

THE ARCHETYPE OF THE TZADDIQ IN HASIDIC TRADITION

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BY
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BY

YA'QUB IBN YUSUF

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Most people are struck by an archetype . . . at least once in their lifetime, and after that all they can do is to circle round and round it.

Elemire Zolla, *Archetypes*

ABSTRACT

What is the nature of the spiritual Master idea in Hasidism? The thesis is set forth that in classical Hasidic sources the figure of the Tzaddiq is conceived of, primarily, as an archetypal idea. Such an interpretation of the Hasidic Tzaddiq is substantiated by a re-examination of both Hasidic and earlier Jewish traditions, and is considered against the background of modern academic scholarship. The approaches of Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem are considered as part of a broad review of modern historiography relating to the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq. Arthur Green is presented as the first modern scholar to relate the Hasidic conception of the Tzaddiq to a history of the idea going back to the Rabbinic period. It is proposed, however, that Green did not grasp the distinguishing characteristics of the Tzaddiq idea, and that like his predecessors, he underestimated the significance of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq. Given that both early Hasidic sources and the earlier Jewish sources to which they refer, point towards an archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq, and given the centrality of the Tzaddiq in the Hasidic world, it is proposed that this is the seminal idea which inspired and informed the development of the whole Hasidic movement.

In setting forth this thesis the term "archetype" is defined, not according to Jung, but according to Philo's idea of an element to be found within an individual which connects the universe with the Divine. This is then related to the holographic idea. The origins of a spiritual idea of the Tzaddiq are traced in Rabbinic literature, as is the emergence of a specifically archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq in medieval Kabbalah. The ramifications of such an idea are explored in a number of classical Hasidic writings, and parallels are drawn to the archetypal conception of the spiritual Master figure in Sufi teachings. An Excursus at the end of the thesis presents modern accounts of the function of the Tzaddiq as it is exemplified by living Hasidic Masters.

PREFACE

This thesis is the fruit of a long-term love affair. When I first began undergraduate studies at the University of Manitoba some twenty years ago, in the Fall of 1972, it was for the purpose of studying Jewish mysticism with Rabbi Zalman Schachter. I was very much on a vision quest at that time: I was seeking a vision of the essence of the Jewish religion. I wanted to know if it was the same or different from the essential mystical teachings of the major religions of the world. On the basis of the answer I found and the "vision" I attained, I was prepared to set the course of my life.

Notwithstanding the fact that in academic circles since then, "essentialism" (in the sense of reducing a given religion to a certain essential idea) has gone out of fashion, I felt I found what I was seeking. In the teachings of the Hasidic Master, Reb Nahman of Bratzlav, I found what was for me was the essence of a Jewish mystical understanding of the place of the human being in the world. What I found, indeed, was a universal vision, which might fit the spiritual teachings of any of a number of religions. What I found, nonetheless, felt to me to be deeply Jewish. I had expected a Jewish view of the world to revolve around the Torah, but what I found at the core of this vision was not a book, but the function of the spiritual Master. In subsequent studies I have learned that Kabbalists, generally, have regarded the Torah not as a code to be deciphered but as a field of infinite meanings. What then provides the basis of the truly great interpretations? Before I ventured any further in the study of Kabbalah, I could see that the interpretations of R. Nahman were far too serendipitous to be derived simply from the knowledge of books. They had authority, vividness and clarity, and answered--as far as words can answer--the questions I was carrying. What then was the source of R. Nahman's inspiration?

What I found at the center of the elaborate mandala which was woven in the teachings of R. Nahman, was the "archetype of the Tzaddiq". I first heard this expression from Zalman Schachter, although I never heard him develop its implications. Yet it was clear from the start that it was not a matter of a certain person as much as a certain human capacity. More than the forms of Judaism, or of any religion or creed, it is this idea which has continued to hold light to my own spiritual search. It is this idea, specifically, that led me to study Sufism.

