

COMMUNICATING
THE INFINITE

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COMMUNICATING THE INFINITE

*The Emergence of the
Habad School*

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Naftali Loewenthal



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*To my mother
with gratitude and love*

1251054

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PREFACE

Many people have contributed to the writing of this study of early Hasidism. While I was an undergraduate at University College, London, contact with the late Professor Joseph Weiss initiated an interest in this field. His great love was, of course, the Braslav school, and this became also my own introduction to the interplay of textual analysis, mystical teachings, and the tangible sociopolitical reality of the Jewish community in Eastern Europe at the dawn of the nineteenth century.

Later, my doctoral research was conducted with the generous supervision of Professor Chimen Abramsky, a mine of bibliographical and other information. The area of study slowly came into focus. Work on the first two generations of the Hasidic movement led towards investigating the early history of Habad. Contrasting with most branches of Hasidism, here, as in the case of Braslav, concrete sources are available: organized texts, carefully supervised by their authors. Eventually it became clear that this fact is not incidental but was an essential feature in the development of both these schools.

During my doctoral studies, together with my wife I became interested in the modern Habad-Lubavitch movement on a personal level. Despite the built-in bias this personal attachment might create for the student of history, I have endeavored to be as objective, critical, and scientific as possible. Historical research is precisely the attempt to stand above one's immediate impressions and to investigate the sources available in order to discover new facts, or to perceive patterns and trends which otherwise would go unnoticed.

In the course of researching and writing this book, conversations with Lubavitch followers provided some interesting insights. Acknowledgement is therefore due to Rabbi Shmuel Lew, a contemporary *hasid* who has a keen sensitivity to historical issues and who has read and commented on most of the manuscript; to Rabbi Nachman Sudak, a prominent emissary who was willing to turn aside from the busy present in order to discuss

questions about the comparatively distant past; and to Rabbis S. F. Vogel, Zvi Telsner, Adin Steinsaltz, Zalman Posner, Rabbi Dr. Immanuel Shochet, and the late Rabbi Aizak Schwei.

Warm acknowledgement is also due to a contemporary Hasidic leader, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher *Rebbe*. In letters and private interviews he has given considerable encouragement to what he has called my "scientific work."

The writing of this study of early Hasidism was greatly enhanced and aided by contact with colleagues and friends working in this field in London and Jerusalem. Dr. Ada Rapoport-Albert heads the list of those who have given of their time in order to chew over a theory, discuss an idea, or read a section of the work; also Dr. Rachel Elior, who has herself written extensively on the history of Habad. The same is true of Professors Moshe Hallamish and Immanuel Etkes, who have been particularly helpful and encouraging, as have Dr. Zev Gries and Professor Moshe Idel. The late Dr. Yishai (Isaiah) Shachar helped formulate the early direction of the research.

I am grateful to a number of specialists in other fields of history. Dr. Joe Udelson read the opening chapters of the book and offered valuable advice. Dr. Joanna Weinberg gave frequently and very generously of her time. Thanks are due also to Professor Raphael Loewe and, at a much earlier stage, the late Professor Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson.

The insights of all these and other scholars mentioned in this book have helped greatly in the all-important task of evolving a methodology for dealing with the complex source material—whether mystical sermons, manuals on contemplation, tracts of various kinds, letters, or stories—and a variety of other forms of evidence. However, it goes without saying that the flaws in this work are solely my responsibility.

Acknowledgement is due to a number of book collectors and librarians who have been very helpful over the years: Mr. E. Z. Gorman and Mr. M. L. Weiser, both of London, Mr. Zvi Rabin of the Lubavitch Foundation Library in London, Rabbi S. B. Levine of the Lubavitch Library in Brooklyn, Mr. Peter Salinger of the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Mr. E. Silver of the British Library, and Mr. Y. Mondschin of the Hebrew National and University Library, Jerusalem.

In the lengthy task of transforming a typical doctoral thesis into what is hoped is a readable book, particular thanks go to Mr. T. David Brent of the University of Chicago Press, who has been a source of warm, patient encouragement. At an early stage of the text, Mr. Y. Cohen gave useful advice

on style. Gratitude is also due to Mr. Richard Astor, for help in this project in a variety of ways.

Generous material aid was provided by a fellowship from the Memorial Foundation of Jewish Culture.

I am grateful to Mrs. H. Silver, Mrs. V. White, and Joost and Madeline Cohen for typing this book at various stages, and to Yochana Sefton for drawing the map.

Special thanks are due to my wife, companion, and friend, Dr. Kate-Miriam Loewenthal. During close to two decades of studying the history of Hasidism, she has given much sound advice and has also subtly ensured a smooth interaction among thought, writing, and life.

I

THE DIALECTIC OF COMMUNICATION

The Third Dimension of Hasidism

The Hasidic movement began in the eighteenth century, among the Jews of the Ukraine. In the course of a few generations it spread to White Russia, Poland, and Galicia. Despite intense resistance from the established communal leadership, especially in the second and third generations, the new movement became a major force among the Jews of Eastern Europe. It maintained this position throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. After the Holocaust, together with other movements in traditional Judaism, Hasidism succeeded in reestablishing itself, most notably in the United States and Israel. Today, Hasidic leaders address increasingly large gatherings, while in cities all over the world there are varied communities of Hasidic followers, who are in regular contact with their leaders and travel great distances to see them. For the Hebrew and Yiddish reader, publishers print large numbers of Hasidic books, both classics and new works. The *hasidim* have also, in some cases, translated their teachings into English, French, and other languages. The communities are expanding and are a powerful force in the arena of Jewish traditionalist society.¹

There are three perspectives, or dimensions, which must be considered in a study of the origin of this movement and its early development. Two of these have already been thoroughly explored. This book concerns the third dimension of Hasidism.

The first dimension is the sociopolitical.² From this point of view, the birth of Hasidism came as a manifestation of social ferment in the eighteenth century, the sources of which are to be found in the previous century. The Chmielnicki massacres of 1648–49, the Shabbatian debacle two decades later, economic decline, and the widening gap between the scholarly and the ignorant classes led to a social struggle which expressed itself in terms of criticism of the established leadership and a rather complex reevaluation of the relative importance of prayer and inspiration, scholarship and action. The result was a new ordering of Jewish society: at the

center a Hasidic leader, the *Zaddik*, or *Rebbe*, surrounded by his followers, the *hasidim*. This did not actually replace the previous structure of communal rabbi leading the community with the authority of the Beth Din and the *kahal* (organized community leadership) behind him. Hasidism functioned rather as a broader framework within which most of the traditional institutions continued to exist (and, indeed, were strengthened), albeit in a subordinate role. The rabbi continued to decide halakhic issues but would himself be a dedicated follower of the *Zaddik*. The same is true of the lay leadership. In the epoch of the decline and dissolution of the Council of the Four Lands, Hasidism provided the Jewish community with a superstructure, the validity of which was hotly contested by the *mitnagdim*, the rabbinic opponents of the new movement.

Viewed from this perspective, the development of early Hasidism has a natural, organic quality. After the first two generations of unified leadership, during the course of the third generation—the last quarter of the eighteenth century—it divided into a number of separate groups, defined partly by geography, partly by subtle ideological issues. The differences were expressed by the personalities and teachings of the various Hasidic leaders. At this point, however, the sociopolitical perspective on Hasidism becomes inadequate, because it fails to provide a clear exposition of the relation between these ideological differences and the effect of the respective branches of Hasidism in society. Indeed, this perspective leads one to the assumption that these differences were actually of little importance. The significant achievement lay in the restructuring of religious and communal authority. While the discourses of the Hasidic leaders provided an important ingredient in the structure—functioning as a bond between *Zaddik* and *hasid*—the investigation of the details of their contents, one might feel, is for the student of rabbinics rather than for the historian.

By contrast, the second perspective on Hasidism—concerning the mystical dimension—focusses deliberately and almost exclusively on the teachings of the Hasidic leaders.³ These teachings have been perceived as the final statement of creative Jewish mysticism: on the one hand they reach the highest extremes of religious radicalism, on the other they delicately avoid the pitfalls of antinomianism. The Hasidic teachings are phrased partly in the vocabulary of the Lurianic kabbalah and partly in the language of the everyday world, employing powerful imagery. R. Yisrael Baal Shem Tov (1698–1760), founder of the movement, speaks of *devekut*, “cleaving” to the Divine radiance concealed in the Hebrew letters of prayer, Torah study, and, in the last analysis, every aspect of life. R. Dov

Ber of Mezeritch (d. 1772), his successor, depicts total *bitul*—self-abnegation—as the ultimate goal: the individual is described as no more than a hollow ram’s horn through which the Divine breath blows. In the third generation, R. Shneur Zalman of Liady (1745–1812), founder of the Habad school, outlines a system of contemplation which tends not only to the abnegation of the self, but also to the perception of the ultimate nonbeing of all existence. The Divine All is the center of consciousness: “there is nought apart from Him.”

From this second perspective, Hasidism is considered primarily as a mystical system, and the different schools which emerged in the third and fourth generations are therefore seen simply as different varieties of expression of the mystical ideal. Any retreat from such radicalism is interpreted as a dilution of the original intense Hasidic ethos.⁴

Two perspectives on the same phenomenon should be consistent with each other. Here, however, this is not the case. The dynamically expanding popular social movement described by the first approach seems completely unrelated, if not actually contradictory, to the esoteric mysticism disclosed by the other. A third perspective is necessary—to unify the two and to describe more accurately the whole.

Investigation of the available evidence indicates that early Hasidism was not simply a movement of radical mysticism. It was one in which men who could achieve *unio mystica* became not just mystics, but mystic leaders, who sought to transform the people around them. The aim was not an elitist community of ecstasies, but the general unification of society and the elevation of the daily life of the men and women in the mundane world.⁵ The third perspective on Hasidism concerns the workings of this process: *communication*. How did the mystic leader, the Hasidic *Zaddik*, communicate with and change the people around him? What is entailed in the creation of a *hasid*, the follower in the swiftly growing movement? To what extent—and how—could the esoteric perception of the leaders of Hasidism be made relevant to the daily lives of ordinary people?

One answer to these questions is, of course, personal charisma. Contact with the man of vision transforms the ordinary individual. The throwing of the prophet’s cloak over his disciple—thereby claiming him forever—becomes translated into broad social terms, and the *Zaddik* is therefore able to inspire the community of which he becomes the center.

There is another aspect of this process, however. This entails the translation of esoteric concepts into forms accessible—and meaningful—to the people. Through oral teachings, or by means of texts, the seed of the eso-

teric is transmitted by the *Zaddik* to his followers. This direct form of communication of the esoteric slowly evolved, and when it did so beyond a certain point it became the subject of heated debate among the Hasidic leaders. The internal rift this caused has largely been concealed by the more obvious attacks by the *mitnagdim*, the opponents of Hasidism, which were taking place at the same time. The fact that there could be a polarization of attitudes on the question of the transmission from the *Zaddik* to his followers is in itself fully understandable. By definition, the esoteric is precisely that body of knowledge which is so rare and exalted that one dare not risk defiling it by overexposure to undeserving eyes. Further, in the age contemporary with the Frankist schism—in which the sinister Jacob Frank (1726–1791), a false Messianic figure, claimed the *Zohar* as his mascot in his battle against the Jewish community—the dangers of too open a disclosure of kabbalistic knowledge were all too apparent. Precisely this was a major point of concern for the *mitnagdim*, who saw in every aspect of Hasidism an attempt to reveal a power which, they thought, it was more prudent to conceal.

Within the Hasidic camp, it was as a result of the slow clarification of the ideal of the direct communication of the esoteric that the Habad school evolved. Habad found ways to translate the rare attainment of self-abnegation, *bitul*, into forms which were experientially accessible to the Hasidic following. The Habad leadership consequently demanded from *all* the *hasidim*—not just the inner circle—the attempt to achieve some variety of *bitul*, employing textual manuals and other material of—broadly speaking—an esoteric nature. The initiation of this process was deemed unwise or dangerous by certain contemporary Hasidic leaders, in particular R. Avraham of Kalisk (d. 1810).

In the lifetime of R. Shneur Zalman there was a development of this process within Habad. The earlier level of translation of the esoteric was relevant particularly to men with great emotional energy—enthusiasts—rather than to the cold, logical mind of the Lithuanian intellectual, famous for the reasoned clarity of his talmudic scholarship. Later, after some inner struggle, R. Shneur Zalman succeeded in communicating his teachings—and the esoteric intensity at their heart—in a form more relevant to logical intellect.

After R. Shneur Zalman's death in 1812 the uncertainty inherent in the attempt to communicate the esoteric was one of the elements in the ensuing conflict concerning the leadership of Habad. While R. Dov Ber (1773–1827), oldest son of R. Shneur Zalman, emphasized the self-

abnegatory possibility in cerebral thought, thereby intensifying the relationship with the esoteric for the broad intellectual class, his rival for leadership, R. Aaron Halevi Horowitz (1766–1828), insisted that unless there was some achievement of enthusiastic emotional expression the Hasidic follower could make no claim to spiritual attainment beyond the norm. This meant that, in effect, he restricted the reach of the esoteric aspect of Habad to the circle of enthusiasts among whom he was a leading figure.

The resolution of the conflict was that R. Aaron founded a rival Hasidic group in Staroselye, while R. Dov Ber, settling in Lubavitch, increased his endeavor to communicate the esoteric in a manner relevant to society as a whole. To this end he succeeded in transmitting the esoteric ethos on a variety of levels. From the elite he demanded the attempt to achieve utter self-abnegation through intensely cerebral contemplation. From others, he demanded other levels of self-transcendence; one of his works was written in Yiddish rather than Hebrew, so as to be accessible to the nonscholar. The teaching which reached the broadest social group was the demand for readiness for self-sacrifice to preserve Judaism. This, R. Dov Ber explained, is an authentic expression of the highest level of esoteric attainment, its mystical power reaching far beyond that claimed by the enthusiasts.⁶

This third dimension of Hasidism—the communication of the esoteric—formed the bridge between the mystic leaders and society around them. It is noteworthy that over forty years ago Gershom Scholem declared that this aim of communication was the point of originality of Hasidism, distinguishing it from the simple popularization of kabbalistic thought and also from the transformation of kabbalistic ideas into ethical directives. For both of these had existed in the heyday of the Lurianic kabbalah in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Further, most of the specific teachings of Hasidism are also to be found in earlier works.⁷ The original contribution of Hasidism lies rather “in the fact that mystics who had attained their spiritual aim . . . turned to the people with their mystical knowledge . . . and . . . undertook to teach its secret to all men of good will.”⁸ The *knowledge* referred to means not the parroting of phrases from books, but an internal transformation. For an example of this process, Scholem singled out the case of Habad. However, it seems he did not notice the tension inherent in this attempt, with Habad representing one extreme in the debate among the Hasidic leadership on the issue of communication. Nor did he discuss the details of how the endeavor to communicate actually took effect. Both these topics—the conflict implicit in the communication of the esoteric, and the methodology of the process,

particularly as seen in the Habad school—form the subject of the present work.

In the light of this, it is striking to discover that in the earliest known fully authenticated Hasidic text we find both the expression of this ideal and the paradoxical restriction on its achievement: the imperative to communicate the esoteric and the prohibition against doing so too directly. This barrier itself, however, provoked the process of “translation” which is seen within this very text: the stepping down, as it were, of esoteric power so as to render it communicable to others. The text in question is the well-known letter written by the Baal Shem Tov to his brother-in-law, R. Gershon of Kutty (d. 1761). It is important not only for what it tells us of the Baal Shem Tov’s own conception of his task, but also because it is likely that the publication of the letter in the 1780s and again in the 1790s influenced the self-image of the members of the Hasidic movement at a crucial time. Further, through discussion of the *Sitz im Leben* of this letter, we will come to a clearer understanding of what is meant by the “esoteric” in the context of the early history of Hasidism.

The Theurgic Tradition and the Letter of the Baal Shem Tov

A text of this letter was printed in 1781 by R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye (d. 1782), the first publicist of the Hasidic movement. The letter had been given to him, he states, by the Baal Shem Tov, to be delivered to the latter’s brother-in-law who was in the Holy Land. However, the letter never reached its destination. Instead it became widely known in the third generation of Hasidism and was reprinted many times.⁹ It is generally considered to be authentic and has even been described as the “manifesto of Hasidism.”¹⁰

The letter describes an experience termed an “ascent of the soul,” a mystical journey through upper realms, fraught with spiritual danger. The climax of this was an encounter with the Messiah. The Baal Shem Tov asked about his advent—“when will you come?”—and the answer was a striking demand for the communication of esoteric power to the people. Whatever our interpretation of this, there is no doubt that for the Baal Shem Tov it was a real experience. Since the demand concerns the communication of an extraordinary level of spiritual attainment—such as the ability of the soul to soar to other worlds—it is necessary for us to pause to examine certain features of the tradition which embodies this form of mysticism.

Kabbalistic thought has two aspects: the “speculative” (theosophic) and the “practical” (ecstatic, or even magical). Most of the Jewish historians of

the nineteenth century rejected both as superstitious nonsense. Since then there has been a widespread reevaluation of the importance of spirituality as a factor of human experience. This has contributed to a general acceptance of the significance of the “speculative” variety of kabbalistic thought, which comprises a fairly accessible body of teaching concerning the relationship of existence to the infinite Divine. This teaching concerns the description of spiritual structures and processes; the texts themselves appear to demand from the reader little more than comprehension. Implicitly, this is expected to lead to greater spiritual awareness, and therefore to greater dedication in practical daily life.

However, in order to come to terms with the details of Hasidic history in the eighteenth century it is necessary to make a further step—into the realms of “practical” kabbalah. This concerns the actual manipulation of spiritual forces through the intervention of the mystic. In this endeavor his soul is the active agent, as it were: it rises to the supernal realms (“ascent”), or unifies with the soul of a departed sage (“unification”), an achievement which imparts special power to affect the world.

We will use the term *theurgic* to delineate this kind of mystical experience and power. Jewish theurgy differs from the “speculative” kabbalah in two respects: it implies a conscious entry into a visionary realm of souls and spiritual forces, angels; in addition there is the possibility of direct manipulation of these forces for an exalted religious purpose.¹¹

The fact that the founder of Hasidism is called Baal Shem (Master of the Name) is itself an indication of attributed theurgic power. The title is known with this meaning from the Gaonic period. A responsum of Hai Gaon speaks of a man, well known as a Baal Shem, who was seen on the eve of the Sabbath in one place, “and at the same time he was seen in another place, several days’ journey distant.”¹² It is true that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Baalei Shem were generally accredited with no more remarkable attainment than the power to heal the sick and to enable barren women to bear children. This itself should not be underestimated by the modern reader. Despite the tendency to rationalize the figure of the Baal Shem Tov, he is to be seen not only as a practical kabbalist and healer, but also as a renascence—or disclosure—of the pristine form of Baal Shem, the theurgic mystic and scholar who could work veritable wonders and whose soul could soar to upper worlds.

The theme of “ascent of the soul” is contained in texts comprising what is called the Merkavah tradition, relating to Ezekiel’s vision of the Divine Chariot (*merkavah*).¹³ These texts originate from circles close to (if not

identical with) the rabbinic scholars of the Mishnaic and early talmudic epochs.¹⁴ They were not widely publicized, and a considerable portion of this material consists of strings of names of “seals” and Divine manifestations. These names were intended to function as keys enabling the adept to traverse spiritual barriers. The term employed in the Merkavah texts for use of the Divine names for this theurgic purpose is *adjuration* (*hash-ba’ah*).¹⁵ This term is used by the Baal Shem Tov at the beginning of the letter describing his ascent: “On Rosh Hashanah [5]507 [= 1746] I carried out an adjuration resulting in an ascent of the soul.”¹⁶

During such an ascent the mystic becomes withdrawn from the physical world around him, yet is fully conscious of another, spiritual realm full of struggle and discovery. He might communicate something of his experience to others, as is seen in a well-known passage in the *Greater Hekhalot*, one of the most famous Merkavah texts, in which the second-century scholar R. Nehunia ben Hakanah is depicted as verbally describing his experience and giving instruction while ascending from level to level. R. Nehunia also refers to a group of disciples who write down the communication expressed by the mystic. It is characteristic of this highly esoteric genre of literature that he criticizes many of these disciples as being unsuitable and declares that they restrict the spiritual progress of the mystic sage.¹⁷

Following the paradigm of Moses, who entreated “show me please Your Glory” and was told “man cannot see Me and live” (Ex. 33:18, 20), one aim of the Merkavah mystic was the closest possible approach to the Glory of the Divine—the Throne of Glory—after which he would return, spiritually enriched, to the daily world.¹⁸ Another aim of the Merkavah mystics was to establish a relationship with the heavenly Prince of the Torah so that the mystic would become endowed with great powers of memory and knowledge of Torah—a term which includes both the Bible and the intricate oral teachings redacted in the Midrash, Mishnah, and Talmud. The Baal Shem Tov refers in his letter to Torah teachings acquired during his spiritual ascent; indeed, the crux of the question of communication relates precisely to these teachings. In later instances in the first few generations of Hasidism in which we find expression of theurgic experience, the greatest emphasis is placed on the teachings drawn from the supernal realm. These are not halakhic instructions but the new, exalted formulations of esoteric ideas which constitute the teachings of Hasidism.

Among the attainments of the Merkavah mystic listed at the beginning of the *Greater Hekhalot* are the ability to know the future, to know the secret sins of every individual as well as the problematic aspects of his ge-

nealogy, and to be able, with theurgic power, to withstand attack by any enemy.¹⁹ It is not difficult to see here the background to certain aspects of the figure of the *Zaddik* of Hasidism as he exists in Hasidic literature. Particularly salient to examination of the letter of the Baal Shem Tov is the depiction of the Merkavah mystic as one who is able to perceive harsh decrees against the Jewish people and seeks to avert them (although he might be unable to do so and may, indeed, be a passive witness). Thus the second-century sage R. Ishmael ascends on high to try to avert a decree of destruction. He fails, however, and is consequently among the first of the Ten Martyrs.²⁰ In a subsequent passage he sees fearful suffering which, each day, is decreed for the Jews. He asks the angel Sagagsagel about this and is told that when the Jews congregate in their synagogues and offer praise in the Kaddish prayer, the suffering is locked away in a heavenly chamber.²¹ In this instance R. Ishmael is a passive spectator, with only the ability to question what he saw.

The Messiah and his advent is another important theme in the Merkavah literature.²² A striking passage in the *Greater Hekhalot* sums up the meaning of the Merkavah experience with the question: “When will he see the heavenly majesty? When will he hear of the final time of Redemption? When will he see that which no eye has seen? When will [the mystic] return and inform the seed of Abraham?”²³ This implies that another aim of the Merkavah mystic was the discovery of the time of advent of the Messiah. This is the ultimate revelation, which the mystic sage will then communicate to the Jewish people. The Baal Shem Tov’s question about the advent of the Messiah at the apex of his ascent, and—as we will see—his concern about the difficult imperative expressed in the answer, the demand for communication of the esoteric, are fully consistent with this tradition.

The ancient teachings of the Merkavah mystics enjoyed a somewhat surprising continuity.²⁴ In the eighteenth century this tradition was expressed in the Lurianic work *Gates of Holiness*, a tract by R. Haim Vital which actually gives instruction in the technique of ascent of the soul. First printed in Amsterdam in 1715, long before the same author’s *Tree of Life* and *Eight Gates*, this work proceeds in stages from the most practical level of piety and ethics to the highest reaches of the esoteric. The first three sections were reprinted several times in the eighteenth century; the fourth, most esoteric, section of the tract was never printed and remains to this day in manuscript.²⁵

Gates of Holiness gives an account of the ascents of the Merkavah mystics, citing the *Zohar* and the Merkavah literature itself. It describes how Divine

Names would be used for adjuration (*hashba'ah*) to force entry, as it were, to the various gateways of the heavenly realms.²⁶ R. Haim Vital points out the dangers in this and advises the use of other techniques.²⁷ Despite this, the fourth, unpublished section of the tract does contain the Divine Names and formulae necessary for the more dangerous aspect of theurgy.²⁸

The milder method counselled comprises a life of meticulous performance of the Commandments, love of one's neighbor, and humility (hence the ethical sections of this book) which leads, through *devekut*, cleaving to the Divine, to the possibility of undertaking an ascent of the soul:

He should be alone in the house, after a ritual bath, and in holiness, in a place where neither human voices nor the chirping of birds will disturb him. After midnight is best in every way. He should shut his eyes and disengage his thought from all aspects of this world, as if his soul had left him, like a corpse, insensible. Then he should strive, with great desire, to meditate on the upper world and to cleave there to the root of his soul and the upper radiances. He should imagine to himself that his soul has left him, and risen above, and he should picture the upper worlds as if he actually stood there. . . . If he feels nothing, it is likely this is because he is not yet fitting and prepared. He should henceforth strive harder in Divine service and holiness. After a few days he should again engage in solitary meditation, as described, till he succeeds and the Divine Spirit rests on him.²⁹

"Unifications"

The theme of ascent of the soul enjoys a venerable and easily identifiable tradition. Another theurgic attainment, also mentioned by the Baal Shem Tov in his letter, is most clearly described in the Lurianic writings. This is the concept of "unifications" (*yihudim*). An important aspect of these is that they have the effect of causing the Divine radiance to flow down towards the world and the mind of the individual, where this flow is expressed as prophecy and prophetic power.³⁰

According to the *Gate of Prophecy*, a tract by R. Haim Vital and his son R. Shmuel, the unifications are Divine Names which enable the mystic to effect a bond between his soul and that of a departed *Zaddik*, taking into account their respective roots in the soul of Adam. This might be while at the grave of the *Zaddik*, or in one's own home.³¹ This connection between souls imparts a theurgic power to interfere, as it were, in the realm of the spirit. This means, on the one hand, the ability to heal and purify one's

own soul, and to raise it to exalted heights; on the other, the power to make the wicked repent is vouchsafed. One kabbalist, whose son unfortunately became an apostate, succeeded in bringing him back to Judaism through the technique of unifications.³² In addition, this tract promises that one will be able to produce original Torah teachings and "to know everything one wants, whatever one asks."³³

An interesting passage affords a glimpse of the process whereby R. Isaac Luria (d. 1572) would impart to each of his disciples the specific formula for unification his soul required:

My teacher discerned the source of each individual Jew in the Torah. He would teach each person the interpretations of Torah which related to his soul. Sometimes he would reveal the interpretation of one verse, sometimes of other verses. According to the need of the moment . . . he would teach that person the interpretation of the verse that was then revealed. . . . Then that man would pronounce the verse, having in mind that interpretation, and the Divine Names emerging from that verse, all in a way which related directly to his own soul. . . . The main times for such "unifications" were before going to sleep, in solitude. Through this his soul would ascend above and receive additional radiance. Sometimes he would tell him to make the unification on arising from bed, in the second half of the night.³⁴

The intense atmosphere of a mystic circle, of which this passage is a trace left for historians, can easily enough be imagined in the setting of the kabbalistic community of Safed, or some other intimate brotherhood of mystics. As we shall see, the letter of the Baal Shem Tov expresses the remarkable demand that esoteric attainment of this order should, in some way, be communicated to everyman.

Concealment of the Theurgic Tradition

Although R. Haim Vital and his son R. Shmuel reveal the ascetic preparation and the details of the Divine Names which should be contemplated, there is none of the personal account which is found in the Baal Shem Tov's letter. An intimate description of theurgic attainment of this kind is extremely rare, not only in printed mystical works but also in the kabbalistic manuscripts which have been preserved.³⁵

If we posit a pedagogic rather than a self-revelatory aim to the corpus of kabbalistic literature, the lack of written reference to such spiritual ascents

is not hard to understand. This kind of attainment, in which the body enters an inert, trancelike state while the consciousness soars to another realm, is not easily communicable knowledge, nor is it necessarily positive in nature. On the contrary, in the context of structured Jewish society and the emphasis, even among ascetics, on human and social values, it is potentially dangerous. Such experiences, if they took place, in the life of the religious leaders of a community were ultimately irrelevant to those who were quite emphatically not being invited to attempt the same path.

The Merkavah literature itself emphasizes the elitist quality of this experience:

Only one who has the following two qualities can "descend" to the Merkavah. He must know the Bible, and the Mishnah, the halakhot and the aggadot, and the final decisions in the application of halakhah. He must also be one who observes the entire Torah, keeping all ordinances and all statutes, laws and teachings.³⁶

A subsequent passage warns of the dire consequences which befall one who is unfit for the spiritual journey: "he is beaten with thousands of iron rods."³⁷ This danger is emphasized by the Talmud. In a famous passage found in both the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds we find the account of an attempt by R. Akiva to communicate direct theurgic attainment to others. These were scholarly men, yet they came to grief: one died, another became a heretic, and a third became a recluse. Only R. Akiva, reports the Talmud, "entered in peace and emerged in peace."³⁸

The danger is clearly spelled out: death, madness, or heresy, probably of an antinomian variety. Later events in Jewish history indicate the justification in the warning. Overintense exposure to the Infinite breaks the bonds with existence, sanity, and the divinely ordained task of humanity: "Man shall not see Me and live" (Ex. 33:20). The severe warning implicit in the talmudic passage set the tone for the generations. Esoteric attainment was reserved for a tiny elite and hidden from society as a whole.

This fact makes it all the more intriguing to find a number of references to spiritual ascents in early Hasidic literature.³⁹ In these the mystic leader is seen struggling in subtle ways with harsh forces, bringing salvation to both the souls of the deceased and the trapped prayers of the living. He observes and strives to influence for good future events in the mundane world; he also hears Torah communications and instructions from departed prophets, sages, and other exalted beings. In the conceptual frame-

work of the writers of these texts, such experiences had total validity, akin to prophecy. Admittedly, the number of such references which can be considered authentic is very small, and it is clear that there was no general invitation to all and sundry to manifest prophetic power.⁴⁰

Nonetheless, the remarkable challenge of the new Hasidic ethos was that it expressed the demand that the inner experience of the mystic leader become—in some way—relevant to his followers and to society as a whole. Other people should share in the mystery of the esoteric. Precisely this is the theme of an important part of the Baal Shem Tov's letter, giving us the clue to the tension at the heart of Hasidism, which was to be a crucial factor in the subsequent development of the movement.

The Demand to Communicate

The letter, probably written in 1751, describes in detail its author's experience on the night of Rosh Hashanah, the solemn New Year festival, in September 1746. Apart from the use of the technical term *adjuration* (*hashba'ah*), no information is given about the technique employed to leave the bounds of materiality; however, the Baal Shem Tov does state that in this spiritual ascent he reached levels he had never previously been able to attain. In an atmosphere of great joy, he encountered souls "of the living and of the dead," including many who had been wicked and had repented. Ascending with these souls to ever higher levels, he witnessed tragic events which were to take place in the immediate future. The author tells his brother-in-law, R. Gershon, to whom the letter was addressed, that these filled him with terror; nonetheless, he continued his ascent to even greater heights.

The question of the dissemination of esoteric thought pertains precisely to the highest level described in this spiritual journey. The Baal Shem Tov ascended "to the Palace of the Messiah, where the Messiah studies Torah with all the Tannaim, and the *Zaddikim*, and also with the Seven Shepherds."⁴¹ There he questioned the Messiah as to the time of his advent, using the same phrasing as did R. Joshua ben Levi in a talmudic passage.⁴² The answer is intriguing:

I asked the Messiah: "when will you come?" He answered me: "through this you will know—when your teachings are publicized and revealed in the world, and your fountains will be spread to the outside—that which I have taught you, and which you have grasped—and they too will be able to make "unifications" and ascents like you. . . ." I was surprised at this,

and was greatly pained at the length of time necessary for this to be achieved.⁴³

The remarkable idea expressed here is that theurgic attainments of the highest order should become common property, as it were; through the publicizing of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings, every man should be able to make spiritual ascents just like his. Of course, this simply did not take place in historic Hasidism.⁴⁴ The Baal Shem Tov himself saw it as a possibility which could only be realized far in the future. What is interesting for us is that there should be expression of such an aim, especially in the context of the traditional reticence on such matters in Jewish mystical thought.

The letter does not end with this remote ideal, however. The Baal Shem Tov writes that although at first he was filled with anguish, he was soon appeased. This is because in the course of his spiritual journey, he was also given a teaching of relatively simple proportions. He describes it as consisting of three special techniques and three Divine Names, "easy to study and to explain." Through this teaching, he felt, it would be possible for his theurgic power to be transmitted to at least some of his contemporaries, probably a close circle of intimate disciples.⁴⁵ Then they too "would be able to achieve ascents of the soul, study in the heavenly realm and return, like me." This is a more restricted goal, but it clearly seeks to impart the highest order of esoteric attainment to others.

Enigmatically, the Baal Shem Tov writes in the letter that he was forbidden to do this. Two contrary forces seem to be at work: traditional reticence—reservation of true spiritual power to a small elite—and the new goal of communication. Even when the Baal Shem Tov sought permission to transmit the relatively accessible teaching he had learned to just one person—R. Gershon himself—this, he states in the letter, was denied him: "I asked concerning you—to teach [just] you; but this was not permitted at all, and I am bound by an oath on this matter." Bound by an oath he could not break, the founder of Hasidism could not directly communicate his power to anyone. This was the apparent situation in 1751, when the letter was written. Perhaps later something of this overt theurgic power was transmitted to R. Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezeritch, to R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye (d. 1782), or to others of whom we do not know. This limited goal, realizable only by the exceptional individual, will be discussed below. More important, however, was the endeavor to translate theurgy into forms accessible to the many.

Transmission of a Teaching

Despite the restrictions and prohibitions described above, the new imperative to communicate was not abrogated. The letter shows that the Baal Shem Tov did finally find a teaching relating to a theurgic level of attainment which he could transmit to others. R. Gershon, to whom the Baal Shem Tov was writing, was himself known as a kabbalist of stature, conversant with the Lurianic *kavvanot* and subject to intense self-transcendence in prayer.⁴⁶ The step beyond this is theurgy, and it is in this direction that the Baal Shem Tov's teaching directed him. Phrased as a *kavvanah* for prayer and Torah study, it is entirely different from the specific, detailed information contained in the kabbalistic source book *Gate of Kavvanot*.⁴⁷ Rather it breathes a theurgic atmosphere which is found in isolated passages in the Lurianic writings, reaching the border between "speculative" and "practical" kabbalah and beyond. This is not a direct instruction to enter upper realms, nor a revelation of efficacious Divine Names for this purpose. As we have seen, this information could not be transmitted. The Baal Shem Tov's teaching is recognizably, however, a milder version of the same theme, a generalized—and therefore communicable—form of the esoteric instruction referred to above in which soul links to soul and transcends world.

However, this I will inform you. . . . During your prayer and study, in every single word, have the intention to achieve unification there. For in every single letter there are worlds, and souls, and G-dliness, which rise and join and unify one with the other. Then the letters join and unify together and become a word. They achieve a true unity with G-d. You should include your own soul with them at every step. . . . Pray also for me with this *kavvanah* . . . and for those in the Diaspora.⁴⁸

Awareness of (and inclusion of one's own soul in) the flow of "worlds, souls and G-dliness" described in the Baal Shem Tov's letter is the background to a number of his teachings in which a core of theurgic experience is made accessible to his contemporaries. It is this transmission—not of the scholarly technicalities of the kabbalah, but of its theurgic potential—which characterized and distinguished the early teachings of Hasidism.

Devekut (cleaving) is the name given to one aspect of this process. This concept, deriving from a biblical passage instructing one to cleave to the

Divine (Deut. 13:5), has a long history in Jewish mystical thought.⁴⁹ The Baal Shem Tov taught that one should strive for *devekut* through awareness of the “radiance” within the letters of Torah study and prayer. Through this, theurgic possibilities come within one’s reach. R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye, who is regarded as the most reliable source of the verbatim teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, states:

I received from my teacher [the Baal Shem Tov] that the chief aim in Torah study and prayer is to cleave to the inner spiritual radiance of the Infinite, which is within the letters of Torah and prayer . . . [from this] one will know the future and all that will happen. . . . One will know what one should do . . . and will see the upper worlds.⁵⁰

An extension of this teaching concerns one’s perception of existence as a whole. At the most supranormal level, this entails the recognition of the Divine radiance in evil itself.⁵¹ Expressed in kabbalistic terms, the Lurianic concept of *Zimzum*, the contraction or veiling of Divine radiance so as to give “room” to a seemingly separate, finite universe, is itself described by the Baal Shem Tov as no other than an integral aspect of the Divine. Just as the hard shell of a turtle is part of the creature, so the concealment of the Divine which characterizes existence is itself an expression of the Infinite.⁵² The world ceases to have even the similitude of separation. Sin itself is perceived as having a more exalted source which is pure and sacred—for this reason, stated the Baal Shem Tov, repentance is effective.⁵³ The awareness of a higher perspective from which all is pure is complemented by the demand to elevate the lower, harsh perspective to the higher, thereby transforming existence around one.⁵⁴ This is a powerful teaching, expressed in the name of the Baal Shem Tov’s spiritual guide, implying that the *Zaddik*—the exalted man who reaches down to those around him—transforms, purifies, and heals the world in which he lives.⁵⁵ Through this contemplative joining of two levels of existence “one is able to annul all harsh decrees.”⁵⁶

One glimpses here the process whereby the ascetic contemplative kabbalist is transformed into a theurgic master, a spiritual leader with a direct and active relationship with the world around him. From lonely kabbalist he becomes the *Zaddik* of Hasidism. His thought processes have a direct effect on the world and on other people; conversely, the spiritual balance of the world around him is mirrored in his thoughts and in the events which take place before his eyes.⁵⁷

The teaching concerning the elevation of “foreign thoughts” is an expression of this interrelationship. The Divine sparks trapped in the lower realms come to the individual while he is praying in order to be elevated to their source.⁵⁸ They come in the form of extraneous thoughts, disturbing his prayer. They are rather reminiscent of the hostile forces encountered during a spiritual ascent in the Merkavah tradition. The Baal Shem Tov taught a technique to recognize the spiritual origin of the thought: if of sexuality, it is from the *Sefirah Hesed* (love), if of violence, from *Gevurah* (severity), if of idolatry, from *Tiferet* (splendor). Elevating the thought to its source has the effect of “healing,” rejoining the Divine spark to its supernal origin.⁵⁹

The importance of this teaching for the close followers of the Baal Shem Tov is seen by a statement quoted in the name of R. Nahman of Horodok (d. 1765). He is said to have remarked that in his youth, “when I was a great *hasid*,” despite his ascetic practices “I was not able to get rid of ‘foreign thoughts’ till I adopted the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov.”⁶⁰

The esoteric and, indeed, somewhat dangerous nature of this teaching is apparent. There are statements in quite early Hasidic literature which limit the application of this technique to *Zaddikim* or other rare individuals.⁶¹ As will be seen below, R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye himself is wary of overpublicizing this teaching. He also alludes to an idea, to be stressed by R. Shneur Zalman a few years later, which shows more clearly the theurgic force underlying the concept of the elevation of foreign thoughts: while the *Zaddik* is in prayer, the foreign thoughts which come to his mind are the product of the sins of other people.⁶² The elevation of these thoughts is not just an expression of the contemplative aspiring to a higher level of sanctity, but of a direct transformation of society, which is purified by the *Zaddik*’s prayer.

This teaching on the elevation of foreign thoughts was transmitted by the Baal Shem Tov to his close followers. By contrast, a rare account of the nature of the prayer of the Baal Shem Tov himself expresses a completely different order of theurgic activity. He is said to have told his brother-in-law, in explanation of the lengthiness of his prayer:

When I reach the words “He revives the dead” . . . I undertake the *kavvanah* of unifications. Then there come to me thousands and myriads of souls of the dead. I have to speak with each one [to discover] why it has been denied its rightful place. I heal it, pray for it, and elevate it.⁶³

Here we have, it seems, the disclosure of the practical kabbalist at prayer. The Baal Shem Tov was not able to teach the unifications which he alone, or almost alone, could undertake. Something of the theurgic core of this aspect of prayer could be transmitted, however, at least to his close following. The teaching on foreign thoughts is the translation and simplification of this dramatic theurgic process, imparting to others too the power to heal the spirit, but concealing from them the frightening revelation of the “thousands and myriads of souls” which would be too intense for them to bear.

Overt Theurgy

The unique quality of the Baal Shem Tov is, therefore, the endeavor to transmit theurgic power to his followers, albeit in a translated and milder form. There are rare instances recorded of a far more intense transmission, such as the account of the way R. Dov Ber of Mezeritch became his full disciple. Here we encounter a methodological problem, since the sources available are mainly from *Shivhei ha-Besht* (*In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*). This was published in both Hebrew and Yiddish versions in 1815 and openly sets out to present and illustrate the spiritual grandeur of the founder of Hasidism.⁶⁴ Given that there is a conscious quest for the wonderful and the supernatural, it is nonetheless noteworthy that this account relates to the Merkavah tradition, and that it describes the leap from the theosophic dimension of kabbalah to the ecstatic-theurgic.

According to *Shivhei ha-Besht*, R. Dov Ber was an ascetic “who had fasted seven or eight times the entire week through.”⁶⁵ The turning point in his relationship to the Baal Shem Tov was a theurgic experience while listening to the latter reciting from a kabbalistic manuscript—according to *Shivhei*, a Merkavah tract identifiable today from its description. The account of this event is presented as if told by R. Dov Ber. The Baal Shem Tov had sent his servant to call for him at midnight.

He asked me “have you studied kabbalah?” I answered “yes.” There was a book lying before him on the table; he told me to read to him from it. The book was written in brief paragraphs, each paragraph beginning “R. Ishmael said: Metat-ron, the Prince of the Countenance, told me. . . .” I read a page or a page and a half to him. Then the Baal Shem Tov said “That is not right. I will read it to you.” He began reading and then started trembling. He got up and said “We are studying the

work of the Merkavah but I am sitting down!” He continued to read, standing up. While reading he made me lie down on a round couch. I could not see him any more, but I heard thunder and I saw lightning and terrible flames. This continued for about two hours. I was very frightened, and from this fear I began to feel faint.⁶⁶

Another version of this event also emphasizes the overtly theurgic element in the transmission from the Baal Shem Tov to his future disciple. According to this version, the text was the Lurianic work *Tree of Life*.

In that text there were many names of angels. As soon as the Baal Shem Tov recited the text the room was filled with radiance and fire was burning all round it. They actually saw the angels they had mentioned.⁶⁷

A somewhat similar, but milder, event is also recorded of R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye.⁶⁸ Dov Ber of Linitz, the redactor of *Shivhei ha-Besht*, interprets these phenomena as a form of private Theophany—the transmission of the aspect of Torah “which relates to one’s soul.” He describes the Baal Shem Tov as being able to transmit this with a theurgic force comparable, in the life of the individual, to that accompanying the original Theophany on Sinai.⁶⁹ In another revealing passage the Maggid is reported to have said that he had by himself acquired the knowledge of angelology contained in the *Book of Raziel*.⁷⁰ However, the theurgic unifications required for this knowledge to have potency he had to learn from the Baal Shem Tov.⁷¹

These dramatic mystical phenomena were the exception, reserved for the very few individuals for whom they were pertinent. The Yiddish version of *Shivhei* records that R. Wolf Kitzes, who considered himself a close follower of the Baal Shem Tov, was disconcerted to discover that his teacher was transmitting the theurgic lore of the Merkavah to R. Dov Ber. This knowledge was denied to him, R. Wolf, a seasoned disciple, yet was being taught to a newcomer. When he voiced his feelings the Baal Shem Tov is said to have answered that only R. Dov Ber was able to bear the intensity of these teachings: “I would happily have taught several others, but I know they would not have been able to take it.”⁷²

This overtly theurgic aspect of the Baal Shem Tov’s teaching is beyond investigation; there are no known texts, nor records of its content. By contrast, early Hasidic literature includes a considerable number of his concep-

tual teachings, expressed as esoteric aphoristic directives or observations, such as those discussed above. These were intended not just for one or two theurgists, but for the Baal Shem Tov's fairly extensive circle of close disciples.

Theurgists and Pneumatics

The full inner circle of the following of the Baal Shem Tov constituted a remarkable spiritual elite; nonetheless, the world of angel-names, unifications, and direct entry into the world of the Merkavah was not for them. They were indeed men of vision; yet, one can suggest, theirs was the generalized vision of the "radiance" in the Hebrew letters, rather than the more particularized angel-names of theurgy. For this circle it was the new guidance of the Baal Shem Tov which transmitted the power both to reflect and to affect existence around one, with the aim of elevating all, of transforming evil to good and sin to repentance.

We will call these disciples of the Baal Shem Tov *pneumatics*, men of the spirit, distinguishing them from the tiny possible elite of *theurgists*. While the few who comprised the latter class were able to achieve ascents of the soul, unifications, and other theurgic attainments, the pneumatics were on a different level. They could indeed experience the ecstasy of *devekut*, cleaving to the Divine, in all aspects of their lives, and were masters of mystic equanimity. To them, principally, were addressed the luminous teachings found quoted in the name of the Baal Shem Tov in the writings of R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye. They interpreted these as instructions and sought to obey them. As pneumatics, they experienced mystic dreams and—without self-deception, in a truly visionary manner—perceived the radiance within the Hebrew letters of their prayerbook or volume of Talmud.⁷³ When praying, they sought the Divine origin of every foreign thought which might occur to them and believed the Baal Shem Tov's assurance concerning the transformation of the world achieved by the contemplative process within their own minds. Through his esoteric conceptual teachings the Baal Shem Tov succeeded in translating his personal theurgic experience into a form suitable for a broader following composed of charismatic figures, the pneumatic men of the spirit, whose *pneuma* now took the form of a special relationship with the world around them, in which the perception of numinous "radiance"—rather than the manipulation of angel-names—functioned as the mystic key which could open all doors.⁷⁴ This translated power was to be used for purifying and unifying the people.

Translation into Social Terms

In the view of R. Yakov Yosef—one of the major figures in the inner circle we have attempted to describe—this was not the only echelon of society that the Baal Shem Tov sought to involve directly in the task of transforming the Jewish world. Beyond the pneumatics, kabbalists themselves, were the varying degrees of scholar who played their part in the Jewish community: rabbis, constituting the official religious leadership; itinerant preachers; learned ritual slaughterers; teachers. It was for this wide group that the teachings of R. Yakov Yosef were composed, originally as talks or sermons and later printed. These men understood kabbalistic terminology and might well have followed certain kabbalistic practices of an ascetic kind. They were not, however, ecstasies or pneumatic personalities. It is to these important figures in the Jewish community that the quasi-pilpulistic, darshanic expositions in *Toledot Yakov Yosef*, his main work, were aimed. In these discourses the social directive of Hasidism was spelled out. This was an authentic translation of the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov into practical terms, as it should be applied by the scholarly class in the endeavor to re-establish the unity of a fragmented people. The union (or "unification") of souls attempted by the theurgist was to be achieved by the communal rabbi in social terms—in his ability to communicate with and respect the ignorant and poor families around him. This teaching has a contemplative aspect—paths of thought whereby the scholar was taught to perceive the interconnection between himself and the downtrodden masses. In a nonpneumatic manner he was invited to recognize his "descent" in the failings in his own Divine service, through which he could unite with those on a lower level. The formal structures are kabbalistic, but no visionary transports were required, only the practical determination to be involved rather than aloof, to rescue rather than abandon. The exposition of the theme of the descent of the *Zaddik* in R. Yakov Yosef's writings indicates that it is a step to be achieved by every man whom Divine Providence has placed among the upper, scholarly class rather than among the masses.⁷⁵ This is a translation into a form realizable in broad social terms of the very exalted demand seen in the Baal Shem Tov's letter—that the great theurgist should seek to share his power with others.

This demand is also expressed in a parable by the Baal Shem Tov about a king who had sent his son far away "in order that later he should have more delight" when the son returned. However, the son forgot everything about his royal origin. The king sent a message to him—but he refused to

come back. Then a wise minister discovered the secret of how to make the prince return. "The king sent ever greater ministers to him, but it did not help at all. At last one minister changed his garments and his language, to be like the son. He came close to him, on his level, and brought him back to his father."⁷⁶ This describes the method of the Baal Shem Tov, who succeeded in translating the most exalted awareness of the Divine into forms accessible to those around him. Through this he could return the prince, the soul of the individual and of the people as a whole, to its heavenly father, the king. This idea was taught by R. Yakov Yosef in terms relevant to the broad reaches of communal leadership. The communal rabbi, seeking to "descend" to the level of his congregants and thereby inspire them, could use a technique parallel to that employed by the Baal Shem Tov himself in his attempt to disguise the intensity of his theurgy so that it could be borne by his disciples.

The fact that the *Toledot* is directed primarily at the scholars rather than the pneumatics is indicated by R. Yakov Yosef's reluctance to dwell on the more esoteric teachings of the Baal Shem Tov. We noted above the importance of the teaching of the elevation of foreign thoughts to the immediate circle of the Baal Shem Tov.⁷⁷ R. Yakov Yosef does quote this teaching, but compared with, say, the Maggid of Mezeritch, he does so with great reticence. At one point he writes about this theme of the elevation of foreign thought: "I heard this from my teacher, but it should not be written down, even though I did write of this elsewhere very briefly."⁷⁸ It would be inaccurate to imagine that R. Yakov Yosef simply had less of an interest in esotericism. His aim in his discourses as printed in *Toledot Yakov Yosef* was to reach the scholars, for whom too intense a pneumatic content was unsuitable. By contrast, the teachings of the Maggid, R. Yakov Yosef's contemporary, were addressed primarily to the pneumatics. Indeed, in R. Yakov Yosef's *Toledot* the famous "I have heard from my teacher" passages which directly quote the sayings of the Baal Shem Tov often have only a very slight connection with the body of the text. What the scholarly but nonpneumatic reader gained was the feeling that there were a number of great personalities, true men of the spirit, for whom the sublime teachings of the great theurgic master were directly relevant. For himself, however, these manifested a luminous direction rather than an actuality. They spoke to his soul, he might have said, rather than to his mind, even though intellectually he knew enough kabbalistic terminology to understand them. The directive from the pages of *Toledot* to him, as a communal rabbi or respected scholar, was of a different nature entirely.⁷⁹

Ethical Guidance

Another aspect of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov is a nonesoteric level of ethical guidance, applicable to every man, including the ignorant. Citing a passage in Ethics (5:19) which speaks of a "bad eye" and a "good eye," the Baal Shem Tov advises one to have a harsh view of one's spiritual progress, so that it should seem that "all one's service is insufficient, and one should move constantly, from level to level, to acquire greater perfection every day. All the service one has already achieved should seem as nothing compared with the service one has to do." On the other hand, in material affairs one should have a "good view" and be satisfied with whatever one possesses.⁸⁰

A further example of these nonesoteric teachings recorded in the name of the Baal Shem Tov is a parable of a band of thieves living in the forest. They send one of their number into the town to entice people out to a place where they can be ambushed; the wise among the townspeople, however, do not let themselves be fooled. In the same way, concludes the parable, we should not let ourselves be enticed by the Evil Desire.⁸¹

Teachings such as these were relevant to everyone; they express the activity of the Baal Shem Tov as a religious guide for those with whom he came in contact. These ethical teachings are quite different from the esoteric demands which were addressed primarily to the inner circle of his disciples.

Admittedly, the dividing line is not always clear. For example, the teaching "where a person's thought reaches, there he is entirely" has both an ethical and an esoteric level of interpretation.⁸² In ethical terms it grants the freedom to be untrammelled by the limitations of one's immediate situation; as an esoteric teaching it is the key to *devekut*, the mind cleaving to the Divine while the body dwells and participates in the lower world.

A further aspect of this is that even the esoteric teachings themselves impart certain simple ethical directives. The sense of ultimate spiritual success embodied in the mystical disclosure of Divine radiance in every aspect of life, even evil, imparts to everyone the ethical directive to be joyful. Because of this the esoteric teachings of the Baal Shem Tov had an effect on a circle far wider than that of those to whom they were directed as literal instructions and demands.

Conceptual and Emotional Communication of the Esoteric

The discussion above indicates that for the Baal Shem Tov, direct communication of the esoteric on a conceptual level (albeit in translated form)

took place within only a very limited circle—that of the inspired pneumatic figures who became his disciples. Others were affected by his ideas in an indirect way or were instructed by him on an entirely different, non-esoteric level.

Emotional, rather than conceptual, communication was another important form of the Baal Shem Tov's transmission of esoteric force to those around him. This, however, is an imponderable factor. The quality of the direct person-to-person relationship with the Baal Shem Tov, and the effect of his charisma on a man, a woman, or a child, cannot be reduced to simple terms. In the case of the kabbalist-scholar R. Yakov Yosef, the conversionary experience which led to his becoming a follower of the Baal Shem Tov is dramatically described. According to one version, after being surprised at seeing the Baal Shem Tov smoke a pipe before the morning prayer, R. Yakov Yosef began weeping uncontrollably during his own prayer, "a great weeping, the like of which I had never wept in all my life. I understood that this weeping was not from myself."⁸³

In general, in fact, the attainment of the step of self-transcendence which is at the heart of the *Rebbe-hasid* relationship is itself an important form of the emotional communication of the esoteric achieved by Hasidism. What is remarkable about this is precisely the fact that it reaches down beyond the pneumatics, and even the scholars, to the world of the masses. Believing in the *Zaddik* as a man of spiritual power and accepting him as a guide to be obeyed necessarily entails what ultimately is an esoteric step of self-subjugation and abnegation. Theoretically, at least, this is likely to exert a continuous effect in the life of the individual, leading to the ethical attributes of joy and trust in Providence for which the early Hasidic follower was justly famous.

This process of the emotional communication of the esoteric relates also to the miraculous effects achieved, in the eyes of his followers, by the *Zaddik*. The barren woman who gives birth, the sick child who is healed—these play a significant part in the transmission of a sense of recognition of the spiritual in the life of the ordinary individual. What the pneumatic scholar achieves through visionary prayer the ordinary man might discover through the fact that his wife, hitherto childless, becomes pregnant shortly after a blessing from the Hasidic leader. The "spiritual" is in a translated form, yet, for the man of faith, the esoteric seed remains whole. For the authors of *Shivhei ha-Besht* this aspect of the founder of Hasidism was paramount, and it is interesting to learn that the scholarly R. Shneur Zalman himself is said to have had a hand in the compilation of this work. The

emphasis on the spiritual possibility for the *hasid* in the revelation of miracles by his master is indicated in that very work by a radical statement, attributed to the Baal Shem Tov: "One who recounts the praises of the *Zaddikim* is as if engaged in the study of the Merkavah."⁸⁴ The self-transcendence implied in the faithful repetition of a wondrous event contains the seed of an exalted and ancient theurgy.

Another imponderable medium of communication is that of melody. Obviously a key to a wellspring of emotion with ecstatic possibilities, this was an important aspect of the Baal Shem Tov's relationship with those around him.⁸⁵ More accessible for analysis is the story, a medium (combining both concept and emotion) whereby the Baal Shem Tov could make available to the common man esoteric themes which otherwise are found only in the most radical of his teachings.

A Story by the Baal Shem Tov

One such story, appended to the first edition of *Toledot*, is followed by a comment by R. Yakov Yosef which indicates the highly esoteric source of the concept which, through this medium, is translated into a form accessible to all.

The main elements of this detailed story are as follows: a merchant was persuaded by a non-Jewish associate to suspect his wife of infidelity; in fact his suspicion was unfounded. Nonetheless, to test her, he sent her away on a boat with a single ugly sailor, really the husband himself in disguise. For several days on the ship she had neither food nor drink. Despite her pleas, the sailor refused to give her any unless she submitted to his advances. Under duress, she finally gave in. At the first opportunity, however, she ran away from the ship. After dramatically becoming wealthy she returned home. There she complained bitterly to her husband about her dreadful experience, describing the ugly sailor and what he had forced on her. The husband was happy at this expression of her true feelings, and thus also discovered that his original suspicions had been baseless.⁸⁶

R. Yakov Yosef interprets this as a parable for "all aspects of this world, from the time of the destruction of the Temple until the coming of the Messiah." About the complaints of the woman to her husband, with her confession of what had transpired on the boat, he comments that this is "the secret of the *viduy*"—that is, the private confession of sins which forms a major part of the Day of Atonement service and, halakhically, is central to repentance in general. The woman, states R. Yakov Yosef, represents the *Shekhinah*, and her being sent away is the destruction of the

Temple. During Exile she is forced to submit to the force of Evil, which, in reality, is but a disguised form of the Divine. The story expresses a teaching of ultimate innocence, despite apparent transgression, of the people as a whole and of the individual. In consequence, confession and repentance are fully accepted.

The theme communicated here in story form is also found among the purely conceptual teachings of the Baal Shem Tov. Expressed in kabbalistic terminology we find the idea of a superior realm where all is pure. The possibility of impurity and of spiritual flaw exists only on a lower level.⁸⁷ In another passage, also employing kabbalistic concepts, the Baal Shem Tov speaks of this exalted realm as the source of the power of repentance:

The flaws and sins of human beings do not reach that realm. About this it is written "if you do evil—how will you affect Me?"⁸⁸ Hence repentance is effective—for the flaw of the sin does not reach that realm. If he transgressed sexually, there only love is aroused. Below he has caused a bad effect through his sin; by repenting . . . everything is put right. . . . And [the Baal Shem Tov] said that there are wondrous things in the depths of this [teaching].⁸⁹

Similar to the teaching on the elevation of foreign thoughts, this idea emphasizes the power of repentance due to the existence of a higher perspective from which all is pure. Precisely this perspective is transmitted by the story.

In story form, however, a "lower" level, both psychologically and socially, is reached. For the scholar hearing this story, the concept is being communicated on a "gut" level more immediate than is reached by pure intellect. At the same time the story makes this esoteric idea accessible to the ordinary man. No doubt it would be transmitted to him in a heightened situation, in which the actual presence of the Baal Shem Tov or one of the latter's followers would limit the evident danger of misinterpretation; probably on account of this danger, stories of this kind were rarely written down—the dramatic stories of R. Nahman of Braslav being a notable exception.

The extent to which this story was seen as transmitting an idea of a truly esoteric nature is indicated by a further comment by R. Yakov Yosef. He adds the information that this theme of ultimate innocence despite sin derives from a theurgic experience of the Baal Shem Tov—an ascent of the soul. During this experience the founder of Hasidism witnessed the ulti-

mate defense of the Jewish people by the archangel Michael: "For my teacher underwent an ascent of the soul and saw that Michael, the great defender of Israel, spoke on behalf of the Jews: every sin of theirs is really merit."⁹⁰ This suprarational teaching of innocence, taken from the upper world, was transformed into a story which made it accessible to society at large. Whether there were stages in this translation, and whether the parallel formulation of this teaching in conceptual, kabbalistic terms, suitable for the scholarly followers, also had a visionary source, is not known. Perhaps the Baal Shem Tov's reference to "wondrous things" in the depths of that teaching hints at an overtly theurgic provenance; we cannot tell. It is clear, however, that the Baal Shem Tov found ways to communicate the inspiration of his teachings not only to the scholar but also to the simple man. Perhaps this was regarded by later generations of *hasidim* as his greatest feat. To this day the term "a Baal Shem Tov Jew," in Yiddish, denotes the unlettered man who has a spontaneous spiritual force and who would have been a fitting recipient for the revelations transmitted by the great master through the stories, the melodies, and the miracles. These revelations of theurgic strength transformed the ordinary man in his own way just as they, together with other forms of communication, transformed the scholar, the enthusiast, and the kabbalist. This is the key to the paradigm of the simple man as the man of spiritual power, which is a theme of some importance in early Hasidism.⁹¹

The Highest and the Lowest

This discussion of communication in early Hasidism has given us an inkling of both extremities of the process. We see that the force which the Baal Shem Tov was trying to transmit to his contemporaries pertained to the highest level of the esoteric: the ecstatic-theurgic aspect of kabbalism, with its ascents of the soul and visionary power, the latter-day expression of the most ancient identifiable stream in Jewish mystical thought. A built-in prohibition, of similarly ancient provenance, prevented this from being transmitted in its pristine form; and yet, paradoxically, the demand for communication was made.

The result was the translation of the theurgic into forms accessible to society, on each level adding something of the energy from the realm of "worlds, souls and G-dliness"—a realm, we also know, of the Divine Names and "seals" which lead to prophecy but could only rarely, if ever, be imparted. As we have seen, some texts, admittedly late and probably embellished, suggest that for one or two individuals, perhaps, theurgic attain-

ment was indeed transmitted with the pristine force of the Merkavah experience. However, for the circle of pneumatic men of the spirit who were the close disciples of the Baal Shem Tov, this power was disguised and translated into the esoteric teachings which have been recorded in his name. It is important to realize how limited a circle actually received these teachings as direct guidance. However, the Baal Shem Tov was also able to express some of the most radical of the teachings gained through his theurgic experience in story form. Apart from these two varieties of direct conceptual communication of the esoteric, there was its heavy disguise in practical and ethical directives, coupled with a purely emotional level of communication. This latter enabled something of his power to impregnate the lives of the simple men and women of the Jewish world—and also, at times, to break through to and deeply affect the learned scholar.

The next stage in the history of Hasidism concerns the successor to the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid of Mezeritch, and his disciples. Charismatic figures in their own right, pneumatic men of the spirit, these were transformed by the Maggid into the Hasidic leaders of the following generation. Among them we discern a polarization of attitudes on the question of the direct conceptual communication of the esoteric to the members of the broad Hasidic following.

Most disciples of the Maggid, when they themselves led Hasidic fraternities, followed the schema we have already observed: the esoteric teachings in themselves pertain primarily to the inner circle. Concern, melody, and even miracles were for wider society—but not mysticism. One or two groups, however, took a different position, maintaining that the esoteric teachings could be translated into forms directly relevant to the broad, highly literate stratum which made up the mass of the Hasidic following. One of these was the group led by the very independent R. Nahman of Braslav (1772–1810). The other, slowly defining more clearly its aim to communicate the esoteric in an overt way to every level of society, was the Habad school.

THE BEGINNING OF HABAD

In Chapter 1 we discussed the aim of communicating an ineffable core of kabbalistic experience which characterized the teachings and activity of R. Yisrael Baal Shem Tov. This aim—along with its implicit dialectic—is the distinguishing feature of Hasidism. We will now examine the parameter of communication as manifested in the second and third generations of the movement.

The Great Maggid

There is very little documentary evidence about the transition of leadership from R. Yisrael Baal Shem Tov to R. Dov Ber, the “Great Maggid” of Mezeritch. R. Yisrael died in 1760; a few years later we hear of R. Dov Ber as the new source of Hasidic leadership.¹ From Mezeritch a stream of influence permeated contemporary society, the effect of which can in part be gauged by the violence of the reaction of the *mitnagdim*. This exploded in 1772 with the publication of harsh condemnations and excommunications and was to continue into the nineteenth century.

It is known that well before the death of the Baal Shem Tov a number of his close disciples and associates conducted themselves as spiritual leaders. This is implicit in his teaching, which guided men of stature towards a new dimension of involvement with those around them. After his death they continued this task, thereby strengthening the promulgation of the Hasidic ethos within their local communities and spheres of influence. R. Dov Ber emerged as the central leader in the second generation of Hasidism for several reasons. One of these may well have been a belief in the unusual nature of the transmission to him from the Baal Shem Tov: theurgy rather than *pneuma*.² The Baal Shem Tov had aroused the need for contact with a leader who had not merely religious insight, but perception of a visionary order. R. Dov Ber, who—in the eyes of his followers—had been granted entry to the realm of the Merkavah, filled this need. His role was thus transformed from that of a disciple following the path of the Baal

Shem Tov to that of the new central leader of the movement, a position conceded by his greatest rival, R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye.³

Self-Abnegation

Another key factor in the emergence of R. Dov Ber as the central leader of Hasidism was his ability, in his own right, to transmit to others spiritual attainment of the highest order, while at the same time establishing and preserving a relationship with the wider Jewish world. Both realms of endeavor were important, for the distinctive nature of Hasidism was precisely a product of the union of the two.

On a rare, esoteric level, translating remarkable transformations of the inner world of the individual into deceptively simple statements, the Maggid expounded the theme of utter self-abnegation. For there are two aspects to the theurgic core at the heart of early Hasidic teaching. One is the radiant visionary perception of "worlds, souls and G-dliness." The other is the concomitant abnegation of the self, the suspension of the ego so that the boundless Divine can be manifested. This self-abnegation might even be overtly expressed in the inert, trancelike states of the latter-day Merkavah mystics and of the founder of Hasidism.

In the scanty fragments of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings which have been transmitted to us, the emphasis lies on the visionary aspect of his experience. However, this was not direct communication of the details of the Merkavah world; as we have seen, this was but rarely possible. Rather, the emphasis lies on the translation of the visionary element into other forms, most notably into the perception during prayer and Torah study of the "radiance within the letters."

By contrast, very little is directly stated by the Baal Shem Tov about the mystical self-abnegation which opens the door to such visionary perception. The absence of this concept from the teachings of the founder of Hasidism is so striking that the suggestion has been made that it had no place in his system.⁴ This view is mistaken but understandable. It stems from the fact that the focus in the Baal Shem Tov's teachings is not on the step away from self, but on the complementary turning towards and cleaving to the Divine radiance which is beyond. It was primarily this luminous area of experience which he sought to communicate to others through his conceptual teachings, his stories, and his melodies.

In the teachings of his successor, R. Dov Ber, the emphasis is not on the radiance, but on the annihilation of the self. The theme of self-abnegation is paramount and reaches extremes which, some writers suggest, have

never previously been expressed in Jewish literature.⁵ At the same time the luminous atmosphere evoked by the Baal Shem Tov is muted. The realm of "worlds and souls" of the Merkavah tradition is not described; the Divine radiance infusing all is not depicted in the popular and immediate imagery used by the Baal Shem Tov, but rather through the more abstract terminology of the kabbalah. Despite this, a powerful sense of intimacy with the Divine remains, quite beyond the normal limitations of humanity. The teachings of the Maggid constitute the most intense expression in Judaism of the quest for—and even realization of—self-dissolution in the Divine.⁶

Central to the Maggid's teaching is the concept of the Divine "Nought," relating to the *Sefirah Hokhmah* (Wisdom).⁷ Previously, the Baal Shem Tov had spoken of the self of the individual being transformed into Nought. He emphasized this theme by a play on the similar Hebrew words: *aniy* (self) is to be changed into *ayin* (Nought).⁸ This teaching was reiterated by the Maggid in many different ways and was the pivot of his system. Thus we learn that by considering himself as Nought, the individual can reach an ecstatic state "above time . . . where all is equal: life and death, the sea and dry land."⁹ Through such self-abnegation, one ascends beyond the integral limitation of being itself, a limitation expressed by the Lurianic concept of the "Breaking of the Vessels," the primeval cataclysm among the *Sefirot* which is the source of the grossness of the material world and of all evil.¹⁰ Through self-abnegation, taught the Maggid, one is freed from this limitation and achieves total purity.

The "Breaking of the Vessels" does not affect something which is at the level of Nought. For the "Breaking of the Vessels" only applies to that which has an attribute, or has the quality of a vessel. This means that if a person considers himself as Nought due to his cleaving to the Creator . . . the "Breaking of the Vessels" does not affect him at all. Thus the verse states "before the Tetragrammaton [i.e., beyond the Divine attributes, at the level of Nought] from all your sins you will be purified" (Lev. 16:30).¹¹

This attainment of total purity and ecstatic beyond-worldly states of mind is not simply for the benefit of the mystic. The Maggid's teachings on self-abnegation also communicate the power to pray and transform existence.

The Maggid refers to the idea that *Hokhmah* (Wisdom), the first *Sefirah*,

is the ultimate source of all language. When the *Zaddik*, in a state of self-abnegation—i.e., unified with *Hokhmah*—prays, his words ascend to their source and elicit Divine delight and good will, which then flow down into the physical world with direct effect.¹² Indeed, the Maggid taught an entire theory of working miracles through the power of self-abnegation, for the quality Nought, or *Hokhmah*, is the intermediary between all states of existence, the point at which one thing can be transformed into another. Because the *Zaddik* stands on this level of total self-abnegation, unified with the Divine Will, he is able “to bring about any change that he wants, to effect a miracle.”¹³

We see here the ancient power of the practical kabbalist and the Merkah mystic brought to a new level of manifestation in the form of the Hasidic *Zaddik*. The visionary perception, the angel-names, and the radiance are, however, entirely concealed. The emphasis is simply on self-abnegation, often called *bitul* (nullification) by the Maggid, using a term borrowed from the halakhah.¹⁴ Through this *bitul* and nonbeing, the individual can reach actual unity with the Divine, for nothing else is present: he is nought but the Divine flowing through him. Yet he is still a man in a human world.¹⁵ In this lies his unique power, for his human emotions affect all realms. His most earthly actions become Divine Torah, as in the case of the Patriarchs, whose marital unions are embodied in the sacred letters of the Torah scroll:

One should totally separate oneself from physical being so that one rises through all the worlds and reaches unity with the Divine: one is nullified from existence. . . . Then, whatever is aroused in the individual is aroused above as well. If love is aroused in the *Zaddik*, love is aroused in all worlds. So it is with all emotions. This is when one elevates oneself with great self-purification, above all worlds, achieving unity with Him. . . . All the upper realms, and angels, are in one's power. . . . What the *Zaddik* desires the Holy One desires. . . . Thus even the intercourse of the Patriarchs is Torah, for this is written down in the Torah scroll. If the words “he had intercourse with Rachel” or “Jacob loved Rachel” were missing, the Torah scroll would be unfit—for they carried this out with *devekut*. . . . Through that action words of Torah were formed: and Torah and the Divine are One.¹⁶

Teachings such as these constitute the body of evidence for those who view Hasidism predominantly as a mystical movement seeking above all

the extreme of radical religious experience. These teachings of the Maggid began to be published in the 1780s, a decade after his death, and enjoyed great popularity among the Hasidic followers.¹⁷ It is not surprising that this fact has strengthened the impression that the Hasidism of the Maggid manifested a call to society at large to strive for the most esoteric and world-transcending variety of religious experience.

This etherealized interpretation of the Maggid's endeavor leads directly to a distorted evaluation of the subsequent development of the Hasidic movement. The books compiled by Hasidic authors living at the end of the eighteenth century—let alone subsequent generations—do not generally contain comparable expressions of religious radicalism. This has been interpreted as expressing a natural decay, a withdrawal from the elevated mystic ideal: mysticism of such intensity must, by the nature of things, succumb to the exigencies of real life.¹⁸

This view of the aim of the Maggid overlooks his real originality. From Mezeritch emanated several different levels of directive, and the special significance of Hasidism for history emerges from the coexistence and union of these. One aspect of the Maggid's teaching was for those who were themselves being trained as the *Zaddikim*, the leaders of the Hasidic movement for the next generation. To these men were directed the radical instructions on thaumaturgy and pneumatic self-abnegation. For the lesser, broader ranks of society there were other levels of guidance which emanated from Mezeritch: an ethical level, textually intertwined with the mystical, but quite distinct; and also a relatively simple practical teaching, which nonetheless demanded a readiness for spiritual advance.

The Inner Circle

The Maggid was distinguished from his predecessor by the fact that as a teacher and leader he remained in one place, instead of travelling to different communities.¹⁹ Rather than live as an itinerant preacher, coming into direct contact with the simple folk of the marketplace, R. Dov Ber in Mezeritch became the center of a powerful structure of religious leadership which extended over thousands of square miles. One effect of this new format of the movement is that an intellectual elite were attracted to visit Mezeritch, as well as lesser men who had heard of the fame of Hasidism and wished to investigate its significance for themselves. There came kabbalists, such as R. Yisrael of Koznitz, who is said to have studied eight hundred kabbalistic works before he met the Maggid; halakhists such as R. Shneur Zalman himself, who, at the age of twenty-five, was to write a

masterly new version of the *Shulhan Arukh*, the encyclopedia of the complex practicalities of Jewish law; and men searching for knowledge and fulfilment, such as the restless Solomon Maimon, whose quest was to lead him from Poland to Berlin to the circle of Moses Mendelssohn and even beyond.

The teachings posthumously published in the Maggid's name are those he addressed to the self-selected group of people who actually came to Mezeritch. Maimon's interesting description of his own visit indicates that there the ideal of self-abnegation indeed pervaded the atmosphere and was particularly apparent during prayer.²⁰ According to his subtle if cynical account, the full attainment of this spiritual ideal was also accompanied by the delivery of spontaneous Torah teachings, regarded as authoritative and Divine by their hearers.²¹

From this we can deduce that there was an inner circle to which the Maggid's teachings on self-abnegation were addressed as directives and instructions. These men were charismatic pneumatic figures in their own right who, as we know from other sources, were in the process of developing Hasidic centers in their home regions. In Mezeritch they came as disciples, while in Lizhensk, Amdur, or Karlin they themselves were Hasidic leaders with access to Divine teaching and, for that matter, the power of blessing. To these men were addressed not only the mystical directives on the attainment of pneumatic self-abnegation, but also instructions on the delivery of Torah teachings drawn from the Divine. The following is recorded by R. Zev Wolf of Zhitomir, a major disciple of the Maggid:

Once I heard the Maggid tell us explicitly: "I will teach you the best way to deliver Torah teachings. One should not be aware of oneself at all, and just be an ear attentive to the way the [Divine] 'World of Speech'²² is speaking through one; the person himself is not speaking. As soon as he begins to hear his own words he should stop." Many times my own eyes saw [the Maggid]: when he opened his mouth to deliver a Torah teaching he seemed to everyone as if he were not in this world at all, but as if the *Shekhinah* [the Divine Presence] were speaking from his throat. Sometimes, even in the middle of a theme or the middle of a word, he would stop and wait a while.²³

As well as the members of the inner circle to whom such teachings were addressed, there were also lesser followers of the Maggid. These were not expected to produce original Torah teachings of their own; instead, they repeated those communicated by their leaders.²⁴ It is beyond doubt that

we would consider these lesser followers men of inspiration. However, they did not lay claim to the exalted state of self-abnegation in which the individual is transformed into a vehicle of the Divine and his every act becomes sacred Torah. For them, the demand which emanated from Mezeritch was of a different nature. It is this second, broader level of communication which helps us evaluate Mezeritch Hasidism as a potential force in society at large.

Ethical Demand

Evidence for the nature of the Maggid's directive to the wider group of Hasidic adherents is found in a letter of one of his disciples. R. Avraham of Kalisk was an older contemporary of R. Shneur Zalman; together they were disciples of the Maggid and, later, of R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk. When R. Shneur Zalman's path of broad communication of esoteric teachings became apparent—through the publication of his book *Tanya* in 1796—R. Avraham sent a critical letter to his old friend. This letter throws light on the style of teaching of the Maggid and of R. Menahem Mendel: "This was the way of our leaders: they were extremely careful to teach most—almost all—of the *hasidim* only in the style of *musar* (ethics), and to inculcate in them faith in the Sages."²⁵

R. Avraham's letter was written twenty-five years after the death of the Maggid, and his own view of the correct path of development of Hasidism might well have colored his memory. His letter, however, is not the only evidence that a predominantly ethical directive was addressed to the majority of the Hasidic following, and one is therefore inclined to accept the veracity of his statement. This indicates clearly that, together with the esoteric teaching of self-abnegation, there was an exoteric level of communication which emanated from the Maggid.

One aspect of this was *musar*, ethical teachings of restraint, of devout concentration on religious activities, such as prayer, and of awareness of the presence of the Divine. Teachings of this kind are intermingled with the esoteric aspect of the Maggid's thought so that, in a remarkable way, the same paragraph can be seen on two entirely different levels: a call to self-abnegation of a mystical nature and at the same time—for example—a plea for restraint of passion and for modesty in the life of the ordinary man.²⁶ It seems likely that the inner circle of disciples to whom the full gamut of the Maggid's guidance was directed were able to distil out this ethical level when communicating with the wider group of Hasidic followers and with their own local communities. As an example of this process

we have the case of R. Avraham of Kalisk himself, in whose writings we find the Maggid's teachings on Nought transported from their mystical context to the ethical-social framework of Hasidic society. Instead of directing the individual to abnegation in relation to the Infinite, R. Avraham employs the Maggid's terminology to direct the Hasidic followers to a sense of humility in relation to each other.²⁷

R. Avraham's letter also delineates another aspect of the communication of the Hasidic leader with broader society. This is termed the imparting of "faith in the Sages" to the members of the Hasidic following. The sages here are the Maggid himself and the inner circle of the pneumatic, inspired leader figures among his followers. The significance of this faith in the *Zaddik* was touched on above.²⁸ For the ordinary man it opened the door to self-transcendence and ethical self-mastery.

In this sphere of relationship the esoteric teachings of the Maggid with their demand for utter abnegation took on a new significance. They were important not as directives to be followed, but as a wondrous self-communication. For the ordinary Hasidic follower, the teachings about self-nullification and union with the Divine *ayin* functioned in a manner similar to the miracles, melodies, and stories of the Baal Shem Tov in the previous generation. They expressed the radiance of the charisma of the *Zaddik*, and it is for this reason that the Hasidic public eagerly bought the books containing these teachings which began to be printed in the 1780s.

Instructions and Involvement

The Maggid's ethical teachings, suitable for the broader reaches of the Jewish society of his time, were concretized through the formulation of a list of religious directives. These instructions, disseminated by his disciples, constituted the real demand that Mezeritch Hasidism made on the growing circle of its adherents. Essentially an oral teaching, the directives—called *hanhagot* (customs)—provided a channel of communication whereby the Maggid could reach out to surrounding society and transmit the central values of the Hasidic ethos. While—according to R. Avraham of Kalisk—the esoteric radicalism of Hasidism was deliberately kept in the background, the *hanhagot* established a genuine bond between the pneumatic-theurgic inner circle of the Hasidic leadership and the broad ranks of their followers.²⁹

A number of different versions of the list of *hanhagot* are known, attributed to such disciples of the Maggid as R. Yehiel Mikhal of Zolochov, R.

Aaron of Karlin, R. Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, and R. Avraham of Kalisk. Some of these versions were printed before 1800, while others remained in manuscript until relatively recent times.³⁰ According to current opinion, these versions derive from a list compiled by the Maggid himself, despite the fact that this list was not published in its complete form until the beginning of this century.³¹

The Maggid's *hanhagot* concern not mystical self-abnegation but ethical and practical directives on topics such as the giving of charity, Torah study, the avoidance of idle talk, of pride, and of anger, and meticulous attention to the Sabbath laws. They are permeated with an ascetic atmosphere of intense religious seriousness, but there is a conspicuous lack of the well-known esoteric teachings of the Maggid. For example, the concept of "elevating" disturbing thoughts in prayer by pondering on their spiritual source—a mystical technique the Maggid had inherited from the Baal Shem Tov—is not mentioned. Instead the reader is directed "to strive as much as possible" that his prayer should be with close attention. The *hanhagot* constitute an intense demand on the ordinary individual, yet, nonetheless, a demand which could be met.³² Relevant to everyone in the widening circles of the Hasidic fraternity, the *hanhagot* did not beckon a man along unattainable paths. Their existence as a formal list reliably attributed to the Maggid and their evident popularity corroborate R. Avraham's letter to R. Shneur Zalman. Ethical and practical teachings were for the majority of the members of the Hasidic movement. The esoteric teachings, by contrast, were addressed as directives only to the inner circle who were able to respond to their demand.³³

The Maggid's involvement with the wider community was not limited to ascetic instructions addressed to the individual. Implicit in the Baal Shem Tov's thought was a critique of society, which was spelled out clearly by his disciple R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye. By contrast, this seems entirely absent from the recensions of the teachings of the Maggid, whether esoteric or ethical in nature. We might well assume a near quietist preoccupation with matters of the spirit, withdrawn from the crudities of communal life, were it not for a fragment of evidence from the pen of the indomitable Solomon Maimon. Analyzing his experience at Mezeritch, Maimon gives a typology of the major disciples of the Maggid. Among these he includes a class of men imbued with power over their fellows. Directed by the ethos of Mezeritch, the force of this charisma was expressed as social activism:

Of this class I became acquainted with one. He was a young man of twenty-two, of very weak bodily constitution, lean and pale. He travelled in Poland as a missionary. In his look there was something terrible, so commanding, that he ruled men by means of it quite despotically. Wherever he came he enquired about the constitution of the congregation, rejected whatever displeased him, and made new regulations which were punctiliously followed. The elders of the congregation, for the most part old respectable men, who far excelled him in learning, trembled before his face.³⁴

The communal regulations which so aroused the concern of the youthful emissary probably related to tax ordinances and other facets of social organization which, from the point of view of the Hasidic leadership, required revision. From such fragments of evidence—a manuscript of ethical instructions, a brief personal account—one is able to build a composite picture of the Maggid as leader in the second generation of Hasidism. This picture is consistent with the concurrent growth of the movement and its claim to authority which was to lead to the open conflict with the establishment in the final decades of the eighteenth century.

As in the case of his predecessor, the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid was able to exert an influence on society on a number of different levels. For the small inner circle, the pneumatic figures who were themselves to become leaders, there was the demand to achieve esoteric self-annihilation and the concomitant thaumaturgical power of miracles and blessings. The teachings of this nature were only partially disclosed to the members of the wider fraternity, and then not as instructions but rather as revelations of the unique nature of the *Zaddik*. By contrast, an ethical level of interpretation, implicit in the Maggid's otherwise esoteric system, was distilled by his close disciples and transmitted to the growing membership of the movement. At the same time a purely ethical and practical directive emanated from the Maggid himself and formed the main channel of his relationship with the majority of his followers.

At the outermost level, a concern for and involvement in the realities of communal life also radiated from Mezeritch. This, of course, was soon to provoke the violent reaction of the *mitnagdim*. Our focus, however, is not on this challenge to established authority, but on the parameter of the communication of the Hasidic ethos within the ranks of the movement. In this we discover the evolution of an aim to promulgate the esoteric core of Hasidic thought on a wider level, rather than restrict it to the inner circle.

This development took place in the third generation and is the key to the significance of the emergence of Habad.

Hasidic Leadership in White Russia

R. Shneur Zalman Borukhovitch (1745–1812) was one of the youngest of the disciples of the Maggid.³⁵ From Mezeritch, in Volhynia, the influence of Hasidism was spreading westwards into greater Poland and northwards into Lithuania. R. Shneur Zalman and his older contemporaries R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk, R. Avraham of Kalisk, R. Yisrael of Polotsk, and R. Issakhar Ber Segal, known as the Maggid of Lubavitch, were the leading representatives of this northerly advance. When the Maggid of Mezeritch died in 1772 and his senior disciples, in their local territories, became yet more clearly established as Hasidic leaders in their own right, it was this group, led by R. Menahem Mendel, which assumed the Hasidic leadership of the Bello-Russia area, comprising the Mohilev and Vitebsk regions.

A striking event which remains a puzzling facet of early Hasidism is the fact that within a few years most of these leaders, including R. Shneur Zalman, determined to leave Lithuania and establish a center of Hasidic leadership in the Holy Land. This plan might have arisen from the intensity of the opposition to Hasidism in Lithuania, a region dominated by the influence of R. Elijah, the Gaon of Vilna. Until his death in 1797 he maintained his belief that the movement was a variety of Frankism, and he fully supported the organized attempts which began in 1772 to "uproot" Hasidism and eradicate it completely.³⁶ In this atmosphere it might well have been considered that the lives of the Hasidic leaders were in danger, and that they would best succeed in their aim subtly to transform society by inspiration and leadership from afar.

Another aspect of this plan concerns the spiritual transaction which lies at the heart of Hasidic thought. The *Zaddik* is conceived as reaching for the highest level of esoteric attainment, with the concomitant aim to employ this power for the benefit of others. The teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid showed the methods to be employed, particularly during prayer, by means of which the *Zaddik* could purify and elevate the world. The most immediate focus of this beneficial force was the community of the followers of the *Zaddik*, his *hasidim*.³⁷ The plan by the Hasidic leaders of White Russia to emigrate to the Land of Israel can thus be seen as an attempt to achieve a yet higher level of spirituality, the benefit of which would then be transmitted to those they had left behind.³⁸

While this spiritual transaction could without question take place at a distance, we might well wonder at the fate of Hasidism conceived as a perspective on life or a body of teachings. How would Hasidic thought and attitudes be communicated to society if the leadership were thousands of miles away? Even accepting the presence of a relatively well-developed system of emissaries and of pilgrims travelling to and from the Holy Land who could bring back letters of guidance and instruction, the task seems formidable. It was precisely this concern which led to the collective decision that R. Shneur Zalman would remain in Europe.

According to Hasidic tradition, in the spring of 1777 he had accompanied R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk, R. Avraham of Kalisk, and R. Yisrael of Polotsk as far as Moghilev on the Dnieper, thinking he too would be part of the sizeable group which was to travel to the Black Sea and on to Constantinople and the Holy Land. In Moghilev, however, the decision was reached—apparently reflecting the attitudes both of the Hasidic followers and of the leadership—that R. Shneur Zalman would remain in White Russia.³⁹ While the others set off on their journey to the heights of spirituality which only the Holy Land could grant, R. Shneur Zalman remained in the cold reality of the Russian communities.

It is tempting, and perhaps justified, to see in this step a presage of the future. In expression of an ancient dialectic, arguably universal to all systems of spiritual quest, R. Shneur Zalman was apparently ready to sacrifice some aspect of his own attainment for the sake of a responsibility to society at large. This analysis, however, must be tempered by the awareness of our lack of knowledge of the real aims of these Hasidic leaders in embarking on their journey. What is more accessible to study, on the other hand, is the mode of communication of the Hasidic ethos which they subsequently employed.

Here we see a division similar to that with which we are familiar from our study of the Maggid. In Tiberias R. Menahem Mendel held court as a Hasidic leader and on Sabbaths delivered teachings whose discursive quality suggests they may have influenced the development of R. Shneur Zalman's style, discussed in the next chapter. They also include some of the most intense expressions of esoteric self-abnegation known in Hasidism:

To sum up the matter: a person should be like someone who is not, with utter abandon of his body and soul, [as if] in order to be wiped out for the Sanctification of His blessed Name—from This World and from The World to Come. In whatever situation he is and wherever he is, he yearns for and is con-

cerned with nothing but G-d. . . . Even from Hell he turns to G-d, for what does he care for himself? Whether . . . he was not born, or being born, is wiped out like an animal. . . . As far as he is concerned he is already completely annihilated, due to gazing at the greatness of the Creator.⁴⁰

These discourses were heard by the relatively small circle of disciples who had accompanied R. Menahem Mendel to the Holy Land. Although transcripts of some of these teachings did eventually find their way back to Europe and were printed in 1814, there is no indication that this intense level of communication was intended for the mass of the Hasidic following in White Russia. For them R. Menahem Mendel wrote letters, which were usually countersigned by R. Avraham of Kalisk, who now lived in Safed. These were sent with the emissaries who travelled through Russia collecting financial support for the community of the righteous in Safed and Tiberias. In each locality the letter borne by the emissary would be copied and studied by the members of the Hasidic fraternity.

These letters are quite different from the radical teachings of self-abandon found in R. Menahem Mendel's discourses. Instead they comprise encouragement, admonition, and practical guidance from a leader to his followers. In these letters we find the ethical rather than the esoteric level of interpretation of the Maggid's thought, together with simple practical exhortation—such as the repeated demand that the Jews living in isolated inns should avoid being influenced by their gentile neighbors.⁴¹

At the same time there is evidence of a demand for scholarly preoccupation with traditional works of ethical inspiration, especially of a kabbalistic nature. R. Menahem Mendel instructs one community to study Rabbenu Tam's *Book of the Righteous* (twelfth century) and the ethical-kabbalistic works *Sefer Haredim* (*Book of the Pious*) by Eliezer Azkiri and *Reshit Hokhmah* (*The Beginning of Wisdom*) by Elijah de Vidas. "And above all," writes R. Menahem Mendel "the Holy Zohar."⁴² Detailed instruction to study books of this kind is consistent with the guidance in the *hanhagot* of the Maggid; however, it also leads towards the direct scholarly communication of Hasidic thought which we later find from R. Shneur Zalman.

During the decade spent by R. Menahem Mendel in the Holy Land, as well as instructing his followers by means of occasional letters he also recommended a more personal level of guidance. This necessarily had to be of a local nature. R. Menahem Mendel did not want his followers in White Russia to turn to other contemporary Hasidic leaders. He therefore advised them to take counsel from three major figures who were with them

in White Russia. These were to act primarily as guides, explaining how to apply the ethos of Hasidism in one's personal life.⁴³ The order in which their names appear in the letters of this period is this: first, the elderly R. Yisrael of Polotsk, who had accompanied the group which travelled to the Holy Land in 1777 but had then returned in order to raise funds; second, R. Issakhar Ber Segal, who had been a follower of the Baal Shem Tov and had taught the young Shneur Zalman many years previously; third, the considerably younger R. Shneur Zalman, who at this time was in his thirties and, it seems, had not fully relinquished the desire to travel to the Holy Land.⁴⁴

As the years went by, R. Yisrael of Polotsk passed away (c. 1784) and R. Issakhar Ber retreated voluntarily to a secondary role: a letter of 1792 indicates that he was then an emissary of R. Shneur Zalman.⁴⁵ During the last years of R. Menahem Mendel we see R. Shneur Zalman as the sole local representative of his leadership, not, however, without some reluctance on his part and also opposition from those who preferred to travel to other *Zaddikim*. In 1786 letters from both R. Menahem Mendel and R. Avraham of Kalisk urged him not to be modest, but to fill the role of Hasidic leader. The people do not need a prophet, states R. Menahem Mendel. They need a teacher to guide them in an intensive path of Divine service so that they can transcend the limitations of their material situation. R. Shneur Zalman has the ability to do this, and therefore he must do so.⁴⁶ R. Avraham of Kalisk adds, in his letter of the same year, that if he had realized earlier the importance of the task of local Hasidic leadership, he himself might well have decided to remain in Europe.⁴⁷ Two years later, a letter to the Hasidic fraternity in White Russia, signed by R. Avraham but containing the last directives of the dying R. Menahem Mendel, exhorted the *hasidim* to follow R. Shneur Zalman and no one else. "We have anointed him to be guide in your region."⁴⁸ Thus the full authority of Hasidic *Zaddik* in all aspects was gradually assumed by R. Shneur Zalman. At the same time, for many years he was to continue his efforts to raise support for the Hasidic community in the Holy Land—despite the dispute with R. Avraham which was soon to cloud the horizon.

We see therefore that the structure of communication of the Hasidic ethos employed by R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk in Tiberias was similar to that which we have observed in the case of the Maggid before him. For the intimate circle who heard his weekly teachings, there was an intense demand to achieve radical attainments such as utter self-abandon. By con-

trast his letters to the wider fraternity in White Russia express an ethical level of instruction. At the same time, however, we find an emphasis on intellectual scholarship which is manifested both in the discursive nature of his esoteric teachings and in the detailed booklists included in some of his letters of ethical guidance. This scholarly style of communication was employed by his disciple R. Shneur Zalman in fashioning the distinguishing characteristics of the Habad school.

Varieties of Communication

The scholarly nature of R. Shneur Zalman's approach to Hasidic leadership is seen unambiguously in his halakhic writings. The first of his works to be published was his *Laws of Torah Study* (Shklov, 1794), followed a year later by a tract on a surprisingly complicated halakhic topic: *Table of Blessings* (Shklov, 1800). His lengthy *Code of Law*—written at the behest of the Maggid—was a new exposition of halakhah, incorporating the opinions of scholars who had commented on the *Code of Law* of R. Joseph Karo, written two centuries before. In his *Code*, which was not published till after his death, R. Shneur Zalman was concerned to show the reasoning behind the halakhah, and the different levels of imperative—biblical, rabbinic and popular custom—which contributed to daily law. This concern for the underlying meaning is also found in his approach to ethical and esoteric teachings.

One level of R. Shneur Zalman's communication with his followers was, therefore, that of normative Jewish scholarship. This was particularly suited to the intellectualism of Lithuania. As a major halakhist, it is likely that he had a circle of disciples, quite apart from his role in the Hasidic movement. References in the writings of his son R. Dov Ber and follower R. Aaron indicate that he was active as a teacher of Hasidism from around 1783; but according to a Habad tradition, there was also an earlier study circle in Liozna which focussed primarily on halakhic subjects.⁴⁹ Habad tradition also mentions an interest in the medieval Jewish philosophers.⁵⁰ This is consistent with the philosophic, discursive style of R. Shneur Zalman's later Hasidic teachings, and with his harmonizing attitude to apparent conflicts between Maimonides' philosophic ideas and kabbalistic thought.⁵¹

Another level of communication between R. Shneur Zalman and his followers, particularly in the late 1780s and subsequently, when he had without any doubt assumed the full role of Hasidic leader, was that of *Yeh-*

idut. This term refers to an intense meeting between *Rebbe* and *hasid*, a meeting which is considered to bear great significance of a beyond-rational, even theurgic nature. The institution continues to the present day, and the sources give every reason to believe that it had a similar force in the time of R. Shneur Zalman.

The first *Yehidut* is of particular significance, as we see from the *Liozna Regulations*, an interesting series of texts dating from this period of R. Shneur Zalman's activity. In one of these, dated 1793, R. Shneur Zalman reveals his concern that, because of the large numbers of people, new followers are finding it difficult to see him in *Yehidut*. "It is absolutely essential to speak to them in *Yehidut*, and no alternative is possible."⁵² Avigdor of Pinsk, the enemy of Hasidism who laid the accusations against R. Shneur Zalman which led to the latter's second arrest in 1800, included reference to the first *Yehidut* in his petition to the tsar. Although his account might be distorted, there is a factual background of the genuine intensity of the event:

I have also heard that when someone wants to join the Karliner group he must first come to their leader and must give him a signed list of all the sins he had ever committed in his life. After that he must deliver his soul to the leader, because the leader has said that his soul includes all the souls that cleave to him.⁵³

The theurgic aspect of the *Yehidut* and the mystical intensity of the encounter was the substructure for an overt content comprising guidance or instructions of an ethical or even practical nature. Hasidic lore tells of people preparing at length for this meeting and then striving for years to apply in their daily lives the directive they had received in the heightened *Yehidut* situation.

A further level of communication between the *Zaddik* and his followers was the direct teaching of Hasidic ideas. Like the *Yehidut*, this process also has an esoteric or spiritually heightened aspect. In the early years of R. Shneur Zalman's leadership this mode of communication took the form of brief, luminous statements. After 1800 they became longer, more discursive, and consequently more accessible to rational thought. This stylistic change will be evaluated in the next chapter.

Chronologically earlier, however, was the publication of R. Shneur Zalman's controversial Hasidic tract, the *Likutei Amarim* (*Selected Teachings*), also known as the *Tanya*. This event was an important watershed in the process of self-definition in the Habad school.

The Publication of *Tanya*

The *Tanya* was not printed in a vacuum. The last two decades of the eighteenth century were a period of intensive activity in the spread of the Hasidic movement and the promulgation of its ethos. An important aspect of this was the publishing of books. However, the approaches these manifest to the question of the communication of Hasidic thought vary considerably.

R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye's *Toledot Yakov Yosef* (Koretz, 1780) has already been discussed in chapter 1. Its effect was to transmit undiluted the luminous inner-circle teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, and also to translate them into a clear social directive. By contrast, the recension of teachings by the Maggid—*Maggid Devarav le-Yakov*—published in 1784 did not include any attempt to make them ethically meaningful to the ordinary members of the fraternity.⁵⁴ Nor did *Keter Shem Tov*, first published the same year, a work anthologizing R. Yakov Yosef's brief quotations of his teacher.

No'am Elimelekh, published in 1788, is a posthumous collection of the teachings of R. Elimelekh of Lizhensk. It includes a list of *hanhagot* which was important in the transmission of the ethical intensity of Hasidism. This book is clearly addressed to the *hasid*: it explains the spiritual link between *hasid* and *Zaddik*, and its clear directive is to have faith in the power of the *Zaddik* and to strive to strengthen one's connection with him. The validity of the spiritual structure described was accepted throughout the Hasidic movement. It is striking that while the *Tanya* refers to this system, it does not elaborate on it at all.⁵⁵ The aim of *Tanya* was to demand spiritual effort from each individual, rather than allow him the luxury of simple faith. Because of this very demand the *Tanya* was criticized, for it led the person along a path which—it was feared by the book's detractors—might well prove to be steep and narrow, or even impassable.

In 1793 *Zava'at ha-Rivash*, the "will of the Baal Shem," was printed.⁵⁶ Not a will at all, but a collection of sayings—mostly found in the known teachings of the Maggid—this comprises a series of directives addressed to the man of spiritual stature. The late eighteenth century was a time of great interest in kabbalistic thought. R. Haim Vital's *Tree of Life* had been printed for the first time in 1784, in Koretz, and the kabbalistic manual *Gates of Holiness*—which includes directions on how to make a spiritual ascent—was printed six times in Eastern Europe between 1767 and 1801. *Zava'at ha-Rivash* was addressed to the readers of those works and mani-

fested an invitation to enter the world of Hasidism at a superior echelon. For the more normative talmudic scholar, however, the work was inadequate as a guide, for it demands a certain pneumatic sensibility. On the contrary, some of its statements, taken baldly, provoked fundamental questions which we see R. Shneur Zalman striving to answer in a long letter to the members of one of the communities in Bello-Russia.⁵⁷

By contrast, in 1794 R. Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, a major figure among the disciples of the Maggid and a close friend of R. Shneur Zalman, published his *Sefer ha-Zekhirot*.⁵⁸ This comprises a different approach to the question of communication of the Hasidic ethos.

Lurianic teachings, quoted in the normative halakhic guide compiled by R. Abraham Gombiner (1635–1685), declare it mandatory to remember daily certain concepts—such as the Sabbath and the Giving of the Torah.⁵⁹ R. Levi Yitzhak's book comprised the brief scriptural passages which express these concepts together with his commentary. This is of an ethical nature, replete with talmudic sayings and stories, but also pervaded with the warm Hasidic outlook we associate with R. Levi Yitzhak—in particular, his praise of the Jewish people. A few years later, in 1798, the first version of his *Kedushat Levi* was published in Slavuta, joining the brief list of early Hasidic works printed in their authors' lifetime. This slim volume comprises aggadic discussions similar to those of the *Sefer ha-Zekhirot*, focussing on the festivals of Purim and Hanukah.

The aim here is clearly to provide a body of study material by means of which the subtleties of the Hasidic world view could be introduced into the life of the community. The study of the *aggadah*, the narratives and interpretations of verses in the Talmud, as collected in the sixteenth-century anthology *Ein Yakov*, was very widespread. This medium was well suited to the communication of the Hasidic ethos, since it enabled the esoteric content to be disguised in the general atmosphere of mystery and infinite possibility which anyway pervades the *aggadot*.⁶⁰

In 1796, the year of publication of the *Tanya*, *Paths of Righteousness* was printed. This brief work by R. Zekhariah Mendel of Yaroslav, a disciple of R. Elimelekh of Lizhensk, also makes the attempt to communicate the Hasidic ethos in a manner accessible to society. In a masterly way the author extracted from the teachings both of the Maggid and of R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye a series of directives which could be directly applied in the life of the man who made no claim to pneumatic vision nor to exceptional powers of leadership and authority.⁶¹

While a number of these works can be seen as providing a clear path for

the would-be *hasid*, there remained much room for confusion. There was little clear indication which teachings were addressed to the men of stature—who in the eyes of their contemporaries had gained ethical self-mastery and access to pneumatic power—and which were directed at the scholars who made no claim to any suprarational attainment, only to the attempt to live up to the ascetic-ethical norms of their time. There was a risk of vulgarization of the subtle ideas at the heart of Hasidism, a risk of self-deception leading, some might fear, to folly.⁶²

It was in this atmosphere that R. Shneur Zalman's *Tanya* was written and printed. Called by Dubnow "the 'Guide to the Perplexed' of Hasidism," the *Tanya* acts both as a body of teaching for intellectual study and also as a manual of guidance for spiritual striving. It might well be considered as having a function parallel to that of the Lurianic text *Gates of Holiness*, a work which it quotes and with which it shares certain features. *Gates of Holiness*, however, is a deeply esoteric text aimed solely at the kabbalist elite. The *Tanya*, by contrast, seeks to map out a variety of paths, some suitable for the man of stature with pneumatic power, others for the rational scholar.

A Spiritual Manual

The writing and subsequent publication of *Tanya* clearly manifested the endeavor of R. Shneur Zalman to communicate esoteric Hasidic teachings to the broad ranks of the Hasidic fraternity. Comprising two parts, the *Book of the Intermediate Man* and the *Gate of Unity and Faith*, the book was first printed in 1796.⁶³ Prior to this it had been circulated in manuscript form for several years.⁶⁴ Both the manuscript and printed versions are prefaced by a letter from R. Shneur Zalman which makes clear that the text is intended to provide direct guidance to the reader, like a manual, and is a substitute for the *Yehidut* interviews with the author, in which he had given direct spiritual advice to his followers.

The *Liozna Regulations* indicate that, at this period, R. Shneur Zalman was forced by the increasing numbers in the fraternity greatly to restrict the times when the *hasidim* could come to Liozna and the times when they could see him in *Yehidut*.⁶⁵ The *Tanya* is intended to provide the advice its author would have given face to face in the heightened atmosphere of the *Yehidut* situation.

All of [the teachings in the book] are answers to the many questions which the members of our fraternity in this region ask continually, each one on his own level, seeking advice in Divine

service. For there is no longer enough time to answer each person's question individually; also, forgetfulness is common. Therefore I have written down all the answers to all the questions, so that each person should have a permanent record and will no longer have to strive to speak to me in *Yehidut*.⁶⁶

The compilation of a work in which the claim is made that the personal guidance of the *Yehidut* situation is being openly transmitted to the reader is a striking phenomenon. An intensely intimate level in the relationship of *hasid* and *Zaddik* is being made accessible to all. For R. Shneur Zalman, as for his contemporaries, the publication of *Tanya* was seen as a daring action, the broad opening of a hitherto closely guarded gate. In order to make the teachings of *Tanya* yet more accessible its author instructs his major followers in each city freely to give advice to those who find the written counsel difficult to understand. He asks these major followers not to display false modesty. One perceives here the attempt to break down the barrier round the inner circle. Instead, each member of the fraternity should have access to the detailed guidance at the core of Hasidic thought.

R. Shneur Zalman indicates that his teachings derive partly from the ideas and letters of R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk, as well as from those of the Maggid.⁶⁷ One can sense the evolution of R. Shneur Zalman's role, from scholar-guide explaining the Hasidic path in the lifetime of R. Menahem Mendel to *Zaddik* in his own right, yet still employing an approach of explication and elucidation rather than simply withdrawing into the exalted heights of theurgic power.

Who were the early readers of *Tanya*? They were, it might be presumed, scholarly individuals of considerable spiritual stature. Most of them did not, however, claim to be members of a pneumatic elite. R. Shneur Zalman's letters to his followers show them to have included men engaged in commerce, others who were teachers, and others who were supported by their parents while they devoted themselves to prayer and study.⁶⁸ Almost all, however, were Hasidic followers, not would-be Hasidic leaders: *hasidim* rather than *Zaddikim*. For these people, *Tanya* was a manual, a work of direct spiritual guidance.

Its organized structure set it apart from the other contemporary Hasidic collections of ethical and practical injunctions, luminous aphorisms, and homiletical discourses. The first section, entitled *Book of the Intermediate Man*, commences with an analysis of the spiritual life of the individual, based on concepts found in the writings of R. Haim Vital.⁶⁹ Through this

the author delineates the inner transformation which takes place within the *Zaddik*—a topic relating closely to the esoteric Hasidic teachings on self-abnegation, and which will be explored below. More within the purview of the intended readership, R. Shneur Zalman gives advice and guidance in spiritual service to the man who is not a *Zaddik* yet might, nonetheless, have attained an exalted level of spiritual attainment. This is the *Benomi*, or "Intermediate Man," who is in perfect control of his thoughts, speech, and actions and is the real subject of *Tanya*. Guidance is also given to one who is far from having reached this degree of self-mastery. The topics discussed in the first section of *Tanya* include the theme of personal spiritual progress, joy in the face of physical suffering or the sense of one's own religious inadequacy, and various levels of love of the Divine to be attained through a Maimonidean style of contemplation.

The chief subject matter of such contemplation, namely the unity of the world with its infinite source in the Divine, is elaborated in the second section of the book. At the same time, especially in the first section, stress is laid on the importance of Torah study and the fulfilment of the practical Commandments. In contrast to the simple imperatives found in the *hanhagot* literature, however, the *Tanya* employs Lurianic vocabulary and explains the Lurianic world view, which gives the background to these values and makes them meaningful to the reader.

Despite its kabbalistic content the *Tanya* thus has, at least in part, an ethical aim, fulfilling the function of the *hanhagot* literature and the ethical letters of R. Menahem Mendel: a work for the Hasidic followers, rather than for incipient *Zaddik* leaders. The ethical and practical aspects of the book received even more emphasis when the manuscript version was printed, in 1796. The author interpolated a chapter in which the scholarly Hasidic follower is directed to feel humble in relation to the ignorant masses.⁷⁰ Another chapter specially added glorifies love for one's fellow, quoting Hillel's famous statement that this is "the entire Torah, and the rest is commentary."⁷¹ All but one of the manuscript versions known end with the conclusion of the analysis of the different varieties of emotion to be awoken through contemplative prayer; the printed text continues with an extra three chapters which provide further explanation of the significance of the practical commandments, and it is on this note that the printed *Book of the Intermediate Man* ends.⁷²

These changes, and the very publication of this work, indicate that R. Shneur Zalman was becoming increasingly concerned with providing or-

ganized teachings for the ordinary members of the Hasidic following for whom, as R. Avraham points out, the basic ethical directive has a paramount position. A further indication of this direction of development is the addition of a third section, a text on the significance of Repentance, to the second edition of *Tanya* (Zolkiev, 1798).⁷³ At the same time, however, the kabbalistic world view is always an aspect of the ideas being presented. Indeed, the second section, entitled *Gate of Unity and Faith*, is a tract on contemplation, reaching step by step towards virtual acosmism and then returning to the world. This section too was changed for the printed version. In the earlier manuscript form, the acosmistic aspect was more pronounced; the single focus of the work was on the idea that the world is subsumed in the Divine. By contrast the printed version introduces the concepts of the "Higher Unity" and "Lower Unity."⁷⁴ The former is the acosmistic reaching beyond existence; the latter is the return to the world and the discovery that the Divine is there too. The addition in the printed version of this second step back to humanity is probably due to the fact that the work was now to be made available to a wider audience, and its author did not want its message to be misunderstood. Nonetheless, the tract presents a profoundly esoteric world view. R. Shneur Zalman's goal was to impart this to his readers, so that their concern to achieve fulfillment in terms of that spiritual perspective would enable them to transcend all other, limited desires. The goal was ethical behavior, very much as conceived by R. Shneur Zalman's older colleagues and teachers; but the means was the acquisition of a spiritual perspective on life, as defined by the Lurianic kabbalah and the esoteric inner core of Hasidic thought.

This comparatively mild attempt to impart esoteric teachings to the broad ranks of literate society excited harsh criticism against R. Shneur Zalman from other major leaders of the Hasidic movement. The significance of this controversy was, for a long time, masked by the more obvious struggle with the *mitnagdim*, the opponents of Hasidism, which was taking place simultaneously. In fact, however, the inner conflict which was taking place within the movement was of crucial significance for its later development. R. Shneur Zalman was moving along a path which ultimately sought to blend the scholarly, esoteric teachings of the inner circle of Hasidism with the ethical and practical directives of the wider fraternity. While there would always remain different levels of spiritual attainment, this direction of development implied a demand on every member of the fraternity to respond to the esoteric level of communication which was

being transmitted. There was a double imperative, one could say: that everyone be a scholar, and that the esoteric teachings be accessible to all.

R. Avraham's Criticism

The publication of *Tanya* expresses clearly this direction of development. But there were those among R. Shneur Zalman's contemporaries for whom this publication provoked alarm, a fear that the exalted power of the inner teachings of Hasidism would be dissipated by being made too freely available to the crowd.

True, compared to R. Shneur Zalman's discourses or the recensions of the teachings of the Maggid, *Tanya* seems to us an exoteric work, and it has even been altogether misinterpreted for this reason.⁷⁵ In the eyes of R. Shneur Zalman's contemporaries, however, this was not the case. They were sensitive to R. Shneur Zalman's aim to communicate a system based on esoteric sources which, step by step, would be meaningful and relevant to the reader, rather than radiate flashes of luminous inspiration. R. Shneur Zalman's action in publishing the *Tanya* was strongly attacked by R. Avraham of Kalisk, writing in 1797 from the land of Israel. The explicit reason he gives for his disapproval is R. Shneur Zalman's attempt to explain the teachings of the Maggid and the Baal Shem Tov by the employment of Lurianic concepts. This, claimed R. Avraham, was not the method of the previous leaders of Hasidism who—as we have observed—were careful to teach the majority of the Hasidic followers "only the path of ethics . . . and faith in the Sages."⁷⁶

R. Avraham's concern is over the very clarity and explicit nature of R. Shneur Zalman's book. He writes:

I have seen the *Book of the Intermediate Man* which you have had printed. I do not consider it very useful for helping people. . . . For this kind of person, it is sufficient to have one spark which will have many meanings for him—this is the path of Torah. Too much oil in the lamp could, heaven forbid, cause the flame to be extinguished.⁷⁷

The "one spark" is the kind of luminous radiance contained in a passage of the teachings of the Maggid, or a saying of the Baal Shem Tov, especially when this is translated into ethical terms as R. Avraham was able to do. To treat the Hasidic teachings as ideas in their own right, part of a broad world view, is the overabundance of oil which, R. Avraham feared, would

lead to a fascination with the esoteric which would result in inconsistency and imbalance. The attempt to communicate Hasidic teachings to the wider fraternity is doomed to failure.

I will not hide from my dear brother what is in my heart. I am afraid that because of the great number of *hasidim* perhaps it is the counsel of the force of Evil to lose the wheat among the chaff. . . . For exceptional people are few . . . especially in these times, for falsehood is very strong. They make themselves out to be greater than they are, with great and wondrous words of deep secrets, while they are sunk in all manner of desires and bad attributes. . . . Regarding the generality of the *hasidim*, it is enough for them to have faith in the Sages and that they should know their own deficiencies.⁷⁸

R. Avraham was also scathing about R. Shneur Zalman's idea that local guides, the leading members of the fraternity in each community, would be able to help others understand the meaning of *Tanya*.⁷⁹ For R. Avraham, the exposition of Hasidic teaching of an esoteric nature required pneumatic charisma. To attempt to make it the property of the rational scholar who could master the orderly system expressed in *Tanya* was a dangerous squandering of spiritual power.

In the light of this criticism we are able to understand more clearly the aim of R. Shneur Zalman. He employed Lurianic concepts in order to make the teachings of the Maggid and the Baal Shem Tov rationally meaningful to a Hasidic following which was composed of scholarly men who, in the main, made no claim to pneumatic attainment. The Lurianic teachings present a vast, transcosmic structure and constant dynamic in which all the detailed aspects of practical and religious life have significance. In terms of this structure—especially as systematized by R. Shneur Zalman—the teachings of esoteric Hasidism, and indeed, of normative Judaism, become rationally meaningful. R. Shneur Zalman states this explicitly in a letter discussing a statement from *Zava'at ha-Rivash*: "It is impossible to explain these ideas rationally except by employment of introductory teachings taken from the Lurianic writings."⁸⁰

Through selective employment of the Lurianic teachings and the kabbalistic world view R. Shneur Zalman had devised a means, a language, for the rational communication of the basic concepts of Hasidism to the Hasidic followers. In fact, in the first three sections of *Tanya* printed in R. Shneur Zalman's lifetime he was relatively sparing in his use of Lurianic terminology.

He was also careful to ensure that this terminology should not be taken too literally. He therefore explains that the frequently employed terms "upper" and "lower," and similarly the phrase "surrounding radiance"—concepts inherent in the Lurianic mystical cosmology—are not spatial, but refer to degrees of revelation of the Divine radiance.⁸¹ Another important step in the direction of communication on a wider level is the fact that in this printed work R. Shneur Zalman almost entirely avoids any of the sexual imagery of the kabbalistic sources. Thus neutral terms "transcendent (lit. "surrounding") radiance" and "indwelling radiance" are used to express various aspects of the sefirotic system, including "The Holy One" and the "*Shekhina*," the masculine and feminine aspects of the Divine as described in traditional kabbalistic works.⁸²

Use of "subdued" kabbalistic imagery and reference to Lurianic cosmology are among the ways in which R. Shneur Zalman sought to communicate the ideas in *Tanya*. He also employed the technique of considering the microcosm of the individual, which is parallel to the macrocosm of the Divine. Through contemplating and coming to some understanding of the relationships between the different faculties within the individual, one is able to grasp something of the way those relationships apply on an infinitely higher plane, that of the Divine.⁸³ This technique is not new. It is found both in the Lurianic writings and in the teachings of the Great Maggid.⁸⁴ There is an important distinction, however. In the teachings of the Maggid the emphasis of this parallelism is on the "Divine" aspect within the person, a simple congruence which was accepted by the pneumatic circle of his hearers. By contrast, R. Shneur Zalman, in his argument from microcosm to macrocosm, speaks not of the ineffable Divine but of the structure of will, intellect, emotion, thought, and action which characterizes the individual as a human being. From this everyday and rationally accessible structure, taught R. Shneur Zalman, one can infer the nature of the infinite Divine. The ancient theme of the relationships of microcosm and macrocosm thus became, in *Tanya*, a means to communicate abstract, esoteric ideas in a way which was meaningful to the Hasidic follower.

The distinction between the approaches of R. Shneur Zalman and the Maggid on this question underlines the importance of a basic theme in the first section of *Tanya*: the difference between the Intermediate Man—one who is in total control of his life and never sins, even for an instant—and the *Zaddik*. The latter, the focus of the teachings of the Maggid, is the one who achieves total self-abnegation to the extent that, as we saw above, "the person himself is not speaking"; rather the Divine presence speaks through

him. To elucidate this distinction in a rationally meaningful way and to show the varieties of self-abnegation which do pertain to the non-*Zaddik* is the task which R. Shneur Zalman set out to achieve in the pages of the *Book of the Intermediate Man*.

Communicating the Abnegation of the *Zaddik*

The central feature in the system propounded in the first section of *Tanya* is the concept of the two souls within the individual. This idea is found in the kabbalistic writings of R. Haim Vital—both in his *Tree of Life* and in *Gates of Holiness*.⁸⁵

In R. Shneur Zalman's system, as expressed in *Tanya*, the teaching of the two souls is the basis for the rational analysis of spiritual life. One soul, the Animal Soul, is derived from the nonholy realm. This "clothes itself in the blood of the person to give life to the body . . . and from it come all bad attributes. . . . Also the natural good attributes . . . such as mercy and doing kind acts, come from it."⁸⁶

The second soul, termed the Divine Soul, is said to be unique to the Jew—a concept found in the writings of Judah Halevi and R. Judah Loeb of Prague.⁸⁷ As defined in *Tanya* it is "a true portion of G-d from on high."⁸⁸ This portion of the Divine is "clothed within" the Animal Soul; in another passage, the Animal Soul is described as dwelling in the "left chamber" of the heart, while the Divine Soul dwells in the brain and the "right chamber" of the heart, from which it can influence the activities of the body.⁸⁹ These two souls are at war, each trying to dominate the thought, speech, and action of the person. The aim of the Divine Soul is to make the person cleave to Torah, and thus to the Divine, through each of these aspects: his thought and speech cleaving to Torah study and cogitation, and his actions totally devoted to the Commandments.⁹⁰ The Divine Soul is able not only to restrain the Animal Soul, but also to affect it in such a way that it too becomes a force purely for good. In the *Benoni* (Intermediate Man) total restraint is achieved, while actual transformation of the Animal Soul into a force for good is the characteristic of the *Zaddik*.⁹¹

The Divine Soul is composed of several different spiritual aspects, and since it derives from the Ten *Sefirot* it too has ten corresponding attributes.⁹² Within the highest attribute, *Hokhmah* (Wisdom), of the Divine Soul there is clothed *Hokhmah* of *Azilut*, the highest of the four realms described by the kabbalah. In this supernal level of *Hokhmah* there "shines the radiance of the *Ein Sof*."⁹³ *Hokhmah* is the essential aspect of the Divine

Soul. It is this attribute which gives life to the other attributes of the Divine Soul; and through this attribute the *Ein Sof* dwells within every individual.

We can see that this key concept of *Hokhmah* relates to that described by the Maggid as the point of mystical self-nullification of all.⁹⁴ R. Shneur Zalman, however, does not elaborate on the nature of *Hokhmah* in esoteric terms, but simply stresses that it is utterly beyond intellect and because of that is a channel for the radiance of the Infinite "whom thought cannot grasp at all."⁹⁵ Instead of expounding the prophetic and supernatural aspects of *Hokhmah*, as does the Maggid, R. Shneur Zalman rather speaks of its relationship to other more familiar aspects of the individual. Further, in order to make this esoteric concept accessible R. Shneur Zalman speaks in terms of a theme which was dear to the heart of his contemporaries and which also occupies an important place in Lurianic thought. This is the ancient Jewish Martyrology, self-sacrifice for the sanctification of the Divine Name. Since the Maccabees this had great significance in the life of the Jewish people. Specific famous examples, such as the self-sacrifice of entire communities in the cities of the Rhineland during the People's Crusade of 1096, had inspired the Jewish imagination for centuries. For the member of the Habad fraternity the martyrology of the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648–49 and many more recent instances in Eastern Europe loomed very large in his consciousness.⁹⁶ Indeed, the famous letter of the Baal Shem Tov which speaks of the communication of the esoteric (discussed in the previous chapter) also describes a vision of contemporary instances of martyrdom.⁹⁷ For the reader of *Tanya* the concept of self-sacrifice was replete with direct and concrete meaning for every individual, if only in the form of glorious yet immediate legend.

R. Shneur Zalman employs the historic theme of self-sacrifice in order to make the elusive concept of the aspect *Hokhmah* of the Divine Soul meaningful to his readers. The fact that even sinners have this Divine Soul within them, states R. Shneur Zalman, prompts each individual to the step of self-sacrifice when he is confronted with the unthinkable alternative of the denial of G-d.

Even the lowest of the low and sinners of Israel give up their lives for the Sanctification of the Divine Name, generally, and suffer severe torture, rather than deny the One G-d, even if they are coarse and ignorant, without knowledge of the greatness of the Divine. And even that little they do know they do not think about at all; for they do not give up their lives because of

knowledge and contemplation of the Divine at all. But without any knowledge, nor contemplation, just as if it were absolutely impossible to deny the One G-d, without any reason or complaint or explanation at all. This is because the One G-d illuminates and animates the whole soul through its being en clothed in the aspect *Hokhmah*.⁹⁸

This passage is the key to the method of communication employed in the first section of *Tanya*. Using the concept of self-sacrifice R. Shneur Zalman is defining something elusive and abstract in terms that have real meaning for his listeners. The theme of Sanctification of the Name becomes a bridge between the esoteric and the exoteric, the pneumatic and the normal individual; ultimately it is a bridge between the rarified glimpses of the Divine which are communicated by the teachings of the Great Maggid, and the pragmatic teachings of *Tanya*, a work designed to be a practical manual for spiritual life.

Having defined the Divine Soul in terms of the historical propensity of the Jew to die for Sanctification of the Name, R. Shneur Zalman elaborates further, employing the image of a candle flame, which, according to medieval physics, seeks constantly to join its source in the elemental fire which is beneath the Lunar Sphere, and therefore always strains upwards. If the flame did actually merge with its source, it would be extinguished. Nonetheless, this is its striving.⁹⁹

In the same way, states R. Shneur Zalman, the Divine Soul seeks self-annihilation in the Divine. This is beyond reason, and derives simply from the aspect *Hokhmah* in which is en clothed the light of the *Ein Sof*.

Thus the soul . . . seeks and yearns by its nature to separate from and leave the body, and to cleave to its source . . . in the Divine. . . . Even though it will be null and void, and will be utterly annihilated, and there will be nothing left of its original quality and essence; nonetheless that is its will and desire by its nature. . . . This will and desire of the soul is . . . beyond reason, and is of the aspect *Hokhmah* of the soul in which is the light of the *Ein Sof*.¹⁰⁰

This means that not only is the fact that “even the lowest of the low and sinners . . . give up their lives for Sanctification of the Divine Name” a “proof” of the presence of the Divine spark of *Hokhmah* within every individual; but self-annihilation, of which self-sacrifice is the prime example, is the natural tendency and yearning of the Divine soul. Martyrological self-sacrifice is thus not merely a remote possibility which indicates the

ultimate connection of the individual with the Divine; it is a final expression in the material world of a force which is constantly present within each person. The manifestation of this force as a constant power active in the daily life of the individual is the step which transforms the Intermediate Man into the *Zaddik*. For while the former achieves perfect control—a control to which the lesser reader of *Tanya* aspires, but perhaps never reaches—the *Zaddik* achieves an inner metamorphosis: his Animal Soul is transformed into a source of Divine energy. This Animal Soul, as taught by R. Shneur Zalman, is not an external force—like the Evil Desire of talmudic and midrashic literature—which comes to tempt the individual with illicit passions. Rather it is his own *self*, and the step of the *Zaddik* is the dissolution of this self and its transformation into a pure vehicle for the higher force within him, the Divine Soul.¹⁰¹

R. Shneur Zalman’s definition of the *Zaddik* is, therefore, an explanation of the process of self-nullification whereby one’s life becomes a pneumatic expression of the Divine. It is an elaboration of the Maggidic theme of pneumatic self-abnegation in terms which a scholar with no personal aspirations to prophetic power is able to understand. In order to communicate this esoteric idea R. Shneur Zalman has translated its essential element into a form which, while faithful to its source, is also meaningful to the reader: the theme of self-sacrifice. Identifying the Maggidic concept of *Hokhmah* as the force which expresses itself in this total—yet also potentially accessible—annihilation of self, the step of martyrdom, R. Shneur Zalman then employs predominantly Lurianic ideas, organized into a clear structure, in order to explain the less tangible expression of the same force which is manifested in the person of the *Zaddik*.

The demand on the *hasid* exerted by R. Shneur Zalman through these passages in *Tanya* is, on the one hand, identical to that claimed by R. Avraham to be a paramount need for the wider following: belief in the *Zaddik* and in the greatness of his pneumatic attainment. At the same time, through the delineation of the spiritual structure within each individual, R. Shneur Zalman is able to show how lesser varieties of self-abnegation pertain to the *Benoni* (who, while not a *Zaddik*, is nonetheless a figure of exceptional stature) and also to the man who has not attained that stature but—according to *Tanya*—should be striving to do so.

The Benoni

A major focus of attention in the *Book of the Intermediate Man* is the question to what extent a member of the intellectual class with genuine pneu-

matic leanings can consider himself a *Zaddik*. This question was also considered by contemporaries of R. Shneur Zalman. Thus R. Meshulam Faivush of Zbaraz was concerned to point out that people were deceiving themselves concerning their level of spiritual attainment. It has been suggested that R. Meshulam Faivush relegated the whole of his generation to a lower level; for him the concept of *devekut* (as well as the Lurianic *kavvanot*) was relevant only to the giants of the past.¹⁰² By contrast, for R. Shneur Zalman the true *Zaddik* was very much a living, if by his nature rare, phenomenon. However, it is of great importance in R. Shneur Zalman's system for the one who is not a *Zaddik* not to deceive himself and think that he is one. R. Shneur Zalman therefore focusses attention on the *Benoni*, a man who has achieved perfect control of his self, in that he allows only the Divine Soul to be expressed through his thought, speech, and action; because of this he never transgresses, not even for a moment.¹⁰³ This self-control is quite different from the inner transformation of the will which takes place in the *Zaddik*. Nonetheless, the *Benoni* does have a pneumatic aspect, and exploration of this is one of the main themes in the *Book of the Intermediate Man*. Thus during ecstatic prayer the *Benoni* too experiences abnegation of the animal self and is swept away in a flow of Divine love.

But the essence of the Divine Soul . . . does not have sole rule in the [life of the *Benoni*] except at certain times, such as the time of saying the *Shema* and prayer . . . which is a propitious time for every person. Then he joins his Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge to G-d, to think deeply of the greatness of the blessed *Ein Sof*, and to awaken "love like coals of fire" in the right-hand chamber of his heart . . . and then the evil in the left-hand chamber submits and is abnegated to the good.¹⁰⁴

The difference between the *Zaddik* and the *Benoni* in this ecstasy is that for the latter this state is not permanent; the "evil" (i.e., the ordinary animal self of the non-*Zaddik*) reawakens once he leaves the heightened atmosphere of ecstatic prayer. "After the prayer, however, when the awareness of the greatness of the *Ein Sof* leaves him, then the evil again awakens in the left-hand chamber [of the heart] and he begins to feel a desire for the pleasures of this world and its delights."¹⁰⁵

The "evil" mentioned does not mean a demonic force in the heart of the pious *Benoni*, but rather the reawakening of the will of the individual in its normal form: wanting to eat, for example.¹⁰⁶ The *Benoni* undergoes the

experience of abnegation during prayer. Afterwards his "normal" self returns, manifested by the activity of his normal will. He is not a *Zaddik*, for a *Zaddik* reaches a permanent abnegation with its own struggle, which will be discussed in chapter 4—whether to surrender himself to absorption in the Divine or be active in the world around him. R. Shneur Zalman does indicate that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between the ecstatic *Benoni* and the true *Zaddik*. He states that the Talmudic Sage Rabbah, who was really a *Zaddik*, considered himself a *Benoni* who prayed all day long and was therefore in a continuous state of ecstasy.¹⁰⁷ Concealed in this are the elements of a polemic with the men of stature, members of what we might call the "semipneumatic class" of society who, in the view of both R. Shneur Zalman and R. Meshulam Faivush, were falling into the trap of self-deception concerning their true spiritual level.¹⁰⁸ Once such an individual recognizes that he is a *Benoni* and not a *Zaddik*, R. Shneur Zalman warmly gives him guidance on different levels of the states of ecstatic abnegation he might experience, as we see from the analysis of different kinds of spiritual emotion and contemplative devices leading to such emotion in the pages of the *Book of the Intermediate Man*.

Self-abnegation for the Scholar

As we have seen, R. Shneur Zalman communicates the Maggidic theme of self-abnegation on two levels: on that of the *Zaddik*, and also on the lesser, "intermediate" level of the man of stature who has certain pneumatic qualities. A third level is for the man who lays no claim to these at all, but is simply a member of the intellectual class. For him the teaching of self-abnegation is translated into terms of inspired—or even, not inspired—study of Torah and observance of the commandments.

R. Shneur Zalman employs exalted and dramatic terminology to explain this to his reader, telling him that through such practical activity he becomes a "chariot" for—i.e., an embodiment of—the Divine Will. Through the fact that his actions, speech, and thought are en clothed in the commandments, prayer, and study, he attains a mystical status similar to that of the Patriarchs.

The limbs of the body of the person carrying out the Commandment . . . become a real embodiment of the Divine Will, such as the hand giving out charity to the poor or carrying out another Commandment; and the feet walking to something relating to a Commandment and similarly the mouth and the tongue speaking words of Torah and the brain thinking words

of Torah and fear of heaven and the greatness of G-d. . . . Thus the Sages said "the Patriarchs are the Chariot," for all their limbs were sacred and separated from the affairs of this world, and they were a "Chariot" [embodiment] only of the Divine Will all their lives.¹⁰⁹

This passage continues by emphasizing the even higher effect of Torah study in achieving unity with the Divine, a unity which is described as greater than that of the radiance of the *Ein Sof* with the upper worlds. This is because the Torah is itself the undisguised Will of G-d, higher than all the worlds and giving life to them. This transcendent aspect of the Divine "clothes itself" in the soul and being of the person studying Torah. Although he is not consciously aware of this, "his *mazal* [star] perceives it."¹¹⁰ At the same time, the fact that he does not perceive it enables him to bear this mystical union. The upper spiritual worlds, R. Shneur Zalman implies, are "aware" and therefore are not able to experience such an intense union, for it would lead to their dissolution.¹¹¹

Through contemplating the above idea, states R. Shneur Zalman, a person can "draw on himself great awe" when studying Torah. However, he makes clear that the union with the transcendent aspect of the Divine takes place through the straightforward intellectual activity of Torah study, without any pneumatic qualities being necessary in order to achieve it.¹¹²

This expression of the esoteric significance of the Torah study of the ordinary Jew was to be emphasized a decade later in R. Shneur Zalman's discourses. We then find the declaration that the paradigm of self-abnegation as found in Maggidic sources, the idea that "the *Shekhinah* speaks from one's throat,"¹¹³ is the attainment of every Jew studying the works of the sages: "This power was given to the Jews, that the halakhah uttered by their mouths should be the actual Divine word which was told to Moses at Sinai."¹¹⁴

Another aspect of this theme is not only the emphasis on the unconscious theurgic power of every Jew, but also the general stress of the significance of normative Judaism—Torah study and the observance of the Commandments. R. Shneur Zalman states that even a *Zaddik* can achieve true abnegation only through observance of the Commandments: for while he may have transcended the Animal Soul, or self, there remains the dialectic of his Divine self which also has to be transcended. However intense his love and fear of the Divine, he remains a separate entity until he throws himself into the observance of the Commandments, in which "there is no concealment of the countenance at all."¹¹⁵ For the Hasidic

follower, this emphasis means that the *Zaddik* takes on the guise not only of theurgic master, but also of personal example in the pietistic attempt to live a life dedicated to normative Jewish values. In the pages of *Tanya*, these values are presented as the path leading to realization of the goal of self-abnegation in daily life.

A further step in the communication of this goal is made by employment of the theme of self-sacrifice. We saw above that R. Shneur Zalman cites the phenomenon of Jewish martyrology in order to translate the esoteric Maggidic concept of *Hokhmah* into terms accessible to the rational mind. In his attempt to describe normative Judaism as an expression of the ideal of esoteric self-abnegation, R. Shneur Zalman again focusses on that theme in order to find a bridge between the ethereal and the tangible. Through this conceptual device a link is established between the daily life of the scholarly community and the upper reaches of esoteric Hasidic thought.

The spiritualized ideal of Sanctification of the Divine Name had long been employed as a contemplative means to intensify religious devotion. R. Joel Sirkes (1561–1640) wrote that when reciting the *Shema* prayer one should have in mind one's readiness for heroic martyrdom.¹¹⁶ This is natural enough: self-sacrifice is the ultimate physical manifestation of the dedication expressed by the prayer. Hasidism, with the ideal of esoteric self-abnegation at its core, employed the theme of self-sacrifice as a translation of that remote ideal into an ethically meaningful form. This step is not confined to Habad. Thus the *hanhagot* of R. Elimelekh of Lizhensk (d. 1786) demand that the *hasid* focus his mind on the theme of martyrdom during his prayer and all his involvement with the practical world.¹¹⁷ This awareness of a readiness or even yearning for self-sacrifice thereby fulfilled the role of *devekut*, the emotional counterpart of self-abnegation. In his *Tanya* R. Shneur Zalman went a step further in drawing together the daily life of the *hasid* and the ideal of self-abnegation in its translated, relatively accessible form of self-sacrifice. He thus declares that the daily study and observance of the Torah is itself a variety of self-sacrifice, for such activity manifests a beyond-worldly dedication to the Divine, like the act of surrender of one's soul through death or martyrdom. According to this equation self-sacrifice, the ultimate concretization of the mystical step of self-nullification, imparts its aura to normative Jewish behavior. For the scholarly *hasid* contemplative awareness of this equation implies access to a powerful font of spirituality: yet the equation is expressed in terms which are fully within the reach of the rational mind. Through this process R.

Shneur Zalman sought to achieve his aim of translating the esoteric ideals inherited from the Maggid into terms accessible to his followers. In the following passage the martyrological Hebrew term *mesirat nefesh* is employed with its literal meaning of surrender of the soul, both in death and in religious service:

Occupation with Torah, Commandments, and prayer also have the quality of real *mesirat nefesh*, as when the soul leaves the body at the end of seventy years. For it then does not consider the needs of the body, but its thought is united with and en-clothed in the letters of Torah and prayer, which are the words and thought of G-d, achieving utter unity. . . . This is why they arranged at the beginning of the Morning Prayers . . . "My G-d, the soul [which You gave me is pure, You created it] and You breathed it [into me] and You will in the future take it from me, etc." This means, since You breathed it into me and You are going to take it from me, therefore *from now I surrender it and return it to You* to unify it in Your Unity, as it is written "to You G-d, I lift up my soul."¹¹⁸ And this is through joining my thought to Your thought and my speech to Your speech. . . . And with this preparation of surrender of his soul to G-d he should begin the Morning Prayers.¹¹⁹

The normative life of the Jewish scholar, spent in prayer and Torah study, is thus presented as an active variety of self-sacrifice. This concept is itself, according to R. Shneur Zalman, a tangible manifestation of the force of the mysterious *Hokhmah*, the source of abnegation of the self. The height of Maggidic thought—the theme of *bitul*, self-abnegation—is thus being translated into a form conceived as relevant and immediate by the Hasidic follower. Yet the esoteric, other-worldly kernel is preserved.

Through these techniques—whether through ordered intellectual contemplation of a Maimonidean style, or through the immediate emotional appeal of dramatic themes—the *Tanya* was considered by its author able to fulfil its avowed aim. This was to communicate the Hasidic ethos to the society of its time, in a manner which makes that ideal—in the words of the title page of the book—"very easy to achieve."¹²⁰ That very statement expresses the relentless demand that *Tanya* was felt to be making on the life of the *hasid*, a demand backed by reference to the intensely radiant Lurianic teachings and the broad, other-worldly perspective which was implicit in the teachings of the Hasidic leadership.

The publication of *Tanya* was an important landmark in the develop-

ment of the Habad school as a distinctive group within the Hasidic movement. The next stage in this process concerns the oral Hasidic discourses. R. Shneur Zalman delivered these—complex combinations of subtle spiritual ideas, replete with kabbalistic terminology—mainly on Sabbaths and festivals. A development was taking place in the style of these teachings, which will be discussed in the next chapter. This was to be of major significance in the evolution of the attempt to impart the esoteric heart of Hasidism to the men and women in the daily world.

THE HABAD DISCOURSE

The Teaching of the *Zaddik*

A distinguishing feature of Hasidism in general is the "teaching" delivered by the Hasidic leader. This is given special emphasis in the sources emanating both from within the movement itself and also from the ranks of its detractors.¹ The reason for this attention is the implicit claim that the Hasidic Torah differed totally from the rational and scholarly discussion of the halakhist and also from the emotional and dramatic sermon of the preacher. Instead it was considered to be of revelatory power, emanating and drawn from an upper realm.

The social setting in which the Hasidic teachings were—and continue to be—delivered is well known. They are generally associated with the heightened atmosphere of special gatherings, such as the Third Meal of the Sabbath, pervaded with a numinous sense of intimacy with the *Zaddik*, intensified by the distinctive Hasidic melodies.² Due to the Sabbath laws, despite the onset of twilight the lamps would not be lit.³ The personal charisma of the *Zaddik*, the human warmth of the people crowded closely together round him, the effect of the singing, and the sense of spiritual expectancy combined to form a situation in which the Hasidic follower could think of himself as party to a fellowship in some way similar to the "sacred fellowship" depicted in the *Zohar*, in which Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai revealed secrets of Torah to the intimate circle of his disciples.⁴ This is indeed the paradigm for the Hasidic gathering, and it is in this context that the teachings of the *Zaddik* are to be viewed. Whether they expressed something new, or dwelt on an idea which had been repeated many times before, these teachings were thought of as revelatory by their hearers.

One aspect of this revelatory power concerns personal spiritual guidance. This can be perceived in the account by the colorful Solomon Maimon of his visit to R. Dov Ber of Mezeritch. Maimon states that he was told to regard the Hasidic gathering in which he was about to take part as a "special interview," despite its public nature. Prior to the discourse, each

of the guests at the table proffered a verse from Scripture—apparently whichever one that came into their heads. The ensuing teaching wove together the different verses and was understood by each participant as having direct bearing on his own particular spiritual quest.

Although they were disconnected verses taken from different parts of the Holy Scriptures they were combined with as much skill as if they had formed a single whole. What was still more extraordinary, every one of the newcomers believed that he discovered, in that part of the sermon which was founded on his verse, something that had special reference to the facts of his own spiritual life. At this we were of course greatly astonished.⁵

Direct contribution of scriptural verses in a Hasidic gathering was unusual. But the fact that the teaching of the *Zaddik* was interpreted as a startling reference to the personal situation of the hearer is to be seen as a typical characteristic. Maimon himself was cynical, but the man who considered himself a Hasidic follower sought direct and personal revelation from the *Zaddik's* words.

Another aspect of the revelatory quality of these teachings is seen in the fact that early Hasidic leaders speak of their delivery as an automatic process transcending the human will. It is the *Shekbinah*, or the mystically equivalent World of Speech, which speaks through the mouth of the *Zaddik*. He, for his part, while delivering the teaching is inert, a mere channel, in a state of utter *bitul*.⁶ Even today this characteristic seems noticeable in some Hasidic leaders during the preparation for and actual delivery of a discourse. The Lubavitcher *Rebbe* in Brooklyn, for instance, while otherwise a vigorously active leader of the Hasidic gathering, conducting the singing by movements of his head and hands, appears to become totally withdrawn from his surroundings during the special slow melody which customarily precedes the recitation of a *maamar* (discourse). The teaching itself is then delivered from a state of relative immobility, in a kind of monotone quite different from normal speech.

We thus see that implicit in Hasidic thought in the eighteenth century and even later is the idea that the formal teachings of the *Zaddik* are drawn from an upper realm. The discourse was considered as a channel of communication by means of which some aspect of a spiritual world—in effect, that of the Merkavah—could be made available to his followers.⁷ In the first two generations of Hasidism this communication was addressed primarily to a small inner circle. Turning now to the incipient Habad move-

ment, we will consider the developments in the discourses of R. Shneur Zalman which transformed them from revelatory guidance for a closely restricted group of disciples to a medium of spiritual and also practical communication with the broader reaches of contemporary Jewish society.

The Textual Evidence

Our first questions must concern the actual material. Do we have any precise knowledge about R. Shneur Zalman's oral teachings, the discourses? To what extent can they be dated? These questions are particularly pertinent when we consider the historical vagueness of most records of early Hasidic ideas. The source material comprises almost exclusively notes by disciples on teachings and sermons that they heard. In some cases the identity of the writer is not known. Reference to dates, or to any kind of temporal event, is extremely rare. As a result, there has been no attempt to date precisely the oral statements of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid.⁸ Hence the question of the internal development of their respective systems of thought has hardly been raised.⁹ Their ideas, and the methods they employed for the communication of their teaching, are taken as emerging fully fledged as a necessary concomitant to their role as Hasidic leaders.

R. Nahman of Braslav and R. Shneur Zalman, the founder of Habad, are two figures in early Hasidic history who are striking exceptions to this general trend. R. Nahman's teachings were recorded mainly by R. Nathan Sternhartz of Nemirov (1780–1845), who gave much attention to the question of when they were delivered and how this related to the unique mystical biography of R. Nahman himself.¹⁰

In R. Shneur Zalman's case there was no contemporary biographer providing the historian with a wealth of detail, but we do see an unusual degree of organization pertaining to the transcription of his teachings. This special concern may have been initiated by R. Shneur Zalman himself; it was certainly directly encouraged by him. The oral discourses were generally delivered on Sabbaths and festivals and, because of the Sabbath laws, could not be written down by their hearers until nightfall or the close of the festival. This meant that considerable skill was required to remember the teaching accurately. An additional complexity is the fact that R. Shneur Zalman would speak largely in Yiddish, but the discourses were always transcribed in Hebrew.¹¹

It is likely that a number of the Hasidic followers attempted to write transcripts of their master's teachings. R. Shneur Zalman was concerned that these transcripts should be accurate, one reason being that a careless

phrase might well become ammunition for the *mitnagdim*. He therefore instituted the system that all transcripts of his Hasidic teaching should be examined by a team of scholars presided over by R. Yehudah Leib of Yanovitch, R. Shneur Zalman's younger brother.¹²

From now on anyone visiting here [i.e., Loznya] should bring with him his transcripts of Hasidic teachings, whether recent or old. This includes even copies of transcripts written by my brother [R. Yehudah Leib]. For there are many serious copyists' errors. Each person should bind the texts, putting his name on the binding, and give them to my brother who will examine them together with other examiners from here under my brother's guidance. The texts will then be returned to their owners.¹³

As evident from this directive, R. Yehudah Leib himself wrote transcriptions of the discourses. These were highly regarded by R. Shneur Zalman and also by his grandson, R. Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek*. When the latter compiled his first anthology of his grandfather's teachings under the title *Torah Or*, he based the work on texts from the pen of R. Yehudah Leib.¹⁴ The latter's position was institutionalized by R. Shneur Zalman. Not only was he the chief examiner of transcripts written by others, he was also paid a salary for his work on his own redactions of his brother's teachings.¹⁵ Other figures close to R. Shneur Zalman who wrote transcripts of his discourses include his sons R. Dov Ber and R. Moshe, his grandson R. Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek*, and the senior *hasid* R. Pinhas Reizes of Shklov.¹⁶

Many of their transcripts and later copies of them are still extant in the Lubavitch Library in Brooklyn. A large number have been published in full. The colophons often give information as to the date, place, and other circumstances (such as a wedding) pertaining to the original delivery of the discourse. An additional fact, characteristic of Habad, is that at an early stage manuscripts of R. Shneur Zalman's teachings were collected into volumes bound by year. The earliest of these is dated 1795.¹⁷ Separate volumes from 1802 till 1810 are extant and have been published.¹⁸ The existence of this manuscript material means that many of R. Shneur Zalman's discourses can be dated quite accurately.¹⁹

The question of the fidelity of the transcripts to the actual words intoned by R. Shneur Zalman on a Sabbath afternoon is less easily resolved. R. Dov Ber is known, for example, to have interpolated explanations of his

own in some of his redactions.²⁰ Tradition records R. Shneur Zalman as having compared the work of three of his amanuenses as follows: "My brother Yehudah Leib writes as I say. My son Dov Ber writes as I mean, and my grandson Mendel writes as I say and as I mean."²¹ Given a level of uncertainty about the accuracy of these transcripts, we can nonetheless conclude that the discourses of R. Shneur Zalman are accessible to us in a relatively organized form. We know in many cases when they were said and, more or less, what was said. This enables us now to attempt to explore the question of development and evolution in the style of his teachings.

Other-Worldly Demands

The earliest discourses extant in manuscript and to which a date can be ascribed are from the autumn of 1792.²² In 1792–93 handwritten tracts of the *Tanya* began to be disseminated among the *hasidim*, and it is noteworthy that these discourses refer to the *Tanya* and are somewhat similar to it in the openness and directness of their style.²³ These early discourses are distinguished by the harsh, other-worldly demand they impose on the disciple. He is expected to strip himself of all material desires; there is repeated reference to the ideal of "breaking" one's appetites for the physical world. This directive towards kabbalistic asceticism is imparted with great force. A person should "plough" away his desires, doing the opposite of the will of the body.²⁴ This breaking of one's earthly passions is the equivalent of martyrological self-sacrifice.²⁵ Conversely, one who does not make this attempt shows "that he has no portion in the G-d of Israel."²⁶ The ascetic ideal is complemented by other themes with the hallmark of religious radicalism. Preoccupation with worldly affairs is decried in the strongest terms: it causes the *Shekhinah* to depart as when Titus pierced the curtain of the Holy of Holies with his sword, and is in some ways even worse than the idolatry of ancient times.²⁷ Equanimity is extolled: one should consider the present just as if it were before the Creation of the World.²⁸ Likewise, since all events are the direct expression of the Divine, anger against a human assailant is tantamount to denial of Divine authority.²⁹ Another recurring theme is that of one's remoteness from the Divine: one should "cast oneself down utterly, like the dust." Through this one attains union with the transcending radiance of the Infinite.³⁰

These texts, records of talks during intimate gatherings on a Sabbath or festival, represent real demands addressed by a leader to his followers. There is little doubt that their ascetic and other-worldly directives (as well as their promises of Divine radiance) were taken seriously. Consequently,

the impression we gain of R. Shneur Zalman's following c. 1793 is of a community of men of spiritual stature who felt able to respond to the intensity expressed in these brief, harshly radiant teachings.³¹ At the same time, we note that they are addressed as Hasidic followers, rather than as a circle of incipient *Zaddikim*. They are told that the fact that they have not achieved and perhaps will never achieve the self-transformation of the *Zaddik* of *Tanya* puts them in a special position with Messianic overtones. R. Shneur Zalman states that there were many *Zaddikim* during the final years of the Second Temple—but they did not prevent its destruction. The task to bring redemption therefore devolves not on them, the *Zaddikim* who have transcended their physicality, but "on us, who have bodies."³² In other words, it is the Intermediate Man of *Tanya* who is being addressed. He is a man of exceptional qualities but is not a *Zaddik*. Nonetheless, he must abandon worldliness. This is the essential prerequisite to attaining spiritual goals, and in these earliest known discourses no ground is given for the sake of those as yet unwilling to make the step of self-renunciation.

Intellectualist Contemplation

As the years go by this aspect of R. Shneur Zalman's discourses changes. By 1795, we note a softening of approach.³³ There is far more emphasis on contemplation, on the performance of the Mitzvot, and on study of the Torah. Of particular importance is the fact that while the earlier discourses seemed to offer no path to one who is not ready at once to surrender his love for things of this world, R. Shneur Zalman now provides a technique to help the individual strive in that direction. This suggests that the discourses of 1795 were being addressed to a wider circle than those of two years earlier. Thus R. Shneur Zalman states that although one is trapped in the personal "Egypt" of one's desires, by contemplating the Infinite one will achieve redemption.³⁴ This interesting idea, which is at the core of the significance of contemplative prayer in Habad, is complemented by a number of passages in discourses of this year in which material for such contemplation is provided. The new, broader path is not a demand immediately to abandon all passion but to devote oneself to intellectualist thought: about the Divine, about existence, about the Torah and the Mitzvot. According to R. Shneur Zalman, through this mental activity a change of state is achieved in the spiritual equilibrium of the individual, a change which is described as the provision of suitable "garments" for the soul, enabling it to be "absorbed in the One."

When [the soul] is naked, without garments, it cannot be absorbed in the One. For it is created, and every created thing is temporal and is very remote from the One. Hence, it needs garments, that is: thoughts of Torah and the Mitzvot. These are garments which cover the soul from head to foot. They derive from the One hence through them souls can be absorbed in the One.³⁵

This teaching, one might say, offers a ladder for the individual to climb out of his imprisonment in the world and in worldly desires and become unified with his Divine source. The ladder constitutes ideas, drawn mainly from kabbalistic and midrashic sources. The underlying belief was that these ideas in themselves bore a spiritual power which ultimately would redeem the individual from his exile in worldly passion. Perhaps not since Maimonides had such great trust been placed on the inner effect of intellectualist thought. What is new is that these ideas were considered to emanate from the mystical realm of the Merkavah experience. Without this factor they would have merely been the interesting discussion of a scholar. Instead they constituted the uplifting discourse of the *Rebbe*.

The discourses of 1795 do not espouse the intellectualist contemplative ideal as strongly as do the later discourses of R. Shneur Zalman and those of R. Dov. Ber. Nonetheless, the contrast between the discourses of 1793 and those of 1795 is striking.³⁶ One has the sense of a growing community of Hasidic followers and the determination of their leader to transmit intensely spiritual values to them. If the earlier direct other-worldly demands could not be met by all, then the "garment" of contemplative intellect had to be used, with an implicit faith in its efficacy.

This trend is continued in the discourses of the following year, 1796: a strong emphasis on contemplation, which is expected to lead to, or go hand in hand with, an abandonment of worldliness.³⁷ The mystical delight afforded by Divine service is seen as an effective competitor to the delight of the physical senses.³⁸ By urging his followers to engage in contemplation R. Shneur Zalman could well feel that he was drawing them away from earthly limitations. If the technique did not always work, this is because the person was "sunk in his physical concerns" and therefore, for that individual, the spirituality which should have been reached by contemplation was "coarsened, clogged up by the earth and mud of his own body."³⁹ R. Shneur Zalman employed striking images drawn from contemporary life to portray the problem.

Even though he deeply contemplates the greatness of the Divine, he does not really want to return to Him and to transform his temperament and his nature; because his physical needs are paramount for him. He is like a Jewish apostate clutching a crucifix in his hand. He knows it is worthless, but he holds onto it because he cannot bear the abject poverty of the Jews.⁴⁰

The counsel given in this situation is to cast oneself down "by contemplating the fact that he is totally, utterly remote from the Divine." Through this he frees himself from the weight of his own physicality, as it were, and "his soul is able to move, to fly upwards and stand before the King."⁴¹

When we compare the discourses of 1793–96 with the teachings in *Tanya*, which was at that time circulating among members of the fraternity in manuscript form, we are struck by the similarity of ideas. Almost every statement of note in one of the discourses has a parallel passage in *Tanya*.⁴² However, while *Tanya* is a broad, all-embracing manual of Divine service, the discourses served to show the necessary emphasis: what the master actually meant. In the few years under discussion this emphasis changed, not in content so much as in approach. The Hasidic follower of the 1790s knew clearly that he must abandon worldliness and live up to the kabbalistic ascetic ideal.⁴³ As the decade wore on, however, the directive focussed increasingly on the styles of contemplation which would bring this about. In this way the Habad discourses slowly developed towards their later form, in which they comprised "ready material" for the lengthy intellectualist contemplation which would ultimately impart other-worldly values to the Hasidic follower.

"Before Peterburg" and "After Peterburg"

By 1795–96, the discourses of R. Shneur Zalman were sufficiently close to their final form for R. Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek*, to consider a small number of them suitable for inclusion in his anthologies of Habad discourses, *Torah Or* and *Likkutei Torah*.⁴⁴ However, development in R. Shneur Zalman's style of discourse continued. This is readily apparent just in terms of their length: the discourses of the 1790s are far shorter than those of the first decade in the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ When we compare their content we find, in general, that the later discourses are more elaborate and contain more factual material. The earlier discourses were brief and luminous, driving home hard one or two main points. After the turn of the century, they became lengthy and subtle constructs, rather like com-

plex philosophical-kabbalistic Midrashim. This change has not gone unnoticed by subsequent Habad scholars.

R. Shalom Dovber Schneersohn (1860–1920), the leader of Lubavitch in the fifth generation of the movement, made some interesting comments about the changes in style.⁴⁶ In 1798 and again in 1800, R. Shneur Zalman was arrested and taken to St. Petersburg due to false accusations by the *mitnagdim*. On both occasions he was freed.⁴⁷ R. Shalom Dovber sees this double event, which he simply calls “Peterburg,” as a significant watershed in the development of his ancestor’s teachings. For R. Shalom Dovber the main parameter in this developmental process was that of the communication of the esoteric to the broader reaches of society, beyond the narrow confines of the kabbalistically inclined spiritual elite. He saw this as a central aim of the Habad school of Hasidism.⁴⁸

In a talk given in 1907 R. Shalom Dovber stated that before Hasidism, only those with “exalted souls” or who had “refined themselves” to perfection were able to absorb the esoteric teachings of the nature of the Divine. The aim of Hasidism was to make those teachings meaningful to “every Jew, even without an exalted soul, and who has not refined himself.”⁴⁹ This aim could best be achieved by expressing the teaching in rational intellectual terms. Rabbi Shalom Dovber believed that “Peterburg” was a major watershed in the process of expressing esoteric concepts in a rational, logical way. He described the difference between the Hasidic discourses of R. Shneur Zalman before and after “Peterburg” in the following terms:

Before “Peterburg” there was less enclothing in the intellect; it was beyond rationality. The radiance of the soul shone. . . . After “Peterburg” the radiance was enclothed in the garment of intellect. The light “thickened.”⁵⁰

In his talk he spoke of two texts by R. Shneur Zalman on the same theme. One he considered to date from before “Peterburg”; the other was from 1805. The distinction between the texts was one of rational comprehension.

The one which is before “Peterburg” not everyone can understand. For that you need a more exalted person. It states there that questions were asked and that he answered; but one still does not understand. By contrast, the text which is from after

“Peterburg” one *does* understand. Having seen that text, one can then comprehend the teaching he said before “Peterburg.” Why is this? Because it was from then on that [Habad] Hasidic teaching clothed itself in intellect.⁵¹

According to R. Shalom Dovber, the *Tanya*, although written several years before R. Shneur Zalman’s arrest, was the beginning of the rational style of expression. While this had been achieved in the form of a written tract, the oral discourses remained on a superrational plane. Only after “Peterburg” was R. Shneur Zalman able to express these too in the garment of intellectualist, rational thought.⁵²

A Habad tradition tells of R. Shneur Zalman’s feelings of uncertainty, while in prison, of the rightness of his open revelation of Hasidic teachings.⁵³ For him his release was a vindication, not only of the legality of the Hasidic movement in the eyes of the Russian government, but also—judged by a heavenly scale—of the justification of the specific Habad path of open communication of Hasidic thought. According to Haim Meir Hielman, the Habad chronicler, after R. Shneur Zalman’s release his discourses became more frequent and more attention was paid to their transcription.⁵⁴ It is likely that there was an expansion in the ranks of Habad after R. Shneur Zalman’s final vindication in 1801. This made more urgent the need to communicate in a manner accessible to those who neither began as, nor had transformed themselves into, pneumatic personalities. R. Shalom Dovber makes the striking statement that if R. Shneur Zalman’s *Tanya* had not been written in a rational way “he would have been left with a bare quorum of *hasidim*, those who had transformed their emotions.”⁵⁵

Insofar as R. Shneur Zalman wanted his oral discourses also to be studied and understood by his followers, the same logic applies to them. Transmitted in a more rational style, the Hasidic teachings could now be studied and internalized by those who had not achieved what R. Shalom Dovber called “refinement” (*hizdakhhut*), meaning the ascetic freedom of the one who is totally untrammelled by worldly desires. Dulled by worldliness, one might say, their ability directly to sense and absorb the “radiance” borne by the mystical discourse of the master was limited. Expressing the radiance in rational terms means that any member of the scholarly class could listen, study, and ponder. The implicit belief, of course, was that the translation was successful: the hidden light of the spirit would be imparted, despite the intervening cloak of intellect.

The Later Discourses of R. Shneur Zalman

As mentioned above, the discourses of each year from the autumn of 1801 till 1810 have been collected in separate volumes. This period constitutes the final stage of development of R. Shneur Zalman's oral teachings. Most later redactions and editions of his sermons are based on the product of this fruitful decade, spent in the town of Liady.⁵⁶ The style of these discourses is discursive, an amalgam of philosophic discussion and kabbalah in some ways reminiscent of the *Pardes* by R. Moshe Cordovero.

Most of the discourses are introduced by a quotation of a verse from the weekly scriptural reading or pertaining to the current festival. Some relate to the situation on hand: a verse from Song of Songs introduces a discourse said at a wedding, while that said at the dedication of a building is introduced by a suitable line from Psalms. A considerable number start with a quotation from the *Zohar* or a question concerning an overtly kabbalistic theme, such as the *Zimzum*.⁵⁷ Whatever the opening of the discourse, however, the effect of most of them is the same: they carry the hearer or reader into a spiritual realm which is presented as the true reality, underlying more worldly levels of existence. This entails opening a new perspective not only on the physical world but also on the Torah. A new, inner story is revealed between the lines of Scripture. The narrative concerning, say, Jacob and Esau is described against the background of the Lurianic kabbalah, with its own logic: a logic which is presented as the basic framework of the Bible, the Talmud, Jewish history, and life itself.⁵⁸

An interesting aspect of R. Shneur Zalman's oral teachings is that they were often communicated on two different levels: the first was that expounded in a public gathering, which took into account the limited kabbalistic knowledge of most of the participants. The second, called the "Explanation," was another version of the same discourse taught to a small group of exceptional individuals. This would contain more abstruse kabbalistic terms and ideas, the sources of the more "open" teaching which had been delivered at the public gathering.⁵⁹

In the scholarly debate on the question of R. Shneur Zalman's stance regarding the more radical aspects of Hasidic thought, the discourses have been adduced as evidence that his teaching was indeed a continuation of that of the Maggid. The discourses are described as representing the esoteric teaching of R. Shneur Zalman, contrasting with the *Tanya*, the exoteric and more popular expression of his thought.⁶⁰ There is a Habad tradition that emphasizes the significance of the title of the first and dominant

section of the latter: the *Book of the Intermediate Man*. This was composed specifically for the Intermediate Man, i.e., the person who had not reached and probably never would reach the level of *Zaddik*. According to this tradition, R. Shneur Zalman also composed another work, since lost, entitled *Book of the Zaddikim*.⁶¹ In fact, among his discourses one does find material that seems to pertain to a more esoteric and radical level of communication, such as the intriguing discussion in 1811 of two different types of *Zaddik*: those who are hidden, whose main service is in the spiritual realm of unification; and those who are revealed, whose activity is in the material world of the practical Commandments and overt enthusiasm.⁶²

A constant feature of the oral teachings is the provision of material for *hitbonenut*, the Habad style of contemplation in preparation for prayer. The ideas drawn from the kabbalah and its other-worldly perspective of existence have a concrete function: to enable the Habad follower to step beyond worldly categories, at least during prayer, and to experience the intense flow of emotion described in Habad texts as "love and fear." *Tanya* contains a tract comprising material for intellectualist contemplation on the Divine aspect and potential of the material universe, as well as a number of passages giving various kinds of advice to the contemplative.⁶³ The basic process of intellectualist contemplation as conceived by R. Shneur Zalman is described in the third chapter of the work, employing the terminology of the *Sefirot*. The intellect of the person, meaning the point of cognition, is termed *Hokhmah* (Wisdom). This point of cognition concerns an idea about the Divine: for example, that He transcends all existence. When the individual contemplates this idea "with his intellect to understand the idea clearly and in depth," he is employing the faculty *Binah* (Understanding). The combination of Wisdom and Understanding, following kabbalistic usage, is described as the union of "Father" and "Mother." Through this union, i.e., through intellectualist contemplation, the emotions of "love and fear" are born in the person's mind and heart.

When he contemplates very deeply the greatness of the Divine, how He fills all worlds and transcends all worlds, and how all before Him is considered as nothing, then there is born and aroused in his mind and thought the emotion of fear of the exaltation [of the Divine]. He is in awe, and ashamed, before the Divine Greatness which has no end, and in his heart there is fear of G-d. Then again, his heart flares up with love strong as coals of fire, with yearning and longing and desire, his soul

longing for the greatness of the *Ein Sof*. This is the "expiry" of the soul.⁶⁴

An important aspect of intellectualist contemplation, as described by R. Shneur Zalman, is its permanent, dedicated nature. This he calls *Da'at*, (*Knowledge*), the third *Sefirah*.

"Knowledge" is as in the verse "And Adam knew Eve" [Gen. 4:1]. It means a bond, being joined together. That he binds his mind and thought with a very firm and strong bond to [the contemplation of] the greatness of the *Ein Sof*, and does not let his mind wander. . . . If he does not bind his mind and thought firmly and continually he will not give birth in his soul to true fear and love, but only to vain fancies.⁶⁵

The initial letters of the three concepts *Hokhmah*, *Binah* and *Da'at* gave R. Shneur Zalman's fraternity the name *Habad*, a term we find used to describe his fellowship in his lifetime.⁶⁶ The fact that this became the name of the movement emphasizes the significance of its intellectualist contemplative aspect. In the discourses of the last decade of R. Shneur Zalman's life there is constant repetition and elaboration of teachings concerning the contemplative process, the ideas which should be contemplated, and the complex structures of thought emerging from those ideas, as if R. Shneur Zalman were communicating to others the stream of thought in his own mind during prayer. The fact that this material is so evident in the later discourses makes clear R. Shneur Zalman's intention: the members of the fraternity should regard this contemplation not as a remote ideal, but as a daily actuality.

Another point, however, about the later discourses is that we sometimes find an emphasis on the significance of the intellectualist aspect of contemplation beyond that of mere emotion, an emphasis which goes further than the teachings on contemplation found in *Tanya*. The following example, from a discourse delivered at the end of 1803, claims that the cerebral ecstasy which can be achieved by deep (i.e., intellectually rigorous) contemplation is far greater than the enthusiasm of the heart which is achieved through a less intellectualist style of thought. This latter level of ecstasy is "separate" from the intellectual idea and can be "contained" in the heart, i.e., it is expressed by emotions which are not too wildly intense. By contrast, the major, cerebral, deeply intellectualist ecstasy is beyond the capacity of the emotions, the heart, leading instead to a state in which the soul seems to transcend the limitations of the body.

When the love in the heart is separate from the intellectual understanding (*hasagah*), then the heart is able to contain the ecstasy deriving from the understanding. This means, when one contemplates the idea that all before Him is as nothing, if one does not think deeply about this—as it really is—even though one's heart will truly be moved with love and yearning, nonetheless, this emotion is "separate." . . . But if instead one thinks deeply about this idea then one attains an intense cerebral ecstasy, as if [the soul] were abandoning its sheath, the darkness of the body. This cerebral ecstasy cannot be expressed in the heart. The heart, because of its smallness and limitation in relation to the intellectual concept, is not able to hear it.⁶⁷

This predominantly cerebral aspect of Habad contemplation was to receive great emphasis a few years later, under the leadership of R. Dov Ber. This will be discussed in later chapters. We will find serious divergence within the Habad movement itself on the nature of contemplation and where, in the psycho-spiritual life of the individual, it is expected to lead. Before this, however, in the final period of R. Shneur Zalman's life the twin issues of the rational communication and contemplation of esoteric teachings became a point of debate which rocked a major section of the Hasidic movement.

Renewed Criticism by R. Avraham

In the previous chapter we discussed the critical letter which R. Avraham of Kalisk sent to R. Shneur Zalman from Tiberias, shortly after the publication of the *Tanya*. This letter, sent in 1797, criticized the idea of making esoteric teachings available to the ordinary members of the Hasidic fraternity. For them faith in the *Zaddik* and an occasional spark of the hidden radiance should be sufficient. In R. Avraham's view the attempt manifested by the *Tanya* methodically to communicate these teachings was dangerous, as was R. Shneur Zalman's appointment of local guides to help explain the teachings to the members of the fraternity.

This letter should be seen in the context of the special relationship which existed between the writer and the recipient, a relationship complicated by the fact that the two parties conceived of it in different terms. R. Avraham saw himself as having inherited from R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk the leadership of the Hasidic following in White Russia. R. Shneur Zalman's position there was as Hasidic *Zaddik*, it is true, but as a *Zaddik* beholden to R. Avraham himself.⁶⁸ R. Shneur Zalman did not perceive this depen-

dence as a factor in their relationship. He considered R. Avraham the leader of the *hasidim* in the Holy Land and had devoted much effort to support him and his community. At the same time he viewed him as something of an *enfant terrible* in the Hasidic movement, whose activities had drawn on himself criticism from the Maggid in 1772.⁶⁹ At that time the younger R. Shneur Zalman had himself made efforts to bail R. Avraham out of trouble, interceding with the Maggid on his behalf.⁷⁰ After the death of R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk in 1789, while R. Shneur Zalman continued to share and even promoted the prevailing view of the spiritual efficacy of the community of *Zaddikim* in the Holy Land, he in no way accepted R. Avraham as a governing authority over his method, tactics, and ideology as a Hasidic leader in his own right.

The two men did share certain attitudes, and quite apart from R. Shneur Zalman's material support of R. Avraham we find them working together in close cooperation. Thus between 1793 and 1797 both leaders wrote letters addressed to the Hasidic community of White Russia asking them to desist from flocking to R. Shneur Zalman in order to ask advice from him on practical matters.⁷¹ Presumably, as his fame increased, and concerned that his role should not deteriorate into that of a mere wonder-worker, R. Shneur Zalman had written to R. Avraham asking him to help by using his influence over the *hasidim*, and R. Avraham had complied. It is noteworthy that one of these letters by R. Avraham also condemns the writing down of Hasidic teachings.⁷² Perhaps he had heard about R. Shneur Zalman's early discourses, or the manuscript version of the *Tanya* which had begun to be publicized in 1793, and paternalistically wished to voice his criticism. This was clearly ignored by R. Shneur Zalman, as was the far more outspoken attack on the publication of *Tanya* sent by R. Avraham in 1797. R. Shneur Zalman saw his communication of Hasidic teachings as following the path set by R. Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezeritch, and his son R. Avraham, "the Angel."⁷³ He therefore neither asked R. Avraham of Kalisk for approval of his work in communicating Hasidic thought, nor did he reduce this endeavor in any way when R. Avraham expressed his harsh condemnation of the publishing of *Tanya* and of the appointment of local guides for the exposition and clarification of Hasidic teachings.

In his letter to R. Shneur Zalman concerning the *Tanya*, R. Avraham also referred to conflicts within the fraternity in White Russia. A certain Aaron Halevi of Vitebsk, an elderly follower of R. Menahem Mendel, had been enddistanced by R. Shneur Zalman, presumably because of his oppo-

sition to the new direction the movement was taking.⁷⁴ By contrast the younger men were close supporters of R. Shneur Zalman, as we see from a critical remark in R. Avraham's letter.⁷⁵ It is at this point that the general Hasidic following in White Russia began to divide into what we can perceive as the incipient Habad group and the "opposition" group, which stood for the status quo. The latter maintained the concept of the Hasidic ethos that had been engendered through the ethically exhortative letters of R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk. By contrast, the new Habad path implied a much greater demand on the Hasidic follower: he had to study the Habad teachings with their esoteric atmosphere, and apply them in contemplation and in life. The relative novelty of this path was alluded to a number of years later by R. Dov Ber, the *Mitteler Rebbe*, who contrasted the Habad ethos with "the old style of Divine service."⁷⁶ R. Avraham's critical reference to R. Shneur Zalman's entourage of young men suggests that the division in the fraternity to a certain extent correlated with age. It was probably a minor factor, but it is sociologically understandable. We shall see in the next chapter, with more specific evidence, that a comparable "generation gap" was to have a role in the internal split in the Habad fraternity during the dispute about succession to its leadership after R. Shneur Zalman passed away.

The incipient polarization in 1797 in the ranks of the Hasidic fraternity in White Russia was no doubt reinforced by another letter by R. Avraham sent in the same year, addressed to the Hasidic followers in the region.⁷⁷ He had already asked R. Shneur Zalman to write a parallel letter to the fraternity.⁷⁸ His hope had been that the latter would withdraw from his position on the question of the communication of Hasidic thought. R. Shneur Zalman, however, who saw himself as legitimately continuing in the path of the Maggid, had not complied with this wish; hence R. Avraham's letter. His aim at this point was not to provoke division, but to state an attitude which he believed to be true and to maintain his role as ultimate spiritual guide for the region.

The main issue in this letter of R. Avraham is the question of the communication of Hasidic teachings. He refers to R. Shneur Zalman as "one of the great *Zaddikim*" who is nonetheless inexperienced and has therefore caused damage by over-discussion of the esoteric. His followers "imagine they ascend to heaven, but in truth descend to the depths." R. Avraham took the opportunity to condemn the flurry of publishing of esoteric works which occurred in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. He probably meant both kabbalistic and Hasidic tracts when he wrote "I am

not pleased with the 'heavenly paths' which have been printed. . . . They are only for those with an exalted soul or those who serve G-d with love, having already transcended Nature. . . . I would like to collect together all the sacred works which are scattered in the hands of novices, and hide them away for those who have purity of soul."⁷⁹ He reiterated the idea that when he was a disciple of the Maggid of Mezeritch, "one word was sufficient for us for a long time." The organized, rational style of *Tanya* and its appeal for intellectualist contemplation provoked R. Avraham into a tirade against the use of intellect, especially in relation to "esoteric concepts."⁸⁰ Intellect, he states, is the source of evil, hence one should be afraid to employ intellect in contemplation. Instead there must be pure faith. Faith stands beyond intellect and is unanswerable. Complementary to faith is simple obedience in action and basic awe of the Divine.⁸¹

These statements indicate a certain gap in communication between the two leaders. R. Shneur Zalman by no means decried the power of faith beyond intellect, and, as we shall see, he apotheosized the virtue of practical action in obedience to the Commandments. Basic awe, the "fear of punishment" which leads to this practical action, is also extolled in the pages of *Tanya*.⁸² We can therefore see R. Avraham's letter to the members of the fraternity as an expression of his fears concerning the ultimate direction and possibility inherent in what he saw as the overeager revelation of esoteric thought and the attempt to bring it within the range of human intellect. It is to be assumed that this letter contributed considerably to the polarization of attitudes that was taking place, despite R. Avraham's concern to retain the resemblance of unity.⁸³

In 1798 R. Nahman of Braslav, grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, visited the Holy Land and met R. Avraham of Kalisk.⁸⁴ The latter asked him to go on a mission of peace to R. Shneur Zalman. R. Nahman was to try to ensure that the funds collected by R. Shneur Zalman be sent to R. Avraham.⁸⁵ One suspects there might also have been some ideological backtracking as well on the part of the Kalisker, since at this point his aim clearly was to maintain a position of ultimate spiritual leadership over the White Russian Hasidic fraternity. During the next two years this aim became yet more difficult in the face of the arrest and liberation of R. Shneur Zalman, who thereby became the hero of the hour. In 1800 R. Avraham therefore wrote an intriguing letter to the members of the fraternity in which he openly retreated from his earlier position of criticism of R. Shneur Zalman.⁸⁶ In this letter R. Avraham stated he was shocked to hear that his earlier letter had caused people to think that his views on Divine

service seriously diverged from those of R. Shneur Zalman. He insisted there was not a hairsbreadth difference, "especially on the question of contemplation," and affirmed that he gave wholehearted approval to R. Shneur Zalman's opening of the "fountains of wisdom in Divine service, through revealing the Divine in the world"—clearly a reference to the communication of esoteric teachings. R. Avraham also now declared that he approved the appointment of leading *hasidim* to interpret and explain those teachings to the wider following—a point which had received scathing comment in his earlier letter.

How is this about-turn (which proved to be of only a temporary nature) to be understood? A few years later when the conflict with R. Shneur Zalman reached its peak, R. Avraham claimed in an open letter to the fraternity that he never really meant these sentiments, but had only written the letter in response to pressure by a belligerent self-styled supporter of R. Shneur Zalman.⁸⁷

However, in a letter to his follower and representative, Meir of Bukhov, R. Avraham gave a slightly different explanation: he had written his approval of R. Shneur Zalman's path in the hope that this would "draw his heart near. . . . Perhaps he would now listen to my advice."⁸⁸ In other words, R. Avraham wrote the letter in a mood of conciliation, hoping to preserve the unity of the fraternity and to maintain ultimate authority in his own hands. This view of the purpose of the letter approving Habad contemplation is supported by the existence of another letter, sent by R. Avraham to R. Shneur Zalman in 1801, which indicates a clear attempt to maintain cordial relations. This is actually a letter of complaint about the behavior of the above-mentioned belligerent figure, Elazar of Disna, who claimed to be a Habad follower. Nonetheless, the letter is written in a friendly tone.⁸⁹ R. Avraham takes the opportunity to criticize R. Shneur Zalman for allowing a person of such low character to imbibe secrets of Torah. There is no reiteration, however, of the general condemnation of the communication of the esoteric. Apparently, then, in 1800 and 1801 R. Avraham was ready to concede ground to R. Shneur Zalman for the sake of the unity of the fraternity of which he saw himself as leader. Indeed, his happy encounter with R. Nahman of Braslav in 1798 might even have made him genuinely shift position, for R. Nahman himself had strong leanings towards the open communication of esoteric teachings, as we see from his later writings.⁹⁰ But even R. Nahman was always hostile to intellectualism, and it is this issue which is the crux of the matter. R. Avraham's letter of approval of contemplation, of the communication of the esoteric,

and even of the appointment of local guides does not actually mention intellectualism, and there is no indication that he changed his opinion of the danger inherent in the intellectualist path. For the sake of a unified Hasidic fraternity in White Russia he was ready to accept, or at least put up with, the style of R. Shneur Zalman's teachings as manifested in *Tanya* and in the early discourses. But when this style changed, as it did particularly after "Peterburg" and R. Shneur Zalman's move to Liady in 1801, so did R. Avraham's attitude.

As we have seen, the last decade of R. Shneur Zalman's teachings manifests an unprecedented emphasis on the intellectualist, cerebral aspect of contemplation, which is reflected in the texts of the discourses of that period. As news of this reached R. Avraham during the early years of the nineteenth century, he decided to follow a new direction in dealing with R. Shneur Zalman: to isolate him and the Habad group within the Hasidic world, and to regain his own leadership of the remains of the White Russian fraternity. He withdrew completely from his earlier position of approval and began to try to extricate himself from any kind of dependence on R. Shneur Zalman. This entailed changing the system whereby money was collected in White Russia and sent to the Holy Land, which had hitherto been organized by R. Shneur Zalman. The way the system was run had provoked frequent complaints from R. Avraham, ever since the beginning of the ideological conflict. He now decided, around 1803, to appoint his own collectors, Meir of Bukhov and Zvi Segal, and to refuse to accept money collected by R. Shneur Zalman. According to these collectors, the Hasidic community he led in Tiberias was anyway dwindling, and consequently needed less money. In addition, R. Avraham was organizing alternative means of support from collections in the Ukraine and Volhyn, which made him less dependant materially on the fraternity in White Russia.⁹¹

The step to break the links with R. Shneur Zalman was followed by open attack against his path of Hasidic teaching. In a letter to the fraternity in White Russia, probably written in 1805, R. Avraham expressed his condemnation of R. Shneur Zalman's path, stating that it was not in accord with the path of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezeritch. He also hinted that R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk had expressed anxiety about the direction R. Shneur Zalman was taking. Only one specific point about that direction is mentioned in the letter: "teaching discourses every day in public."⁹² The increased intellectualist style of R. Shneur Zalman's discourses was the issue which had provoked the *volte face* of R. Avraham.

Probably in the same year R. Avraham wrote to R. Levi Yitzhak of Ber-

dichev, likewise claiming that R. Shneur Zalman had departed from the path of the Maggid.⁹³ The letter does not state explicitly any precise details of the complaint, but R. Levi Yitzhak's reply is illuminating. He defended R. Shneur Zalman with the claim that the latter was certainly following the path of the Maggid: "For the main path of the Maggid and all his effort was to teach people Torah and Mitzvot." This must refer to esoteric teachings on the Torah and Mitzvot, because the normative exoteric teachings were not a point of contention. R. Levi Yitzhak continued: "On the contrary, anyone who does not follow this path is not on the path of our teacher the Maggid, and anyone who attacks this path is attacking our teacher, heaven forbid." He also emphasized the tremendous esteem which the Maggid had borne for R. Shneur Zalman.⁹⁴

From the reply in defense one can infer the point of attack: the effort "to teach people," to communicate the esoteric in society. R. Avraham had made temporary peace on this issue for the sake of unity: but his goal now was quite different. To replace R. Shneur Zalman, R. Avraham now chose R. Mordekhai of Lachovitz as his local *Zaddik* and representative in White Russia.⁹⁵ His letters from Tiberias to the fraternity revoked all former approval of R. Shneur Zalman's path. The division among the former followers of R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk was complete. Indeed, there was an open polarization of attitudes which had a far-reaching effect. The Habad group had a clear identity and ethos of its own, characterized by the intellectualist communication of esoteric teachings. This was hotly opposed by some, such as R. Mordekhai of Lachovitz and R. Asher of Stolin. The latter wrote to R. Yisrael of Koznitz, criticizing R. Shneur Zalman's sphere of influence as an "entire region where people are full of secrets of Torah."⁹⁶ Others, such as R. Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, came to the fierce defense of Habad.⁹⁷ It seems that the key factor in this process was the intensifying of the intellectualist aspect to R. Shneur Zalman's discourses. This provoked R. Avraham, who claimed suprarational "faith" as his banner. With all his might he opposed R. Shneur Zalman's intellectualism, sacrificing the unity of the White Russian fraternity for his cause. What he gained, however, was undisputed leadership of a large section of the Hasidic community there. With the full support of figures such as R. Asher of Stolin and R. Barukh of Medziboz, the argumentative grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, this community had as its local leaders R. Mordekhai of Lachovitz and Aaron Halevi of Vitebsk, a senior *hasid* who now led a group of particularly vociferous opponents of Habad.⁹⁸

It took some time for R. Shneur Zalman to concede to R. Avraham's

endeavor to break links with him. Thus in 1803 he tried to resist the attempts to change the system for collection of money for the community in the Holy Land, so as to preserve unity among the members of the fraternity.⁹⁹ Despite the efforts of R. Avraham's own emissaries, a considerable sum of money was collected by R. Shneur Zalman himself. According to his own account, on being informed that this money would not be accepted by R. Avraham he took advice from R. Yakov of Smolian, a long-standing emissary who had collected for the Holy Land for over twenty years, and invested the money.¹⁰⁰ R. Shneur Zalman stated that he found it hard to believe that R. Avraham himself really wanted to reject the money collected by Habad.¹⁰¹ Two years later he wrote to him offering him the money and interest which had been earned, but as far as we know the offer was refused.¹⁰² As late as 1804, in an attempt to scotch the strong rumours that R. Avraham had turned completely against Habad, in a letter to his own followers R. Shneur Zalman referred to cordial letters he had received from R. Avraham and to the latter's earlier expression of approval of Habad contemplation.¹⁰³ By the autumn of 1805, however, after R. Avraham's letters to the fraternity at large and to R. Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, there was no longer any doubt that he had succeeded in his aim to divide the fraternity. At this point R. Shneur Zalman wrote a long letter to R. Avraham which helps us understand the ideological conflict. Copies of the letter, with a postscript asking his own followers not to get involved in arguments with extremists among R. Avraham's supporters, were made available to local members of the fraternity.¹⁰⁴

The central ideological issue is that of "faith" versus intellectualist contemplation. The Talmud, discussing the basic principles of Judaism, states that "Habbakuk came and expressed them in one concept: 'the righteous man lives by his faith' (Hab. 2:4)."¹⁰⁵ This theme had been adopted by R. Avraham as the motto of his movement, emphasizing the way it was distinguished from Habad. The only mode of relationship between the mind of the individual and the Divine was faith, beyond rational intellect, simply the cleaving of spirit to spirit. This structure left no room for theosophical ideas nor for contemplation of esoteric teachings. It should be noted that an unspoken axiom in R. Avraham's system is that this mode of relationship with the Divine pertains specifically to the Hasidic follower. The *Zaddik*, by contrast, is party to the full body of esoteric knowledge. By dipping into this and revealing a spark of its sublime radiance, he feeds the faith of his followers.

R. Shneur Zalman's answer to this in his letter to R. Avraham is to quote

the dictum "The thief about to break in calls to G-d."¹⁰⁶ The thief has "faith," as shown by the fact that he calls on the Divine to protect him and help him to be successful in this effort. But faith alone does not give him the power of self-control to stop himself from stealing, an action forbidden by the Divine law. In order to have active, effective piety, claimed R. Shneur Zalman, there must be deep thought and contemplation. By implication, this must have cogent material as its basis, namely the central concepts of the esoteric tradition. For R. Shneur Zalman the demand to use the mind in this way is inherent in the path of the Baal Shem Tov and is an essential aspect of Hasidism.

You think that this idea [that "the righteous man lives by his faith"] is to be taken in its simple sense, that simple faith is enough, as you write in your letter of 1798.¹⁰⁷ You have forgotten the saying of the Sages: "the thief about to break in calls to G-d." Thus even though he believes in G-d he cannot control himself from stealing, or [even] from murdering. . . .

But in order for there to be fear of the Divine [i.e., active piety] one has to think seriously and to contemplate, as it says in *Likkutei Amarim*. Everyone in the regions of Volhyn and the Ukraine who has ever had a scent of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples knows the explanation of the passage in the holy *Zohar* that "*Binah* (contemplative understanding) is the mother of the children."¹⁰⁸ The "children" mean love and fear [of the Divine] . . . and they are brought into being by serious thought and contemplation on the greatness of the Divine, each person according to his measure. Just as it is impossible to give birth to children without a mother, so it is impossible to fear G-d without contemplation. You were quite right in your letter of 1801 to the fraternity when you wrote [you approve] "especially as concerns contemplation." How can anyone think of arguing about this point?¹⁰⁹

R. Shneur Zalman insists that the true interpretation of the dictum "the righteous of man lives by his faith" is as he himself had explained in chapter 33 of his *Tanya*: "faith" means a strong awareness of the Divine, born from cognitive thought. He also refers to a recent discourse he had delivered on the theme of "faith" versus "knowledge." This discourse has been published. It describes a dual relationship with the Divine. The imminent aspect of the Divine is so apparent and obvious to the eye of the intellect that one achieves the level of "knowledge" in relation to it. By contrast the

transcendent aspect of the Divine is beyond cognition and the rational intellect. This is the level of "faith." Through contemplation, however, obviously in the Habad mode, the transcending radiance of the Divine can be drawn down into the person's inner being, imparting life, joy, and delight.¹¹⁰

We thus see that the pivot of the conflict between R. Avraham and R. Shneur Zalman is the issue of intellectualist contemplation. The letter specifically mentions R. Shneur Zalman's discourses as a point of contention.¹¹¹ For it was only when these entered their final period, with their increased emphasis on the intellectualist demand of Habad, that R. Avraham came to the conclusion that conciliation was impossible. As we have seen, the result was the division of the White Russian fraternity and the clear emergence of Habad as a distinct group within the wider Hasidic movement.