In the light of my own spiritual search, this thesis and indeed all my academic efforts represent a kind of "round trip". They reflect a return to my roots, a desire to clarify for myself the wisdom of my ancestral tradition, and a desire to share with others perspectives of this tradition which to nourish me. Some readers may find me too much concerned with understanding Jewish tradition in its own terms, rather than from the position of an impartial outsider. To such objections I would answer that the object of my study is simply to arrive at a correct understanding of the contents of certain Jewish mystical teachings. As for those who may be concerned that I may have imposed a personal or perhaps a "Sufi" point of view on the Jewish sources, I would simply request that they carefully weigh and consider the evidence I have assembled. My aim is neither to write an apology for the Jewish tradition nor to reading new meanings into it, but to uncover a vital idea of the Jewish tradition which, until now, has gone unnoticed.

The biggest challenge in writing this thesis has not been documenting it. Indeed, as I have read and reread the Jewish texts cited by previous scholars, I have been amazed at how vividly and consistently they tend to illustrate my thesis. The challenge had been accounting for this thesis in terms of the work of previous academic scholars. And yet, for all of the criticism I level at the work of previous scholars such as Buber, Scholem and Green, as I have pursued their work my esteem for them has steadily increased. Scholem's overview of the field of Jewish mysticism, and his

standards of academic discipline have provided a working basis for scholars ever since. Buber's courage to seek a vision in traditional sources which might be applicable to modern man, has been less influential among modern scholars, but it has been no less of an inspiration for me. Arthur Green was a personal model for me in my spiritual search, before I went up to Canada to study with Zalman Schachter. Thus it comes as something of a surprize to find myself, after all these years, in intellectual combat with Art Green. Nevertheless, it is Green who first traced the major sources of the development of the Tzaddiq idea which provides the basis of this thesis. Although I sometimes feel frustrated that none of these scholars recognized the archetype of the Tzaddiq which I believe to be the very heart Hasidism and of much of Kabbalah, I am also quietly pleased. They mapped out the territory and left it for others to come and dig up the treasure.

Thus I hope that my criticism of the work of these men will be understood for what it is meant to be, what is often called, in the Hasidic sources, "controversy for the sake of heaven". I realize, of course, that without the contributions of the various scholars I mention here, I would have no ground on which to stand.

I was introduced to the work of Moshe Idel after I had already begun to compose this thesis. I was greatly encouraged to find a scholar of his calibre who had the courage to pursue the thesis that there is in Judaism, more than a mystical philosophy, a *bona fide* mystical tradition. Over the course of the last two years I have been privileged to be able to study with Professor Idel, first briefly at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, and then at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. More than anything else, what (I hope!) I have learned from him about the craft of scholarship is to welcome new data and allow it to inform my theories, rather forcing it into the shape of my preconceptions. I am grateful that our insights are often similar, and appreciative, as well, of the differences in our views.

I have had the good fortune to choose a thesis topic which reflects my "first love" in the spiritual field. Were it not for the sustenance that comes from what one loves, I don't think I would have endured the arduous process of bringing this project to the light of day. I am appreciative of the advice of my advisor, Neal Rose, and of the members of my thesis committee, and am grateful for the support of my friends in the years that I have been immersed in this thesis. I am most especially grateful for the moral and material support of my parents, Joe and Tzippi Heckelman. It says in the Mishnah, "*mikol mlamdai hiskalti.*" "I have gained consciousness from all of my teachers." My parents were my first teachers, and beginning with them I wish to thank all the teachers and friends who have enlightened me on the way.

Ya'qub ibn Yusuf

Vernon, B.C.