The Protective Emphasis on Action

Surveying these developments in the Hasidic fraternity in White Russia, one is faced with the question of why the path of intellectualist communication of esoteric teachings should have provoked such intense opposition. What were R. Avraham's fears? As we have seen, he regarded intellectualism as the root of evil. Probably he saw it as akin to the secular rationalism which was becoming increasingly widespread among the Jews of north-western Europe. Yet he was also a fierce opponent of the communication of esoteric thought in any mode. In 1797, after the publication of *Tanya*, he wrote to R. Shneur Zalman that those who study it are likely to "make themselves out to be greater than they are, with great and wondrous words of deep secrets, while [really] they are sunk in all manner of desires and bad attributes." Further, he commented that "too much oil in the lamp could, heaven forbid, cause the flame to be extinguished."¹¹²

This is more than the fear of the member of the elitist inner circle that subtle concepts and constructs will be debased if revealed to the crowd. There is a concern here that the esoteric teachings may well prove harmful: the flame of the lamp could be extinguished. One aspect of this is the age-old Jewish sensitivity to the antinomian possibility inherent in mystical experience. This possibility had become concretized in the Shabbatian and Frankist movements, which were by no means extinct at the time of the birth of Hasidism. Indeed, the *mitnagdim* had accused the Hasidic movement of being a variety of Shabbatianism, and a catalogue of alleged anti-

nomian behavior on the part of the Hasidic followers forms an important part of the contemporary mitnagdic literature. Within the Hasidic movement, R. Avraham believed that communication of the esoteric teachings at the heart of Judaism could lead to dangerous results, in which "desires and bad attributes" might well be followed by the breakdown of the basic structures of the halakhah. Drunk with the cerebral delight of esoteric themes such as the abnegation of all existence, the unseasoned follower might, it was feared, forget the practical exigencies of the halakhah or even imagine that his closeness to the Divine set him entirely beyond the realm of the performance of the Commandments.¹¹³

In the light of this reasonable concern it is interesting to note the extent to which R. Shneur Zalman gave special emphasis to the role of the practical Commandments. It is important to bear in mind that together with his role as communicator of esoteric teachings he was also a halakhist of immense stature, as indicated by his comprehensive *Shulḥan Arukh* (Code of Law) and other halakhic writings. While the code was written early in R. Shneur Zalman's career and was probably studied in manuscript by his followers, it was only published posthumously. However, a number of his halakhic tracts were printed during the period under discussion. The first of R. Shneur Zalman's works to be printed at all was his *Laws of Torah Study*, published anonymously in 1794 and reprinted in 1798 and 1799. In 1800 a tract on a topic of great halakhic complexity but also of immediate practical relevance was published, *Table of Blessings*. This defines precisely which blessing should be said on various occasions.¹¹⁴ A further edition included laws on washing the hands.¹¹⁵ In 1803 the *Prayer Book* was published, including halakhic expositions of the detailed laws concerning the daily prayers, religious requisites such as *Tefilin* and *Zizit*, and other topics such as the proper observance of the Sabbath.

For a follower of R. Shneur Zalman in this period there could be absolutely no doubt as to the direction of the path of Habad service of the Divine. The importance of the halakhah was emphasized not only in purely halakhic tracts, but also in R. Shneur Zalman's expositions of esoteric thought, *Tanya* and the discourses. Indeed, it is noteworthy that as he intensified his endeavor to communicate the ideal of intellectualist contemplative mysticism in broader ranks of society, so he strengthened the emphasis on the significance of the practical Commandments as an essential category central to the quest for spiritual fulfilment. This was to function as a framework and guide balancing the repeated calls for contemplative self-abnegation. Thus, as was mentioned in chapter 2, when R. Shneur

Zalman decided to print the *Tanya* which had hitherto been circulating in manuscript form, an important step in broadening the range of communication, he added three extra chapters on the theme of the practical Commandments.

It has long been noted by scholars that R. Shneur Zalman's teachings on the spiritual meaning of the Commandments are exceptional in the literature of early Hasidism.¹¹⁶ This is no incidental fact. The unusual emphasis was integral to the attempt to transmit the thrust of contemplative mysticism to social groupings which, in the eyes of R. Avraham and other contemporary Hasidic leaders, were deemed fit only for *musar* (ethical teachings) and faith in *Zaddikim*. It is therefore worth pausing to consider some aspects of R. Shneur Zalman's treatment of this topic.

The important step is the presentation of the practical Commandments as the path to achieve fulfilment in the mystical framework expounded by the esoteric teachings themselves. In the Habad texts, therefore, the esoteric striving does not lead away from the halakhah, but towards it. If we follow R. Shneur Zalman's logic, the Commandments are seen not only as having the eschatological significance described by the Lurianic kabbalah.¹¹⁷ They also manifest achievement of the ultimate personal mystical goals, of *bitul* (self-abnegation) and utter union with the Divine. In chapter 2 we looked at some of the ways this is expressed in the system expounded in the *Tanya*. The main theme is based on the concept that "the Holy One and the Torah are one"; the texts and practical teachings of the Torah are described as a channel transmitting to this lower world the opportunity of union with a flow of Divine radiance which has not been veiled by the *Zimzum*. This union takes place through recital and study of Torah and observance of the practical Commandments.¹¹⁸ True enough, the luminosity is not perceived, due to the interposing physicality of the text or of the practical action. Nonetheless the Divine union is achieved: "It is like one who embraces the King. It makes no difference to his closeness and cleaving to the King whether he embraces Him when He is wearing one robe or several robes—since the body of the King is within."¹¹⁹

This is a union which transcends conscious ecstasy, or *devekut*. It is this feature which clearly distinguishes the Habad teachings on the Commandments from previous Hasidic thought. R. Shneur Zalman describes a union which exists whether or not the individual is aware of it. Due to his lack of sensitivity his inner emotional life might completely lack the pneumatic transformation which should ideally accompany the practical action. Nonetheless this lack of conscious awareness does not prevent the Divine

union from taking place.¹²⁰ There is an undertone in *Tanya* that *no* consciousness, only brute action, could bear the full intensity of the transcending radiance of the Divine expressed through the Commandment.¹²¹ *Devekut*, by contrast, reaches only the lesser, veiled, immanent radiance. Therefore, however intense the *devekut* and the experience of mystical love of the Divine, it is surpassed by the spiritual attainment achieved by the observance of the Commandments. This is expressed in a striking passage in the first section of *Tanya*:

Even in the case of a perfect *Zaddik*, who cleaves to Him with great love, behold, "thought does not really grasp Him at all."¹²² For the ultimate truth of the Divine is His utter unity that He alone exists, and there is absolutely nothing apart from Him. And hence in the case of this person who loves, who exists and is not "nothing," his thought does not grasp Him at all. The Divine radiance does not dwell in him, nor can it be revealed for him, except by observing the Commandments. They are the actual Divine Will and Wisdom, without any concealment.¹²³

This construct of ideas was clearly likely to have the effect of maintaining a balance between contemplative abnegation and practical action in the life of the Hasidic follower. The same balance is found in the discourses, particularly in the later ones. As we saw above, the brief oral teachings of the early 1790s imposed an other-worldly, spiritual demand on a group of people who were clearly exceptional men of stature. After 1800 the discourses took a different form and were addressed to broader sections of society. This change was complemented by increased emphasis on the practical Commandments. Thus, in a discourse of 1807 the unique Divine self-expression achieved through a Commandment is described as an inscription engraved on a precious stone so radiant that none can gaze at it. Only when a wax impression of the inscription is made can the letters be discerned.¹²⁴ Thus brute action reveals the infinite; the highest is manifested in the lowest. This, says R. Shneur Zalman, is the true purpose of creation: to express the *Ein Sof* in the practical world. Hence there is no doubt that the man who achieves the most exalted spiritual goals must also carry out the simple practical Commandments. R. Shneur Zalman employs the image of the biblical spies who "did not want to lower themselves to the practical Commandment," i.e., to enter the Land, the world of action, preferring the spirituality of the wilderness. They were decidedly in error.¹²⁵ R. Shneur Zalman's message was clear to his followers. His teachings on

the apotheosis of the Commandments complemented those on contemplative mysticism. They acted as a corrective safeguard, as a pointer to the direction and purpose of Habad contemplation. As presented by R. Shneur Zalman, normative Jewish life, the halakhah, itself constitutes the ultimate realization—even if unconscious—of the mystical ideal. This clear guideline established, the demand for intellectualist contemplation of esoteric themes could be made without fear of misapprehension.¹²⁶ This was the view of R. Shneur Zalman. R. Avraham however, disagreed. In his opinion the danger inherent in the communication of esoteric thought was paramount. Rejecting R. Shneur Zalman's reliance on intellectual structures, R. Avraham of Kalisk was oblivious to the safeguards which we find built into the Habad system. The only safeguard which would have been acceptable to R. Avraham was the absolute restriction of esoteric knowledge to the small elite of the men of stature and pneumatic figures, the leaders of the Hasidic movement.

The Widest Thrust

Around 1805 or 1806 a further aspect of R. Shneur Zalman's discourses began to be discerned: between the lines, some of the oral teachings of R. Shneur Zalman became a medium for communal leadership, offering guidance in the face of the political realities of the time. This step extended their sphere of influence beyond the scholarly class into the lives of the simplest men and women of the Jewish community, communicating advice concerning how to face up to the exigencies of the external political situation. The development of this aspect of the Habad discourses indicates the breadth of their reach in society. In some way the abstruse teachings replete with Lurianic terminology were intended to function also as a medium of sociopolitical guidance, and the directive they expressed was one which every Jew could follow. Let us examine this intriguing phenomenon in more detail.

Self-Sacrifice and the Purim Story

In the previous chapter we considered the fact that in *Tanya* the popular historical theme of Jewish martyrological self-sacrifice is employed in order to communicate to the reader abstract spiritual ideas concerning the nature of the soul and other aspects of Divine service. The new sociopolitical dimension found a decade later in R. Shneur Zalman's discourses also uses the theme of self-sacrifice, but in a quite different mode. At a certain point in time, which will be ascertained below, this theme enters his teachings

concerning the minor festival of Purim. Through a rather unusual interpretation the events of the Purim story are described as signifying an epoch of religious persecution when the Jews, through determined and defiant dedication to Judaism and readiness for self-sacrifice, reestablished their spiritual power.¹²⁷

R. Shneur Zalman depicts Purim as a case of "classical" *Kiddush Hashem*, (Sanctification of the Divine Name) in which the avenue of apostasy is open to the Jew, who defiantly rejects it. This is quite different from the normative rabbinic interpretation of Purim. Maimonides refers to the events at the time of Purim as "troubles" which have beset the Jewish people.¹²⁸ He makes no reference to their reaction to these troubles, whether defiant or passive. By contrast, R. Shneur Zalman insists that if the Jews had changed their religion, Haman would have desisted from his attack. However, they steadfastly refused to take this step and were ready to experience the worst suffering, even to give up their lives, for Judaism.

In R. Shneur Zalman's discourses on this theme we find not only the emphasis on the readiness for self-sacrifice but also the linking of this readiness with a variety of esoteric qualities, such as self-abnegation and spiritual union with the radiance of the *Ein Sof*. At the same time, by referring to a talmudic *aggadah* which states that the true acceptance by the Jews of the Torah was in the time of Ahasuerus rather than at Sinai, R. Shneur Zalman is able to show that the readiness of the Jew for self-sacrifice for Judaism established for him a total acceptance, which previously had been incomplete, of the Torah.¹²⁹ He states:

The Jews then attained the exalted level of self-abnegation, through self-sacrifice for *Kiddush Hashem*. For if they had wanted to deny their religion, Haman would not have done anything at all to them. . . . But they put their lives at risk for that entire year, and none of them thought of apostasy. Through this self-sacrifice they achieved a total acceptance of the Torah, that the very radiance of the *Ein Sof* flowed to them and entered them.¹³⁰

When we consider the dates of the discourses expressing this idea, we find strong indication that the emergence of this theme in the teachings of R. Shneur Zalman is directly linked to the infamous Statute concerning the Organization of the Jews issued by the tsar in December 1804. Clause 34, the most severe provision in the statute, forbade the Jews entirely to live in any village or to hold any lease on property in the rural areas. Aimed par-

ticularly at the Jewish innkeepers, it has been estimated that this clause threatened half the Jews of Russia with economic ruin.¹³¹

R. Shneur Zalman's concern for the economic catastrophe which hit the Jews through the implementation of this statute is known through the fact that he himself later collected money to rehouse those who were expelled from their homes.¹³² The timing of the theme of self-sacrifice in the Purim theme in his Hasidic discourses directly relates to the promulgation of this statute. Through the medium of the discourses R. Shneur Zalman was endeavoring to encourage the Jews to be steadfast to Judaism despite the bitterness of their situation. The discourses with this Purim theme presented in an ideal light the courageous example of the past, expressed in terms of self-sacrifice for Judaism and for Jewish values.

The fact that the discourses, which we know as handwritten texts, couched in obscure Lurianic terminology and generally considered the repository of the "esoteric" level of Habad thought, should at the same time be a medium for the communication of a perspective on the political situation and for inspiration to defiance in the face of oppression, indicates the subtle fusion of mysticism with sociopolitical leadership. It was R. Shneur Zalman's aim that the mystical teachings be given over to the ordinary Hasidic follower. In this form they would not only teach the contemplative the virtue of self-abandon in prayer, but also provide the ordinary man with the leadership needed in confrontation with daily life.

The Purim Discourses and Contemporary Events

Now let us consider the question of the chronology of these Purim discourses, on which this analysis depends. Our first question is, when did R. Shneur Zalman begin, unconventionally, to describe Purim as a case of readiness for classical *mesirat nefesh* (self-sacrifice) for *Kiddush Hashem*?

From 1796 on we find, almost every year, one or more Purim discourses by R. Shneur Zalman.¹³³ However, until 1804, none of them includes the theme of self-sacrifice, nor any allusion with obvious political relevance. In that year, however, the Purim discourses include a definite hint to contemporary events. In the early spring of 1804 before Purim the Committee for the Amelioration of the Jews was at the final stage of the deliberations which were to result, eventually, in the oppressive statute which was to be published in December. The Jewish community was well aware of these deliberations and of their hostile nature. Against this background, the following depiction of the nature of Amalek (traditionally considered the ancestor of Haman) seems unmistakably relevant to its time:

Amalek will be destroyed because truly there is nothing real about him, just insolence and pride, meaningless, like someone who is vain and has nothing to be vain about in any way; he is proud with insolence alone. . . . He is like a wave of the sea which rises up powerfully; this rising, however, is not of itself, it is merely because of the wind which raises it. When the wind subsides, the wave sinks down, for by its own nature it has no greatness at all. . . . Through this can be understood the way that in every generation enemies of the Jews arise among the nations of the world, like waves of the sea, they rise up stormily, then suddenly fall, for they come on account of the wind and they subside on account of the wind.¹³⁴

In the contemporary atmosphere there is little doubt as to the meaning of this passage for R. Shneur Zalman's hearers. Nonetheless, in 1804, while there is this reflection of contemporary events in one of the Purim discourses, the presentation of Purim in terms of classical *Kiddush Hashem*, with its full defiant power of an ancient martyrology, is not yet seen.¹³⁵

On December 9, 1804, the Statute Concerning the Organization of the Jews was promulgated, causing consternation in the Jewish communities. On December 18 R. Shneur Zalman delivered an unusual discourse to the intimate circle of his immediate family at the Sabbath morning meal, which clearly seems to be a reaction to this event.¹³⁶ A few months later, in a public discourse delivered in the spring of 1805, we find allusions to the contemporary situation and a directive concerning the attitude to take concerning it. In this discourse, the Jews in exile among the Gentiles are compared to wine standing on its lees, a process which improves the wine. So long as the Jews

do not raise themselves . . . they need the lees to strengthen the wine. Then there is no judgement at all against the nations of the world for their severe oppression of the Jews . . . for why should a person be angry with the stick that hits him—it is only because of the action of the hand of the one who has raised it against him; the stick is mere wood.¹³⁷

The discourse expresses the idea that persecution is not surprising and even can be viewed as 'strengthening' the Jews, a view traceable to aggadic sources.¹³⁸ When the Jews "raise themselves," however, the situation becomes completely different:

But when the Jewish souls are raised very high . . . then He examines the nations of the world and there is judgement

against them for all the severity of their oppression and for every detail of their actions.¹³⁹

The means whereby the Jews exalt themselves to this higher level, states R. Shneur Zalman, is “by means of their self-sacrifice [*mesirat nefesh*].” Through this the Jews attain Divine protection from their oppressors.

The self-sacrifice enjoined here is defined in terms of prayer and spiritual striving. It is a sacrifice “of will, in depth, reaching beyond all the life of the World to Come.” R. Shneur Zalman describes it in terms of utter self-abnegation, similar to the Sabbath of existence in the Seventh Millennium.¹⁴⁰ The directive implied by this discourse is therefore of a mystical kind, addressed primarily to an aristocratic group of near pneumatic scholars. For them this intensely esoteric demand, expressed as the key to the well-being of the Jewish people, was relevant. In the following year, however, the Purim discourse expressed a simpler, more practical interpretation of the Purim story, and the directive which emerged had relevance to a far wider spectrum of the Jewish social world.

In this discourse of 1806, for the first time R. Shneur Zalman depicted the events in the time of Ahasuerus as an instance of the classical *Kiddush Hashem* situation, in which the avenue of apostasy is open but the Jew defies this, dedicating himself totally to Judaism, even at the expense of his life. In the Purim discourse of that year “self-sacrifice” did not mean subtle spirituality. Rather it had the direct, practical meaning of defiant determination, not passively to die, but to fight on and to observe Judaism against all odds. The question was no longer one of sublime prayer, but of clinging to Judaism in an atmosphere of religious oppression.

In the time of Ahasuerus they had total self-sacrifice for the whole year of the decree of Haman. Throughout that year it was clear to them that they were all given over to be killed, by the law of the King. And surely they were determined not to apostatize, even if they would all be massacred. They had no thought of betrayal, Heaven forbid. Hence they stood with true self-sacrifice throughout that year, accepting death with a full heart rather than leave their religion.¹⁴¹

This Purim discourse of 1806 was the basis of a number of other discourses by R. Shneur Zalman and, indeed, by his successors in the Habad leadership, extending to our own century and the conflict with Bolshevism in Russia.¹⁴² In all of these Purim is described as the paradigm of defiant dedication to Judaism in the face of oppression. It is for this reason, states

R. Shneur Zalman, that the Talmud says that the real fulfilment of the acceptance of the Torah was not at Sinai when the Divine was revealed, but in the darkness of struggle and self-sacrifice at the time of Ahasuerus.

It is clear that these teachings had a didactic purpose, giving a counsel of defiant courage as the necessary response to government persecution. This was not seen as purely economic in nature. The promulgation of this statute was influenced by the Enlightenment and embodied the aim to transform the Jews. It permitted them to attend the state schools, to open secular schools of their own, to learn the gentile languages, and to wear gentile clothing. Behind the economic oppression lay a deeper threat to Judaism itself. In the terms of reference of R. Shneur Zalman’s discourse, the suffering which was to be inflicted on the Jews by dispossessing them from their homes could immediately be averted by apostasy. This indeed is not far from the truth. A few years later the same tsar was to set up a special society to encourage Jews to convert to Christianity. The teaching communicated by R. Shneur Zalman was that self-sacrifice—not seeking death, but a readiness for death, with total dedication to Judaism in the face of opposition—has exalted significance and power *in itself*. Revealing this teaching as the central theme of a popular festival gave it permanent meaning in Jewish life. It thereby became a quality necessary for every individual rather than a rare saintly attainment. The Hasidic followers who heard this discourse from R. Shneur Zalman or who perused a transcript of it in manuscript found a teaching of defiance and consolation relevant to themselves and those around them in the atmosphere of grief and panic prevailing in the year 1806.¹⁴³ The more scholarly Hasidic followers would then act as interpreters and popularizers of the obscure discourse of the *Rebbe*, communicating to the wider masses of Jewish society a teaching of inspiration and courage in the face of despair.

It is intriguing that in the following year, 1807, there was no Purim discourse. This is stated explicitly by the *Zemah Zedek*, the grandson of R. Shneur Zalman, and indeed no discourse of this year has as yet been found.¹⁴⁴ Of course, there could be many reasons for this. However, it is tempting to suggest a link with the contemporary situation.

In the spring of 1807 there was a rather different atmosphere from that which had prevailed a year earlier. In the autumn of 1806 Napoleon’s “Jewish Parliament” had sent out appeals to all the countries of Europe announcing the impending convocation of the “Great Sanhedrin.” The Russian government suspected that this was a device to dispose the Jewish masses of Russia and other countries in Napoleon’s favour. Anxious that

the resentment provoked by the application of the 1804 statute would increase this danger, it was decided to stop the expulsion of the Jews from the villages. By a government ukase of February 19, 1807, the Jewish communities were informed that the entire question of the implementation of the statute would be discussed anew and were invited to elect Jewish deputies to discuss the most suitable course of action together with governmental officials. The Jewish communities interpreted this as a genuine softening of the governmental line, and there was a general feeling of optimism. The festival of Purim fell that year on March 24, at just the time when hopes were running high for modification of the statute. Perhaps it was for this reason that R. Shneur Zalman chose that Purim *not* deliver a discourse extolling self-sacrifice against the oppressor. This might have been considered prejudicial to the delicate situation.

In fact, however, the Peace of Tilsit (July 1807) established an *entente cordiale* between Napoleon and Alexander I. There was no longer any need to be concerned about the Jewish attitude, and a harsh decree of October 19, 1807, made clear that the expulsions from the villages were indeed to take place. They began in January 1808. Thousands of Jews "were ejected ruthlessly, under the escort of peasants and soldiers. They were driven like cattle into the townlets and cities, and left there on the public squares in the open air. The way in which the expulsion from the villages was carried out in the Government of Vitebsk was particularly ferocious."¹⁴⁵

It was in this atmosphere that R. Shneur Zalman delivered his Purim discourses in 1808. We are not surprised to discover that the theme of the self-sacrifice of the oppressed Jews has returned in full force, together with the interpretation of Purim in terms of classical *Kiddush Hashem*. Another element is the paradoxical theme that oppression expresses the greatness of the Divine.

"That is His Might: Gentiles dance in His Sanctuary and He is silent."¹⁴⁶ This means: the concealment and veiling which is so great that Gentiles dance in His Sanctuary—this is an expression of His strongest Might, that He is able to conceal Himself and veil Himself with . . . such utter concealment.¹⁴⁷

This Purim discourse of 1808 gave meaning to exile, and to suffering. Through undergoing the bitter exile the Jews attain their highest exaltation. The key to this is their self-sacrifice, as an expression both of straightforward dedication to Judaism and, on a more spiritualized plane, of surrender of the soul in prayer. The discourse thus spoke both to the ordinary

man and to the man of stature from whom self-sacrifice in pneumatic prayer is the ultimate demand.

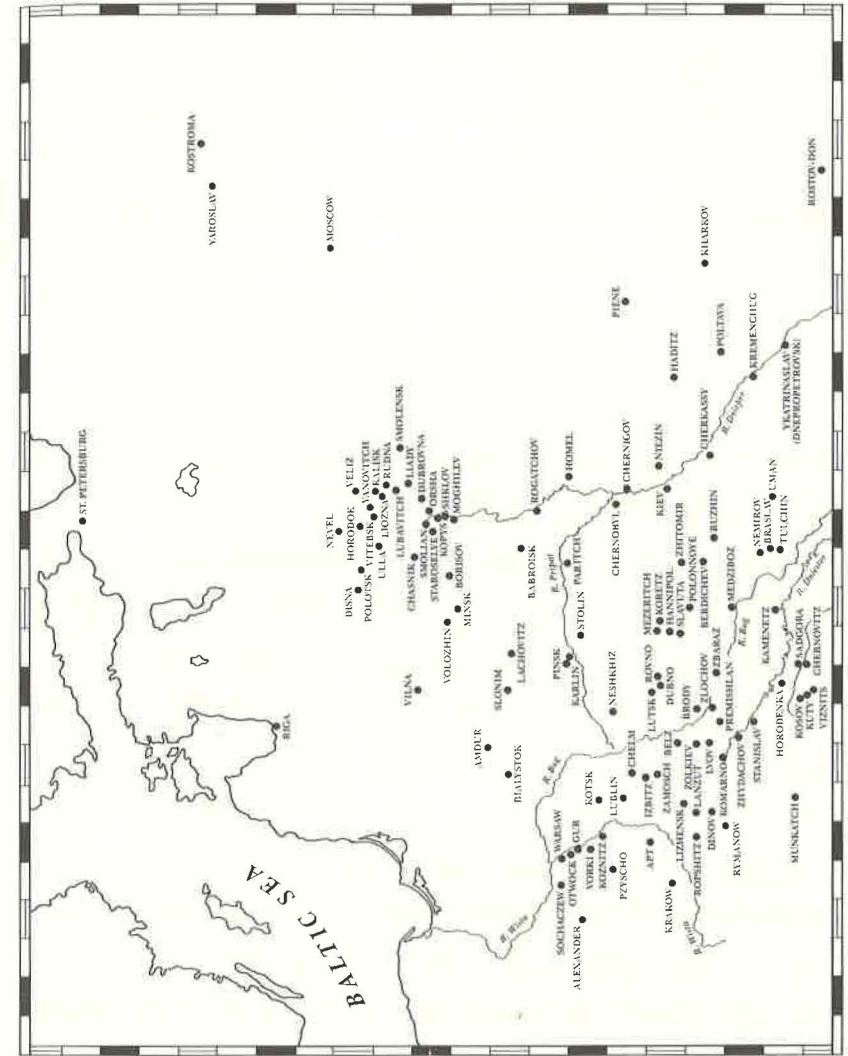
The year 1808 brought economic ruin to the Jews of White Russia. Despite the ukase of December that year suspending the expulsions, the Jewish community continued to be in great distress and was described as "desitute" by an official report of 1812.¹⁴⁸ In 1809 and 1810 there were Purim discourses with the now standard theme of readiness for self-sacrifice in the face of oppression.¹⁴⁹ This interpretation had become a part of the selective anthology of interpretation of Scripture and of Judaism whereby R. Shneur Zalman communicated Hasidic values to, and directly guided, the Hasidic following. Significant for us is the union that we see here of the Habad Hasidic discourse with the more practical aspect of R. Shneur Zalman's guidance. After all, the same urging to defiance and courage was no doubt also communicated in other ways as well. The fusion of the mystical aspect of Hasidism with its role as social leadership had two complementary effects. In the first place the vitality of the esoteric tradition was introduced into the practical directive, so that the private struggle of the individual could be seen as part of a wider and more grand landscape, imparting meaning and purpose to what might otherwise be simply lonely tragedy.

The second effect is that the mystical teachings, by relating to the contemporary struggle on the sociopolitical front, became in themselves more relevant to the ordinary individual. From the point of view of the Habad ethos, this in itself was a desirable achievement. The discourses which related directly to the daily reality of the Hasidic follower drew with them, as it were, other teachings with a purely spiritual demand. Through employment of the discourse as a medium of general communal leadership, therefore, the ideal of the broad communication of the esoteric could more easily be achieved.

Conclusion

Our survey of the development of R. Shneur Zalman's discourses has thus enabled us to see clearly the stages whereby they became relevant to ever broader echelons of society. Throughout this process, the esoteric kernel, the step of transcendence of self, *bitul*, was preserved, although it took different forms. For the man of stature, other-worldly detachment from ordinary desires; for the enthusiast, contemplation in prayer leading to ecstasy; for the scholar, intellectualist absorption in the luminous dialectic of the Divine; and for the ordinary man and woman, positive *mesirat nefesh*,

defiant readiness to suffer every deprivation for the sake of Judaism. As R. Shneur Zalman's teachings evolved in style and content to reach these broader circles of society, so too the Habad fraternity became more clearly defined within the wider Hasidic movement. As we have seen, this process was colored by serious conflicts with other Hasidic leaders. Self-definition of this school and its ethos was yet to continue. The contrasts, however, were not to be in relation to other Hasidic groups but within the ranks of the Habad fraternity itself. Again, this process was to be associated with conflict, both in the lifetime of R. Shneur Zalman and more overtly after his demise, in the ensuing struggle for leadership.



Hasidic Eastern Europe

"LUBAVITCH" AND "STAROSELYE"

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, as we have seen, the Habad movement led by R. Shneur Zalman had a clearly defined ethos, in which the meaningful communication of esoteric teachings and other-worldly demands had a central role. During R. Shneur Zalman's last years and in the transition to the next generation of leadership, development in the definition of the mode and reach of this communication continued. Thus in the inner circle of major figures close to the *Rebbe* we find divergent views on the direction of Habad. During R. Shneur Zalman's lifetime there were traces of conflict, but for the most part the differences were contained. When he passed away, however, in January 1813, there soon formed two rival factions.¹ At first glance, the issues which divided them seem to concern subtle questions in the life of the spirit: which is the superior path, emotional enthusiasm or intellectualist abnegation? Further, considering that one faction was led by a son of R. Shneur Zalman, R. Dov Ber, and another by his foremost disciple, R. Aaron Halevi Horowitz, one might view the conflict as simply a quite natural phenomenon, the birth pangs of the dynastic structure which was to become predominant in Hasidic leadership. However, closer examination shows that the division in the fraternity had also other levels of significance. A less overt issue—but one at least equally important—concerned the concept not of the *Zaddik* but of the *hasid*. Was the typical follower of Habad to be a man with pneumatic qualities, an enthusiast for whom contemplation leads invariably to inspired ecstasy? Or was he to be a person drawn from the broad literate class of the period, transformed in some way by immersion in the intellectualist Habad teachings? Put another way, the argument concerned the teachings themselves. One view was that they should be imparted only to people who were capable of transports of heartfelt ecstasy, those who formed the spiritual elite. The opposing view was that the Habad teachings, cloaked in their discursive, almost philosophic, guise, somehow had the power to speak to the soul via the mind, despite the lack of spiritual stature on the

part of the *hasid*. Hence, translated into suitable forms, they could be transmitted virtually to anyone.

We therefore find that the dialectic implicit in any attempt to communicate esoteric teachings or values was being acted out in the political arena of the leadership of a large and powerful movement. Both factions stood for the communication of Hasidic teachings, the central Habad ethos as defined by R. Shneur Zalman in contradistinction to R. Avraham of Kalisk. However, in the struggle after R. Shneur Zalman's demise one faction, in effect, stood for the status quo; the other, for furthering the communication process. This important point of contention complemented the overtly expressed issue of the relative merits of emotional enthusiasm or abnegatory intellectualism. An underlying factor in the debate was therefore the powerful and ancient theme of the preciousness of the esoteric treasure at the heart of Torah, and the strictures on revealing its glory to any but a small elite. However, since the dispute took place within a movement already defined by the ethos of communication, we do not find the conflict openly discussed in such terms, and we have to read between the lines in order to discern the wider issue, the relationship between spirituality and society.

This conflict in the second generation of Habad led to the majority faction following a path of more emphatic endorsement of the ethos of ever-increasing communication of the esoteric. This, we maintain, is the real point of originality of the Habad school. It is therefore in the second generation of the movement that its direction becomes unambiguously clear. In the ensuing pages we will attempt to examine some of the details of this process whereby, through inner conflict, self-definition of this branch of Hasidism was achieved.

R. Dov Ber and R. Aaron

The leading protagonists in the contest for leadership were R. Dov Ber, the oldest son of R. Shneur Zalman, and R. Aaron ben Moshe Halevi Horowitz, his foremost disciple.²

R. Dov Ber was born in November 1773; a year after the death of the Maggid of Mezeritch, whose name he was given. R. Aaron Halevi, seven years his senior, became a close follower of R. Shneur Zalman around 1783.³ According to Haim Meir Hielman, the Habad chronicler, R. Aaron was accorded free access to R. Shneur Zalman like one of his own sons. We can well imagine these two figures growing up together at the heart of the incipient Habad group. Hielman states that they were close friends study-

ing talmudic literature and Hasidic teachings together.⁴ Both were given positions of responsibility by R. Shneur Zalman. The *Liozna Regulations* indicate that they were both given the responsibility to expound and explain R. Shneur Zalman's teachings to the members of the Hasidic fraternity.⁵ Further, a number of letters by R. Aaron are extant addressed to the Hasidic following asking for material support for the needs of R. Shneur Zalman.⁶ When the latter was arrested in 1798 R. Aaron devoted himself to making the rounds of the various communities, collecting the funds needed to meet the exigencies of the situation.⁷

After 1800 the town of Liady became the new centre of the Habad school. R. Aaron took up residence there and continued in his position of "leading disciple," as he was later termed by R. Shneur Zalman's brother, R. Yehudah Leib of Yanovitch.⁸ A letter dated 1804, addressed to the members of the fraternity and pleading for increased spiritual effort in prayer, was signed by both R. Dov Ber and R. Aaron.⁹ During this period, R. Aaron, R. Dov Ber, and also the latter's younger brother, R. Moshe, would occasionally deliver Hasidic discourses themselves.¹⁰ In the case of R. Dov Ber it seems that this was particularly encouraged by his father.¹¹ He also wrote letters of spiritual guidance addressed to the fraternity as a whole.¹² We therefore see both R. Dov Ber and R. Aaron playing leading parts in the carefully organized structure of the Habad Hasidic school. However, this harmonious situation was not destined to last. During the last few years of R. Shneur Zalman's lifetime a controversy arose around the powerful figure of R. Aaron. This probably began with a dispute with R. Dov Ber, which may well have related to their differing concepts of the Habad ideal. This division led to R. Aaron becoming estranged from R. Shneur Zalman's household and ostracized by other leading personalities in the Hasidic community. Around 1808 the conflict became so severe that he had to sell his house in Liady and return to his birthplace, Orsha.¹³ From then on there was a permanent rift between him and R. Dov Ber. This was to become an open contest for leadership after R. Shneur Zalman had passed away. This event took place during the final stages of the war with Napoleon.

It is well known that R. Shneur Zalman gave his support to the tsar in the battle against Napoleon. Unlike other Hasidic leaders, notably those of Poland, who believed that French victory would bring lasting benefits to the Jewish community, R. Shneur Zalman was convinced that this would be to the ultimate detriment of Judaism.¹⁴ He therefore advised the

Jewish community to try to aid the Russian army, and there are even stories of Habad *hasidim* being active as spies on behalf of the tsar. This support was to earn considerable favour for the Habad group from government quarters.

As the war progressed, R. Shneur Zalman was advised by generals of the Russian army to leave Liady and to seek safety in the interior of Russia. The entire household of the Hasidic leader began this journey in August 1812. After several months of travelling, undergoing the bitter Russian winter of that year, R. Shneur Zalman passed away in January 1813. R. Dov Ber was not with him when he died. He had been sent some distance ahead to Kremenchug to find accommodation for the family. Now he came to Haditz, where his father had been buried, and attended to the building of an *ohel* (prayer chamber) by the grave. Then he returned to Kremenchug, where he was to remain until the spring.¹⁵ From there he wrote a letter to the members of the fraternity which, despite its grief-stricken tone, bears the mark of a letter from a *Rebbe* to his followers.¹⁶ According to Hielman, a group of these now made the journey to Kremenchug to invite R. Dov Ber to return to White Russia in order formally to take the place of his father. Where precisely he would go had yet to be decided, for the buildings maintained by R. Shneur Zalman in Liady had been burnt during the ravage of the war, and the site had been appropriated by others during the rebuilding operations.¹⁷ A nobleman, named in Habad tradition Tchekhovsky, invited R. Dov Ber to come and settle in a townlet in his territory: Lubavitch.¹⁸ Thus there came into being a new center for the Habad movement, one which would retain its importance for over a hundred years. In 1813, however, the position of Lubavitch and of R. Dov Ber himself was undergoing serious challenge.

Ostensibly, the division began during the months of R. Dov Ber's absence in far off Kremenchug. A considerable following gathered round the powerful figure of R. Aaron, claiming him as the truly fitting successor of R. Shneur Zalman. In the general atmosphere of disorientation, R. Aaron had written to a number of potential followers inviting them to become his disciples.¹⁹ This eventually grew into a rival Hasidic group, based in the town of Staroselye, in the Moghilev district. For the next fifteen years "Lubavitch" and "Staroselye" were to be the expression of two quite different perspectives on the aims and ideals of Habad.²⁰

A key factor in the formation of two rival groups within Habad was the attitude of a considerable proportion of the leading *hasidim* towards R.

Dov Ber. Some of these men, to a large extent charismatic figures in their own right, did not think of him as manifesting their ideal of a Hasidic leader. As we will see, his style differed considerably from that of his father. In the view of a number of these men of stature, the situation after R. Shneur Zalman's demise was parallel to that after the death of the Maggid of Mezeritch. They felt that just as, in the past, each major follower had become a Hasidic leader in his own right, so too now the leadership should be divided among the most prominent *hasidim*, they themselves.²¹ It is likely that many of these men had positions of note during R. Shneur Zalman's lifetime as expounders of Habad thought. A number voiced the opinion that after R. Shneur Zalman, no successor was possible.²² Yet others felt that R. Dov Ber might well be suitable as a Hasidic leader, but not over them. His mode of delivering a discourse, they considered, was mere exposition and explanation of his father's teachings, lacking the novelty which they themselves craved. They did not expect him to be able to produce "new teachings." Hielman records a striking exchange in which an unnamed figure said as much to R. Dov Ber, suggesting he move away to Greater Russia where people were not yet used to the Habad discourses, and would be inspired by mere repetition of R. Shneur Zalman's teachings. Meanwhile, the suggestion continued, the fraternity in White Russia would be led by a consortium of major disciples who would take turns to visit the various communities. The lack of new teachings drawn from the world of the Merkavah would thus be compensated for by variety. R. Dov Ber is said to have given a sharp retort to this.²³ There was no doubt in his mind that he drew on the same revelatory source as his father before him. For R. Dov Ber, however, an important aspect of this revelation took the form of explanation and elaboration of his father's teachings, taking to an extreme the intellectualist mode characteristic of the last decade of R. Shneur Zalman's life. Throughout the years of his leadership, many of R. Dov Ber's discourses (especially those on the weekly scriptural readings) functioned as broad expositions of earlier discourses by his father, although they contain much original material in his own distinctive manner.²⁴ At the same time, he composed a number of tracts on various aspects of Divine service which include some of the most remarkable works in Jewish religious literature.²⁵ For R. Dov Ber, the expositions and elaborations of his father's teachings were themselves the expression of a mystical connection with the source from which those teachings had originally emanated. We see this belief expressed in an intense, almost ecstatic letter, a fragment of which is recorded by Hielman:

Thank G-d, my father bequeathed me the precious treasure of the sweetness and inwardness of the esoteric teachings. Believe me, if G-d would favor me so that I could receive their profundity in my lowly soul, I would say: I have received my future reward; I do not want more. The main thing is explaining his teachings. They radiate and live, flowing from their source as if he were still alive, and even more so. G-d has granted me this power, that all his sacred words flow afresh from their source.²⁶

We see here that R. Dov Ber felt an inspired connection with his father's teachings, enabling him to repeat them, with the lengthy interpolations and explanations which are characteristic of his method, and at the same time claim for his expositions an authority of the spirit which goes beyond originality. It is interesting that in a tract he later wrote on contemplation, R. Dov Ber described the process whereby an initial concept is broadened into a metaphorical river of thought.²⁷ Through the breadth and length of this river, signifying the elaboration of the initial concept and its translation into other terms and images "until a child could understand it," one plumbs more profound levels of its source.²⁸ This means that in R. Dov Ber's view, the process of communication of an idea, evolving more accessible forms, taps ever deeper levels of its essence. For many of the men of stature in R. Shneur Zalman's following, however, there was the feeling that they did not need this process beyond the stage it had reached in the lifetime of their master. They saw themselves as having acquired the ability to edify the contemporary membership of the fraternity, on the basis of the teachings in *Tanya* and the oral discourses they had heard and studied. The idea that the scope of Habad within society might broaden further was not their initial concern. Instead, faced with the general disorientation of the Jewish community after the Napoleonic Wars, they wanted to be sure that the wealth of spiritual counsel and teaching provided by R. Shneur Zalman would not be dissipated. As mentioned above, some indeed had lost hope about this. Thinking that no successor to R. Shneur Zalman was possible, they are described by Hielman as crying "woe, woe, we have no leader and Hasidism is dying."²⁹

This was not the view of a number of leading figures in the Habad fraternity, who gave their support to R. Dov Ber. Chief among these was R. Pinhas Reizes Shick of Shklov.³⁰ R. Pinhas had been one of the foremost disciples of R. Shneur Zalman and was also prominent for his transcriptions of the latter's teachings. He now sent an open letter to the members

of the fraternity.³¹ One aspect of this is the claim that R. Shneur Zalman himself wanted his son to be *Rebbe* after him. R. Pinhas describes an event which, he claimed, had taken place in 1811, at the time of the marriage of R. Dov Ber's daughter Devorah Leah to R. Yaakov Yisrael, son of the Hasidic leader R. Mordekhai of Chernobil. During the course of the festivities R. Shneur Zalman had called R. Pinhas and R. Dov Ber aside into a room and closed the door. He told R. Pinhas that he wanted R. Dov Ber to conduct the institution of *pidyonot* after he himself had passed away.³² In terms of the vocabulary of Hasidism this meant unambiguously that he should be *Rebbe*. There is no doubt that among the rank and file of the fraternity this disclosure was taken very seriously. However, there was another aspect to the letter of R. Pinhas: the emphasis that R. Dov Ber was a paradigm of the ideal of communication. In the secret interview with R. Shneur Zalman during the wedding, this was adduced as the reason why the founder of Habad wanted R. Dov Ber to be his successor. R. Pinhas writes:

In brief I will let you know the content of R. Shneur Zalman's sacred words: Basic to the nature of his son is the concern "to spread the fountains to the outside" through the Hasidic teachings; this is his desire, his yearning and also his thought-out goal—to teach the Divine word to his community, and he has put his eye and heart on nothing else. This being so, [R. Shneur Zalman] was commanding me that after he ascends to the Supernal Yeshivah, I should make sure that *pidyonot* should be conducted by him and not by anyone else.³³

"To spread the fountains to the outside" is a quotation from the famous letter of the Baal Shem Tov in which he expressed the ideal of communication of the esoteric.³⁴ This reference is not by chance. Habad had made its goal the spreading of the radiant fountains of the Merkavah realm to the "outside." The method it had evolved was that of the intellectualist Habad teachings. Assuming that this letter is authentic, R. Dov Ber was seen, at least by his father, as one who could continue in that direction of development.

The letter from R. Pinhas also refers to the fact that in the lifetime of R. Shneur Zalman, his son would often transmit his teachings to the members of the fraternity.³⁵ This point is amplified in another letter sent during the early period of conflict concerning the succession. R. Yehudah Leib of Yanovitch, R. Shneur Zalman's brother, wrote to R. Aaron rebuking him

for provoking dispute. According to this letter, R. Aaron himself had admitted that R. Dov Ber had broader understanding of the Hasidic teachings than he had, and that his prayer was with greater intensity of *mesirat nefesh*, self-sacrifice. Of particular importance, however, is the way R. Dov Ber is described as a communicator of Hasidic thought. In his own lifetime, R. Shneur Zalman had willingly given him the authority to teach Hasidic discourses "instead of him and in his presence." R. Dov Ber did not merely explain his father's teachings: he would go further, disclosing aspects of esoteric ideas beyond the bounds set by R. Shneur Zalman. According to R. Yehudah Leib, such trespasses beyond bounds were eventually accepted by R. Shneur Zalman as implicit in the evolutionary nature of Torah thought:

Even exalted esoteric teachings, which our holy *Rebbe* [R. Shneur Zalman] did not want to reveal to everyone, his son R. Dov Ber would teach, against his will. About this he would say: What should I do? Each generation has its teachers. Perhaps the generation has reached the generation of my son. In my time, I would not have explained [so much].³⁶

The sense of progression in the increasing disclosure of the esoteric fount of Hasidism is noteworthy, together with the fact that R. Dov Ber was seen as filling the role of communicator to the new generation. For R. Yehudah Leib, an important figure in the controversy which divided the Habad fraternity, this was another point strengthening R. Dov Ber's claim to leadership, and he chided R. Aaron for his opposition. He advised him to be consoled that he was seen as the greatest of all the disciples of R. Shneur Zalman. At the same time, he claimed, R. Dov Ber is yet greater. While he wrote with considerable respect, R. Yehudah Leib's message was clear. Using the logic of Habad that the mind can control the will, he advised R. Aaron to shun the position of *Rebbe*. Rather than desiring that followers should flock to him, R. Aaron should want the reverse.³⁷

Son or Disciple

Both R. Yehudah Leib and R. Pinhas stress the idea that R. Dov Ber's claim to leadership was strengthened by virtue of his being the son of R. Shneur Zalman.³⁸ At this time the Hasidic movement as a whole was in a state of transition regarding succession to leadership. While in the first two generations the mantle had passed from master to disciple, in the third generation the dynastic principle began to emerge.³⁹ This tendency was

quite consistent with the prevailing attitudes in contemporary Jewish society as a whole. In Poland and Russia, in any form of communal leadership, such as the rabbinate, the fact that a man was the son or son-in-law of the previous leader, other things being equal, was a good and perfectly legitimate qualification for election to that post.⁴⁰ This phenomenon could claim support from the halakhic tradition. Thus Maimonides writes:

Not only kingship, but all aspects of leadership and all appointed positions among the Jewish people should be bequeathed to one's son and grandson for ever, as long as the son is a fitting successor to his father by virtue of his wisdom and his piety.⁴¹

In fact, quite apart from other considerations, there was dispute among halakhists on the extent to which this principle should be applied literally to the position of communal rabbi.⁴² Nonetheless, in the area in which the Hasidic movement was spreading, in both the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries, the evidence indicates that an average of one-third of instances of succession to the post of communal rabbi were to a son, son-in-law, or other close relative of the previous incumbent.⁴³ There are great differences between Hasidic leadership and the role of a paid communal rabbi. However, the case of the rabbinate illustrates the presence of a deep-rooted pattern of hereditary succession in the Jewish community, not only in the Sefardi East, but also in the Ashkenazi West. Hasidism, once it had established its mode of leadership and its structure, began to follow the general trend. An additional factor is the aura of theurgic power which surrounds the Hasidic *Zaddik*, imparting to him the quality of prophetic kingship, relating to the traditional conceptions of David and Solomon. Implicit in this concept is the significance of lineage. Another possible parallel is with the Jewish priesthood, in which the special power of blessing is transmitted simply by virtue of being a descendant of Aaron.

In early Hasidism, coexistent with any likely expectations concerning the offspring of a leader were the rival factors of personal charisma and organizational power, qualities which might well be exhibited in a leading disciple as much as or more than in a son. During the initial period of expansion of the Hasidic movement, the mantle of authority tended to pass from teacher to disciple or, in some cases, to a galaxy of disciples. At the same time the dynastic principle gradually came to the fore and eventually became dominant.⁴⁴ In the case of Habad, we have already seen that

R. Shneur Zalman's own position as Hasidic leader had evolved because he was a disciple of the Maggid and of R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk. However, it is interesting that he showed considerable deference to R. Barukh of Medziboz, the grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, a fact which indicates respect for the principle of the noble lineage of the descendants of a *Zaddik*. In 1798, when R. Shneur Zalman was released from prison, he wrote to R. Barukh informing him of this as a victory for the Baal Shem Tov and all his followers: the entire Hasidic movement.⁴⁵ Clearly it was the fact that R. Barukh was the grandson of the Baal Shem Tov which made R. Shneur Zalman write this letter to him. However, later R. Barukh sided with R. Avraham of Kalisk, against R. Shneur Zalman. In 1810, when the leader of Habad came to ask R. Barukh for permission to collect funds in his territory, the money to be used for Jews dispossessed of their homes in the villages, there was a severe argument between them. There is an account that one aspect to their conflict concerned the inheritance of leadership. R. Barukh is reputed to have said, "I am the grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, therefore you must respect me." To this R. Shneur Zalman is said to have replied, "I too am the grandson of the Baal Shem Tov spiritually, for the Maggid was the disciple of the Baal Shem Tov and I am the disciple of the Maggid."⁴⁶ This conflict with R. Barukh may well have had the effect of weakening the respect paid to the dynastic principle in the ranks of Habad. R. Dov Ber's right to succession had to be argued on the grounds of actual appointment by his father and the position of authority, particularly with regard to the communication of Hasidic teachings, that he held in the lifetime of R. Shneur Zalman. Both R. Pinhas of Shklov and R. Yehudah Leib emphasize these points but also stress his descent, and in the eyes of the rank and file of the fraternity this factor probably had considerable importance. Nonetheless, a considerable sector of the Habad group followed R. Aaron. Let us now try to understand why they did so.

Styles of Prayer

From its earliest days the Hasidic movement was characterized by its concern for the inner experience taking place during prayer.⁴⁷ The theme of *devekut* and a variety of contemplative techniques for reaching and maintaining this state form a considerable portion of the earliest Hasidic teachings as we know them. Transmitting these ideas in suitable form to the broader reaches of the Hasidic community was, as we have seen, an important aspect of R. Shneur Zalman's endeavor, and this became a distinguishing feature of the Habad school.

In addition to themes or techniques for contemplation, Hasidism was also marked by new modes in the praxis of prayer.⁴⁸ This feature of Hasidic teaching was not formalized on the textual level, since it was transmitted primarily through imitation of the Hasidic leader or other models of the Hasidic ethos. Hence we do not usually find *instructions* to gesticulate in prayer, to sing, to weep, or to pray tumultuously and clamorously. Nonetheless these features were part of the praxis of Hasidic prayer, as we see from incidental references and also from criticisms by the *mitnagdim*.⁴⁹ A major aspect of the conflict between R. Dov Ber and R. Aaron concerned this issue: the overt practical framework of prayer which formed the guiding channel for the inner cerebral and emotional activity. R. Aaron stood for open, tumultuous expression of emotion, while R. Dov Ber gave an example of silence and stillness. In their formal teachings, as rival Hasidic leaders, we see clearly the division between them regarding the desired direction of thought and feeling during prayer. This will be discussed below. They themselves did not write of the division between them concerning praxis, but it is clearly evident from anecdotal material. While some of the details of this might be mere legend, the general impression conveyed seems reasonable and is probably authentic.

One aspect of the conflict concerns not the rival styles of prayer per se, but the way these styles related to that of R. Shneur Zalman. Many of the contemporary Habad followers were preoccupied by the question of whether the new *Rebbe* truly manifested a continuation of the old one. Let us therefore now consider the anecdotal description of R. Shneur Zalman's manner of prayer, and also assess what kind of overt behavior during prayer he expected from his followers.

The material available indicates that R. Shneur Zalman was famous for ecstatic and emotionally enthusiastic prayer. His style of delivering discourses was of the same quality. It seems, however, that in prayer he expressed two different styles: one, in public, of extreme enthusiasm; the other, in private, of silence. The following traditions are recorded by Hielman.⁵⁰

R. Shneur Zalman's delivery of Hasidic teachings was very awe-inspiring and all those who were present . . . would become enthusiastic for Divine service in a very remarkable way. . . His prayer too was very awe-inspiring. His grandson the *Zemah Zedek* said of him that he had a thirst to be absorbed in His [Divine] Essence. In his *devekut* he would say "I do not

want Your Garden of Eden, I do not want Your World to Come, I want only You alone." . . . When he prayed alone he would pray silently. But in public he would be tumultuous. . . . During his prayer he would beat his hands on the wall until blood would flow from his hands, and he would not feel it at all. So they fixed padding on the wall.⁵¹

Was the "tumultuous" style of prayer of R. Shneur Zalman a style which he expected to be imitated by his followers? When we look at his letters we see that sometimes he demands what we would consider ecstatic, enthusiastic prayer, while other letters show a much more moderate demand of the individual. Thus around 1790 R. Shneur Zalman wrote to a certain R. Yitzhak Yafeh of Kopys warning him against fasting and the kabbalistic practice of self-imposed "exile." The true counsel is "to pray with unlimited joy." The nature of this joy is "to experience a great delight in the greatness of the Creator . . . as if one were seeing with one's own eyes the greatness of a human King who is revealing himself with the splendor of his greatness and the boundless glory of his kingship." The letter continues with advice concerning preparation for prayer including "to weep profusely and to ask complete forgiveness from G-d with a clamorous voice." While most of R. Yitzhak's study should be in the domain of *Zohar* and Midrash, R. Shneur Zalman advises him to use for preparation for prayer *Reshit Hokhmah*, a sixteenth-century kabbalistic work which emphasizes the ascetic, world-transcending ideal.⁵² This study will lead him "to break his heart on account of his transgressions and sins of youth in order that he should be able to weep." Through this weeping he will rid himself of all sorrow and attain the total joy required in prayer. However, when he comes to the words "forgive us" in the liturgy, he should again "weep as much as possible."⁵³ Clearly R. Shneur Zalman was making an intensive spiritual demand on this follower—a demand which included overtly emotional prayer not dissimilar from his own style of service.

By contrast other letters by R. Shneur Zalman on the subject of prayer indicate a more restrained directive. In a circulating letter addressed to the Hasidic communities, he states: "Be very careful concerning . . . the service of the heart, which is prayer with *kavvanah*. All should begin together, word by word, not this one here and that one there, this one silent and that one chattering." The letter continues with advice concerning the selection of the leaders of the prayer who should be people "who pray word by word, in a moderate way, aloud, not over lengthily nor too briefly." This

letter also encourages the individual communities to divide up the tractates of the Talmud among their members so that in the course of a year each community completes the whole Talmud. Each of the participants in this should regularly recite extra psalms. Careful study of the complex laws of the Sabbath is also recommended.⁵⁴ These instructions are clearly addressed to people who are scholars but are on a different level from R. Yitzhak Yafeh of Kopys. A number of similarly restrained letters concerning prayer are extant. In one there is a warning against wild behaviour before prayer;⁵⁵ another, to the community of Kopys, demands that they should ensure there are ten people praying together at the commencement of the morning prayers.⁵⁶ Another letter demands that the main part of the morning prayer should take an hour and that people should not walk back and forth during the prayers.⁵⁷ In another instance, R. Shneur Zalman takes into account the fact that some people have more time to devote to prayer than others. During the week, "teachers and those who are supported by their fathers" are expected to spend a hour and a half at prayer. These people should form the basis of the service in the synagogue, and one of their number should lead the prayers. Business people "who do not have so much time" should not lead the prayers: the unspoken inference is that they will pray more quickly and leave when they have to. On Sabbaths, however, everyone is expected "to pray at length with *kavvanah* of their hearts and souls for G-d."⁵⁸

There is little doubt that contemplative activity was an important ingredient of the prayers in the congregations to which these letters were addressed. The nature of this contemplation is defined in a number of passages in *Tanya*, in which we find depiction of a variety of contemplative modes. Some lead to great intensity of feeling, while others are comparatively mild and make little emotional demand on the Hasidic follower. It is likely that the milder forms of contemplation were regarded as suitable for the broader membership of the Habad community, who were also expected to behave with suitable decorum in the synagogue.⁵⁹

There is little doubt that in the lifetime of R. Shneur Zalman, his leading disciple, R. Aaron Halevi, was a member of the small elite who prayed with overtly extravagant enthusiasm. Hielman writes of him, in his later years as Hasidic leader: "The style of his prayer was very awe-inspiring with great excitement and tremendous ecstasy so that anyone who saw or heard him would become very excited. All those who followed him had a style of prayer with ecstasy and excitement."⁶⁰ It is likely that this was also

his style before becoming leader in Staroselye. In R. Aaron the overtly enthusiastic praxis manifested by R. Shneur Zalman was continued. For a number of the Hasidic followers, particularly those who themselves aspired to clamorously enthusiastic prayer, R. Aaron represented a welcome continuity of style.

It is against this background that we can now consider the style of prayer of R. Dov Ber. The immediate impression that we get is that this was the opposite extreme. "His prayer was silent without any movement or stirring of any limb at all. Within him he was burning like a burning flame but it was not revealed externally at all."⁶¹

Yakov Cadaner was a member of the Habad circle who apparently spent some time with R. Aaron of Staroselye and later became a follower of R. Dov Ber. In a collection of anecdotes he compiled he gives some interesting accounts.⁶² One of these concerns an incident in which R. Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev was visiting R. Shneur Zalman; the latter highly praised his son R. Dov Ber. After the meal R. Levi Yitzhak asked R. Dov Ber to lead the grace after Meals.

His intention was to see his great ecstasy and *devekut* in the Grace after Meals. But R. Dov Ber said the Grace like a simple man without ecstasy at all. This greatly surprised R. Levi Yitzhak . . . for his Grace after Meals was really like that of a person who knew only the translation of the words, without any inner meaning.⁶³

According to Cadaner's account, R. Shneur Zalman told R. Levi Yitzhak, who was quite taken aback, that R. Dov Ber had full knowledge of the kabbalistic teachings concerning "the down-chaining of the worlds, from the highest of all levels to the lowest of all levels." He stated the reason for his apparent simplicity: "His service is very exalted, and I am jealous of such service, for I cannot achieve it. For within he is filled with supernal love and fear, but it is not at all apparent externally."⁶⁴ As will be pointed out below, one of the main themes of R. Dov Ber's teaching was *bitul*, self-abnegation. Here we see it, one might say, in a social context. Instead of melodiously chanting the words of the prayer, imparting an atmosphere of deep ecstatic feeling, R. Dov Ber recites it in a simple way like an ordinary man, startling R. Levi Yitzhak, one of the foremost exponents of the mainstream of Hasidic teaching. Overt enthusiasm in prayer was indeed the hallmark of the Hasidic leader, whether in the generation of the Baal Shem

Tov, the Maggid, or R. Shneur Zalman and his colleagues. The simplicity of R. Dov Ber represented a new departure quite baffling to a section of the Habad following.⁶⁵

Complementary to R. Dov Ber's apparent simplicity, saying the prayer like "a person who knows only the translation of the words," there was another mode, one of mystical silence and immobility. Cadaner describes an incident he himself witnessed, as a follower of R. Dov Ber. In this the Lubavitch leader prayed with unnatural stillness. "On Rosh Hashanah he prayed at very great length, that is, he stood in the *Amidah* prayer for about three hours, and I did not see the slightest movement from him. He just stood like a pillar of iron stuck in the ground."⁶⁶

Another incident witnessed by Cadaner did not concern prayer, but a trancelike state, in which R. Dov Ber stood "like a stick, without any movement or feeling" for several hours. Descriptions of this kind are very rare in Jewish mystical literature, and it merits quotation at length.⁶⁷ The event described took place in the village of Krislave, where R. Dov Ber and a group of *hasidim* including Cadaner were staying while on a journey. On the second evening there, R. Dov Ber delivered a discourse which greatly impressed his hearers. "Even the exceptional, famous, original *hasidim* said they had never heard anything like that from him, nor from his father." The *hasidim* went to eat their evening meal.

Soon after the meal the serving man came to me very excitedly and said to me: "if you want to look at the face of the *Rebbe*, this is a good time." I said to him "I do not want to, for I know he greatly objects to such things because of his reticent nature." The serving man promised that "at the moment he will not notice you at all." I decided it would be right to have a look, and went with the serving man. He opened the door of his room and I saw the *Rebbe* standing in the middle of the room without any movement. His face was glowing as with flames, and his eyes were open. I said to myself he could certainly see me, and I was afraid of his anger so I jumped backwards. The serving man took hold of my coat and said loudly "do not be afraid at all, for now he cannot see and cannot hear for he is in the upper worlds, even though you see his body in this world." I said "How do *you* know such things? You are just an ordinary person." He said "It is not my idea, but from experience. For several times I have seen him like this." After that I gazed at his face and I too realized that then he could not see nor hear, even

though his eyes were open; he had no sensation from any physical senses at all. I stood at the entrance of the room gazing very intently at his face: perhaps I would detect some animation in it. Simply his eyes were open and his face glowed like a Seraph. I stood like that from the tenth hour till the third hour. The servants were coming and going in the room and the *Rebbe* was standing like a stick, without any movement or feeling. At the end of the third hour the serving man said to my cart-driver "Lay the table for it is time he ate a little, for he has not eaten all day." He did this, laid the table and took the ewer in his hand and stood in front of him so that he should wash his hands. He stood some time by the *Rebbe* and understood that he could not see him at all, although his eyes were open. The serving man said to him "why do you not wake up the *Rebbe* so he should wash his hands. He has not eaten warm food all day." He said "I am afraid to touch him." The serving man said "if so, whatever happens to me I have to wake him up." The serving man went and took hold of the sleeve of his coat and said "I am asking the *Rebbe* to wash his hands." He did not answer him at all, but walked from the middle of the room to the wall and stood there as before.⁶⁸

At this point Cadaner was no longer able to see R. Dov Ber's face, so he retired to his room. Later the serving man told him that after another hour of immobility R. Dov Ber had suddenly come out of his meditative trance and sat down at the table, where he ate normally "with great joy."

According to this account by Cadaner, R. Dov Ber told his serving man that during the Hasidic discourse he had said earlier in the evening he had had a spiritual visitation from the souls of his late father, R. Shneur Zalman, the Maggid, and the Baal Shem Tov. After the discourse the sense of contact with R. Shneur Zalman continued. Then, R. Dov Ber told the serving man, "The fact that I stood a long time in the middle of the room was because I was repeating the discourse again before my father, and he revealed to me wonderful secrets concerning it."⁶⁹

There is no doubt that Cadaner was a Hasidic raconteur and loved a good story, as the title of his book *Sippurim Noraim (Tales of Awe)* attests. Unlike many of the stories in this work, however, his accounts of R. Dov Ber are based on what he claims to be events he saw himself. It is quite plausible that Cadaner should be among the entourage of *hasidim* accompanying R. Dov Ber on a journey. Further, it seems unlikely that an ac-

count of this kind should be completely fabricated. The trance state in itself embodies no obvious miracle. Indeed, it might well not be considered very meaningful to the normal reader. These points lead us to feel that R. Dov Ber indeed underwent such states; they constituted a further step in the direction of mystical abnegation and self-transcendence. This phenomenon was not completely new in Hasidic history: the ascent of the soul described by the Baal Shem Tov in his letter to his brother-in-law is a famous earlier example, linked (as we have seen in chapter 1) to the ancient tradition of Merkavah mysticism. This kind of experience is quite different from the more comprehensible and accessible enthusiasm associated with the ecstatic prayer of R. Aaron Halevi. It is also of a different order from the silently meditative style of prayer that R. Dov Ber overtly taught to his followers. However, as we shall see, for the elite of the *hasidim*, meditation on the intellectualist Habad teachings was understood as having the power to tear through the veils of existence allowing access to utter *bitul* of a beyond-worldly nature. For the *hasid*, the ancient theurgy was translated into a form that would not destroy the coordinates of his daily life nor of society around him. For the *Rebbe*, by contrast, there was direct access to the mystic world of departed souls and the fount of spiritual vision and power of the Merkavah realm.⁷⁰

It is not known when R. Dov Ber began to undergo this kind of experience. Possibly it was a direct function of the position of *Rebbe* he assumed in 1813 after the death of his father. Nor is it known whether trancelike states of this kind formed any part of R. Aaron's inner life. Their later teachings on prayer, addressed to their respective followers, overtly concerned the approach to, and by inference the praxis of, inspired contemplative prayer. It is not surprising that in the case of R. Dov Ber the highest level of attainment demanded was that of silent meditation "beyond ecstasy," in which through a state of utter abnegation the Divine core of the intellectualist teachings was disclosed, while by contrast R. Aaron taught a path of overt emotion and openly ecstatic enthusiasm. Their differences as revealed in their published writings will be considered below. However, long before the appearance of these publications, during the years in Liady, it was quite clear that the two leading personalities after R. Shneur Zalman were following different paths. The wild enthusiasm of R. Aaron was ostensibly more similar to that of R. Shneur Zalman. By contrast, R. Dov Ber appeared on the one hand to be an ordinary man, recited Grace as anyone else would, and—it was suspected by some—might well not produce Hasidic teachings of any novelty; on the other his road of silence,

immobility, and abnegation in prayer seemed enigmatic and inimitable, breaking dangerous new ground.

Association with Kalisk-Lachovitz

Another factor in the division between Lubavitch and Staroselye concerns the dispute between R. Shneur Zalman and R. Avraham of Kalisk. As we saw in the previous chapter, after a brief lull around the turn of the century, the attacks by R. Avraham were renewed in 1803. He did his best through heated letters from the Holy Land and changes in the fundraising organization which supported him to make a clear division between Habad and the rest of White Russian Hasidism. In place of R. Shneur Zalman, he appointed R. Mordekhai of Lachovitz as the local *Rebbe* who would act as his, R. Avraham's, personal representative. The most obvious issue in the conflict was R. Shneur Zalman's ever-increasing dissemination of intellectualist Hasidic teachings.

Conflicts of this kind within a movement such as Hasidism tend to polarize attitudes on a wide range of issues which somehow relate to the central ideological division. While the central issue in the Liady-Kalisk conflict was the communication of esoteric thought in society, there is evidence that another, related point of dispute was the question of overt enthusiasm in prayer. Hielman quotes an unnamed descendant of R. Shneur Zalman who explained the polarization within White Russian Hasidism in these terms. He stated that R. Shneur Zalman was concerned that his followers should strive for perfection in two dimensions: that of contemplation, and that of practical action. He was less concerned, however, about the dimension of heartfelt emotion. "For if the emotions are revealed in the heart, this is good, but it is not so essential. (See *Tanya* Ch. 16.) And on this the Kalisker and Lachovitzer disagreed (and afterwards also the Staroselyer, as is known)."⁷¹

This association of Staroselye with Kalisk is striking. It might be that this late informant of Hielman had been influenced in his view of the Liady-Kalisk conflict by the later dispute between R. Dov Ber and R. Aaron. Hielman himself, however, saw it as quite reasonable to suggest that Contemplation and Action, rather than Contemplation and Emotion, were the main focus of R. Shneur Zalman's directive to the fraternity. The reference to "*Tanya* Ch. 16," probably an interpolation by Hielman, is relevant here.

This chapter indeed provides evidence for this view of R. Shneur Zalman's teaching. The chapter gives advice to the person whose contempla-

tion on the Divine does *not* result in heartfelt emotion. Nonetheless he should happily devote himself to the practicalities of Judaism which constitute genuine fulfilment of the intellectual awareness that all existence is as nothing in the face of the Infinite. Clearly, emotional experience in contemplative prayer is not the be-all and end-all in R. Shneur Zalman's system. *Tanya*, written in the early 1790s, gives room for the nonenthusiast in the Habad fold. However, a discourse delivered by R. Shneur Zalman late in 1804 carries the argument a stage further. This discourse contrasts the two paths of emotion and of abnegation. R. Shneur Zalman declares that these correspond with the Sanctuary and the Temple respectively. The Sanctuary, built of living wood, representing emotion, eventually had to give way to the Temple of stone, representing abnegation, which was really higher. Another expression of these two contrasting paths is found, says R. Shneur Zalman, in the form of Joseph, representing emotion, and Judah, who represents abnegation. The conflict between these two is described in terms which make one think of the conflict between Kalisk and Liady, which at that time was raging fiercely:

Now Joseph is higher than Judah, for he [Joseph] is compared to the cedar which grows high and continues to grow. Thus the Ten Tribes pertain to Joseph . . . and hence he is more numerous than Judah. . . . However, in the future, when both Joseph and Judah will be united in total, true unity . . . then Judah will be higher than Joseph.⁷²

One level of interpreting this is as a statement that the mainstream of Hasidism, and the many who support R. Avraham of Kalisk, are the exponents of the path of emotion, while Habad expounds, above all, abnegation. Eventually the two will be reconciled: there will be both emotion and abnegation, but the abnegation will be seen to be higher.

Another discourse extolling *bitul* beyond emotion was said by R. Shneur Zalman in the spring of 1805.⁷³ This includes the idea that enthusiasm (*bitlahavut*) can lead to anger.⁷⁴ A discourse of the following year discusses the situation in which, despite full intellectual understanding of "the greatness of the *Ein Sof*," the person does not feel the ecstasy of love. This is because of a "barrier of iron which intervenes and holds back the light." Despite this, when the person studies Torah "in every word of halakhah or *aggadah* that he learns there is en clothed the aspect of *Hokhmah* in which is en clothed the radiance of the *Ein Sof*. Therefore he achieves *bitul* when he learns Torah . . . and there is no concealment."⁷⁵

The existence of these discourses is complemented by an internal Habad tradition that after "Peterburg," i.e., after R. Shneur Zalman's double arrest and release, there was a new direction in Habad away from radical emotionalism. Previously, the elite among R. Shneur Zalman's followers "had gone out of the city into the nearby countryside to pray with great cries" of solitary emotional intensity.⁷⁶ Now this was curbed: it was made clear that the emotionalism which leads away from the world is not the path.

This new emphasis on abnegation at the expense of emotion relates also to the contemporaneous broadening of the thrust of Habad in Jewish society. After "Peterburg" the steps were more clearly in the direction which led away from the small elite group of enthusiasts. By contrast, R. Avraham of Kalisk presented a perspective in which just such an elite function as the center of Hasidism. Around them, in his view, should gather those who in the purity of their hearts could express similar emotions, based on "ethical teachings and faith in the *Zaddikim*."

During the remaining years of R. Shneur Zalman's life the conflict with R. Avraham continued with increasing strength. In the light of this, the fact that R. Aaron too was seen as an exponent of enthusiasm tended to weaken his position within the Liady community. As we have seen, his name was later linked with Kalisk and Lachovitz. Indeed, after the death of R. Aaron's son R. Haim Rafael, bringing the Staroselye line to a close, some of the Staroselye *hasidim* became followers of Lachovitz.⁷⁷ All this makes more comprehensible the fact that during the first decade of the nineteenth century R. Aaron became the center of a controversy in Liady. Reputedly he was criticized both by members of the household of R. Shneur Zalman and by "many of the foremost *hasidim*."⁷⁸ As mentioned earlier, around 1808 R. Aaron had to sell his house in Liady and return to his birthplace, Orsha. Only occasionally would he come to visit R. Shneur Zalman. This rift, which already existed in R. Shneur Zalman's lifetime, became concretized as an outright struggle for leadership after he passed away.

The Quest for *Bitul*

Their respective published writings indicate three overt issues in the conflict between R. Dov Ber and R. Aaron: the question of whether the exalted state of *bitul*, self-abnegation, was the goal, rather than more accessible emotional enthusiasm; the extent to which intellectualist contemplation which is not followed by an emotional "flush" has a value in itself;

and the limits on intellectualist thought—how high can the human mind reach in its quest for contemplative union with the Infinite?⁷⁹

These points of conflict in Habad concerning the subtleties of contemplative prayer were the expression of broader issues. One was the question of authority and transmission of leadership in the Hasidic movement; another concerned the intended reach of that movement in society. R. Aaron's position tended to limit the membership of his following to those who could achieve heartfelt enthusiasm, men whom we would probably consider charismatics and inspired enthusiasts: they were not charlatans. By contrast, R. Dov Ber's teachings opened the ranks of Habad yet further to include the rational scholars, members of the broad intellectual class in White Russian Jewry. He believed that the Habad teachings drawn from the world of the Merkavah had the power to transmit Divine radiance to the mind of the sober Lithuanian intellectual. Further, he taught, the highest spiritual goals would be attained not by the easy enthusiast, but by that individual who could maintain his focus on the outpouring of the Divine thinly cloaked in its garb of rational structured thought. Through the ability to restrain enthusiasm, to hold back from the emotional climax, the deepest levels of the acknowledged highest goal of Hasidism, selflessness, *bitul*, would be achieved.

These ideas were expressed by R. Dov Ber in a remarkable tract on the subject of enthusiasm and ecstasy.⁸⁰ This was publicized in 1814 and disseminated in manuscript form; it constituted the clarification of the Lubavitch ideal, contrasting with that of Staroselye, and also was an unambiguous expression of R. Dov Ber's assumption of the reins of leadership.

In the atmosphere of the dual conflict Habad-Lachovitz and Lubavitch-Staroselye, there was danger of a coarsening of the lines of argument. The subtle ideals expressed by R. Dov Ber could be misunderstood and misrepresented by his own supporters. The *Tract on Ecstasy* together with other contemporaneous epistles from the pen of R. Dov Ber gave guidance and correction concerning the nature of the path.⁸¹

These sources, all dating from the beginning of his leadership, indicate that some of the devotees of Habad had taken the emphasis on *bitul* rather than emotion to an extreme even in the lifetime of R. Shneur Zalman. A Hasidic movement is governed, perhaps unofficially, by the leading figures in each local community. They impart the ideals and translate the sometimes obscure hints of the *Rebbe* into terms relevant to the daily life of the members of the fraternity. R. Dov Ber criticizes these local Habad leaders for too coarse a representation of the Habad-Lubavitch path. "They com-

pletely forbid enthusiasm," he complains, commenting that his father, R. Shneur Zalman, had himself been upset by this.⁸² These Habad expositors saw the question of emotionalism in prayer as an important divide between themselves and the "old" *hasidim*, probably particularized in the form of Kalisk-Lachovitz.⁸³ It is clear that the Lubavitch-Staroselye division gave further impetus to wholesale condemnation of emotional enthusiasm as mere spiritual self-gratification, serving one's own self rather than the Divine.⁸⁴ According to R. Dov Ber, some of the Habad followers, in their attempt to maintain the purity of the intellectualist path, had even asked his advice how to rid themselves of such emotion as inadvertently overtook them during contemplation. His letter pours scorn on this attitude: it arises among those who have insufficiently imbibed R. Dov Ber's own teaching on the subject of prayer.⁸⁵ Unfortunately, he states, it is these overzealous exponents of his path who are responsible for spreading erroneous attitudes. Any expression of enthusiasm in prayer is mocked; his younger followers are so eager to adopt R. Dov Ber's own style of silent prayer that "they sit silently thinking and fall asleep."⁸⁶

These complaints by R. Dov Ber concern the excesses of those seeking to follow his own subtle path. He is particularly concerned at being cited as the source of what in his eyes is a false direction.⁸⁷ R. Dov Ber exhorts his followers to come to him to receive guidance in person and presents the *Tract on Ecstasy* as the authentic exposition of his views. This remarkable manual on enthusiasm in prayer was brought by his emissaries to the various Lubavitch communities. It functioned as a manifesto at an important epoch in the history of Habad and provided a scale of values which continued to be relevant during the subsequent development of the movement.⁸⁸

Tract on Ecstasy

Two linked concepts are the basis of this manual on approaches to contemplation and prayer. The first is that the Habad teachings bequeathed by R. Shneur Zalman to his followers bear within them a flow of Divine radiance. The second is that through *bitul*, self-abnegation, the Hasidic follower can absorb that radiance, enabling his own soul to join with the Infinite.

These two concepts express the thrust of R. Dov Ber's path. The discourses, ostensibly intellectualist expositions of kabbalistic themes, are considered as revelations from a higher world. All Torah is holy and has a certain theurgic power, as indeed Habad texts emphasize.⁸⁹ R. Dov Ber

believed that the teachings of R. Shneur Zalman, and his own elaborations of them, manifested that power in a particularly open way. The direction of his teaching as Hasidic leader was to emphasize the ability of the ordinary members of the fraternity to partake in what was in essence a theurgic relationship with the Divine.

Given that in R. Dov Ber's view this mystic union is the chief purpose of contemplation and prayer, the phenomena of enthusiasm, heartfelt emotion, and ecstasy are seen in a somewhat critical light. Emotion was not excluded from his system, and as we have seen R. Dov Ber took arms against the suggestion that conventional enthusiasm had no place in Divine service. However, he makes clear at the very beginning of his tract that the aim is not the ecstasy of the self, but of the nonself, the Divine *Neshamah* (soul) within. It is this ecstasy which has a Divine quality; otherwise the enthusiasm is to be regarded merely as a fleshly passion.⁹⁰ The aim for an inner Divine revelation through the contemplative process, rather than for any other emotional experience, is, he claims, the distinctive feature of the path of R. Shneur Zalman, distinguishing it from the "old" Hasidic teachings of other leaders.

This position leads to total condemnation of what R. Dov Ber terms "false" enthusiasm. The following passage criticizes the *hitlahavut* (excitement) which was probably widespread among followers of the general Hasidic movement, an excitement, R. Dov Ber claims, without any conceptual (and consequently, in his view, spiritual) basis:

It is clear that the enthusiasm of most people is an external enthusiasm, the result of vain illusion in their soul and heart during prayer. It comes from an external cry of the fleshly heart, without any inner light or life-force at all; it is not at all directed towards the Divine. For at that moment in his mind, there is neither enthusiasm nor thought concerning the Divine, or only in the most general way. . . . Even though people do call this by the name *devekut* or *hitlahavut*, it is a totally false *devekut*, the opposite of the true *devekut* which is termed Divine ecstasy.⁹¹

R. Dov Ber ascribes no value to this at all. The person "is moved by his own self" rather than by the immanence or exaltation of the Divine.⁹² Further, this kind of false *devekut* really stems from earthly passion. The person is totally deceived, and his apparent *devekut* actually causes an increase in egoism and sometimes even arouses in him the flames of coarse, earthly desire.⁹³

By contrast, true emotion in contemplation stems from the inner bond of the individual with the Divine, on the level of the deepest aspect of the soul.⁹⁴ This is a constant, internal *devekut* "which exists in every single Jew, each according to his measure."⁹⁵ On account of this, the Habad teachings are able to reach the individual, whoever he may be, and stir him.

Every man, even one who is insignificant, with an unexceptional soul, and lacking in comprehension and emotional depth, when he hears something concerning the contemplation of the Divine, such as an explanation of the transcendent and immanent aspects, and similar, his soul is greatly moved. . . . This sensitivity stems from the root of his soul, from the Divine aspect of his soul.⁹⁶

Quoting a teaching of his father, R. Dov Ber gives a yardstick for evaluating whether the enthusiasm has a true or a false basis. The realm of holiness is characterised by *bitul*, abnegation.⁹⁷ Hence, all the genuine varieties of emotion or enthusiasm have a spontaneous quality. By definition this implies an absence of self-consciousness and at least to some extent a muting of the ego. In the case of the pure enthusiasm of the Divine Soul, even though it might be manifested in heartfelt emotion it nonetheless retains the quality of "total *bitul*, without any feeling of Self at all."⁹⁸

While this is clearly sublime, lesser varieties of emotional enthusiasm, while not totally false, are nonetheless associated with a sense of ego. It is noteworthy that the idea that emotion is linked with ego actually stems from R. Shneur Zalman. When love is felt, he says, "there is a self who loves."⁹⁹ R. Dov Ber explains that it is this concept which has generated the confusion among Habad followers.¹⁰⁰ Aware that emotion implies ego, they have tended to condemn all emotion in prayer. To counter this coarsening of the lines of his teaching, R. Dov Ber presents an analysis of varieties of enthusiasm, from the outset distinguishing between that of the Natural Soul and that of the Divine Soul. This distinction enables him to resolve the paradox concerning emotion and ego.¹⁰¹ Unlike the Natural Soul, the Divine Soul is capable of feeling emotion without impairing the state of *bitul*. This approach is similar to, and of course based on, that of R. Shneur Zalman to the concept of the *Zaddik* in the *Tanya*: by distinguishing between the force of the Divine and Natural (or Animal) Souls, R. Shneur Zalman was able to depict an individual who is at one and the same time in a state of total *bitul* yet is also taking part as an active force in society and the material world around him: it is the Divine Soul, the non-

Self, which is acting.¹⁰² In *Tract on Ecstasy*, R. Dov Ber presents a system of different varieties of emotion and enthusiasm; approximately five of the Natural Soul and five of the Divine Soul. Since the totally false enthusiasm described earlier is excluded from the system, all these levels have some validity, to a progressively increasing degree. Through this taxonomy of ecstasy in prayer, R. Dov Ber's own relentless quest as Hasidic leader for *bitul* and absorption in the Infinite is defined.

Varieties of Inspiration

A brief survey of the categories in R. Dov Ber's system enables us to see that it actually presents a scale of increasing manifestations of *bitul*, abnegation of the individual before the Divine, not all of them expressed in contemplation or prayer.

He begins with a description of a type which was probably well represented in the Habad fraternity, one who strives through contemplation on Hasidic teachings to achieve a flush of emotion. Here the overt goal, says R. Dov Ber, is emotion rather than closeness to the Divine. While this is criticized as not being far from the total self-deception of the shallow enthusiasts described above, R. Dov Ber does concede a certain positive element in that the underlying motive is a desire to have "the quality of the Divine in his soul."¹⁰³ This generous assessment probably stems from the fact that the individual does engage in genuine contemplation, quite different from those who barely have "a thought concerning the Divine" in their minds.

The next stage is termed "Acceptance" (*Hoda'ah*). It is described by R. Dov Ber in cerebral terms: serious contemplation, leading to a powerful awareness of the veracity of the spiritual theme on which he is meditating.¹⁰⁴ According to R. Hillel of Paritch, a disciple of R. Dov Ber who wrote a commentary to *Tract on Ecstasy*, this theme might be "that He is the source of all the worlds, and that all before Him is as nothing."¹⁰⁵ However, R. Dov Ber tells us, at this stage, although the theme seems true to the one contemplating, it does not seem *immediate*: "it is distant from him, it does not belong to him." Hence "there is no ecstasy at all in his mind"; instead his relationship with the spiritual theme is one of "acceptance" or "submission."¹⁰⁶

Although R. Dov Ber terms this stage "cold thought," he also regards it as a genuine step on the ladder of inspiration. The ideal of *bitul* has here been translated into a contemplative movement of acceptance of the veracity of the delineation of the nature of the Divine in relation to the universe,

as depicted in Habad teaching. R. Dov Ber clearly considers that everyone of the scholarly class—those capable of studying, memorizing, and contemplating Hasidic teachings—would be able to achieve this level. It arouses no emotion in mind or heart, except *shame*. "There falls into his heart shame concerning himself, how remote he is, and the nature of his lowness; also, in general, the lowness of this physical world . . . till he sighs."¹⁰⁷

This, one feels, is truly the first level of a follower of R. Dov Ber. From this train of thought is born a "decision" to keep the Commandments of the Torah. R. Hillel views this decision to submit to Torah Law as an expression of "*bitul* in the heart."¹⁰⁸ The submission to the veracity of the greatness of the Divine leads to obedient submission to His laws. The decision to act in a certain way, or to limit one's actions, is itself an expression of an accessible form of *bitul*.

The third stage described is a much more intense level of thought in which an enthusiastic dimension is revealed. However, this enthusiasm remains cerebral: it is love, but only a cerebral love, rather than one felt in the heart. The fulfilment of this love is in performance of the Commandments, rather than in ecstasy of the heart.¹⁰⁹

It is at the fourth level that we feel we recognize the genuine enthusiast, in whom the cerebral experience of contemplation has been translated into powerful, heartfelt emotion. This transition requires effort, which R. Dov Ber terms "the labour of love."¹¹⁰

While R. Dov Ber writes in glowing terms of this stage of genuine ecstasy, his aim is to reach beyond it, to a more intense level of *bitul*. He therefore writes of the fifth stage that it is "even higher than the ecstasy of the heart."¹¹¹ It is at this point that we discern the force of his teaching. His goal is a kind of immersion in the Divine, made possible through intellectualist awareness of the Lurianic-Hasidic landscape in which all being is dissolved in the One. This awareness requires suspension of all emotion, indeed of all self. The *hasid* is faced with the strong temptation to delight in his vision. This would be a genuine ecstasy; however, of necessity, it would diminish his awareness of, and, we could add, his immersion in, the Divine. Instead of emotionless nonbeing, *bitul*, due to cerebral unity with the details of the kabbalistic reality transmitted by the Habad discourse he is contemplating, indulgence in delight and ecstasy would lead to an "abbreviation" of that mental reality. The *hasid* would be left with an idea, a "summary," feeding the emotion in his heart, but he would no longer be absorbed into the Divine dynamic himself.

Behold at the moment that he feels ecstasy in the heart, the full perspective of the Divine theme—the source of his ecstasy—becomes abbreviated, and he is only left with that which concerns the ecstasy of the heart: that is, the abbreviated summary. . . . This state is considered minor in comparison with the actual attention of the heart on the full perspective of the Divine which was in his mind . . . beyond ecstasy of the heart.¹¹²

R. Dov Ber adds that there is an aspect of emotion present at this stage, but it is concealed and is cerebral in nature. Unlike the heartfelt emotion of the enthusiast, cerebral emotion is no contradiction to the process of contemplation of which it is a part.

If it is expressed outwardly, for example by clapping the hands, it has an involuntary, automatic quality. Further, this cerebral emotion is characterized by constancy, unlike the heartfelt emotions which come and go.¹¹³ At a later point in his tract, again discussing this stage, R. Dov Ber describes it as “utter *bitul*.”¹¹⁴

The various levels of attainment described here were highly relevant to the contemporary Habad *hasid*. Led on a path of increasing intensity of contemplation, he is advised by R. Dov Ber to hold back from ecstasy in order to reach the higher attainment of *bitul*, through retaining the full cerebral intensity of his stream of thought. If he exclaims, or claps his hands, it is automatic and unnoticed. He is seeking not emotion, but the union with the Infinite afforded by utter *bitul* in contemplating the Divine.

These teachings describe levels of attainment of the *hasid* rather than the *Zaddik*. They are all defined by R. Dov Ber as stages of the inspiration of the Natural Soul: the ecstasy of the Divine Soul is of a totally different order. Among the approaches to enthusiasm which have been described we see a number of varieties of Hasidic follower, who probably all coexisted within the Habad movement of the time. We have seen vignettes of those who express enthusiasm in prayer but do not engage in contemplation, those who contemplate but seek primarily ecstasy rather than the Divine, and those who contemplate but do not feel ecstasy. It is this last group (the second stage in R. Dov Ber's scheme) who are particularly interesting. They are not enthusiasts and do not pretend to be such; however, as long as they make an inner step, that of Acceptance, in R. Dov Ber's view they have achieved the first level of some form of *bitul*. After this come two varieties of—in R. Dov Ber's terms—genuine enthusiasts. Beyond them are those who, albeit with difficulty, hold back from enthu-

siasm and thereby attain through *bitul* a higher relationship with the Divine. R. Dov Ber also adds a brief description of a sixth level which “has the nature of pure Will, far beyond contemplation: simply the pure, essential Will, from which intellectualisation is born and branches out.”¹¹⁵ According to R. Hillel this represents an even deeper measure of self-abnegatory absorption in the contemplative process, until one reaches the very source of the stream of Habad intellectualist thought. Both these fifth and sixth levels express the aspiration that R. Dov Ber had for the elite among his followers: through intensive intellectualist contemplation, to reach “utter *bitul*.”

Tract on Ecstasy does not stop at this point. Following the classification of the levels of inspiration of the Natural Soul, the subsequent categorization of five levels of ecstasy of the Divine Soul starts on an entirely different plane. Indeed, the first two stages are not specifically related to contemplation. The first is the basic piety of the Jew in adherence to the Commandments, and, in the next stage, we find a more intense form of this devotion, which expresses itself in the true repentant and in self-sacrifice.¹¹⁶ The third stage, however, concerns ecstasy in prayer. It is clearly a variety of the ecstasy of the *Zaddik*.

This is the ecstasy of the essence of the human heart, deriving from the Divine concept itself, in the Divine Soul. . . . This is like the ecstasy of melody which radiates in the human heart and comes by itself, automatically, without choice or effort at all; it is simply because of the ecstasy of the Divine Soul. . . . This is felt in the heart, indeed the heart feels it intensely, just as a melody emerges from the breath of the heart itself, in ecstasy; but he is completely unconscious of this.¹¹⁷

Unlike the parallel level of inspiration of the Natural Soul (the fourth stage enumerated above) there is no effort at all in this ecstasy; it is deeply heartfelt, yet unconscious at the same time. R. Dov Ber makes clear the distinction between this passion of the Divine Soul and that of the Natural Soul: in that of the Natural Soul “there is a Self which has ecstasy,” which is not the case with the ecstasy of the Divine Soul.¹¹⁸ Nonetheless there is an important relativistic aspect to this teaching. Compared to the Natural Soul, the enthusiasm of the Divine Soul is an expression of *bitul*; yet there are further levels of *bitul* to be achieved. Even though the emotion is Divine, the greater the spirituality of the emotion the less it will be “felt.”¹¹⁹

The fourth stage of ecstasy, as we now expect, is a further level, so ex-

alted that it is not expressed emotionally even by the Divine Soul. As we have seen, the ecstasy of the heart in the third stage is totally genuine, automatic and even Divine. Nonetheless, the cerebral experience in the fourth stage is inestimably higher. From R. Dov Ber's description, it seems that the soul connects with the esoteric Divine radiance which is channelled within the intellectualist theme. Through this bond, the soul "ascends in Divine delight."¹²⁰ R. Dov Ber associates with this state, perhaps autobiographically, the atmosphere of the Sabbath prayers and the moment of spiritual surrender in the reciting of the *Shema*.¹²¹

The fifth and final stage of ecstasy of the Divine Soul is one of "total absorption of the whole essence" in the Divine, which R. Dov Ber describes, understandably, as being very rare, being exemplified by such cases as death in Sanctification of the Divine Name, the repentant who dies from regret, or the perfect *Zaddik*.¹²² Thus ends the classification of ecstasy. This helps us understand R. Dov Ber's personal style of prayer, beyond emotion, leading either to a deceptive simplicity or to hours of silent immersion in an other-worldly state of consciousness. It also gives a perspective on the nature of his demand on his followers. The first level expected is that of Acceptance, a step which requires no pneumatic qualities; yet the *hasid* aspiring to this level must also seek earnestly to refrain from self-deception. Higher on the scale is the quest for total *bitul*, in which the adept who could feel heartfelt ecstasy restrains himself in order to reach higher. In the modern Habad movement, stories continue to be told about the physical strain this spiritual discipline imposed on the followers of R. Dov Ber.

In addition to the classification of levels of ecstasy and inspiration, R. Dov Ber's tract includes other material which helps us understand some of the basic axioms in his system and his goal as leader of a Hasidic fraternity. An extended passage in this work is devoted to explaining the nature of the ecstasy of the Divine Soul as distinct from that of the Natural Soul. This section of the *Tract* helps us understand how R. Dov Ber conceived of the contemplation process. The soul is confronted with an intellectualist "concept" within which is "G-dliness," a kind of Divine flow or radiance. Because of the sacred nature of the Divine Soul, it is able to relate directly to that radiance.¹²³ The paradigm of this is the situation of the soul in the Garden of Eden, absorbing the "radiance of the *Shekhinah*."¹²⁴ R. Dov Ber states that just as the soul in that exalted realm is able to feel "Divine ecstasy," so too when it descends below into this world it is able to continue its relationship with the Divine through the "concepts concerning the Di-

vine" which it conceives.¹²⁵ These concepts are, of course, the Hasidic teachings, which act as a channel bearing Divine radiance to the soul. As he states elsewhere, R. Dov Ber regarded these teachings as being the product of the Divine Spirit, *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.¹²⁶ The same process of transmission of the Divine through the teachings is effective to a certain extent also for the Natural Soul, despite the fact that this is obscured by a "veil."¹²⁷ Due to this veil, originating in *kelipat nogah*, the Natural Soul requires far more effort in order to reach the Divine radiance within the concept. Since the ultimate source of the veil—the source of the *kelipah*—is the Divine, this breakthrough is possible.¹²⁸ An important aspect of this process is the direct focussing of the intellect on the detailed stream of cognitive thought, called the *hesber* (explanation).¹²⁹ Through this intellectualist, contemplative effort the Natural Soul can itself sense the Divine. According to R. Dov Ber, imagining that one can do without this attention to the details of the cognitive structure disclosed by the Habad discourses "is the most widespread error" in the ranks of the fraternity.¹³⁰

For R. Dov Ber, therefore, the detailed teachings associated with the final decade of his father's life constituted a necessary and powerful medium to link the individual with the Infinite, through the contemplative process. It should be borne in mind that those teachings stress the direct connection with the Divine afforded by every aspect of normative Judaism—study of Torah, including legal texts, and the observance of the practical Commandments. Generally, however, these interactions with the Creator are not sensed as such by the individual concerned. The teachings on contemplation constitute a path towards generating heartfelt or, on a higher level, cerebral ecstasy of immersion in the radiance of the Infinite. Belief in the power and efficacy of the Habad teachings in this process is a basic element in the system taught by R. Dov Ber.