July 14, 1992

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATIONS

The commonly accepted "scientific" scheme for writing Hebrew characters employed by the *Encyclopedia Judaica* leans heavily on the use of diacritical marks, and is often misleading regarding matters of pronunciation. I have adopted a modified scheme which gives priority to the correct pronunciation of the words in modern Hebrew. I have employed underlining (which my computer supports) in place of diacritical marks (which it does not), so as to distinguish a soft "h" from a harder "*kh*", while eliminating the misleading "ch". In cases where there is a *daggesh* in Hebrew I have doubled the consonant in English. However, in the case of certain well-known words for which a popular spelling is generally accepted, such as "Hasidism" and "Kabbalah", I have conformed to popular usage. Of course, the original spelling of all transliterations in direct quotations has been preserved. Thus I count six different spellings of the word "Tzaddiq" in this thesis, and I may have missed some! I apologize to the reader who may find this confusing, but until a sensible compromise such as the one I am proposing becomes generally accepted, the gap between a popular and "scientific" scheme for Hebrew transliterations will continue, with numerous variations proliferating.

Thus I have conformed, as much as possible, to the following scheme for the English spelling of the Hebrew terms in this thesis:

a א
b ב
v ו
g ג
d ד
h ה
v ו
z ז
h ח
t ט
i,y י
k כ
kh כ

l ל
m מ
n נ
s ס
 ' ע
p פ
f פ
tz צ
q ק
r ר
sh ש
s ש
t ת

Given the vagaries of English, I have found no one scheme for rendering the ubiquitous Hebrew vowels, which are written in Hebrew only as diacritical marks. I have, however, aimed at employing a reasonably consistent system which employs some of the commonly accepted spellings for vowels, and gives the reader a good chance to guess at correct pronunciations.

INTRODUCTION

The Tzaddiq is the foundation of the world.

These words identify the pattern which connects successive layers of the Jewish tradition of a spiritual master figure.¹ On the basis of this quotation, which was deliberately taken out of context from Proverbs 10:25, cosmic significance was ascribed to the figure of the Tzaddiq. Although the term *tzaddiq* in the Bible simply meant a "Righteous" individual, it was identified in later Jewish tradition the Tzaddiq as a kind of upside-down "foundation" by which the earth is established on the basis of the Divine. The idea of the Tzaddiq as "the foundation of the world" is introduced in Talmudic literature. It is developed in the theoretical literature of medieval Kabbalah, in which the Tzaddiq is identified with the Sefirah of "Foundation" (in Hebrew, *Yesod*) within the metaphysical structure of the Ten Sefirot. The outstanding historical application of this Tzaddiq idea appears somewhat later, among the leaders of the Hasidic movement initiated in the middle of the eighteenth century by Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov.²

¹Gregory Bateson's notion of "the pattern which connects" comes to mind in this regard: "Break the pattern which connects the items of learning and you necessarily destroy all quality." *Mind and Nature: a Necessary Unity* (Toronto: Bantam, 1980), 8. In this case, however, the "pattern which connects" a variety of Jewish conceptions of the Tzaddiq as "the foundation of the world", is not only implicit in the idea of the Tzaddiq, but is stated explicitly in the tradition in which it is related.

²Although the historical examples of *tzaddiqim* (the plural of the Hebrew word *tzaddiq*) have generally been male, a feminine form of the word, *tzaddaiqah*, also exists

Arthur Green has traced the history of this idea in his ground-breaking study, "The *Zaddiq* as *Axis Mundi* in Later Judaism".³ Green presents the Talmudic, Kabbalistic and Hasidic developments of this idea as successive strata of the Jewish "holy man" tradition. Although he does not explicitly claim that the Tzaddiq is "the" (rather than "a") conception of the spiritual master figure in post-exilic Judaism, it emerges from Green's analysis no other figure in the Jewish tradition of the last nineteen hundred years has represented a comparable function. Neither the scholarly authority of the Rabbi, nor the enthusiastic devotion of the Hasid, nor the eschatological ideal of the Messiah has represented, as has the Tzaddiq, a human bridge between Creator and creation in the here-and-now.