The second axiomatic concept is the need for *bitul*, self-abnegation. In order for the individual to be able to imbibe the radiance afforded by the Hasidic teachings and the contemplative process, his self must not stand in the way. While *bitul* has a highly esoteric dimension it also takes expression in a variety of modes, some quite familiar. This fact makes it particularly suitable as the key concept in a branch of Hasidism which seeks a broad reach in society. In the *Tract on Ecstasy* the higher contemplative levels reached clearly constitute exceptional manifestations of *bitul*. However, the step defined by R. Dov Ber as the first level of real attainment, called Acceptance, is also a variety of abnegation of self and of will.

The final chapters in this tract concern the importance of *bitul*, now also

translated into immediate and ethical terms: *nishtkayt* (being nothing); *tsubrokhenskayt* (literally “being broken”), meaning having an intensely negative view of one’s self. R. Dov Ber defines it as “really loathing one’s life, continually, every moment.”¹³¹ Due to lack of this quality, and feeling self-satisfied (*gantz ze’er bei zikh*), the person studies Hasidic teachings and contemplates but achieves only a superficial effect.¹³² R. Dov Ber quotes his father, in the name of the Maggid of Mezeritch, to the effect that “natural melancholy” is required for a person truly to “receive secrets of Torah and understanding of the true depths of the radiance of the Infinite” in a genuine, internalized way “till it is fixed in his soul.” This melancholy—a quality we usually consider to be shunned by Hasidism—really stems from the Divine Soul’s bitterness at its imprisonment in the body, says R. Dov Ber.¹³³ In other words, it is an inner discontent with the limitations of material existence, a yearning for the spiritual. Its conscious expression, however, is as a harshly critical self view. This bitter self-criticism renders the person capable of achieving, through contemplation, inner revelation of the Divine, expressed as joy and ecstasy.

This I heard from my father, who heard from the Maggid, that a person cannot truly receive secrets of Torah and understanding of the true depths of the radiance of *Ein Sof*, till it is fixed in his soul, unless he has profound natural melancholy rooted in him from youth, in his very essence. If this is present, in genuine depth (that is: true *tsubrokhenskayt*, by nature, till he really loathes his life continually, every moment) then there dwells in him, from the source of life, the Source of All, giving life to the lowly, as it says “with whom shall I dwell? with the crushed and lowly in spirit.”¹³⁴ Then G-d accepts all he does. If he contemplates secrets of Torah, true revelation is given to his soul, if his heart is humble within him (and if not, then nothing is given to his soul, even if he understands the meaning of the words). Similarly, every detail of the paths of [his] Divine service are acceptable to G-d. Then his sigh, and natural melancholy, are transformed to joy and delight solely because of the Divine flux which rests on his very soul.¹³⁵

This emphasis on *tsubrokhenskayt*, which is really an ethical variety of *bitul*, leads to a critical evaluation of his own followers. Some of these, especially the newcomers to Habad, think that such feelings of contrite humility are only necessary for repentants. By contrast, says R. Dov Ber, the older *hasidim* are more aware of the true path.¹³⁶ The interesting distinc-

tion between older and younger followers is amplified in another passage. The contemplative attainments of the younger men make them feel superior to others. They think they have achieved *bitul*, but they are mistaken. This is made apparent by the angry way they react when someone tells them to be quiet when deep in contemplation. By contrast, the older *hasidim* do not fool themselves and achieve true *nishtkayt*. Their aim in contemplation is more genuine, and they achieve Divine delight through contemplative prayer.¹³⁷

It is likely that during the last years of R. Shneur Zalman’s life many new adherents had joined the Habad group, attracted by the Hasidic teachings. They did not yet have the ascetic ethical counterpart which is required in order for those teachings to have their full effect. It is likely that it is some of the members of this younger faction of his following who are accused by R. Dov Ber of misrepresenting his views on enthusiasm. He returns to this theme at the end of his *Tract*, emphasizing the genuineness of simple enthusiasm which comes from true purity of heart, despite the fact that the self-styled exponents of Habad do not appreciate this.¹³⁸ Such simplicity, R. Dov Ber comments, “is found more among ordinary people than among scholars.”¹³⁹

The *Tract on Ecstasy*, one can assume, brought order to confusion. It imparted the emphasis on the subtle quest for *bitul* in lengthy cerebral contemplation, while preserving the ethical dimension of this quest and giving room for other varieties of expression of the spirit. Here too are found elements of themes which R. Dov Ber was to amplify in his later writings.

We are now able to consider the contrasting approach to contemplation and enthusiasm of R. Aaron of Staroselye.

R. Aaron’s Criticism

Both R. Aaron and R. Dov Ber were inheritors of R. Shneur Zalman’s system of thought, and there are many similarities in their approach to a theme in Hasidic teaching. The theoretical differences are subtle and are usually no more than changes of emphasis.¹⁴⁰ These subtleties of theory, however, led to a broad division between their respective communities and the styles of Hasidism they espoused.

In R. Aaron’s introduction to a work published in 1821, *Gates of Service*, we find a lengthy critique of R. Dov Ber’s teaching.¹⁴¹ He is not mentioned by name, but it is obvious who is meant. The points expressed in this passage were clearly raised years previously, at the beginning of the open dispute for leadership. Indeed, there is some indication from a num-

ber of letters between R. Aaron and R. Dov Ber that their disagreements on the nature and goal of contemplation began in the early years of their friendship.¹⁴²

R. Aaron begins by criticizing the “great error and lack of knowledge of those who endistance emotional ecstasy of the heart.”¹⁴³ His claim, as we expect, is that one should indeed seek emotion, and that anxieties that one’s enthusiasm may not be genuine are misplaced: he states that R. Shneur Zalman “considered all varieties of love as valid” and hence “one should not worry whether it is illusion.”¹⁴⁴ Later in the same work R. Aaron emphasizes this idea, stating that “from the point of view of the Divine, He is [present] equally in every Jewish soul and all within them is a flow from the blessed Creator, without distinction.”¹⁴⁵ Hence “the revelation of the Divine and the ecstasy in every Jewish soul is a [true] revelation of His Divinity, and the *devekut* with which one cleaves, through the ecstasy, is truly to the living G-d. It is not an illusion, it is completely true from the point of view of the Divine Truth.”¹⁴⁶ From the limited human perspective, there are distinctions. R. Aaron, however, focusses on the perspective of the Divine Essence, in terms of which, he says, all varieties of enthusiasm are valid.¹⁴⁷ His main barb is that without the striving for heartfelt enthusiasm in prayer, the natural desire for worldly pleasures will remain in the person’s heart in all its inborn strength.¹⁴⁸ As for the idea that emotion is itself an expression of self, R. Aaron is adamant that first the person should strive for the heartfelt enthusiasm; after that there is the unending quest to make that enthusiasm more selfless and more profound.¹⁴⁹

It is interesting that we find in R. Aaron’s writings an analysis of emotion in prayer similar in a number of ways to that of R. Dov Ber. He too condemns the variety of enthusiasm which is not based at all on contemplation in the Habad style. However, once the person makes an effort in contemplation, his emotions are automatically purified. The *Sitra Ahara* (power of evil) which might seek to infiltrate his emotions is driven away by the person contemplatively “gazing at the glory of the King,” for “the *Sitra Ahara* does not want to gaze” at this glory.¹⁵⁰ We thus see R. Aaron, too, expressing faith in the mystical power of the Habad teachings. While R. Dov Ber saw them as disclosing Divine radiance to the individual, as long as he makes the preparatory inner steps, R. Aaron saw them as having an automatic purificatory effect, and any emotion which might derive from them as valid.

An important distinction between R. Aaron’s analysis of emotion and the system in *Tract on Ecstasy* concerns the category which R. Dov Ber called “cold thought,” the level of Acceptance. In R. Dov Ber’s scheme this constitutes an inner step of acceptance of the veracity of the structure of existence as presented by the Hasidic teachings. Although the person at this stage can conceptualize this vista and is intellectually captivated by it, it nonetheless remains remote from him, and hence he does not feel any personal emotion at all. However, he does “accept” the significance of the spiritual landscape revealed by the teachings, and this leads ultimately to a decision to be more devoted in his practical observance of Judaism. The next stage in R. Dov Ber’s system is one of cerebral enthusiasm, called “good thought,” which is also expressed in practical observance. Only the level beyond this actually attains heartfelt emotion. In R. Aaron’s system there is only one stage with any validity before that of heartfelt emotion. This means that the level termed by R. Dov Ber “cold thought” is absent from R. Aaron’s system. The first stage to which he gives cognizance as a genuine step in Divine service based on contemplation is that of cerebral enthusiasm, the “good thought.” Anything less than that has no value; it is not called “understanding” at all but is merely “thought and illusion.”¹⁵¹ Both R. Aaron and R. Dov Ber are in agreement that merely thinking through the Habad teachings without any inner step at all is insufficient.¹⁵² They must have an effect, and the minimal acceptable effect is to make the person more concerned about practical action. However, in R. Dov Ber’s system this stage itself is divided into the two levels of “cold thought” and “good thought”—thereby giving more room to the “cold” Lithuanian intellectual.¹⁵³ By contrast R. Aaron’s system expresses the insistent demand for at least cerebral enthusiasm, even if heartfelt emotion could not yet be reached.

This is one aspect of the distinction between R. Aaron and R. Dov Ber. The effect of this was, we believe, the exclusion from R. Aaron’s following of those who did not experience and express emotional enthusiasm of some kind. Even though theoretically there was room in his system for someone whose Divine service was not expressed in this way, the emphasis on the validity of every variety of emotion would tend to make the normal praxis of prayer in the Staroselye study house one of overt, vocal enthusiasm. Anyone who could not share in creating that intense atmosphere by implication had no place there.

Another aspect of the divergence of R. Aaron’s approach from that of

R. Dov Ber concerns the upper reach of spiritual attainment. As we have seen, R. Dov Ber emphasised *bitul* as the direction in which to strive. Beyond heartfelt emotion is an internalized cerebral ecstasy in which the mind remains focused on the analytic *hesber* (explanation) in the Habad contemplative process, which affords it numinous contact with the Divine. In his introduction to *Gates of Service*, R. Aaron roundly condemns the quest for this state, although he shares the same theoretical system in which *bitul* is more exalted than ecstasy. He declares that attainment on this level relates only to exalted figures of the past. Moses alone achieved total *bitul*. For everyone else, the struggle in Divine service necessarily entails the emotions.¹⁵⁴

Later in *Gates of Service* R. Aaron returns to this theme. Because Moses alone reached pure *bitul* above emotion, he repeatedly commanded the Israelites to love or fear "your G-d" throughout the Book of Deuteronomy. For Moses himself, the emotions of love and fear had no relevance, for he was on the higher level of *bitul*. Hence, addressing the Israelites and exhorting them to emotional service, he said "*your* G-d"; his own relationship with the Divine was on a higher plane.¹⁵⁵ The message is clear: the quest for *bitul* is relevant only to Moses and others of comparable stature. This, of course, was a frontal attack on R. Dov Ber himself, and also on his leading followers who themselves sought the exalted path of *bitul*, restraining themselves from emotional enthusiasm. In R. Aaron's view, this was a false approach to Divine service, despite the fact that, in theory, *bitul* was indeed higher.

Let us now consider the social effect of these views. In practice, it is clear, everyone in R. Aaron's circle would express overt enthusiasm in prayer. As mentioned above, to enter the Staroselye prayer meeting and feel a part of it, one would have to begin with a leaning to enthusiasm and overt emotionalism. By contrast, the Lubavitch study house emphasised the goal of *bitul*. The major *hasidim* would be silently contemplating, while the ordinary members of the fraternity would be praying in a fairly "normal" way, perhaps with a meditative Hasidic melody. The visitor could enter and join the prayer service without feeling the strain of a demand for immediate enthusiasm.

There were other aspects to R. Aaron's critique of R. Dov Ber. He condemned the latter's style of intellectualist contemplation, rejecting its method and also to some extent its content. When in the next chapter we consider the way R. Dov Ber sought to communicate the contemplative

ideal to his followers, this facet of the division between Lubavitch and Staroselye will be discussed.

Transfer of Allegiance

The Habad chronicler Hielman provides us with a list of almost sixty of the major followers of R. Shneur Zalman, together with brief biographical details.¹⁵⁶ He also gives the names of the most notable *hasidim* who transferred their allegiance to R. Dov Ber. Some of these "served him exactly as they did his father and drank his words with thirst," while others "were only submissive" to his authority.¹⁵⁷ From this material we find that slightly fewer than half of the most notable among R. Shneur Zalman's disciples were able fully to make the transition and dedicate themselves to R. Dov Ber.¹⁵⁸ Among the lesser-known rank and file the proportion was almost certainly much greater. It is interesting to consider what happened to the other notable *hasidim*, of whom thirty-one are listed.

Only five of these, according to Hielman, became followers of R. Aaron. A further five are recorded as being "opponents" of R. Dov Ber. (One of these later changed his mind and was accepted by R. Dov Ber as a follower.)¹⁵⁹ This still leaves twenty-one of the notables unaccounted for. It is interesting that of these, six had sons who became noted followers of R. Dov Ber.¹⁶⁰ The fathers, too, may have been loyal to him but, due to their age, may not have acquired fame among his leading followers. It is also likely that while some of the older *hasidim* could not transfer their allegiance to R. Dov Ber, due to his youth or the difference in emphasis in his style, their sons, the new generation, did become his faithful followers.¹⁶¹

The notable *hasidim* who are not accounted for may have been past their prime and achieved no prominence under their new *Rebbe*, whether they followed R. Dov Ber or R. Aaron; or some of them may be among those mentioned above who believed that after R. Shneur Zalman no successor was possible.

Focussing our attention on those of whom it is recorded that they became either *hasidim* of R. Aaron or opponents of R. Dov Ber, we find a number of what we might term charismatic personalities, men who themselves had exceptional enthusiastic qualities.

Thus R. Yisrael of Dubrovna, who together with his son followed R. Aaron, was a noted musician. At the wedding in 1803 of R. Dov Ber's daughter Beila to the grandson of R. Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, at a certain point R. Shneur Zalman retired to his room. R. Yisrael

remained by the door of our *Rebbe* [R. Shneur Zalman] and began to play on his violin until our *Rebbe* opened the door and let him enter his room. He played there until our *Rebbe* began to say a discourse on the verse "and when the player played the spirit of G-d came to him" (II Kings 3:15). . . . All the *hasidim* gathered and our *Rebbe* said discourses until the seventh hour in the morning.¹⁶²

Even if such a story is fanciful, the fact that it could be told at all indicates something of the character of R. Yisrael. He left after him "writings of Hasidic discourses which he composed himself."¹⁶³

His son R. Shlomoh was also a noted musician. At the same wedding he was playing while R. Shneur Zalman and R. Levi Yitzhak danced together. Suddenly R. Levi Yitzhak bared his chest and cried to R. Shlomoh, "Dear one! Look at my heart and you will not have any 'foreign thoughts' in prayer!"¹⁶⁴ There were certainly enthusiasts among the followers of R. Dov Ber. Yet for certain men, such as R. Yisrael and R. Shlomoh of Dubrovna, the ecstatic, tumultuous prayer and general style of R. Shneur Zalman was meaningful, while the silence and apparent simplicity of R. Dov Ber was not a path they could follow. R. Aaron no doubt seemed to them to stand for a continuation of the style of Hasidic leadership to which they were accustomed.

Among those listed as opponents to R. Dov Ber were R. Zev Vilinkes, also a somewhat enthusiastic personality,¹⁶⁵ and Elazar of Disna, the belligerent figure who caused strife between R. Avraham of Kalisk and R. Shneur Zalman.¹⁶⁶ A third was R. Yehezkel of Dravia. According to the tradition recorded by Hielman, he was himself an adept of the deep, dead-to-the-world style of prayer which we associate particularly with R. Dov Ber. Thus when advanced in years, in the time of the *Zemah Zedek* whom he visited on a few occasions, one *Rosh Hashanah* he became so immersed in his thought that he did not notice the blowing of the *shofar*.¹⁶⁷ Perhaps he regarded himself as no less an adept than R. Dov Ber and for this reason opposed his leadership.

The initial period of uncertainty following the death of R. Shneur Zalman was resolved by R. Aaron moving to Staroselye, where a circle of followers gathered round him. He also had groups of *hasidim* in Slonim, Vitebsk, and probably elsewhere, as we see from the letters he sent to these communities. The letters themselves indicate something of the nature of his following: like those of R. Shneur Zalman, they read like discourses,

replete with kabbalistic allusion, quite different from the letters sent by R. Dov Ber to his followers, which are relatively straightforward.¹⁶⁸

Throughout his life, R. Aaron believed he was faithfully representing the views of his great teacher R. Shneur Zalman. It is noteworthy that the *Zemah Zedek* is said to have defended the memory of R. Aaron, saying that in his case, his ecstasy truly was Divine in nature, and he had shown great self-sacrifice on behalf of R. Shneur Zalman.¹⁶⁹ In modern editions of the *Tanya*, R. Aaron is termed the latter's "great disciple."¹⁷⁰ He devoted his life to the publicization of Habad thought to the upper echelon of the Jewish community through the medium of his own Hasidic discourses which are described as—literally—"enchanting," and through his published books, which breathe an atmosphere of yearning for the ultimate Oneness of the Infinite.¹⁷¹ In Habad terminology, we could describe the distinction between R. Aaron and R. Dov Ber as that between the quest for the "Upper Unity," in which the world is dissolved in the One, and the struggle for the "Lower Unity," in which the world—as world—expresses the One.¹⁷²

Continuity or Development

Division of a dynamic movement into different streams in the transition from one generation to the next is a very natural phenomenon. In Hasidism as a whole we see it clearly after the death of the Maggid of Mezeritch; in Habad we meet it again after R. Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek*, passed away in 1866.¹⁷³ However, in the division between Lubavitch and Staroselye there was a further level of significance. While R. Shneur Zalman had fought with his own colleagues for the ideal of the communication of the esoteric, there were many among his closest followers who felt this process had extended to its limit. Hasidism was for the enthusiast, they felt, for the man of spirit and of stature. It could not reach directly the "cold" intellect of the average White Russian scholar: it could not descend so low. The men who subscribed to this view tended to become the followers of R. Aaron, who seemed to represent continuity with the past.

By contrast, R. Dov Ber took the group under his leadership through a further stage of development. His teachings gave yet more room for the ordinary individual to become part of the Hasidic fold, imbibing the Divine stream of radiance transmitted by the Hasidic discourses and tracts. During the relatively short period in which R. Dov Ber headed the movement, it developed into Habad as it was to be known throughout the nine-

teenth century and even into the twentieth. Our task now is to consider the methods he utilized for the communication of the Habad ethos to the various echelons of the society of his time: men of stature, the normative educated class, ignorant pietists, women, the wider community, and even beyond the Jewish world.

ניגון המקהלה של כ"ק אדמו"ר האמצעי נ"ע

ידוע בשם "דעם מיטעלער רבינ'ס קאפעליע"

12

Andante

mf

1

Lento a tempo

con moto

Lento

Con moto

Lento

Moderato

a tempo con moto



"Melody of the Ensemble of the *Mitteler Rebbe*" (see p. 278 n.87). From S. Zalmanoff, *Sefer ha-Niggunim*, (Brooklyn, 1948), by courtesy of the Kehot Publication Society, Brooklyn, NY.

CONTEMPLATION AND REALITY

In the early history of the Habad school, it was R. Dov Ber, the son of R. Shneur Zalman, who most clearly developed the ideal of the communication of esoteric teachings in society. In this chapter and the next we will consider the various means he used for this: how the rare self-transcendence at the heart of Hasidism was translated into forms relevant to people at different levels of the social and intellectual spectrum.

As we have seen, the attempt to communicate the esoteric was regarded critically by a number of the contemporaries of the early Habad leadership. In this chapter, which examines R. Dov Ber's teachings to the elite among his followers and to the scholarly intellectuals, we will find that the process of transmission of an esoteric attainment such as contemplation in prayer is somewhat delicate, even from the point of view of R. Dov Ber himself. He was seeking a very exalted goal: intense, "detailed" contemplation, drawing the radiance of the Merkavah realm into the personal devotions of the normative scholar. However, the method he began teaching turned out to be so demanding that only the true men of stature could follow it in a manner which gained his approval. R. Dov Ber therefore later provided a modified contemplation method, more suitable for the mainstream among his followers.

This did not mean a lessening of the quest to communicate the esoteric teachings at the heart of Hasidism. R. Dov Ber gave greatly increased emphasis to the idea that the Hasidic teachings should be studied. He regarded his followers as falling into a number of different groups, distinguished by the time they had available for study and their sensitivity to the material. He encouraged each group to study the Habad teachings to the best of their ability, and thereby institutionalized the learning of *khasidus* (Hasidic teachings). In subsequent generations this became a distinguishing characteristic of the Habad school.

In the course of our examination of this aspect of R. Dov Ber's achievement we will become aware of some important further dimensions of the

communication ethos. The communication structure, in which the highest, ethereal level is transmitted to the lowest, operates within a number of different formats. R. Dov Ber's intensive contemplation method in fact constitutes a process of communication with oneself. Indeed, the Habad perspective of the universe is that it is the expression of the self-communication of the Divine.

Another format in which this process operates is that of the two opposing poles of faith and reason. R. Dov Ber's method is to enter the domain of reason and, somehow, to induce it to recognize the radiance of the Infinite. While one aspect of this is the fact that it makes the Hasidic ethos accessible to the mind of the rational scholar there is also a further dimension. Hitherto we have explored the history of Habad and its relation to the general Hasidic movement without reference to the changes which were taking place in European society. One could imagine that the growth and development of Hasidism was taking place in a secluded garden of mystical perception, untouched by the hurlyburly of the wider historical reality. In fact, of course, within the Hasidic movement, as in Jewish society as a whole, there were responses to that reality, and strategies were being adopted in order to deal with the changing situation.

A clue to the significance of Habad in this wider arena comes from the opposition aimed at R. Dov Ber by his Hasidic contemporaries. We will see that he was deemed a rationalist. His teachings were criticized because they advanced into the realm of reason instead of remaining in the luminous realm of faith. A letter defending R. Dov Ber by his prominent follower, R. Yitzhak Aizak of Homel, will help us understand that the significance of this Hasidic school extends beyond the question of whether or not rabbinic scholars contemplate the Divine during their prayers. According to R. Yitzhak Aizak, the most profound reaches of R. Dov Ber's philosophy reveal a path which somehow incorporates reason, as well as faith. At one and the same moment the Habad thinker can appreciate that "all is G-d" and also that "the world is the world." The world is not something to be feared, to retreat from: "it does no harm at all; it does not confuse the faith at all."

In an epoch in which the most important question was whether or not Judaism—and, ultimately, faith of any kind—would be able to survive the fall of the ghetto walls and the onset of the modern age, this perception of the nature of the world, proceeding from the very heart of the Jewish mystical tradition, might well have considerable significance. During the nine-

teenth century the Jewish enlighteners (*maskilim*) thought that the only course open was to abandon—more or less—traditional Judaism, and other branches of Jewish leadership tried to find a *modus vivendi* which would enable them to survive. For some this meant recreating the ghetto walls; for others, Judaism underwent a secularizing process in which one of the sacrifices was the Jewish mystical tradition. By contrast, the Lubavitch scholar of the mid-nineteenth century took his strength from that very stream of thought. The Habad teachings encouraged him in the optimistic belief that traditional Judaism, together with its spiritual heritage, had the power to fight every battle necessary. It did not have to retreat in the face of a changing world, but could exist and continue to grow on its own terms.

R. Dov Ber as Hasidic Leader

We have already discussed R. Dov Ber's youth and his struggle for leadership after the death of his father early in 1812. At this point he was not yet forty years old. His own life was relatively short: he died on his fifty-fourth birthday in December 1827. During this rather brief period of leadership of the Lubavitch brand of Habad, he succeeded in consolidating the movement and in concretizing the ideal of the communication of Hasidism. He did this through the spoken word, both in private audiences (of which we know very little) and in addresses to public gatherings of his followers. As we have seen, he issued tracts on aspects of Hasidic thought which were studied in manuscript. A further aspect of R. Dov Ber's achievement, distinguishing him from most other Hasidic leaders, including his own father, was his concern to make Hasidic teachings available in printed form. During his leadership about a dozen such volumes were printed.¹ There is evidence that this went beyond the predilection of some of his followers, who preferred to study Hasidic teachings in manuscript as had been the custom in the time of R. Shneur Zalman.² This onslaught of printing technology against the natural esotericism of the members of a mystic circle was facilitated by the fact that one of R. Dov Ber's own followers was a printer, resident in Kopys. However, Habad tradition records that even the oral transmission of Hasidic teachings by R. Dov Ber sometimes exceeded the capacity of the majority of his followers. He is said to have delivered oral discourses of extraordinary length, lasting several hours. "Not everyone has your head," commented his uncle, R. Yehudah Leib.³ While his demand on the scholarly elite was very intense, R. Dov Ber also

published more accessible works, including a tract in Yiddish. Below we shall consider in more detail the way the various works sought to communicate the Hasidic ethos to the different ranks of society.

R. Dov Ber's leadership commenced in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, which had gravely impoverished the Jewish communities in White Russia. As the years went by, the attitude of the government towards the Jews changed for the worse. R. Dov Ber sought to ensure that he had information of developments in St. Petersburg which might affect the Jewish community. To this end around 1814 he wrote to the wealthy Habad *hasid*, R. Moshe Meisels, asking him to maintain close contact with the Jewish deputies in the capital.⁴ It is reasonable to assume that this line of communication between the Hasidic leader and the contemporary intermediaries between the Jewish community and the government continued throughout his leadership.

The practical realism of R. Dov Ber is also expressed in a public letter in which he advised his *hasidim* to learn the basic crafts of weaving and spinning and to engage in farming. This attempt to change the economic basis of the Habad community was a response to harsh governmental attitudes, but also manifested a religious ideal. Describing the Jewish farmers he had seen in the steppes, R. Dov Ber wrote that although they do not have luxuries, such as "expensive clothes, pearls and jewelry," they have sufficient for their needs. Even when they are at work in the fields "the fear of G-d is on their faces." They "rejoice in their lot, have no sorrow and no corruption. They study [Torah] and deal honestly with each other."⁵

In the 1820s R. Dov Ber's health, which had never been strong, became severely impaired. To a certain extent he withdrew from permitting his *hasidim* to see him in private audience (*Yehidut*). The task of counselling his followers was given over, in the first instance, to the major *hasidim* in each community; problems too difficult for them were to be referred to R. Dov Ber's brother, R. Haim Avraham, and to his son-in-law, R. Menahem Mendel, later known as the *Zemah Zedek*. Only in the last resort was the matter to be brought before R. Dov Ber himself.⁶ It is possible he did not even deliver discourses in public for a certain period. Another aspect of R. Dov Ber's leadership is that he revived the Habad fund for Hasidim in the Holy Land; later he established a settlement of his followers in Hebron.⁷ A letter which he sent them comprising a discourse on prayer is extant.⁸ He also bought a synagogue in that city. He himself yearned to travel to the Holy Land, but never achieved this aim.⁹

In the summer of 1825, R. Dov Ber undertook a journey to Karlsbad for medical reasons. An intriguing feature of this journey is that at least part of the time he travelled incognito: "here they think that I am a merchant, not a Rabbi," he wrote to his son-in-law, R. Menahem Mendel.¹⁰ During his journey R. Dov Ber met R. Akiva Eger and R. Mordekhai Bannet of Nicholsburg. A lengthy discourse he said in the presence of R. Akiva Eger is extant.¹¹

During R. Dov Ber's leadership there was intense hostility from the *mitnagdim*.¹² This came to a head when, in 1826, R. Dov Ber and other prominent figures from the Habad camp, including R. Aaron of Staroselye, were arrested on charges of treason and were brought to Vitebsk for trial. This was the result of efforts by the *mitnagdim*, and the charges were not dissimilar to those aimed at R. Shneur Zalman a quarter of a century earlier. R. Dov Ber compiled a special tract, addressed to the governor of Vitebsk, in which he explained the kabbalistic significance of sovereignty and expressed his own loyalty to the czar and to his ministers.¹³ It is a unique document in the history of Hasidism: a Hasidic tract addressed to a non-Jew. After a few weeks R. Dov Ber was released, on 10 Kislev, a day which retains a festive quality for the Habad *hasidim*. The charges against him, however, were not dropped. Although he was permitted to leave Vitebsk, threat of renewed government action remained. In addition, there was even an attempt to implicate him in the Veliz blood libel.¹⁴ These threats induced him to travel to his father's grave to pray for succor. This was to be his last journey.

In these final days of R. Dov Ber's life we also see his concern about the notorious Cantonist Decree which became law in August 1827. By this edict the Jewish Communities had to furnish recruits between the ages of twelve and twenty-five for twenty-five year periods of service. The younger recruits would be sent "to special institutions that would prepare them for military service." As it turned out, these institutions were blatantly conversionary.¹⁵

While returning from his father's grave in Haditz, R. Dov Ber fell ill in the town of Niezin in the Chernigov region. One of his last discourses concerned the Cantonist Decree.¹⁶ Its theme is that since the destruction of the Temple, only a small number of Commandments remain which the Jews can carry out. Now, however, there is a heavenly accusation which demands that even those Mitzvot should be taken away and the world will be destroyed. This is because of the increase in transgressions, and because

even those Mitzvot which are carried out are performed merely through habit. To oppose this accusation G-d has made the government issue the decree in question. Through this the Jew

is put into their power and they shave off his beard and side-locks, and force him to profane the Sabbath and many similar prohibitions, and because of the pain he cries out to G-d . . . and says . . . "woe for me, I am so remote that I cannot keep anything of Torah at all" . . . and he weeps bitterly. . . . Later, when he is able to carry out some Mitzvah, he rejoices greatly, and this joy in the Mitzvah reveals that he has inner yearning of the heart, and he is considered genuinely G-d fearing. Even if he cannot keep many Mitzvot, nonetheless the pain that he feels from their lack is accounted for him as if he had fulfilled them; behold he keeps the world in existence, as it says "the Zaddik is the foundation of the world" (Prov. 10:25), and the accusation is annulled.¹⁷

In another passage in the discourse R. Dov Ber speaks of the different ways in which the individual is tested. One might be tested at home; another must be taken to a remote land, where he "purifies the air" by the very fact that he does not apostatize.¹⁸

A few days later R. Dov Ber passed away. There are a number of descriptions of this event, in Hielman's *Beit Rebbe* and in various manuscripts.¹⁹ It seems he told his servant to gather all the *hasidim*. Then

he sat in great joy and began speaking on behalf of the Jewish people, citing their merit. He said they were very careful concerning practical Mitzvot, even though there was some causeless hatred. . . . Nonetheless they are very careful concerning practical Mitzvot, especially the Mitzvah of charity in these times of struggle, when each person gives more than he can afford. Then he began to talk of the decree to take Jews as soldiers.²⁰

The rest of the night was spent delivering discourse after discourse in a room packed with his *hasidim*. Near dawn his soul departed.

Although R. Dov Ber left two sons, he was succeeded as *Rebbe* by R. Menahem Mendel, the grandson of R. Shneur Zalman, who had married R. Dov Ber's daughter, Hayah Mushka. R. Menahem Mendel led the Habad *hasidim* for nearly forty years, and later generations of Habad thought of R. Dov Ber as being the "middle" leader, in between R. Shneur Zalman

and R. Menahem Mendel. For this reason R. Dov Ber is known as the "*Mitteler Rebbe*."

The Printed Word

Integral to R. Dov Ber's attempt to spread the study of Hasidic teachings throughout the ranks of his followers was the craft of the printer. We see this in his earliest endeavors as Hasidic leader, despite the war-ravaged atmosphere. The retreating French army had devastated the Jewish communities.²¹ Nonetheless R. Dov Ber succeeded in having a new edition of the *Tanya* published in Shklov in 1814, including extensive material by R. Shneur Zalman now printed for the first time.²² One new section comprised over thirty letters containing Hasidic teachings and instruction to the members of the fraternity. The second was a collection of manuscripts relating to the *Book of the Intermediate Man*, elaborating some of its ideas with heavy reference to the Lurianic kabbalah.

It is likely that this new edition of the *Tanya* with its extra material had the effect of consolidating and strengthening the following of R. Dov Ber, in the contemporary atmosphere of conflict with R. Aaron. Another important printing project undertaken by R. Dov Ber which was to have the same consolidatory effect was the publishing of his father's *Code of Law*. This had been written early in R. Shneur Zalman's career but had remained in manuscript.²³ Unfortunately, due to a fire in 1810 part of the text was lost, but a considerable portion still remained of this comprehensive presentation of the halakhah.²⁴ With the aid of financial help offered by R. Pinhas of Shklov, a number of sections of the *Code* were printed in 1814. In 1816 a more complete edition was printed, edited by two of R. Shneur Zalman's brothers, R. Judah Leib of Yanovitch and R. Mordekhai. A preface by R. Dov Ber instructs his followers to study this *Code of Law* in an organized way. Employing a system usually applied to the Talmud, R. Dov Ber asked that each local community should divide the *Code of Law* among a number of people so that the entire work would be completed "once or twice" in the course of a year.²⁵

In this preface we also find guidance to various classes of the community concerning the study of halakhah. The full-time scholars "supported by their parents and in-laws" are given a system of study which begins with the Talmud and the glosses called *Tosafot* (additions) written in medieval Franco-Germany. The student should then proceed to the halakhic writings of R. Asher ben Yehiel; the *Tur* of his son R. Jacob b. Asher, R. Joseph Caro's commentary on the latter, and then R. Joseph Caro's own *Code of*

Law with its glosses by R. Moshe Isserlis.²⁶ The scholar should then proceed to study of R. Shneur Zalman's *Code*, focussing especially on the analytical commentary compiled by its author entitled *Kuntres Aharon*.²⁷ The reader is enjoined to seek clear knowledge of the sources in earlier literature of R. Shneur Zalman's halakhic decisions. These are indicated by the references printed in the margin of the *Code*, and should also become clear, says R. Dov Ber, by study of halakhic works, such as the *Turei Zahav* by R. David Halevi (d. 1667) and the *Magen Avraham* of R. Avraham Gombiner (d. 1683).²⁸

Those who have less time for study are given a more limited program, and the third and lowest group addressed in this preface (who have only "two or three hours per day") are told to study the Mishnah followed by the Alfasi, which provides an abstract from the Talmud of the relevant halakhic material.²⁹ They should then turn to R. Joseph Caro's *Code of Law*, studying two pages a day and revising repeatedly. In addition, says R. Dov Ber, they should make time to study R. Shneur Zalman's *Code*, which explains the reasoning behind the halakhic decisions.

Clearly this publication was addressed to the scholarly class of White Russia: the differences among the three different study programmes prescribed by R. Dov Ber concern time available, rather than ability. The preface continues with a striking list of nonhalakhic material which should also be studied by this section of the fraternity. There should be

in addition fixed sessions for study of Bible, the midrashic teachings of the Sages as in *Ein Yaakov*³⁰ and in the *Zohar*, [especially] its ethical portions. Also the ethical works based on kabbalistic wisdom, such as *Reshit Hokhmah*,³¹ *Shnei Lubot HaBrit*³² and similar. On the Sabbath [one should make] time to study the *Zohar* with commentary and explanation through some perusal of kabbalistic works, such as those of R. Moshe Zaccuto,³³ *Mikdash Melekh*³⁴ and *Likkutei Torah*³⁵ and similar. Apart from this, there is a permanent duty for the life of the soul: to illuminate it with the precious radiance of the greatness of the Creator, through the sacred writings which have been printed.³⁶

The final reference is, of course, to the Habad Hasidic teachings. In the same year, 1816, two large volumes of previously unpublished material were printed by the Lubavitch printer in Kopys. Both comprised discourses by R. Shneur Zalman as transcribed and elaborated by R. Dov Ber. One was a selection of teachings relevant to prayer, published together

with the text of R. Shneur Zalman's edition of the *Prayerbook*.³⁷ The second was a collection of discourses expounding passages of the *Zohar*.³⁸ During the following decade, about ten further works of Hasidic teachings were published. Let us now consider R. Dov Ber's method in the communication of Hasidic thought, beginning with his teachings on contemplation.

Tract on Contemplation

The emphasis on contemplation as preparation for or accompaniment to prayer had been, as we have seen, a central theme in R. Shneur Zalman's system of Hasidism. The second section of his *Tanya*, entitled *Gate of Unity and Faith*, comprises a twelve-chapter tract elaborating the twin themes that existence is absorbed in the Infinite and the Infinite is expressed in existence. These concepts, termed the Upper and Lower Unity respectively, are the basis of the scheme of contemplation which should precede and culminate in the *Shema* prayer, the declaration of the Unity of the Divine which constitutes the central statement in the Jewish daily prayer service.³⁹ Thinking through the ideas expressed in this tract before beginning to pray, and sensing their reality and depth in the course of the morning service in the synagogue, was the basic substance of the system of contemplation propounded by R. Shneur Zalman. In addition, in the first section of *Tanya* he provides a number of brief outlines of contemplative patterns of thought.⁴⁰ Over the years these were supplemented by the discourses, most of which could function not only as mystical expositions on themes from the Bible and Talmud, but also as source material for the contemplative process. In chapter 3 we discussed the way these discourses gradually changed in style, becoming ever more accessible, both for the scholar in the study house and for the intellectualist contemplative in prayer. As we saw in chapter 4, while R. Shneur Zalman made allowance for those who, during the week, did not have the time for contemplation, he insisted that the Habad prayer meeting should proceed at a slow, meditative pace.⁴¹ He also prohibited talking at any part of the prayers, a rule which emphasized the serious nature of prayer and protected the contemplative atmosphere.⁴² On the Sabbath, all his followers were expected to recite their prayers slowly and to utilize the Habad teachings for contemplation.

This system was inherited by R. Dov Ber. In the previous chapter we considered his directives in *Tract on Ecstasy* concerning the psychological effect of contemplation: whether, ideally, it should lead to emotional en-

thusiasm or to what he considered the higher, unfelt ecstasy of self-abnegation. Here we will focus on R. Dov Ber's teachings concerning contemplation, his provision of suitable source material and discuss the extent to which he expected a meditative approach to prayer from every member of the fraternity.

Not long after he assumed leadership, a letter from R. Dov Ber complains about the confusion among the Hasidic followers with regard to contemplation. Although they have heard many discourses "they do not know what to do with them. Many wise and scholarly people have asked: what should one do in prayer with all the Hasidic teachings one knows?"⁴³ While the discourses of R. Shneur Zalman were comprehensible as Torah teaching and as guidance for various areas of life, their use as a basis for contemplation in prayer was insufficiently understood. In response to this need, in 1814, the year of publicization in manuscript of his *Tract on Ecstasy*, R. Dov Ber also issued another work in manuscript entitled *Tract on Contemplation*.

Both works circulated among the Lubavitch Hasidic followers. The *Tract on Ecstasy*, which is primarily an exhortation to seek, through contemplation, utter *bitul* rather than easy emotional enthusiasm, was not printed in R. Dov Ber's lifetime. It is likely that this work was considered directly relevant only to a small elite: the inner circle of R. Dov Ber's following. By contrast the *Tract on Contemplation* (also called *Gate of Unity*) was printed by the Habad printer in Kopys in 1820, suggesting that the author intended its teachings to be studied by a wider audience.⁴⁴ Necessarily the readership of the book would have been scholars. Considering its subject matter, its style, and the directive which the work expresses, it is clear that it is intended for men of high intellectual capacity. Indeed, the frontispiece to the first edition emphasizes that it is for those "whom G-d has graced with intellect." However, for contemporary Jewish society, in which study of advanced talmudic and halakhic works was commonplace, the demand for high intellectual ability was not unusual. The innovative aspect of *Tract on Contemplation* was that it sought to communicate the process of mystical contemplation to this relatively broad section of society.

THE CONTEMPLATIVE PROCESS

At the beginning of this book R. Dov Ber states that he has already explained in a special tract (namely *Tract on Ecstasy*) the various levels of ecstasy or enthusiasm caused by contemplation. "Now," he writes, "one must

explain clearly the nature of contemplation: what it is, essentially, and what should be the subject of the contemplation."⁴⁵

The opening chapters of the tract comprise a remarkable analysis of the process of contemplative thought.⁴⁶ While in earlier Habad teachings we encounter discussion of the cognitive and contemplative process, R. Dov Ber's exposition at the beginning of *Tract on Contemplation* is unique for its classification of the possible directions of thought in the mind of the contemplative. Employing the image of a river, R. Dov Ber defines the parameters of "width, length, and depth."⁴⁷

The source of the river, described as a swiftly flowing spring, is the initial concept on which the person is contemplating. This might be, for example, the way all existence emerges from the Divine void. The "width" of the contemplative flow of thought is the exploration of this concept in a private, noncommunicative way. The thinker finds or creates a variety of images and conceptual models expressing the various aspects of the central theme. While this is a rich and satisfying process intellectually, it also carries the danger of straying away from the point.

A second mode, termed the "length" of the river, is contemplative thought of a different kind. The thinker tries to find imagery or conceptual models which render the initial concept more *communicable*. If carried to its full extent, this process of thought would enable the contemplative to find a way to explain the most esoteric idea in terms which would be meaningful to a child.

Both the "width" and "length" modes of thinking add to the sense of "depth." This third aspect of contemplation means a return to the source of the river, enriched by the contemplative discoveries which have been gained. Due to an enhanced sense of the real nature of the concept, the thinker is able to enter the source to a greater "depth."⁴⁸

Interesting for us is the significance of the faculty of communication, here termed "length," in this contemplative process. The thinker applies this faculty within his own being in order to plumb the depths of the spiritual concept at the center of his thought. As R. Dov Ber explains further stages of his system of contemplation, we again encounter this idea. R. Dov Ber states that in order for the contemplative process to be effective, the thinker must aim for something more than the structure of intellectual exploration which has been described. The goal is a total focus on and bonding with the initial concept, as something of permanent and wide reaching significance. While the contemplative process in itself is called

Binah (understanding), this bonding (*hitkasherut*) is termed *Da'at* (knowledge).⁴⁹ A child is weak in this faculty, states R. Dov Ber; hence, although he seems to care very much about something, he can easily be persuaded to want the opposite.⁵⁰ In order to reach mature bonding, a further dimension of contemplation must be attained.

This is described in the second chapter of the tract. R. Dov Ber employs an obscure Lurianic term (*Tevunah*) to express this further aspect of the contemplative process, but his explanations make clear what is meant. It is the ability to make the entire body of one's contemplative achievement relevant to a hypothetical second person. Continuing with the image of the source of a river, R. Dov Ber states that the man who has this ability has the power to draw the water from the depths and make it available to others.⁵¹ Without this faculty, even though he may have achieved profound understanding characterized by "width, length, and depth," his knowledge remains abstract. It cannot be shown to be relevant to others and cannot be applied in any realm beyond the world of intellectualist thought. As an example of this failure in communication, R. Dov Ber cites the example of a person studying a talmudic *pilpul*. Despite his grasp of its intellectual subtlety, he is unable to apply it in real terms of practical law. At this stage of comprehension it is just abstract scholarship, a potential force (*hylos*) which has not yet been actualized.⁵²

At this point, we note, the critique of contemporary talmudic scholarship expressed by the early Hasidic movement seems to reappear in another format.⁵³ The breakdown of the connection between extravagant *pilpul* and the reality of practical halakhah becomes a paradigm for a lack of relevance and real significance in the stream of thought of a contemplative *hasid*. It is noteworthy that R. Dov Ber's program of Torah study for his followers which we discussed earlier was decidedly halakhic in direction rather than *pilpulistic*. The same structure of values is pertinent in the world of meditative contemplation. R. Dov Ber's aim was that the esoteric focus of contemplative thought, the kernel of teaching drawn from the Merkavah realm, should be seen as meaningful on lower levels of existence. If this step takes place in the mind of the thinker, then his contemplation in prayer will be effective and he will internalize and affirm the spiritual world-view implicit in the Hasidic teachings. R. Dov Ber complains that inability to reach this stage of inner communication characterizes many of the *hasidim*, both new followers and men of experience: they grasp the intellectual constructs but do not understand how to apply them within their own inner world.⁵⁴

TWO MODES OF CONTEMPLATION

R. Dov Ber now defines two different kinds of contemplation. One is "general," the other "detailed."⁵⁵ The general form of contemplation concerns basic perspectives on existence as propounded in Habad teaching. Two examples are: all is a flow of radiance emerging from the Infinite; all existence is maintained by a stream of sacred Hebrew letters flowing from the Divine.⁵⁶ Each of these perspectives could be the basis of the general contemplative process. By contrast, the detailed mode of contemplation is defined as "contemplating each world, each created thing, on each of the different levels of the order of the downchaining of worlds." R. Dov Ber describes the step-by-step progress of this form of contemplation, beginning on the lowest level of the Lurianic world order and ascending level by level through each of the *Sefirot* in each of the Four Worlds. A higher form of the same type of contemplation starts in the realm of *Azilut* and ascends to the most exalted reaches of the Lurianic spiritual cosmology.⁵⁷

Discussing these two methods, R. Dov Ber indicates that while the general method is easier, and more suitable for the beginner, it also can lead to self-deception: one can imagine one is very close to the Divine, when in fact one is still very remote.⁵⁸ The detailed method, however, leads to the greater immediacy of each stage of the Lurianic schema, and when, after climbing mentally from level to level, one finally reaches the Divine Essence, the general perspective which one then attains has more veracity and a greater quality of reality.

R. Dov Ber emphasizes that the fulfilment of the detailed mode of contemplation is when it merges with the general perspective. The powerful general teachings expressed in the second section of *Tanya* on the absorption of existence in the Infinite and the expression of the Infinite in existence remain the goal of the contemplative. However, the addition of structured detail from the Lurianic teachings, explored by the Habad methods of analysis and analogy, provides more opportunity, so to speak, for the rational intellect itself to be suffused by the Divine. The directive ultimately to merge the two methods of contemplation is quoted by R. Dov Ber in the name of his father, R. Shneur Zalman, and the Maggid of Mezeritch.⁵⁹

This directive also has bearing on another question concerning Habad contemplation. How do the broad radiant perspectives revealed by this contemplative system relate to the specific wording of the daily prayers? This is an important question, particularly for a system which, we believe,

was intended to be applied not by a small elite but by the general membership of an expanding fraternity. We will see below further indication of R. Dov Ber's attention to this issue. In *Tract on Contemplation* he makes the point that, given the basic directive that the detailed mode of thought should ultimately merge with the general perspective, the specific wording of the prayers—when analyzed in kabbalistic terms—aids rather than hinders the general realization that, say, all is subsumed in the Essence of the Divine.⁶⁰ However, *Tract on Contemplation* itself provides little information on the way the very wording of the prayers can itself become part of the detailed contemplative process; this was left for later works by R. Dov Ber.⁶¹

JOY AND BITUL

The opening, psychological section of *Tract on Contemplation* concludes with discussion of the inner effect of the contemplative process. Grappling with the theme of the emergence of existence from the Divine void, on the one hand there is some comprehension of the abnegation of all reality before G-d; on the other there is a reaching for that which lies beyond understanding “but nonetheless flashes in his mind like a lightning flash” for a moment, giving the person a near visionary perception of the nature of the Divine.⁶² These two modes of knowledge produce contrasting effects: from comprehension is born joy, while the reaching for the unknowable provokes a sense of *bitul*, self-abnegation, and a spiritual form of melancholy. Paradoxically, both the joy and the melancholy can coexist in the heart of the contemplative and, indeed, taught R. Dov Ber, should do so.⁶³ In our discussion of *Tract on Ecstasy* in the previous chapter we encountered the concept of this melancholy, termed *tsubrokhenskayt* (being broken). We will return to this theme when we examine the way R. Dov Ber employed ethical concepts to transmit what is fundamentally an esoteric teaching.

We thus see that in this first section of *Tract on Contemplation* R. Dov Ber provided his followers with a brief but clear manual on the technique of contemplation. We see too how the central ethos of Habad, communion, was applied internally. The contemplative followed an ordered cerebral path which both made tangible that which is elusive and also reached with ever more yearning for that which cannot be known.

MATERIAL FOR CONTEMPLATION

This brief manual is followed by the comparatively lengthy main section of *Tract on Contemplation*.⁶⁴ This provides a step-by-step exposition of the Lurianic schema of the downchaining of worlds. It starts well before the *Zimzum*, the initial veiling of the Divine radiance which preceded the emanation of the highest *Sefirot*, and follows the process right down to the lowest levels of existence, including, kabbalistically surveyed, the realms of evil (*kelipot*). One aspect of this section of the book is that it provides source material for the Hasidic follower to study and utilize in the detailed method of contemplation. The elite in the Lubavitch fraternity were probably expected to know the entire schema by heart and have the ability to think through at least part of it as preparation for and accompaniment to their daily prayers. Others would focus on just one or two of the brief chapters. At the same time, this section of the tract gives continuous guidance on various other aspects of the contemplative process. Repeatedly, the detailed and general perspectives are drawn together, for example through the concepts of unity (*yihud*) and integration (*bitkalelut*). “Unity” here means the idea that corresponding aspects on each of the different levels of the Lurianic cosmology are all unified together. Thus the opening chapters of this section of the tract expound the theme that all levels of *Keter*, *Hokhmah* and *Malkhut* respectively, from the highest realm to the lowest, are unified.⁶⁵ This idea facilitates ready access from the particular to the general which, as we have seen, is an important axis in R. Dov Ber's system. “Integration,” the contemplative absorption of all in the One, is a closely related theme which has the same effect. The concept of this mystical movement is found repeatedly throughout the tract and is in many ways its central teaching.⁶⁶ R. Dov Ber states:

And this is the main aim in all contemplation of whatever detail, throughout the downchaining [of the worlds], from before the first Veiling (*Zimzum*) to the lowest level of the realm of Action—that everything should be [perceived as] absorbed in the simple Unity which is the Essence of the radiance of the Infinite.⁶⁷

This leads, conversely, to the complementary perception that every detail of the lower realms is itself an expression of the “Simple Will” of the Essence of the radiance of the Infinite.⁶⁸ Thus, in effect, All is G-d, and G-d is All: the Upper Unity and the Lower Unity respectively.

A Theory of Communication

Another aspect of the *Tract on Contemplation* is its use of what in Hebrew is called a *mashal*, the English translations of which include proverb, parable, simile, image, and model. Throughout the book R. Dov Ber employs images of various kinds to render meaningful the different stages in the Lurianic description of existence, and to bring home his own points of emphasis. For example, to convey the theme of integration, R. Dov Ber employs the image of a map.⁶⁹ Each dimension of the spiritual realms is like a map of the dimension which is higher: every detail is there, but in miniature and on a lower spiritual level. The lowest level of existence, the universe as we see it, therefore functions as a "map" of the most exalted spiritual realms described in kabbalistic thought. Thus "the end is joined in the beginning," the highest is expressed in the lowest.⁷⁰ In Hebrew thought, whether midrashic or kabbalistic, the *mashal* has great popularity in the task of communication of ideas. However, R. Dov Ber makes the very concept of the *mashal* a central theme. He quotes the biblical statement (1 Kings 5:12) that King Solomon said three thousand *meshalim* (proverbs), and explains that each was a parable explaining the preceding one. In other words, the original idea was so exalted that in order to communicate it, three thousand steps down were required, at each step translating the higher concept into an image or parable, which was then again translated into a yet simpler form.⁷¹ This idea is employed by R. Dov Ber as an image to explain the nature of communication in general, which itself serves as a model for existence, Creation being pictured as an act of communication from the Divine.⁷² This chain of parables does not mean a diminution of significance. "In the final parable is the greatest depth and the original essence of that reality which the parable is depicting," states R. Dov Ber.⁷³ This idea is part of an entire theory of communication found in *Tract on Contemplation* focussing on the concept of "letters."

In early Habad teachings there is relatively little employment of *gematria*, the talmudic and kabbalistic art concerning the numerical values of the Hebrew letters.⁷⁴ However, Habad teachings on the communication process emphasize another aspect of the letters: the manner of their emergence, their source, and their power to transmit an idea by means of ordered language (including use of the *mashal*) from teacher to disciple. The idea that Creation is a process of Divine "speech," a concept rooted in the opening verses of Genesis and elaborated in the *Book of Creation*, has an important place in the system of contemplation expounded in R. Shneur

Zalman's *Tanya*. Existence comes into being through a stream of letters.⁷⁵ The letters have the quality of the "vessels" for Divine radiance described in the kabbalistic teachings of both R. Moshe Cordovero and R. Yitzhak Luria.⁷⁶ However, as letters their source can be more clearly defined as emerging from exalted levels beyond the system of *Sefirot*.⁷⁷ Thus R. Shneur Zalman speaks of "letters of *Ein Sof*" and the idea that "the soul [i.e., the essence] is full of letters."⁷⁸ This leads to a depiction of existence as Divine communication expressing the very essence of the Divine. R. Dov Ber makes this a central theme in his *Tract on Contemplation*. Stating that "the root of the letters is in the very essence of the soul," R. Dov Ber describes the way these letters become the expression of the Divine Will on all its different levels. The letters themselves are the medium for translation from one level to another. "Through the letters that which is hidden becomes revealed." Following this process downwards, ultimately the essence of the Divine is expressed in the physical world. At each stage of descent, the role of the letters is paramount:

Behold, before the source of the Simple Will and Simple Delight comes into being, there are letters included in the essence of the soul. After the Will has come into being, they emerge so as to reveal the Will, and they are called "Letters of the Will." This reveals the Will in a tangible way. Indeed, this is the main significance of the letters in the essence of the soul: they achieve the expression of the radiance of the essence of the soul on whatever tangible level one is considering. Through the letters, that which is hidden becomes revealed. . . . Through this, the Will can be expressed in the Intellect. . . . Similarly, in the Intellect of the Will . . . there are letters through which it descends from one mode to another, becoming Emotion of the Will . . . and similarly there are letters of Emotion . . . until [one reaches] the Will of Thought, Speech and Action: all of them have letters. . . . Thus we find that through the letters there is the downchaining from one level to another from the essence of the soul to the final level of action.⁷⁹

In subsequent chapters of *Tract on Contemplation* the theme of the letters merges with the theme of the *mashal*, discussed above, and the concept of the transmission of an idea. Just as one can speak of a chain of parables, of which the last most clearly reveals the reality they are intended to communicate, so too "in the concretization of the idea—the more it achieves expression and clarification in a yet more tangible way, lower and lower—

the more [it contains] the depth and the source of the very inwardness of the radiance of the idea.”⁸⁰

Employing the concept of the letters, we find also that the very dialectic of existence is interpreted in terms of communicability. The veil (*masah*) described by the Lurianic kabbalah as interposing between one spiritual realm and the next is itself defined as letters, “but the letters are disorganised” and convey no meaning. This too is the nature of all *Zimzum*, the source of the finite (and grief-laden) quality of existence. However, when the letters are rearranged in an organized way the meaning of the concept—the boundless Oneness of the Divine—shines through. This is the mystical, all-transcending step of “breaking through the veil.”⁸¹

In these teachings, tangible communication is described not as a watering down of the idea, a necessary compromise, but as an expression of its very essence. In terms of the natural psychology of the mystic, one senses a boldness here, a confidence in the power of communication which distinguishes the ethos of Hasidism from that of the earlier kabbalah, and which within Hasidism distinguishes Habad from most other groups. *Tract on Contemplation* was itself an expression of this confidence. By inviting the ordinary scholar to contemplate in the detailed mode, and by presenting an ordered account of the kabbalistic cosmology with reasoned imagery in explanation, R. Dov Ber was opening another gate on the road of communication of the esoteric.

Tract on Contemplation provided the member of the scholarly class with a clear guide to contemplation in prayer. The individual who was capable of following the syllabus of halakhic study we discussed earlier was also expected to put in practice these teachings on the various modes of contemplative thought and to use the source material provided. We gain an insight to the way the followers of R. Dov Ber related to this work when we consider a commentary on it written by the major *hasid* R. Hillel of Paritch.⁸² This emphasizes an aspect not discussed here by R. Dov Ber: the source of the central ideas which constitute the focus of the contemplative process, and also the source of the parables which communicate the central theme. R. Hillel describes the situation in terms of a disciple contemplating the teachings and “letters” of his teacher.⁸³ The teacher “has the nature of *Azilut* (the highest of the Lurianic worlds) and his perception has the quality of ‘vision’ and *Hokhmah* (Supernal Wisdom).”⁸⁴ Clearly this is the figure of the *Rebbe* who transmits teachings from a higher realm to his followers. In addition, the teacher provides explanations and parables, which it seems have also an exalted nature, quite beyond the reach of the

hasid in himself. R. Hillel describes the approach of the *hasid* to this material, obviously the text of *Tract on Contemplation* and similar sources from the Habad teachings. The disciple enters a state of “*bitul* and concentration, divesting himself of his own thought and focusing on the parables and explanations he received from his teacher.”⁸⁵

Continuing the image of the river and its source found at the beginning of the tract, R. Hillel states that through this process of self-abnegation, focussed on the stream of Habad imagery, the contemplative is able to break through to “the upper waters,” the exalted fountain of spirituality to which the “letters of the teacher”—parables, explanations, and ideas together—give access.⁸⁶ In R. Hillel’s view, the *Rebbe*’s teachings therefore provide the mystic key, or ladder, to be used by the *hasid* in his own contact with the upper realms.

Tract on Contemplation represented an extraordinary transmission to the Hasidic follower of an intensive contemplative technique. R. Dov Ber’s other early manuscript work, *Tract on Ecstasy*, encouraged the adept to remain with his stream of thought, climbing ever higher, rather than give way to emotion. The two books together convey the impression of an atmosphere of deep, lengthy, silent meditation, leading the Habad contemplative to a realm of infinite Divine radiance, thinly disguised as world.⁸⁷

Developing a Popular Contemplative Technique

The contemplative path defined in these early manuscript works by R. Dov Ber was relevant with its full force only to the elite among the fraternity: the men of stature, among them pneumatics and charismatics in their own right, such as R. Hillel of Paritch and R. Yitzhak Aizak of Homel. However, in muted or modified form, the road of contemplation was thrown open to the entire membership of the scholarly class. This is indicated by a work published in 1816, a prayerbook in which the text of the prayers was supplemented by Habad discourses, transcripts or elaborations by R. Dov Ber of his father’s teachings.⁸⁸ Included in this work was a tract on the main preparatory and inherently contemplative section of the prayers, the series of psalms entitled “Verses of Praise.”⁸⁹ This tract had been compiled by R. Dov Ber in his father’s lifetime, and he states in the introduction that his father had read it and approved it. Unlike the material in *Tract on Contemplation*, this section of R. Dov Ber’s *Prayerbook* functions as a line-by-line commentary on the prayers drawn from R. Shneur Zalman’s teachings. In addition, there are many other discourses relating to the prayers of weekdays, Sabbaths, and festivals.

From R. Dov Ber's introduction we learn that a problem which confronted many people in the Habad following was the relationship of contemplation to the wording of the prayers.

I know the pain of all those who seek to come close to the Divine in prayer. They are unable to connect the thoughts in their mind and heart, the contemplation and cognition of the Divine, with the words they are uttering with their mouths, such as the "Verses of Praise." They are disconnected. With one's mouth one utters the praise written in the verse, but one's heart is remote, concentrating on something else. And although that also concerns the contemplative praise and exaltation of the Divine, the two are not connected at all.⁹⁰

As the circle of would-be contemplatives became broader, guidance from R. Dov Ber was required to direct them along a balanced path. The *Prayerbook* is an instance of this kind of direction. The Habad teachings it contains expound the wording of the prayers and at the same time provide material for the detailed mode of contemplation. In the background remains the entire Lurianic cosmology in the schema propounded by *Tract on Contemplation*. Guided by the teachings in the *Prayerbook*, the *hasid* could focus his awareness of this radiant vista into its expression in the specific text of the prayers he was reciting. In this way the balance between deep contemplation on the one hand and the halakhically defined norm of the daily prayers on the other could be maintained, as the number of *hasidim* following R. Dov Ber's path of detailed meditation increased.

R. Dov Ber's edition of his father's commentary on the prayers was closely linked to the Lurianic *kavvanot* as they appeared in contemporary kabbalistic manuals. Repeatedly the commentary begins with a quotation of the *kavvanah* and then proceeds with a typical Habad exposition of what it means. The *kavvanah* itself is usually simply identification of a sefirotic level in the Lurianic spiritual cosmology, or of a Divine Name expressing that level. In the tract on the "Verses of Praise" in R. Dov Ber's *Prayerbook*, the abstract *kavvanot* are translated into the terminology of the intellectually and emotionally accessible structure communicated by the Habad teachings. The *Prayerbook*, guiding the *hasid* towards a form of contemplation which relates directly to the text of the prayers, thus also translated the highly esoteric *kavvanot* into a form in which they were meaningful to the Hasidic followers.

There is another aspect to this. In the second half of the eighteenth cen-

tury there had been a considerable number of editions of manuals of Lurianic *kavvanot*, published both by non-Hasidic kabbalists and also by members of the Hasidic movement.⁹¹ While Hasidic teachings tended to bypass the *kavvanot*, the Habad follower who had leanings to mystical prayer might well have been tempted to try to employ them in his own devotions.⁹² As a Hasid, he prayed from the Lurianic text of the prayers, an edition of which had been published by R. Shneur Zalman in 1803. This, however, did not include the Lurianic *kavvanot*.⁹³ In R. Dov Ber's view widespread employment of the kabbalistic *kavvanot* would lead to self-deception. It might be that this view was predicated by the expansion of the Habad fraternity. In another work, printed in 1821, he openly advised against attempting to use the *kavvanot*.⁹⁴ The *Prayerbook* of 1816 provided a substitute, a translation of the esoteric *kavvanot* into concepts meaningful on a personal psychological level in the Habad style, a work clearly accessible to and intended for the broad membership of the scholarly class.

An important feature of the *Prayerbook* was the inclusion of halakhic material (by R. Shneur Zalman) concerning the laws of prayer and other topics. This in itself was not unique: other contemporary prayerbooks also contained both mystical and halakhic sections.⁹⁵ What is interesting is R. Dov Ber's apparent attempt to underline the union between these two aspects of Jewish thought. Near the beginning of the *Prayerbook* we find two sections, *Sha'ar ha-Zizit* (*Gate of the Fringes*) and *Sha'ar ha-Tefilin* (*Gate of Phylacteries*) respectively. In these sections each page has two columns of text, one headed "The Mitzvah is a Lamp" and the other "And Torah is Light" (Prov. 6:23). In the first column there is a halakhic exposition of the topic, and in the second parallel column there is a Hasidic discourse.⁹⁶ These pages thus seem to express typographically the idea that the halakhic and contemplative domains are joined, a Habad idea we have discussed in chapter 3.⁹⁷ This feature of the *Prayerbook* is consistent with our view of it as providing contemplative material for the full range of the scholarly class.

The idea of the union of the halakhic and contemplative aspects of Judaism received further emphasis in a double work published by R. Dov Ber in 1820. The title of this book is again the verse from Proverbs: *The Mitzvah is a Lamp and Torah is Light*. The first section, entitled *Gate of Faith*, emphasizes the supreme importance of the practical Commandments.⁹⁸ The second part, *Gate of Unity*, is the *Tract on Contemplation* which previously existed only in manuscript. Thus in this work we see both the aim to publicize teachings on contemplation and also the concern to balance this by emphasizing the significance of obedience to the halakhah.

Consideration of these tracts and publications therefore leads us to the view that R. Dov Ber was indeed attempting to popularize his method of detailed contemplation throughout the scholarly class. The initial works in manuscript taught a path suitable primarily for the man of stature. They were followed by the printed *Prayerbook*, which gave guidance to the ordinary scholar concerning the road of contemplation he should follow. The next step in the transmission of contemplative techniques to the fraternity was the printing of *Tract on Contemplation*.

This endeavor required constant surveillance. Deep contemplation of the kind we have been discussing is a subtle spiritual instrument, open to misinterpretation and misuse. When put in the hands of the broad membership of a fraternity now in its second generation, watchful control was necessary. An example of this is seen in a letter by R. Dov Ber addressed to his followers written in the early 1820s.⁹⁹ This expresses his concern at the way his directives on contemplation were being applied by the young full-time scholars in the fraternity. These were the young married men supported by their in-laws, eighteen- to twenty-five-year-olds for the most part. They are indeed spending a long time on contemplation, says R. Dov Ber, but it is in a manner which does not relate to the wording of the prayers. R. Dov Ber concedes that the inner effect of their contemplation is genuine. However, if after contemplation they would apply a commensurate spiritual effort to their daily prayers, they would spend at least two hours on this. Instead, he complains, they recite the prayers quickly.¹⁰⁰

It is likely that the publication of *Tract on Contemplation* in 1820 had encouraged the full-time scholars to engage before prayer in the lengthy contemplative process which it teaches. However, they were not able to sustain the intensity of their mood so as to infuse the actual prayers with the radiant perspective of the integration of All in the One. A later generation of Habad spoke of "praying with a folded page in the prayerbook." The *hasid* would make a fold at the page he reached with the full intensity of contemplation; beyond that point he would complete the prayers in the normal way. The next day, he would try to improve his performance, and sustain the contemplative mood for longer, making a new fold further on in the prayerbook.¹⁰¹ In the early 1820s the young men addressed by R. Dov Ber, attempting to apply the teachings of *Tract on Contemplation*, exhausted their spiritual potential before beginning the actual prayers. This is R. Dov Ber's claim. He therefore demands, as only a Hasidic *Rebbe* can demand, a complete change in the mode of service of his followers.¹⁰² Instead of aiming for lengthy contemplation followed by prayer, full-time

scholars should divide their activities in two. On the one hand, they should study Hasidic teachings "every morning and evening," at which time the individual should use "all his power" to consider their significance. This will then provide a contemplative resource which should be applied in prayer.¹⁰³ Further, R. Dov Ber insists that the daily prayers of the full-time scholars should be recited in a quorum together, with mental focus on the meaning of the words and with enthusiasm, joy, and contrite humility. Contemplation during prayer should be limited to the significance of the *Shema*.¹⁰⁴ If they were to attempt to use the teachings in the *Prayerbook* as a contemplative accompaniment to the entire text of the prayers, comments R. Dov Ber, they "would have to pray all day long, and that would still not be enough."¹⁰⁵ This does not reduce the significance of the *Prayerbook* as a work for daily study: in 1823, close to the date of this letter, it was reprinted. However, we see here R. Dov Ber taking action to redirect his followers so as to preserve the quality of prayer as he wanted it to be manifested in the fraternity. For the young full-time scholars, lengthy contemplation before prayer was to be replaced by defined periods of contemplative study followed by a more normative variety of audible Hasidic prayer. At the same time, provision is made for those who genuinely put into practice the technique of slow, silent prayer. "If however there are a few people whose nature is not to concentrate through a raised voice, but in silence and slowly—this duty [to pray aloud] does not apply to them."¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, R. Dov Ber insists that they should pray together with the community.

This letter is a striking expression of the dialectic implicit in the process of communication of esoteric teachings. The intense, highly mystical technique taught in *Tract on Contemplation* was directly relevant only to a small, elite group of men of stature. As the Lubavitch fraternity expanded and more of the young scholars sought to follow the contemplative path, it became necessary to give a somewhat different directive, in order to preserve the norm of contemplative prayer as conceived by the *Mitteler Rebbe*. It is interesting to note that in later generations of Lubavitch, particularly those of R. Shalom Dovber (d. 1920) and his son R. Yosef Yitzhak (d. 1950), the ideal of lengthy contemplative prayer was achieved within a remarkably broad segment of the scholarly class in the fraternity, aided enormously by the *Tomkhei Temimim* system of academies which began in the townlet of Lubavitch and eventually spread to other regions and countries.¹⁰⁷ In R. Dov Ber's time, however, this stage of the communication of the esoteric had not yet been reached. R. Dov Ber sought to protect the

normative expression of Hasidic prayer among the young scholars in the fraternity, the children and even grandchildren of his father's followers. His earlier teachings on extreme *bitul* during prayer were restricted to a small group of men of stature, and the rank and file of the young scholars were literally compelled to change their style of service.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps because of this change of direction, *Tract on Ecstasy*, which preaches above all the path of esoteric *bitul*, was studied in manuscript copies during the lifetime of R. Dov Ber; the first extant printed edition dates from 1831 or later.¹⁰⁹

Instead of intensive self-abnegatory contemplation during or before prayer, this letter placed increased emphasis on the institutionalized study of Hasidic teachings. The corpus of printed texts available to the members of the Habad fraternity had grown considerably during the period of R. Dov Ber's leadership. Previously, only the *Tanya* had been published. One of R. Dov Ber's first concerns as Hasidic leader had been the preparation of a new edition of *Tanya* with supplementary material. Later, the *Prayer-book* of 1816 was the first printed collection of Habad discourses.¹¹⁰ It was swiftly followed by a second collection of discourses focussing on the *Zohar*.¹¹¹ Subsequently, from 1817 to 1822, at least one new volume of Hasidic teachings appeared every year. The letter by R. Dov Ber which we have been discussing introduced an enactment for the Habad communities that there would be regular study in the evenings, in groups, of *Ein Yakov*, *Tanya*, the printed works of Habad teachings and also those which were as yet in manuscript.¹¹² In each study group there would be two or three leaders to give guidance to the others.¹¹³ In addition, there was time specifically set aside for contemplation, on Mondays and Thursdays and on the Sabbath, before the Afternoon Prayer.¹¹⁴ The aim of this enactment was to ensure the continued or increasing study and contemplation of Hasidic teachings without disturbing the structure of prayer.

The sections of the letter which restrict or regulate contemplation are those addressed to the young full-time scholars. It was their mode of application to R. Dov Ber's own teachings which had excited his concern. By contrast, the same letter has a second aspect, turning with a different demand to the householder who was less scholarly or, due to the pressure of making a living, had less time for study. In his case the problem was not unbridled contemplation, but the opposite: he did not contemplate enough.

There are many people who consider themselves to be insignificant and lowly, because they are busy householders. They are

over-humble in their opinion of themselves, for they declare that they are not *hasidim* and therefore they consider themselves free of any duty to make the effort with their minds to understand even the simplest teachings concerning Divine service.¹¹⁵

R. Dov Ber insists that these busy householders should spend time in study of the Hasidic teachings and in application of what they have learned during prayer. He assures them that they truly have "a contrite heart" and have the desire for (and implicitly, the ability to achieve) emotional enthusiasm, *devekut*, and bonding to the Divine through "a bit of contemplation."¹¹⁶ Thus while this letter restrained the young full-time scholars from a path which led away from normative prayer into the remote abstraction of contemplation of the downchaining of the worlds, it also encouraged the ordinary householder in his ability to study the Habad teachings and to realize their spiritual potential in contemplative service of the Divine.

We thus see that R. Dov Ber provided the members of the fraternity both with material for contemplation and also with selective guidance as to how it should or should not be used. There was one style for the elite inner circle, expressed in the tracts on ecstasy and on contemplation. For the wider reaches of the scholarly class, a milder variety of contemplation in prayer was developed and defined. R. Dov Ber's demand that people should engage in this variety of contemplation was emphatic. In the introduction to *Imrei Binah*, printed in 1821, he makes the striking statement that any literate person who does not attempt to contemplate is almost as bad as one who does not fulfil the Commandment to wear *Tefilin*. "For a head which has not donned *Tefilin* is called a sinner with his body, and this man [who does not contemplate] is called a sinner with his soul."¹¹⁷ During R. Dov Ber's leadership the Habad Hasidic teachings became fully incorporated into the regular study program of every literate member of the fraternity. Rather than constituting a sublime esoteric corner of the bookshelf, the growing corpus of printed books of what came to be called *khasidus* was integrated into the public study sessions of normal daily life.

Each to His Measure

As we have seen, R. Dov Ber addressed different demands to different sectors of his following. A remarkable document which illustrates his insistence on the study and contemplation of Hasidic teachings in the various ranks of his followers is a list of rules concerning visits by the *hasidim* to

Lubavitch.¹¹⁸ The document dates from around 1822 and is therefore roughly contemporaneous with the letter discussed above. Arranged in ten points, this list divides the *hasidim* into different categories. The main yardstick is their skill at mastering the Hasidic tracts published by R. Dov Ber—a skill which depended both on intellect and on sensitivity to the mystical subject matter. A major factor, however, was the economic basis of their lives. There is an underlying assumption that those who were supported by their parents or in-laws while they immersed themselves in Torah study generally stood a greater chance of plumbing the depths of Habad mystical thought than did those who were involved in business activities. Consequently an intense demand was made on these full-time scholars. They had to bring written questions to R. Dov Ber about the Hasidic teachings they had been studying; in addition they were expected to devote themselves to contemplative prayer and had permission to ask questions about this as well. The young men who fell into this category but did not make the attempt to study Hasidic teachings and did not even possess the volumes which had been printed are warned that they will not be admitted to R. Dov Ber's presence.

A lesser demand was made on businessmen, who fell into several groups according to the time they had available for study. The highest category was expected to engage in regular study sessions together with the full-time scholars. These might be daily, or at least twice a week. A lower category would study in this way only on the Sabbath. All were expected to spend some time reading for themselves the Hasidic teachings, such as R. Dov Ber's tract *The Way of Life (Derekh Haim)* which had been published in 1819.

Another category of visitor to Lubavitch comprised both the "simple householders" and those talmudic scholars who had no flair for Hasidic teachings. Both these groups were considered equally remote from comprehending Habad Hasidic thought. Nonetheless, they would want to hear ethical teachings from R. Dov Ber, and he assures them they will not be disappointed.¹¹⁹ Time is set aside, too, for new visitors. Provision is also made for those whose journey to R. Dov Ber is merely for advice and blessing regarding their material lives, or simply in order to receive from him a letter of approbation so that they can travel the region collecting charity for some worthy cause. The document is characterized by the aim to make room and time, somehow, for everyone. Together with this it expresses the intense demand on the members of the fraternity to study the

Hasidic teachings to the limit of their time and ability, and also requires people to live up to those teachings in their manner of prayer and other aspects of their behavior. Men who are known for their "evil tongue, foolery, drunkenness or pride" will not be accepted in private audience with R. Dov Ber until they accept reproof and affirm that they will change their ways. Further, it is made clear that the wealthier businesspeople are expected to help others in the expenses of the journey to Lubavitch and also to contribute to funds supporting the teachers and scholars who totally devote themselves to the study of Hasidic thought.

The full text of this document expressing the atmosphere of R. Dov Ber's fraternity is as follows:¹²⁰

List of the Various Categories for Visitors, as I have instructed my friend the bearer of this letter.¹²¹

1. Young men free to study, and scholars, who have some knowledge of Hasidic teachings, should come together in groups of not less than six and up to ten.¹²² They should stay here for one or two weeks.

2. Among them should be two or three who have expert knowledge of Hasidic teachings and who study them assiduously without cease, who take seriously the duty to pray with contemplation¹²³ extending to mind and heart, and to study Torah for its own sake.¹²⁴

3. Each of these people should present separately in writing their questions about the Hasidic teachings in the books which have been published: *The Way of Life*, *Gates of Radiance*, and *Words of Understanding*.¹²⁵ They should admit the truth about whether they understand the Hasidic teachings, whether they always make a proper effort in their study, and whether they make a suitable effort in contemplative prayer, each on his level. They have permission to ask about this subject in detail.

4. They should undertake to put effort into their study of Hasidic teachings in future, and not to treat lightly the communal prayers.¹²⁶ They should not pray briefly, nor should they walk backwards and forwards during their prayers [which leads to] extraneous thoughts. Instead they should stand still in one place concentrating their hearts and minds properly for an hour or more.¹²⁷

5. Anyone¹²⁸ who has not made the attempt to study Hasidic teachings, and does not possess any of the books for himself, deliberately rebelling,¹²⁹ will not be received [in private

audience]. Also anyone whose behaviour is repugnant, due to his Evil Tongue and foolery, or drunkenness, pride, and similar should be made known to me in writing by his friends. He should accept reproof and change his ways. Then he will be received.

6. Business people who are not so heavily occupied, who study and have some knowledge of the Hasidic teachings and are sensitive to what they mean and who have undertaken to study regularly with the full-time scholars,¹³⁰ whether daily or at least twice a week, and who learn by themselves the book *The Way of Life*¹³¹ in their spare moments—they will be received here [for advice] in spiritual and also practical affairs.¹³² From the positive you can infer the negative.¹³³ A person who deliberately separates himself [and does not study with the full-time scholars] should affirm in writing that he truly wants to repent; then he will be received.

7. Business people who are more heavily occupied but they understand and want to study the Hasidic teachings in their free time, should undertake to study together with the scholars on the Sabbath, or other suitable opportunity, and also should by themselves meditate on the book *The Way of Life* in their free moments. Then he [*sic*] will be received for advice on spiritual and practical affairs. If not, he will not be received—unless others testify on his behalf that he is very heavily occupied with business.

8. The simple householders, and the scholars, who are very remote from understanding Hasidic teachings but want to hear ethical teachings on their level, with brief explanation, are able to come here, and there will be a special time for them. Also for new followers [there will be time] only once a week, on condition that they donate money towards the travelling expenses of the poor¹³⁴ and to support the teachers who totally devote themselves to the study of Hasidic teachings.¹³⁵

9. The householders who visit here only on account of worldly matters, in order to obtain a letter for some financial affair¹³⁶ or in order to ask advice concerning their children, health or livelihood, or any negative event, may heaven protect us—should not come with the other followers, nor for the Sabbath. However, if he [*sic*] stays here two or three days, there will be an opportunity to let him enter [in private audience]. He should not try to push his way in together with the other followers,¹³⁷ or only once or twice, unless he is among those

who occasionally study Hasidic teachings and he is sensitive to what they mean and loves listening in order to understand as much as he can.

10. At the present time,¹³⁸ people should not rely on hearing Hasidic teachings on the Sabbath, but rather on weekdays, which will entail waiting. The bearer of this letter will explain all the details and reasons as I have informed him. You should obey his instructions, so that your journey here should not be for nothing at all. This is sufficient for the wise.¹³⁹

Opposition from Contemporaries

It is almost to be expected that R. Dov Ber's attempts to propagate the widespread study and contemplation of Hasidic teachings would provoke opposition. In the previous chapter we discussed R. Aaron Halevi's critique of R. Dov Ber's ideas concerning enthusiasm and self-abnegation. R. Aaron's writings also contain attacks on the method of R. Dov Ber's system of Hasidic teaching and on certain aspects of its content. One major target for R. Aaron is the *mashal*, the parable or model.

As we have seen, use of the *mashal* is central to R. Dov Ber's style of contemplative inner communication. It is by means of the *mashal* that he leads the individual to perceive the deep structure which links different levels of being, a perception which is the key to the intellectualist realization of the ultimate unity and integration of all. R. Aaron himself used the *mashal* extensively in his own teachings; however, in his book *Gates of Unity and Faith* (Shklov, 1820) he attacks those who do not exercise sufficient care in employment of this method. Although he does not mention him by name, it is obvious that his words are directed against R. Dov Ber.¹⁴⁰ R. Aaron states:

The one who understands [a spiritual concept] through the rationale (*hesber*) of the *mashal* imagines to himself that he has grasped with his intellect and comprehends how things are . . . he thinks that it is really like that above. Through this he can come, heaven forfend, to many errors.¹⁴¹

The errors of which R. Aaron warns concern falsely conceiving of the Deity in anthropomorphic terms; namely, to "imagine Him, heaven forfend, as one who has wisdom and emotions and will and delight; or as being, heaven forfend, comparable to the worlds in a material way."¹⁴² R. Aaron did not openly impute such ideas to R. Dov Ber, but his implicit accusation is that R. Dov Ber's teachings, which employ rational thought

to the full and demand intellectual comprehension, using the medium of the *mashal* and frequent comparison of the macrocosm to the microcosm, did not sufficiently emphasize the infinite elevation of the Divine; indeed, he even considered the texts of R. Shneur Zalman's teachings to contain a certain ambiguity. This had been harmless during the lifetime of R. Shneur Zalman, but after his death his teachings "remain transcribed on paper; and the one who heard his holy words wrote them down in a literal way, each one according to his understanding."¹⁴³

R. Aaron was pained by the steady transformation of "luminous" Habad teachings into a system of rational thought. This had begun in the lifetime of R. Shneur Zalman but was greatly accelerated by R. Dov Ber. For R. Aaron, the paradigm of the enthusiast, the Hasidic follower has to be imbued with a spiritualist intensity which negates all reason. For the man following this path, the quest is only for the Upper Unity where all is One, a perspective from which existence has no ultimate reality whatsoever. For R. Dov Ber, on the other hand, the Lower Unity, which teaches of the expression of the Divine in the variety, practicality, and rationality of existence, is the more profound realization of meditative consciousness.¹⁴⁴ R. Aaron drew back from rationality as leading away from the One; for R. Dov Ber, the rational communication of Hasidic thought both within one's own being and to ever wider areas of society is the expression of the One in the world. It is true that R. Aaron himself wrote, published, and earnestly desired the spread of Habad teachings. Nonetheless, he did this not as a popularist turning to the people, but as a man of the spirit seeking those companions who can rise to his level. His strictures of rational thought about mystical topics express a concealed elitism. Included in his critique of rationality is the fear that "everyone might say and imagine in his soul that he has some grasp of this knowledge; and everyone will be able to say 'I expound *Maaseh Bereshit*' [an aspect of the ancient Merkavah tradition]."¹⁴⁵ It is not far from the truth to say that precisely this was the aim of R. Dov Ber. Through rational thought-constructs, models, and *meshalim* he sought to transmit suprarational perceptions to people who, though scholars, made no claim to be part of the kabbalistic elite of their time.

Another aspect of R. Aaron's critique of the Lubavitch system of contemplation concerned its kabbalistic content. One of the innovatory aspects of R. Dov Ber's discourses and tracts is the way they explore the upper aspects of the sefirotic realm. The highest of the four spiritual

"worlds" described in the Lurianic kabbalah is that of *Azilut* (Emanation). Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century kabbalistic writings describe the presence of yet more exalted realms—such as those before the *Zimzum*, the Divine self-veiling which predicates the emergence of the spiritual realms of *Azilut* and below.¹⁴⁶ These, however, are only rarely mentioned in the teachings of R. Shneur Zalman.¹⁴⁷ By contrast, R. Dov Ber wrote quite frequently of those upper levels. In *Tract on Contemplation* we find the theme of "the delight of the King in His Essence," which is before the *Zimzum*.¹⁴⁸ He wrote too of the esoteric "hidden *Sefirot*," pre-*Sefirot* which coexist within the otherwise attributeless, boundless, and undefinable *Eim Sof*.¹⁴⁹ Another focus of R. Dov Ber's attention is the Lurianic concept *Adam Kadmon* (Primeval Man). This is a level of Divine emanation which is after the *Zimzum* but which precedes the evolution of the *Sefirot*. *Adam Kadmon* includes "in one glance" all levels of existence, from the highest to the lowest.¹⁵⁰

R. Dov Ber discusses and analyzes these dimensions of the Lurianic cosmos in rational, discursive terms, freely employing the technique of the *mashal*. Pondering on these exalted themes is central to his detailed method of contemplation. By contrast, in R. Aaron Halevi's writings there is very strong, repeated criticism of any thought or investigation beyond the realm of *Azilut*. According to R. Aaron, no *mashal* may be applied to the higher aspects of the Divine, "for there is no understanding whatsoever of that [level], and it cannot be discussed at all."¹⁵¹ Similarly, while in theory R. Aaron permits one to speak of *Adam Kadmon*, which is lower than the *Zimzum*, he limits this in a way which seems pointedly to refer to R. Dov Ber's teachings: "concerning the inwardness and the essence of *Adam Kadmon* we are not permitted to speak or discuss at all."¹⁵² Precisely the inwardness and essence of *Adam Kadmon* is an accurate definition of the realms of the Divine discussed by R. Dov Ber in *Tract on Contemplation*.¹⁵³

In another passage R. Aaron discusses the limits of intellectual contemplation. This too seems aimed directly against the teachings on contemplation by R. Dov Ber. R. Aaron insists that one may only contemplate rationally the various levels of the flow of the created realms, the "Worlds." However, it is forbidden to try to see any rational link between the Worlds and the Divine Essence, or the Divine potential force. This more exalted area may not be investigated intellectually. It remains accessible only to faith which is beyond intellectualization and understanding:

Regarding the flow of creation, with different levels, discussion is possible: to contemplate that they are all from His unlimited Divine power and to consider their unity with Him. . . . But this is as regards His flow. Concerning His Essence, however, which does not have the quality of "flow" from which the worlds come into being, it is forbidden to discuss how they [relate] to His potential force or to relate the existing realms to Him in His potential force even in the most veiled way, Heaven forbid. This should not be discussed at all, but should just be in the way of faith which is above intellectualization and understanding. . . . This is the basis of contemplation: there is no change at all in Him from before the world was created to after it was created.¹⁵⁴

These attacks on R. Dov Ber found in R. Aaron's *Gates of Unity and Faith* are repeated in his *Gates of Service* (Shklov, 1821). The criticism of the teachings concerning the realms beyond *Azilut* throws into relief the novel and daring aspect of R. Dov Ber's thought. R. Aaron remains the spiritualist enthusiast, seeking the unchanging Divine Essence utterly beyond existence, in the face of which the only human response is faith and ecstasy. This upward movement of R. Aaron, towards the Upper Unity in which only the Divine is perceived and where there is no world, contrasts strongly with the direction in which R. Dov Ber guided the elite among his followers. The Lubavitch contemplative would rise higher and higher through the realms of the Divine beyond *Azilut*, beyond the *Zimzum*, to the inwardness of the radiance of the *Ein Sof*. There, beyond existence, he would discover the *hitkalelut*, integration and absorption of all lower levels with the essence of the Divine.¹⁵⁵ This discovery of the daily world within G-d is not for the "beginner," who is advised to direct his contemplation to realms closer to physical reality and to consider simply the way the physical emerges from the spiritual.¹⁵⁶ For the more advanced contemplative, however, the lower realms are seen as a direct expression of the higher, and the higher the level of the Divine that his thought has reached, the greater the realization of the integration of All, and of the significance of All right down to the lowest level.¹⁵⁷ Thus R. Dov Ber guided the elite of his followers to the contemplative realms beyond ordinary enthusiasm, where mind, world, and Essence meet. Through this apparently rational path of Hasidic thought R. Dov Ber sought to communicate the sense of self-abnegation which was the core of the teachings of the Maggid and early Hasidism. At the same time he was concerned that this self-abnegation

should not simply transcend and virtually annihilate all existence, absorbed in an acosmistic ecstasy in which G-d is the only reality. R. Dov Ber's basic activism was revealed precisely in the most esoteric reach of his contemplative path. For him the world where the action is to take place originates and is discovered in the highest levels of the Divine. In the Lubavitch teachings, contrasting strongly with those of Staroselye, the world qua world is therefore imbued with ultimate reality, a realm where the Essence of the Infinite can be communicated and expressed in the life of man.

R. Aaron was not the only critic in the Hasidic movement of R. Dov Ber's intellectualist approach. Censure of the *Tract on Contemplation* is also found in a work by R. Zvi Hirsh of Zydachov (d. 1831), a Hasidic leader in Galicia who had been a disciple of the Seer of Lublin.¹⁵⁸ The case of R. Zvi Hirsh provides us with an illuminating insight into the parameter of communication in the Hasidic movement at the beginning of the nineteenth century. This Hasidic leader is in fact distinguished for his attempt to induce his followers to study the kabbalistic teachings of R. Yitzhak Luria.¹⁵⁹ In particular he recommended the study of the *kavvanot* for prayer in the standard Lurianic works and declared that this study should be "with effort" and understanding. At the same time, he emphasized, the person should be aware that he can never fully understand, and that ultimately all depends on faith. Nonetheless, R. Zvi Hirsh does demand a real effort of the intellect.¹⁶⁰

One detects here an aim very similar to that of R. Dov Ber: the communication of the values and inner esoteric kernel of Hasidism to the nonpneumatic *hasid*. In this attempt R. Zvi Hirsh sought to employ the Lurianic texts in their original form. However, it was clear to him as it is to us that these texts came into being in a circle of mystics for whom they had direct meaning. This was not the case for the expected readership of a Hasidic author in the nineteenth century. R. Zvi Hirsh therefore had to deal with the question of the meaning of the abstract and highly esoteric concepts—such as the Lurianic *Parzufim* (Visages)—whose study he was demanding. R. Zvi Hirsh's answer to this problem was to provide his followers with translations of these esoteric concepts into ethically meaningful terms, as the following passage indicates:

Now, how can we achieve fear or [directive for] action from the account of the *Parzufim* in the words of the *Zohar* . . . and of R. Yitzhak Luria? We have a clear explanation. For example, the *Parzuf* "Aba" is "Wisdom"; and *Parzuf* "Ima" is "Understanding," Supernal Repentance. The verse states "Fear of G-d

is *Hokhmah* . . . and turning from bad is *Binah* (Job 28:28).” Hence, when we term “Wisdom” *Parzuf* “*Aba*,” we mean inward fear of G-d; and when we term “Understanding” (*Parzuf* “*Ima*,” we mean Repentance . . . ¹⁶¹

In comparison with the approach of R. Avraham of Kalisk, who insisted on only “ethical teachings and faith in the *Zaddikim*” as the fare for the vast majority of his disciples, R. Zvi Hirsh is closer to the path of Habad. However, he vehemently rejected the Habad method of seeking models, parallels, and structural affinities in exposition of esoteric themes. In the view of R. Zvi Hirsh this was a dangerous road akin to rationalism. In one passage in his writings he explicitly attacked R. Dov Ber’s *Tract on Contemplation*, accusing its method of employment of the *mashal* as being influenced by “philosophy.”¹⁶² Elsewhere he criticized “some of the sages of the generation” for their rational explanations of the Lurianic teachings—without doubt a shaft aimed at R. Dov Ber and the Lubavitch path. His accusation was that the exalted kabbalistic concepts were thereby being irredeemably lowered to the level of human intellect. Like R. Aaron Halevi, he is particularly incensed at the way the most sublime themes receive this intellectualist treatment. Thus R. Zvi Hirsh writes:

I have explained [the need for “faith” in study of Kabbalah] at length, for I have seen some of the sages of the generation who explain all the words of the *Zohar* . . . and the Lurianic writings, which speak of the *Parzufim* and the Four Worlds, and say that all this is by way of a metaphor and riddles and [to impart] wisdom in service of G-d. They explain these concepts by means of the *mashal*, with rational investigation, and remove the ideas from their context in order to make everything meaningful to the human intellect.¹⁶³

It is noteworthy that R. Zvi Elimelech Shapiro of Dinov (d. 1840), who wrote a commentary to this work of R. Zvi Hirsh, defends R. Dov Ber and supports the approach and method of his teachings. Discussing R. Dov Ber’s employment of the *mashal* he writes:

[This] is not forbidden and, on the contrary, it is the basis of wisdom for [Divine] service: to contemplate the subject discussed in spiritual terms, in order to grasp a similar phenomenon also in this world, especially within the Jew. For example, that there are spiritual realms of *Hesed* (Kindness, or Love) and *Gevurah* (Severity, or Fear), and that corresponding to these

there is the phenomenon among the emotions of a person of Fear and Love. Similarly with all concepts you can find significant meaning. . . . I have written all this so that the reader should not err, and remain empty of wisdom.¹⁶⁴

R. Zvi Elimelech, author of the famous and highly influential Hasidic work *B’nei Yisaskhar*, shared R. Dov Ber’s concern for the meaningful communication of the Hasidic ethos. As Hasidism entered the nineteenth century and underwent the transformation from a system of spiritual guidance for an intimate inner circle of pneumatics to a large-scale movement, the question of transmission of the Hasidic teachings in society was resolved in different ways by the different Hasidic schools. Contemporaneously with R. Dov Ber, the Braslav group, for example, laid heavy emphasis on the importance of studying R. Nahman’s deeply mystical, revelatory teachings and of the translations of these into practical and ethical terms which were composed by R. Nahman himself and by R. Nathan Sternhartz of Nemirov (1780–1845), the organizer of the Braslav group after the death of its founder.¹⁶⁵ As we have seen, others were suspicious of, or totally condemned, the attempt to communicate esoteric teachings to the Hasidic followers. Within Habad, where the ideal of communication was paramount, the division between the paths of R. Dov Ber and R. Aaron Halevi concerned the extent to which the process of transmission of esoteric thought could be carried further.

Faith and Reason

The accusation of rationalism which was laid against the Lubavitch school by R. Aaron and R. Zvi Hirsh helps us evaluate the wider significance of this line of development within Hasidism. The interrelation between faith and reason had been a point of conflict in the earlier medieval history of the Jewish people, in particular taking the form of the heated controversies during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries over the philosophical writings of Maimonides.¹⁶⁶ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this issue had a central role in the development of the Haskalah which, during the lifetime of R. Dov Ber, began to enter Eastern Europe. Nachman Krochmal (1785–1840) had been resident in Zolkiev since 1799, the year that the *Tanya* was printed in that city. During the era of the leadership of R. Dov Ber, Krochmal’s role as a teacher of a rationalist approach to Judaism became known and in 1816 there was an attempt to brand him as a heretic.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, it is striking to note that Krochmal’s main work, *Guide for the Perplexed of our Time*, which was only published posthumously, had

another title, *Gates of Pure Faith*. This almost seems a direct response to R. Dov Ber's *Gate of Faith*, printed in 1820.¹⁶⁸ In the atmosphere of the incipient Eastern European Haskalah, the charge of rationalism directed at R. Dov Ber by his contemporaries in the Hasidic movement can be seen in perspective: two rival paths were indeed emerging, Habad and the Haskalah, both claiming—in starkly opposing ways—to make a synthesis of Judaism and rational reality. By contrast, R. Dov Ber's Hasidic opponents sought protection and retreat from the dangers of rationalism in any form.

The fact that R. Dov Ber's teachings and his contemplative path somehow led towards an integration of faith with reason is the key to one of the most important and lasting aspects of the Habad school. The crux of the matter here is that from the point of view of Habad, the power to communicate, to make an esoteric concept meaningful to the rational intellect and to the normative life of the individual, is a power itself drawn from an exalted source. For the followers of R. Dov Ber the Habad teachings were not at all a rationalist philosophy, but in their very intellectualism were the gateway to a sense of numinous contact with the Divine without denying the reality of life within the world.

The conscious intimation of this balance between mysticism and reason is conveyed by a letter by R. Yitzhak Aizak Halevi Epstein of Homel (1780–1857), a major follower of R. Dov Ber.¹⁶⁹ This describes the concrete awareness that “all is G-d,” an awareness which is not reduced at all by the complementary perception of the darkness of the world. The letter was addressed to a critic of R. Dov Ber—possibly to a follower of R. Aaron, or even to R. Aaron himself.¹⁷⁰ After recalling his earlier friendship with the recipient of the letter, and expressing his chagrin at the denigration of his Hasidic group (i.e., R. Dov Ber and his followers), R. Yitzhak Aizak writes: “Listen, my friend. Do not say . . . that this [i.e., R. Dov Ber's path] is *apikorsus* [atheism] and philosophy. Say rather that this is true faith.”¹⁷¹

The letter continues with a description of the inspired realization during prayer that “all is G-d. And the darkness of the *kelipat nogah* stands from afar. It appreciates that the world is the world. But it does no harm at all; it does not confuse the faith at all.”¹⁷² In the original these words are in Yiddish rather than Hebrew, which gives them an extra force of emphasis. R. Yitzhak Aizak's statement is that one can attain a truly mystical state (faith) in which the dimension of reason, practical reality—in kabbalistic terminology, *kelipat nogah*—is not annihilated but is able to coexist, ad-

mittedly from afar, but doing no harm and without confusing the essentially mystical perception that “all is G-d.”

Further on in the letter R. Yitzhak Aizak characterizes his understanding of the relationship between faith and reason in an interesting way. He emphasises that the basis of religious service is faith, the esoteric dimension. However, when this is accompanied by reason, it is much more powerful. He depicts the dimension of faith as comparable to a child's awareness that a certain person is his father, while that of reason is to be compared to the way an adult understands the same relationship. For the adult the idea that he has a father has far more meaning than for the child; he understands that his origin “is from the very essence” of his father. At the same time, however, the adult is dependent on the child's level of awareness. The child knows that a certain person is his father. If the adult does not also have this simple and factual dimension of knowledge, he remains ignorant of his relationship to the other person and, states R. Yitzhak Aizak, will never be able to discover it unaided. In other words, on the one hand reason is essential for a mature relationship with the Divine; on the other, reason itself is always dependent on the initial perception provided by faith.¹⁷³

We note that this synthesis is the key to the perception described in R. Dov Ber's teachings as the Lower Unity. From the awareness that “all is G-d,” the Higher Unity, one is able to turn back to the world, the realm of reason, and accommodate it, despite its comparative gloom. This achievement is higher in R. Yitzhak Aizak's eyes than merely attaining the world-denying dimension of the Upper Unity. This is illustrated by a passage in the letter which describes the effect of the teachings in *Tract on Contemplation*. For R. Yitzhak Aizak, unlike R. Dov Ber's detractors, this “does not relate at all to human intellect.” Rather it is like “an unguent to anoint the eyes, a good unguent from an expert doctor.” The Hasidic teachings have the power of that unguent, strengthening the power of the Divine Soul “so that it should have knowledge and reason in its faith,” a balance of confrontation with reality together with mystical perception which imparts to the soul the ability “to recognize properly, with clear knowledge and understanding, the nature of its faith that all is G-d, including even the world which is perceived at that moment, despite its darkness.”¹⁷⁴

Beyond the Ghetto Walls

It is a commonplace to point out that the major issue facing the Jews of Europe as they entered the nineteenth century was the process of the re-

lentless breaking down of the walls of the ghetto which was gradually taking place, despite the many setbacks encountered. This posed the question to what extent the Jews or Judaism could hope to survive.

At particular risk in the developments which were taking place was the Jewish mystical tradition, with its theurgic dimension and contact with the Merkavah realm. In the cultural and political ghetto of eighteenth-century Poland and Russia this had been able to thrive among kabbalists and mystics of various kinds both within and outside the Hasidic movement. With the gradual erosion of the ghetto structure, due both to forces outside the Jewish community and to those within it, this tradition faced a serious challenge. This was, indeed, the age-old confrontation of faith with reason, but at this point the pressures behind the confrontation, forcing the men of faith to deal with the new regime of reason, were greater than ever before. For the *mitnagdim* of Lithuania the eventual answer was the restricting of the mystical tradition to a tiny elite. In the eighteenth century the acknowledged spiritual leader of the *mitnagdim*, R. Elijah the Gaon of Vilna, had been a major kabbalist, as were many others who had been critical of the new movement. Their hostility stemmed to a great extent from their concern to reserve any kind of mystical knowledge for the exalted few. Foremost among the successors to R. Elijah was R. Haim of Volozhin (1759–1832), who was also a man of kabbalistic knowledge and author of the important mystical tract *Nefesh ha-Haim*.¹⁷⁵ However, after the middle of the nineteenth century the mystical tradition virtually disappeared from the Lithuanian talmudists. The ethical dimension of eighteenth-century kabbalism was replaced by the nonkabbalistic system of ethical striving known as *musar*.¹⁷⁶ The move away from mysticism was complemented by an intensive focus on a rational, intellectualist approach to talmudic study, for which the Lithuanian scholars became justly famous. This provided them with the cerebral weight, so to speak, to balance the rival claims for attention and devotion by the Haskalah.¹⁷⁷

In the case of Hasidism, most branches of this movement sought to preserve the identity of the Jew and of Jewish culture by preserving as much as possible the walls against the new rationalism, and indeed the old.¹⁷⁸ Some exceptional Hasidic leaders, such as R. Menahem Mendel of Kotsk, who created a Hasidic rationalism of his own, are distinguished for standing out against this trend, and for this very reason were controversial figures.¹⁷⁹ The extent to which mystical teachings were communicated within Hasidic society varied. In Kotsk there was an elevated sense of transcending the overtly mystical, while in Habad, Braslav, and the Hasidic path

opened by R. Zvi Elimelekh of Dinov, mystical knowledge became part of the everyday world of the Jew. In the case of Habad, the quest to communicate the heights of the Merkavah experience as far as possible in society—"to the outside," in the words of the Baal Shem Tov's letter—led to a particularly remarkable infusion of faith and theurgy into the domain of intellectualist cerebralism. At the very moment of the most ecstatic transport in contemplative prayer, the world in all its reality is not rejected but rather is somehow included and contained. This synthesis gave a unique power to Habad to survive the fall of the ghetto walls and to carry the esoteric kernel at the heart of Hasidic teaching into the modern age. The Habad writings published by R. Dov Ber and his successor the *Zemah Zedek* stood up to the sophisticated onslaught of the new knowledge and new perceptions of the Haskalah because of the belief that the power and scope of the teachings of the mystic leader went far beyond anything which might be found in a maskilic work. Indeed, according to Pesah Ruderman (1854–1887), who was brought up in the world of Habad, it was in the time of R. Dov Ber of Lubavitch that the members of his fraternity began to think of themselves as "philosophers" whose understanding of existence surpassed all the comparative trivia revealed by the new knowledge of languages, geography, and science offered by the savants of the contemporary Haskalah.¹⁸⁰

In effect this amounted to the claim that traditional Jewish scholarship, especially when enhanced, broadened, and made more evaluative by the rapidly growing library of Hasidic teachings, should provide the main body of knowledge and sole source of cultural orientation for the Jew. This view on the education of the Jewish community was complemented by endorsement of the need for economic change. We mentioned earlier that R. Dov Ber encouraged his followers to learn the basic crafts of weaving and spinning and to engage in farming, taking advantage of government-sponsored schemes to provide land to would-be Jewish farmers.¹⁸¹ This pragmatic approach to knowledge and skills acquired in order to make a living had been defined by R. Shneur Zalman in his *Tanya*. He states there that the "wisdom of the nations" primarily has value only in order to employ it "as an axe with which to cut, that means, in order to make an abundant living from it so as to be able to serve G-d."¹⁸² Another, more rare purpose in acquiring this knowledge would be in order to employ it directly in Divine service, which implies the ability to discover a spiritual dimension in secular wisdom. According to R. Shneur Zalman, Maimonides and Nachmanides were able to do this, and it is for this reason that

they engaged in such study.¹⁸³ It is likely that R. Shneur Zalman included himself in this category: apart from his prodigious scholarship of Torah he had acquired a considerable range of secular knowledge.¹⁸⁴ In general, however, the open spiritualization of secular wisdom remained, for the Habad fraternity, something for the distant future. Even the possibility of direct economic advantage through the new knowledge offered by the Haskalah seemed quite remote. For the Habad leadership in the nineteenth century the uppermost question concerned the orientation of the Jew, the general parameters from which he drew his perspective on the world. The conviction that the traditional curriculum of Bible with Rashi's commentary, Mishnah, Talmud, Commentaries, and Codes provided the most powerful basis for the survival of the Jew no longer protected by the medieval walls separating the Jew from general society spurred R. Dov Ber's successors in their battle to preserve the education system against the attempts at educational reform by the *maskilim* and the Russian government. In the struggles on this issue in the 1840s, precipitated by the *maskil* Lilienthal, the Lubavitch leader R. Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, the *Zemah Zedek*, was far more vigorous in his defense of the traditional system than was his colleague in the debate, Rabbi Yitzhak of Volozhin, who represented the *mitnagdim*. R. Menahem Mendel's stand might be interpreted as a desperate attempt to preserve the ghetto territory and to retreat from the encroaching reality of the social changes of his time. We see it somewhat differently: as the positive power to grapple with that reality in order to bend it to his own terms of reference. Rabbi Yitzhak, by contrast, was frightened of what might happen if the rabbinic leadership refused to compromise.¹⁸⁵ The strength of R. Menahem Mendel's stand came from the spiritual overview of both life and Torah provided by the Habad teachings: they had transformed the rabbi, so to speak, into a mystic leader who was not subject to the temporal power of the non-Jew but rather would wrestle with him for the well-being of his people.

Conclusion

The communication ethos, which we have isolated as the central feature of Habad, is now seen a little more in perspective. The more recondite teachings of R. Dov Ber, addressed primarily to the scholars of his time, indicate that this ideal had a central role in his system of contemplation. The movement from the highest to the lowest characterizes both the process of Creation by the Divine, and also the endeavor by the *hasid* to bring his own most profound perceptions to fruition.

This inner dimension of communication is complemented by the fact that R. Dov Ber was making the attempt to transmit to his followers a remarkable path of deep, "detailed" contemplation as preparation for prayer. Initially this was relevant only for the elite. But R. Dov Ber wanted to extend the contemplative technique also to the broad echelon of White Russian scholars who comprised the backbone of his following. In order to achieve this, careful balancing, modifications, and also changes of direction were necessary, until a truly popular contemplative system was evolved. Only later, in the fifth generation of Habad at the end of the nineteenth century, do we see the fulfilment on a broad level of the earlier goal of widespread "deep" meditation throughout the scholarly echelon of the fraternity.

R. Dov Ber's method for imparting the contemplative technique involved a rational-seeming, intellectualist mode of exploring *meshalim* (models or parables). This was particularly suited for the talmudic and halakhic scholars whom he was trying to transform into contemplatives. The thrust of his system was to climb, fearlessly as it were, to the highest realm (the Upper Unity, expressed in the most exalted terms) and then from that vantage point to reveal the spiritual significance of the daily world (the Lower Unity); the emphasis is particularly on the latter step in which normative reality is confronted and ratified.

This method provoked criticism by R. Aaron and by R. Zvi Hirsh of Zhydachov. They accused R. Dov Ber of being a rationalist and of breaching the hermetic law of the kabbalist by daring to speak of such exalted levels of the Divine cosmology. Analysis of the accusation of rationalism ("atheism and philosophy") and of an interesting response to this by a close follower of R. Dov Ber helps us understand something of the contribution of Habad to the stream of Jewish history in the nineteenth century. The world system expounded by the contemplative teachings provided the Habad movement with a potential ability to embrace and ratify reason and reality in the living world of historical forces. How far this potential was actualized as the Habad movement, together with everyone else, proceeded through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth remains a topic for future research. This would need to include careful analysis of the modern Habad attitude to science.¹⁸⁶ In addition, evaluation is required of the extent to which this branch of Hasidism embraces postghetto universalistic ideals, relevant not just to the Jewish people but to society as a whole.¹⁸⁷

TRANSLATING THE TEACHINGS

Complementary to R. Dov Ber's aim to transmit a system of contemplation to a broad echelon of his followers was his concern to make the Hasidic ethos accessible to those who did not aspire to lengthy meditative prayer. In addition, the contemplative too required direction in order to ensure that his solitary spiritual discoveries were internalized and became part of his life as a totality. Apart from the works on contemplation, enthusiasm, and ecstasy which were discussed in the last two chapters, R. Dov Ber also compiled a number of other tracts which can each be seen as presenting the esoteric kernel of Hasidism in a translated and more approachable form. In this final chapter we will examine some of these works and consider their significance for the society of his time.

The Spectrum of *Bitul*

The goal of R. Dov Ber's system of contemplation, even in the modified form which was developed during the years of his leadership, was the attainment of a state of *bitul*, transcendence of the sense of self. This too was the intended effect of the study of the Hasidic teachings: in the face of the Divine cosmology which they disclosed, the selfhood of the individual dissolved away. In his attempt to communicate the theme of *bitul* beyond the ranks of the elite among his following, R. Dov Ber repeatedly expounded and elaborated this concept and also translated it into a variety of themes and ideals, in all of which the essential step of going beyond the limitations of one's own self were preserved. One such concept is *tsubrokhenskayt* (feeling broken), a term which depicts the person's sense of the inadequacy of his selfhood and of his need for change, "repentance"; another is *kabbalat 'ol*, the "acceptance of the yoke" of Heaven in terms of practical obedience to the commands of the Torah in daily life, despite any contrary desires of the normal self and consciousness of the person. Another variety of translated *bitul*, in which the person enters a heroic mode quite transcending all concern for selfhood and indeed for life, is that of *mesirat nefesh*, "self-

sacrifice." In the following pages we will explore the way R. Dov Ber employed these themes to propagate varieties of *bitul* throughout the Lubavitch community and indeed beyond its borders.

In 1817 a volume of R. Dov Ber's teachings was printed in Shklov. This was the first section of a three-part work entitled *Gate of Repentance and Prayer* but sometimes referred to as *Way of Life* (the title of the third part).¹ In his introduction to the first volume R. Dov Ber writes that this book is intended "for those who are very busy in gaining a living, and the impecunious teachers (*melamdin*)" who will only have time to peruse it "on the holy Sabbath and similar times." Due to the limitations on the time available for study by its intended audience, the book is written in an open and accessible style rather than as an elaborate discourse: it can be "read" in the modern sense of the word rather than needing to be "learned" like a tal-mudic text or most other writings of early Habad.

In this work the concept of *bitul* is repeatedly explored in its variety and presented as the goal of Divine service. R. Dov Ber employs the image of a circle in order to express the idea that through achieving an attainable aspect of *bitul* one is somehow linked with an exalted and highly esoteric dimension of the Infinite. The higher level is termed "the essence of the *Ein Sof*," or "the true *ayin*." The latter term, literally meaning "nothing," was used by the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid in their depictions of the quest of the Hasidic mystic to change his self (*aniy*) into *ayin*, nonself.²

R. Dov Ber explains that the highest and lowest points of a circle are unified, because they are both on the circumference, on which every point is equal. Through attaining *bitul*, the lowest point of the circle, one is unified with *ayin*, the highest point.³ A barb contained within this image is the idea that the attempt to leave the lower point of abnegation, and to strive to draw near to *ayin* by ascending, metaphorically speaking, the diameter which joins the lowest and highest points of the circle, leads to failure. So long as one is on the lowest point, one is connected to the highest. By leaving that lowest level one enters an indeterminate "spiritual" realm in which one is actually very far from the essence and the ultimate goal. This was a jibe against the semipneumatics and, in particular, the school of R. Aaron. Through spiritualist enthusiasm, claimed R. Dov Ber, one becomes remote from the Essence, while through pure *bitul* one is unified with it.

The upper reaches of the spectrum of *bitul* expounded by R. Dov Ber are the domain of the *Zaddik*. Thus we find a lengthy description of different levels of esoteric *bitul*, culminating in a depiction of the mystical,

trancelike states experienced by "the greatest *Zaddikim* of the generation, like the Baal Shem Tov" and, as we saw in a previous chapter, R. Dov Ber himself.⁴ However, this most esoteric dimension of *bitul* is more than a quietistic state of mystical nonbeing. It has also an intensely active mode. This is highly significant. The Habad ethos of communication demands involvement with the world and with life even at the very moment of achievement of *unio mystica*. According to R. Dov Ber, it is precisely the intensity of cleaving to the Divine in a state of utter self-abandon which enables the individual to be actively involved with worldly affairs. He contrasts two different kinds of *bitul*. The first is impermanent, can be maintained only in prayer since it would be dissipated by the hurlyburly of daily life, and has a passive, quietistic quality. The second is described as a far higher level at which the person achieves a bond with the Divine which "lasts continually and eternally, without ever being loosened for any reason at all."⁵ It is because of the firmness of this bond that this higher mode of *bitul* can be expressed in the form of active involvement in the practical world. "Even if he conducts business affairs and activities which demand deep preoccupation with all his energy, becoming intimately involved with the 'external' forces [of impurity and *kelipah*], they do not separate him at all from total cleaving to the Divine, not even by a hairsbreadth."⁶

As an example of this higher kind of *bitul*, which continues despite the individual's deep involvement in worldly activities, R. Dov Ber refers to the biblical Joseph, who carried out his administrative work, "writing accounts," while at the same time maintaining the mystical state of being "a chariot to *Azilut* itself."⁷ In other words, his ego was entirely transcended and transformed, so that he functioned as a total expression of the Divine, but simultaneously he was able to be heavily involved in daily life rather than having to dwell in a continuously protected atmosphere of Torah study and prayer.

This activist interpretation of the esoteric *bitul* of the *Zaddik* was important for the future development of Habad. Although having access to the upper Merkavah realms, the *Zaddik* also organizes and directs activities in the daily world. It is known that R. Dov Ber himself, despite the mystical dimension of his personality, maintained contact with individuals important on the political scene, men such as Zundel Zonnenberg of Grodno and Eliezer Dillon of Neshkhiz.⁸ We interpret one aspect of his book *Gates of Light*, published in Kopys in 1822, as a response to hostile developments in the attitude of the Russian government towards the Jewish community. It gave a clear directive about the stance which the Jews should take in

order to protect Judaism. In the next generation of Habad, Rabbi Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek* (1789–1866), was at the forefront of the political battle in the 1840s to defend the Jewish education system from the combined onslaught of the government and the *maskilim*.⁹ At the same time he was a prolific exponent of Hasidic discourses: his printed works run to over forty volumes. His successor, R. Shmuel (1834–1882), likewise is noted for his activism and also for the profundity of his thought as an exponent of the mystical Hasidic teachings.¹⁰ The tradition in the Habad leadership of combining mysticism with activism may well have continued into the twentieth century. However, this is beyond the scope of the present volume and remains a topic for further research.

It seems clear that, at least in the nineteenth century, the teaching in R. Dov Ber's *Gate of Repentance and Prayer* that the highest level of union with the Divine can be expressed in an intensely active mode provided the Habad fraternity with an outlook receptive to leaders who could unite the trance of the Merkavah mystic with the ability, or at least ambition, to confront the political and social realities of their time. However, complementary to these expositions in his writings on the higher reaches of *bitul*, suitable only for the *Zaddik*, were those which translated this theme into forms directly relevant to the *hasid*.

One step in this process was the assurance that every single Jew has within him or her a hidden power of *bitul* which is simply not yet manifest. It would be revealed as such if the person were to give up his life for Judaism, or transform his whole being in a flush of repentance. Otherwise, this force of "utter *bitul*" remains concealed. This idea is found in earlier Habad teachings.¹¹ However, *The Way of Life* (Kopys, 1819), the third part of *Gate of Repentance and Prayer*, makes another step in the translation of the concept of *bitul* into an accessible psychological, and also spiritual, attainment, within reach of every member of the fraternity. This is expressed through a discourse on King Saul's error described in 1 Samuel 15. He disobeyed Samuel (and was therefore rejected as king) because he thought he was doing something which would be more pleasing to G-d. R. Dov Ber comments that instead of simply obeying the prophet Samuel's command, Saul was led astray by his own subtle, esoteric understanding. David, by contrast, was preferred as king simply because of his power of unquestioning obedience. R. Dov Ber equates this quality of "acceptance of the yoke of Heaven" with the force of *bitul* which reaches the highest levels of the sefirotic system. It is expressed now, he writes, in simple, dedicated observance of the Commandments. By comparison, the esoteric *kavvanot*

(mystical meanings of the Commandments) taught by the kabbalists reach only a lower level, the intermediate realm of "distinctions."

The *kavvanah* of the Commandment is not the main thing: rather it is the obedience and *bitul* of one's whole self simply to keep the command of the King. . . . This is higher than all *kavvanot*. . . . [It is] simple *bitul* which reaches *Keter of Keter*, beyond the distinction between "right" and "left."¹²

R. Dov Ber emphasizes the universal aspect of this power of simple faith and obedience. It is not a rare quality but is seen in the simple obedience and faith shown by the masses of the time in the observance of the Commandments. Indeed, the implication is that the simpler the person the closer he or she is to attaining the ideal of *bitul*. Expounding the verse "With this he will come into the holy place" (Lev. 16:2), R. Dov Ber continues:

"With this," meaning with the simple *bitul* in simple faith, like the masses, and women and children, who carry out [the Commandments] only because of the *bitul* of faith, "he will come into the holy place"—to the very Essence.¹³

Simple obedience to the Commandments of the Torah is thus in itself an expression of *bitul* in a way which reaches the very essence of the Divine. One aspect of R. Dov Ber's aim here is to extol the grandeur of the ordinary Jew. This was an important element in his teaching, as it was in that of the Baal Shem Tov at the very beginning of Hasidism. A further goal was the attempt to induce a comparable quality of simplicity and dedicated acceptance in the heart of the member of the widening Lubavitch fraternity who, whether by virtue of his own study or by instruction from leading figures in the Hasidic community, was a recipient of the guidance of the *Rebbe*. Whatever the level of scholarship of the Hasidic follower the idea could be imparted to him—and to his wife—that simple obedience to the Commandments of the Torah is a direct expression of the most exalted goal of Hasidism. The challenge, one could say, was to develop this power of simple obedience and faith in the heart of a person drawn to or brought up in a society characterized by contemplation of subtle teachings on esoteric themes. In this context simplicity indeed meant self-transcendence; in a society devoted to intellectualism, unquestioning obedience was a genuine expression of *bitul* and abnegation of one's ego. According to R. Dov Ber, this step in itself opened the door to the most exalted mystical attainment, reaching *Keter of Keter* and the Essence of the Divine.

This theme was elaborated in a work which appeared a year later, the *Gate of Faith*, published in Kopys in 1820.¹⁴ In this tract the concept of *bitul* was presented as the central theme of the Passover festival, and consequently as a necessary and significant dimension in the life of every Jew. The term "faith" in the title of the book is employed by the author as a synonym for *bitul*.¹⁵ In his introduction R. Dov Ber refers to the rabbinic statement that faith is the basis of the Commandments.¹⁶ He explains this as meaning not just belief, but total acceptance of the Mitzvot and submission to them as Divine commands, without understanding. The power of submission beyond understanding leads to a greater dedication of the individual to the Creator. This idea is expressed through an image of a wise father who gives his son precepts for his own good. He "does not reveal to him the reasons and esoteric secrets" which lie behind his commands.

For if he did reveal them, the son might find a reason to deviate somewhat from the exact commandment, and also he would not be so firm in its observance. But when the son does not know the reason, he keeps everything [his father] commanded him without deviation at all, just from simple faith . . . completely above reason.¹⁷

This theme is elaborated in the opening chapters of the book with reference to Passover, in particular focussing on the unleavened *mazah* eaten during this festival, which is presented as a symbol of *bitul*.¹⁸ The fact that *mazah* is made without salt, thus lacking "taste," is linked to the idea of *bitul* beyond reason (the same word in Hebrew, *ta'am*, meaning both "taste" and "reason"). R. Dov Ber employs Zoharic and Lurianic imagery about *mazah* in order to communicate this concept. *Mazah* is termed the "food of faith" in the *Zohar* and is described by R. Haim Vital as expressing the Lurianic theme of "smallness."¹⁹ The fact that *mazah* does not rise suggests the quality of *bitul*, unlike leavened bread, which symbolises the ego. The link of *mazah* as an expression of *bitul* with the story of the Exodus is explained by R. Dov Ber: the Divine revelation which took place at midnight on the night of the Exodus was so intense that it provoked total *bitul* in the Israelites. At the same time it miraculously prevented their dough from rising. Due to the revelation of the *Shekhinah* even the dough in the kneading bowl could not express "self" and was in a state of abnegation. Subsequently, explains R. Dov Ber, the eating of *mazah* activates the power of faith and *bitul* in the individual.²⁰ The Passover festival is thus an opportunity to strengthen one's power of *bitul* for the entire year.

While *Gate of Faith* describes a variety of different levels of *bitul*, there is recurring emphasis on the importance of simple practical action of the Mitzvot. The effect of the Mitzvot, states R. Dov Ber, is above all spiritual unifications and other mystical attainments.²¹ The pure action is also far more significant than the Lurianic *kavvanah*. In a striking passage R. Dov Ber cites R. Isaac Luria (the leading exponent of the *kavvanot*!) as proof that it is the action, not the pneumatic *kavvanah*, which is the main thing:

A proof is from R. Y[itzhak] Luria who only attained the secrets of Torah and the revelation of Elijah and the spirit of Prophecy through the joy of the Mitzvot in practical action, not from the joy of the *kavvanah*.²²

R. Dov Ber emphasizes the Messianic power of the simple action of the Mitzvot. He describes a model of history in terms of an anthropomorphic structure. Successive stages of religious-historical development of the world are described as breaking through veils in this structure in a kind of internal process of communication of the Creator with His creation. The first breakthrough is prior to the Exodus, and the veil which is pierced is the "cerebral membrane" of the anthropomorphic model. In successive stages R. Dov Ber traces, in terms of this model, the Exodus, the journeying in the desert, the entry to the Holy Land, the building of the Temple, and the further process of history leading to the final stage—the present—termed the "heels of the Messiah." At each stage a further level of the communication process is achieved, expressed in a more emphatic and overt form of action. The culmination of the process in the final stage is the simple but triumphant practical action of the Mitzvot, beyond meaning.²³

The final chapter of *Gate of Faith* is a panegyric of *bitul*, which is also described in terms relevant to the social life of the Hasidic community. The highest level of *bitul* reaches beyond all other attainments. At this level the highest and lowest are joined: the *bitul* which is beyond intellect is one with that which is lower than intellect, and is expressed in a dance of joy. "In an ecstasy of joy from his very soul, beyond the limitations of intellect and knowledge, he dances with his feet like a little child or an animal."²⁴

Social Unity

R. Dov Ber's *Gate of Faith* brought the concept of *bitul* within reach of every member of the Hasidic fraternity. The inner movement of selfless dedication to the Commandments is a step which can be demanded from scholar and nonscholar alike, from the kabbalist and from the simple man

or, indeed, woman. This psycho-spiritual movement breaks through to an ecstasy beyond the distinctions of intellect and social standing and, in R. Dov Ber's view, was also the cure for the malady of the time: causeless hatred. This point is emphasized in his introduction to this book. He states that his aim is to teach true faith—explained as *bitul*—in order to counteract the "false faith" which was prevalent. In the period of the First Temple the false faith had been belief in idols; in the time of the Second Temple and subsequently, the false faith is that one believes the bad tales one is told about other people. This causes widespread conflict and arouses spiritual accusations against the participants in the quarrel which in turn result in actual physical suffering.

And this is the reason for the length of the Exile: there is no city which does not suffer from causeless hatred on account of false faith in lies. Each person pursues his neighbor in order to devour him alive, awakening [heavenly] accusations which can destroy everything. In particular, in this orphaned generation, there is great hatred even among the leaders (as was the case in the time of the First Temple among the leaders of Israel. . . . They would eat and drink together, then stab each other with the swords of their tongues).²⁵

In R. Dov Ber's view even the gravity of these personal conflicts was surpassed by the incipient class war. The "basis of the hatred," he writes, is the mutual enmity between the poor and the rich. On the one hand, the poor are jealous of and hate those who are successful; on the other, the rich have earned this hatred as a punishment "because they have no mercy on the poor and needy; they take every benefit for themselves and every imposition [i.e., the taxes] they place on the poor, making things easy for themselves, as is well known."²⁶

Later in the nineteenth century the class war was to have a decisive influence on the development of the battle of the secularized, socialist Jews against the rabbis and Talmud teachers who were attempting to preserve traditional Judaism in Russia. R. Dov Ber saw the ethos of *bitul* and contemplation as the panacea which would achieve the social unity which, from the time of the Baal Shem Tov, had been presented as a central goal of Hasidism. The essay condemning contemporary social and personal enmity in his introduction to *Gate of Faith* concludes with an outline of the two tracts which follow: first *Gate of Faith* and then the *Tract on Contemplation*, which was now being printed for the first time, even though it had

long been circulating in manuscript form. Through the quest for spiritual self-transcendence, whether through the lengthy meditation of the scholar, or the inner movement of everyman of submission and dedicated acceptance of the practical Commandments, some aspect of ego would be eroded, bringing society closer, R. Dov Ber believed, to the central religious ideals of harmony and fellowship.

In the further history of Habad the link between *bitul* and social unity was reiterated and expounded. An example from the epoch of the flowering of contemplative prayer in the fifth generation of the movement is seen in a tract entitled *Heḥalzu* comprising a lengthy exposition by Rabbi Shalom Dovber delivered in 1899. In this the figure of Moses signifies *bitul* and the biblical nation of Midian represents strife (*maddon*) and causeless hatred. The unique power and final task of Moses is to eradicate the force of Midian, bringing total love and harmony between man and his fellow.²⁷ Study of the possible effect of these teachings about social harmony on the later developments in the history of the Habad movement, in the USSR, Poland, and the modern West remains a topic for further research. This would need to explore both the activist dimension of Habad and also its mode of internal organization as a Hasidic community in comparison with others.²⁸

Mesirat Nefesh

R. Dov Ber's depictions of the power of dedicated observance of the practical Commandments, which he saw as a gateway to *bitul* for the individual and unity for society, reach their climax in his many and varied teachings on the theme of *mesirat nefesh*, self-sacrifice. This concept became central as a translated expression of *bitul* not only in R. Dov Ber's time but also in ensuing generations of Habad. Indeed, the emphasis on the concept of *mesirat nefesh* has been described as a decisive factor in the early spread of "aristocratic" and intellectual Habad through the broad echelons of Jewish society and also in the later survival of the movement as a force in Jewish life.²⁹

Employment of the theme of *mesirat nefesh* in the communication of Hasidic thought long predates R. Dov Ber, as we have seen in earlier chapters.³⁰ However, concomitant with the attempt by the *Mitteler Rebbe* to transmit the Hasidic ethos to ever-broader strata of the contemporary world came a particular emphasis on this theme. It has a prominent place in the various sections of the *Way of Life*, where the theme of *mesirat nefesh* is employed to express both the unique nature of the *Zaddik* and also the

underlying unity of all Jews.³¹ The universal dimension of *mesirat nefesh* is particularly linked to the observance of the practical Commandments, and it is in this form that the concept of self-sacrifice became the central theme of an entire volume of R. Dov Ber's teachings, *Gates of Radiance*, published in Kopys in 1822.

By this time the political and legal position of the Jewish community in Russia, temporary alleviated in the years after the Napoleonic Wars, had again become critical. While in 1814 Tsar Alexander I had requested the Jewish deputies to inform the Jewish community leaders of "his most gracious favor" towards the Jews and his concern to ameliorate their situation, the atmosphere changed entirely after the Holy Alliance of 1815. In the words of Dubnow, the last ten years of Alexander's reign "paved the way for the iron absolutism of Nicholas I."³² Thus, in January 1817 the Senate had decreed that almost all issues concerning Jewish affairs should be put under the control of the Christian pietist Prince Alexander Golitsyn. In the same year the Society of Israelite Christians was set up. Encouraged by an English missionary, Lewis Way, one of the founders of the London-based Society to Disseminate Christian Faith among the Jews, the tsar and Golitsyn visualized mass conversions of Jews. In 1820 a vast tract of land in Yekaterinoslav was set aside for the converts. These, however, failed to materialize. Ironically, instead the government was alarmed to learn in 1817 of the existence of a large group of gentile Judaizers, called Subbotniks, who claimed they wished to return to the teachings of the Old Testament. Harsh repressive measures against this sect were adopted in 1823. The appearance of this phenomenon considerably increased the mood of anti-Jewish feeling in St. Petersburg.

In 1819 a new series of anti-Jewish laws began to be instituted. Lease contracts known as *krestenzie* enabling Jews to act as managers of the crop harvest were banned. Existing contracts were annulled, impoverishing the unfortunate Jewish lessees. The following year, in a piece of medieval-style legislation, Jews were barred from employing Christian domestics, from fear they might convert them to their faith: clearly a response to the Subbotnik phenomenon. In 1821 White Russia experienced a crop failure, greatly impoverishing the peasants and, indirectly, the Jews. The nobility took the opportunity to blame the Jews for the abject condition of the peasantry, and urged the government to deport all Jews from the villages, or at least to prohibit them from leasing taverns. In effect, the old ideal expressed in the Statute Concerning the Jews of 1804 was being revived: the Jews should be expelled from the villages. A royal decree issued in April

1823 ordered the implementation of this aim in the Moghilev and Vitebsk provinces, and was swiftly to cause widespread impoverishment and suffering to tens of thousands of Jews. In the same year a Committee for the Establishment of the Jews was founded. A later official source admitted that a central goal of this committee was to find "ways and means for diminishing the number of Jews in general in the State."³³

During this period, since 1818, a collegium of Jewish deputies, headed by Zundel Zonnenberg and Eliezer Dillon, was maintained in St. Petersburg at the expense of the Jewish community of White Russia. To pay for this there was an appeal for the Jews to remove the silver ornamentation from their prayer-shawls. The deputies did their best to intercede with high dignitaries in order to avert the harsh legislation which was eventually to become law in 1823. According to S. A. Shishkov, the successor to Golitsyn, they also secretly informed the Jewish communal leaders of what was afoot in government circles.³⁴

The Habad community, itself based in the Moghilev and Vitebsk regions, was without doubt aware of the worsening situation. R. Dov Ber mentions Zonnenberg and Dillon in a letter probably to be dated 1814, in which he asks the wealthy Habad follower Moses Meisels to establish good relations with them, because "they seek the good of the community in truth and faithfulness."³⁵ It is reasonable to assume that the relationship between R. Dov Ber and the Jewish deputies continued into the 1820s.

In the previous generation R. Shneur Zalman's teachings about the Purim festival had functioned as a response to the prevailing political situation. The same is true of R. Dov Ber's tract *Gates of Radiance*, which consists of a lengthy elaboration of his father's teachings about Purim and *mesirat nefesh*, together with discourses on the festival of Hanukah. This too is depicted as celebrating a classical example of self-sacrifice for Judaism.³⁶ However, together with the force of this book as a response to a specific contemporary situation, it has also a broader significance in the history of Habad. The work is compendious, containing varied teachings on repentance, prayer, the nature of Torah, the significance of the Mitzvot, joy, *bitul*, and other subjects. Indeed, in the later traditions of Habad this tract is termed "the Alef-Bet of Hasidism."³⁷ Central to this aspect of the book is the way the theme of *bitul* is translated into terms of *mesirat nefesh*, which is defined as selfless dedication to Jewish cultural and, above all, religious identity. Without losing the esoteric kernel at its core—i.e., the negation of selfhood—the exalted theme of *bitul* is thus yet further brought within the range of the average member of the Jewish community,

with far-reaching religious, social, and even political effect. At the same time the book functions as a response to the almost quietest interpretation of the Habad contemplative path which was taught by R. Aaron of Staroselye. R. Aaron's major works *Gates of Unity and Faith* and *Gates of Service* had been published in Shklov in 1820 and 1821 respectively. R. Dov Ber's *Gates of Radiance* (of which even the title seems a direct rejoinder) presented a contrasting expression of the Habad ethos. R. Aaron's books taught a system of world-transcending enthusiasm suitable for the few. R. Dov Ber's *Gates of Radiance* pointed in a direction which could be followed by the many.

The author's introduction to this tract presents an interesting typology of *mesirat nefesh* which makes particularly clear the path along which he is guiding the reader. R. Dov Ber describes two varieties of Divine service and *mesirat nefesh*. One is of a spiritual, primarily emotional, nature. This state of yearning and ecstasy expresses itself as "an intense cry from the depths of the heart in prayer" or in "utter repentance, so that he really loathes his life." Exalted as this "spiritual" *mesirat nefesh* may be, it is surpassed by the second category: self-sacrifice for Judaism. This second category of *mesirat nefesh* has all the power of the ancient ideal of *Kiddush Hashem*; at the same time, it is a direct expression of the basic practical and religio-cultural dimensions of Jewish life. For unlike the first, spiritual variety of *mesirat nefesh*—which might not relate to Torah and Mitzvot, but may simply be an expression of repentance, love, and *devekut*³⁸—the second, practical category is the product of a confrontation about the concrete observance of Judaism in the everyday world.

The second [category] is the *mesirat nefesh* which everyone has for *Kiddush Hashem* in actual fact. This specifically concerns the Torah and the Mitzvot: that when they are forcing him to abandon his religion he gives himself up actually to be killed. This is like nature in every single person, to give up his life for *Kiddush Hashem*, even in the worthless ones. As it is known, that the Jews have withstood trials for the past three thousand years.³⁹

R. Dov Ber explains that both Hanukah and Purim celebrate the exaltation of *mesirat nefesh*, particularly of the second variety. The distinction between the practical and the emotional is reiterated throughout *Gates of Radiance*. The reason for the distinction is expressed in familiar, if mystical, terms: the practical is higher because only on the lowest and most basic

level can there be the direct expression of the "essence" of the *Ein Sof*. The highest comes lowest; the end is joined with the beginning and the beginning with the end.⁴⁰

In the teachings in this book R. Dov Ber is not calling for people to throw away their lives, but rather for total determination and defiance in their devotion to the continued study of Torah and observance of the Mitzvot in the hostile atmosphere of Russia in the years leading up to the Cantonist Decree. *Gates of Radiance* is therefore an expression of the greatness of the simple Jew observing Torah in conditions fair or foul, with the possibility of suffering or even dying for his beliefs not far away. Through his *mesirat nefesh* he becomes the embodiment of the most esoteric reaches of Hasidic thought, and in this he far surpasses the quietest mysticism of the pure contemplative whose Divine service does not transcend the limitations of the spiritual.

There is a further, important dimension of the teachings in *Gates of Radiance*.⁴¹ This concerns the crux of one of the central problems at the heart of Jewish mysticism. Traditional Jewish teaching—quite apart from the phenomenon of Shabbatianism—does include reference to realms or planes in some way beyond the Mitzvot.⁴² From this dimension of Jewish thought stem the antinomian possibilities which so troubled the earlier guardians of the kabbalah and even Hasidic leaders such as R. Avraham of Kalisk. These possibilities had indeed been actualized in Shabbatianism and, later, Frankism. However, in *Gates of Radiance* R. Dov Ber succeeded in defining a psychospiritual structure in which the force from that upper region was channeled in a direction which *promoted* the Mitzvot rather than opposed them. He did this through his teachings on *mesirat nefesh*. This force in the life of the Jew is expounded by R. Dov Ber as one which emanates from that exalted realm transcending the Torah and the Mitzvot. At the same time, as we have seen, the faculty of *mesirat nefesh* in its highest mode is aroused specifically in order to protect and defend the practical Mitzvot of normative Judaism. In the writings of this Hasidic leader a kind of spiritual sleight of hand is taking place which transforms the potentially destructive force of the higher reaches of mystical perception into a power which strengthens rather than weakens the halakhic structure of Jewish life.

This exposition is found in the final, climatic discourse in *Gates of Radiance*, concerning the Purim festival. The basic theme, now thoroughly familiar to us, is that the Jews in the time of Haman were given the chance of apostasy in order to save themselves from his decree. Instead they stood

firm, ready to give up their lives for the sake of Judaism and the observance of Jewish law.⁴³

The exaltation of this response of *mesirat nefesh*, says R. Dov Ber, had a spiritual dimension which led to cleaving to the "essence of the *Ein Sof*" on a plane which entirely transcends the Mitzvot. The positive Mitzvot, he states, emanate from the "revealed worlds," and the negative Mitzvot, which are higher, stem from the "concealed worlds." But popular *mesirat nefesh* for Judaism and also the more rare, spiritual attainment of "supernal Repentance" reach "beyond concealment and revelation" and beyond the "worlds" entirely, whether hidden or revealed.⁴⁴ By ascending to that upper vantage point, united with the Infinite and beyond the Mitzvot and the Torah itself, the Jews attained a new, rare power: to strengthen the Torah and the Mitzvot and to help them be established, rejuvenated and permanent.

In the time of Mordekhai and Esther when the Jews had *mesirat nefesh* and supernal Repentance, from the depths of their hearts through their fasting and cries, the root of their souls ascended to the essence of the radiance of *Ein Sof* beyond the "worlds" mentioned above, even beyond the "hidden worlds," that is, beyond . . . the 248 positive Commandments and the 365 negative Commandments. Thus it says "they upheld and accepted" (Est. 9:27) which means: that it was then in their power to uphold the Torah. It was explained above that "upholding" means strengthening something from its fundament and root. For through their *mesirat nefesh* they had reached the essence of the radiance of the *Ein Sof* which is the source⁴⁵ and root of the Torah and the Commandments. The meaning of upholding the Torah is that one makes it take form, and makes it stand firmly from its root, source and origin. From there the Torah takes form on the [lower] level of the hidden and revealed worlds [i.e., the domain of the Mitzvot].⁴⁶

R. Dov Ber does not deny the ancient theme of the power of spiritualist mystical attainment, "supernal Repentance." But while this is attainable only by the few, *mesirat nefesh* for Judaism in its contemporary sense of defiance and dedication was accessible to the many. The teaching in *Gates of Radiance* gave an obvious and important message to R. Dov Ber's followers. Indeed there is an exalted realm, beyond the Torah and the Mitzvot. But it does not lead to the antinomianism of the talmudic figure Elisha ben Abuya, who ceased to observe the halakhah after entering *Pardes*, the

esoteric Merkavah realm.⁴⁷ Rather, taught R. Dov Ber, those who reach that degree of union with the Divine have a special task: to strengthen Judaism. For his followers, R. Dov Ber's authoritative delineation of this personal religious structure subtly defused the socially and halakhically dangerous dimension of Jewish mystical thought.

We thus see that *Gates of Radiance*, the "Alef-Bet of Hasidism," clearly points the way for the Habad follower. His inner exploration in the intellectualist contemplative process is given firm guidance, leading him unambiguously towards the practical, the normative, and the real. At the same time, through the teachings on *mesirat nefesh* the door is opened to the upper reaches of the Merkavah realm. Yet here, too, the power transmitted to the Hasidic follower is the power to build, strengthen, and protect Jewish life in the face of the contemporary onslaught. Despite the kabbalistic terminology of R. Dov Ber's tract it is made clear too that this power is not only the province of the scholarly *hasid*. Without his necessarily knowing it, it was also in the hands of the simple man and his family, whether or not he was part of the Habad fraternity. It is likely that, in the dismal atmosphere for the Jew of Russia in the 1820s, R. Dov Ber's scholarly followers who perused the pages of *Gates of Light* also explained its central themes to others around them, beginning with their own wives and children, encouraging them in the ideal of self-sacrifice which was becoming increasingly necessary for the survival of traditional Judaism.

A Yiddish Tract

In the modern historiography of the Hasidic movement its populist aspect has received heavy emphasis. To some extent this led to a distorted view in which Hasidism was seen solely as a turn towards the masses. The scholarly reaction to this was to explore and describe the esoteric theology of Hasidism, a process which in turn leaves one with the question of the role of Hasidism in relation to the broad masses of the ignorant. In considering the growth of the Habad school, in which we have traced a gradual development from a relatively small circle of enthusiasts to a broad fraternity seeking contiguity with the scholarly echelon of Jewish society in White Russia, this question is particularly pertinent. We have seen that there were teachings about *mesirat nefesh* and the practical Mitzvot which could be communicated by the scholarly Hasidic followers to others with whom they came in contact. But did the Habad leadership have anything to say directly to the simple man, or, indeed, woman?

The existence of a Yiddish tract written by R. Dov Ber helps us to answer that question.⁴⁸ Called *Opening the Eyes*, this work has been described as a kind of selection from the Hebrew tract *The Way of Life*. It is aimed primarily—but not exclusively—at the person who cannot understand Hebrew. *Opening the Eyes* is therefore a direct communication with the ordinary person. In order to understand the main thrust of this book to its intended readership, we have to consider another of the "translated" varieties of *bitul* in R. Dov Ber's teachings, namely the concept of *tsubrokhenskayt* (being broken). This theme has an important place in his writings. The term derives from the "broken spirit, broken and contrite heart" of Psalms 51:19 which is amply elaborated in later ethical literature.⁴⁹ The concept of breaking one's coarse, animal, material self and its desires—which conceal one's deeper, Divine dimension—is found in R. Shneur Zalman's *Tanya* as a concomitant to the contemplative process. Due to this coarseness, deriving from the *kelipah*, even though the contemplative reflects on the grandeur of the Divine, he remains unmoved. He must therefore "beat it [the *kelipah*] and cast it down to the dust: that is, to fix times to cast himself down, to be loathsome in his eyes, as it is written 'a broken heart, a broken spirit.'"⁵⁰

Initially the theme of *tsubrokhenskayt* is not a substitute for *bitul* but an ethical aspect of it. It is through *tsubrokhenskayt* that the contemplative attainments taught by the Habad teachings have their required effect. In our discussion of R. Dov Ber *Tract on Ecstasy* we encountered the idea that without *tsubrokhenskayt*, one can achieve only a superficial approach to contemplation. The way to "receive" the Hasidic teachings is in an atmosphere of true repentance. If the person is "whole" in his own opinion, rather than "broken," he will not be able to receive the teachings in an inward way.⁵¹ This idea was attributed by R. Dov Ber to the Maggid of Mezeritch.⁵² It is interesting to note, too, that the theme of *tsubrokhenskayt* had been an early concern of R. Dov Ber which was criticized by R. Aaron Halevi during the period when they were still friends.⁵³

In *Tract on Ecstasy*, which is primarily devoted to the theme of contemplation and its effect, the concept of *tsubrokhenskayt* is depicted in relation to the contemplative process. It is an ethical movement which prepares the ground for the Habad style of contemplation to have its full effect in a genuine way. In other works by R. Dov Ber, however, we find this concept being ascribed value in itself, without reference to contemplation. *Tsubrokhenskayt* becomes a goal for which the *hasid* should directly strive; it is

a translation of esoteric *bitul* into ethical terms, and is consequently the gateway to the most supreme ideals of the Hasidic ethos.

The conceptual basis of this ethical ideal is provided by R. Dov Ber in his demands for harsh self-criticism, attacking not only the bad within a person, but also his good points: they are accused of being false, impure, and mingled with bad. This severe stance is particularly expressed in *Gate of Repentance and Prayer*. The path of self-criticism is presented as the means to reach the highest goal, employing the image of the circle which we encountered earlier. In this case the *hasid* is told to view himself from the perspective of Truth, "which is unlimited." From this viewpoint "even all the good he does with all his heart is utterly low, because of the lack of truth in his soul." The effect of this harsh self-perception is to "cast him down to the lowest of all levels." However, the effect of this is, paradoxically, to exalt him, using the logic of the circle. By seeing himself as false, and thereby joining the lowest point on the circle, he is connected with the highest point, the ultimate power of Truth, which is exalted beyond limit.⁵⁴

If there is criticism of the "good" in the life of the *hasid* of R. Dov Ber, how much more is there condemnation of the "bad"! In the form of *tsubrokhenkayt* this self-condemnation, termed "lower Repentance," a movement which is accessible to the will, itself becomes the key to "supernal Repentance," which is beyond will. In *The Way of Life*, in a section on repentance—particularly in the context of the High Holy Days—we find a description of this process. Because the individual has "forsaken the Divine" and "gone very very far away through his sins," he enters a state of *tsubrokhenkayt* which "reaches the depths of his heart, depth beyond depth, till he weeps bitterly, really loathing his life."⁵⁵ This triggers a spiritual transaction: "According to the measure of the 'lower Repentance' . . . the 'supernal Repentance' is drawn down. . . . Through the utter lowness, he awakens the absolute heights."⁵⁶

This upper level is expressed by totally involuntary weeping, beyond the will, which is inward and silent. The person is "like someone going out to be killed . . . who cannot cry, but is silent, and weeps inwardly without a sound." This mood is described as "total *bitul* to the Divine"; it is the "supernal Repentance" which has been triggered by his *tsubrokhenkayt* and now flows from above, from the source of the soul. The self-condemnation of *tsubrokhenkayt* during the High Holy Days creates a tangible response from the Divine, which takes the form of the granting of spiritual goals.

The individual attains "power and strength for his soul for the whole year, to have the quality of *bitul* to the Divine *ayin*, that there should be *bitul* of his will . . . in practical matters and inner *bitul* with emotion and intellect in prayer and Torah study."⁵⁷

The Way of Life is a scholarly work, freely employing kabbalistic terminology. It was written for the members of the educated class who are chided by the author, in his introduction, for romantically preferring expensive manuscripts of Hasidic teachings rather than inexpensive and more accurate printed books.⁵⁸ At the other end of the social scale there is the ignorant man or woman who cannot understand Hebrew. The concept of *tsubrokhenkayt* is communicated to them directly by R. Dov Ber's Yiddish work, *Opening the Eyes*. We thus find that a concept, initially encountered in the esoteric context of the spiritual quest of the contemplative or the harsh self-criticism of the man of stature, is made available by R. Dov Ber in this Yiddish tract to the members of the ignorant masses in terms which they can understand.

Opening the Eyes is primarily a work of Hasidic *musar*, ethical teachings, addressing itself to the individual who wants to improve or transform his spiritual life through the conversionary process called repentance.⁵⁹ In his introduction R. Dov Ber states that while for scholars who know Hebrew many ethical tracts are available, "for those who do not know Hebrew it is difficult to find ethical books which are written in Yiddish, so they remain without any counsel about how to repent. Consequently my heart stirred me to write the paths of repentance in Yiddish."⁶⁰ It is therefore clear that the work is aimed at the members of the ignorant class, although R. Dov Ber does add that the scholar will also derive benefit from it: because it is written in the vernacular, rather than in Hebrew, it will have more force to awaken the heart to obey its instructions.⁶¹ He continues with an interesting comparison with a popular medical book written for ordinary people (*proster layt*), but which, if read by another doctor, would still be found illuminating.

The central theme of this work is repentance, and throughout the reader is referred to as "the Repentant" (*baal teshuvah*). The strongly pietistic mood of the book, referring to weeping while thinking of one's sins and the need for constant guard against repeating one's transgressions, conveys the impression that the intended reader is indeed unlearned but nonetheless is undergoing an inner transformation comparable to that of a scholar who chooses to join the Hasidic movement.⁶² In this work there is a typi-

cally Habad emphasis on seeking a constant level of spiritual attainment, rather than merely occasional—albeit intense—feelings of regret, which are derided by the author.⁶³

Throughout *Opening the Eyes*, on virtually every page, the ideal of *tsubrokhenskayt* is presented as the goal of the reader. *Opening the Eyes* provides him with guidance about how he should conduct himself from the moment of awaking in the morning, throughout the day, until the last moments before sleep at night. It also provides him with *kavvanot* relating to the theme of *tsubrokhenskayt* and repentance to be applied during the daily prayers.⁶⁴

While in *The Way of Life*, addressed to the person who has always been a pious scholar, the general mood is one of looking for warts with a magnifying glass in order to provoke the desired goal of regret, repentance, and *tsubrokhenskayt*, in *Opening the Eyes* we encounter the spiritual striving of a person who may well have transgressed basic laws of the Torah and of the society in which he lived. The work constantly refers to sexual sins and thoughts of adultery; in a second section of this Yiddish tract, which remained in manuscript till recent times, R. Dov Ber mentions the problem of Jewish men living in the villages who have relationships with non-Jewish women.⁶⁵ Drunkenness is also mentioned as a problem.⁶⁶ There is also reference to the problem of being drawn into transgression by one's acquaintances.⁶⁷

Whatever the nature of the transgressions in the life of the reader—and we should remember that the author wrote that the book is suitable also for scholars—the intended goal is a constant mood of *tsubrokhenskayt* and repentance.

“My sin is always before me” (Ps. 51:5). This verse was said by King David . . . meaning that he never forgot his sins and always repented for them. He tried constantly to achieve *tsubrokhenskayt* in his heart. This is what every Repentant should also do. He should never stop being aware of his sins, even when he is very involved in his business activities and even at the time when all Jews are rejoicing because of a Mitzvah or a festival or the Sabbath—he should take to heart that he is worse than everyone.⁶⁸

It might seem that this is simply a return to pre-Hasidic pietism. However, with the exception of fasting, which receives considerable emphasis in early Habad,⁶⁹ the author of *Opening the Eyes* makes clear that the reader should not engage in specific ascetic practices. Nor should he

bow his head and show in an obvious way that he is *tsubrokhesh*, for the main thing is in the heart with truth. . . . The Sages say that even if one undertakes a hundred fasts this is not as good as achieving true *tsubrokhenskayt* in one's heart. But one should not make this obvious, acting like an ascetic. On the contrary, a Repentant should be in a mood of joy, because he has been turned away from evil to good, from death to life.⁷⁰

The key concept in this book is the promise that the *tsubrokhenskayt* of the individual will activate the spiritual transaction described in *The Way of Life*: as the individual “breaks” his own ego, the Divine responds by aiding him in maintaining his mood of repentance and protecting him from low desires.

The one who has deep bitterness of heart and is truly constantly very *tsubrokhesh* in his inner heart . . . is aided by G-d. He gives him great help to repent; that is, He strengthens him very much in his mind and in his heart. According to that which he wishes for in his thought, so [G-d] gives him for the whole day: he keeps away from bad in his actions. Also in thought and desire his heart turns away from all bad things—even just not to look with one's eyes at that which one should not. This is known to be effective.⁷¹

Structurally this is the same as the promise given to the contemplative in R. Dov Ber's Hebrew works that through *tsubrokhenskayt* he will achieve more genuine ecstasy or *bitul*. In *Opening the Eyes* the reader is assured that his *tsubrokhenskayt* will transform him. Not only will he no longer do bad in practice, but he will not even *want* to do bad. This change has a pneumatic quality and is comparable to the process described in *Tanya* whereby contemplation induces an involuntary quelling or complete transformation of the Animal Soul.⁷² In the case of the unlearned reader of *Opening the Eyes* the same effect is achieved by a dedicatedly constant *tsubrokhenskayt*, based on a relentlessly unceasing awareness of his past sins.

We thus see that *Opening the Eyes* represents an attempt to communicate the basic psychological process of Habad thought—the achievement, through *bitul*, of a new dimension of consciousness—in terms which are meaningful to the nonscholar. How successful this attempt was in R. Dov Ber's own time is not clear. The fact that in his letter to the fraternity which was translated above we find reference to the fact that provision will be made in Lubavitch for the “simple householders . . . who are very remote

from understanding Hasidic teachings but want to hear ethical teachings on their level, with brief explanation"⁷³ indicates that *Opening the Eyes* is an example of a habitual genre of R. Dov Ber's oral teaching, as is the further Yiddish text preserved in manuscript. Two Yiddish discourses by R. Dov Ber are also known. Both of these concern repentance, and one in particular is very close in its subject matter to *Opening the Eyes*.⁷⁴

Habad tradition includes an account of an individual in the time of R. Dov Ber who became a Hasidic penitent after years of absence from the Jewish community, and therefore required Habad material in Yiddish.⁷⁵ There is also an intriguing reference in *Tract on Ecstasy* to "Repentants" who were somehow part of the Habad fraternity.⁷⁶ It is likely, however, that the majority of the "lower" level of R. Dov Ber's following were in fact to some extent literate in Hebrew, although they were not scholars in the contemporary sense of the word. Indeed, it has been suggested that the reason why the additional manuscript Yiddish text was never printed was because of the publication of the Hebrew *The Way of Life* in 1819.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, despite their knowledge of Hebrew the Yiddish teachings by R. Dov Ber brought home to them ideas which otherwise might have remained masked behind the Hebrew literary terminology. Thus while *Opening the Eyes* constitutes an interesting attempt to provide a Habad handbook for the simple man who cannot understand Hebrew and may be guilty of relationships with non-Jewish women, its main readership was a more respectable echelon of literate but nonscholarly householders. At the same time the work was relevant for true scholars, and it emphasizes certain practices which were (or became) typical of the men of stature in the Habad movement.⁷⁸ This multiple aspect of the work was intended by the author, as one sees from his recommendations concerning Torah study: the individual should study "what he can, even a chapter of Bible" and relatively simple Mishnah and Code of Law. But "he who is more of a scholar" is given a stronger diet of halakhic writings and kabbalistic-ethical works.⁷⁹

Speaking to Women

An interesting feature of this Yiddish work is the fact that it directly addresses women. Let us try to see this in perspective. In 1815, two years before the probable date of publication of *Opening the Eyes*, the collection of stories about the founder of Hasidism, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*, had been published not only in Hebrew but also in Yiddish. It is significant that the first Hebrew edition was printed by the Habad printer in Kopys,

Yisrael Yafeh in his preface he mentions hearing stories about the Baal Shem Tov from R. Shneur Zalman.⁸⁰ It seems likely that this publication was approved by R. Dov Ber and that it was seen as a way of communicating some aspect of Hasidism on a wide level. Indeed, the Habad printer begins his preface with the statement, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov, that "one who is occupied in telling the praises of the *Zaddikim* is as if occupied in Merkavah mysticism." One possible dimension of this work is that it might have been seen as providing material for a man to communicate something of the Hasidic ethos to his wife and children. Hasidism functioned primarily as a movement seeking the transmission of an esoteric aspect of Judaism within society. At an epoch when women were literate only in Yiddish and had little access to normative Torah study, the actual teachings of Hasidism were unlikely to be directed at them at all. There is therefore no hint in any earlier Hasidic literature that a woman might be the reader of the book. The publication of an anthology of stories, many of them quite dramatic, is therefore noteworthy. Even more so is the fact that several editions in Yiddish swiftly followed.⁸¹ None of these, as far as is known, had any connection with the Habad school; but it was obviously in the interest of all branches of Hasidism to gain the enthusiasm of the womenfolk for a movement which was still facing heavy antagonism from the *mitnagdim* and, increasingly, from the *maskilim*, and which also made considerable demands on the life of the family: in particular, the fact that the men would frequently absent themselves in order to visit the "Court" of the *Rebbe*.⁸²

Women are known to have been readers of earlier ethical literature printed in Yiddish, and a number of such tracts had been printed in bilingual editions.⁸³ The publication of *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov* in Hebrew, and certainly its Yiddish versions, can therefore be seen as a step towards the broadening of Hasidic influence within the life of the family and the community.

Another publication in 1815 was also partly directed at women: this was the collection of stories by Rabbi Nahman of Braslav. He had begun to relate these stories during the last few years of his life, and in a teaching which provides a theoretical background to them he made the striking statement that through reading these stories a barren woman could become pregnant!⁸⁴ Braslav literature records that R. Nahman wanted the stories printed in a bilingual edition because "then it might easily happen that a woman who is barren would read one of the stories and through this she would be blessed with children."⁸⁵ Indeed, when the stories were fi-

nally published, a few years after R. Nahman's death, his wish was fulfilled and they were printed with parallel Hebrew and Yiddish versions on the page.⁸⁶

Quite apart from this miraculous dimension, R. Nahman's stories communicate profound ideas drawn from the kabbalistic tradition, and in a unique way they express their author's world-view. Even if published in Hebrew alone, the stories would certainly have been told by the menfolk in the context of the family circle. Printing them in Yiddish made them directly accessible to women.

In the case of Habad we find a number of interesting traditions. Hielman, the Habad chronicler, tells us in *Beit Rebbe* about R. Shneur Zalman's wife Sterna, who "had great *mesirat nefesh*" for the Hasidic cause. Further, she felt that she had acquired spiritual power through the many years of her marriage to a *Zaddik*, and is said to have commented to her son, R. Dov Ber: "I know more about spirituality than you! I was with [R. Shneur Zalman] for fifty years, and can make a *pidyon* better than you can!"⁸⁷

Hielman also describes the exceptional relationship of R. Shneur Zalman with his daughter Freida, the sister of R. Dov Ber.

She was very beloved by our *Rebbe* [R. Shneur Zalman] and he would say Hasidic discourses for her. When her brother the *Mitteler Rebbe* wanted to hear some specific topic from our *Rebbe*, he would request from her that she should ask our *Rebbe* about this topic, and he would tell her. Her brother used to hide in the room and listen.⁸⁸

R. Shneur Zalman's relationship with his daughter Devorah Leah, the mother of the *Zemah Zedek*, was on a more mysterious plane. She is said to have given her life for her father in a mystical transaction enabling him to live on. According to this account, the reason his life was threatened—by a heavenly accusation—was because of his open revelation of Hasidic teachings.⁸⁹ If his wife Sterna showed *mesirat nefesh* during his arrest and the many struggles they lived through together, his daughter Devorah Leah was an example, within the mystical framework of perception in which they lived, of "self-sacrifice" in the literal sense of the term.

On a more general and popular level, the call for *mesirat nefesh* in R. Dov Ber's *Gates of Radiance*, expressed as defiant dedication to Judaism in practical life, certainly involved the woman together with the man. R. Dov Ber's statement that in the time of Haman every single Jew, "all of them, from great to small, women and children"⁹⁰ determined they would risk

death rather than forsake Judaism was certainly intended to provide courage and inspiration to every single member of the community. This communication would take place, however, by virtue of the basic message of the Hebrew teaching of the *Rebbe* being explained by the husband and father to his household in the grim atmosphere of the 1820s. For the wives, mothers, and daughters, the fact of the inner movement of *mesirat nefesh* carried its own *pneuma*. But the call from the *Rebbe* to express that *mesirat nefesh* was cloaked in a Hebrew text, replete with kabbalistic terminology and abbreviations, inaccessible to the woman as to the unlearned man.

In R. Dov Ber's *Opening the Eyes*, however, we encounter direct statements to women. These are not "mystical" but are in keeping with the general pietistic tone of this book. Unlike most halakhic texts, which primarily concern action, Hasidism focussed much attention on the thought of the individual. Hence the emphasis in early Hasidic works on the "foreign thoughts"—often of a sexual nature—which might arise in a person's mind. They are to be avoided at any time, but especially during prayer. All earlier Hasidic texts referring to one's thoughts speak exclusively to the male. In *Opening the Eyes*, too, this topic is at the center of attention. Care about what one thinks and what one looks at is a constant theme. It is therefore noteworthy that in one passage, just as the male reader is warned not to think about nor gaze at women, for this might lead to a nocturnal emission—regarded as strengthening negative spiritual forces—so the female too is admonished: "Even for women this has a bad—and even worse—effect. They consider it perfectly permissible to stare at handsome men and to speak a lot with them. From this they get at night bad dreams about sex."⁹¹

Later in the tract, this idea is repeated.⁹² A direct demand was being made to the woman, albeit of a simple moralistic nature. Nonetheless, a door was being opened for them to enter the dynamic of piety, Habad style. Perhaps the main significance of these passages is that they indicate the author's expectation that the wives or daughters of his followers might peruse this Yiddish Hasidic tract, with its appeal for near mystical *tsubrokh-enkayt*. Could we imagine that this ideal was thought of as being relevant to women? It is interesting to note that one of the female models described in *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*, Rivale the Pious, whose aim is the collection of charity for needy people in the community, is depicted as a paradigm of "utter humility, really like the dust."⁹³ Perhaps this was indeed an ideal communicated to the daughters of a Hasidic household in the early

nineteenth century. It is interesting to note that this humility did not make Rivale a weak figure. On the contrary, as described in this story it gave her the power relentlessly to pursue her goal on behalf of the poor, and also the courage to defend a sinner—an adulterer—in the face of condemnation by a group of men.

A point made in R. Dov Ber's *Gates of Radiance* is that humility and *mesirat nefesh* act in complement to each other, and both reach to the essence of the Infinite.⁹⁴ The same is true of the simple obedience eulogized in *Gate of Faith*. These qualities are defined neither by gender nor by scholarship, nor even by maturity. They remain the special province of the simple man, the woman, and the child and manifest the point at which, from the Habad perspective, any individual can be joined with the Divine.

It is certainly true that the creating of special women's organizations by the Habad leadership early in the twentieth century, both in Russia and elsewhere, the Hasidic teachings written in Yiddish specially for women, and, later, the widespread study of *Tanya* and Hebrew Habad discourses by women and girls lay far in the future. In a letter written in Otwock in 1936 Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak states concerning his own teachings, disseminated in Yiddish, that

to a considerable extent an important aim for me in the *Sihot* [talks, distinct from Hebrew *ma'amarim*, discourses] is to give the possibility to the wives and daughters of the *hasidim* to acquire ideas of the paths of Hasidism and to give material to parents of Habad stock to employ to awaken the interest of their sons and daughters and to tell them about ideas of the paths of Hasidism.⁹⁵

Complementary to this was the aim of R. Yosef Yitzhak, described by Ada Rapoport-Albert, to transform the women in the Habad fraternity into activists battling for the strengthening of Judaism, particularly in realms of life which relate specifically to the woman.⁹⁶ This dual process, in which the intellectual input, the transmission of the Hasidic ethos by means of ideas and teachings, is translated into activist organizational power, increasingly became part of the normative life of the Habad woman. Investigation of the development of the role of the woman in modern Habad society remains a topic for further study.⁹⁷

Many changes were to take place in the Jewish and indeed non-Jewish world before the power of womanhood could begin to be harnessed as an overt, tangible force. In R. Dov Ber's *Opening the Eyes* we see a very slight

step in this direction. Nonetheless, it is worthy of notice. More important than this, however, is the fact that the central value scale of Habad Hasidism as taught by R. Dov Ber—the spectrum of *bitul*, with all its variety—allowed virtually every individual, whether man or woman, learned or ignorant, to locate his or her own point of connection with the spiritual ethos of Hasidism.

Hasidic Teachings for a Non-Jew

It is interesting to discover that both R. Shneur Zalman and R. Dov Ber were involved in compiling a brief tract of Hasidic teaching which was intended for a non-Jewish reader. This is more than a mere historical curiosity: it indicates something of the Habad perspective on the spiritual power of Hasidic thought and also has some bearing on the perennial question of the relationship between Jew and non-Jew in any society which is being considered.

The occasion for the writing of this tract was not a happy one. The earlier version, which is not extant today, was penned by R. Shneur Zalman in connection with his arrest; whether the first arrest in 1798 or the second in 1800 is not certain.⁹⁸ Precise details about the nature of this document are not known. The text which *has* been preserved is a second version, written a quarter of a century later by R. Dov Ber, which was sent to the governor general of the Vitebsk region, named Chovansky.⁹⁹ This was in connection with R. Dov Ber's arrest in the autumn of 1826.¹⁰⁰ Other leading figures in Habad were also arrested: R. Aaron Halevi of Staroselye, R. Zalman Reitzes of Shklov, and R. Shlomoh Freidas of the same city.¹⁰¹ The arrest was provoked by highly placed and wealthy *mitnagdim* who, as it happened, were also relatives of the mother of R. Dov Ber. One aspect of this conflict may well have simply been a family quarrel.¹⁰² However, they claimed that their intense hatred of their relative was provoked by his incessant dissemination of Hasidic teachings, which they saw as having displaced the study of the Talmud.¹⁰³ This was not the official accusation they made against him. Instead they appealed to the government with complaints similar to those aimed previously at his father: that R. Dov Ber was plotting rebellion, that his study hall had the same dimensions as the Temple, and that he was sending money to the sultan (a charge based on records of the charity funds he was sending to the Habad community in the land of Israel).¹⁰⁴

R. Dov Ber was taken to Vitebsk. According to Habad tradition, en route he was greeted by the non-Jewish elders of the villages through

which they were passing: they came to meet the Jewish leader with bread and salt.¹⁰⁵ In Vitebsk, efforts by the Jewish doctor Heibenthal, a Habad sympathizer, ensured that R. Dov Ber did not have to be incarcerated in a prison cell together with the common criminals.¹⁰⁶

The investigation was apparently presided over by Chovansky. According to Hielman's account, the accusations of the *mitnagdim* were answered in a straightforward way which gained his sympathy. After a few weeks, R. Aaron Halevi was released. Ten days later, on 10 Kislev (which became a Habad festival) R. Dov Ber was also given his freedom. The other *hasidim* who had been arrested were released somewhat later.¹⁰⁷

It was presumably at some point during this period that the text under discussion was compiled, with the aim that it should be translated into Russian and given to Chovansky. Letters by R. Dov Ber are extant in which he asks a certain R. Leib to work in some way on a text he had written in connection with the trial. It is likely that this work was the translation into Russian of the tract we are discussing.¹⁰⁸

The text sent to R. Leib is "copied exactly from my handwriting," says R. Dov Ber.¹⁰⁹ The recipient is told he may depart slightly from the original text by expanding or abbreviating "but should not omit completely even a small part" of its contents. The letter suggests that the text sent to R. Leib is based on a text by R. Shneur Zalman and emphasizes the ability of R. Dov Ber to communicate the essential elements of that original, even though he is actually changing it considerably both in order of presentation and in content.¹¹⁰

According to Hielman, the tract was delivered to Chovansky on the morning of the day that R. Dov Ber was released.¹¹¹ This, however, did not constitute the end of the case, which was transferred to the capital and put before the senate. When R. Dov Ber passed away a year later, the trial was still hanging over him, and there were fears that he would be arrested again and brought to St. Petersburg.¹¹²

Let us now consider the nature of this Habad document addressed to a non-Jewish leader. It expresses a number of aims, some more obvious than others. To a certain extent, it is part of the tradition of the *Shtadlan*, the Jewish intermediary—often both wealthy and erudite—who stood between the ghetto community and the forces of government.¹¹³ Thus the tract seeks to demonstrate the great respect which the Jew has for the king and his authority. To this end it quotes biblical verses, the Talmud, and the halakhic fact that a Jew is commanded "to run to see a king and to recite a full blessing incorporating the Divine Name" when he does so.¹¹⁴ In addi-

tion the point is made more than once that the law of the Talmud demands obedience to the law of the state: "the law of the kingdom is law."¹¹⁵ All of this is fully comprehensible and to be expected in the context of a plea during a trial.

Another major aim is the plea that the case should be judged by the governor-general himself (and presumably the earlier version, by R. Shneur Zalman, asked the tsar to decide the case).¹¹⁶ It was probably felt that the more senior official would be more likely to judge the case fairly. The document, however, provides another, mystical perspective on this request, as we shall see below.

One of the accusations against R. Shneur Zalman, in the first arrest, had been that he held that the *Sefirah* "Kingship" is the lowest of the *Sefirot*. The *mitnagdim* claimed that this indicates his treasonable attitude towards royalty and the tsar. It is not known whether this was also one of the charges against R. Dov Ber. One central aspect of this tract is the fact that it makes clear the significance of "Kingship" and of its place in the sefirotic system. This, however, is developed far beyond what we might expect into a general and powerful statement on the nature and responsibility of a human ruler.

It is here that we begin to find quite unusual features in this tract. It contains no element at all of a plea that its author is innocent, and no reference whatsoever to the accusations against him. Instead the text is an exposition by an almost archetypal "Wise Jew" who combines the wisdom from "books of the kabbalah" (which are frequently mentioned as such)¹¹⁷ with a universally comprehensible emphasis on the Middle Way (although the term is not used). Phrased in Habad Hasidic terminology, it is the path of balance and of Truth which is being communicated to the reader, linking the concepts of Divine kingship and human leadership. Implicit in the tract is the claim, on the part of its author, to spiritual wisdom and authority. Perhaps related to this aspect of the way R. Dov Ber sought to present himself to the governor-general is the fact that, much to the alarm of his followers, he insisted on attending the court attired in the white garments of a Hasidic leader.¹¹⁸

Finally, this document is evidence of the tremendous optimism of the Habad school that the Hasidic teachings truly have the power to transmit a spiritual dimension of awareness to the reader. There is the implicit belief that study of this quite esoteric discourse will itself transform the recipient in some way, for through it he will have been linked to the radiant, Divine source of Hasidic teaching.

The main theme of this tract is that it is the central line of the *Sefirot*, from *Keter* (Crown) to *Malkhut* (Kingship), which constitutes the Middle Way of Truth. Both the right-hand line of "Kindness," which would permit people to steal, and the left-hand line of "Severity" are askew of the truth. This central line is the expression of "Splendor" (*Tiferet*).

The tripartite division exists at every level of being: in one's mind, in the emotions, and in action. However, it is specifically the human leader, the king or one of his close ministers, who manifests the central line of truth. The Divine quality of truth flows through the central line, from "Crown" to "Kingship," and becomes embodied in the human king. This gives the Divine stamp to his decrees ("the law of the kingdom is law") and imparts to him the ability to perceive the truth and act with justice. For this reason the author requests that only the recipient of this document (i.e., Chovansky, or, earlier, Tsar Paul), judge his case: for only he has the Divine aid to see the truth as it really is.

The document, which includes a diagram of the *Sefirot*, gives the impression that it seeks to engender a spiritual transaction, in typical Habad style. It is intended to act as a mystical communication, one might even say as a form of blessing, granting its temporally powerful reader a sense of contact with the Divine flowing through the *Sefirot* and embodied in his own self and position.

This tract constitutes the furthest reach of Habad Hasidic teaching in the early generations of the movement. Halakhically, the relationship of a non-Jew to the Torah is categorized by the concept of the Noahide Laws (Divine commands applying to all sons of Noah). These are discussed in some detail by Maimonides but otherwise figured little in the writings of later halakhists.¹¹⁹ It is noteworthy that R. Dov Ber in one of his Hasidic tracts mentions in passing that a non-Jew, through carrying out the Seven Noahide Laws, achieves a certain spiritual effect.¹²⁰ The idea that Hasidic or kabbalistic teachings might have relevance in any way for a non-Jew would probably have scandalized those who tried to limit the spread of those teachings even among the members of the Hasidic fraternity. However, no reaction is recorded. Since the transmission of these ideas to the non-Jew took place in both instances under serious threat of death, the halakhic category "nothing stands in the face of danger to life" (which permits everything except idolatry, sexual immorality, and murder) could have been applied.¹²¹

The existence of this tract also raises a wider issue. In the context of the early nineteenth century, with the gradual onset of the breaking down of

the walls of the cultural ghetto in which the Jews of Eastern Europe found themselves, a key question was that of the relationship with the non-Jew. One of the central features of the Haskalah had been its promise about the future harmony which would accompany the dawning epoch of universal enlightenment. The concretization of this ideal was one of the greatest challenges faced by the Haskalah movement, which was inspired by the belief that if only the Jew would secularize his intellectual life he would find common ground with the educated gentile and that this, together with concomitant economic, linguistic, and cultural changes, would lead to a truly happy and effective mode of symbiosis.

Contrasting strongly with this was the approach of Habad, which sought a line of development more in keeping with the past but which likewise, we suggest, had the potential to lead beyond the ghetto. From the Habad point of view Judaism did not have to become secularized in order for it to have a role in the nineteenth century and subsequently. On the contrary, by tapping more profoundly its spiritual sources and its esoteric dimension, Judaism would provide teachings and perspectives which would be both viable and useful in relation to the non-Jewish world.

It was therefore quite logical that, when faced with the threat of a death sentence, the Habad leaders should draw on the depths of Hasidic teaching as a resource, together with other, more normative modes of confronting the situation.

In this context the taking of sides by the Habad movement in the struggle between Napoleon and Alexander I needs reconsideration. Rabbi Shneur Zalman had written to his wealthy follower Moshe Meisels a directive concerning the war:

If Bonaparte wins, the wealth of the Jews will be increased, and their position will be raised. But their hearts will be estranged from their Father in Heaven. However, if Tsar Alexander wins, then although the poverty of the Jews will increase and their position will be lower, their hearts will cleave to and be bonded with their Father in Heaven.¹²²

This has been interpreted as a general statement about the question of civil rights for the Jews: for them to move out of the civic ghetto, into a new world where they have the same rights as everyone else, was a step which was to be feared and prevented, because it would lead them to forsake Judaism.¹²³ However, evidence that this was not R. Shneur Zalman's position is provided by a letter written by R. Dov Ber shortly after his father's

death. This letter too was addressed to Moshe Meisels. R. Dov Ber exhorts him to continue to devote his efforts for the benefit of the tsar.¹²⁴ Further, R. Dov Ber reveals his father's ideas on the question of civic rights: "He said, that when the tsar will feel secure, and all his enemies will have fallen before him, he will certainly remember the Jews, and will grant them a firm place in the population, with all kinds of permanent freedom."¹²⁵ R. Dov Ber continues with the statement that the tsar "believes in the unity of G-d" and does not want to dislodge the Jews from their religion. For this reason "he does not at all want to enlist them" in the army.¹²⁶

These optimistic words were written, of course, before the Holy Alliance and in the enthusiastic aftermath of the retreat of Napoleon. It is noteworthy that even then, however, R. Dov Ber distinguished between the tsar himself, and the Russian people as a whole, who are described as having "a strange and total hatred" towards the Jews.¹²⁷ On the one hand, these ideas are fairly consistent with the medieval past of the Jewish people: the feeling of a special relationship with the crown, which grants benefits to the Jews despite a hostile population. On the other hand there is also a new dimension, which becomes more apparent when we consider the tract of Hasidic teaching which had been sent to Tsar Paul and was later to be given to the governor-general of Vitebsk. This new factor is a focus on the spirituality of the gentile as a key to the well-being of the Jew. The fact that the tsar believes in the unity of the Divine is adduced as grounds for supporting him and for trusting that his real desire is to grant the Jew civic freedom. R. Dov Ber also speaks of the religious "humility" of the tsar and of the fact that he sees his victory as coming from G-d rather than from his own power.¹²⁸ We thus see that R. Shneur Zalman's antipathy to Napoleon was not based on the fear that he would destroy the ghetto walls, but because he was seen to represent a force against the biblical tradition in general and Judaism in particular. R. Shneur Zalman did not want the ghetto: he, together with his son R. Dov Ber, sought "permanent freedom" for the Jewish people.

The studies in this chapter have sought to demonstrate that it was R. Dov Ber who effectively carried the Lubavitch branch of Habad far enough along the road of communicating, making accessible, and "translating" the Hasidic teachings so that the process could continue in the ensuing generations. Through the different varieties of *bitul* which he taught his followers, in the form of concepts such as dedicated acceptance of the Mitzvot, *mesirat nefesh*, or *tsubrokhenskayt*, he succeeded in transmitting in

an internalized way to the entire Habad fraternity, comprising women as well as men, the essential step of self-transcendence which constitutes the esoteric kernel at the heart of Hasidism. This was complementary to his endeavor—discussed in chapter 5—to popularize among the scholars in his fraternity a contemplative approach to prayer, based on cerebral exploration of the Lurianic spiritual cosmos. The system of Hasidic meditation that he taught emphasized the quest to discover for oneself that the Essence of the Infinite is expressed in the simple details of the daily world. The translation of the Hasidic ideal into terms meaningful for the non-scholar, described in the present chapter, helped consolidate the fraternity and prepare it for the future.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Our study of the emergence of the Habad school has attempted to trace the role of the communication ethos within the Hasidic movement. Starting with the Baal Shem Tov, R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye, and the Maggid, we observed the importance of this dimension of development in the earliest generations of Hasidism. On this basis, we suggested that the Hasidic movement can in general be characterized as manifesting the attempt to make some aspect of the highest levels of Jewish mystical experience, the theurgy of the Merkavah, accessible to the Jewish people at large.

This feature of Hasidism was a major cause of the bitter attacks by the *mitnagdim*. In addition, internal dispute about the implementation of this ideal predicated certain features of the further history of the movement. Towards the end of the eighteenth century and in the beginning of the nineteenth the Habad school began to be distinguished for its claim that not only the rare, inspired member of the kabbalistic elite but also the ordinary scholar could be granted direct access to an other-worldly plane of Torah communication and perspective on life. The Habad Hasidic teachings, drawn from the Lurianic kabbalah but translated into terms meaningful to the normative, Talmud-trained intellect, to the scholar who made no claim to pneumatic sensibility, constituted the medium for this theurgic interchange. Controversy on this issue between R. Shneur Zalman and some of his colleagues in the general Hasidic leadership led to the definition of Habad as a clearly distinguished branch of Hasidism with a unique emphasis on the goal of communication.

In the second generation of Habad we found a somewhat similar dispute but in more subtle form: an important aspect of the conflict over the succession to R. Shneur Zalman was the issue of the further implementation of the communication process. His son R. Dov Ber sought to further the reach within the society of his time of Hasidic teachings and practices such as contemplation. This endeavor invited criticism, from R. Aaron Halevi and others, and indeed was not a straightforward process. At one

point R. Dov Ber himself had to draw in the reins and redefine the contemplative technique he expected to be put into practice by a major section of the fraternity; however, our study pointed out the interesting fact that after the passage of almost a century, a later generation of Habad found ways to circumvent the pitfalls which R. Dov Ber had feared.

While R. Dov Ber had to limit the application of his highly esoteric mode of meditation before prayer, he fully succeeded in translating the central concept of Hasidism—self-abnegation—into terms meaningful for the growing membership of the Lubavitch fraternity. His overt aim was to extend the process of the communication of Habad discourses, values, and ideals through ever broader circles of the society of his time. The portals of Habad were thus entirely opened for the normative White Russian scholar; in addition, access was given to less literate social echelons, including the simple man who might be a repentant “sinner.” R. Dov Ber’s teachings were also relevant to women: indeed, his presentation of *mesirat nefesh*, self-sacrifice, as a central path for the attainment of the highest esoteric goals gave every single individual—within and also beyond the Hasidic movement as such—a potentially crucial role in the task to unify earth and heaven.

The later history of the Habad movement and its effect on the internal balance of the wider Jewish community in Russia during the nineteenth century has yet to be explored and evaluated. Unlike most other Hasidic groups during this period, Habad continued to place great emphasis on the study of the esoteric Hasidic teachings. Rabbi Menahem Mendel, known as the *Zemah Zedek* (1789–1866), combined Hasidic thought with halakhah in an interesting way and thereby considerably broadened the influence of the Habad ideal in society. Like his grandfather, R. Shneur Zalman, he was also famous as a halakhist. Despite his stature as a renowned scholar, it is known that R. Menahem Mendel addressed talks to groups of simple Cantonist soldiers, illustrating another application of the communication ethos.

After Rabbi Menahem Mendel, his sons, of whom a number were prolific exponents of Habad teaching, led several branches of Habad: further research is required to investigate whether there were significant differences between these groups, and their respective relationship to the study of Hasidic thought.

It was R. Shmuel (1834–1882) who became the leader in Lubavitch itself and the author of a considerable library of discourses, which have been collected in chronological volumes. At the same time his direct in-

volvement with the Jewish community was expressed through his activities as a latter-day *Shtadlan*,¹ travelling abroad in order to try to gain foreign assistance for the protection of the unhappy Jews of Russia. His son R. Shalom Dovber (1860–1920), mentioned several times in our study, gave a greatly increased impetus to the study of deeply esoteric Hasidic teachings and to the practice of contemplative prayer. His lengthy, comprehensive, and extremely subtle Hasidic tracts have led to his being termed “the Maimonides of Hasidic teaching.” In 1897 R. Shalom Dovber established the *Tomkhei Temimim* yeshiva. This academy was remarkable for the fact that in addition to the normal fare of Talmud study, Hasidic thought was instituted as a major part of the curriculum for the students. These youthful scholars were encouraged to implement the esoteric mode of contemplation which had been developed by R. Dov Ber. The inner psychological—and spiritual—effect of this cannot easily be evaluated by the historian. Other techniques, perhaps borrowing from other disciplines, would be needed to explore what it meant to stand in silent contemplation, “for four hours, standing by the wall like a stick.”²

For the purposes of social history we can only suggest that at that point, early this century, an endeavor to communicate intimations of the Infinite was taking place: not just to an elite circle of kabbalists, but to a group of teenage students for whom the rival attractions of fiercely secular Zionism on the one hand and communism on the other were very real. The results of this endeavor, the kinds of personalities it created, and, in turn, their possible effect on the changing society of their time remain areas for future study.

NOTES

Chapter One

1. Modern Hasidism is discussed in anthropological studies such as G. Krantzler, *Williamsburg, A Jewish Community in Transition* (New York, 1961); Jerome R. Mintz, *Legends of the Hasidim—an Introduction to Hasidic Culture and Oral Tradition in the New World* (Chicago, 1968); S. Poll, *The Hasidic Community of Williamsburg* (New York, 1969); Daniel Meijers, *Chassidisme in Israel. De Reb Arelech van Jeruzalem* (Assen, 1979), English translation *Guardians of the Faithful, an Ethnographic Study of a Hasidic Community in Mea Shearim, Jerusalem* (forthcoming).

2. The sociopolitical perspective on the history of Hasidism is provided by Simon Dubnow's *History of Hasidism* (1944); see also Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis* (1961), chs. 20–22, and the works listed in n. 5.

3. The mystical aspect of early Hasidism is delineated in a number of articles by Professor J. G. Weiss and in Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer's *Quietistic Elements in Eighteenth Century Hasidic Thought* (1968). This approach is continued, in examination of the Habad school, by Rachel Elior in her *Theory of Divinity of Hasidut Habad* (1982).

4. See Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer, “Anti-Spiritualism ba-Hasidut” (1962).

5. Previous discussions of this aspect of Hasidism include the following. Gershom Scholem's essay on Hasidism in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (1946) makes the accurate assessment that Hasidism manifests the paradox “of the mystic in the community of men” (p. 346; see also pp. 327, 342–43). J. G. Weiss writes of the attempt of the early Hasidic leaders to purify the nation in “The Beginnings of Hasidism” (1951); see p. 71. Samuel Dresner gives an account of the Hasidic aim to unify the Jewish people in *The Zaddik* (1960). See also Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer's “Le-Mahuto shel ha-Zaddik ba-Hasidut” (1960), which discusses the mystical aspect of the relationship of the *Zaddik* with his followers, and Shmuel Ettinger's “Hanhagah ha-Hasidut be-Izuvah” (1965). In this he depicts the way the lone kabbalist became the “mystic leader” (p. 124). These works do not discuss the actual process of this transmission from the point of view of the recipient—i.e., how the consciousness of the individual member of the people is transformed. They focus rather on the movement within the higher individual which allows him to enter this relationship with those around him. However, see next note.