The Hasidic movement which arose in the second half of the eighteenth century to capture the hearts and minds of much of Eastern European Jewry, revolved around the figures of various *Rebbeim*, or spiritual "Masters", who were regarded as living embodiments of this Tzaddiq idea.⁴ The teachings of these Masters were delivered

in Hebrew. There are, indeed, numerous instances of mothers, daughters and sisters of Tzaddiqim who served at least to some degree as spiritual leaders (although not generally the wives of such leaders, or women unrelated to prominent men). Specifically, Hannah Rahel, the famous Maid of Ludmir, is known to have functioned for a time in the Hasidic world in the Tzaddiq role. For further discussion, see Ada Rapoport-Albert, "The Maid of Ludmir", *Kabbalah: a Newsletter of Research in Jewish Mysticism* 2, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 1987), 1-3. This is the historical figure upon whom the Isaac Bashevis Singer story and Barbara Streisand movie of "Yentel" was (very loosely) based. Although she functioned as a Tzaddiq, Rapoport-Albert points out that this does not demonstrate a genuinely feminine Tzaddiq role: it was generally believed that the Maid of Ludmir acquired her powers because she was possessed by the soul of a male Tzaddiq who had sinned! Nevertheless, I have endeavored as much as possible to avoid referring to the figure of the Tzaddiq as a "he". While all of the prominent Hasidic Tzaddiqim were men, the archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq itself is not in itself, I believe, gender-specific.

³Arthur Green, "The *Zaddiq* as *Axis Mundi* in Later Judaism", *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 45, 1977.

⁴Although the Yiddish term *Rebbe* is a direct translation of the Hebrew term *Rav*, which is in English "Rabbi", it came to be associated with the original meaning of the term, a "Great One" or "Master", while even in a Hasidic context, the term *Rav* continued to mean an ordained representative of the Rabbinic tradition. The diminutive

orally to their *hasidim*, or "disciples", and were subsequently recorded and published. The ideas conveyed in these discourses tend to reflect earlier developments of mystical Jewish thought; preeminent among them is the idea of the Tzaddiq.

Precisely what is the nature of the Tzaddiq idea which Hasidism derived from earlier traditions, and made the basis of its spiritual Master ideal? For interesting though complex reasons, modern Judaic scholarship has generally neglected to ask this question. Yet within this literature, the answer is not hard to find. Green cites a quotation from the *Bahir*, the first major book of Kabbalah (which appeared in the 12th century), which serves to summarize both earlier and later developments of the idea of the Tzaddiq:

There is a single pillar that reaches from earth to heaven and *zaddiq* is its name. It is named for the *zaddiqim*. When there are *zaddiqim* in the world, it is strengthened; when there are not, it becomes weak. It bears the entire world, as scripture says: "*Zaddiq* is the foundation of the world" (Prov. 10:25). If it is weakened, the world cannot exist. For that reason, the world is sustained even by the presence of a single *zaddiq* within it.⁵

By means of the metaphor of a pillar, this text describes the function of maintaining the world in terms of "*tzaddiq*". The name of this function is then applied to a category of people, known as *tzaddiqim* (plural for the "righteous") who perform this function of bearing the existence of the world. While it is desirable that there be more than one such individual in the world at any given time, the emphasis is placed not on the identity of a particular individual, or group of individuals, but on the function itself. The "righteous" individual who serves in this capacity is thus considered to be an exemplar of this Tzaddiq function.

form, *Reb*, was used rather freely in a Hasidic context as a term of respect. The abbreviation "R.", which stands for "Rabbi", may also be read in some instances as "Reb" or "Rebbe". For example, in the case of "R. Nahman of Bratzlav", any of the three are correct.

⁵Green, "*Axis Mundi*", 333.

My thesis is that the Hasidic movement, basing itself on sources such as this, conceived of the Tzaddiq as an archetypal idea. That is, rather than describing a mythic hero or an exalted personality of some kind, the term Tzaddiq was understood as describing, primarily, an objective *function* which was reflected in the personal examples of individual Tzaddiqim. I intend to demonstrate that the classical literature which appeared in the early decades of the Hasidic movement is very much concerned with the elaboration of this idea, so that it would have served as the theoretical model upon which Hasidic leadership was based.

Such an archetypal understanding of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq has not been pursued in any methodical way, until now.⁶ Because it is unprecedented, it will

⁶I am indebted to Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi for first introducing me to the idea of "the archetype of the Tzaddiq" as it applied to the teachings of Rebbe Nahman of Bratzlav, when I was an undergraduate student of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at the University of Manitoba between 1972 and 1975. In his recently published expanded version of his doctoral dissertation, *Spiritual Intimacy: a Study of Counseling in Hasidsim* (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1991), Schachter-Shalomi discusses "The Rebbe as an Archetypal Model" (170-1), saying that "he functions as a conjunctive person: he responds to the hasid's problem by answering, scolding, and even by giving the needed "pat on the back." . . . Against the "divine" role that the rebbe assumes, the hasid can work out his problems with some assurance of definite results. . . . If the rebbe were not there to intercede with the divine, the covenantal relationship between the hasid and God would not be concretized. None of the accessible means of communion with God are equal to the mediation of the rebbe." Thus Schachter-Shalomi uses the term "archetype" in the restricted sense of an earthly intermediary or representative of God. He does conclude his discussion by saying that the Hasidic Master serves as "both the human archetype and the divine; and as such he reminds the hasid of his own potential, of what he can become." This encompasses more of the sense of "archetype" as I employ it in this thesis. But as he proceeds (171) to discuss "The Rebbe as an Accessible Model", Schachter-Shalomi does not apply this, explicitly, to the idea of the archetypal function of the Rebbe. Thus, as I illustrate in the Excursus at the end of this thesis, the data which Schachter-Shalomi has assembled generally bears out this thesis, but it is the observed function of the Hasidic Master, more than the understanding or this function expressed in traditional Hasidic teachings, which is the focus of Schachter-Shalomi's study.

The only other published references I am aware of to the Tzaddiq specifically as an "archetype", are by Yehudah Leibes. In his Hebrew study, "Hamashiah Shel Ha-Zohar ("The Messiah of the Zohar: the Messianic Image of Rabbi Shim'on bar Yohai"), published in *The Messianic idea in Israel* (a volume in honor of Gershom Scholem's Eightieth Birthday, Jerusalem: the National Research Academy of Israel, 1982), Leibes indicates that the second century rabbi, Shim'on bar Yohai, who appears in the

be necessary, first, to provide an account of the general state of modern Hasidic scholarship which provides the backdrop against which this thesis appears. Only once I have done this will I endeavor to trace the development of an archetypal understanding of the Tzaddiq, by reviewing and reevaluating a number of texts which have previously been considered in academic discussions of the Tzaddiq, along with corroborating sources which I have translated into English for the first time.⁷ My approach to these texts will be mainly hermeneutical: I will attempt to interpret texts in accordance with the kind of understanding that the texts themselves imply.⁸

thirteenth century as the hero of the Zohar, provides an "archetypal" model of the figure of the Tzaddiq which later is important to the Hasidic Masters. Leibes states (114) that "in my opinion, generally, the [Hasidic] theorists saw in Rashbi [R. Shim'on bar Yoḥai] the archetype [*avtypus*] of the Hasidic leader." However, the focus of Leibes's study is not on an archetypal conception of the function of R. Shim'on as distinct from a mythic one, but precisely on the personality of R. Shim'on as a mythic hero. Leibes emphasizes this personal dimension, for example, in the following quotation (118): "the spiritual connection of the Tzaddiqim with Rashbi was altogether very great, as is indicated in the pronouncement of R. Barukh of Medzibush: "Shim'on bar Yoḥai, I know you and you know me." Thus Shalomi-Schachter's work complements my thesis, whereas Leibes provides a counter-point to it.