6. The role of the concept of self-sacrifice (*mesirat nefesh*) in the spread of Habad among the broad strata of society has accurately been noted by Tishby and

Dan in their entry "Hasidut" in the *Hebrew Encyclopaedia* (Heb.), vol. 17, col. 814; also in A. Rubinstein, *Studies in Hasidism* (1977), p. 305.

7. Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 340. See also M. Pickarz, *The Beginning of Hasidism* (1978), chs. 4–7.

8. Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 342.

9. Ben Zion Dinur considers it was well known before it was printed (*Be-Mifneh ha-Dorot*, 1972, p. 181). Yehoshua Mondschein has published a very similar text which was included in a manuscript collection of teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, written in 1776 (*Migdal Oz*, 1980, pp. 119–26). First published at the end of R. Yakov Yosef's *Ben Porat Yosef* (Koretz, 1781), the letter appears again in *Keter Shem Tov* (Zolkiev, 1794, and frequently republished), in which it has pride of place at the very beginning. Another version of the letter was published by D. Fraenkel in *Mikhtavim me-ha-Besht* (Lvov, 1923), pp. 1–5. For discussion of this in relation to R. Yakov Yosef's version see Rubinstein and Bauminger in a series of articles in *Sinai* 67, 68, and 71–73; and Mondschein, *Migdal Oz*, pp. 119–21.

10. S. Dubnow, *History of Hasidism*, p. 60. G. Scholem disagrees with this view but affirms the authenticity of the letter (*The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, p. 182). Concerning the importance of this letter in early Hasidism, see Horodetzky, *Ha-Hasidut ve-ha-Hasidim*, vol. 1 (1928), p. 56, and Dinur, *Be-Mifneh ha-Dorot*, p. 183, n. 8. See also Scholem, *Demuto ha-Historit shel R. Yisrael Baal Shem Tov* (1960), pp. 347–48, and Tishby, "The Messianic Idea and Messianic Trends in the Growth of Hasidism" (1967), pp. 29–32.

11. E. R. Dodds defined theurgy as "magic applied to a religious purpose," depending on revelation of a religious nature. See his appendix on theurgy in *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1964). The kabbalah, in general, emphasizes the theurgic effect of the Commandments. The difference between the speculative and practical aspects of the kabbalah concerns the level of direct visionary sensitivity to that effect. In this work a lesser level of visionary attainment will be termed "pneumatic." According to this brief typology, when the mystic breaks through from the generalized sense of numinous radiance to a conscious visionary realm of souls and angels, the door between *pneuma* and theurgy has been opened.

12. See G. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 310–11. See also his "Demuto ha-Historit," p. 337. Scholem emphasizes that the appellation Baal Shem Tov is found in earlier kabbalistic literature with reference to theurgic masters, refuting the view which seeks to rationalize this aspect of the founder of Hasidism. Throughout this article Scholem stresses the "practical kabbalist" aspect of the Baal Shem Tov.

13. A number of central texts of this tradition were edited by A. Jellinek in his *Beit Hamidrash* (1855), S. A. Wertheimer in *Batei Midrashot* (1968, hereinafter cited as *B. M.*), and Peter Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (1981). See also Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and the Talmudic Tradition* (1960) and Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkabah Mysticism* (1980).

14. See Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, pp. 9–13, Saul Lieberman's appendix to I. Gruenwald's *Merkabah Mysticism*, pp. 241–44, and Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (1988), p. 89.

15. Wertheimer, *B. M.* 1, pp. 92, 134. Schäfer, *Synopse*, pp. 236–40.

16. Thus the text printed by R. Yakov Yosef and the manuscript published by

Fraenkel. This term is absent, however, from the manuscript published by Mondschein (see n. 9 above).

17. Wertheimer, *B. M.* 1, p. 98.

18. Gruenwald points out it is the aim to return which particularly clearly demonstrates the difference between the Jewish Merkabah mystics and the non-Jewish Gnostics, who sought totally to leave the confines of an evil world (*Merkabah Mysticism*, pp. 110–11). Another point of divergence noted by Gruenwald is the difference between the heavenly "guardians" in the Jewish texts and the evil Archons in the Gnostic works (p. 111). According to Scholem, in the second century Jewish converts to Christianity conveyed aspects of Merkabah mysticism to the Christian Gnostics (*Kabbalah*, p. 376).

19. Wertheimer, *B. M.* 1, pp. 67–68.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 77ff. This is also described in a section of the *Musaf* service on the Day of Atonement.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

22. See Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 72.

23. Wertheimer, *B. M.* 1, p. 95. See Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 72.

24. The question arises whether it is reasonable to credit ancient Merkabah mysticism and the visionary experience at its heart with any relevance in the eighteenth century. True, there are *aggadot* of the Talmud and Midrash which attest to (and thereby possibly preserve) this phenomenon (see Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, pp. 24ff., 51–64; and I. Gruenwald, "Yannai and Hekhalot Literature," (Heb.) *Tarbiz* 36 (1966–67), pp. 257–68, and *Merkabah Mysticism*, ch. 3). This, however, is only to a limited extent. In fact, a number of the relevant passages are harsh warnings to the uninitiated against exploring this realm. By contrast, however, the liturgy helped to keep this theme alive in the popular consciousness, particularly in the minds of the spiritualist elite. There are specific references, such as the passage in the martyrology of the Day of Atonement (see n. 20 above), and many phrases which breathe the atmosphere of the Merkabah experience are to be found in the corpus of *piyyut*, (as Gruenwald's above-mentioned article on Yannai indicates). The *Hekhalot* literature itself contains many prayers or hymns, a number of which are found in the daily prayer book, a work central to the life of the people. Examples are *Ha-Aderet ve-ha-Emunah* (see Wertheimer, *B. M.* 1, p. 110) and *Ein Kelo-heinu* (see *ibid.*, p. 73 and the editor's note there). Further, the daily service alludes directly a number of times to the heavenly refrains recorded in the Merkabah vision of Ezekiel (3:12) and in a similar passage in Isaiah (6:3). The latter is repeatedly quoted in the *Greater Hekhalot*, which also ascribes great significance to the daily *Kedushah* prayer in which these refrains have pride of place (see Wertheimer, *B. M.* 1, p. 86). There seems little doubt that, as Gruenwald suggests, the authors of the liturgy were conversant with the *Hekhalot* texts and thereby contributed to popularizing the outline of this mystic theme, even though the esoteric details were not communicated to the general public (*Merkabah Mysticism*, pp. 132–33). It is also noteworthy that the sources indicate that the position in which the *Amidah* prayer is recited—the feet together—relates to Ezekiel's vision of the Chariot (*T. B. Ber.* 10b; *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayim* 95:1).

It is in relation to prayer that the *Greater Hekhalot* is cited with respect by major

halakhic authorities through the centuries. (See R. Jacob b. Asher's *Tur*, R. Josef Karo's *Beit Yosef* commentary on the latter, and R. David Halevi's commentary—the *Taz*—to Karo's *Shulhan Arukh*, all in *Orah Hayim* 125:1). This, however, is a rare instance and no more than a brief allusion.

In the long esoteric tradition, as one would expect, Merkavah mysticism is more in evidence. A strong claim for continuity of the practice of spiritual ascent from the rabbinic period till the time of the Baal Shem Tov and beyond, into the nineteenth century, is made by Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, pp. 88–95.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the pietists of Franco-Germany (*Hasidei Ashkenaz*) wrote copies of the Merkavah tracts and incorporated them into their own works. The crucial question in the search for evidence for historical continuity is whether they did this out of respect for the mystic leaders of the past or as part of a living tradition of ecstatic experience. For some few, it seems, ascents to heaven and similar theurgic experiences during prayer were indeed a reality. (See G. Scholem, *Major Trends*, third lecture, passim, especially pp. 85, 102; also J. Dan, *The Esoteric Theology of Ashkenazi Hasidim* (Heb., 1968), pp. 24–28, M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, p. 91.)

The *Zohar*, the most popular compendium of kabbalistic thought in the eighteenth century, printed and reprinted by the presses most accessible to the early *hasidim*, contains long passages concerning the *Hekhalot*. These give information about them and about the spiritual guardians which protect their gateways (*Zohar* II, 201b–213b, 244b–262b). Much of the material concerns, primarily, the path of the soul after death. In life, the possibility of “gazing” is described, with emphasis on the dangers involved (*Zohar* II, 245a). The ascent of prayers through the various realms is also discussed. This is an important theme in some accounts of the Baal Shem Tov's theurgic power, such as *Shivhei ha-Besht*, ed. B. Mintz (1961), p. 64 (translated in D. Ben-Amos and J. R. Mintz, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*, 1970, p. 56).

The main teachings from the *Zohar* concerning the *Hekhalot* were collected by R. Moshe Cordovero in the sixteenth century in the “Gate of *Hekhalot*” in his *Pardes Rimmonim*, another classic of the kabbalah which was easily accessible to the *hasidim* and is quoted by them. The author adds Gaonic material concerning the *Hekhalot*, including an interpretation of the ascent of R. Akiba and his three companions (ch. 7) and a discussion of how the *Hekhalot* relate to the worlds of the *Sefirot* (ch. 9).

The theurgic aspects of the Safed school of mystics have been discussed by R. J. Z. Werblowsky in *Joseph Karo, Lawyer and Mystic* (1962), ch. 4. *Gates of Holiness*, a text by R. Haim Vital which actually gives instruction on how to make an ascent of the soul (pp. 65–78) was accessible to the eighteenth-century *hasidim*. A passage concerning the nature of human emotion from the beginning of this tract (1:2) is quoted in the Hasidic work *Tanya* (1, ch. 1, fol. 5b).

It is also likely that the actual texts of the Merkavah tradition, such as the *Greater Hekhalot*, were known in manuscript. R. Isaiah Horowitz's *Shnei Luhot ha-Brit*, the famous seventeenth-century kabbalistic anthology, includes a *Pirkei Merkavah* in a list of major esoteric works (vol. 1, Jerusalem 1960—photog. reprint of Lemberg, 1860—fol. 20a; see also 25a). R. Haim David Azulai (d. 1807) lists as a manu-

script a work with the same name in his *Shem ha-Gedolim*, pt. 2. A fragment of the *Greater Hekhalot* was printed in R. Gershom b. Asher's *Yihus ha-Zaddikim* (Mantua, 1561), p. 48. *Arzei Levanon* (Venice, 1601) includes—under a different name—the briefer work published by Wertheimer (*B. M.* 1, p. 55ff.) entitled *Ma'aseh Merkavah*. This lacks the personal theurgic aspect of the *Greater Hekhalot*; it was printed again in Shklov, 1785, and Berdichev, 1817. A longer text with more intense theurgic material was printed in our period without record of place or date, entitled *Sefer Hekhalot*. Zedner suggests Zolkiev, 1800. A. Y. Wertheimer suggests Lemberg. The same text, probably, is that recorded by Friedberg as being published in Zolkiev in 1837. These editions might well be seen as an indication of Hasidic interest in the Merkavah texts. The *Greater Hekhalot* is quoted in R. Shneur Zalman's *Tanya* (3, ch. 7, fol. 96b; see Wertheimer, *B. M.* 1, p. 95).

It is noteworthy that *Shivhei ha-Besht*, printed in Kopy's in 1815, has a number of references to the Merkavah tradition. The editor, R. Dov Ber of Linitz, the scribe of the Baal Shem Tov, considered the trancelike states we associate with the Merkavah tradition so important that he wrote in his introduction: “In previous times it sometimes happened that they would lie for several days comatose, which is called *hiner bet* and when they got up they would talk of the wondrous things they had seen in the upper worlds”; see *Shivhei ha-Besht*, ed. B. Mintz (Tel Aviv, 1961), p. 23 (this edition will be referred to below as *Shivhei*; it is used in preference to the Horodetzky edition—Tel Aviv, 1947—since it retains the order of the original Kopy's edition of 1815); *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*, translated and edited by D. Ben-Amos and J. R. Mintz (Bloomington, 1970), p. 4 (this edition will be referred to below as *In Praise*).

In the account of the youth of the founder of Hasidism, a passage which relates to the Merkavah tradition is the description of the attempt by the young Baal Shem Tov, together with the son of R. Adam Baal Shem, to gain communication with the Prince of Torah, using a technique of fasting and ritual baths similar to that described in the *Greater Hekhalot* (Wertheimer, *B. M.* 1, p. 134), *Shivhei*, pp. 46–47; *In Praise*, pp. 17–18. (Concerning the Prince of Torah, see Gruenwald, *Merkabah Mysticism*, p. 169). Further, this reference to Merkavah mysticism in a saying of the Baal Shem Tov is reported in *Shivhei*: “The Baal Shem Tov said, anyone who recounts the praises of the *Zaddikim* is as if he is engaged in the study of the Merkavah” (*Shivhei*, pp. 9, 133; *In Praise*, pp. 1, 199). Particularly notable is the account of a dramatic meeting, at midnight, between the Baal Shem Tov and his future successor, R. Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezeritch, which is presented in terms relating to the Merkavah tradition (see below, pp. 18–19).

We must, however, consider a basic methodological question: can these passages in *Shivhei ha-Besht* be utilized as evidence by the historian? Professor J. G. Weiss wrote, defending his use of *Shivhei* as a source for certain aspects of the history of early Hasidism, that this is with the assumption that “the *Shivhei* is not a late fabrication invented just before its publication in 1815, but that it reflects essentially the way of life of the Hasidic movement during the lifetime of its founder” (“A Circle of Pneumatics in pre-Hasidism,” in *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, p. 41 n. 21). More recently, Moshe Rosman has shown that certain details in the accounts in *Shivhei* are corroborated by Polish archival sources, in “Miedzyboz

and Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov," *Zion* 52 (1987). See p. 178, where Rosman states that this is testimony "to the power of those transmitting the traditions about the Baal Shem Tov to be precise concerning minor details." However, one needs to distinguish between incidental evidence culled from the stories and ideological patterns which derive from the later editors' view of the significance of early Hasidism. (See Ada Rapoport-Albert, "Hagiography with Footnotes: Edifying Tales and the Writing of History in Hasidism," (1988). Thus while there is a need for caution when using this material as evidence about the 1750s, it can also be very useful as a source for understanding attitudes c. 1815, when it was printed. This evidence is particularly relevant in the history of Habad, because the Kopy's 1815 edition of *Shivhei* was printed by a Habad printer, R. Yisrael Yafeh. It is also possible that R. Shneur Zalman himself had a hand in the earlier formulation of the text (see Dubnow, *History of Hasidism*, p. 413; J. Dan, *The Hasidic Story* (Heb., Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 67, 75, 79, 81, 83, 238. For reservations concerning this, see Y. Mondschein's edition of *Shivhei ha-Besht* (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 18–22). This indicates that *Shivhei* conveys a testimony of the way the Habad school at the beginning of the nineteenth century envisaged the early period of Hasidism. The passages quoted above show that, at least from the point of view of early Habad, the theurgic tradition of the Merkavah was an essential element. Of course, this is broadly corroborated by the reliably authentic letter of the Baal Shem Tov. But the passages in *Shivhei*, some of which will be considered below in more detail, help us to understand more clearly the role of this tradition in the evolution of the Hasidic movement, particularly (but not exclusively) as this was perceived by the early Habad school.

25. British Library MS add. 19788 (Margoliouth cat. no. 749). For discussion of this work (*Sha'arei Kedushah*) see Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo*, pp. 65–78.

26. *Sha'arei Kedushah* 3:6.

27. Ibid. See Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo*, pp. 72–78.

28. See Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 122.

29. *Sha'arei Kedushah* 3:8. See Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo*, p. 75.

30. "The drawing of that *maḥshavah* [the Divine flow] certainly does not take place by itself; only through *kavvanot* and 'unifications' transmitted to him by the prophet who was teaching him prophecy. . . . Through the 'unifications' he achieved, he would draw down the Divine radiance and flow according to his will; this is the goal of prophecy" (*Sha'arei Kedushah* 3:6). Compare with *Tanya* 2, ch. 2, fol. 77b.

31. *Sha'ar Ruah ha-Kodesh* (Tel Aviv, 1963), pp. 74–75. See also *Sha'ar ha-Yihudim* (Koretz, 1783), fol. 4c–5b. This work is also called *Sha'ar ha-Nevuah*.

32. *Sha'ar Ruah ha-Kodesh*, p. 76; *Sha'ar ha-Yihudim*, 1a.

33. *Sha'ar Ruah ha-Kodesh*, p. 111.

34. Ibid., pp. 108–9.

35. See Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 122.

36. Wertheimer, *B. M.* 1, p. 107. The visionary journey is termed "descent to the Merkavah" in the texts.

37. Ibid., p. 135.

38. This is the reading in *T. J. Hag.* 2:1. This account is also found in *T. B. Hag.*

14b; *Tosefta Hag.* 2:3–4. It is interpreted as an example of Merkavah mysticism by Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, pp. 14–19, and Gruenwald, *Merkabah Mysticism*, pp. 241–44.

39. References to the Baal Shem Tov undergoing such experiences are in *Toledot Yakov Yosef* (Koretz, 1780) 202b, and in *Shivhei*, pp. 63–64; *In Praise*, pp. 55–57. A. Rubinstein, in *Sinai* 67, p. 130, considers the latter an authentic account, independent of the letter to R. Gershon of Kutty, which was very well known by the time *Shivhei* was published in 1815. R. Dov Ber of Lubavitch alludes to the Baal Shem Tov's ascents of the soul as an example of the highest level of spiritual attainment possible to man (*Sha'arei Teshuvah*, pt. 1, p. 92). In chapter 4 below, R. Dov Ber's own relationship with the Merkavah tradition will be discussed. Outside Habad, in the mid-nineteenth century, R. Yitzhak Yehudah Yehiel Safran also stressed the importance of spiritual ascents and engaged in them himself; see Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, p. 95.

40. In this there is a sharp distinction from Shabbatianism, in which mass prophecy following comatose states played a significant role. See G. Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, p. 420. Scholem notes also that, in the Shabbatian variety of this phenomenon, "the new prophecy . . . was devoid of originality. The prophetic utterance was a mere jumble of well-known phrases and quotations from the Bible and prayer-book, repeated over and over again" (p. 422).

41. See Micah 5:4 and *T. B. Succah* 52b.

42. *T. B. Sanh.* 98a.

43. *Ben Porat Yosef* 128a. The text published by Fraenkel states only "when your teachings are spread throughout the world" (op. cit., 3a). The rest of the passage concerning transmitting esoteric thought is missing. Y. Mondschein has published a text of this letter from a manuscript predating *Ben Porat Yosef* (see n. 9 above). While this has some singular features of its own, its rendering of this particular passage is essentially the same as that printed by R. Yakov Yosef. This makes it more likely that, as Dinur has suggested, the letter was well known before it was printed, and hence Fraenkel's and Mondschein's texts are simply variant copies. It is also reasonable to accept that the version published by R. Yakov Yosef, the close disciple of the Baal Shem Tov, is the one most likely to be authentic. This is also the view of Rubinstein in *Sinai* 67, p. 123, of Tishby in *Zion* 32 (1967), p. 32, and of Scholem in *The Messianic Idea*, p. 360, n. 9. Scholem expressed the view (p. 183) that the letter was unknown before it was printed in 1781. Mondschein's publication of a manuscript copy dated 1776 must, of course, change this perspective.

44. See Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, p. 183. While Tishby in *Zion* 32 (1967), p. 32, notes that the directive is towards ecstatic attainments, Scholem interprets it as concerning only teachings and ideas, simply because of the absence, for the most part, of this kind of theurgic experience in later Hasidism.

45. See A. Rubinstein in *Sinai* 67, p. 135, and Y. Mondschein in *Migdal Oz*, p. 124, n. 10.

46. See A. Heschel, "R. Gershon Kutover," in *The Circle of the Baal Shem Tov*, p. 46. R. Gershon is reported to have said: "So long as one . . . is aware of sound and thought, one has still not reached the *kavvanah* (true mystical intention) of prayer" (ibid., n. 12).

47. By R. Haim Vital, the disciple of R. Isaac Luria. The *kavvanot* are formulations of the Divine Name (its consonants pointed in a specific way, for example) or particular unions within the world of the *Sefirot*, which are to be borne in mind intently by the kabbalist while praying or performing the Commandments.

48. *Ben Porat Yosef* 128a.

49. See G. Scholem's article "Devekut" in *The Messianic Idea* and Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, ch. 3.

50. *Toledot Yakov Yosef* (Koretz, 1780) 25a.

51. See *ibid.* 7a, 25a, and 201a, passages which speak of the Divine life-force being concealed in manifold veils until it gives life to evil; recognizing the Divine spark within tears through the concealment. Also 43c: "I received from my teacher that when bad causes good it becomes a 'throne' for the good and [thereby] all becomes utter good—almost the annihilation of the *kelipot* [the force of evil], similar to the [Messianic] Future."

52. *Ibid.* 48b. See also Cordovero's *Pardes Rimonim* 4, ch. 9.

53. *Toledot* 47c.

54. *Ibid.* 13c: "As explained by my teacher in the name of his teacher [see next note] that one should join the harshness of *Malkhut* to *Binah*." The raising of the lowest *Sefirah*, *Malkhut*, to its source in *Binah* (one of the upper *Sefirot*) neutralizes the "harsh" qualities in *Malkhut* which relate closely to the origin of worldly evil.

55. The biblical prophet Ahijah the Shilonite is said to be the heavenly teacher of the Baal Shem Tov (see *Toledot* 156a), obviously a claim which implies theurgic power. He is mentioned—"my teacher, of whom you know"—as a protector in the supernal realms in the letter of the Baal Shem Tov discussed above. See J. Dan, *The Hasidic Story*, p. 80.

56. *Toledot* 20a: "Through faith [Abraham] would join *Malkhut*, called *Aniy* [I, ego] to Thought [a homonym for the upper *Sefirot*] called *Ayin* [Nothingness] and through this one can annul all bad decrees, as I heard from my teacher." The implication is that the inner movement of self-abnegation, due to the link between the psychological world of the individual and the *Sefirot*, achieves a transformation in the supernal world which has also a theurgic effect.

57. *Ben Porat Yosef* 57a: "I heard from my teacher that according to a person's thought—whether of holy matters, or of impure things—so are the upper realms; and, according to his thought, so are the actual events which take place before him: whether [he sees] pure or impure animals, and other events." For a full exposition of the interrelation of the *Zaddik* with society as described by R. Yakov Yosef, see S. Dresner's *The Zaddik*.

58. Lurianic teaching attributes the origin of evil to the spiritual "Breaking of the Vessels" in a primeval realm of *Sefirot* called the World of *Tobu* (Chaos). The result of this was the "fall" of Divine radiance concealed within, as it were, "shards" of the broken vessels—the *kelipot*. The *kelipot* became the force of concealment of the Divine, a process which has different levels, the lowest of which is utter evil. The task of man is to elevate this radiance—the "Divine spark" within the *kelipah*—through prayer and the performance of the Commandments. The raising of the spark effects the dissolution of the *kelipah*. The advent of the Messiah will achieve the completion of this process and the implicit disappearance of all evil. See Scho-

lem, *Major Trends*, p. 265ff., and I. Tishby's *The Doctrine of Evil and the Kelippah in Lurianic Kabbalism* (1965). Through the Baal Shem Tov's teaching the struggle with the "foreign thoughts" is interpreted as an inner confrontation with the source of evil which the *Zaddik* has the power to neutralize. See J. Weiss, "The Beginnings of Hasidism," *Zion* 16 (1951), p. 88ff.

59. See *Toledot* 67d, 105a. The Baal Shem Tov himself drew a parallel between the "foreign thoughts" and the guardians obstructing the path of the soul in the *Hekhalot* tradition. "The Baal Shem Tov said about this that it says in the *Zohar* 'the person is judged at each *Hekhal*, and is banished from the *Hekhal*' [cf. *Zohar* II, 245b]; the meaning is that the words are called *Hekhalot* (Palaces), because intellect dwells in them. The man praying is going from letter to letter and from word to word. When he is not fitting he is banished. That is, they throw him a 'foreign thought', and at once he is outside" (*Maggid Devarav le-Yakov* [1976], p. 81).

60. *Shivhei*, p. 112; *In Praise*, p. 156.

61. See L. Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer* (1972), ch. 9, for sources and discussion of Hasidic attitudes to this teaching. See also n. 78 below.

62. See Dresner, *The Zaddik*, p. 208, discussing *Toledot* 154d (the reference 153d, in n. 67, is a misprint), and 189c. Compare *Tanya* 1, ch. 28, fol. 35a.

63. *Shivhei*, p. 65; *In Praise*, pp. 60–61. A similar passage concerning R. Isaac Luria's theurgic activity is found in *Shivhei ha-Ari*, ed. Benayahu (Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 236–37. Joseph Dan, discussing both these passages, does not consider the lines quoted from *Shivhei ha-Besht* a mere imitation of the earlier work (*The Hasidic Story*, p. 68ff.). Both accounts are expressions of the world view and experience of the "practical" kabbalist, quite distinct—in both cases—from that of most of their followers.

64. See the end of n. 24 above.

65. *Shivhei*, p. 75; *In Praise*, p. 81.

66. *Shivhei*, p. 76; *In Praise*, pp. 83–84. The book described, written in brief paragraphs, is the Merkavah tract *Sefer Hekhalot*, also called the *Book of Enoch*. See Peter Schäfer, *Synopsis*, pp. 6–10.

67. *Keter Shem Tov* (New York, 1972) 63a. A theurgic level to the relationship between the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid—involving the study of "secret names and 'unifications'" and other theurgic attainments—is reported also by R. Shlomo of Lutzk, who edited the first printed edition of the Maggid's teachings (*Maggid Devarav le-Yakov*, ed. Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer [Jerusalem, 1976], pp. 2–3).

68. *Shivhei*, p. 76; *In Praise*, pp. 83–84.

69. *Ibid.*

70. A work of angelology, Divine Names, and *Maaseh Bereshit* (Creation Mysticism) first printed in Amsterdam in 1701 and reprinted several times at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries by presses serving the Hasidic community, such as Grodno, Lemberg, Medziboz, and Kopys.

71. *Maggid Devarav le-Yakov*, pp. 2–3.

72. *Shivhei Baal Shem Tov* (Ostraha, 1815; Koretz, 1816), ch. 23, fol. 11a. For discussion of the relation between the Hebrew and Yiddish versions, see A. Yaari in *Kiryat Sefer* 39 (1964) and Y. Mondschein, *Shivhei ha-Besht* (Jerusalem, 1982), p. 22ff.

73. Compare the statement by the scholarly kabbalist and rabbi of Lemberg and Ostraha, R. Meir Margolis, that through the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov concerning Torah study, "to cleave in holiness and purity with the letters . . . one is even able to discern, from the letters themselves, future events . . . as from the letters of the *Urim* and *Tummin*" (*Sod Yakbin u-Voaz* [Ostraha, 1794] 6a; quoted by Scholem in *Molad* 144–45, [1960], p. 352). The reference is to the breastplate of the High Priest; in the letters engraved in its twelve jewels the Divine instructions would be revealed (*T. B. Yoma* 73a–b).

74. This has bearing on the attitude of the early *hasidim* to the Lurianic *kavvanot* of prayer. See J. G. Weiss, "The Kavvanot of Prayer in Early Hasidism."

75. See S. Dresner, *The Zaddik*, chs. 7–9.

76. *Toledot* 169b.

77. See above, p. 17.

78. *Toledot* 32d. See also 43c, in which a passage on the general transcendence of evil (quoted above, n. 51) ends with a hermetic reference to the teaching on the elevation of "foreign thoughts": "Although there are also in this profound things concerning 'foreign thoughts' etc. and this is sufficient."

79. It has been argued that the esoteric teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and even of the Maggid were intended for the full gamut of society. Thus Scholem wrote: "Hasidic *devekut* is no longer an extreme ideal, to be realized by some rare and sublime spirits at the end of the path. It is no longer the last rung in the ladder of ascent, as in Kabbalism, but the first. . . . *Devekut* is a starting point and not the end. Everyone is able to realize it instantaneously" (*The Messianic Idea*, p. 208). However, later in the same essay he retreated somewhat from this position, stating: "[*Devekut*] has the unmistakable ring of a mystical practice which has its esoteric side and is by no means as easy to carry out as it appears to be" (p. 212). A suggestion for which I am indebted to Rachel Elior is that the term *devekut* has two different meanings: a pneumatic semivisionary perception of "radiance" attainable only by the few; and also a contemplative "bearing in mind" of the Divine, which any individual is able to carry out. This second level has particular significance in the development of Habad. The rarity of true, mystical *devekut* is emphasized by Ada Rapoport-Albert, who writes convincingly that true *devekut* and other exceptional qualities were the province of the few ("G-d and the Zaddik," pp. 305–18). She emphasizes the theurgic nature of the powers contingent on these attainments, which are clearly relevant only "for those few who are born to be receptive of them, not by ordinary people" (p. 309), and discusses the view of R. Meshulam Faivush of Zbaraz (d. 1794), an important figure in the third generation, whose writings make clear that certain aspects of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid were intended only for a small spiritual elite (pp. 317–18). It is true that this distinction is not usually stated explicitly; consequently, as Rapoport-Albert puts it, "ordinary people appear to be welcomed to exercise clairvoyance" (p. 309). Nonetheless, it is reasonable to view this dichotomy as an underlying axiom in the study of early Hasidism.

80. Efraim of Sudzilkov, *Degel Mahaneh Efraim* (Jerusalem, 1963), p. 30.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 53. See *Keter Shem Tov*, section 16, for an extreme—but not eso-

teric—formulation of the need for joy in Divine service. In a class of their own are the *segulot* (special practical teachings) taught by the Baal Shem Tov, which probably have their origin in the practical kabbalah. A list of several of them, with literary sources, is at the end of *Sefer Baal Shem Tov*, ed. Shimon Menahem Mendel (Tel Aviv, n.d.).

82. *Toledot* 129c.

83. *Shivhei*, p. 66; *In Praise*, pp. 61–62. See Dresner, *The Zaddik*, pp. 37–48.

84. *Shivhei*, pp. 9, 133; *In Praise*, pp. 1, 199. See also Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 424, n. 35.

85. For melodies attributed to the Baal Shem Tov, see Meir S. Geshuri's *La-Hasidim Mizmor* (1936).

86. *Toledot* 202b. See also 67c–d. For discussion of this see J. Dan, *The Hasidic Story*, pp. 40–46.

87. *Toledot* 138a. "I heard from my teacher . . . among the six [lower *Sefirot*] there pertain pure and impure, whereas in the three [upper *Sefirot*] all is good and pure. . . . Through this is understood . . . why sometimes we find the action of the lower world causes a flaw above . . . and sometimes we find the flaw affects only themselves. . . . For the flaw can affect *Beriah*, *Yezirah*, *Asiyah* [the lower spiritual worlds] but not *Azilut* [the upper spiritual world]."

88. See Job 35:6.

89. *Toledot* 47c.

90. *Ibid.* 202b.

91. See the story of the craftsman who did nothing but exercise his craft and say psalms, and is presented as a man of rare spiritual strength, "the foundation of the synagogue." His respect for the Baal Shem Tov is noteworthy, contrasting with the behavior of the householder who refuses to carry out the Baal Shem Tov's request (*Shivhei*, pp. 89–90; *In Praise*, pp. 110–12).

Chapter Two

1. David of Makov, in one of his anti-Hasidic epistles, cites 1766 as the year the Maggid began to achieve fame. See M. Wilensky, *Hasidim and Mitnagdim* (1970), p. 235; A. J. Heschel in his article "Rabbi Pinhas of Korzec" in *The Circle of the Baal Shem Tov*, p. 16, implies R. Dov Ber was appointed by the Baal Shem Tov (see n. 80), although he questions the extent of his acceptance by the latter's disciples. In chapter 5 below we discuss the extent to which a follower of one leader can ever be expected to transfer his allegiance to a successor. See also Ada Rapoport-Albert, "The Hasidic Movement after 1772: Continuity or Change?" (forthcoming in *Zion*), S. A. Horodetzky, *Hasidism and Hasidim* (1928), vol. 1, p. 99, and Dubnow, *History of Hasidism*, p. 80. A story in *Shivhei ha-Besht* tells how R. Yehiel Mikhal of Zolochov was "commanded from heaven" to accept the Baal Shem Tov as a guide. When the latter died he was similarly commanded to accept the Maggid, and was shown that the "fountains of wisdom" which formerly flowed to R. Yisrael now flowed to R. Dov Ber (*Shivhei*, p. 126; *In Praise*, p. 185). A small number of disciples of the stature of R. Yehiel Mikhal could, of course, swiftly grow into a large following.

2. See above ch. 1, n. 11 and "Theurgists and Pneumatics," page 20.
 3. See Heschel, *The Circle of the Baal Shem Tov*, p. 17 and Horodetzky, *Hasidism and Hasidim*, vol. 1, p. 107.

4. Scholem states: "There is one saying of the Baal Shem—apparently the only one—stating that the process of *yihud* (unification), which is accomplished through *devekut*, transforms the Ego, or *aniy*, into the Nought, of *ayin*. This idea . . . plays no central part in the Baal Shem Tov's conceptions" (*The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, p. 214). Similarly, Weiss stated of the Baal Shem Tov that the concept of self-annihilation played "no part in his religious world" ("*Via Passiva* in Early Hasidism," in *East European Jewish Mysticism*, p. 75). Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer is critical of this statement and says that "it is however impossible to speak of the complete lack" of such concepts in the Baal Shem Tov's teachings (*Quietistic Elements*, p. 22 n. 1). On the one hand these comments indicate a lack of attention to the suspension of self involved in the trancelike states to which the Baal Shem Tov was prone. On the other they raise the question of the nature of our knowledge of the Baal Shem Tov's thought, and of its relationship to that of the Maggid. Horodetzky states the latter based himself almost entirely on the teachings of his predecessor, although he comments on the fact that the Baal Shem Tov's name is hardly mentioned in the Maggid's works (*Hasidism and Hasidim*, vol. 1, p. 99). One should note that the Baal Shem Tov is the *only* contemporary of the Maggid mentioned in *Maggid Devarav le-Yakov*.

It is interesting that R. Shneur Zalman, who is seen in his halakhic works as an acutely critical scholar, apparently regarded the work *Zava'at ha-Rivash* (published several times in the 1790s) as an expression of the thought of the Baal Shem Tov, even though he must have known that the bulk of the book contains ideas found in contemporary recensions of the teachings of the Maggid (see *Tanya*, 4, sec. 25, fol. 138a–b). R. Shneur Zalman also regarded his own elaborate teachings purely as an attempt "to explain the words of the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples" (fol. 141b). For the *hasidim*, it seems the "teaching" is the original idea, or structure of ideas, which is then expressed in a variety of ways. The variety of forms and of emphasis is, of course, the key to the Hasidic process of the communication of the esoteric. This variety is seen in the distinctions between master and disciple and also, to a considerable extent, in the different modes of expression on the part of a single individual.

5. Scholem considers the concept of self-annihilation and of dissolution in the Divine to be primarily of Hasidic origin, relating particularly to the Maggid and his immediate disciples (*The Messianic Idea*, pp. 214, 222–27). See, however, I. Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar* (Jerusalem, 1961), vol. 2, p. 289 n. 69 and M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, ch. 4.

6. See Idel, *Kabbalah*, p. 66.

7. "*Hokhmah* is the main thing, and *Hokhmah* gives existence to all things, and all transformation in the world is impossible without *Hokhmah*, which is *ayin* ('Nought'). . . . It is the *ayin*, it is the hylos of the whole world; it strips off Form and assumes it. Therefore through it transformation takes place" (*Maggid Devarav le-Yakov*, ed. Schatz, sec. 60, p. 91). The kabbalists usually identified Nought as

Keter, the first *Sefirah*. However, R. Moshe Cordovero's *Pardes Rimonim* 5:4, 23:1 (sec. *ayin*), shows that this term relates also to *Hokhmah*, the second *Sefirah*.

8. See Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, p. 214, and *Toledot Yakov Yosef* 20a, 29b. This teaching constitutes a translation of the primarily theosophic concepts of the kabbalah into parameters of the human psyche. The kabbalistic terms, applied to the inner life of the individual, are treated not as symbolism but as the depiction of an actual psychological reality. See G. Scholem, "The Unconscious and the Hasidic Concept of Kadmut ha-Sekhel" (1954), p. 148. Through this technique the Baal Shem Tov and later the Maggid communicated exalted levels of pneumatic attainment to their respective inner circles of disciples.

9. *Maggid Devarav le-Yakov*, sec. 110, p. 186.

10. The "vessels" of the primeval *Sefirot* "broke" because they could not bear the intense radiance flowing to them from the *Ein Sof*. See Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 135–39.

11. *Maggid Devarav le-Yakov*, sec. 51, p. 74.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 94–96.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

14. Halakhic texts employ the verb *btel* in several senses, e.g., practical nullification, such as that of a small particle of forbidden food mixed with a large quantity of permitted food (see *T. B. Zevahim* 79a; Maimonides, *Yad, Hil. Ma'akhalot Asurot* 15:1), and also a mental movement, such as the nullification of all leaven in one's possession on the eve of Passover (see *T. B. Pesahim* 6b; Maimonides, *Yad, Hil. Hametz u-Maza* 3:7).

15. See Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, p. 227.

16. *Maggid Devarav le-Yakov*, pp. 39–40.

17. The most important collections of the Maggid's teachings published in the eighteenth century are *Maggid Devarav le-Yakov* (Koretz, 1784); *Likkutim Yekarim* (Lemberg, 1792); and *Zava'at ha-Rivash*, published several times in the 1790s. The latter, despite the reference to the Baal Shem Tov in its title, contains teachings found elsewhere in the name of the Maggid.

18. Thus Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer presents the quietistic aspect of Hasidism as an episode in the history of the movement, a phenomenon which arose in the second and third generations and then disappeared. See *Quietistic Elements*, pp. 22–23.

19. See J. Weiss, "The Beginnings of Hasidism" (Heb.), *Zion* 16 (1951), pp. 53, 103–5.

20. *The Autobiography of Solomon Maimon* (London, 1954), p. 171. When Maimon wanted to mock the *hasidim*, he did so through satirizing the concept of self-abnegation (p. 179).

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 173, 179.

22. *Malkhut*, the tenth *Sefirah*.

23. *Or ha-Meir*, (N.Y., 1954) *Rimzei Vayikra*, 95c. See Weiss, "*Via Passiva*," *East European Jewish Mysticism*, p. 79. See also R. Binyamin of Zelazitz, *Torei Zahav* (Mohilev, 1816) 56d, and Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Quietistic Elements*, pp. 117–18.

24. See Maimon's *Autobiography*, pp. 173–74.

25. D. Z. Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya u-Venci Doro* (Jerusalem, 1953), p. 106.

26. *Maggid Devarav le-Yakov*, p. 68: "In *Sefer Hasidim* is a story about a man who could not raise children [they died in infancy]. He was told this was because he did not behave with modesty. 'With the modest is Wisdom' (Prov. 1:2), and 'Wisdom gives life to those who have it' (Ecl. 7:12)—hence modesty would have brought life to his children. Modesty is the attribute of Fear; for he fears G-d rather than think of other desires—physical desires. From the attribute of Fear he reaches the attribute of Nought, because through it he considers himself as nothing. Nought is called 'wisdom,' as it says 'Wisdom derives from Nought' (Job 28:12), and therefore life is generated [from modesty, because 'Wisdom gives life'], as above. Hence [Abraham said to Sarah] 'please say you are my sister' (Gen. 12:13). [Generally] a man and his wife are distinguished by closeness and great intimacy of speech. However, [Abraham and Sarah] were extremely modest [and therefore behaved together like brother and sister]. . . . Hence, a person should be modest in sexual matters, and there will dwell with him the attribute Wisdom, which derives from the power of Fear. . . . Through following the path of the Patriarchs, and being modest like them . . . a person will be able to raise his children."

Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer has noted the ethical element in the Maggid's teachings, without exploring its full implications in the social history of early Hasidism. See her note to this passage and *Quietistic Elements*, pp. 26, 29.

27. See J. G. Weiss, *East European Jewish Mysticism*, p. 157ff., and Zev Gries, "Mi-Mitos la-Etos—Kavim li-Demuto shel R. Avraham mi-Kalisk."

28. Ch. 1, p. 24.

29. The importance of the *hanhagot* literature of early Hasidism was pointed out by Zev Gries, "The Hasidic Conduct (*Hanhagot*) Literature from the Mid-Eighteenth Century to the 1830's," *Zion* 46 (1981).

30. Examples of early printed versions are *Sefer Reb Yaybiy* (Slavita, 1792), *Dar-khey Zedek* (Lemberg, 1796), *Iggeret ha-Kodesh* (Zolkiev, 1799). See Z. Gries, "Hasidic Conduct," pp. 278–87.

31. In *Likkutei Amarim* of R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk (Brooklyn, 1962, reprint of Lemberg, 1911), fol. 26a–27a. Also in *Likkutim Yekarim* (Jerusalem, 1974), fol. 181b. Compare Z. Gries, "Hasidic Conduct," pp. 288–95.

32. In order to demonstrate this point, the complete list of *hanhagot* of the Maggid is translated below (from R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk's *Likkutei Amarim*, Lemberg, 1911 fol. 26a–27a). What is significant is not so much what is included—for the most part, familiar, kabbalistically influenced, ascetic, ethical material—but what is left out. The brief reference to "Wisdom" at the beginning is the only hint to the Maggid's esoteric system of self-annihilation.

"The beginning of Wisdom is the fear of G-d" (Ps. 110:10); and "His fear will be on your faces, in order that you should not sin" (Ex. 20:17), "this is shame" (*T. B. Ned.* 20a), shame brings one to fear of G-d, so one should always have a great sense of shame and fear before G-d, for the whole world is filled with His glory, and He searches out all hidden things, and gazes at all movements and all thoughts. One should think deeply about this, as it is written, "I put G-d before me

always" (Ps. 16:8), and as is written in the *Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayim* (1:1).

One should follow the saying of the Sages (*T. B. Ber.* 63a) "What is a brief chapter on which the whole body of Torah depends? It is: 'know Him with all your ways'" [Prov. 3:1]. All one's actions—eating, drinking, sleep, intercourse—should be for the service of the blessed Creator; they should be undertaken only to the extent that they are necessary, as explained in the *Shulhan Arukh, (Orah Hayim, 231)*. Be very careful not to waste time which could be spent studying Torah. One should study constantly, as much as possible, following (*Josh. 1:8*) "This book of Torah should not depart from your mouth." However, one should be careful that one's study should be for its own sake, with fear and love. For Torah without fear and love at once [leads to] "G-d heard, and became angry" (*Num. 11:1*). One should know before whom one is saying these words—and what words one is saying. Torah and G-d are one—but it must be for its own sake. One should know the path whereby a person can cleave to G-d. Be very, very careful about learning for ulterior motives, that one should not, G-d forbid, turn Torah into poison (*T. B. Yoma* 72b). It should be pure and clean, without foreign thoughts. One should study every day Bible [*Tanakh*], until it is familiar; and one should study Mishnah every day, and thereby put right one's offenses. One should learn *Gemara* [Talmud] in depth, for deep study of *Gemara* breaks the *kelipot* [impure forces]. However, it should be for its own sake. Be careful to study books of *musar* [ethics] every day, especially the sacred work *Reshit Hokhmah* [by R. Eliyahu de Vidas]. Never cease to think over its ethical teachings, studying them twice in order to remember them. One should study the 613 Commandments, and know them thoroughly. At least once a month one should review the 613 Commandments.

One should be very careful in observing the Sabbath, according to its laws, with all the strict observances enjoined by the earlier and later Sages. One's thought should always be directed to the Sabbath, as it says "Remember the Sabbath day" [Ex. 20:8], that one really should not divert one's attention from the Sabbath day.

One should be very careful to keep [moral] accounts. Every night before going to bed, one should make an account of the actions one did during the day. If one sees that one transgressed, G-d forbid, one should immediately confess and ask forgiveness, and impose a fine on oneself: a sum of money to be given to charity.

One should not speak at all of everyday matters, not even of important concerns, from the time one gets up from bed until one hour after morning prayer. Not even with one's wife or children, unless it is very urgent. Even then one should try to be as brief as possible. The whole day long one should avoid worthless talk, restricting oneself to matters necessary for one's livelihood or other essential things, as the Sages stated (*T. B. Yoma* 19b) "and you should speak about (Torah)" [Deut. 6:7]—but not indulge in worthless talk." At a time when one could study, obviously this is forbidden. But even at a time when one cannot study, one should be very careful to cleave to the

blessed Creator and not to let one's attention wander from Him, G-d forbid. How much more should one avoid—G-d forbid—lies, mockery, slander, and gossip. These characterize the four groups who do not receive the Divine Presence, as explained in several places [T. B. *Sotah* 42a, *Sanh* 103a]. Also, at the time of the afternoon prayer, one should avoid speaking of everyday matters till an hour after the evening prayer.

One should strive to honor the poor as much as possible, especially the worthy poor, who should be at one's table every Sabbath or at least every festival, especially Tabernacles, so that one can give a fine portion to the guest, the worthy poor man and scholar. Before the afternoon prayer on the eve of the Sabbath, and before every festival, one should give charity to the poor to the extent of one's means.

One should strive as much as possible that one day a week should be spent in solitary meditation, fasting, and devoting oneself to repentance, Torah, and prayer. The entire day one should not speak of everyday matters at all. One should read the Chapter of Repentance [Deut. 30:1–10] and the Chapter of Fear [Deut. 10:12–11:9] with attention.

One should pray with attention. You should strive as much as possible that this should be without any extraneous thoughts, and especially without any ulterior motives, G-d forbid. One should be careful the entire day not to transgress, G-d forbid, the prohibition on "being loathsome," by delaying one's natural functions, especially before each prayer [see *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayim*, 92:1]. One should pray with cleanliness so as to fulfil "all my inward parts (will praise His holy name)" (Ps. 103:1). Before each prayer one should give something to charity. One should be careful that, at the time of one's marital duty, one should not pray in the same clothes. One should even change one's vest and head-covering.

One should make sure to recite, every night, the *Shema* as arranged by R. Isaac Luria. After this, even before saying the concluding blessing "*ha-Mapil*"—one should not speak before sleep. During sleep one should always wear at least a *Talit Katan* [fringed garment].

One should recite the *Tikkun Hazot* [prayer of mourning for Jerusalem] every day, even if one does not have time to devote to one's other regular studies, both summer and winter. On the Sabbath and festivals one should say the section pertaining to them. One should never miss saying a number of psalms every day.

One should say before every Commandment, or before study: "For the sake of the Unification of the Holy One and His *Shekhinah*."

One should be careful not to use the Name of Heaven in vain. If, G-d forbid, one accidentally pronounced it, one should at once accept a ban on oneself, till being released by a Law-Court of three men.

One should recite every day the Chapter of Fear [Deut. 10:12–11:9] and the Chapter of Repentance [Deut. 30:1–10]. At least on fast days. And all depends on the intention of the heart.

Be very, very careful to avoid pride which pushes aside, as it were, the feet of the *Shekhinah* [see T. B. *Ber.* 43b], as the Sages said "I and he cannot [dwell together in the world]" (T. B. *Sotah*, 5a). Further,

one should avoid anger, which is also as serious as idolatry [See *Yad, Hil. Deot*, 2:3]. The kabbalists enjoined that it is forbidden to come near such a man, for his soul is snatched away from him. About this it says "there shall not be within you a foreign god" (Ps. 81:10). One should also avoid anger over concern for the performance of a Commandment, even within one's own household. How much more should one avoid dispute, G-d forbid.

One should be very careful to avoid looking at women and girls, including gentile women. For this incites one to lewd thoughts, G-d forbid. Also one should not gaze at the colored garments of a woman, nor at her bed. Nor should one gaze at one's wife when she is a *nidah*. Nor should one stare at animals or birds which are having intercourse. Nor should one gaze at an impure thing. How much more should one avoid touching a married woman, G-d forbid: this is more serious than the case of a *nidah*. Also one should not gaze at the sign of the sacred Covenant [male genitalia]. Also, in the bath house, one should not gaze at naked men.

One should be very careful to separate [for charity] a fifth from one's capital and a tenth from one's profits—not less than a tenth. One should look out for a Commandment: "whenever it comes to my hand, I will keep it." [T. B. *Yoma* 19b].

One should be very careful to avoid melancholy. Instead one should "serve G-d with joy" (Ps. 100:2). Melancholy is almost like idolatry. For he shows that he is not pleased—G-d forbid—with the decree of the King and Creator, may His Name be blessed.

33. Gries does not clearly distinguish between teachings which can be directly applied in the life of the *hasid* (such as the Maggid's list of practical directives) and the more esoteric exhortations (contained in works such as *Zava'at ha-Rivash*) which demand semipneumatic attainment from the individual. However, he does indicate that these two forms of directive are not identical (cf. "Hasidic Conduct," pp. 198–99).

34. *The Autobiography of Solomon Maimon*, p. 177. This description goes on to mention a case of opposition by "a great scholar," who was so quelled by the threatening look of the young Hasidic emissary "that he fell into a violent fever of which he died." Maimon's account probably pertains to the situation prior to the rise of organized opposition to Hasidism in 1772.

35. Moshe Hallamish, in his doctoral thesis, "The Theoretical System of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi" (Hebrew University, 1976), p. 2, gives a full list of the different opinions about the date of birth of R. Shneur Zalman. The Schneerson family tradition is that he was born in 1745. Some accounts, such as H. M. Hielman's *Beit Rebbe*, p. 1 n. 9, suggest 1746. Dubnow suggests 1748. R. Shneur Zalman was born in Liozna, in the Moghilev region. His father Barukh traced his lineage to R. Judah Loew of Prague (1520–1609), known as the *Maharal*. His mother's name was Rivkah. R. Shneur Zalman's wife, Sterna, was the daughter of Judah Leib Segal of Vitebsk.

36. See M. Willensky, *Hasidim and Mitnagdim* (Heb.), vol. 1, p. 60.

37. Elaboration of this spiritual transaction is found in R. Elimelekh of Lizh-

ensk's *No'am Elimelekh* (Lemberg, 1788). These ideas were not unique to him but were accepted as a basic premise of Hasidism. A material aspect of the transaction was the giving of money to the *Zaddik*—a practice mocked by the opponents of Hasidism. However, the sending of money for the support of the righteous in the Holy Land was a feature of traditional Jewish life (see next note).

38. R. Menahem Mendel and R. Avraham of Kalisk, in their letters from the Holy Land, refer frequently to the fact that they are "praying constantly" on behalf of the Hasidic followers in Europe. These letters are collected in Y. Barnai, *Hasidic Letters from the Land of Israel* (Heb.; Jerusalem, 1980). This theme is found in almost every letter. It is also found in letters from relatively minor figures, such as a Yizhak of Cirsak (a town in the Moghilev region). In a letter to his father he promises to pray at the holy places on behalf of everyone who sends money for his support (p. 80). The spiritual transaction at the heart of the *hasid-Zaddik* relationship is here subsumed into the more general relationship of a saintly community spending most of its time in Torah study and prayer for the benefit of their brethren. These, in return, undertake the burden of material support. It is possible that one aspect of the move to the Holy Land by R. Menahem Mendel was the aim to achieve the "normalization" of Hasidism. The *Zaddik* in Europe was a new and controversial phenomenon: the *Zaddik* in the Holy Land was closer to being a conventional stereotype, especially in the aftermath of the glory of sixteenth-century Safed. The letters by the Hasidic leaders to the *mitnagdim* (pp. 62, 69) suing for peace and even asking for material support are consistent with this view of the move to the Holy Land. Other views are summarized by Barnai at pp. 27–28. For an account of the Hasidic settlement in the Land of Israel see *ibid.*, pp. 15–29, and I. Heilpern, *Ha-Aliyah ha-Rishonah shel ha-Hasidim le-Eretz Yisrael* (Jerusalem, 1946), pp. 50–79.

39. See H. M. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe* (Tel Aviv, n.d.), fol. 7b. Hielman was a follower of the Kopyts line of Habad. His book *Beit Rebbe* (Berdichev, 1902) is a chronicle of the first three generations of Habad. See Haberman, "Sha'arei Habad," in *Alei Ayin* (Jerusalem, 1948–52), no. 17. Considering the question of Hielman's reliability as a chronicler, there is no doubt that he included in his work many hearsay legends. At the same time, states Dubnow, "apart from the many legends it also contains much material from family traditions and documents" (*History of Hasidism*, Heb., p. 405). Dubnow emphasizes Hielman's lack of a critical approach to his subject, as does L. Jacobs. Nonetheless, the latter also agrees that Hielman "is generally reliable in preserving the family traditions of the Habad leaders." (See *Seeker of Unity*, p. 23; also *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 33). Jacobs also comments on Hielman's adulation of his topic and his discretion concerning sensitive areas of Habad history (*Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 54; *Seeker of Unity*, p. 24). Hielman justifies this general approach in a passage attacking Zweifel's *Shalom al Yisrael* (Zhitomir, 1868) for publishing the texts of the letters and bans whereby the *mitnagdim* had attacked the *hasidim*. "It is unnecessary to publicize the error of the great, good rabbis. Of this one should reveal only a fingersbreadth and should conceal a hundred thousand cubits—especially since now they are in the world of truth" (Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 5). Given these limitations on his work, the historian can use it cautiously.

40. *Pri ha-Areẓ* (Jerusalem, 1974), sec. *Kedoshim*, p. 76. See also his discourse on sec. *Bo*, p. 43.

41. See Barnai, *Hasidic Letters*, pp. 119, 130, 132, and D. Z. Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 25 n. 5.

42. Barnai, *Hasidic Letters*, p. 90. In this letter R. Menahem Mendel also counsels his followers to speak among themselves on ethical issues "every day for about half an hour" (p. 91). See also J. G. Weiss, *East European Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 165–66.

43. Barnai, *Hasidic Letters*, pp. 93, 96.

44. See Immanuel Etkes, "R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi's Rise to Leadership," *Tarbiz* 54 (1985), p. 435, and S. D. Levine, ed., *Iggrot Kodesh Admur ha-Zaken* (Brooklyn, 1980), p. 122. This article by Etkes, the discussion by the Habad historiographer H. M. Hielman in *Beit Rebbe*, pp. 29–30, and S. D. Levine, *History of Chabad in the Holy Land* (Hebrew; Brooklyn, 1988), pp. xix–xxv, 10–13, present slightly differing analyses of the steps leading to the sole leadership of R. Shneur Zalman.

45. Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 51.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 146–47. In a letter of 1810 R. Dov Ber, son of R. Shneur Zalman, stated that his father had been leader for twenty-five years (p. 225; compare Etkes, *ibid.*, p. 435 n. 18).

47. Barnai, *Hasidic Letters*, p. 148.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 174. An obscure letter by R. Shneur Zalman is interpreted by M. Willensky as indicating that there was conflict over his leadership (*Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research*, vol. 48, 1981). S. D. Levin suggests a different interpretation in the rabbinic journal *Yagdil Torah*, vol. 7, no. 51 (Brooklyn, 1982/83).

49. See Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 255, for a letter by R. Dov Ber which speaks of "thirty years" of teaching by his father, who died in 1813; there are similar references in the introductory letter to *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'ut* (*Likkutei Biurim* [Warsaw, 1868] 4a) and in R. Aaron's *Sha'arei ha-Yihud va-Emunah* (Shklov, 1820), *Petaḥ u-Mevo ha-She'arim* fol. 15a (my pagination). Concerning earlier study circles see Rachel Elior, "The Minsk Debate" *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* (Heb.) (1982), p. 188, based on *Ha-Tamim* 2 (Warsaw, 1935), p. 50ff. Elior's approach to this source material is attacked by Ada Rapoport-Albert in "Hagiography with Footnotes."

50. Study of the *Kuzari*, *Ikkarim*, and Maimonides' *Guide* is mentioned in *Sefer ha-Siḥot* 5702 (Brooklyn, 1964) and *Likkutei Diburim*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn, 1957), p. 58. An earlier reference in Habad literature to the idea that the disciples of the Maggid studied philosophical works—in particular, the *Guide*—is found in R. Shalom Dovber Schneerson's *Torat Shalom* (Brooklyn, 1946), p. 244. Texts by R. Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek*, discussing Saadia's *Emunot ve-Deot* and Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed* have been published with the title *Sefer Hakkirah* (Poltava, 1912).

51. See *Tanya* (Vilna, 1900) 1, ch. 2, fol. 6a; pt. 2, ch. 7, fol. 83a.

52. D. Z. Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, pp. 60, 65; Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, pp. 54, 70. These regulations governed the organization of the Habad fraternity. The

date of the earliest regulations is uncertain; texts dated 1793 are known. An English account of these regulations is to be found in N. Mindel, *Rabbi Shneur Zalman*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn, 1971), pp. 109–18.

53. M. Willensky, *Hasidim and Mitnagdim* (Heb.; Jerusalem, 1970), vol. 1, p. 276. The admission to the *Zaddik* of major transgressions in the life of the would-be follower might well be factual. See A. Rapoport-Albert, “Confession in the Circle of R. Nahman of Braslav” (1973). We can gain an impression of the *Yehidut* experience from the following record of an account given in 1893 by an elderly *hasid*, Dov Ber of Babroisk. He describes a *Yehidut* of his father with the *Zemah Zedek* in 1832; Dov Ber was six years old at the time and was present during the audience. “My father entered the room of the *Rebbe*, and I went after him clutching his coat. . . . The *Rebbe* was looking at a book lying open before him. When my father approached . . . he lifted up his eyes and gazed at the face of my father and at my face. My father began trembling, I too was startled and began to cry quietly. The *Rebbe* stretched out his hand to take the note which was in my father’s hand, for from his great fear he was just standing motionless, not knowing what to do. My father stood silent, his head bowed down, and from his eyes tears fell on the floor. At first he managed to control himself and made no sound, then he began audibly sobbing. When I saw my father weeping my heart contracted and I too wept freely. For a considerable time the *Rebbe* read the note . . . then he spoke to my father. When the *Rebbe* began speaking to my father he stopped weeping. His lips were moving, silently repeating the words the *Rebbe* was saying.” (*Ha-Tamim* 2, p. 123). Even allowing for some exaggeration over the sixty-year interval, it is clear the experience was of an intense nature. For a detailed personal account of a *Yehidut* in 1924 with the late R. Joseph I. Schneerson, see Meir Gurkow, *Sefer ha-Zikhronot—Divrei ha-Yamim* (1977), pp. 33–34. The author was a major *hasid* of the last generation. For an attempt to analyze the *Yehidut* experience in terms of modern psychodynamics, see Zalman M. Schachter, “The Dynamics of the Yehidut Transaction” (1978).

54. The later rearrangement of many of these teachings together with additional material into a kind of commentary on Scripture and Talmud made them more accessible and meaningful to the scholarly public. This was published as *Or Torah*, (Koretz, 1804). See Dubnow, *History of Hasidism* (Heb.), p. 389.

55. *Tanya* 1, ch. 2, fol. 7a; ch. 28 fol. 35a. See my comments on the Habad concept of the *Zaddik* in “Self-sacrifice of the *Zaddik*” (1988), p. 458ff.

56. See Z. Gries, “The Redaction of *Zava’at ha-Rivash*” (1977).

57. See the collection of letters published in *Tanya*, section 4, letter 25. *Zava’at ha-Rivash* was also cited by Avigdor of Pinsk in his attack on the *hasidim*.

58. A copy dated Mezirov, 1794, is in the Hebrew National and University Library, Jerusalem. Friedberg has 1793. Concerning R. Levi Yitzhak’s life and teachings, see S. H. Dresner, *Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev* (1974).

59. See R. Avraham Gombiner’s *Magen Avraham* (para. 2) to *Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayim*, sec. 60. This injunction is emphasized by R. Shneur Zalman in his version of the *Shulhan Arukh*.

60. R. Shneur Zalman recommended daily study of the aggadic literature, stating that “most secrets of Torah are concealed in it” (*Tanya* 4, sec. 23, fol. 137a).

61. See Zev Gries, “‘Darkei Zedek’ attributed to Zacharia Mendel of Yaroslav,” (Hebrew), *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* (Heb.) 2 (1981/82), p. 132ff.

62. Concern at this problem was voiced by R. Shneur Zalman’s contemporary R. Meshulam Faivush Heller of Zbaraz (d. 1795) in texts written in the 1770s, later published as *Yosher Divrei Emet* and *Derekh Emet*. He had seen the Maggid and studied from R. Mendel of Premishlan and R. Yehiel Mikhal of Zlochov. R. Meshulam Faivush makes clear that the teachings of the Maggid which were being disseminated pertain only to the man of exalted spiritual stature. Directives on the elevation of evil, whether in the realm of thought—as in the teaching on the elevation of foreign thoughts during prayer—or in the realm of corporeality, i.e., involvement with the material world “for the sake of heaven,” were relevant only for the man who has rid himself totally of all desire for worldly things, “not like the fools of our time who study kabbalah and think they can elevate the Divine sparks in the food. . . . In their thought they meditate on the *kavvanot* but nonetheless they enjoy the food. . . . From eating for the sake of heaven one comes to eat *not* for the sake of heaven.” (*Yosher Divrei Emet*, in *Likkutim Yekarim* [Jerusalem, 1974], fol. 119b). The ordinary man, taught R. Meshulam Faivush, should avoid the grandiose ideas suggested by the teachings of the Maggid. Rather he should strive for the moderately ascetic stance depicted in earlier ethical literature (see 118b–120b). Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer is inclined to accept R. Meshulam’s teachings as authentically representing views of the Maggid, on the basis of an independent manuscript source (*Quietistic Elements*, p. 160 n. 14). See n. 102 below.

63. The first edition, comprising these two sections only, was printed in Slavuta, December 1796. In 1798 a second edition printed in Zolkiev comprised also a third section, a tract on repentance. This edition added the general title *Tanya* on the title page. For a full account of the history of the publication of this work, see Y. Mondschein, *Torat Habad: Likkutei Amarim-Tanya* (1981). Our quotations are from a reprint of the Vilna, 1900 edition (Brooklyn, 1984).

64. The manuscript version of *Likkutei Amarim*, with variants, has been published under the title *Likkutei Amarim-Mahadura Kama* (1981).

65. In 1796, the year that the *Tanya* was printed, the last known set of *Liozna Regulations* was issued. These further limited the visits to Liozna by the members of the fraternity; the text was signed by forty-eight of R. Shneur Zalman’s followers, representing a similar number of different communities, thereby expressing their acceptance of these new rules.

66. *Tanya* 1, Introduction, fol. 4a.

67. The relationship of R. Shneur Zalman’s teachings to those of the Maggid was questioned by Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer in “Anti-Spiritualism ba-Hasidut,” *Molad*, 171–72 (1962). Due to his avoidance of the more radical aspects of Hasidic thought she characterizes him as anti-Hasidic (p. 516). This analysis leaves the dimension of communication completely out of the question. Apart from this, Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer’s view has been modified or even reversed by other scholars. I. Tishby and J. Dan, in their article in *The Hebrew Encyclopaedia*, vol. 17, (entry “*Hasidut*”), col. 775, suggest that there is a “revealed” aspect of Habad, embodied in *Likkutei Amarim (Tanya)*, and a more esoteric aspect, expressed in R. Shneur Zalman’s discourses. In the latter, they suggest, the full spiritual content of

early Hasidism is to be found. R. Shneur Zalman not only accepted the basic teachings concerning the transformation of evil and its elevation to holiness, but in certain respects "went even further than the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid and their disciples" (col. 790). R. Shneur Zalman's aim was "to reveal the true implications of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid, as he understood them, by adding amplification and additional explanations which seem to us completely new" (col. 795). The late Professor J. G. Weiss regarded R. Shneur Zalman's teachings as a direct development of those of the Maggid ("Contemplative Mysticism and 'Faith' in Hasidic Piety," in *East European Jewish Mysticism*, p. 44). See also M. Hallamish, doctoral thesis, pp. 253ff.

68. See Louis Jacobs' discussion of the social standing of the members of the Habad fraternity in his translation of Dov Ber's *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 31. See also *Tanya* 4, sec. 1, fol. 103a.

69. The basis of R. Shneur Zalman's analysis is the double concept of the Divine Soul and the Animal Soul which battle within the individual. Apart from precedents to these concepts in Jewish medieval philosophy, they are also found in the Lurianic writings. See *Tree of Life*, portal 48, ch. 2, which refers to the "soul . . . of holiness," and portal 50, ch. 2, which describes the "animal soul." See also *Gates of Holiness* 1:1. Tishby discusses the dualism of the individual as portrayed in Lurianic thought in *Torat ha-Ra ve-ha-Kelipot be-Kabbalat ha-Ari* (Jerusalem, 1965), pp. 105–8.

70. This is chapter 30 of the printed text, entirely missing from all the extant early manuscript versions. See *Likkutei Amarim, Mahadura Kama*, pp. 224–27.

71. This is chapter 32 of the printed version. See *ibid.*, pp. 234–37, which shows that it is omitted from all known early manuscripts.

72. See *ibid.*, p. 411. Most manuscripts of the *Book of the Intermediate Man* conclude at the end of fol. 70b of the printed text. One early manuscript does include the extra three chapters; however, the theme of the practical Commandments receives more emphasis in the printed text than in this manuscript version.

73. This differs considerably from the *Iggeret ha-Teshuvah* which was first printed in the edition of Shklov, 1806, and is found in all subsequent editions of *Tanya*.

74. In the printed version there is an introductory paragraph stating that the aim of the tract is to explain a passage in *Zohar* I, 18b in which the terms "Higher Unity" and "Lower Unity" are employed with reference to the *Shema* prayer. In chapters 6 and 7 of the printed version, a long passage is interpolated in which this idea is elaborated. See *Likkutei Amarim—Mahadura Kama* pp. 457, 465 n. 1.

75. See n. 67 above.

76. Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 106. A. J. Braver was the first to discern that this conflict concerned the question of broad dissemination of the Hasidic teachings, in "On the Quarrel between R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi and R. Abraham of Kalisk," *Kiryat Sefer* 1 (1924), pp. 142–43. See also Rachel Elijor, "The Minsk Debate," pp. 194–95.

77. Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 105.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

79. *Ibid.* This conflict is discussed further in chapter 3 below.

80. *Tanya*, 4, sec. 25, fol. 141b. The passage quoted is from a letter written by

R. Shneur Zalman in response to an appeal from a community to explain the enigmatic statements in some of the early Hasidic texts. R. Shneur Zalman ends: "Now you have seen the explanation of *one* statement from those books, which shows that *all* the strange statements have a clear explanation." He offers to explain more in person to a representative of the community (*ibid.*, fol. 142a). This indicates R. Shneur Zalman's confidence that by judicious employment of the Lurianic teachings the enigmatic aspects of Hasidic thought could be made clear to the rational mind. R. Shneur Zalman believed that in the broader landscape disclosed by the kabbalah relationships which were otherwise puzzling could be seen to make sense.

81. *Tanya* 1, ch. 36, fol. 45b; ch. 48, fol. 67b.

82. See *Tanya* 1, ch. 41, fol. 58a. More generally the transcendent radiance expresses the highest *Sefirah*, *Keter* (crown).

83. See *Tanya* 1, ch. 3, fol. 7a–b; ch. 20, fol. 26a.

84. See *Maggid Devarav le-Yakov*, p. 324. This fact was commented on by Scholem in "The Unconscious and the Hasidic concept of Kadmut ha-Sekhel," *Hagut* (1954), p. 148, and discussed further by R. Schatz-Uffenheimer in "Contemplative Prayer in Hasidism" (1967), p. 219.

85. Concerning the two souls, see above, n. 69.

86. *Tanya*, 1, chs. 1–2 fol. 5b–6a. R. Shneur Zalman's moral analysis of the soul draws on *Gates of Holiness* 1:2.

87. See *Kuzari* 1:27, 95, 103; R. Yehudah Loew, *Tiferet Yisrael*, end of ch. 1, ch. 7; and L. Jacobs, "The Doctrine of the Divine Spark in Man in Jewish Sources" (1966), p. 97.

88. *Tanya*, 1, ch. 2 fol. 6a. See Jacobs, "Doctrine," p. 111 n. 48, where the source of the Habad use of this phrase from Job (31:2) is traced to *Shefa Tal* of Shabtai Sheftel Horowitz (d. 1619).

89. See *Tanya* 1, ch. 9, fol. 13b; ch. 28, fol. 35b.

90. *Tanya* 2, ch. 9, fol. 14b.

91. *Ibid.* In R. Haim Vital's *Gates of Holiness* 1:3 there is a similar description of different levels of attainment. The *Zaddik* is one who is perfect in action (like the *Benoni* of *Tanya*), the *hasid* is one who has conquered his evil desire and therefore is capable of feeling only good emotions (the *Zaddik* of *Tanya*), and there is a yet higher level, called *Kadosh*, (Holy) described in terms similar to those depicting the more exalted levels of *Zaddik* in *Tanya*, pt. 1, ch. 10, fol. 15a–b.

92. *Ibid.*, ch. 3, fol. 7a. For earlier philosophic references to the aspects of the soul described in *Tanya*, see Teitelbaum, *Ha-Rav mi-Liadi u-Mifleget Habad*, vol. 2, p. 129 n. 5.

93. *Tanya* 1, ch. 18, fol. 23b.

94. See n. 7 above.

95. *Tanya* 1, ch. 18, fol. 24a, quoting *Tikkunei Zohar* (Jerusalem, 1965), fol. 30a.

96. See my article "Self-Sacrifice of the *Zaddik*" (1988), p. 463ff.

97. In his letter the Baal Shem Tov mentions accusations against the Jews in Zaslav, Dinowitz, and Sobotovka. As a result of these a number of Jews were killed, including two who had let themselves be baptized. See S. Dubnow, *History of Hasidism*, p. 61.

98. *Tanya* 1, ch. 18, fol. 24a. I. Tishby and J. Dan cite this important concept

and comment: "This remarkable outlook, which equalizes small and great—rare exalted individuals with coarse and evil men of the masses—surely acted as a decisive cause in the spread of the stream of "aristocratic" and "intellectual" Habad among the broad layers [of the people], and in the continuance of its power of influence among the circles of its followers and their descendants for generations" (*Hebrew Encyclopaedia* [Heb.], vol. 17, col. 814; also in A. Rubinstein, *Studies in Hasidism* [Heb.], p. 305). This is a sound assessment, touching directly on the core of the process of communication the present work is attempting to describe.

99. *Tanya* 1, ch. 19, fol. 24a–b.

100. *Ibid.*, fol. 24b.

101. R. Shneur Zalman makes this clear in *Tanya* 1, ch. 29, fol. 36a. Throughout this work the terms "Vital Soul" and "Animal Soul" are used interchangeably. "The *Sitra Achara* (unholy realm) is the man himself, in the *Benoni*, for the Vital Soul giving life to the body is as strong as it ever was in his heart and the origin of the Vital Soul is from the unholy realm. Hence that is the man himself. Concerning the Divine Soul which is in him it is said [in the liturgy] 'the Soul which You have put in me is pure'—note 'which You have put in me,' implying that the person himself is not the pure Soul, except in *Zaddikim*, with whom it is the opposite, that the pure Soul which is the Divine Soul is the person . . . for the evil, which is the Vital Soul . . . has changed to good and been included in the holiness of the Divine Soul itself in *Zaddikim*." In the analysis of self-abnegation in *Tanya* one can detect two processes: the abnegation of the Animal Soul—the everyday self—and then, more subtly, the abnegation of the Divine Soul which seeks extinction in its source. These two aspects of the process were elaborated by R. Dov Ber, the *Mitteler Rebbe*, in his *Tract on Ecstasy*.

102. See Ada Rapoport-Albert, "G-d and the *Zaddik*" (1979), pp. 317–18. R. Meshulam Faivush sought to teach an ethical ideal suitable for the wider community, rather than the esoteric demand for *devekut* which was directly relevant only for men of unusual spiritual stature. See Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Quietistic Elements*, pp. 138, 146, and n. 62 above.

103. *Tanya* 1, ch. 12, fol. 16b. Moshe Hallamish discusses at length the concept of the *Benoni* in his doctoral thesis, pp. 366–73. See also his *Netiv la-Tanya* (Tel Aviv, 1987), p. 82ff.

104. *Tanya* 1, ch. 12, fol. 16b.

105. *Ibid.*

106. See *ibid.*, fol. 17a–b, which speaks of the "folly of the evil fool"—i.e., the Animal Soul, as being the source of all desire for any aspect of the materiality of this world, whether permitted or forbidden.

107. *Tanya* 1, ch. 13, fol. 19a.

108. This polemic is also expressed in R. Shneur Zalman's strictures on the "raising" of foreign thoughts which occur during prayer. "And even if there occur to him thoughts of desire and other foreign thoughts . . . he should not pay attention to them, but should at once avert his mind from them. Further, let him not be a fool and attempt to elevate the attributes of the foreign thought, for these teachings only apply to *Zaddikim* who do not have foreign thoughts of their own, but

from others. However, someone whose own thoughts occur to him, from the evil in his heart . . . how can he elevate them above while he himself is tied below?" (*Tanya* 1, ch. 28, fol. 35a). The attitude of R. Shneur Zalman to the approach to the foreign thoughts is the subject of considerable discussion among scholars. See S. Dubnow, *History of Hasidism*, p. 239; J. G. Weiss, "The Beginnings of Hasidism" (1951), p. 103; R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, "Anti-Spiritualism ba-Hasidut" (1962), p. 522; Tishby and Dan, *Hebrew Encyclopaedia* vol. 17, pp. 789–90; L. Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer*, pp. 112–14; M. Hallamish, doctoral thesis, pp. 301–4. The latter, as do Tishby and Dan, considers that R. Shneur Zalman retains the Maggidic teaching which is concealed in his discourses, while the other scholars named, to varying degrees, maintain that he rejected the idea of elevation of the foreign thoughts. My own view is that the statement in *Tanya* that this practice is for the genuine *Zaddik*, while others should not deceive themselves and attempt something beyond their level, is to be taken at face value.

109. *Tanya* 1, ch. 23, fol. 28b. The idea that "the Patriarchs are the Chariot" is found in Midrash and *Zohar*, interpreting Gen. 17:22. See *Ber. Rab.* 47:8, *Zohar* I, 213b.

110. See *T. B. Meg.* 3a.

111. *Tanya* 1, ch. 23, fol. 29a.

112. *Ibid.*, 29a–b. See also *Tanya* 1, ch. 5, fol. 9a–10a; ch. 46, fol. 66a. At the same time, R. Shneur Zalman urges the individual to try to develop pneumatic aspects and achieve a genuine emotional level in his service of the Divine, which then functions as the "soul" and "life-force" of the Commandments he carries out and the Torah he studies. See *Tanya* 1, ch. 16, fol. 21b–22b; ch. 38, fol. 50a–51b.

113. *Maggid Devarav le-Yakov*, p. 271. See also R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Quietistic Elements*, pp. 118–20.

114. *Torah Or* 67b.

115. *Tanya* 1, ch. 35, fol. 44a–b.

116. *Bayit Hadash to Tur, Oraḥ Hayim*, sec. 61. See Jacob Katz, "Martyrdom in the Middle Ages and in 1648–9" (1960).

117. "At every moment that a person has free from Torah study, especially when he is sitting with nothing to do, alone in a room, or lying in bed unable to sleep—he should think about this positive Command (of self-sacrifice). He should imagine there is a great fire burning in front of him and that he, because of the sanctity of the Blessed Name, breaks his nature and throws himself into the fire for sanctification of the Blessed Name. . . . During the first verse of the *Shema* and the first blessing of the Eighteen Benedictions he should think as above. He should also have in mind that if the Gentiles would torture him with the worst tortures, stripping his skin from his flesh to make him deny the Divine Unity, he would suffer the torture and would not give in to them. He should imagine to himself that they are actually doing this to him. . . .

"Also while eating, and having intercourse, he should have the same idea in mind. If he begins to feel physical pleasure he should say to himself that he would have yet more delight and joy from fulfilling the Command of self-sacrifice. . . . The proof for this is that if murderers would tear him away from food or inter-

course in order to torture him he would rejoice more in the sanctification of the Blessed Name than he does in that physical pleasure. But he should make sure that this is sincere" (*No'am Elimelekh*, *Zetil Katan*, secs. 1–3).

118. Ps. 25:1. This verse is significant, for it appears in the Lurianic teachings concerning self-sacrifice. See *Shaar ha-Kavvanot*, vol. 1, p. 310.

119. *Tanya* 1, ch. 41, fol. 58a–b. R. Shneur Zalman's teacher R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk employs the theme of self-sacrifice in order to express the intensity of self-abnegation of a pneumatic nature. See above, page 40.

120. Deut. 30:14.

Chapter Three

1. See Dubnow, *History of Hasidism*, pp. 96 n. 3, 353, 362–64; M. Willensky, *Hasidim and Mitnagdim*, vol. 2, pp. 77, 167; J. G. Weiss, *East European Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 33, 78–82. Concerning R. Shneur Zalman's oral teachings in the context of his Hasidic leadership see E. Etkes, "R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi as a Hasidic Leader," pp. 341–47.

2. R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye pays special attention to the significance of the Third Meal in his *Toledot Yakov Yosef* (Koretz, 1781), fol. 10b.

3. Only after actual nightfall could one of the participants recite a brief, private *havdalah* prayer and light the candles. See Weiss, *East European Jewish Mysticism*, p. 32 n. 16. The Third Meal was not the only occasion for the delivery of Torah teachings of this kind. There is a description of the Baal Shem Tov giving a discourse after praying, presumably in the synagogue. He spoke in an ecstatic manner, "shaking and trembling as in the midst of prayer" (Mintz, *Shivhei*, p. 87).

4. This atmosphere is conveyed particularly by the *Idrot*, *Zohar* III, 127b ff., 287b ff. Zev Gries suggests the circle described in the *Zohar* as a paradigm for certain aspects of the Hasidic fellowship, in "Mi-Mitos la-Etos," pp. 122–26. Gries focuses on the personal warmth and love between the members of the fellowship. See also Y. Liebes, "The Messiah of the *Zohar*," pp. 159–65.

5. Solomon Maimon, *Autobiography*, pp. 175–76.

6. See above, p. 34.

7. In early Habad the discourses are called *Divrei Elo-him hayim*, "words of the living G-d." It is likely that this phrase is borrowed from the description in the *Yogzer* liturgy of the angels of the *Merkavah*. Another possibility is that it is a reference to the point at which the conflicts of the Sages of the Mishnah are unified. See *T. B. Eruvin* 13b; *T. J. Berakhot* 1:4.

8. The writings of R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye are in a different category, since they were penned by their author rather than recorded by disciples. Dresner discusses the dating of these texts in the appendix to *The Zaddik*.

9. One text known to be from the hand of the Baal Shem Tov—the famous letter to R. Gershon of Kutty—in fact describes the onset of a new direction in the Baal Shem Tov's communication of his thought, as discussed in chapter 1 above.

10. See J. G. Weiss, *Studies in Braslav Hasidism*, pp. 66–83.

11. See *Tanya* 4, sec. 25, fol. 141a, where R. Shneur Zalman mentions that this was so in the case of transcriptions of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, and that this fact could lead to confusion in comprehension of the ideas.

12. Concerning R. Yehudah Leib (b. c. 1749) see *Beit Rebbe*, p. 109. His halakhic writings and responsa are collected in *She'erit Yehudah* (Vilna, 1841; Brooklyn, 1956).

13. From the *Takkanot* of Liozna, in D. Z. Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, pp. 58–59; S. B. Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 104; N. Mindel, *Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi*, vol. 1, p. 110. A similar concern about spurious texts was voiced in 1796 by R. Shneur Zalman in his introduction to the *Tanya*.

14. This is mentioned in the second frontispiece of *Torah Or* (Kopys, 1836).

15. *Zemah Zedek*, *Sha'ar ha-Miluim*, vol. 4 (Brooklyn, 1978), no. 142, sec. 9, p. 166. See also S. B. Levine's article on the discourses of R. Shneur Zalman in *Ma'amarei Admur ha-Zaken* [MAHZ] *ha-Kezarim* (Brooklyn, 1981), p. 608.

16. Ibid, p. 607. Levine, chief editor of the manuscripts in the Lubavitch Library in Brooklyn, writes that the transcripts by R. Dov Ber begin, in the main, from 1800, those of R. Moshe, from 1802. A few transcripts by the *Zemah Zedek* are known with dates between 1807 and 1810; many more are extant dated 1811 and 1812, the last years of R. Shneur Zalman's life. Transcripts by R. Pinhas (d. c. 1825) date from 1807.

17. It is mentioned by R. Shalom Dovber Schneersohn (1860–1920), in *Torat Shalom* (Brooklyn, 1957), p. 87. This manuscript volume is no longer extant. See MAHZ *ha-Kezarim*, p. 613.

18. In the course of the nineteenth century selections of R. Shneur Zalman's teachings were printed in *Torah Or* (Kopys, 1836), *Likkutei Torah* (Zhitomir, 1848), and *Torah Or* (Lemberg, 1851). See M. Hallamish, "Al Mahadurot ha-Sefer 'Torah Or'". In addition, *Hosafot la-Sefer Torah Or* (Zhitomir, 1862) and *Boneh Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem, 1926) were published. Then in Brooklyn in 1957, publication of the extant manuscript collections of R. Shneur Zalman's teachings began. More manuscript material became available in 1977, when an important section of the Lubavitch library was rescued from its wartime repository in Poland and brought to Brooklyn. Over a score of volumes have been published to date. Some of the earlier of this series of Brooklyn publications are discussed by Moshe Hallamish in his doctoral thesis, pp. 28–30. He declares them to be authentic. See also A. Steinsaltz, "Ma'amarei Admur ha-Zaken." Most of the Brooklyn publications include much editorial information by S. B. Levine, who has compiled chronological lists for each year showing which discourses were said and where they are to be found in the printed material. The texts of some discourses are no longer extant but are referred to in other Habad writings. This documentation by Levine and others supplements the earlier work of Rabbis Y. L. Groner and A. Chitrik in compiling appendices showing the colophons of the manuscript sources of the discourses in the 1965 edition of *Likkutei Torah* and the 1972 edition of *Torah Or*. (An earlier appendix of this kind, citing published collections of manuscripts and other printed works, was compiled by Rabbi M. M. Schneerson for the 1959 edition of *Likkutei Torah*.) As further manuscript material was made available, in particular from the 1977 material, the appendices were brought up to date and published in later editions of these works. Thus many discourses which have long been known in an undated form can now be examined in their historical context.

19. The writings of R. Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek*, published with the

title *Or ha-Torah*, provide much information about the dates of discourses of R. Shneur Zalman.

20. See Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 183 n. 3: "In general, we find three kinds of transcript by him [R. Dov Ber]. One, the first version, in which he would record straightforwardly the words he heard from his father. The second version he would write afterwards at very great length with explanations. The third was that from the long version he would afterwards make a shortened form, like the discourses in the *Siddur*." (The reference is to R. Dov Ber's *Seder Tefilot mi-Kol ha-Shanah*, Kopy, 1816). R. Dov Ber's transcripts are also distinguished by certain stylistic mannerisms which are undoubtedly his own, rather than derived from the original oral teachings.

21. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 219 n. 3.

22. See Levine, *MAHZ ha-Kezarim*, p. 589, and *Chabad in the Holy Land*, p. xxv.

23. One of the early manuscripts of the *Tanya*, no. 750 in the Lubavitch Library, is followed by a number of discourses dated Tishri to Kislev 1792. See *MAHZ ha-Kezarim*, p. 599. It is likely that this manuscript was written in the same year; see p. 190. The discourses of 1792–93 which are extant are at pp. 66, 118, 161, 190, 198, 227, 234, 237, 520.

24. "Ploughing" means to quell himself, that as much as possible and with whatever means, even aggressively, in everything he should do the opposite of the wish of the body. When he does this, hidden goodness will spontaneously be revealed to him" (*ibid.*, p. 161).

25. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, p. 199 (see *T. B. Gittin* 56b) and p. 521: "When a person thinks all day long how he should conduct his business or other worldly affairs, rather than serve the Divine through Torah study and prayer—this activity is worse than the worship of the Amareans in which they would actually bow down [to idols]: because sometimes they merely bowed their heads, without the involvement of their intellect [and by contrast the businessman puts his mind into his activities]."

28. *Ibid.*, p. 191. See also the statement that true joy is possible only to those who have *hishtavut* (equanimity) "in all worldly matters: 'yes' and 'no' are equal, for they have no concern for this world" (p. 163). Compare *Tanya* 4, sec. 11, fol. 116a–b. In another passage R. Shneur Zalman demands total impartiality in providing food for one's own family and for other needy people (pp. 200–201). Compare *Tanya* 1, ch. 49, fol. 69a–b.

29. *MAHZ ha-Kezarim*, p. 199 (compare the letter printed in *Tanya* 4, sec. 25, fol. 138b).

30. *MAHZ ha-Kezarim*, p. 236. The relationship of the Divine to the individual is like that of a king who kisses an ugly beggar. To this one should respond with the utter dedication of *devekut* (p. 238). Compare *Tanya* 1, ch. 46, fol. 65a.

31. See the comments by R. Shalom Dovber, the fifth Lubavitch leader, about a discourse said in 1794 (printed in *Torah Or*, Lemberg, 1851, fol. 7a–8a, and from a different manuscript, *MAHZ al Parshiot ha-Torah*, vol. 1, p. 238) which speaks in strong terms of the negative effects of mental preoccupation with worldly matters,

bitul Torah (i.e., not studying Torah at every opportunity), and lack of intensity in Divine service. R. Shalom Dovber speaks of the probable atmosphere in the room when this discourse was said: "There must have been a mood of great awesomeness at the time. I don't envy those who were present when it was said. . . . It is a fierce Hasidic teaching, frightening (*a beyze khasidus, gor moyradik*)" (*Torat Shalom, Sefer ha-Sihot*, p. 86).

32. *MAHZ ha-Kezarim*, p. 119: "The redemption depends on us, who have bodies. We must quell and break all (worldly) desires. Through this merit we will be redeemed."

33. The main known discourses of this year are as follows: *Likkutei Torah Shelah* 51c (*Va-yishlah Yehoshua*); *ibid.*, *Be-Hukotai* 48a (*Be-shivri lakhem*); *ibid.*, *Be-ha'alotekha* 32d (*Ve-zeh ma'aseh ha-menorah*); *ibid.* 33b (*Ra'iti menorat zahav*)—this discourse is heavily edited by a later hand, probably R. Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek*; *Boneh Yerushalayim*, sec. 115 (*Le-havin ha-Hefresh*); *Or ha-Torah, Ba-Midbar, Mas'ey*, p. 1428 (*Va-yehi kol*)—this text bears the date 1838, but according to S. B. Levine it was originally said in 1795; *MAHZ ha-Kezarim*, pp. 60, 88, 105, 272. See S. B. Levine's list in *ibid.*, pp. 613–14.

34. *Likkutei Torah, Be-Ha'alotekha* 33a. Compare also *MAHZ ha-Kezarim*, p. 274.

35. *Likkutei Torah, Shelah* 51d. Compare with *Tanya* 1, ch. 35, fol. 44a–b, in which the emphasis is on the power of action. Here the emphasis is on the power of thought as the means to achieve unity with the One.

36. 1795 should be seen as a watershed in the evolution of the discourses of R. Shneur Zalman. It is noteworthy that some discourses of this year (unlike earlier years) were included by R. Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek*, in his *Likkutei Torah*, which was an anthology intended to popularize his grandfather's teachings. In addition, there was an early collection of the discourses of this year (see *Torat Shalom, Sefer Ha-Sihot*, p. 87). This has since been lost. (See the note by S. B. Levine in *MAHZ ha-Kezarim*, p. 613). A number of aspects of the Habad discourse which were fully developed later are glimpsed in these discourses of 1795, including the theme of the importance of *bitul* beyond pneumatic emotion. This is seen in the discourses in *Or ha-Torah* and *Boneh Yerushalayim* (listed above, n. 33) and in *MAHZ ha-Kezarim*, p. 60.

37. The discourses—thirty-nine in all—of 1796 are listed by S. B. Levine in *ibid.*, pp. 614–16.

38. See *ibid.*, p. 425, "It is written 'for G-d is a consuming fire' (Deut. 9:3), this means: a fire which consumes fire, for it burns and consumes all the flames and heat which are not directed towards G-d. . . . Even concerning something permitted, which he may have and which he [legitimately] requires—his heart should not be burning for it. As the Sages say 'one who wants to live should kill himself' (*T. B. Tamid* 32a). . . . 'Live' . . . means excitement (*hitlahavut*), and one who wants his Divine Service to be with life and excitement should 'kill himself' as concerns his physical needs. He should be involved with them only coldly, which is as if dead, without enthusiasm. For it is impossible for there to be excitement about two opposite things."

39. *Ibid.*, p. 330.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. See in particular *Tanya* 1, chs. 14, 27, 29.

43. To a considerable extent this remained a feature of the inner-circle level of Habad thought. The major twentieth-century Habad *hasid* Rabbi Peretz Motzkin (c. 1890–1982), who during his long life was an officially appointed spiritual guide (*Mashpia*) to Habad communities in Russia, Paris, Montreal, and later New York, used to emphasize strongly this aspect of Divine service. One of his favorite themes was the ascetic implications of the talmudic phrase “For a slave, freedom from restraint [of his passions] is welcome” (*T. B. Gittin* 13a). He would add: “Habad removes the ‘welcome.’” (Oral communication by Rabbi Shmuel Lew, a former student of R. Peretz). The ascetic ideal is more overtly expressed in modern Braslav. In an encounter with the Braslav community in Jerusalem in 1970 this writer was told by an elderly scholar: “Here you will learn how to lose all sensual desires. People do not understand this!”

44. *Torah Or* was first printed in Kopys, 1837; *Likkutei Torah* in Zhitomir, 1848. Both constitute R. Menahem Mendel’s collections of the teachings of R. Shneur Zalman. The second volume includes many annotations and interpolations by the editor. In a letter of 1837 R. Menahem Mendel states that *Torah Or* contains discourses from 1796 until 1812 (Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 334).

45. See Levine, *MAHZ ha-Kezarim*, p. 590, where he states that R. Shneur Zalman’s discourses became progressively longer. Thus those of 1808 are far longer than those of 1802. However, R. Shalom Dovber Schneersohn points out that the very lengthy texts of the discourses are probably due to lengthy elaboration of the original on the part of the transcriber (*Torat Shalom, Sefer ha-Sihot*, p. 114).

46. Several of the sons and grandsons of R. Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek*, acted as Hasidic leaders in their own right. His son R. Yehudah Leib (d. 1865) founded the Kopys line and was succeeded by his son R. Shlomoh Zalman (d. 1900), author of *Magen Avot* (Berdichev, 1902). Two other sons of R. Yehudah Leib were also active as Hasidic leaders: R. Shmaryahu Noah of Babroisk, who founded a yeshivah in that city in 1901, and R. Shalom Dovber of Retzitz (d. 1909). Another son of the *Zemah Zedek*, R. Haim Shneur Zalman (d. 1879), founded the Liady line and was succeeded there by his son R. Yitzhak Dov Ber (d. 1910). Two other sons of the *Zemah Zedek*, R. Yisroel Noah of Niezin (d. 1883) and R. Yosef Yitzhak of Ovrith (d. 1875), had also been Hasidic leaders but were not succeeded by their sons. See S. A. Heilprin, *Sefer ha-Ze’ezaim* (Jerusalem, 1980), pp. 135–37, 171–72. In the same period the leader in Lubavitch was R. Menahem Mendel’s son R. Shmuel (1834–1882), who was succeeded by R. Shalom Dovber (1860–1920). The life of the latter is described in *ibid.*, pp. 179–95, and A. H. Glitzenstein, *Sefer ha-Toldot Admur RaShaB* (Kfar Habad, 1972).

47. For full accounts of this climax in the clash between the *hasidim* and the *mitnagdim*, see Teitelbaum, *Ha-Rav mi-Liadi*, vol. 1, pp. 65–121; S. Dubnow, *History of Hasidism*, pp. 257–78; N. Mindel, *Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi*, pp. 156–217; Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, pp. 125–53. The main points are as follows. The first arrest, in October 1798, came as a result of accusations of a

certain Hirsh Davidovitz of Vilna—possibly a fictitious personality. His accusation, addressed to the chief prosecutor in St. Petersburg, spoke of “actions harmful to the realm” on the part of R. Shneur Zalman and in particular of his sending money regularly to Turkey, an enemy country. (This of course was the money collected and sent to R. Avraham of Kalisk in the Holy Land.) Twenty-two leaders of the Karlinists, as the *hasidim* were called, were arrested and brought to Vilna. After examination, most were released, but seven were detained further on suspicion of collaboration with R. Shneur Zalman, the principal accused. R. Shneur Zalman himself was sent to St. Petersburg. Apparently, there it was soon recognized that he was not a rebel. On 27 November he was released. This was 19 Kislev of the Jewish calendar, as was emphasized by R. Shneur Zalman (see *Iggrot Kodesh*, pp. 98–99). This day later became a Habad festival called the New Year of *Hasidut*, a term which means both the Hasidic movement and Hasidic teachings. The name was given because R. Shneur Zalman’s release was seen as vindication of his communication of Hasidic teachings. In mid-December a statement from Tsar Paul I was issued affirming his innocence. Nonetheless, in 1800 he was again arrested, this time as a result of an accusation by Avigdor Chaimovitch, who had been Rabbi of Pinsk but had been ousted from that post by the *hasidim* in the community. (He might well have been behind the first accusation of 1798 as well.) Avigdor went to St. Petersburg with a lengthy string of theological claims against the Karlinists. He accused them of being Shabbatians and used quotations from *Zava’at ha-Rivash* to demonstrate that the *hasidim* were beyond any moral law (for example, they abhor sorrow and claim one should fear nothing in the world, only G-d). Again the funds sent to the Holy Land were cited, this time as an amoral squandering of wealth while indigent Jews in Russia were starving. As previously, the accusations were directed primarily at R. Shneur Zalman. On 9 November he was taken to St. Petersburg. Nineteen questions formulated by Avigdor were addressed to him. Apparently he answered these satisfactorily. Important too was a letter sent by Severin, the governor of White Russia, which stated he had found nothing untoward in R. Shneur Zalman’s activities. The prosecutors recognized that this was not a case of rebellion against the realm, but an internal Jewish religious conflict. The case was therefore referred to the Senate. This induced Avigdor to bring more accusations, this time quoting passages from *Tanya* from which he sought to prove its author’s antipathy to the entire Christian world. It seems these accusations too were answered satisfactorily by R. Shneur Zalman. The case slowly dragged on, and R. Shneur Zalman had to remain in St. Petersburg. Then in March 1801, Tsar Paul I was assassinated. The new Tsar Alexander I granted R. Shneur Zalman his freedom on 29 March, by the old Russian calendar (10 Nisan in the Jewish calendar). From both sides, however, further petitions were sent to the tsar. Avigdor’s petition was a claim concerning the loss of his rabbinical post, which he had “hired” for a ten-year period from the governor of the city. On the grounds of the personal monetary loss caused him by the acquittal of R. Shneur Zalman, he asked to have another chance to prove his guilt as a rebel against Judaism and the government. Apparently this petition was ignored. Towards the end of July 1801, R. Shneur Zalman left the capital and took up residence in Liady. A document dated July 1801 issued by the governor of White Russia affirmed his freedom.

48. In fact R. Shalom Dovber himself achieved this goal to a very striking extent during his leadership. He set up a yeshivah almost unique in the history of Jewish education, in which esoteric teachings formed part of the daily curriculum. Later called *Tomkhei Temimim*, it was founded in 1897. See A. H. Glitzenstein, *Tomkhei Temimim* (Brooklyn, 1969), for an account of its history and a collection of relevant letters and documents. Further, the discourses and tracts which flowed from his pen include much of the most subtle analysis of kabbalistic themes to be found in the extensive output of Habad. R. Shalom Dovber's teachings (which he himself wrote down) were studied in his lifetime in handwritten and mimeographed form; for the most part they were not printed until the 1940s and later. During the four decades of his leadership these particularly recondite explorations (of, for example, the dialectic implicit in the radiance of the *Ein Sof* before the *Zimzum*) became the basic frame of reference, or ideology, of a considerable section of the fraternity, the *Temimim*, graduates of his yeshivah. The *Temimim* were to be particularly important as an activist force in the next generation, facing the vicissitudes of Jewish life under the Communist regime. Clearly R. Shalom Dovber manifests a later stage of development of the ethos of communication of the esoteric in society. His comments on the nature of this goal and on the early stages in the process of communication are useful for our own evaluation of what precisely was taking place.

49. *Torat Shalom, Sefer ha-Sihot* (Brooklyn, 1946, 1957), p. 113. "Refining oneself" is a Habad term for detachment from "coarse" material desires. R. Shalom Dovber linked his view of the goal of Hasidism—the broad communication of esoteric teachings—with the letter of the Baal Shem Tov in which the demand is made that the "fountains" of esoteric attainment should spread to the "outside."

50. *Torat Shalom*, p. 114. "Thickening of the light" is a kabbalistic term: through this process the "vessels" are formed. See *Ez Haim*, portal 47, ch. 1.

51. *Torat Shalom*, p. 114. The existence of a transcript of a talk in which questions were addressed to R. Shneur Zalman and he responded is very interesting. So far none such have been published.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–15. See also p. 55. Adin Steinsaltz discusses the development of the discourses and the stages before and after "Peterburg" in *Sefer ha-Kan*, pp. 85–87. See also Rabbi M. M. Schneerson, *Sihat Moz'ei Zot Hanukah 5746*, pp. 40–45.

53. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 61.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 69.

55. *Torat Shalom*, p. 55. The "transforming of the emotions" implies a pneumatic level of spiritual attainment. Not only does the person have total conscious control of his actions, speech, and even thought: his inner semiconscious desires and passions are also transformed. See *Tanya* 1, ch. 10.

56. Liady is a small town in the Horecki region of the Mohilev province, on the River Mereja. According to Teitelbaum in *Ha-Rav mi-Liadi*, vol. 1, p. 127, the town comprised 348 dwellings. The reason for the move, after R. Shneur Zalman's return from the capital in 1801, is unknown. See Rodkinson, *Toldot Amudei Habad* (Koenigsberg, 1876), p. 75; Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 78; Dubnow, *History of Hasidism*, p. 333. Hielman mentions the chagrin of the people of Liozna, R. Shneur Zalman's former domicile.

57. See Adin Steinsaltz, "Ma'amarei Admur ha-Zaken," p. 89. Many of these discourses concerning the *Zohar* were delivered on Friday nights, to an intimate gathering of members of R. Shneur Zalman's family, rather than to the members of the wider fraternity. See R. Dov Ber's introduction to his *Biurei ha-Zohar* (Kopys, 1816).

58. See *Torah Or*, fols. 24–25, for R. Shneur Zalman's perspective on the account of Jacob and Esau, and *MAHZ 5565*, vol. 1, pp. 157–62, for a discussion about the Sadducees and Karaites.

59. This assessment was made by R. Menahem Nahum, the son of R. Dov Ber, in the introduction to his father's *Torat Haim*, vol. 1 (Kopys, 1826).

60. See above, ch. 2, n. 67.

61. See *Iggrot Kodesh*. . . *Admur Menahem Mendel Shelita*, vol. 9, p. 232, *Likkutei Sihot*, vol. 10, p. 268, and Zevin, *Sippurei Hasidim, 'Torah'*, p. 302. The esoteric nature of *Tanya*, contrasting with the discourses, has been pointed out by Tishby and Dan. See above, ch. 2, n. 67.

62. *Likkutei Torah, Shemini*, fol. 18a.

63. See, for example, *Tanya* 1, chs. 16, 33, 42–50.

64. *Tanya* 1, ch. 3, fol. 7b. Compare Ps. 84:3.

65. *Tanya* 1, ch. 3, fol. 7b.

66. See the letter of R. Shneur Zalman written in 1805 (in Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 176, and Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 127).

67. *MAHZ 5564*, pp. 2–3.

68. See I. Etkes, "R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi's Rise to Leadership," p. 438. Etkes's view is that R. Avraham had a hand, together with R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk, in the appointment of R. Shneur Zalman as Hasidic *Zaddik* (rather than local guide and organizer) in the mid-1780s. He therefore felt a sense of authority over R. Shneur Zalman, which the latter did not recognize at all. Concerning the ideological conflict between the two, see Etkes, "R. Shneur Zalman as Hasidic Leader," pp. 343–44.

69. That R. Shneur Zalman recognized R. Avraham as having inherited the local leadership of the *hasidim* in the Holy Land is seen by a letter in Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 29 (see also Etkes, *Tarbiz* 54, p. 438). R. Shneur Zalman's view of R. Avraham is expressed in his letter to the latter, in Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya* (hereinafter cited as "Hillman"), pp. 173–77; *Iggrot Kodesh*, pp. 120–29. Concerning R. Avraham's style of leadership, see Z. Gries, "Mi-Mitos la-Etos."

70. *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 175; *Iggrot Kodesh*, pp. 125–26. See also Gries, "Mi-Mitos la-Etos," pp. 126–32.

71. See R. Shneur Zalman's letter of 1793 in *Iggrot Kodesh*, no. 24, (part of which is printed in *Tanya* 4, sec. 22), and R. Avraham's letters in Barnai, *Hasidic Letters* (hereinafter cited as "Barnai"), nos. 62–63. The first restricts personal interviews with R. Shneur Zalman and is very similar to the latter's own *Liozna Regulations*, and the second complements this by criticizing the beseeching of advice on practical affairs. A comparable letter on this question by R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk is in *Pri ha-Arez* (Jerusalem, 1974), pp. 7–8.

72. Barnai, p. 237. The letter refers warmly to R. Shneur Zalman as leader of the fraternity in White Russia but then immediately warns "but certainly it is right

... not to write down any words of Torah [i.e., Hasidic teachings] not even a single letter."

73. See *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 121. The idea that R. Shneur Zalman's intellectualist path derives from R. Avraham the Angel, (1740–1776), the son of R. Dov Ber the Maggid of Mezeritch, is conveyed in an interesting passage quoted in the name of R. Hillel of Paritch, a prominent disciple of R. Shneur Zalman. R. Hillel said (in one of his own discourses) that he heard in the name of R. Avraham the Angel a new path in Divine service. Previously one thought of contemplation as necessarily leading to enthusiastic emotion. But R. Avraham "discovered a new concept: that one should bind oneself to G-dliness itself. This is through contemplating deep secrets of the upper *Parzufim* (a Lurianic concept relating to the *Sefirot*) or the meaning of the Commandments—ideas which do not have anything at all to do with emotional ecstasy of love. Nonetheless [through this] one draws down Divine radiance in a way which surrounds the evil [in one's heart] till it submits of its own accord." R. Hillel adds that "this is the basis of the [Habad] Hasidic teachings, and the basis of the book *Tanya*." (Quoted in *Beit Rebbe*, p. 88 n. 1. See also H. Y. Bunin, *Mishnat Habad*, vol. 1 [Warsaw, 1932], p. 82).

74. Barnai, pp. 239, 242. This Aaron Halevi should not be confused with R. Aaron Halevi Horowitz, the close disciple of R. Shneur Zalman, who later became an opponent of R. Dov Ber.

75. "And do not listen, my brother, to the counsel of the young men. Building by young men is really destruction" (Barnai, p. 242). In 1797 R. Shneur Zalman himself was fifty-two years old.

76. *Likkutei Biurim al Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut* (Warsaw, 1868), fol. 4a.

77. Barnai, pp. 243–47; see also Braver, *Kiryat Sefer* 1 (1924), pp. 144–45.

78. This is in the letter to R. Shneur Zalman criticizing the publication of *Tanya*. "Behold I am writing a letter to the entire region . . . and it would be fitting for you to do the same so that our words will complement each other" (Barnai, pp. 241–42).

79. Barnai, p. 244.

80. "*Sikhlím nistarim*"; *ibid.*, p. 245.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

82. See *Tanya* 1, chs. 40–43.

83. R. Avraham's desire to conceal his conflict with R. Shneur Zalman both from the Hasidic followers and from the local Sefardi leaders in the Holy Land is expressed in his letter to R. Shneur Zalman sent in 1801. See Braver, p. 148; Barnai, p. 255.

84. See Ada Rapoport-Albert, "R. Nahman's Journey to the Holy Land."

85. See *Hayei Muharan* 1, pp. 52–53, describing R. Nahman's movements after returning from the Holy Land. "At once he travelled to Liady to the famous R. Shneur Zalman and spoke at length with him about the community in the Land of Israel. For when R. Nahman had been in the Land of Israel he had been asked to go there." A letter from R. Avraham of Kalisk to R. Nahman referring to this visit to R. Shneur Zalman and detailing the pressing economic need is in *ibid.* 1, p. 66, also in *Hesed le-Avraham* (Jerusalem, 1973), 96a–b, sec. 73.

86. This was published by E. Kupfer in *Tarbiz* 47 (1978), pp. 236–37. The date of the letter is discussed on p. 233. See also Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 447.

87. Barnai, p. 279; Hillman, p. 168. The letter, probably written in 1805, cites the strange, aggressive figure Elazar of Disna, who styled himself an ardent follower of R. Shneur Zalman. He came to the Holy Land and caused many problems for R. Avraham and the community there. In this letter to the fraternity R. Avraham implies that if he had not written his approval of Habad contemplation, Elazar would have caused further trouble. He was not the first person claiming to be a member of the Hasidic fraternity to be troublesome: the account of R. Nahman of Braslav's visit to the Holy Land includes an encounter with some kind of informer who paraded as a Hasidic follower but actually hounded the Hasidic community. (*Shivhei ha-Ran*, pp. 38–39). This affair ended with the death of the informer, indicating that he is not to be identified with Elazar of Disna, who was still alive twenty years later and was then directing his aggression against R. Dov Ber, the son of R. Shneur Zalman. See R. Dov Ber's letter to him, written between 1818 and 1820, begging him to desist from his slanderous attacks (*Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 260). Another aspect of R. Avraham's claim is his insinuation, repeated several times in letters after 1805, that material support from R. Shneur Zalman had depended on his paying lip service to R. Shneur Zalman's path. (See in particular Braver, pp. 228–29; Barnai, p. 261). In his own letter to R. Avraham in 1805, however, R. Shneur Zalman expresses his willingness to send a large sum of money to him, his only condition being that the money will be received rather than thrown away (*Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 128; Hillman, p. 177).

88. Barnai, p. 271. This letter was written in 1805.

89. The letter was published in Braver, pp. 145–50, and Barnai, no. 68.

90. He also wrote copious drafts of his teachings during his journey to the Holy Land and while he was there, according to the account in *Shivhei ha-Ran*, pp. 23, 59.

91. R. Avraham's broadening of his sources of funds is also seen from the fact that from 1806 and possibly earlier he sent emissaries to North Africa (see Yaari, *Shivhei Erez Yisrael*, pp. 626–27). Concerning the chain of events described, see R. Shneur Zalman's account in his letter to R. Avraham (Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 127; Hillman, p. 176). R. Avraham's letters of 1805–6 give a different account. He claims that in 1803–4 R. Shneur Zalman collected the money in White Russia but refused to send most of it to R. Avraham unless the latter revoked his ideological criticisms of R. Shneur Zalman (Barnai, pp. 261, 263). He also claims he never at all wanted R. Shneur Zalman to collect money on his behalf (p. 269). See also Yaari, pp. 624–26. R. Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev's letter to R. Avraham in 1806 endorses R. Shneur Zalman's account of these events in 1803–4 rather than that of R. Avraham: "As for what you have written concerning the money, I am very surprised at you and your accusations. You yourself sent emissaries to upset the system and increase arguments, and they spoke unashamedly against the firm righteous man [R. Shneur Zalman], may the mouths of liars be closed! They said in your name you do not at all want our collections. How could he [R. Shneur Zalman] have acted differently? On the contrary, he did the right thing" (Hillman, p. 172).

92. Hillman, p. 168. Barnai's text, p. 279, is defective, the word "discourses" being missing. This is probably because the word was omitted by Braver on p. 235 of his article in *Kiryat Sefer* 1 (1924). This was obviously an accident, since in his discussion of the passage in question (on p. 228) he quotes the full text, including the reference to the discourses.

93. Hillman, p. 169; Barnai, p. 267.

94. Hillman, p. 172.

95. See Barnai, pp. 273, 276. According to Dubnow he was born in 1745. Others give 1742. In 1798 he was arrested together with R. Shneur Zalman, but was soon released. Dubnow gives a rather cynical account of his activities in *History of Hasidism*, pp. 222–23.

96. Hillman, pp. 184–86. R. Yisrael of Koznitz, however, was in favor of R. Shneur Zalman's path.

97. R. Shneur Zalman was also supported by R. Yisrael of Polotsk, R. Nahum of Chernobyl, R. Zusya of Hannipol, and his brother R. Elimelekh of Lizhensk. Further opponents to Habad were R. Shlomoh of Karlin and R. Barukh of Medziboz. See Rachel Elior, "The Minsk Debate," p. 196 n. 48.

98. See Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 129; Hillman, p. 177, where R. Shneur Zalman warns his followers not to get into arguments with the members of this group.

99. See Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 127; Hillman, p. 176. The ideal of a unified fraternity was a long-standing goal of R. Shneur Zalman. He refers to an earlier letter of his on this subject, written in 1798, after the initial conflict with R. Avraham. It is likely that this demand for a unified fraternity constituted the pressure from R. Shneur Zalman complained of repeatedly by R. Avraham. Hence the latter's letters of conciliation of 1798 and 1800. As R. Shneur Zalman's intellectualist style intensified and the discourses became more clearly a mode of communication with the wider fraternity, R. Avraham saw that, given his own very definite ideas on this subject, unity was impossible.

100. Concerning R. Yakov, see Yaari, *Shluhei Erez Yisrael*, p. 612.

101. Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 128; Hillman, p. 177.

102. Ibid. The interest was earned by the *heter iska*, a common rabbinical device to enable money to be invested at profit, despite the biblical stricture on usury.

103. See E. Kupfer in *Tarbiz* 47 (1978), pp. 233–36, and *Iggrot Kodesh*, pp. 115–19. In this letter R. Shneur Zalman absolutely refuses to accept the rumor that R. Avraham only wrote his 1800 letter of approval of contemplation in order to ensure that funds continue to be sent to him from the Habad fraternity. He regards this insinuation as quite beneath the dignity of a man of R. Avraham's stature. In R. Shneur Zalman's letter to R. Avraham written in 1805 he refers to other cordial letters sent by the latter in 1802 and 1803.

104. Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 120ff.; Hillman, p. 173ff.

105. *T. B. Mak.* 24a.

106. In the *Ein Yaakov* version of *T. B. Ber.* 63a.

107. Apparently R. Avraham wrote three letters in 1797, which reached their destination in 1708. Two of them are known (Barnai, nos. 64 and 65). The third, which we know only by citations, emphasizes the concept that "the righteous man lives by his faith."

108. See *Tanya* 1, ch. 3, fol. 7b. *Binah* is seen as a "mother" giving birth to the lower *Sefirot*. See *Zohar* III, 290a–291a.

109. Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, pp. 123–24; Hillman, p. 174.

110. *MAHZ* 5565, vol. 2, p. 732.

111. R. Shneur Zalman states that initially R. Avraham's emissaries Meir of Bukhov and Zvi Segal "did not say anything adverse about the discourses. On the contrary, they heard several discourses and liked them. They said as much in all the communities they visited, in Shklov and the villages" (*Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 125; Hillman, p. 175). R. Shneur Zalman wrote this in demonstration of the cordial relationship which had previously existed between R. Avraham and himself. He claims that the ideological attack in 1805 is therefore unwarranted and without authority. R. Shneur Zalman stresses that he himself had to intercede with the Maggid on behalf of R. Avraham in 1772, when the latter's wild behavior had provoked the displeasure of the leader of the Hasidic movement. He adds that R. Avraham and his followers had also been censured by R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk (*Iggrot Kodesh*, pp. 125–27; Hillman, pp. 175–76). The repeated implication is that R. Shneur Zalman did not see R. Avraham as an authority concerning the ideology of Hasidism, although he did see him as having influence over a section of the White Russian fraternity.

112. See above, ch. 2, p. 51.

113. See Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Quietistic Elements*, pp. 54–77. This explores the antinomian possibilities in early Hasidic thought, in which the teachings of R. Yitzhak of Radvil present an extreme example (pp. 67–72). She does not suggest that any of these possibilities were ever translated into action. They remained theoretical, spiritual realms for contemplation by the elite of the movement. She also repeatedly refers to the religious conservatism of Hasidism both in principle and in practice.

114. *Luah Birkhot ha-Nehenin* (Shklov, 1800; Zolkiev, 1801). This apparently simple topic is of great halakhic complexity. The 1801 edition had approbations by R. Avraham Haim, Av Beth Din of Zlotschow, and R. Meshulam Cohen of Lemberg. See Mondschein, *Torat Habad: Sifrei Halakhah Shel Admur ha-Zaken*, pp. 64, 202.

115. Zolkiev, 1801. See Mondschein, p. 65.

116. "More than in any other branch of Hasidism, the question of the Torah and the Commandments is discussed in the literature of Habad" (Tishby and Dan, "Hasidism," col. 806). See also Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer, "Anti-Spiritualism," pp. 525–28, who interprets this as a rebellion against the spiritualist path of the Maggid, and the contrary view of Moshe Hallamish, "The Theoretical System of R. Shneur Zalman," pp. 253–61.

117. See Yoram Jacobson, "Torat ha-Beriah shel R. Shneur Zalman mi-Liadi," pp. 345–59, and Moshe Hallamish, "Theoretical System," pp. 262–71.

118. Thus *Tanya* 1, ch. 4, fol. 8b: "Hence the Torah is compared to water. Just as water descends from a high to a lower place, so the Torah descended from the place of its glory, which is the Divine Will and Wisdom, since Torah and the Holy One are one. . . . From there it descended from level to level in the downchaining of the worlds until it clothed itself in physical matters and worldly things, i.e.,

almost all the Commandments of the Torah, and their detailed laws . . . in order that thought will be able to grasp them, and even speech and action, which are lower than the level of thought, will grasp them and be enfolded in them. And since the Torah and its Commandments clothe all ten aspects of the soul, and all its 613 'limbs' from head to foot, the soul is wrapped up in the bundle of life with G-d Himself, and Divine radiance surrounds it entirely." Another passage in R. Shneur Zalman's *Tanya* emphasizing the mystical significance of observance of the practical Commandments is in *Tanya* 1, ch. 35, fol. 45a: "But in order to draw the radiance of the *Shekhinah* also over his body and Animal Soul . . . he has to observe the practical Commandments which are carried out by the body itself. Through this action he is absorbed in the Divine radiance and Will, and utterly unified with it."

119. *Tanya* 1, ch. 4, fol. 9a.

120. This makes clear the distinction between R. Shneur Zalman's teachings on the Commandments and those of R. Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk. The latter describes the Commandments as a link with the *Ein Sof* through which the individual ascends to a level "beyond the beginning of Creation." (*Pri ha-Areẓ* [Zhitomir, 1867], p. 16. See also p. 7. Compare Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Quietistic Elements*, pp. 57–60). To an extent we can consider R. Menahem Mendel as a source for R. Shneur Zalman's teachings on the significance of the Commandments. The important distinction is that R. Menahem Mendel is speaking of a *conscious* state, which therefore requires the prerequisite of pneumatic attainment. See *Pri ha-Areẓ*, p. 6, which describes a chain of intense emotions and mental states, beginning with "fear" and continuing to the "spirit of prophecy." This pneumatic attainment precedes the exalted height achieved through the Commandments in which the individual ascends "above Creation." Similarly on p. 16, a pneumatic state of *automatic* observance of the Commandments is demanded as a prerequisite to the exalted union with the divine that they afford. In this state of automatic observance, all a person's desires are totally dedicated to the Divine: "He does not use his desires for himself at all, only for G-d alone. All personal benefits are loathsome to him, like dirt and mud and filth, which no one needs to be commanded to avoid since anyway he will do so through loathing." Through this state which will be general in Messianic times, the individual reaches "the source of the Torah and the Commandments . . . simple Unity and *Ein Sof*." Since the Commandments do not have to apply as controls, his observance being automatic, they act as the doorway to exalted intimations of the Divine. By contrast R. Shneur Zalman stresses the mystical union achieved by observance of the Commandment despite lack of *pneuma* and spiritual awareness. See also *Tanya* 1, ch. 38, and ch. 46, fol. 66a–b; and Hallamish, "Theoretical System," p. 254.

121. This is openly stated concerning Torah study: only because of the lack of conscious awareness is a person able to bear the revelation of the transcending radiance achieved through study of Torah. Only his innermost soul (termed *mazal*, see *T. B. Meg.* 3a) is sensitive to the Divine revelation (*Tanya* 1, ch. 23, fol. 29a). Compare also *Tanya* 1, ch. 46, fol. 66a–b: "I am a brute and do not know. I am like an animal with You, and I am always with You" (Ps. 73:22–3). This means: even though I am like an animal when I am with You, and I do not know and do

not feel in my soul this union . . . nonetheless I am always with You, for matter does not prevent the union of the soul with the radiance of the *Ein Sof*."

122. A quotation from the second introduction to *Tikkunei Zohar*, fol. 30a.

123. *Tanya* 1, ch. 35, fol. 44b.

124. *Likkutei Torah, Shelah*, fol. 36c–37a.

125. Moshe Hallamish has shown that R. Shneur Zalman does refer, if only very rarely, to exalted states of communion of the soul alone. See "Theoretical System," pp. 254–55. See also the reference in *Tanya* 1, ch. 40, fol. 55b–56a, to "love without service which has the quality of the World to Come." Another reference to a similarly exalted level is in *Tanya* 5, fol. 154a. This suggests that the spiritual flow from below to above which is normally produced by the practical Commandments is effected by the rare individual through the surrender of his soul, in "self-sacrifice for the Torah" or through the spiritualized self-sacrifice of the *nefilat apayim* prayer. It is noteworthy that the theme "self-sacrifice for the Torah" steers this concept away from any possible antinomian interpretations. These exalted levels of attainment are clearly for a rare level of *Zaddik* who is able to achieve Divine union by virtue of simple existence. There is no suggestion, however, that the Commandments as such have less power for him. On the contrary, R. Shneur Zalman's teachings on the nature of the *Zaddik* make clear that his striving will be that of the Divine soul untrammelled. His yearning will be for "self-sacrifice for the Torah" as we saw above, with total dedication to the strengthening of Judaism.

126. It has been suggested that the second section of *Tanya*, which is primarily a manual of material for contemplation, was originally intended to precede the first section. (This is indicated by the expression "as will be explained," at the beginning of section 2, fol. 75b, 76a, referring to something which is actually explained in section I, chs. 4, 41). See Hallamish, "Theoretical System," p. 19. The fact that R. Shneur Zalman changed his original plan and put section 1—which gives great emphasis to the role of the Mitzvot—at the beginning of the work, indicates his concern that mystical contemplation should be firmly guided and controlled by the practicalities of the halakhah. On the basis of this control, he felt, popularization of contemplative practices could proceed.

127. This interpretation was probably based on *Mishnat Hasidim*, by R. Emmanuel Hai Ricchi (1688–1743). See *Mishnat Hasidim* (Amsterdam, 1727), fol. 130b. See also R. Judah Loew of Prague's *Ner Mizvah-Or Hadash* (1972), p. 128. The discussion which follows was first published in *Journal of Jewish Studies* 37 (1986).

128. *Yad, Hil. Meg.*, 2:18. See also *T. B. Meg.* 13a, 19a; *San.* 61b (and *Tosafot* there); the Targumim, Rashi, and Ibn Ezra to Est. 3:2; *Midrash Rabbah* to Est., ch. 7; *Yalkut Shimoni* to Est., sec. 1054. For the idea of readiness for self-sacrifice in the Purim story, see *ibid.*, sec. 1058. In this Mordekhai advises his disciples to flee, lest they be killed by Haman. They reply, "whether he heals or kills we are with you."

129. *T. B. Shab.* 88a states that at Sinai the Jews were forced to accept the Torah. In the time of Ahasuerus they accepted it of their own volition.

130. *Torah Or* (1972) 97a.

131. S. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland* (Philadelphia, 1916),

vol. 1, pp. 343, 346. For further discussion of this statute see Y. Sosis, *Di Sotsial-ekonomishe Lage fun di ruslendishe Yuden in der ershter helft fun 19-ten Yarbundert* (Petersburg, 1919), pp. 13–16. I am grateful to Dr. S. Zipperstein for this reference.

132. R. Shneur Zalman wrote that he told R. Barukh of Tulchin, “I cannot bear the pain and suffering of the villagers who have been expelled from their homes, into the cities, where they are dying of hunger in the streets.” For this reason he was collecting funds for them (Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 86).

133. Study of these is aided by the existence of a list of Purim discourses compiled by R. Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek*. The list begins with 1803 and ends with 1810. For each year it gives the opening words of the discourses relating to Purim said by R. Shneur Zalman. For the year 1807 R. Menahem Mendel writes, “it seems there was not a discourse on Purim.” See *Hosafah la-Sefer Or ha-Torah Megillat Ester* (1974), p. 51. The list presumably contains all the Purim discourses of R. Shneur Zalman’s later period then known to R. Menahem Mendel. However, he later discovered another, dated 1803, which is not included in this list but is mentioned in his notes to Psalms, published in *Sefer Tehillim Ohel Yosef Yizhak ha-Shalem* (Brooklyn, 1953), p. 373. It is interesting that R. Menahem Mendel chose to record only the discourses after “Peterburg.” Earlier teachings on the theme of Purim are extant and were probably known to him.

134. MAHZ 5564 (Brooklyn, 1980), p. 60.

135. We do find the theme of *mesirat nefesh* in Purim discourses of that year, but in a purely spiritualized form: i.e., concerning repentance rather than martyrdom. See *Seder Tefilot mi-Kol ha-Shanah*, (1965), fol. 283b–d (a discourse which can now be dated by the information supplied in MAHZ 5564, pp. 346–47); MAHZ 5564, pp. 61, 64.

136. This discourse attacks false paths in Divine worship, mentioning Sadducees and Karaites, and also refers to “more subtle” errors, such as those who say “they only have to study Torah, and throw off the yoke of (spiritual) prayer”—the *mit-nagdim*—and, yet more subtly, those within the Hasidic movement who do not seek personal spiritual improvement but say “let me believe in the *Zaddik*, and the *Zaddik* will raise me”—the Kalisk style of Hasidism. The theme of the discourse is that the Jewish errors cause more Divine anger than does the evil of the Gentiles. See MAHZ 5565, vol. 1 (Brooklyn 1980), p. 157ff. This discourse seems to be an inward-looking reaction to the promulgation of the harsh statute nine days previously.

137. MAHZ 5565, vol. 1, p. 402.

138. See *T. B. Men.* 53b.

139. MAHZ 5565, vol. 1, p. 402.

140. MAHZ 5565, vol. 1, p. 401.

141. MAHZ 5566 (Brooklyn, 1979), p. 122.

142. Particularly notable is the final discourse in R. Dov Ber’s work *Sha’arei Orah* (Kopys, 1822), published in the anxious atmosphere just preceding the reimplementation of the 1804 statute. See also a comparable discourse by R. Yosef Yizhak Schneersohn (1880–1950), delivered some months before his arrest by the Bolsheviks in 1927, printed in *Sefer ha-Maamarim* 5687, pp. 110–25.

143. A number of other discourses delivered in that year dwell on the theme of the self-sacrifice of the Jewish people in exile or undergoing oppression. Among these are three other discourses concerning Purim (*Torah Or*, 119c, 121d; MAHZ 5566, p. 152. See also *ibid.*, p. viii). It is noteworthy that we have two versions of a discourse by R. Shneur Zalman concerning an obscure passage in the *Idra Rabba*. One is headed “Liozna, approximately 1799” and is found in R. Menahem Mendel’s *Biurei ha-Zohar* (Brooklyn, 1968), p. 471; this discourse contains no reference to self-sacrifice. The second version, on the same passage of the *Idra*, was delivered in 1806. In this there is discussion of the martyr’s death of R. Akiva and of the idea that “this is His Might: Gentiles dance in His Sanctuary and He is silent” (see *T. B. Yoma* 69a). This discourse is printed in R. Dov Ber’s *Biurei ha-Zohar* (Brooklyn, 1955), fol. 89c. Another discourse of 1806 extolling self-sacrifice is in *ibid.*, fol. 100a. Another discourse, delivered on Hanukah at the end of 1805, does not speak of self-sacrifice but does, implicitly, refer to contemporary events, describing a battle between the Divine Guardian of Israel, and the heavenly “Prince” of a certain nation (Russia?) which “on account of jealousy, hates the Jews” and seeks to destroy them (MAHZ 5566, p. 106).

144. See n. 133 above.

145. S. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. 1, p. 351.

146. See *T. B. Yoma* 69b.

147. MAHZ 5568 (Brooklyn, 1971), p. 93.

148. Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, pp. 353–54.

149. See *Torah Or* 96c and MAHZ 5570 (Brooklyn, 1981), p. 37. The dated volumes of manuscripts of R. Shneur Zalman’s discourses stop at the year 1810. A Purim discourse of 1812 is printed in *Torah Or* 90a (see the editorial notes at the end of the Brooklyn, 1972 edition). This contains the same martyrological theme (fol. 91b).

Chapter Four

1. The contest for leadership of Habad has been discussed in L. Jacobs (trans.), *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 11–12, and *Seeker of Unity*, pp. 23–25; Rachel Elior, “The Controversy over the Leadership of the Habad Movement”; also her *The Theory of Divinity of Hasidut Habad*, pp. 5–14. See also Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, pp. 133–54, 186–91; Pesah Rudermann, *Ha-Shahar* 6 (Vienna, 1875), pp. 101–102; A. Gottlob, *Zikhronot u-Masa’ot*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1976), p. 152.

2. For the biography of R. Dov Ber, see L. Jacobs’s introduction to his translation of R. Dov Ber’s *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 20–26, Rachel Elior’s doctoral thesis (Hebrew University, 1976), pp. 362–74, and *Beit Rebbe* part 2. For that of R. Aaron see L. Jacobs, *Seeker of Unity*, pp. 11–26, and R. Elior, *Theory of Divinity*, pp. 3–21. Both these works expound and discuss R. Aaron’s teachings. R. Aaron was a descendant of R. Isaiah Horowitz (1555–1630), author of the kabbalistic classic *Shnei Luhot ha-Brit*. Born in Orsha in 1766, he died in 1828 in Staroselye. See also Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, pp. 133–35, and A. Horodetzky, *Hasidism and Hasidim* vol. 3 (Tel Aviv, 1951), pp. 215–25. R. Aaron’s works are *Sha’arei ha-Yihud ve-ha-Emunah* (Shklov, 1820); *Sha’arei Avodah* (Shklov, 1821); *Avodat ha-Levi*, vol. 1 (Lemberg, 1861) and vol. 2 (Warsaw, 1866). Selections of the latter work are also

published as a commentary to the Passover Haggadah in *Sod Kedoshim* (Warsaw, 1903). See L. Jacobs, *Seeker of Unity*, p. 16.

3. On the frontispiece of *Sha'arei ha-Yihud ve-ha-Emunah* (Shklov, 1820) it states that R. Aaron was a disciple of R. Shneur Zalman for thirty years. In the general introduction, "*Petah u-Mevo ha-She'arim*," fol. 15a (my pagination), R. Aaron states "nearly thirty years." Compare Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 133 n. 2. Since R. Shneur Zalman died in January 1813, R. Aaron must have become his disciple around 1783.

4. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 134.

5. See *ibid.* and D. Z. Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 58; Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh: Admur ha-Zaken, Admur ha-Emzai, etc.* (Brooklyn, 1980), pp. 103–4. Their expositions were an important institution in Liozna. In order to be permitted to hear them, each *hasid* needed formal testimony that he conformed to the high standard of religious earnestness set by R. Shneur Zalman.

6. See Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 134; *Avodat ha-Levi*, vol. 2, "*Likkutim*," fol. 13b–14b. Compare Jacobs, *Seeker of Unity*, p. 25 n. 8. See also Y. Mondschein, *Likkutei Reshimot u-Ma'asiyot*, pp. 43–46.

7. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 56. Hielman states at that time R. Aaron showed "great self-sacrifice" for R. Shneur Zalman (p. 134).

8. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 190. R. Yehudah Leib had an important position in the circle of R. Shneur Zalman. Hielman states, "most matters concerning our *Rebbe* were decided by him" (p. 109). The *Liozna Regulations* indicate that he had the duty of checking the transcripts of R. Shneur Zalman's discourses made by the Hasidic followers. He himself wrote transcripts, which were preferred by R. Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek*, when preparing his grandfather's teachings for publication. R. Yehudah Leib edited R. Shneur Zalman's *Shulhan Arukh*, which was published in 1814. His own rabbinic responsa are collected in *She'erit Yehudah* (Vilna, 1841; with additional material, Brooklyn, 1957).

9. Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 223.

10. For a discourse delivered by R. Aaron in the lifetime of R. Shneur Zalman see *Avodat ha-Levi*, vol. 2, "*Likkutim*," fol. 87d. This is dated "New Moon of Elul, 1805."

11. Thus states R. Yehudah Leib of Yanovitch in his letter to R. Aaron: R. Shneur Zalman encouraged R. Dov Ber to deliver discourses in his presence (*Beit Rebbe*, p. 190). R. Yehudah Leib adduced this as additional evidence that R. Dov Ber was the rightful heir to leadership. Seven discourses delivered by R. Dov Ber in Liady in 1807 are published as an appendix to *MAHZ 5567*, pp. 385–419.

12. See Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, pp. 224–27, a letter of 1810 after a fire which destroyed R. Shneur Zalman's home and library. R. Dov Ber requests support from the members of the fraternity for rebuilding the home, furnishing it, and setting up a new library. At pp. 228–33 is a letter by him beginning, "I have been ordered by my father the *Rav* to write in his name a reproof from hidden love to the fraternity in general. . . ." The letter concerns the demand for contemplation before prayer.

13. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 187. From R. Yehudah Leib's letter to R. Aaron we see that R. Shneur Zalman was aware of the ostracism to which he was subjected.

According to this letter, R. Shneur Zalman commented about this: "Suffering is only considered such when it is contrary to one's desire" (p. 189), which seems to imply he expected R. Aaron to have a philosophical attitude to his problems. If these arose, as is probable, from critical attacks by R. Aaron aimed against R. Dov Ber, it is unlikely that R. Shneur Zalman would have been very sympathetic. He certainly did not prevent R. Aaron from moving out of Liady around 1808.

14. See below, ch. 6, p. 209.

15. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, pp. 100, 184.

16. In the letter R. Dov Ber asks for *ma'amad* (see below) to be sent to him so that he could look after his mother and other members of R. Shneur Zalman's household. He addresses two of his closest followers among the *hasidim*, R. Pinhas of Shklov and R. Zalman of Dubrovna (see Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, pp. 139–40), giving them responsibility for this. *Ma'amad* (lit. "support") is the material support given by the *hasidim* to the *Rebbe*, establishing a spiritual bond. This theme is elaborated in the teachings of R. Elimelekh of Lizhensk (d. 1786). See Dubnow, *History of Hasidism*, pp. 182–83; Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer, "Le-Mahuto shel ha-Zaddik ba-Hasidut." See also Horodetzky, *Ha-Hasidut ve-ha-Hasidim*, vol. 3 (Tel Aviv, 1943), p. 85, regarding this institution in the Chernobyl school. It also had a central role in the interconnection between the community of *Zaddikim* in the Holy Land and their followers in White Russia. (See above, ch. 2, notes 37 and 38). Letters by R. Aaron Halevi are extant appealing for funds for R. Shneur Zalman and explaining the spiritual significance of the donation of such support to the *Zaddik* (see n. 6 above). See also Mondschein, *Migdal Oz* (1980) pp. 326–35.

17. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, pp. 103, 184; see also p. 198.

18. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 184. Lubavitch is about 15 miles northwest of Liady and about 40 miles southeast of Vitebsk. For a description of the town as it was around 1900 see R. N. Kahn, *Lubavitch ve-Hayaleha* (Kfar Habad, 1983).

19. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 187.

20. According to A. Gottlob, the two rival Habad groups were called the "Lubavitcher" and the "Staroselyer" (*Zikhronot u-Masa'ot*, vol. 1, p. 152).

21. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 187.

22. The case of Braslav provided a recent instance of the continuation of a Hasidic group without a successor being appointed to leadership. Rabbi Nahman had passed away in 1810. There was no successor, but the group did not end: Rabbi Nahman remained the *Rebbe*, and his disciple R. Nathan Sternhartz of Nemirov (1780–1845) was highly successful in organizing and inspiring the group. The example of Braslav may have influenced attitudes in the Habad group.

23. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 187: "*Ikh vell eikh zogen un zogen* (I will say and say [Hasidic teachings] to you) until they will come out of your noses!" According to Hielman, this was a turning point in relations between R. Dov Ber and his opponents among the senior *hasidim*. When, later, a number of these relented and wanted to become his followers, he did not accept all of them (p. 191).

24. A volume of these discourses on weekly scriptural readings was printed in R. Dov Ber's lifetime, entitled *Torat Haim* (Kopys, 1826). A second edition (Warsaw, 1866) included more material, completing the section on Genesis. A volume of discourses on Exodus was published in Shanghai, 1947, and further volumes have

appeared (*Maamarai Admur ha-Emzai*, Brooklyn 1985–88). These discourses were delivered by R. Dov Ber during the Hasidic gatherings on the Sabbath. Their close relationship to discourses by R. Shneur Zalman is pointed out in Rabbi M. M. Schneerson's preface to the 1947 volume. R. Dov Ber's discourses are invariably much longer than those of R. Shneur Zalman, providing the lengthy *hesber* (reasoned explanation) characteristic of R. Dov Ber's teachings. Other volumes primarily comprising his elaboration of his father's discourses are *Seder Tefilot Mikol ha-Shanah . . . im Perush ha-Milot* (Kopys, 1816); *Biurei ha-Zohar* (Kopys, 1816); *Perush ha-Milot* (Warsaw, 1867). The material in *Sha'arei Orah* (Kopys, 1822) also relates to specific discourses of R. Shneur Zalman (see the preface to the Brooklyn, 1956 edition).

25. R. Dov Ber's more obviously "original" works are *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut* (Koenigsberg, 1831?), later published as *Likkutei Biurim* (Warsaw, 1868), a tract on ecstasy in prayer; *Poke'ah Iyrim* (? , 1817), a work in Yiddish on repentance; *Sha'ar ha-Teshuvah ve-ha-Tefilah*, pts. 1 and 2 (Shklov, 1817, 1818) and *Derekh Haim* (Kopys, 1819), which concern subtleties of Divine service; *Ner Mizvah ve-Torah Or* (Kopys, 1820), comprising *Sha'ar ha-Emunah*, on faith and abnegation, and *Kuntres ha-Hitbonenut*, a tract on Habad contemplation; *Ateret Rosh* (Kopys, 1819), concerning the High Holidays; *Imrei Binah* (Kopys, 1821 and Kfar Habad, 1978), comprising meditative tracts on the *Shema* prayer, the prayer shawl, and phylacteries; *Bad Kodesh* (Warsaw, 1871), a work addressed to the non-Jewish governor of Vitebsk, explaining in kabbalistic terms the significance and responsibility of an earthly ruler (written in connection with R. Dov Ber's arrest in 1826); *Iyun Tefilah* (Piotrikov, 1904), a Yiddish tract on prayer; *Inyan ha-Hishtatshut* (Shklov, ?), attributed to R. Dov Ber, concerning the psychological and spiritual effects of visiting the graves of the *Zaddikim*. Other published material by R. Dov Ber includes various discourses printed separately or included in *Migdal Oz* (Kfar Habad, 1980), and his halakhic writings: *Piskei Dinim . . . Yoreh De'ah* (Brooklyn, 1958); *Piskei Dinim . . . Even ha-Ezer* (Brooklyn, 1977). Concerning the unusual nature of some of R. Dov Ber's writings, see Scholem's remarks about *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut* in *Major Trends*, p. 121, and Jacobs concerning *Bad Kodesh*, in *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 25.

26. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 183 n. 4.

27. *Sha'ar ha-Yihud* (also known as *Kuntres ha-Hitbonenut* [Tract on Contemplation]), fol. 2a–4b, in *Ner Mizvah ve-Torah Or* (Brooklyn, 1974).

28. *Ibid.*, fol. 4a.

29. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 187.

30. Concerning him see *ibid.*, p. 140. He died c. 1825.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 188–89.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 188. The *pidyon*, short for *pidyon nefesh* (redemption of the soul), is a term for a note given by a *hasid* to a *Rebbe* in which he asks the *Rebbe* to pray on his behalf. The *pidyon*, which may include a donation, expresses a spiritual interconnection (see n. 16 above). For texts of some Habad *pidyonot*, see Mondschein, *Migdal Oz*, pp. 324–26.

33. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 187.

34. See above, chapter 1, p. 13.

35. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, pp. 188–89.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 189–90. See n. 13 above.

38. R. Pinhas rebukes those who have appointed over them "a stranger, not from the seed of our *Rebbe*" (Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 189). R. Yehudah Leib writes: "Further, it is right that the son should be the successor to his father. Concerning being the successor to one's father Rashi comments 'if there are none greater than him among his brothers'. How much more if there is none greater than him in the whole land!" (p. 190. See Rashi to *T. B. Ketubot* 103b).

39. See S. A. Horodetzky, *Shivhei ha-Besht* (Berlin, 1922), p. 190 n. 8; A. Z. Aescoli, "Ha-Hasidut be-Polin," in I. Halpern, ed., *Beit Yisrael be-Polin* (Jerusalem, 1953), vol. 2, p. 96; S. Ettinger, "Ha-Hanhagah ha-Hasidit be-Izuvah," in *Dat ve-Heyrah be-Toledot ha-Amim* (Jerusalem, 1965), pp. 131–32; and Ada Rapoport-Albert, "Succession in Hasidic Leadership," ch. 2. In the Hasidic teachings of the time the issue of "son" versus "disciple" is but rarely mentioned. One example is found in *Likkutei Mubaran* by R. Nahman of Braslav: Since "the son derives completely from the father and there is not a hair which does not derive from the brain of his father, necessarily the understanding of the son is on a greater level than the understanding of the disciple" (part 2, Torah 7, sec. 8). Concerning this see Rapoport-Albert, "Succession in Hasidic Leadership," pp. 134–35. A brief reference to this is found also in the teachings of R. Shneur Zalman, prior to 1800: he states that the devotion of a disciple to his teacher is subject to vacillation, because it depends on the teachings he receives from him, which are limited and variable; by contrast the devotion of a son to his father is constant, because "it derives from the essence of the soul of his father, not from his teachings. . . . He is bonded to the essence of his father's soul" (*MAHZ Ethalekh-Liozna*, p. 169). Both these passages, by R. Nahman and R. Shneur Zalman, are found in a wider context which has no direct reference to the question of succession. An issue in Hasidic thought which is probably more relevant is that of the sanctity of the parents at the moment of conception, which imparts a special quality to their offspring. The prevalence of this concept would be likely to further the trend to dynastic succession. This concept is found in R. Elimelekh of Lizhensk's *No'am Elimelekh* (New York, 1916), *Mishpatim*, sec. *ve-zehu ve-eleh*, fol. 46a, a passage discussed by Horodetzky in the reference cited above, and Rapoport-Albert, "Succession in Hasidic Leadership," pp. 129–30. This concept is also expressed in *Tanya* 1, ch. 2, with the additional explanation that this sanctity at the moment of conception affects only the "garment" of the soul, "but as for the soul itself—sometimes the soul of an infinitely exalted person comes to be the son of a degraded and low man" (fol. 7a). A further statement by R. Elimelekh also qualifies the concept of inherited sanctity: the "self-made" *Zaddik* is in certain ways superior to the *Zaddik* who is such by virtue of his birth. See *No'am Elimelekh*, beginning of *Emor*, fol. 63b–c, and the discussion of this passage by Ettinger, "Ha-Hanhagah ha-Hasidut be-Izuvah," pp. 131, and Rapoport-Albert, "Succession in Hasidic Leadership," pp. 132–33.

40. See Rapoport-Albert, p. 88.

41. *Yad, Hil. Melakhim* 1:7. See also *Hil. Klei ha-Mikdash* 4:20. Historically, dynastic succession was a recurring tendency in Jewish leadership, a reflection of

the biblical examples of the significance of the Davidic line and of the descendants of Aaron (see S. Baron, *The Jewish Community*, vol. 1, p. 140, on the tendency to ascribe temporal and even regal power to the scholar and religious leader). Thus, in medieval times such posts as the Patriarch in Palestine and the Exilarch in Babylon had been hereditary (pp. 140–50). From the tenth to the sixteenth centuries, Egyptian Jewry had been ruled by a *Nagid*, a position likewise transmitted to a great extent from father to son: for some two hundred years this office was held by a chain of descendants of Maimonides. There were parallel systems of dynastic leadership in the Yemen, Kairawan, and Granada (pp. 190–91). In Europe the professionalization of the rabbinate, beginning in the fourteenth century, tended to restrict the power of the communal rabbi and also to limit the likelihood of hereditary succession (vol. 3, p. 132). The earlier hereditary principle, expressed by R. Meir of Rothenburg (*Responsa*, no. 110) was opposed by the communal plutocracy. See also S. Asaf, *Be-Oholei Yakov* (Jerusalem, 1943), p. 40. However, from the seventeenth century on the hereditary principle began to reassert itself.

42. Contemporary halakhic writings saw two contrasting directives from the past. On the one hand, the ancient kingship and high priesthood (as described in Talmud and Midrash) were hereditary, as was also the chain of leaders from Hillel the Elder. On the other hand, the special position of “the Priest Anointed for War” was not hereditary (see *T. B. Yoma* 73a), nor was membership in the Sanhedrin (see *T. B. Sanh* 37a and Rashi there). Hence, in the *Shulhan Arukh*, *Yoreh De’ah* 245:22, R. Moshe Isserlis supports the idea that communal rabbinic leadership should pass from father to son, as long as the son has the basic qualities necessary for the post. This view is endorsed by the Vilna Gaon (ad loc. sec. 38). However, R. Avraham Gombiner (1637–1683) expresses, somewhat ambiguously, an opposing view in his comments on the *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Haim*, end of sec. 53. He declares that the hereditary succession to Hillel’s post as Patriarch was merely “a custom” and that the hereditary principle does not apply to “the crown of Torah.” R. Moshe Sofer, writing in the 1820s, applies this latter view to questions concerning the post of communal rabbi in his responsa *Orah Haim*, no. 12 and *Hoshen Mishpat*, no. 22. See *Enziklopedia Talmudit* vol. 14, cols. 361–64.

43. See Rapoport-Albert, “Succession in Hasidic Leadership,” appendix 1.

44. Ibid., chapter 2.

45. Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 99.

46. This interchange is found in the collection of anecdotes compiled by Frumkin (Rodkinson) in the mid-nineteenth century, *Shivhei ha-Rav* (Jerusalem, 1961), fol. 17a. It also appears in *Buzina di-Nehora ha-Shalem*, sec. 12. It is discussed in relation to the question of hereditary succession by Ettinger, “Ha-Hanhagah ha-Hasidut be-Izuvah,” p. 131, and Rapoport-Albert, “Succession in Hasidic Leadership,” pp. 77–79.

47. See L. Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer* (London, 1972).

48. The practical aspects of prayer are to some extent defined in the *Shulhan Arukh*. Thus *Orah Haim*, sec. 95, 1–4, defines how one should stand with one’s feet together during the *Amidah*; sec. 131, 1–2, describes the seated position, face hidden by one’s arm, which is to be adopted during *nefilat apayim*. The practice of swaying to and fro during Torah study and prayer is mentioned in *Zohar* II, 218b–

219a; *Kuzari* 2, 79–80; *Sefer Hasidim* (Margoliot ed.), sec. 57; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Haim*, sec. 48. More exaggerated gestures during prayer are mentioned in the Talmud: Rabbi Akiva, when he said the *Amidah* in public, would complete his prayer quickly; however, in private, “a person would leave him in one corner and find him in another” because of the way he would bow during the prayer (*T. B. Ber.* 31a). In Hasidism emotionalism in prayer took practical expression through gestures, pacing to and fro at certain parts of the service, and sometimes more extreme behavior. R. Elimelekh of Lizhensk, a colleague of R. Shneur Zalman, makes the point that such gestures and movements, legitimate in the case of the *Zaddik*, are sometimes imitated by the Hasidic follower in a superficial way (*No’am Elimelekh* to Lev. 19:4 and 23:6, fols. 61b, 65a). For a survey of attitudes to gesture in prayer, see Jacobs, “Hasidic Prayer,” pp. 54–69.

49. See Willensky, *Hasidim and Mitnagdim* (Heb.), vol. 1, pp. 39, 59, 68, 82, 125, 138, 151, 156, 227, etc. See also Solomon Maimon, *Autobiography* (London, 1954), pp. 171–72.

50. Concerning the question of use of Hielman as a source, see above, chapter 2, n. 39.

51. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 31 n. 2.

52. Concerning the significance in early Habad of *Reshit Hakhmah* by R. Elijah de Vidas, see Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 118 n. 1. On the book itself and its influence on Hasidism, see M. Pechter, “Traces of the Influence of *Reshit Hakhmah* upon the Writings of R. Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye” (1986), p. 570ff.

53. Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 212; Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 40. Hillman identifies the recipient as R. Yitzhak of Ula, the brother-in-law of R. Moshe, the youngest son of R. Shneur Zalman. The same R. Yitzhak is termed a “major *hasid*” by Hielman, who likewise seems to identify him as the recipient of this letter (*Beit Rebbe*, p. 143). However, Levine, on the basis of manuscript evidence, identifies him as R. Yitzhak Yafeh of Kopys, possibly the father of R. Yisrael Yaffe, the printer. Much of this letter is translated by Louis Jacobs in *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 48–49.

54. *Tanya* 5, fol. 162b.

55. Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, pp. 213–14; Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, pp. 180–82.

56. Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, pp. 215–16; Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, pp. 177–79.

57. Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 216; Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, pp. 11–12.

58. *Tanya* 4, sec. 1, fol. 103a.

59. In the *Liozna Regulations*, R. Shneur Zalman makes provision for a few singular individuals who are permitted to pray outside the context of the normal prayer quorum. All others, however, have to participate in the normal services (Hillman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 58; Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 105). For a discussion of R. Shneur Zalman’s directives to his followers concerning prayer, see I. Etkes, “R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi as a Hasidic Leader,” pp. 347–49.

60. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 134.

61. Ibid., p. 184.

62. This is *Sippurim Noraim* (Lemberg, 1875). Yakov Cadaner also had a hand in the editing or writing of *Mazref ha-Avodah* (Koenigsberg, 1851) and *Vikuha*

Rabab (Chernovitz, 1864). See Y. Mondschein, "Ha-Sefarim Mazref ha-Avodah u-'Vikula Raba," p. 169. A commentary on *Tanya* is also attributed to him. See Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 213.

63. *Sippurim Noraim* (Jerusalem, 1957), p. 32. R. Levi Yitzhak himself had the reputation of being a great enthusiast in his prayer.

64. Ibid. See also Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 49 n. 34. Hielman quotes a statement attributed to the *Zemah Zedek* in which he says of his father-in-law and uncle R. Dov Ber, "His prayer had the quality of 'mind' . . . and *bitul* which are above ecstasy, totally pure" (*Beit Rebbe*, p. 184 n. 3).

65. The concept of such simplicity is not, however, entirely absent from earlier Hasidic thought. In the collection of Maggidic teachings called *Likkutim Yekarim*, first published in Lemberg in 1792, we find references to "shouting quietly," one's service being "within," and consequently "not visible to other people at all, that one does not make any movement with one's limbs" (Kahn edition, Jerusalem, 1974, secs. 6, 192). Another passage, found also in *Keter Shem Tov*, states as follows: "Sometimes one can serve G-d with the soul alone, that is, with one's thought; and sometimes one can recite the prayer with love and fear and great intensity, [but] without any movement. It would seem to another person that he is saying those words in an ordinary way, without any *devekut*. A person can achieve this when he cleaves greatly to G-d: then he can serve Him with the soul alone, with great and exalted love. This service is better and proceeds with more swiftness and cleaves more to G-d than the prayer which is visible externally on one's limbs. The *kelipah* cannot attach itself to such prayer, for it is all inward." (*Likkutim Yekarim*, sec. 211; *Keter Shem Tov* [Kehot edition, Brooklyn, 1972], sec. 233). It is noteworthy that in an early letter (before 1792) R. Shneur Zalman refers to such service in stillness as pertaining only to the "early *Zaddikim* who were greater than the ministering angels." By contrast, he states, the people of his generation are on a lower level and therefore should have an overtly enthusiastic style of prayer, despite the attacks of the *mitnagdim* who demand that "one should pray only like them, hurriedly and without any movement or raising of one's voice" (Hielman, *Iggrot Baal ha-Tanya*, p. 33; Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 33).

66. *Sippurim Noraim*, p. 33.

67. See G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, p. 122.

68. *Sippurim Noraim*, pp. 34–35.

69. Ibid.

70. In the case of R. Shneur Zalman, his visionary experience "on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, before *Musaf*" (following the blowing of the *shofar*) is probably to be considered an example of this kind of theurgy. A number of prophetic insights were imparted to him on this occasion, including his own death ("the one you love will be taken"). Most important, this experience was to dictate his subsequent attitude to Napoleon (see below, ch. 6, p. 209).

71. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 87. See also Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 41 n. 29. Habad tradition tells of the "Tolk" style of service, meaning the wild enthusiasm shown by R. Avraham of Kalisk in 1770, which aroused the ire of the Maggid and provoked the *mitnagdim*. See *Torat Shalom-Sefer Ha-Sihot* (Brooklyn, 1957), p. 55.

R. Shneur Zalman refers to this wild behavior of R. Avraham in a letter to him. See Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 126.

72. *Torah Or*, fol. 44a–b.

73. *MAHZ* 5565, vol. 1, pp. 423–34. See also pp. 429, 433. In this discourse emotion is given an important place, but ultimately *bitul* transcends it.

74. Ibid., p. 426.

75. *Torah Or*, fol. 83b. See also the discourse of 1807 in which R. Shneur Zalman states that true ecstasy from contemplation of the transcendent aspect of the Divine is something that Abraham could achieve, but others cannot: "It is not in the power of his soul to leave its sheath, which is the prison of his body" (fol. 67a). In fact this leads to a lack of egoism. Hence the Jews are extolled not for their emotional service but for their *bitul*. "They do not have the quality of 'there is a Self who is studying' and 'there is a Self who loves.' Rather, all have *bitul* in the radiance of the *Ein Sof*, and the radiance of the *Ein Sof* dwells in their Torah and their prayer" (fol. 67c). See also the passage in *Or ha-Torah, Bereshit*, vol. 5, pp. 1926–27, which condemns *hitlahavut*. Concerning this discourse, see n. 76 below. Another passage in R. Shneur Zalman's teachings extolling *bitul* beyond emotion is in *Torah Or*, fol. 60c.

76. This is recorded in a gloss by R. Shmuel Schneersohn (1834–1882), the fourth Lubavitch leader, on a manuscript of the discourse printed in *Or ha-Torah, Bereshit*, vol. 5, pp. 1914–28, according to a note by Rabbi Joseph I. Schneersohn, p. 2027–28. He adds that this discourse was said in a briefer form in 1800, shortly after R. Shneur Zalman's return from St. Petersburg, and was again said in 1803. The text in *Or ha-Torah* is longer than the original and is the work of the *Zemah Zedek*. See *Likkutei Diburim*, vol. 1 (Kfar Habad, 1973), pp. 41–42.

77. R. Aaron passed away in 1828. At this point many of his followers became *hasidim* of the *Zemah Zedek*. The others followed R. Haim Refael, R. Aaron's son, who, however, was not long lived. At his death the Staroselye followers joined Lubavitch, Lachovitz, Villednick, and Kaidanov (see Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 135).

78. See Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, pp. 134, 187.

79. For discussion of the conflict between R. Aaron and R. Dov Ber see L. Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 11–12, 41–49, and *Seeker of Unity*, pp. 12–13, 23–25, 85–86, 113–18; and Rachel Elijor, *The Theory of Divinity of Hasidut Habad*, pp. 307–26.

80. There is uncertainty about the date of the first printing of this work, *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut*, in Koenigsberg. Dubnow (*History of Hasidism*, p. 391) and Haberman ("Sha'arei Habad," sec. 32) ascribe the date 1825. However, Rachel Elijor interprets the printer's colophon not as 1825 but as 1831, and further suggests that this date was deliberately falsified in order to circumvent the severe governmental restrictions on Hebrew printing in Russia after 1837. Books would be printed in Koenigsberg, in Prussia, with title pages either lacking the date of printing or with a false, earlier date. Elijor considers *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut* was first printed in this way between 1837 and 1848. Her main evidence is that the printer demands copyright of the book until 1858; usually this was demanded for only ten years. See her "Dov Ber Schneersohn's 'Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut'" (1979). However,

whenever the work was first printed, it was certainly written and circulated much earlier. S. B. Levine, of the Lubavitch Library in Brooklyn, states that a manuscript colophon indicates that 1814 is the date of the publication of *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut* in the form of handwritten copies circulating among the *hasidim* (*Kiryat Sefer* 54 [1979], p. 830). A later printed edition of this work entitled *Likkutei Biurim* (Warsaw, 1868) includes a commentary by R. Hillel of Paritch (d. 1864), a leading disciple of R. Dov Ber and, after him, of the *Zemah Zedek* (see n. 105 below). Further references will be to this edition (*L. B.*).

81. There are two relevant letters by R. Dov Ber. According to Levine (see previous note) both were written in 1814. The first was published in 1868 as an introduction to *Likkutei Biurim*. The second was printed earlier, as preface to the 1831 (?) edition of *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut* (see Haberman, no. 234). In the Warsaw 1868 edition and in the manuscript used by Jacobs (see *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 27), the major part of the letter is found as a preface but the conclusion of the letter is *after* the text of the *Kuntres*, which is thus given the form of a lengthy epistle signed at the end by its author.

82. See the first letter on enthusiasm, *L. B.* 2a. A discussion of R. Dov Ber's views on enthusiasm in prayer is found in Rachel Elior, *Theory of Divinity of Hasidut Habad*, pp. 290–307.

83. See the reference to “the path of the old ones” in the letter introducing *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut*, *L. B.* 4a. See also Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 60 n. 1; Elior, *Theory of Divinity*, p. 295 n. 20; A. Marcus, *Ha-Hasidut* (Bnei Brak, 1980), p. 122.

84. “*Erbert zikh*” (*L. B.* 4a); Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 59.

85. *Ibid.*

86. From the earlier letter: *L. B.* 1b; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 180.

87. *L. B.* 4a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 58, 60.

88. A later tract with a rather similar aim is the *Tract on Prayer* (*Kuntres ha-Tefilah*) by R. Shalom Dovber (d. 1920), the fifth leader of Lubavitch. In 1900 it was publicized in manuscript form, and thousands of copies were made by the Habad followers. Twenty-four years later it was first printed in Vilna. A major theme of this tract is that one should avoid fooling oneself in the quest for ecstasy and enthusiasm in prayer. A complementary tract speaking of stages of Divine service in prayer, also similar to *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut*, is the *Tract on Service* (*Kuntres ha-Avodah*). This was written in 1910 and circulated among the *hasidim*. It was not printed until 1946, in Brooklyn.

89. See the passage quoted above (ch. 2, pp. 59–60). See also the first of R. Shneur Zalman's discourses to be printed (in the Shklov, 1806 edition of *Tanya*), describing the flux of Divine radiance caused by Torah study and the action of the Commandments. (This discourse is reprinted in the *Prayerbook*, fol. 18b).

90. *L. B.* 4b; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 61.

91. *L. B.* 7b–8a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 67–68.

92. *L. B.* 8a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 68.

93. *L. B.* 9b; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 70–71.

94. R. Dov Ber speaks of the five levels of the soul: *Nefesh*, *Ruah*, *Neshamah*, *Hayah*, *Yehidah* (*L. B.* 6a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 66), the last-named being the

deepest level. The structure of the *Tract on Ecstasy* is built around these five categories as they relate to the Vital Soul and the Divine Soul. See G. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 157–58.

95. *L. B.* 6b; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 66.

96. *L. B.* 7a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 67.

97. *L. B.* 10b; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 74. See also *Tanya* 1, ch. 19, fol. 24b.

98. *L. B.* 11a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 76.

99. *Torah Or*, fol. 67c. See above, n. 75.

100. *L. B.* 12b; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 78.

101. R. Dov Ber emphasizes the idea that a paradox is involved: *L. B.* 11a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 76, see n. 5. See also Jacobs, *Seeker of Unity*, p. 114.

102. For discussion of the distinction between the Divine and Animal Souls made in *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut*, see Jacobs, “The Doctrine of the Divine Spark” (1966), p. 107.

103. *L. B.* 16b; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 79.

104. *L. B.* 17a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 80.

105. *L. B.* 17a, “second version,” n. 11. R. Hillel ben Meir of Paritch, who was originally a follower of R. Mordekhai of Chernobyl, became one of the foremost followers of R. Dov Ber. Apart from the two versions of the commentary on *Kuntres ha-Hitpa'alut* printed in *Likkutei Biurim* (see Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 26) he wrote discourses of his own published under the title *Pelah ha-Rimon* (Vilna, 1887; Berdichev, 1918; Brooklyn, 1957. See Haberman, “Sha'arei Habad,” nos. 228–29). After R. Dov Ber's demise, R. Hillel became a senior follower and in some ways almost a colleague of his successor, the *Zemah Zedek*. R. Hillel died in 1864. An *obel* (prayer enclosure) was built at his graveside, and people would pray there as at the grave of a *Zaddik*.

106. *L. B.* 17a–18a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 80–81.

107. *L. B.* 18b; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 83.

108. *L. B.* 17a, “second version,” n. 13.

109. “From this there is born love, but his heart is not yet moved at all, only in thought; and this love is only in relation to action, not to an inner aspect at all, as is the ecstasy of the heart” (*L. B.* 18b–19a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 84).

110. *L. B.* 20a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 86. Compare *Zohar* II, 55b.

111. *L. B.* 20b; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 88.

112. *L. B.* 20b–21a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 88–89.

113. *L. B.* 21b; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 90.

114. *L. B.* 63b; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 160 (see n. 5).

115. *L. B.* 21b; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 92. See R. Hillel's commentary regarding this in *L. B.* 21b–22b. While R. Dov Ber in fact lists six levels, the first one is excluded from the final schema, so that the five remaining levels correspond to the five levels of the soul. See R. Hillel's opening comment in *L. B.* 16a and n. 94 above.

116. The first stage is an expression of “the basic Jewishness” of the person, which R. Dov Ber states expresses itself also “in women and unlearned people, who are meticulously careful to avoid that which is forbidden” (*L. B.* 46b; Jacobs, *Tract*

on *Ecstasy*, p. 114). The second stage of expression of the Divine Soul, which takes form as repentance and self-sacrifice, is described in *L. B. 50b–51a*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 125–26.

117. *L. B. 51b–52a*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 127.

118. *L. B. 52a*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 128. In the case of the Natural Soul “there is a Self which has ecstasy, and which considers itself very significant, till it makes the ecstasy the main thing, rather than the Divine.” Note that the third level of ecstasy of the Divine Soul corresponds to the *fourth* level of ecstasy of the Natural Soul: see n. 115 above.

119. “And this is the important principle: the deeper the ecstasy of the essence—such as a more inward love, desire and delight—the less will he feel it” (ibid.).

120. *L. B. 53b*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 133.

121. Ibid.

122. *L. B. 56a*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 140.

123. *L. B. 29b*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 97.

124. *L. B. 30b–31a*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 99.

125. *L. B. 36b*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 105.

126. “It is highly obvious to everyone that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* alighted on him (R. Shneur Zalman) when he revealed his radiance in hidden secrets of Torah” (from R. Dov Ber’s introduction to *Biurei ha-Zohar*, first published in 1816).

127. *L. B. 34b*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 103.

128. *L. B. 44b*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 110–11.

129. *L. B. 37a*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 105.

130. *L. B. 38a*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 106.

131. *L. B. 59b*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 149.

132. *L. B. 59a*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 147.

133. Ibid.

134. Is. 57:15. Compare *T. B. Sotah* 5a.

135. *L. B. 59b–60a*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 148–49.

136. *L. B. 60b*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 150.

137. *L. B. 64a*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 163.

138. *L. B. 65b*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 171.

139. *L. B. 66a*; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 173.

140. Concerning discussions of the differences between R. Aaron and R. Dov Ber, see n. 79 above.

141. The introduction to *Sha’arei Avodah* (Shklov, 1821) has no pagination. Commencing with the title page as fol. 1, the critique of R. Dov Ber begins in full force on fol. 12b. Much of it is translated by Jacobs in *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 42–46; see also *Seeker of Unity*, pp. 113–18. A list of R. Aaron’s works is in n. 2 above.

142. A number of letters from R. Aaron to R. Dov Ber have been published by Y. Mondschein in *Kerem Habad* 1 (1986). These letters are mentioned by S. B. Levine in *MAHZ ha-Kezarim*, p. 613 n. 33. One letter refers to a discourse said in 1795, and Levine considers that the letter was written in the summer of that year. The letters are written in a tone of enthusiastic friendship and also express the guidance of an older man to a youth. E.g., “throw away your *maase ingel* (childish behavior) and [your Divine service] shall no longer have the quality of a dream”

Kerem Habad, p. 98); “in brief, my Berel, follow me, do not consider the world, it is only a concealment” (ibid.). In 1795, R. Aaron was twenty-nine, while R. Dov Ber was twenty-two. It should also be borne in mind that but a few years previously R. Aaron, then in his early twenties, had been an enthusiastic follower of R. Shneur Zalman, while R. Dov Ber had been merely a young boy. Now, turning to the content of the letters: the first is on the dangers of mystical “broken-heartedness,” *tsubrokhenskayt* (although the word is not mentioned). The aim is ecstasy in the Divine rather than concern at one’s own lowness. However, R. Aaron concedes this does have a place (“but not too much”) in order to help one attain a more total abandon in the Infinite.

The second letter is an emphatic rejection of “the world.” This might concern primarily contemplation: one should not contemplate the lower aspects of the spiritual ladder, but only the higher. This point is in fact stated in the introduction to R. Aaron’s *Sha’arei Avodah*, fol. 13b (see n. 141 above) in the polemical passage against R. Dov Ber. R. Aaron states there that contemplation should be primarily on the “Upper Unity”—the Divine Oneness—rather than the “Lower Unity”—the Divine expressed in the world. A contrary approach is taught by R. Dov Ber in his *Tract on Contemplation*, in which the directive is towards seeing the *hitkalelut* (integration) and joining of the highest and the lowest in the ladder of existence. Another interpretation of this letter might be as concerns practical, political reality. R. Aaron says, “Listen, brother, why should I write overmuch. In brief we have to consider that all aspects of this world are a ‘behind’ (*an okhor*), that means a round-about way (*arum gang*), that is not the main thing.” (*Kerem Habad*, p. 98).

The third letter expresses with great intensity the Habad contemplative ideal: “there is no world! ‘mine’ and ‘I’ with all foolishness are totally annihilated, like the dust of the earth, ‘yes’ and ‘no’ are really equal” (ibid., p. 99). There is a strong emphasis that the stirring of the emotions is the goal. The letter refers to an identifiable discourse about the making of the Menorah (*Likkutei Torah be-Ha’alotekha* 32d) and mentions R. Dov Ber’s own statement that he finds difficulty “at the beginning of the making of the Menorah.” In the terms of that discourse, this means the process of refashioning the emotions so that they concern the Divine instead of worldly desires, symbolized as the beating of the block of gold into the form of the sacred Menorah, the seven branches of which express the emotions. This letter includes the statement “My dear brother, do not blame me that I endistance you. It is not so. I am seeking your real good. As I understand it, I am dealing harshly with you for your own good, to beat down the coarse ‘Litvak’ which is worthless and false” (p. 99). The ‘Litvak’ here presumably means the cold intellect associated with Lithuanian scholarship.

The fourth epistle refers to a letter from R. Dov Ber which claimed that R. Aaron wanted “to reveal the [Messianic] end.” This is possibly a reference to the emphasis on the emotions (see Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 87). R. Aaron’s letter continues by making the point that intellectualizing (“Wisdom” and “Understanding”) is not enough; there must be “Knowledge” which leads to *hitlahavut* (p. 100). R. Aaron says, in implied criticism of R. Dov Ber’s position, “we have too many illusions in our material brains and minds, it is not intellect but foolishness” (p. 101). The content of the two letters of 1797 fits Mondschein’s assumption that

they were written by R. Dov Ber to R. Aaron. Both are primarily transcripts of discourses by R. Shneur Zalman. Each of these expresses an idea which is contrary to the position of R. Aaron on the question of enthusiasm and relationship with the world. One speaks of the "channel of Wisdom which joins the mind and the heart. This cools the heart by drawing down fluid from the mind" (*MAHZ ha-Kezarim*, p. 21). The second letter-cum-discourse speaks of the "ascent" of the individual towards the Divine. One cannot compare the blessed *Ein Sof* with an earthly king. In the case of the latter, when a person comes close to the king "people say he becomes higher and higher, but when a person ascends in Divine service the person remains as he was, but G-dliness spreads through him and dwells in him with greater and greater revelation, this means [the Divine] descends lower and lower, and this is what is meant by 'being close to the King'. . . . Your brother the *Dov*" (ibid., p. 24). In this we see R. Dov Ber's direction towards the world—the emphasis on the "Lower Unity," contrasting with R. Aaron's constant thrust away from the world, into the "Higher Unity," the simple Oneness of the Infinite.

143. *Sha'arei Avodah, Hakdamah*, fol. 12b (see n. 141 above).

144. Ibid., fol. 14a.

145. Ibid., *Sha'ar Torah u-Mizvot*, fol. 55a.

146. Ibid., fol. 55b. Rachel Elior writes that R. Aaron opposes the distinction between true and illusory ecstasy "because he does not attribute true reality to the human distinction between truth and illusion in the light of, on the one hand, the fact that there is only one true existence, which is the Divine, and every level of attainment of man is but illusory compared with that; and on the other hand, the fact that from the point of view of the Divine, the Divine flow is equal in every Jewish soul" (*Theory of Divinity*, p. 308). From the point of view of R. Aaron "the illusion is also the power of the Divine which descends in the form of illusion to each and every man" (*Sha'arei Avodah, Hakdamah*, fol. 14b).

147. See also, in *Sha'arei Avodah, Shaar Yihud Zu'n ve-Torat ha-Adam*, fol. 35b; *Sha'ar Yihud ha-Neshamot*, fol. 46a–b; *Petaḥ ha-Teshuvah*, fol. 2b. See *Tanya* 1, ch. 43, fol. 63b, for a somewhat similar suggestion that the illusory love is ultimately true.

148. "On the contrary: when the heart does not feel enthusiasm at all then the emotions of the Animal Soul remain in all their strength, with an egoism which comes from evil, while the Divine Soul is never revealed. . . . It is shocking that in all aspects of worldliness, his desires and his passions, he expresses all his feeling with totally self-directed egoism—for this reason this is called *Nogah*, *Kelipah* and *Sitra Aḥara* [i.e., evil], while in Divine Service, any feeling is forbidden! These are the people who are extinguishing the lamp of Divine service" (*Sha'arei Avodah, Hakdamah*, fol. 12b).

149. Ibid.

150. "However [R. Shneur Zalman] also used to point out that the heart without knowledge [i.e., through contemplation] is also no good, because of the admixture of egoism, as was explained above on the verse 'the fool does not want understanding but only the revelation of his heart' (Prov. 18:2). This is as it is explained in the *Zohar*, sec. *Terumah* (*Zohar* II, 134a) . . . that before the unification of the Holy One and His *Shekhinah*, the *Sitra Aḥara* also wants to join in that

unity. In order to separate the *Sitra Aḥara*, that he should not confuse the unification, there is an announcement: 'Go out to see and gaze at the glory of the King!' Now, the *Sitra Aḥara* does not want to see the glory of the King, because 'the fool does not want understanding, but only the revelation of his heart.' Through this the *Sitra Aḥara* is separated from holiness, and when the *Sitra Aḥara* is separated, the unification takes place. The reason is as explained above: since the Divine Soul is en clothed in the Animal Soul, when it awakens in love and *devekut* to the Divine, in this awakening is mixed also the [egotistical] awareness of his love, that he is the one who loves, and he wants to cleave to Him because of his awareness of his own self. Therefore, in order to remove this feeling, one first has to contemplate, gazing at the glory of the King. Through his contemplation of the exaltation of the Divine beyond the worlds [he realizes] that there is nothing apart from Him at all and that from the point of view of His Divine Essence, existence (*yesh*) is completely abnegated. . . . Hence through this contemplation [his own] self becomes abnegated and the *Sitra Aḥara* is separated. . . . Therefore, enthusiasm of the heart without knowledge has in it also an admixture of self and evil but through contemplation and knowledge one removes the admixture" (*Sha'arei Avodah, Hakdamah*, fol. 13a–b. See also Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 43–44).

151. *Sha'arei Avodah, Shaar Yihud ha-Neshamot*, fol. 50b, 51a. This passage is in effect an expansion of the passage in *Tanya* 1, ch. 16, concerning the person whose emotions are not stirred, despite his contemplation. R. Aaron employs the same image as R. Shneur Zalman to describe this state: that of an unborn foetus (see also *Torah Or* 55a–b). R. Shneur Zalman employs the term "good thought" (see *T. B. Kid.* 40a) for the positive decision or direction which such a person can reach. Both R. Dov Ber and R. Aaron use this concept in their respective systems, although only R. Dov Ber describes in more psychological detail two aspects to it: "cold thought" and "good thought." See also *Tanya* 1, ch. 44, fol. 63b, which describes "depicting in one's mind" a category of love of the Divine, which leads to greater spirituality in practical observance despite the lack of actual emotion. This too is termed by R. Shneur Zalman "good thought."

152. *Sha'arei Avodah, Shaar Yihud ha-Neshamot*, fol. 43a. See also *Hakdamah*, fol. 10b and 15b: "Understanding without enthusiasm of the heart achieves nothing and further it is not called understanding at all."

153. As explained in *L. B.* 18a, "cold thought" is the intellectual excitement or fascination one might derive from contemplating the Hasidic teachings, making one sense the grandeur of the Divine but without the personal involvement of one's own self. "Good thought" is when one feels directly involved on a personal level, provoking a positive enthusiasm, albeit on a cerebral level.

154. According to R. Aaron, the attempt to go beyond the feelings of "self" which accompany enthusiasm in prayer is the constant struggle both of the *Benoni* (the Intermediate Man of *Tanya*) and of the *Zaddik*. "This battle is there for the *Benonim* all their lives and with *Zaddikim*, each one according to his service abnegates his feeling of 'Self', to remove the admixture [of evil]. By this are distinguished their levels [of attainment], for anyone who can abnegate his self to a greater degree, so that his love and cleaving and abnegation are more pure, is more distinguished in his attainment. Every *Zaddik* has [this] battle, as I write in

this work in the name of [R. Shneur Zalman] on the verse 'and I will remove illness from among you' (Ex. 23:25), that there is no one who can completely remove it, only the Holy One removes it. Therefore a person must die in order completely to remove his 'Self'. . . . Concerning this it says 'for there is no man on earth who is a *Zaddik* and does good and does not sin' (Eccl. 7:20)—all because of this feeling. No one has ever achieved this removal of the feeling of 'self' except Moses our Teacher and the great souls who achieved his level with the quality of . . . total *bitul*' (*Sha'arei Avodah, Hakdamah*, fol. 12b, paginated as per n. 141 above).

155. "Throughout Deuteronomy Moses said to the Israelites 'the L-rd *your* G-d,' 'to fear the L-rd *your* G-d,' and you who cleave to the L-rd *your* G-d,' 'you shall go after the L-rd *your* G-d'—it is thus in the whole of Deuteronomy. For the *bitul* of Moses our Teacher . . . was from the Essence, which is the blessed Tetragrammaton. In relation to His essence there is nothing apart from Him at all, and there is nothing separate from His being. Therefore, for him [Moses] love and fear did not apply. Hence he said 'you should love the L-rd your G-d (Deut. 6:5, 11:1),' specifically *your* G-d; for the *bitul* of the Israelites is precisely because of the Existence ("Yesh") which is revealed . . . therefore all their service is specifically through love and fear, with enthusiasm and feeling the *Yesh* ("Self")' (ibid., *Sha'ar Yihud ha-Neshamot*, fol. 39b–40a).

The theoretical system which places *bitul* on a higher level was shared by R. Aaron and R. Dov Ber, and also by R. Shneur Zalman. An early letter of the latter refers to the idea that stillness in prayer is indeed more exalted, but pertains only to the great *Zaddikim* of the past; in the present generation, overt enthusiasm and emotional gesture are required (see n. 65 above).

156. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 133ff.

157. Ibid., p. 206.

158. Apart from R. Aaron Halevi himself, fifty-eight names are listed as the major followers of R. Shneur Zalman. One of these, R. Alexander of Shklov, definitely died before 1813. Of the remainder, twenty-six are recorded as becoming followers of R. Dov Ber. Among these, one, R. Shlomoh Freidas of Shklov, is termed a "friend" of R. Dov Ber rather than a *hasid* (Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, pp. 141–42) and a further two are described as "only submissive" to his authority. These are R. Barukh Mordekhai of Babroisk and R. Moshe Meisels. These two wanted to move to the Holy Land after the death of R. Shneur Zalman. R. Dov Ber declined to permit this: "If you are mine and you listen to me . . . do not do this." They obeyed. After R. Dov Ber himself passed away, they did settle there (pp. 145–46).

159. This was R. Moshe Vilenkes (Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 151). He was with R. Dov Ber when he died in Niezin. See also p. 153 concerning R. Eliezer Higer of Chasnik, who was one of the five listed as following R. Aaron. Later he wanted to return to R. Dov Ber. The latter demanded fulfilment of "a certain condition" which he did not fulfil; he was therefore, according to Hielman, not accepted as a follower.

160. These are the elderly R. Yosef of Shklov (Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 142); R. Yitzhak of Yanovitch (p. 143); R. Mordekhai of Liepele (p. 147); R. Yosef of

Liepele (p. 147); the very elderly R. Issakhar Ber of Lubavitch (p. 148); and R. Yisrael Yafeh, the famous printer of Kopys (p. 149).

161. See Ada Rapoport-Albert, "Succession in Hasidic Leadership," pp. 295–96, for a similar generation difference in acceptance of R. Nathan as organizer of the group after the death of R. Nahman of Braslav.

162. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 152.

163. Ibid. These were later printed with the title *She'erit Yisrael* (Klausenberg, 1924). See the popular article (Yiddish) by Y. Mondschein, "R. Yisrael fun Dubrovna," in *Yiddishe Heim*, vol. 16, no. 1 (Brooklyn, 1974). Writing original discourses was not limited to the followers of R. Aaron: R. Hillel of Paritch, a close disciple of R. Dov Ber, is the author of discourses collected in *Pelah ha-Rimon* (see n. 105 above), and the teachings of R. Yitzhak Aizak Epstein of Homel, who first followed R. Shneur Zalman and later R. Dov Ber, are collected in *Hanah Ariel* (Berdichev, 1912).

164. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 153.

165. See the story about him in Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 151.

166. See above, chap. 3, p. 81.

167. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 152.

168. R. Aaron's letters are collected in the second section (*Likkutim*) of *Avodat ha-Levi* (Lemberg, 1862). A number of R. Dov Ber's letters were published in *Meah She'arim* (Berdichev, 1913). See Haberman, no. 170. A recent, more comprehensive collection is in S. B. Levine's *Iggrot Kodesh*.

169. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 134 n. 3. R. Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, the fifth Lubavitch leader, stated that the path of Staroselye was suitable for R. Aaron himself, although it was not necessarily suited to his followers (*Torat Shalom, Sefer ha-Sihot*, p. 55).

170. In the notes at the end, before the brief biography of R. Shneur Zalman.

171. See the statement about R. Aaron by R. Zvi Hirsch of Chasnik in his approbation to *Avodat ha-Levi*: "His whole aim was to publicize his teachings and he would strongly urge his disciples to disseminate them to anyone who would give ear to listen." On the "enchanted" quality of R. Aaron's discourses, see R. N. Kahn, *Shmuot ve-Sippurim* (Kfar Habad, 1976), p. 38. See Rachel Elijor, *Theory of Divinity*, p. 13. It is noteworthy that R. Aaron saw his work *Sha'arei ha-Yihud ve-ha-Emunah* as an introduction to direct study of the Lurianic Kabbalah (*Sha'ar Katnut ve-Gadlut*, fol. 24a, the final page). See Elijor, *Theory of Divinity*, p. 371.

172. See *Tanya* 2, ch. 7. A complementary view is given by Rachel Elijor, who terms the path of R. Aaron "theocentric" and that of R. Dov Ber "anthropocentric" (*Theory of Divinity*, p. 325).

173. See above, ch. 3, n. 47.

Chapter Five

1. See above, ch. 4, n. 24, 25.

2. At the end of his introduction to *Derekh Haim* R. Dov Ber writes: "I know the nature of the members of the fraternity (*anshei shlomenu*) who do not spare any expense to acquire [Hasidic teachings] in manuscript. Yet when those very same

words are printed they do not bother to buy [the book], even at the lowest price. When they do buy it, they bind it nicely and leave it in a corner for when they have spare time to study. But they never find time, because of the great pressure of work."

3. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 185 n. 5. Hielman also describes an occasion when R. Dov Ber said discourse after discourse on *Simhat Torah* till well on in the evening. Only then were his followers able to go home to eat the festive meal. He adds that R. Dov Ber's aim was that the most exalted themes should be "cast down in the streets" (Lam. 4:1), "that when two people would meet in the street they would speak about Hasidic teachings, about *Arikkh* and *Arik* (aspects of *Keter*)" (ibid.).

4. See below, ch. 6, p. 190.

5. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 185 n. 1; Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 313. The letter is translated by Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, pp. 22–23. One manuscript dates this letter 1823. The letter concludes by expressing the fear that if such measures are not embarked on, the Jewish community might be banished to some remote province. Comparable suggestions about the economic life of the Jewish community are found in the writings of some *maskilim*, such as Menasseh ben Joseph of Ilya (1767–1831), a disciple of the Gaon of Vilna. See Rachel Elijor, "Theory of Divinity . . . in the Second Generation of Hasidut Habad" (doctoral thesis, Hebrew University, 1976), p. 365 n. 6, and B. Z. Dinur, *Be-Mifneh ha-Dorot* (Jerusalem, 1972), p. 259.

6. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 191ff; Levine, p. 276ff.

7. A letter concerning the fund is in Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 256, written 1814–16. Habad traditions date the establishment of the settlement in Hebron as 1816–17 (see *Ha-Yom Yom*, p. 5). In 1819 fifteen Habad families left Safed and settled in Hebron (see Yaari, *Shluhei Erez Yisrael*, p. 679), and in 1823 a number of Habad *hasidim* travelled from Russia to Hebron. See Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 500. Documents on the later history of the Hebron community are collected by Y. Mondschein in *Migdal Oz* (Kfar Habad, 1980), p. 513ff. See also Levine, *History of Chabad in the Holy Land: 1777–1950* (Heb.).

8. Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 305.

9. See Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 202.

10. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 194; Levine, p. 284.

11. *Al Tozar et Moav* (Kfar Habad, 1976).

12. R. Dov Ber complained about this to R. Akiva Eger. He writes that R. Akiva "asked about the situation in our country, and I told him about the causeless rift between the *mitnagdim* and the *hasidim*." (Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 194; Levine, p. 284).

13. See below, chap. 6, p. 206.

14. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 201. R. Dov Ber's case was referred to St. Petersburg. Concerning the Veliz blood libel, which dragged on for twelve years, see Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. 2, pp. 75–84.

15. An earlier outline of the scheme which later became enforced as the Cantonist Decree is an anonymous memorandum from the archive of the political police entitled "Memorandum on how to attract Jews for the Welfare of the Empire—to

lure them to the Christian faith and eventually, through rapprochement, to merge them with the rest of the subjects" (Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. 5, p. 154 n. 4). Dubnow emphasizes the conversionary aspect of the way the decree was enforced (pp. 159–60). See also Michael Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews* (1983), pp. 15, 22–25. Physical torture was employed to induce the young recruits to let themselves be baptized.

16. It is quoted in Hielman, *Beit Rebbe* (p. 203 n. 1) and has been published in full from manuscript sources by Y. Mondschein, *Migdal Oz*, pp. 400–407.

17. *Migdal Oz*, p. 404.

18. Ibid., p. 406.

19. See Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, pp. 203–4; *Migdal Oz*, pp. 408–11. The event is seen as reminiscent of the ecstatic death of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai as described in the *Idra Zuta* (*Zohar* III, 287b–296b).

20. *Migdal Oz*, p. 410.

21. See Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 103, and R. Dov Ber's letter in Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 235. The fact that R. Dov Ber was concerned to have his father's works published at that difficult time is discussed in *Siḥat Tet Kislev 5739* (Brooklyn, 1978), pp. 6–9.

22. See Mondschein, *Torat Habad, Sefer ha-Tanya*, vol. 1 (1982), p. 60.

23. See Teitelbaum, *Ha-Rav mi-Liadi*, vol. 1, p. 252, and Mondschein, *Torat Habad, Sifrei Halakhah shel Admur ha-Zaken*, vol. 2 (Kfar Habad, 1984), p. 9 for discussion of the date of composition of this work. The introduction by the author's sons states that it was begun at the behest of the Maggid of Mezeritch and that by the early 1770s a considerable portion of it—section *Orah Haim*—had been completed. The statement in sec. *Hoshen Mishpat*, *Hilkhot Halva'ah* sec. 36, that "(5)544 was a Shemittah year" indicates that this section was written, or edited, between 1785 and 1791.

24. See above, ch. 3, p. 87, and Mondschein, *Torat Habad*, vol. 2, p. 28. The original introduction by the author's sons, in a passage apologizing for the poor state of the text (after the text was improved, for the second edition, this passage was deleted; it is printed in the modern edition, Kfar Habad, 1968, in the appendices to vol. 6, p. 1929), mentions two fires which destroyed the manuscripts in R. Shneur Zalman's own hand, and the published edition therefore had to be based on copies. One fire was in 1810 and is mentioned in a letter by R. Dov Ber (see Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 225). R. Shneur Zalman's home in Liady was also destroyed by fire in the French retreat in 1813; see R. Dov Ber's letter in *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 235. See also Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 103.

25. R. Dov Ber's preface is printed at the beginning of the standard edition and in Mondschein, pp. 34–35. See R. Shneur Zalman's letter printed at the end of *Tanya* 5, fol. 163a, concerning dividing the tractates of the Talmud among the members of each Habad community so as to complete the Talmud in a year.

26. R. Asher b. Yehiel (1250–1327) wrote a precis of the halakhic portions of the Talmud, similar to that of the earlier R. Yitzhak Alfasi (1013–1103), except that unlike the latter he included the teachings of the Franco-German school. His son, R. Jacob (1280–1340), wrote the *Sefer ha-Turim*, which divides all halakhah into four broad classes (*Orah Hayim*, *Yoreh De'ah*, *Even ha-Ezer*, *Hoshen Mishpat*,

concerning (1) daily life; (2) more complex laws of daily life, such as Kashrut; (3) family relations; and (4) business law and justice, respectively) and deals systematically with each class, discussing the topics in separate sections. The essays on each topic are clear and sparing in quotation of sources. The *Tur*, as it is usually termed, provided the basic structure for subsequent codes, both in its division into four and its numbering of topics. R. Joseph Caro (1488–1575) wrote a thorough commentary on the *Tur*, called *Beit Yosef*. This remains the most complete exposition of the halakhic teachings of the scholars prior to the sixteenth century. R. Joseph Caro then compiled his *Shulhan Arukh* (lit. “laid-out table”) which is a brief digest of the larger *Beit Yosef*, retaining the classification system of the *Tur*. The *Shulhan Arukh*, together with the glosses appended by R. Moshe Isserlis of Krakow (1520–1572), became the main *Code of Law* for subsequent generations. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries further commentaries were written on the *Shulhan Arukh*. R. Shneur Zalman’s *Code* is a reformulation of the halakhah, employing the same classification system as the *Shulhan Arukh* and incorporating the views expressed by its later commentators.

27. This section of R. Shneur Zalman’s *Code of Law* was printed as an appendix to two of the volumes printed in 1814; in the third volume, selections from *Hoshen Mishpat*, it was printed as a running commentary at the foot of the page. This system was followed in the 1816 edition and subsequently. Concerning the content of this highly complex discussion of the halakhah, see Mondschein, pp. 15–19.

28. These are commentaries on the *Shulhan Arukh* of R. Joseph Caro. R. Shneur Zalman’s halakhic decisions in his *Code* usually follow the view of the *Magen Avraham*.

29. R. Yitzhak Alfasi (1013–1103) compiled a compendium comprising the halakhic material of the Talmud. Study of this together with the Mishnah would provide a sound perspective on the halakhic structure of Judaism. The books and commentaries listed by R. Dov Ber are standard works of rabbinic scholarship, suitable for mature study.

30. An anthology of aggadic material from the Talmud, compiled by R. Yakov ibn Habib, an exile from Spain. R. Shneur Zalman advises his followers to study this daily between the Afternoon and Evening Services, “because most secrets of Torah are concealed in it” (*Tanya* 4, ch. 23, fol. 137a). This work was very popular among relatively unlearned people, who would be taught it in groups by a scholar, such as the communal rabbi. However, for the Habad *hasidim* it acquired an extra dimension of significance since many Habad discourses draw on and clarify otherwise enigmatic statements in the aggadic literature. The *Ein Yakov*, expounded by a scholar, therefore became a ready means for communicating the Hasidic ethos to the members of a community.

31. By R. Elijah de Vidas (d. 1518). Hielman states that R. Shneur Zalman insisted that his followers study this work. He said, “Anyone who does not study *Reshit Hakhmah* should not be taught Hasidic teachings.” According to Hielman, it was also regarded by the *mitnagdim* as the beginning of Hasidic study (Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 118 n. 1). See also M. Pickarz, *The Beginning of Hasidism* (Heb.), p. 102, and M. Pechter’s articles about this work.

32. By R. Isaiah Halevi Horowitz (1555–1630). Mendel Pickarz has shown the

significance of this work as an early expression of most of the basic concepts of Hasidism. See *The Beginning of Hasidism*, index q.v. *Shelah*.

33. R. Moshe Zaccuto (1625–1697) was a remarkable man of many parts. His commentary on the *Zohar* (cited by R. Shneur Zalman in *Tanya* 1, ch. 17, fol. 23a) is much quoted in *Mikdash Melekh* (see next note) but otherwise remains in manuscript. See Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 449–51.

34. By R. Shalom Buzaglo (d. 1777), who was born in Morocco at the beginning of the eighteenth century and lived subsequently in London and Amsterdam. His *Mikdash Melekh* is a largely Lurianic commentary on the *Zohar* which was printed in Lemberg, 1793, with an approbation by R. Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, among others. This fact indicates its importance for the Hasidic movement. An article by H. Loewe, “Solomon ben Joseph Buzaglo,” gives some information about the life of this kabbalist (*Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 26), and Cecil Roth, in *Transactions JHSE* 23, discusses the Buzaglo family. I am grateful to Professor R. Loewe for these references.

35. By R. Haim Vital (1542–1620), printed in Zolkiev, 1773. See Scholem, *Kabbalah*, p. 446.

36. *Shulhan Arukh* (Kfar Habad, 1971), vol. 1, p. viii; Mondschein, *Torat Habad*, vol. 2, p. 34.

37. *Seder Tefilot . . . im Perush ha-Milot* (Kopys, 1816). See Haberman, “Sha’arei Habad,” *Alai Ayin* (Jerusalem, 1948–52), no. 137.

38. *Biurei ha-Zohar* (Kopys, 1816). See Haberman, no. 15.

39. The tract begins with the idea that all existence is the product of a stream of Divine letters which continuously gives it being. The name of any object in Hebrew denotes the combination of letters giving it life. These letters derive from the opening verses of the Torah, the Ten Statements with which the world was created (see Mishnah, Ethics 5:1), through a process of kabbalistic transformations and letter-changes which reduce the force of energy so that it can give life to a finite realm. The world depends totally on this stream of Divine energy: if it would cease, the world would disappear, as before Creation (ch. 1, fol. 76b). This implies that all is as nothing before the Divine, and to explain this another metaphor is employed from chapter 3 onwards. Existence is compared to a ray of light emanating from the sun, i.e., from the Divine source. Inside the body of the sun, this ray of light is as nothing; so too, existence, which is given life by and is indeed immersed in G-dliness, is as nothing. It is only the Divine power of veiling and *Zimzum* which enables the human being to see the world as having existence. The interplay between the Divine powers of revelation and concealment are the source of the letters of the Torah (ch. 5). These contrasting powers are expressed by two different Divine Names: the Tetragrammaton denotes revelation and the ultimately Divine Unity, while the Name *Elo-him* expresses concealment and has the same numerical value as *ha-Teva*, the Hebrew word for Nature. In truth, these two Names are one, and Nature, all existence, has no separate reality from the point of view of the Divine (ch. 6). Two different perspectives are then defined: the Upper Unity, in which all is seen as absorbed in the Infinite, and the Lower Unity, in which the Infinite is perceived as expressed by the world (ch. 7). These two contemplative perspectives are manifested in the first two utterances of the *Shema* prayer, respec-

tively. The tract continues with the discussion of the interpretation of the Lurianic concept of the *Zimzum* and of the use of the terminology of the *Sefirot* in relation to the Divine (chs. 7–11). It concludes with reiteration of the central theme that existence manifests the stream of Divine energy, described both as “downchaining” combinations of Hebrew letters and also as a series of stages of increasingly veiled levels of the radiance of the Divine. For discussion of these ideas, both in themselves and in relation to previous kabbalistic teachings, see M. Teitelbaum, *Ha-Rav mi-Liadi*, vol. 2, chs. 1–4; L. Jacobs, *Seeker of Unity*, chs. 2–4. Jacobs then continues (pp. 90–112) with an exposition of R. Aaron Halevi’s discussion in his own works of these teachings by R. Shneur Zalman. This aspect of R. Aaron’s thought is explored by Rachel Elior in *Theory of Divinity* (Heb.), pp. 25–118. See also Y. Jacobson, “Torat ha-Beriah shel R. Shneur Zalman mi-Liadi,” *Eshel Be’er Sheva*, 1976.

40. Chapters 20–21 depict existence in terms of an unpronounced word in the ‘mind’ of the Divine, and chapters 42–50 give a variety of contemplative perspectives which lead either to fear or love of the Divine in a number of different ways.

41. *Tanya* 5, fol. 162a ff.

42. *Tanya* 4, sec. 24, fol. 137a.

43. L. B. 1b. This is from R. Dov Ber’s first known encyclical epistle on the theme of Divine service, after the demise of his father. It was written in 1814.

44. It was printed in a work entitled *Ner Mizvah ve-Torah Or*, comprising *Sha’ar ha-Emunah* (Gate of Faith) and *Sha’ar ha-Yihud* (Gate of Unity). The introduction indicates the latter work was also known as *Kuntres ha-Hitbonenut*, *Tract on Contemplation*. See Haberman, no. 129.

45. *Sha’ar ha-Yihud* (hereinafter *SHY*), in *Ner Mizvah ve-Torah Or* (Brooklyn, 1974), fol. 2a.

46. For exposition and discussion of this see L. Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer*, pp. 84–91, and Rachel Elior’s doctoral thesis, pp. 433–43.

47. These terms were first employed by R. Shneur Zalman; see *Tanya* 4, sec. 15, fol. 124a. The “river” in R. Dov Ber’s imagery pertains to the traditional kabbalistic symbolism for the *Sefirah Binah*. See *Pardes*, *Sha’ar* 23, entries *nahar* and *rehovot*. See also Elior dissertation, p. 434.

48. *SHY*, ch. 1, fol. 2a–b.

49. Based on the use of this verb in the verse “and Adam knew Eve” (Gen. 4:1). See *Tanya* 1, ch. 3, where the terms *Hokhmah*, *Binah*, and *Da’at* are defined in the context of the contemplative process.

50. *SHY*, end ch. 1, fol. 3a.

51. R. Dov Ber quotes Prov. 20:5: “Deep water is the counsel in a person’s heart, and the man of understanding (*tevunah*) can draw it out.”

52. *SHY* 3b. See Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer*, p. 86.

53. The critique of *pilpul* was not limited to the *hasidim*: see M. Piekarz, *The Beginning of Hasidism* (Heb.), pp. 305–20. For the effect of the emphasis on *pilpul* in the breakdown of the relationship of the scholar and society, see Dresner, *The Zaddik*, p. 30.

54. *SHY* 4b.

55. See Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer*, p. 87; Elior, dissertation, p. 435ff.

56. *SHY* 4b. Both these “general” perspectives are found in the second section of *Tanya*. See above, n. 39.

57. *SHY* 4b. R. Dov Ber describes these two levels of contemplation as contemplation “in detail” of (a) the Lower Unity (the *Sefirot* of the Four Worlds) and (b) the Upper Unity: the Lurianic *Parzufim*—“Visages”—of *Azilut* and beyond.

58. *SHY* 4b–5a.

59. *SHY* 5a.

60. *Ibid.*

61. The most important of these was *Seder Tefilot . . . im Perush ha-Milot* (Kopys, 1816), a prayerbook with Habad discourses as commentary on the prayers (see below).

62. *SHY* 5b.

63. *SHY* 7a.

64. This might originally have been conceived as a separate work. In the first section of *Tract on Contemplation*, there is reference to the second section as “a special tract” which will explain the detailed subject matter for contemplation (*SHY* 5a, beginning of ch. 5).

65. *SHY*, chs. 7–8, fol. 7a–9a.

66. See *SHY*, chs. 10, 15, 21, 31, 33, 36, 43, 53. See Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer*, p. 91, and Elior dissertation, p. 433.

67. *SHY*, ch. 53, fol. 39a.

68. *Ibid.*, 39b.

69. This artefact excited the interest of more than one Hasidic leader. See R. Nahman of Braslav’s *Sippurei Ma’asivot* (Jerusalem, 1970), 51b. During the late eighteenth century, a considerable number of atlases were produced in France and Germany which may have reached the Jews of Russia. See R. V. Tooley, *Maps and Map-Makers* (London, 1949), pp. 27, 43.

70. *SHY*, ch. 33, 25b–26a. Other examples of employment of the *mashal* are found in chs. 12, 13, 14, 17, 24, 26, 28.

71. *SHY* 38a; see also 33b. On the concept of the *mashal* see also *Imrei Binah*, *Sha’ar ha-Keriat Shema*, 16a–b, 50d; *Sha’arei Orach*, pp. 131–32.

72. *SHY* 33b.

73. *Ibid.*

74. On *gematria*, see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 351–52. A later Habad writer who did expound *gematria* profusely is Rabbi Levi Yitzhak Schneersohn (1878–1944), father of the present leader of the Lubavitch movement, in his commentaries on Scripture, *Zohar*, and Talmud, and also in his letters. See *Torat Levi Yizhak* (Brooklyn, 1971); *Likkutei Levi Yizhak*, vols. 1–3 (Brooklyn, 1970–73).

75. *Tanya* 2, ch. 1 (see n. 39 above). Compare R. Haim Vital’s *Ez Haim*, “Gate of Cantillation Signs, Vowels, Words and Letters,” ch. 3: “All the worlds were created by the twenty-two letters of *Malkhut*.”

76. *Tanya* 2, ch. 4, fol. 79b.

77. The source of this image is the beginning of the *Zohar*, which describes the commencement of all Creation as a process of “engraving engravings in the upper purity” (*Zohar* I, 15a).

78. See *MAHZ* 5567, pp. 392, 236.

79. *SHY*, ch. 38, fol. 28b–29a. This passage depicts the stages in the process of existence emerging from the Divine in terms of the psychological categories which lead from the essence of a person's being to will, intellect, emotion, and finally action. This movement from the microcosm to the macrocosm, often citing the verse "From my flesh I will perceive the Divine" (Job 19:26), has an important place in the Habad system of contemplation. See above, ch. 2, p. 53.

80. *SHY*, ch. 45, fol. 33b.

81. *Ibid.*, ch. 51, fol. 37b.

82. See above, ch. 4, n. 105.

83. *L. B.*, section *Sha'ar ha-Yihud*, 3b ff. This way of presenting the theme of contemplation is found also in R. Dov Ber's *Imrei Binah*, *Petaḥ ha-Sha'ar*, chs. 3–4.

84. *L. B.*, section *Sha'ar ha-Yihud* 5c.

85. *Ibid.* 5a.

86. *Ibid.* 5b.

87. S. Zalmanoff's *Sefer ha-Nigunim* (Brooklyn, 1948), a collection of the melodies of Habad, includes a melody entitled "Melody of the Ensemble of the *Mitteler Rebbe*" (vol. 1, no. 12). Zalmanoff explains that R. Dov Ber had an ensemble of instrumentalists and quotes the following from R. Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn: "Once the *Zemah Zedek* was asked why the *Mitteler Rebbe* had a musical ensemble. He answered: 'This was made in order to hold back my father-in-law—the *Mitteler Rebbe*—from expiration of the soul, for he might have expired into the Divine'" (*ibid.*, p. 46). The suggestion is that the music played by the ensemble would draw the *Rebbe*, deep in the silent ecstasy of his contemplation, back into the world. In fact, the melody does begin with a slow, ethereal passage, gradually increases in pace, as it were reentering life, and concludes with a joyful march.

88. *Seder Tefilot mi-Kol ha-Shanah* (Kopys, 1816). A second edition was printed in Berdichev, 1818. A third edition published in R. Dov Ber's lifetime was in Kopys, 1823; however, no copies of this are extant. See Y. Mondschein, *Torat Habad*, vol. 2, pp. 55–57.

89. The tract is printed in two parts: first the section which pertains to weekdays (*Seder Tefilot*, Brooklyn, 1965, fol. 39b ff.), then the section which pertains to the additional "Verses of Praise" (i.e., psalms) said on Sabbaths and festivals (fol. 178a ff.).

90. *Seder Tefilot*, introduction by R. Dov Ber.

91. The *Seder Tefilot* is to be considered in the context of other versions of the prayerbook which sought to communicate the *kavvanot* of R. Yitzhak Luria (see the introduction by R. Avraham David Lavat to his *Sha'ar ha-Kolel* in *Siddur Torah Or*, originally published Vilna, 1887, reprinted Brooklyn, 1987, p. 249; see also G. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, p. 179). Thus R. Emmanuel Hai Ricci's *Mishnat Hasidim* was printed in Zolkiev, 1744, then in 1756 R. Aryeh Leib Epstein published *Mishnat Gur Aryeh*. This latter publication was cited as a precedent in one of the approbations to an edition of the prayerbook with the Lurianic *kavvanot*, printed in Zolkiev, 1781, called *Seder ha-Tefilah*. All the approbations express concern that this esoteric work was being printed. R. Mordekhai Zev, head of the Beth Din of Lemberg, gives his approbation because the text is being printed without vowel

points "so that not everyone will be able to use it." R. Zvi Hirsch, the head of the Beth Din of Brody, likewise warns against use of the book by ordinary people. In 1782, an edition of R. Haim Vital's *Pri Ez Haim* containing *kavvanot* was printed in Koretz. Three years later it was reprinted with corrections by R. Shabtai Rashkover. In the same year, 1785, a prayerbook incorporating the kabbalistic tract *Mishnat Hasidim* (by R. Emmanuel Hai Ricci) was printed in Koretz. This bears as subtitle *Seder Tefilah mi-Kol ha-Shanah*, similar to the title adopted by R. Dov Ber. In 1788, R. Asher Margoliot had printed at Lemberg an improved edition of the Zolkiev, 1781 prayerbook, with an approbation by the non-Hasidic Sages of the Klaus of Brody. The editor cites the *Mishnat Hasidim* and the manuscript text of the Lurianic prayerbook of R. Shabtai of Rashkov. The latter's *Kelalut Tikkun ve-Aliyot ha-Olamot* (Summary of the Putting Right and Raising of the Worlds) was also published in Lemberg, 1788 (together with *Shulḥan Arukh ha-Ari*). This was a brief resume of the Lurianic *kavvanot* for daily prayer. In 1794 there was a Hasidic edition of the Lurianic prayerbook: it comprised R. Shabtai of Rashkov's text, with the addition of *Yihudim* (Unifications) by the Baal Shem Tov. At the beginning is R. Shabtai's *Kelalut Tikkun ve-Aliyot ha-Olamot*. It is noteworthy that this Hasidic edition omits the more overtly sexual imagery found in the 1788 text, in a section headed *Zivugim hana'asim be-khol ha-tefilot* ([Spiritual] copulations achieved through each of the Prayers). Probably it was felt that these esoteric teachings might be misunderstood by those at whom the publication was aimed. This prayerbook of R. Shabtai has as its main title *Seder Tefilah mi-Kol ha-Shanah*. Like R. Shneur Zalman's *Tanya*, it was published with an approbation by R. Meshulam Zusia of Hannipol. In 1803 R. Shneur Zalman had published in Shklov his edition of the Lurianic prayerbook. See Haberman, nos. 135–36. This included notes of a halakhic nature, and also guidance in Divine service (In R. Shneur Zalman's *Iggeret ha-Teshuvah*, "Letter on Repentance," first published in Shklov, 1806, there is reference to a note "in the Prayerbook" concerning one's thoughts during the recital of the kabbalistic midnight prayer in mourning for the Temple, *Tikkun Haẓot*. It is likely that the reference is to his own edition of the prayerbook.) Unfortunately, no copies of this have survived (see Mondschein, *Torat Habad*, vol. 2, pp. 55–57). It comprised the Lurianic text of the prayers, but according to R. Avraham David Lavat (d. 1890), who saw this edition, it did not include the actual *kavvanot* (see the introduction to his *Sha'ar ha-Kolel* in *Siddur Torah Or*, Brooklyn, 1987, p. 250). Thirteen years later, R. Dov Ber's edition of the *Prayerbook* states in the frontispiece that the teachings on "Verses of Praise" are based on the Lurianic *kavvanot*; indeed, they are always mentioned, at least briefly, and they are basically the same as those found in the other Lurianic manuals on prayer. However, the elaboration in each case is a Hasidic discourse by R. Shneur Zalman, making the *kavvanah* meaningful to the rational mind and transforming them into Habad teachings. Other sections of R. Dov Ber's *Prayerbook* are entitled "Gate of *Zizit*," "Gate of *Tefilin*," "Gate of Prayer," "Gate of the *Shema*," etc., following the earlier example of R. Haim Vital's *Pri Ez Haim*. Here too, however, the text is not kabbalah but is drawn from R. Shneur Zalman's discourses transcribed and edited by R. Dov Ber. Another contemporaneous Lurianic prayerbook, printed in Shavuta in 1804, was an edition of the manuscript prayerbook of R. Yakov Kopel Lifschitz, entitled

Siddur me-ha-Arizal ha-nikra be-shem Kol Yakov. Like the *Pri Ez Haim* this has sections entitled "Gate of *Zizit*," etc. and also a number of sections entitled "The *Kavvanot* of . . ." In R. Dov Ber's prayerbook there is only one section with such a title (*Kavvanat ha-Mikveh*) and this, too, consists of discourses in the Habad style (fol. 156–159b). The *Prayerbook* of R. Dov Ber is therefore primarily a Hasidic rather than a kabbalistic text, differing from all the known Lurianic prayerbooks which preceded it. It retains the kabbalistic vowel-pointing in the Divine Names in the *Amidah* prayer (fol. 88a–91b), and it often records briefly the Lurianic *kavvanah*. Its main aim, however, was to provide contemplative material in the Habad style, relating directly to the text of the prayers. In addition to the Hasidic discourses there is also copious halakhic material. I mention below what I interpret as an attempt to show typographically the balance between the contemplative and halakhic teachings.

92. See J. G. Weiss, "The Kavvanot of Prayer in Early Hasidism" (1958).

93. This fact is stated by R. Avraham David Lavat (1815–1890), who saw the text. Concerning R. Avraham David, see the introduction to his *Kav Naki* (Brooklyn, 1951), p. 3.

94. *Imrei Binah, Hakdamah*, fol. 2b.

95. E.g., *Kol Yakov* (Slavuta, 1806).

96. This typographical arrangement is seen in the Kopys 1816 edition and that of Berdichev 1818. No copies of the Kopys 1823 edition are known. In the Berdichev 1863 edition, the halakhic and Hasidic material was divided and printed in separate, consecutive sections of the book. However, the headings *Ner Mizvah* and *Torah Or* were retained (see the appendix to the Brooklyn 1971 edition, p. 748).

97. Ch. 3, p. 86.

98. This tract presents Passover as a festival embodying the theme of *bitul* (self-abnegation). However, the form of *bitul* which is presented as paramount is not the esoteric attainment of the contemplative, but simple faith and *kabbalat 'ol*, "acceptance of the yoke", in performance of the Commandments. See below, ch. 6, p. 185.

99. It was first printed as the introduction to the *Prayerbook* (Warsaw, 1886) and is in *Meah She'arim* (Berdichev, 1913), fol. 11a. Several manuscripts of the letter are extant, one of which includes a colophon with the date 1823. See Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, pp. 262–8, 494 (hereinafter cited as "Levine"). The letter was most likely written after the publication in 1820 of *Tract on Contemplation*, but before 1826 when *Torat Haim* was printed. The latter work comprises teachings on the weekly scriptural reading; the letter advocates study of such teachings "in manuscript" (Levine, p. 265).

100. "Further, concerning the young men who are free [to study], who are accomplished in study of Hasidic teachings: I rebuke them with an open rebuke from hidden love. They cannot deny the truth, that their study of Hasidic teachings is only temporary in nature. Although they are genuinely moved by this in their mind and heart, and are inspired, [lit. "and they live from them" (the teachings)], nonetheless this is only temporary, and as concerns effort at the yoke of prayer—they are too lax. As everyone can see, even the one who has thorough knowledge of Hasidic teachings prays very briefly. If they would apply [contemplative] effort

with the Hasidic teachings they know well, they would certainly spend longer in prayer—at least two hours" (Levine, p. 263).

101. Oral communication from the present-day *hasid* R. Yankel Gurkow (b. c. 1906).

102. "Behold my demand and request . . . to the young men who are free [to study] and know well a great deal of Hasidic teachings from their youth, is that they should obey my trustworthy counsel and change the mode of their service. Until now it was as if normal and natural to separate the words of the prayer from one's thought in the depths of detailed contemplation: but this is not correct before G-d, in whose presence one is speaking." (Levine, p. 266).

103. "[Through regular study] they will have ready in their hearts [Hasidic teachings suitable] for the auspicious situation of prayer: they will be able to consider at least the precis of each subject which they already know, so as to understand it with emotional enthusiasm (*hitpa'alut*) which should be experienced in the heart of flesh specifically, [rather than in the mind alone], such as during the 'Verses of Praise' and the entire prayer. This should be recited aloud. The more they have [Hasidic teachings] ready, so all the more will they be able to find extra radiance by way of the precis and summary" (Levine, p. 267).

104. *Ibid.*, pp. 266, 267.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

107. The first *Yeshivat Tomkhei Temimim* was founded by R. Shalom Dovber in Lubavitch in 1897. See above, ch. 3, n. 48. R. Shalom Dovber compiled a number of tracts on the subject of study of Hasidic teachings and contemplative prayer for use by the students of the yeshivah. Originally these were studied in manuscript, then in mimeographed form. Only in the next generation were they printed. The first such work was *Tract on Prayer* (*Kuntres ha-Tefilah*), which began to be publicized at the end of 1899. This is a manual on contemplative prayer; in particular, it points out pitfalls to be avoided. It was followed (c. 1904), by *Tract on the Tree of Life* (*Kuntres Ez ha-Haim*), which emphasizes the importance of study of Hasidic teachings and specifies their role in the daily program of study in the yeshivah. In 1910 *Tract on Service* (*Kuntres ha-Avodah*) appeared, describing different levels of emotion and spirituality to be attained in prayer. In the same period of time R. Shalom Dovber wrote and recited in public lengthy "series" (*hemshekhchim*) of discourses which clearly functioned as material for deep contemplation. The most famous series are those entitled *Yom Tov Shel Rosh Hashanah 1906* (Brooklyn, 1971), "Eter" 1910 (Brooklyn, 1975), and *Be-Sha'ah she-Hikdimu 1912* (Brooklyn, 1972–77). The latter series of discourses, which develops a single theme, runs to almost fifteen hundred printed pages. These teachings were for the most part recited by the *Rebbe* in the presence of the yeshivah students, who then learned them by heart and utilized them as contemplative material, both with regard to their content and also their method of analysis and exploration of a theme. See my article "Habad Approaches to Contemplative Prayer, 1790–1920."

R. Shalom Dovber and his son R. Yosef Yitzhak are described as having a style of immobility during the weekday prayers (Chitrik, *Reshimot Devarim*, vol. 2 [Brooklyn, 1985], pp. 101, 103). This author describes how he saw R. Shalom

Dovber praying on the Sabbath. He would come to the synagogue, but while the congregation recited the entire Sabbath morning service, R. Shalom Dovber would complete only the preliminary prayers (until *Barukh she-Amar*). He would then go home and continue praying until four in the afternoon (*Reshimot Devarim*, vol. 1, p. 176). This mode of lengthy contemplative prayer was followed by the elite among the Habad *hasidim* and continues to have its exponents today.

108. Apart from the passage quoted above in which some *hasidim* were explicitly permitted to pray silently, it is quite likely that there were older men of stature in the fraternity in whose case it was generally understood that this corrective letter did not apply. They continued to put into direct practice the teachings on contemplation and *bitul* in *Tract on Ecstasy*.

109. See above, ch. 4, n. 80.

110. In R. Dov Ber's introduction he speaks of the effort involved in editing the transcripts of his father's discourses. He also states that if the members of the fraternity are suitably receptive to the teachings in the *Prayerbook*, "studying them faithfully, meditating on them and using them to walk on all paths of the Divine," then "certainly I will not keep back the goodness which G-d has generously bestowed on us: I will have printed all the teachings which were said in explanation of passages of the *Zohar* and all [other] transcripts of teachings and fine explanations which were said year by year."

111. *Biurei ha-Zohar* (Kopys, 1816); see Haberman, "Sha'arei Habad," no. 15. This comprises R. Dov Ber's version of discourses originally said by R. Shneur Zalman on Friday evenings, in the presence only of members of his family. In his introduction R. Dov Ber reaffirms that it is his intention to publish further volumes of his father's teachings. However, the statement that there would soon be printed "another two or three volumes like this of explanation of passages in the *Zohar*" was never fulfilled. The explanations of *Zohar* were suitable primarily for the elite. R. Dov Ber's subsequent publishing activity was in the main for the benefit of the broader reaches of the fraternity.

112. On the *Ein Yakov*, see n. 30 above.

113. Levine, p. 265.

114. *Ibid.* Extended contemplation on the Sabbath before the relatively brief Afternoon Prayer would be less likely to lead to the problem with which R. Dov Ber was concerned.

115. *Ibid.*, p. 262.

116. *Ibid.*

117. *Imrei Binah* (Brooklyn, 1976), Introduction, fol. 2a (my pagination).

118. It is somewhat reminiscent of, but quite different from, the *Liozna Regulations* of a generation earlier.

119. Among R. Dov Ber's published teachings, *Pokeah Ivrin*, printed in Yiddish, is distinguished for its focus on ethical directives rather than discussion of kabbalistic themes. The volumes *Sha'ar ha-Teshuvah ve-ha-Tefilah*, parts 1 and 2, and *Derekh Haim* are also noted for their emphasis on the inner and outer behaviour of the individual, contrasting with the contemplative abstraction found in, say, *Imrei Binah*. This dichotomy was much discussed by R. Shalom Dovber, the

fifth Lubavitch leader (d. 1920) as the distinction between *haskalah* (intellectualist philosophy) and *avodah* (inner ethical transformation). In his time too a clear distinction was made between a *sihah* (straightforward general teaching) and *ma'amar* (scholarly kabbalistic discourse), possibly a development of the two styles of communication alluded to by R. Dov Ber.

120. The document is printed in Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, pp. 269–71. It mentions a book printed in 1822 and therefore dates from after that time. Not later than 1825, the system described came to an end due to R. Dov Ber's failing health.

121. The bearer was probably a senior *hasid* who toured the communities informing them of the regulations.

122. The idea that a considerable number of *hasidim* (rather than just "two or three") should come together to Lubavitch is dwelt on by R. Dov Ber in an earlier letter to his followers, dated 1814. See *Likkutei Biurim* 3a, L. Jacobs', *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 186.

123. Heb. *avodah*, literally "service" but meaning the inner transformation which is achieved through contemplation. See n. 119 above.

124. Torah "for its own sake" is an ideal with a mystical background which extended its reach throughout the community. See *Tanya* 5, fol. 154b–155a, for use of the term in Habad. For this theme in the non-Hasidic community, and as expressed in the writings of R. Haim of Volozhin (1749–1821), see N. Lamm, *Torah Lishmah* (Jerusalem, 1972).

125. *Derekh Haim* (Kopys, 1819)—this title probably included the two volumes named *Sha'ar ha-Teshuvah ve-ha-Tefilah*, to which *Derekh Haim* constituted a third part; *Sha'arei Orah* (Kopys, 1822); *Imrei Binah* (Kopys, 1821).

126. This obviously complements the theme of the contemporaneous letter discussed above.

127. R. Dov Ber was against the common practice of walking about while contemplating or praying. See Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 310.

128. This refers to members of the class of scholars discussed in paragraphs 1–4.

129. A strong term, here applied to one who has the intellectual ability but rebels against the Habad imperative to study Hasidic teachings. This expression is employed in the same context in the introduction to *Imrei Binah*, fol. 2a (my pagination).

130. Those mentioned above in paragraphs 1–4.

131. Another text reads "Hasidic teachings."

132. This means they will be able to ask for blessing or advice concerning their business activities and daily life.

133. If those who have the ability do not make the attempt to study Hasidic teachings, they will not be received by R. Dov Ber.

134. Indigent *hasidim* who were travelling to Lubavitch.

135. Probably the entire business class (not just the "new followers") were expected to contribute in this way.

136. Probably a letter of approbation for a person collecting charity.

137. The more learned *hasidim* would come as a group to R. Dov Ber to hear a Hasidic discourse in private audience. Such a group is described in a letter by R.

Yitzhak Aizak Epstein of Homel in *Hanah Ariel* (Berdichev, 1912), second pagination at end of volume, fol. 5a. The letter is translated by L. Jacobs in *Seeker of Unity*; see pp. 163–64.

138. R. Dov Ber's health was failing.

139. This phrase in abbreviated form (*vd"l*) is characteristic of the literary style of R. Dov Ber.

140. See L. Jacobs, *Seeker of Unity*, pp. 83–86, and Rachel Elior, *Theory of Divinity*, pp. 307–26.

141. *Sha'arei ha-Yihud va-Emunah, Petah u-Mevo She'arim*, fol. 13a (considering the title page as fol. 1).

142. Ibid.

143. Ibid., fol. 13b.

144. The exaltation of the Lower Unity above the Upper Unity is a major theme in R. Dov Ber's *Imrei Binah*. See *Sha'ar ha-Keriat Shema* 11a, 27a–b, 32c–33b, 40c.

145. *Sha'arei ha-Yihud va-Emunah, Petah u-Mevo She'arim*, fol. 13a. The theme of *Ma'aseh Bereshit* (lit "The Work of Creation") relates to and is found juxtaposed with that of Merkavah mysticism, often termed, similarly, *Ma'aseh Merkavah*. See Mishnah *Hagigah* 2:1; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, p. 14ff.

146. Thus R. Moshe Cordovero speaks of the *Zahzahot*, hidden *Sefirot* within the *Ein Sof*. See *Pardes Rimmonim, Sha'ar ha-Zahzahot*, ch. 1.

147. See *Torah Or* 10c, where R. Shneur Zalman equates these with the realm of *Akudim* described in the Lurianic writings.

148. *Sha'ar ha-Yihud* 15a, 19b. This concept is found in *Emek ha-Melekh* (Amsterdam, 1648), by R. Naftali Bacharach; see *Sha'ar Sha'ashvei ha-Melekh*, ch. 1, fol. 1a. He was influenced by R. Yisrael Sarug (a contemporary of Luria), from whom derives the concept of a progression of development within the radiance of *Ein Sof* before the *Zimzum*. See Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 394–95.

149. Thus R. Dov Ber writes: "The pure delight in the Essence of the radiance of *Ein Sof*, before the *Zimzum*, is called 'the delight of the King in His Essence,' which is the *Ein Sof* itself; also the ten *Sefirot* of the Essence, which are *Keter* to *Malkhut* of *Ein Sof*, all have the quality of the pure delight which is in His Essence" (*Sha'ar ha-Yihud* 19b).

150. See Scholem, *Kabbalah*, pp. 137–38. This level is discussed in R. Dov Ber's characteristic style in *Tract on Contemplation* 15b–16a. Another exalted, pre-sefirotic level which is treated by R. Dov Ber is the *reshimu*, an "afterglow" which remained after the *Zimzum*. See *ibid.* 12b, 14b, 15b; *Sha'ar ha-Emunah* 56b; *Ateret Rosh* 5a–b; *Imrei Binah, Sha'ar ha-Keriat Shema* 22a, 23a, 29b, 41a; *Sha'arei Or*, p. 139.

151. *Sha'arei ha-Yihud va-Emunah, Petah u-Mevo ha-She'arim* 11b.

152. Ibid., *Hakdamah* 1b. In fact, R. Shneur Zalman himself referred extensively to *Adam Kadmon* in his teachings. See, e.g., *Tanya* 4, ch. 20, fol. 132a; 5, fol. 157b; *Torah Or* 10c, 36a, 55a, 78b.

153. In ch. 18, fol. 15b–16a.

154. *Sha'arei ha-Yihud va-Emunah, Sha'ar Kelut ha-Yihud* 15a–b.

155. See L. Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer*, pp. 90–91.

156. See R. Dov Ber's *Imrei Binah, Sha'ar ha-Keriat Shema*, 33b–c.

157. See *Sha'ar ha-Yihud* 25b.

158. See L. Jacobs, *Seeker of Unity*, pp. 85–86.

159. Hence R. Zvi Hirsh is noted as a kabbalist among Hasidic leaders of his time. See G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, p. 341. In his turn back to the texts of the classical kabbalah, R. Zvi and his disciples are to be compared with two other Hasidic dynasties, that of Komarno, and the Shapiros in Galicia and Hungary (Munkatch). Concerning the emphasis by R. Zvi Hirsh on the use of the Lurianic *kavvanot*, see Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Quietistic Elements*, pp. 137–39.

160. See *Sur me-Ra ve-Aseh Tov* (Jerusalem, n.d.), p. 79: "One should, however, study the order of *kavvanot* in *Pri Ez Haim* and work hard at them." On pp. 97–98 he warns that "after all the intellectual concepts which you have grasped of the supernal forms . . . you should know that . . . in addition there are myriads upon myriads of worlds which you cannot grasp." Nonetheless, "one should not say: since it is impossible to grasp anything except through . . . faith . . . why should you weary yourself to understand? For after the effort and discussion it is a delight for you."

161. *Sur me-Ra*, p. 95. We find reference to this question also in Braslav. See *Hayei Muharan* 2, (*Shivhei Muharan*), "Ma'alot Torato u-Sefarav," sec. 22 (fol. 14a): "[R. Nahman] said that recently he had completed the *Ez Haim* and saw that it was all *musar* (ethics)." This statement indicates that to see ethical directives in the esoteric Lurianic teachings is a rare accomplishment. R. Nahman also stated that he "wanted to compile a commentary on the *Ez Haim*, but a simple commentary is not needed, rather one has to say *Torah* (a Hasidic teaching) which will be an explanation. I have already said several *Torot* relating to *Ez Haim*." R. Nahman's teachings can be viewed as embodying the endeavor meaningfully to communicate the power of the Lurianic teachings and the mystical world view to his disciples. At one point he speaks openly of two contrasting levels: (a) a visionary dimension of perception by which "one can see the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob whenever one wants," a dimension which is irrelevant to the Hasidic followers ("of what use is this to you?") and (b) the ability "to clothe this in *musar* (ethics) so that it should be useful to everyone" (*Hayei Muharan* 1, *Nesiat le-Erez Yisrael*, p. 65, sec. 19; see also *ibid.*, pt. 2, p. 27, sec. 22). See A. Rapoport-Albert, "'Katnut,' 'Peshitut,' ve 'Eini Yode'a' shel R. Nahman miBraslav" (1979), p. 26. R. Nahman's later teachings in fact combine both of these levels, as do most Habad discourses. R. Nahman's *Sefer ha-Midot* (Moghilev, 1811) distills a purely ethical level of communication. A further step in the direction of meaningful communication in the Braslav fraternity is the way *Likkutei Halakhot*, by R. Nahman's disciple R. Nathan Sternhartz (1780–1845), transformed the visionary aspects of the intensely mystical *Torot* in *Likkutei Muharan* into teachings applicable in daily life.

162. *Sur me-Ra*, pp. 144–45. Referring to "a printed book by a certain famous man of our time . . . which he called *Sha'ar ha-Yihud*," R. Zvi Hirsh writes: "Believe me, brother, all his paths are not the path of light. There are investigations (*hakirot*) and *meshalim* which have no use. My brother, I have already sought to keep you away from this. For this path is dangerous, and a cautious person will

keep far from it. G-d knows that I am not saying this for my honour, but to keep my friends away from these investigations, which are defiled by the investigations of philosophy." See Jacobs, *Seeker of Unity*, pp. 85–86.

163. *Sur me-Ra*, p. 99. For a contemporary Habad discussion of R. Zvi Hirsh's views, see Rabbi M. M. Schneerson, *Iggrot Kodesh*, vol. 2 (Brooklyn, 1987), pp. 224–25.

164. *Sur me-Ra*, p. 101 n. 96.

165. See n. 161 above.

166. See Y. Baer, *History of the Jews in Christian Spain* (Philadelphia, 1966), vol. 1, pp. 96–110, 289–305.

167. See Simon Rawidowicz's introduction to *Kitvei R. Nahman Krochmal* (Waltham, 1960), pp. 42–45. The attacks on Krochmal came from the local *hasidim*. In his letter defending himself, Krochmal pours scorn on the Hasidic movement. See also Raphael Mahler, *Hasidism and the Jewish Enlightenment* (1985), pp. 9, 80, for depiction of Krochmal's antipathy towards local Galician Hasidism.

168. See Rawidowicz, p. 52, and the second frontispiece after Zunz's introduction to the first edition (Lemberg, 1851). Concerning Krochmal's relationship with the kabbalah see Fischel Lachover, "Revealed and Hidden in the Doctrines of Nachman Krochmal" (Heb.), *Kneset* 6 (1941); Eliezer Schweid, "Nachman Krochmal's Philosophy and its Relationship to the Philosophy of Maimonides, the Kabbalah, and Modern Philosophy" (Heb.), *Iyyun* 20, no. 1 (1969); David Biale, "The Kabbala in Nachman Krochmal's Philosophy of History," *JJS* 32 (1981). Krochmal's critique of the kabbalah is interesting. As interpreted by Biale, he notes that "mysticism begins with reason" but then quickly slips into "feverish imagination" of celestial realms. At the end, the mystic imagines he is one with G-d. (p. 93). These statements are consistent with the view that Krochmal was in some way responding to Habad teachings. I am grateful to Dr. J. Udelson for pointing out the relevance of Krochmal to the study of this school of Hasidism.

169. R. Yitzhak Aizak had been a close follower of R. Shneur Zalman, who transferred his allegiance to R. Dov Ber and later to R. Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek* as well. See Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 136. He is the author of *Hanah Ariel* (Berdichev, 1912), and the letter under discussion is printed there, fol. 4b–5a of the final section at the end of vol. 1. It is translated in full in L. Jacobs, *Seeker of Unity*, pp. 159–64.

170. See *ibid.*, p. 159.

171. *Hanah Ariel*, vol. 1, final section, fol. 4a; Jacobs, p. 160.

172. *Ibid.*

173. *Ibid.*, fol. 4a; Jacobs, p. 162 (see also p. 164).

174. *Hanah Ariel*, fol. 5a; Jacobs, p. 163.

175. See I. Etkes, "Shitato u-foalo shel R. Haim mi-Volozhyn" (1972), p. 23 n. 62.

176. See I. Etkes, *Rabbi Israel Salanter and the beginning of the "Musal" Movement* (1982), pp. 132–33.

177. I am grateful to Professor Etkes for helping to clarify this view of developments in nineteenth-century Lithuania.

178. See Mahler, *Hasidism and the Jewish Enlightenment*, p. 64.

179. *Ibid.*, pp. 282–83.

180. Ruderman's jibes against R. Dov Ber, in an article on the history of Hasidism published in a maskilic journal, emphasize the Habad aim to communicate Hasidic teachings to the non-scholar and the imparting through them of a sense of knowledge and power in facing the world: "He showed the path for any donkey to open his mouth and speak on very exalted things even though he might know hardly anything about Talmud and Tanakh (Bible). In his time, anyone who wanted to take the title 'savant' (*yode'a*) would come and take it. It was he who breathed into the nostrils of the *hasidim* a spirit of crazy exalted pride which made them consider themselves sages and philosophers, knowing everything, and viewing everything happening in the world as mere child's play" ("A General Survey of the *Zaddikim* and the *Hasidim*" [Heb.], *Ha-Shahar*, vol. 6 [Vienna, 1875], p. 102). In volume 7 of the same journal there is further material by Ruderman: "A Bundle of letters from the pen of one who was a *Hasid*" (Heb.). Concerning this scion of Habad who became a *maskil*, see Bernard Wachstein et al., *Die Hebraische Publizistik in Wien* (Vienna, 1938), vol. 3, p. 68. I am grateful to Professor Chimen Abramsky for information on Ruderman.

181. See above, p. 142.

182. *Tanya* 1, ch. 8, fol. 13b.

183. *Ibid.*

184. See Teitelbaum, *Ha-Rav mi-Lindi*, vol. 1, ch. 3.

185. See Michael Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews* (1983), pp. 77–82. This corroborates the main points expressed in the Habad account of this event written by Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak, *The "Tzemach Tzedek" and the Haskala Movement* (Brooklyn, 1962), p. 44ff.

186. It is interesting to note that the writings of the sixth Habad leader, Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak (d. 1950), allude to the idea (espoused by Nachmanides) that all scientific wisdom is included in the Torah. According to R. Yosef Yitzhak, this pertains particularly to the Hasidic teachings. Since the lower world is an expression of the upper, and the Habad teachings give direct access to the upper realms, necessarily they contain, at least potentially, all true knowledge (*Sefer ha-Sihot* 5704, p. 68). He also makes the interesting statement that the natural sciences, mathematics, botany, medicine, and other fields are employed by the leading sages in every generation in order to communicate the teachings of Torah in terms suited to the level of knowledge of their contemporaries (*Sefer ha-Zikbronot*, vol. 2, Brooklyn, 1965, pp. 429–30). No doubt consequent to this idea is the fact that he encouraged his son-in-law and eventual successor, the present Lubavitcher *Rebbe*, to attend universities in Berlin and Paris, studying scientific subjects. Since becoming Hasidic leader, the latter has written extensively on the relationship of science and Judaism. See the collection of his letters (in Hebrew) entitled *Faith and Reason* (Kfar Habad, 1977). While to a great extent these are intended to defend traditional Jewish teachings from the onslaught of science, the view that there is a positive link between science and religion is also expounded. See *Likkutei Sihot*, vol. 15, p. 47, where the idea is expressed that the revelation of Hasidic teachings in Jewish society, and the first major steps which led to modern science, were approximately contemporaneous. This is because of the profound unity between science and To-

rah: "The true unity between science and Torah is that in science itself one perceives aspects of the inner [i.e., Hasidic] teachings of Torah. . . . [For example,] the inner teachings of Torah seek to reveal the utter unity of G-d in the world. . . . This subject, the unity which exists in the universe (which in truth is the utter unity of the Divine) is becoming more and more revealed with the advancement of science."

187. It is noteworthy that among the concerns of the modern Habad movement are issues relating to the non-Jewish world, such as the question of nondenominational daily prayer (or a moment of silence) in the American public schools. There is also a campaign for an annual Education Day or Day of Reflection: see *Congressional Record* for March 30, 1982: H. J.R. 447. Contemporary Habad presents the promulgation of the universal Seven Noachide Laws (see Maimonides, *Yad, Hil. Melakhim* 8:10–10:12) as an important task of the Jew, which will improve the moral level of society at large and also change the image of the Jew in the eyes of the world. See *Likkutei Sihot*, vol. 26, pp. 135–37, 143–44.

Chapter Six

1. The first two parts were later printed in Zhitomir, 1864, with the title *Sha'arei Teshuvah*. The frontispiece of *Derekh Haim* (Kopys, 1819) states, "This is the third part of *Sha'ar ha-Teshuvah*". The entire work is referred to as *Derekh Haim* in the letter by R. Dov Ber translated above, ch. 5, p. 165–67.

2. See above, ch. 2, p. 31.

3. "The essence of the radiance of the *Ein Sof* is the true *ayin*. Hence it only dwells in the aspect *ayin*. Therefore, the more profound the abnegation of self (*bitul ha-yesh*) of the person, the more there dwells in him the inwardness and profundity of the essence of the true *ayin*. . . . From this it can be understood that *bitul ha-yesh*, even though . . . it cannot be compared with the pure *bitul* of *ayin* of the essence of supernal Wisdom, nonetheless when it is total, stripping off its self to the very depths, it is able to reach the *ayin* of the essence itself, since it has become a vessel fit to receive all aspects of the true *ayin* of the essence. This can be compared to a circle, in which the very highest and very lowest points are equal in terms of 'higher' and 'lower.' For only along the diameter from highest to lowest does there apply the concept of 'higher' and 'lower.' When one comes to its very lowest point, however, which is on the circumference itself, then the highest and lowest are equal. As is known, a circle in itself does not have the property of 'higher' and 'lower,' for when it turns, the lowest becomes the highest. Similarly, when it does not turn, only in relation to the lower [point] is the upper one called 'higher'; but in relation to the center, all points on the circumference are called the highest" (*Sha'arei Teshuvah*, pt. 1, pp. 44–5).

4. *Sha'arei Teshuvah*, pt. 1, p. 92. Concerning trancelike experiences of R. Dov Ber, see above, ch. 4, p. 114.

5. *Sha'arei Teshuvah*, pt. 1, p. 90. The higher level of *bitul* is termed the "*mesirat nefesh* of *nefilat apayim*." *Nefilat apayim* is the *Tahanun* prayer following the *Amidah*, which is omitted on any kind of festive day. The association of *nefilat apayim* with the concept of *mesirat nefesh* is found in the *Zohar* (see Tishby's *Mishnat ha-*

Zohar, vol. 2, pp. 275–76) and in the Lurianic writings. See *Zohar* II, 200b, 202b; *Shaar ha-Kavvanot* (Tel Aviv, 1962) vol. 1, pp. 302–5. See also G. Scholem, "Perakim mi-Toledot Sifrut ha-Kabbalah," *Kiryat Sefer* 7 (1930/31), p. 154; A. Shochet, "Kiddush Hashem be-Hagut shel Megureshei Sefarad u-Mekubelei Zfat," in *Holy War and Martyrology* (1968), p. 143. The theme of *mesirat nefesh* of *nefilat apayim* is briefly mentioned in R. Shneur Zalman's *Tanya* 6, fol. 154a. In R. Dov Ber's *Prayerbook* there is a discourse, probably by R. Shneur Zalman, linking *nefilat apayim* with total abnegation (fol. 92d), which is clearly the source of the ideas found in *Sha'arei Teshuvah*. The concept of *mesirat nefesh* of *nefilat apayim* is also found in the writings of R. Aaron Halevi: see his *Sha'arei Avodah, Petah ha-Teshuvah*, ch. 12, fol. 18b, where *nefilat apayim* is depicted in terms of the mode of entry from prayer into the daily world. See Rachel Elior, *Theory of Divinity of Hasidut Habad*, pp. 273–81. R. Aaron and R. Dov Ber both inherited the teaching of *nefilat apayim* from R. Shneur Zalman. The emphasis in R. Aaron's treatment of this concept is on giving counsel to the reader as to how to achieve a true negation of the world and its desires while nonetheless having to come into contact with it. He stresses the mental movement of giving oneself over to death which is implied by the theme of *nefilat apayim*: thus R. Aaron speaks of "the extinction and total burning away of 'being' (*yesh*) which has the quality of *nefilat apayim*, that he delivers himself to death. This means, that he really does not want to continue existing." Through this, promises R. Aaron, the person attains an inspired sense of closeness to the Divine "the whole day long" and is able to join the otherwise contrary qualities of being and nonbeing (*Avodat ha-Levi, Tezaveh*, fol. 47c). In another passage he states that the fact that after prayer one has to be involved with earning a living could be disastrous spiritually ("one could fall completely, heaven forfend") and therefore one recites *nefilat apayim*. The effect of this is to impart a "coldness" to one's worldly activities, as if one's possessions were not really one's own (*Avodat ha-Levi, Vayehi*, fol. 71b). Through the concept of *nefilat apayim* R. Aaron found a suitable medium to transmit in meaningful terms the ascetic kabbalistic world view to his followers, imparting also the acosmistic yearning which is the cornerstone of his system. The total effect maintains the quietistic mood, despite the enforced brush with practical reality. By contrast R. Dov Ber, through employment of this theme, sought to communicate a rare activist concept of unity with the Divine which is most likely the province of the *Zaddik* alone. See also Lowenthal, "Self-Sacrifice of the *Zaddik*," p. 465ff.

6. *Sha'arei Teshuvah*, pt. 1, p. 90.

7. Ibid.

8. See below, p. 190.

9. See the internal Habad tradition concerning this episode: R. Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn's *Ha-Zemah Zedek u-Tenuat ha-Haskalah* (1946) (trans. by Zalman Posner: *The "Tzemach Tzedek" and the Haskala Movement*, 1962). The general import of this account is corroborated by Michael Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews* (1983), pp. 72–82.

10. For information on the life and teachings of R. Shmuel, see Rabbi M. M. Schneerson, *Sefer ha-Toledot Admur MaHaRaSh* (Brooklyn, 1947), and A. H. Glitzenstein's book with the same title (Kfar Habad, 1970).

11. See *Tanya*, pt. 1, ch. 6, fol. 10b. The idea of a "hidden fountain" of *bitul* in every Jew is reiterated in R. Dov Ber's *The Way of Life*, pp. 137–38.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

13. *Ibid.*

14. This tract, *Sha'ar ha-Emunah*, was printed together with *Sha'ar ha-Yihud* in a volume entitled *Ner Mizpah ve-Torah Or*.

15. "The whole nature of the Divine Soul is simply to cleave to the [Divine] Essence, and this itself is the faculty of total *bitul*, and this is the basis of the power of *emunah* (faith)," (*Sha'ar ha-Emunah* 10a–b. See also *Derekh Haim* 208a).

16. *Sha'ar ha-Emunah* 4a. "613 Mitzvot were given to Moses; Habakuk came and based them on only one, which is the Mitzvah of *emunah*". See T. B. Mak. 23b–24a and *Tanhuma*, *Shofetim*, sec. 9.

17. *Sha'ar ha-Emunah* 4b.

18. The background to this idea is found in the Lurianic teachings in which *mazah* is depicted as expressing "*katnut* *Aba*," i.e., the smallness of the visage (*parzuf*) of *Hokhmah*. See *Pri Ez Haim* (Koretz, 1782) 21:2 (fol. 101a); *Mishnat Hasidim*, *Masekhet Seder Leil Pesah* 4:5; 13:3, 5. The identification of *Mazah* with *bitul* is found only rarely in the teachings of R. Shneur Zalman. See *MAHZ* 5608, p. 125ff (also in *Torah Or*, 88d–90b). The *Prayerbook* edited by R. Dov Ber gives this idea more prominence. See fol. 301a–d, and also 284a–288b; 298a–d. The concept is found in *Likkutei Torah* (e.g., *Vayikra* 13c; *Shir Hashirim* 14d), but these discourses, from the manuscript collection entitled "Babroisk No. 4," may have interpolations from—or indeed, be entirely the work of—R. Menahem Mendel, the *Zemah Zedek*. See Rabbi Y. L. Groner's comment on the Babroisk No. 4 manuscript collection in "*Maftelot ve-Hosafot la-Sefer Likkutei Torah*," p. 136; see also n. 4.

19. See *Zohar* II, 41a, and the beginning of the previous note.

20. *Sha'ar ha-Emunah* 10b–11a.

21. *Ibid.* 65a–b.

22. *Ibid.* 69a.

23. *Ibid.* 101bff. See also 104a. (The pagination is misprinted at this point in the volume; the correct numbering should be 111b, 114a). It is interesting that R. Dov Ber refers in his writings to historical events such as the expressions of mass martyrdom in 1096 and 1648–49 and cites Ibn Verga's *Shevet Yehudah* (*Sha'arei Teshuvah*, p. 9, misprinted p. 5; *Derekh Haim*, p. 23). Yosef Yerushalmi's *Zakhor* argues that historical interest is more or less lacking from rabbinic Jewish thought. However, he cites Ibn Verga as something of an exception to this rule, together of course with Azariah de Rossi (pp. 62–65). In later Habad, accounts of the history of Hasidism and of pre-Hasidism were made into a vehicle for the communication of the Hasidic ethos by R. Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn (1880–1950) in his *Sefer ha-Zikbronot* and articles in the Habad journal *Ha-Tamim*, a process described in Ada Rapoport-Albert's "Hagiography with Footnotes." The Habad interest in history can be traced back to R. Dov Ber and, perhaps, to the historical approach sometimes seen in R. Shneur Zalman's *Shulhan Arukh* (see *Orah Haim*, sec. 308, paragraphs 16–17).

24. *Sha'ar ha-Emunah* 106a (misprinted, instead of 116a).

25. *Sha'ar ha-Emunah* 7b.

26. *Ibid.*

27. The tract, published under the title *Ma'amar Hehalshu*—(5)659 (Brooklyn, 1948), originally appeared in manuscript form and was widely distributed among the contemporary Hasidic following. Its title derives from Numbers 31:2–3, describing the battle against Midian as the final task of Moses.

28. It is noteworthy that the "Mitzvah Campaigns" of modern Habad are presented as a path to Jewish unity. In contemporary publicity leaflets "Love of One's Fellow" is placed at the head of the list of Mitzvot which are being encouraged, and this is also seen as the basis of all Mitzvot (see *Likkutei Sihot*, vol. 23, p. 254).

29. Tishby and Dan, "Torat ha-Hasidut," in *The Hebrew Encyclopedia* (Heb.), vol. 17, p. 814; also in A. Rubinstein, ed., *Studies in Hasidism* (Heb.), p. 305.

30. See above, ch. 2, p. 61ff; ch. 3, p. 90ff.

31. A typology of *mesirat nefesh* is found in *Shaarei Teshuvah*, pt. 1, pp. 91–92. This presents successive levels of self-sacrifice culminating in a depiction of the *mesirat nefesh* of *nefilat apayim*, relevant to the *Zaddik* alone (see n. 5 above). See also *Shaarei Teshuvah*, pt. 1, pp. 105–12, where there is another example of depiction of the stature of the *Zaddik* in terms of *mesirat nefesh*. The complementary concept, that every Jew has within him or her the power of *mesirat nefesh* for the practical Commandments and that this functions as a great equalizer, is described in *Derekh Haim*, pp. 22–23. Women, children, and the unlearned are described as having the power of *mesirat nefesh* as much as, or even more than, the scholar. It is a function of the quality *Yehidah* of their souls, their essential Jewishness.

32. See S. Dubnow, *History of the Jews* (South Brunswick, N.J., 1973), vol. 5, p. 142.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

34. Concerning Zonnenberg and Dillon see *ibid.*, pp. 144–45, and the same author's *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. 1, p. 358. They had functioned as representatives of the Jews during the war and were later given the official position of deputies. However, due to the accusations that they communicated government plans to the Jewish leadership, this position was abolished in 1825.

35. R. Dov Ber states that he was given important information in "a letter from the senior statesmen who have entrance to the tsar . . . They seek the good of the community in truth and faithfulness: namely, Zundel of Grodno and Eliezer of Neshkhiz." R. Dov Ber asks Meisels to be warm and open in his relations with them "for the good of the fraternity." See S. B. Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 249, 251, 254.

36. Unlike the case of Purim, in R. Shneur Zalman's treatment of Hanukah the theme of *mesirat nefesh* is not predominant. His discourses concerning this festival for the most part focus on the spiritual service of the individual, employing imagery which interprets the "lamp" as a model for Divine service, as found in *Tanya* 1, ch. 35, fol. 44a, based on *Zohar* III, 187a. A brief discourse in *MAHZ* (5)566, p. 106, said at the end of 1805, seems to be a response to contemporary events, but even this does not refer to *mesirat nefesh*.

37. There is a Habad tradition in the name of R. Shmuel (1834–82), the fourth-generation leader and grandson of R. Dov Ber: "The books *Sha'ar ha-Yihud* and

Sha'arei Orah are general, and were written for all the *hasidim*. For *Sha'ar ha-Yihud* is the index to the teachings of Hasidism, and *Sha'arei Orah* is the Alef-Bet of Hasidism" (Rabbi J. I. Schneersohn, *Kuntres Limud ha-Hasidut* [New York, 1956], p. 30). This is in distinction to R. Dov Ber's other works, which—according to this interesting tradition—were compiled for particular types of *hasid*; for some the emphasis was intellect, for others it was ethical striving. See Rachel Elior, doctoral thesis, p. 372.

38. See *Sha'arei Orah*, fol. 2a: "But this [*mesirat nefesh* of Great Love and Repentance] can be without Torah and Mitzvot at all: for it can be through Repentance alone, or Great Love and true *devekut* in saying the *Shema* and in prayer".

39. *Sha'arei Orah*, fol. 2a.

40. See *Sha'arei Orah*, fol. 53b, 90a, 96a, 99a. Other related themes include the idea that the fact that a force descends lower indicates a greater power at its source (fol. 58a–59a); the idea that the source of the materiality of the world—with which one carries out the practical Mitzvot—derives from the Transcendent rather than the Immanent aspect of the Divine (fol. 55a, 70b); and the teaching that the power of limitation which gives rise to the "vessels" of the *Sefirot* has its source in the essence of the *Ein Sof* (fol. 83b).

41. See Lowenthal, "The Apotheosis of Action in Early Habad," (1986), p. xvi ff.

42. One aspect of this is the idea that "the Mitzvot will be annulled in the future" (T. B. *Nid.* 61b), meaning in the epoch of the Revival of the Dead. A passage in *Zohar* III, 124b–125a might be understood to mean that in the time of the Messiah there will be no study (nor observance?) of the halakhah. This interpretation was vigorously disputed by R. Shneur Zalman himself in *Tanya* 4, sec. 26. For reference in R. Shneur Zalman's teachings to levels of service which transcend practical action, see above, ch. 3 n. 125.

43. *Sha'arei Orah*, fol. 90a–b, and passim in the continuation of that discourse. For discussion of R. Shneur Zalman's treatment of this theme, see above, ch. 3, p. 91 ff.

44. *Sha'arei Orah*, fol. 95b–96a, sec. 24. See also sec. 22.

45. There is an obvious misprint in the Hebrew text.

46. *Ibid.*, sec. 24. See also fol. 99a, sec. 34.

47. T. B. *Hag.* 14b–15a. See above, ch. 1, p. 12.

48. *Pokeah Iyrim* (? , 1817?). See Haberman, "Sha'arei Habad," no. 207. A later edition was in Shklov, 1832 (*ibid.*, no. 208). We will quote the edition of Kfar Habad, 1973, which includes an additional text previously in manuscript, as well as a letter by Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn concerning this work, sent to one of his sons-in-law, and other material. The letter states a Habad tradition that *Pokeah Iyrim* was the first of R. Dov Ber's own works to be printed (p. 5). The additional text, also by R. Dov Ber and also in Yiddish, seems by internal evidence to be a part of the same work.

49. See *Zohar* III, 5a, 153a, 224b, 240a; *Reshit Hokhmah*, (Waldman ed., Jerusalem, 1984); *Sha'ar ha-Teshuvah*, ch. 4, sec. 6; *Sha'ar ha-Anavah*, ch. 1, sec. 9; *Shnei Luhot ha-Brit* (Jerusalem, 1960), *Sha'ar ha-Otiyot*, "Lamed" (end), fol. 122a.

50. *Tanya* 1, ch. 29, fol. 36a. See also ch. 26, fol. 32b.

51. *Likkutei Biurim* 58b–59a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 147.

52. See the references in the previous note; L. B. 59b–60a; Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 148. Usually we find melancholy decried in Maggidic teachings. However, a passage in *Likkutim Yekarim* (Jerusalem, 1974), fol. 7a, sec. 42, after criticizing ordinary melancholy, then goes on to describe a pneumatic state of fear and weeping which is "the gate to love." Someone who does not first attain this state of fear and weeping "imagines to himself that he loves G-d and serves Him with joy. It is not joy, however, but folly; therefore he should turn back to G-d with all his heart and with all his soul."

53. See the letter by R. Aaron to R. Dov Ber quoted above, chap. 4, n. 142, the first epistle.

54. *Sha'arei Teshuvah*, pt. 1, p. 48. See also the treatment of *nishtkayt* (being nothing) which is the point of superiority of the lower kind of soul (p. 116) and the way the "lowness" of the individual relates to the very essence of the Divine (p. 141). For elaboration of the idea that one's good aspect and actions are mixed with bad, see *ibid.*, pt. 2, pp. 4–6; *Sha'ar ha-Emunah*, ch. 50. See also *Tanya* 1, ch. 13, fol. 19a.

55. *Derekh Haim*, p. 40. Concerning the mystical effect of weeping, see Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, pp. 75–88.

56. *Derekh Haim*, p. 41.

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 41–42.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

59. Due to its prevalence today among Jews in Israel and elsewhere, this phenomenon has received some attention from psychologists and sociologists. See Kate Loewenthal, "Patterns of Religious Development and Experience in Habad-Hasidic Women" (1988); Janet Aviad, *Return to Judaism: Religious Renewal in Israel* (1984). See also a modern handbook for the repentant: Adin Steinsaltz, *Teshuvah: a Guide for the Newly Observant Jew* (1987). Initially associated with the modern Habad movement, the *baal teshuvah* now exists in other Hasidic groups such as Braslav and also in non-Hasidic communities. An early twentieth-century *baal teshuvah* in the modern sense of the word was Jiri Langer, the friend of Franz Kafka who became a follower of the Belzer *Rebbe* and subsequently wrote the anthology of Hasidic stories *Nine Gates* (London, 1961).

60. *Pokeah Iyrim*, p. 35. The frontispiece of the Shklov 1832 edition states: "Now [R. Dov Ber] also gave guidance to ordinary people (*gemayne layt*) who want to repent, as to how they should conduct themselves. So he wrote this book in Yiddish."

61. *Pokeah Iyrim*, p. 35.

62. See *ibid.*, ch. 5, 14. Concerning the conversionary experience associated with becoming a *hasid*, see the accounts about R. Yakov Yosef of Polonnoye, collected in Dresner, *The Zaddik*, p. 44 ff. In particular, he quotes a passage in *Shivhei ha-Besht* which states that, after seeing the Baal Shem Tov smoking his pipe early in the morning, and being surprised by this, R. Yakov Yosef began to recite his daily prayers. In the midst of this "I wept a great weeping, the like of which I had never wept in all my life. I understood that this weeping was not from myself" (Dresner, p. 45; *Shivhei*, Mintz ed., p. 66.).

63. *Pokeah Ivrin*, ch. 14, 30. See also *Tanya*, pt. 1, ch. 13, fol. 19a.
 64. *Pokeah Ivrin*, p. 44, chs. 22–23.
 65. *Ibid.*, p. 53, ch. 34.
 66. *Ibid.*, p. 46, ch. 27.
 67. *Ibid.*, p. 43, ch. 21.
 68. *Pokeah Ivrin*, p. 40, ch. 13.
 69. See *Tanya* 3, ch. 2–3.
 70. *Pokeah Ivrin*, p. 39, ch. 12.
 71. *Ibid.*, p. 36, ch. 3.
 72. See *Tanya* 1, ch. 12, fol. 16b. See also above, ch. 2, pp. 57–58.
 73. See above, ch. 5, p. 166, sec. 8 of the letter.
 74. One is *Mizmor Shir le-Yom ha-Shabbat* (Brooklyn, 1956), originally published together with a second Yiddish discourse (beginning *Mal'iti ka-'Av Peshakha*) in a volume entitled *Darkhei Teshuvah* (Warsaw, 1898). Both discourses are there attributed to R. Dov Ber; however, they are both found in Hebrew versions in *Boneh Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem, 1926), secs. 113, 37, a volume containing discourses generally attributed to R. Shneur Zalman. It is possible that the Hebrew texts are indeed transcripts of discourses by the latter and that R. Dov Ber translated them into Yiddish.
 75. This person, named as Shlomoh Leib Gametcki, is described as having been drawn into the circle of a local nobleman. Presumably after baptism, he married a gentile woman. An encounter with a scholarly Habad follower provoked him to an intense mood of “repentance,” as a result of which he came to R. Dov Ber to receive guidance as to how he should proceed. It has been suggested that this might have been the occasion for the initial compilation of *Opening the Eyes*. See *Pokeah Ivrin*, pp. 33–34, and Rachel Elior’s doctoral thesis, p. 372.
 76. R. Dov Ber accuses his followers of thinking that the ideal of *tsbrokhenkayt* is relevant “only for those on a lower level, like *ba’alei teshuvah* (Repentants)” (*L. B.* 60b; Jacobs, p. 150).
 77. *Pokeah Ivrin*, p. 5.
 78. In *Opening the Eyes* there is emphasis on the idea that the time of saying the *Shema* before retiring is a suitable opportunity for intense feelings of repentance, (ch. 4, p. 36). This idea is not new: it is mentioned in *Tanya* 1, ch. 7, fol. 12a, and 3, ch. 7, fol. 97b. However, it might be that the emphasis this practice received in *Opening the Eyes* helped establish it as a mark of the man of stature in Habad. The writer was informed by a son of the major contemporary *hasid* R. Shmuel David Raichik (b. 1918) that his father sometimes spent the entire night in supplication during this prayer. The personal “spiritual accounting” and repentance associated with the *Shema* before retiring appears to have gradually replaced the Lurianic *Tikkun Hazot* prayer, despite the fact that recital of the latter is encouraged by R. Shneur Zalman in *Tanya* 3, ch. 10, fol. 99b.
 79. *Pokeah Ivrin*, p. 45, ch. 25.
 80. *Shivhei ha-Besht*, ed. Mintz (Tel Aviv, 1961), p. 9.
 81. Ostraho, 1815; Koretz, 1816; Novi Dvor, 1816; Zolkiev, 1817. See Yaari’s articles in *Kiryat Sefer* 12 (1935) and 39 (1964), and Y. Mondschein’s edition of *Shivhei ha-Besht*, pp. 22–40 and the bibliography, pp. 69–70.

82. See the discussion of the role of women in Hasidism by Ada Rapoport-Albert, “On Women in Hasidism and the Case of the Maid of Ludmir” (1988).
 83. Most notable in this genre is the popular *Kav ha-Yashar* by R. Zvi Hirsh Kaidanower (d. 1705). The opening chapter of this work includes a passage about the need for women to be concerned about the Day of Judgment and recounts a story of a punishment which befell a woman who joked about this.
 84. *Likkutei Muharan* 1, no. 60, sec. 6.
 85. *Hayei Muharan*, “*Sihot ha-shayakhim la-torot*,” p. 16, sec. 25.
 86. The question whether the Yiddish or the Hebrew version of the stories is the original is the subject of scholarly debate. See M. Pickarz, *Studies in Braslav Hasidism* (1972), pp. 160–84.
 87. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 109.
 88. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
 89. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
 90. *Sha’arei Orah* 90b.
 91. *Pokeah Ivrin*, p. 38, ch. 9.
 92. *Ibid.*, p. 42, ch. 17. In both instances R. Dov Ber tells the reader that such sexual thoughts lead to sickly children: the woman’s inner spiritual status (purity or impurity of thought) produces a tangible effect. This emphasizes the significance of the woman’s inner, cerebral life, contrasting with the normative socio-halakhic focus on action.
 93. *Shivhei ha-Besht*, ed. Mintz, p. 94. See also Ada Rapoport-Albert, “On Women in Hasidism,” n. 36.
 94. *Sha’arei Orah* 91b, ch. 11.
 95. *Iggrot Kodesh . . . Admor Yosef Yizhak*, vol. 4 (Brooklyn, 1983), p. 13.
 96. *Ibid.*, and see Ada Rapoport-Albert, “On Women in Hasidism,” n. 81.
 97. In schools and seminaries run by the contemporary Lubavitch movement women and girls study *Tanya*, Hebrew discourses of Hasidic teaching, and Yiddish *Sihot*. Women are prominent in the outreach work of modern Habad: the Lubavitch *shaliah* (outreach emissary) is almost invariably a husband-and-wife team in which the wife plays a communicatory role in her own right. Many modern Habad publications are written by or directed at women. See the survey by Ada Rapoport-Albert, “On Women in Hasidism,” n. 82.
 98. Hielman in *Beit Rebbe* associates it with the first arrest, although with some doubt: see p. 63 n. 1, p. 200 n. 2. Dubnow too mentions it in connection with the first arrest, but doubts it was ever delivered to its intended recipient—Tsar Paul—largely because its Hasidic-kabbalistic content seems to him so unsuitable as a plea! (*History of Hasidism* (Heb.), p. 260 n. 2.) Teitelbaum associates it with the second arrest in 1800 (*Ha-Rav mi-Liadi*, vol. 1, p. 112). For details about the arrest and liberation of R. Shneur Zalman, see above, ch. 3, n. 47.
 99. This was published under the title *Bad Kodesh* together with other Habad material—a letter by R. Shneur Zalman and a commentary by R. Aaron Halevi to the Book of Ruth—in Warsaw, 1871. Rodkinson published a slightly different version in his *Toledot Amudei Habad* (Koenigsburg, 1876). We will quote the Brooklyn 1963 edition, based on the annotated text published in Brooklyn, 1947. The editor—Rabbi Schneerson, who in 1950 became the contemporary leader of

Lubavitch—employed two manuscripts dated 1835 and 1862 respectively, with some comparison with the printed versions of 1871 and 1876, in order to establish a reliable text. It used to be thought that the entire tract was by R. Shneur Zalman, and thus it is presented in the first printed edition. Rodkinson too thought of it as such, and interpreted the reference to “*admor*” in the first paragraph as a reference to the Maggid of Mezeritch (*Toledot Amudei Habad*, p. 54 n. 45). However, it is more likely that it is a reference to R. Shneur Zalman, especially since the manuscript dated 1835 employs the abbreviation for “my father *admor*”. Also, while R. Shneur Zalman’s letter is known to have been addressed directly to Tsar Paul, some versions of the extant text refer to Tsar Paul as a recipient of an earlier plea from “*admor*” or “my father *admor*,” and the last section of the extant version is expressed in terms which indicate that the document was addressed to a leader of a region in a country “who has been given by our master the Tsar, may he be exalted, almost one tenth part of his entire kingdom” (*Bad Kodesh*, p. 19; see also the editor’s introduction, p. 3). Rodkinson has a different reading at this point, but it still clearly refers to a minister rather than the king himself (*Toledot Amudei Habad*, p. 65). Further, the detailed mode of explanation in sec. 5 and the employment of a Yiddish phrase in sec. 7 seem typical of the style of R. Dov Ber rather than that of his father.

100. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 199 n. 3, gives the date as 1825. The family tradition of the Habad line maintains that it was 1826. See *Bad Kodesh*, p. 9.

101. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 198 n. 2. Concerning R. Zalman, whose son had married a daughter of R. Dov Ber, and R. Shlomoh, whose daughter married a son of the *Zemah Zedek*, see p. 141. Both had also been major figures in the fraternity in the time of R. Shneur Zalman. Hielman considers the arrest of R. Aaron an expression of the unbounded hatred felt by the opponents of Habad (p. 199 and n. 2). See also L. Jacobs, *Tract on Ecstasy*, p. 71.

102. See the account by R. Yeshaya Mekler of Vitebsk in *Bad Kodesh*, p. 5.

103. See Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 199 n. 1. When the *Zemah Zedek* asked the leading opponent of Habad in this case how he could act in such a way against a relative, he is said to have replied: “A relative of mine? I do not want to have anything to do with such a relative! Hasn’t he made his followers forget the study of the Revealed Torah?!”

104. *Beit Rebbe*, p. 198. Hielman states that they also employed a letter written by R. Dov Ber at the beginning of his leadership, in which he referred to the collection of a relatively modest sum of money. The *mitnagdim* altered this so that instead it seemed to be speaking of a huge sum, which could only be required for some traitorous purpose (*ibid.*).

105. See the account given in *Bad Kodesh*, pp. 6–7.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

107. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 198 n. 2.

108. This is the view of the editor of the letters, S. B. Levine. See *Yagdil Torah*, Year 4, no. 2 (33), p. 126 n. 67.

109. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

110. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

111. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 200 n. 2.

112. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 201.

113. On the *Shtadlan* see S. Zitron, *Shtadlonim* (Yiddish; 1926); Zelma Stern, *The Court Jew*; Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis*, index s.v. “Court Jew.”

114. *Bad Kodesh*, p. 10.

115. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 17. This concept, “*Dina de Malkhuta Dina*”, from *T. B. Git. 10b*, is employed by R. Dov Ber as it was traditionally understood: that it applies solely to monetary matters, and cannot affect Jewish religious law. Reformists at the beginning of the modern period sought to do away with this distinction. See Gil Graff, *Separation of Church and State, Dina de-Malkhuta Dina in Jewish Law, 1750–1848* (Tuscaloosa, 1985), pp. 12, 132.

116. See Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 200 n. 2.

117. See *Bad Kodesh*, p. 4 n. 3.

118. Hielman, *Beit Rebbe*, p. 200.

119. See Maimonides, *Yad, Hil. Melakhim*, 8:10–10:12. In modern Habad thought the paucity of reference to the Noahide Laws in halakhic sources is explained as being due to the danger, in medieval times, of a Jew being seen as attempting to convert a Christian to Judaism. See *Likkutei Sihot*, vol. 26, pp. 141–42.

120. *Sha’arei Orah* 92a, sec. 13.

121. *T. B. Yoma* 82a.

122. Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh—Admur ha-Zaken etc.*, p. 150; Teitelbaum, *Ha-Rav mi-Liadi*, vol. 1, p. 155ff.; Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, vol. 1, pp. 356–57.

123. See Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, p. 357, interpreting R. Shneur Zalman’s letter as “tantamount to saying that civic rightlessness was preferable to civic equality inasmuch as the former bade fair to guaranteeing the inviolability of religious life, while the latter threatened to bring about its disintegration.”

124. Levine, *Iggrot Kodesh*, p. 245.

125. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

126. *Ibid.*, p. 247.

127. *Ibid.*

128. This is from an earlier passage in the letter, *ibid.*, p. 240. Here R. Dov Ber explains that Divine help comes only to the one who is humble. “And this quality was seen clearly—by anyone who has a little knowledge—in our master the Tsar. . . . We saw his great trust in G-d, and his great humility. Even now, in his victory, he does not consider this to be from his own strength, but rather from G-d alone, as everyone knows” (see Teitelbaum, *Ha-Rav mi-Liadi*, pp. 155–56). This text by R. Dov Ber affirming the positive religiosity of the non-Jew is complemented by a comment by R. Hillel of Paritch: he states, in the name of his teacher R. Dov Ber, that a “Righteous Gentile” achieves inner spiritual transformation (*Likkutei Biurim*, fol. 47b). See the letter by Rabbi M. M. Schneerson, drawing attention to the text by R. Hillel and emphasizing this point, in J. Korf, *Likkutei Biurim be-Sefer ha-Tanya* (1974), vol. 1, p. 28.

General Conclusion

1. Political intercessor on behalf of the Jewish community. See above, ch. 6, n. 113.
2. Interview with Rabbi Yankel Gurkow, 1988, describing the style of prayer of his younger school friend R. Nissan Neminov (d. 1984) in the Lubavitch Yeshiva in Kremenchug c. 1917.

GLOSSARY

- aggada* pl. *aggadot* Narratives, sayings, and interpretations of Scripture in the Talmud, contrasting with the legal discussions of *halakhah*.
- Amidah* The main daily prayer, recited quietly, standing immobile, facing towards Jerusalem morning, afternoon, and evening.
- aniy* "I," the self, ego.
- anshei shlomeinu* (men of our peace) Fellow members of the Hasidic fraternity.
- apikorsut* Heresy or atheism.
- Arikkh* A kabbalistic term referring to an exalted aspect of the spiritual realms: the lower *Parzuf* relating to *Keter*.
- Ashkenaz* Medieval Franco-Germany.
- Asiyah* (Action) The lowest of the Four Worlds described in the kabbalah: *Azilut*, *Beriah*, *Yezirah*, *Asiyah*.
- Atik* The upper *Parzuf* relating to *Keter* (see *Arikkh*).
- Av Beth Din* The head of the Jewish Law Court.
- ayin* Nought, nonbeing, nothingness; sometimes identified with *Keter* or *Hokhmah*.
- Azilut* (Emanation) The highest of the Four Worlds described by the kabbalists (see *Asiyah*).
- Baal Shem* (Master of the Name) A person attributed with the power to utilize the Divine Name for healing or other purposes.
- Baal Shem Tov* The founder of Hasidism, R. Yisrael ben Eliezer (1698–1760).
- baal teshuvah* A repentant.
- Benoni* (Intermediate person) One who is not a *Zaddik*, i.e., who has not achieved permanent inner transformation of his being, yet at the same time is a man of spiritual stature, experiencing near pneumatic states during contemplative prayer.
- Beriah* (Creation) One of the Four Worlds (see *Asiyah*).
- Beth Din* Jewish Law Court
- Binah* (Understanding) One of the three upper *Sefirot*, corresponding to faculties of the intellect. *Binah* represents contemplative, exploratory thought, contrasting and interacting with *Hokhmah* (lit. "Wisdom" but interpreted as

"Inspiration"). In the creative process *Binah* is sometimes termed "Mother" in relation to *Hokhmah*, termed "Father." *Hokhmah* and *Binah* "give birth" to the other *Sefirot* through the mediation of *Da'at*.

Da'at (Knowledge) The third *Sefirah*, which brings the force of *Hokhmah* and *Binah* to fulfillment. As an intellectual faculty, it represents the cerebral "attachment" (concern) which actualizes Inspiration and Contemplation, giving rise to emotion (the lower *Sefirot*) culminating in practical action.

devekut "Cleaving" to the Divine, whether through prayer, Torah study, observance of the Mitzvot, or a mystical approach to the practicalities of life.

Din, Dinim (Judgment) Harsh spiritual forces.

Ein Sof (Without End) The Essence of the Divine, beyond all worlds, beyond the *Sefirot* and beyond all Names: the Infinite.

Ein Yakov A popular anthology of the narrative material in the Talmud, collected in the sixteenth century by R. Yakov ibn Habib.

Gevurah (Might) A *Sefirah* signifying severity, fear, withdrawal of radiance, limitation, harshness, contrasting with *Hesed*.

Habad An acronym of *Hokhmah*, *Binah*, *Da'at*, the *Sefirot* representing Intellect.

Hagat An acronym of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferet*, the *Sefirot* representing Emotion.

halakhah (the way to go) Teachings of Jewish law.

hamez Leaven and leavened food, forbidden on Passover.

hanhagah, pl. **hanhagot** Customs and directives for daily life which became an important aspect of Hasidic teaching.

Hanukah The Festival of Lights.

hasidim Members of the Hasidic movement; followers of a *Zaddik*.

hasidut, Yiddish **hasidus** Hasidic teachings.

Haskalah The Jewish Enlightenment movement which began in Germany in the eighteenth century.

Hayah (Living one) An exalted aspect of the soul. In ascending order, the five aspects of the soul are *Nefesh*, *Ruah*, *Neshamah*, *Hayah*, *Yehidah*.

Hesed (Kindness) A *Sefirah* signifying love, giving, kindness. Contrasts with *Gevurah*.

Hekhal (Palace) An aspect of the spiritual realms; also, the inner chamber of the Temple, leading to the Holy of Holies.

hesber (explanation) Rational, discursive explanations of the spiritual teachings in a Habad Hasidic discourse.

hishtavut Mystical equanimity.

hitbonenut Contemplation.

hitkalelut (Absorption, integration) The sense of integration of everything to-

gether, both the highest and the lowest. This perception is the quest of the Habad contemplative, who also seeks the *hitkalelut* of his own self in the Divine.

hitlahavut (Being enflamed) Spiritual enthusiasm in prayer or other religious activities.

hitpa'alut Ecstasy, being moved to some degree.

Hoda'ah (Acceptance) a basic level of abnegation of Will and of self. A basic form of *hitpa'alut*.

Hokhmah (Wisdom) Emerging from *Keter*, this is the beginning of the creative process signified by the *Sefirot*. As an intellectual faculty it represents "Inspiration" (see *Binah* and *Da'at*).

kabbalat 'ol [*Malkhut Shamayim*] (Acceptance of the yoke [of the Kingdom of Heaven]) Submission of the Will to the command of the Divine, particularly with regard to the observance of the Mitzvot.

kavvanah, pl. **kavvanot** Mystical concepts to keep in mind during prayer.

kelipah, pl. **kelipot** (shells) Negative forces in the spiritual realms, with the effect of concealing Divine radiance, as a shell hides the kernel within.

kelipat nogah A higher level of *kelipah*, which has the possibility of being transformed into holiness. This level is the source of the materiality of permitted everyday life.

Keter The most exalted level of the *Sefirot*, the point at which they begin to emanate from the *Ein Sof*. It represents the Will of the Divine.

Khasidus Hasidic teachings.

Kiddush Hashem (Sanctification of the [Divine] Name) The extreme form of this is self-sacrifice for Judaism.

kolel An institution (and fund) to enable men to devote themselves to Torah study after marriage.

ma'amad (support) This is the fund which provides for the upkeep of the "court" of a Hasidic *Rebbe*; the *hasidim* make regular contributions.

ma'amar A discourse of Hasidic teaching, said by a *Rebbe* in a state of inspiration.

ma'ariv The evening prayer.

maggid, pl. **maggidim** A preacher. In the eighteenth century many towns had a professional *maggid*, and there were also itinerant *maggidim*.

Malkhut (Kingship) The tenth and lowest *Sefirah*, the source of life for the lower realm; the *Shekhinah*.

mashal A proverb, parable, or image ("model") used to explain a concept.

Mashpia "Guide" in spiritual matters; this is a professional role in a Habad *yeshivah*.

maskil, pl. **maskilim** Followers of the Haskalah movement.

mazal (Constellation) A term often used to mean luck. In kabbalistic and Habad

- thought it means an exalted level of the soul which remains in the upper realms, yet exerts a certain influence on the spiritual life of the person.
- mazah** Unleavened bread eaten on Passover.
- melamed**, pl. **melamdin** A teacher of children, whether as a private tutor or in a school.
- Merkavah** The Divine Chariot described by Ezekiel, which became the focus of an important stream of Jewish mysticism.
- mesirat nefesh** Self-sacrifice, both literally and also figuratively (i.e., acting in a dedicated way).
- Mikveh** A ritual bath.
- minyán** A quorum of ten men required for the public prayer service.
- Mishnah** The formulation of the Oral Law compiled by R. Judah the Prince at the beginning of the third century.
- mitnaged**, pl. **mitnagdim** Opponents of the Hasidic movement.
- Mitzvah**, pl. **Mitzvot** Commandment of the Torah.
- Musaf** The "Additional" *Amidah* recited in the morning of Sabbaths and festivals, corresponding to an additional offering in the Temple.
- musar** Ethical teachings.
- Nefesh** The soul; also, an aspect of the soul (see *Hayah*).
- nefilat apayim** (prostration) A section of the daily prayers said after the *Amidah* on weekdays, in which the face is hidden symbolically. Also called *Tahanun* (Supplication).
- Neshamah** The soul; also, an aspect of the soul (see *Hayah*).
- nidah** A menstruating woman, forbidden to have intercourse with her husband.
- nishtkayt** (Being nothing) A form of self-abnegation, *bitul*.
- ohel** A hut near the grave of a sage or *Zaddik*, where candles are lit and people can stand in prayer.
- Parzuf**, pl. **Parzufim** (Visage) A Lurianic term for a compound structure of *Sefirot*. For example, corresponding to the *Sefirah Hokhmah* is *Parzuf Aba*, lit. "Father," made up of ten *Sefirot*. Viewing the *Sefirot* in terms of such structures enables one to perceive the relationships between them.
- pidyon** = *pidyon nefesh*, pl. **pidyonot** (redemption [of the soul]) A written note given to a *Rebbe* asking for a blessing; sometimes this includes money.
- pilpul** A complex talmudic discourse, in some cases remote from any practical application.
- Purim** A festival falling in the early spring, commemorating the events described in the Scroll of Esther.
- Rebbe** A Hasidic leader.
- Rosh Hashanah** The New Year festival, usually falling in September.

- Rosh Hodesh** The New Moon; a minor festival at the beginning of every Hebrew month.
- Ruah** (Spirit) An aspect of the soul (see *Hayah*).
- Ruah Hakodesh** (The Holy Spirit) A form of prophecy.
- Sefirah**, pl. **Sefirot** Ten Divine emanations, through which *Ein Sof*, the Infinite, both creates the universe and is expressed in it.
- Sefardi** (Spanish) A Jew of Spanish or Middle Eastern extraction.
- Shema** The central Jewish prayer, said several times a day and before death, expressing the unity of the Divine (Deut. 6:4ff).
- Shekhinah** The Divine Presence which dwells, ideally, in the Holy of Holies of the Temple. When the Temple does not stand the *Shekhinah* is spoken of as being in Exile.
- shofar** A ram's horn, sounded on the New Year festival.
- Shtadlan** An intercessor, usually a wealthy and worldly member of the medieval Jewish community, who would intercede on its behalf with government officials and the nobility.
- Sihah**, pl. **Sihot** (Talk) In Habad, a genre of Hasidic teaching, less formal than a *ma'amar* and also less overtly kabbalistic in style.
- Sitra A'hara** (The Other Side) The force of evil.
- Tahanun** See *nefilat apayim*.
- talit** A prayer-shawl with fringes called *Zizit*.
- Talmud** The comprehensive anthology of Jewish teaching completed in Babylon in the fifth century. An earlier version was compiled in Palestine.
- Tannaim** Sages of the Mishnah.
- Tefilah** Prayer.
- Tefilin** Phylacteries: small scrolls of the *Shema* and other texts, encased in a leather cube, worn on the forehead and upper arm during the morning prayers on weekdays. See Deut. 6:8.
- Tiferet** (Splendour) The *Sefirah* which mediates between *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, signifying "praise" and also "mercy."
- Tikkun Hazonot** A kabbalistic prayer, recited at midnight, expressing mourning for the Exile of the *Shekhinah*.
- Torah** The Scroll of the Pentateuch; also, the entire body of Jewish teaching.
- tsubrokhén** adj. **tsubrokhénkayt** noun (Being broken) An ethical form of self-abnegation: the person's ego is "broken" because of the sense of worthlessness and of having transgressed.
- viduy** (confession) A section of the liturgy in which one admits to having sinned, reciting an alphabetical composition.

- Yakov** Jacob.
- Yehidah** The highest aspect of the soul (see *Hayah*).
- Yehidut** Private audience with the *Rebbe*, an event deemed to have great spiritual significance.
- yesh** (Being), as opposed to "nothingness" (*ayin*); also "self." Thus *Bitul ha-yesh* means "abnegation of the self."
- Yeshivah** A talmudic college.
- Yezirah** (Formation). One of the Four Worlds (see *Asiyah*).
- yihud**, pl. **yihudim** (unification) A mystical process of effecting unions of forces in the spiritual realms, particularly regarding souls: e.g., causing the soul of a *Zaddik* to join with the soul of another person, in order to help the latter.
- Yitzhak**, **Yizhak** Isaac.
- Yom Kippur** The Day of Atonement.
- Zaddik**, pl. **Zaddikim** A totally righteous person; the leader of a Hasidic group. In Habad thought the *Zaddik* is defined as one who has achieved a permanent inner spiritual transformation.
- Zimzum** (Contraction) The process whereby the boundless *Ein Sof* "contracted" or was "veiled" in order to permit the creation of the finite universe.
- Zizit** Fringes worn on a ritual garment or prayer-shawl in accordance with Num. 15:38.
- Zohar** The central work of Jewish mystical teaching, organized as a commentary to the Torah.

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