⁷Although the idea of this thesis and the manner of developing it are my own, my approach has many parallels to that which is advocated by Moshe Idel in *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University, 1988). As Idel has demonstrated, it is not only by uncovering material that has been neglected by previous scholars, but by finding better ways of approaching already familiar material, that the knowledge of Jewish mysticism may be expected to grow. Thus Idel has addressed the question of how the study of this field might progress beyond the formidable accomplishments of Gershom Scholem. He proposes the study of manuscripts as a balance to Scholem's emphasis on (the more theoretically than experientially-oriented) books of Kabbalah. Yet Idel points out (p. 19) that "the exploration of new material is not the only, or even the most important, object. . . . Even a rereading of texts studied by Scholem may yield interesting new findings . . . and the study of the *context* of some quotations cited by Scholem may at times foster different interpretations." (The italics are his.) My study is mainly concerned with texts which are already available in easily accessible studies of Hasidism (in the English language), and is more directly concerned with the research of Arthur Green than that of Gershom Scholem. Yet I share Idel's fundamental concern with bringing an appropriate sense of "*context*" to the study of mystical Jewish texts.

⁸For a discussion of the importance of such a methodology and some examples of its application, see Chapter 9, "Kabbalistic Hermeneutics", in Idel's *New Perspectives*. Idel declares (p. 200): "Modern research has formulated only some general concepts regarding Kabbalistic symbolism, but has neglected the problematics

Such an approach requires that attention be paid not only to what is stated, explicitly, in the words of a given text, but to what is conveyed, implicitly, by the ways in which language is employed in the text, and in the context of the larger tradition in which this text appears. This requires a sensitivity to the ways in which Jewish authors refer to earlier texts, which may relate to other texts that are earlier still, implying a whole tradition of interpretation. In order to be able to enter and understand the realm of Hasidic discourse, it is first of all necessary to appreciate that the Hasidic authors located themselves within the context of an existing, on-going tradition.⁹ Although Hasidic authors, like the earlier Jewish sources they quoted, did not feel bound to be faithful to the simple meaning of the sources they quoted, a field of meaning nevertheless became associated with certain key words and themes. A term such as *tzaddiq*, as it is employed in Hasidic usage, implies such a field of meaning. Thus, although Hasidic authors were often anachronistic--they were often (but not always) unconcerned about the historical sequence in which the sources they quoted first appeared--I believe that retracing the historical development of the Tzaddiq idea will be helpful in facilitating a contemporary understanding of how the Hasidic sources understood it.

that arise from the emergence of Kabbalistic methods of interpretation, and has ignored the intricacies of the relationship between the Kabbalist qua interpreter and the divine text." The challenge which faces the scholar of Kabbalah is not only to interpret a given text, but to correctly apprehend the approach to interpretation which is implicit in the text itself. Thus Idel points out, for example, that preconceptions regarding the nature of "symbolism" have limited the scope of scholarly interpretation of Kabbalah (pp. 218-34). By imposing a category of analysis on a given text which is inappropriate to the universe of discourse of that text, much of the information it contains may be distorted, or rendered inaccessible.

⁹The Hasidic sense participation an on-going process of interpretation is expressed, for example, in their calling their new insights *hidushay Torah*, literally, "renewals of Torah". (The word "Torah" itself means "Revelation", or "Teaching", or "Scripture", that is, the Five Books of Moses.

Inasmuch as I am concerned with the idea of the Tzaddiq as it is reflected in the "context" of the tradition in which it appears, my methodology might be considered both historical and hermeneutical, and thus I would call it "contextual". Rather than regarding the characteristic ways in which the authors of Hasidic texts framed their idea of the Tzaddiq as distractions to be ignored or as obstacles to be overcome, I am looking, precisely, to understand the phenomenon implied by nuances of Hasidic expression. My aim is to grasp the self-understanding reflected not only in the works of individual Hasidic Masters, but in the broader tradition which they collectively represent.

Yet I have chosen to express my understanding of the traditional idea of the Tzaddiq in a word I am introducing from outside of Hasidic tradition. As I am claiming that the idea of the Tzaddiq may best be understood as an "archetype", it will be necessary to clarify the contextual meaning of this term, as well. What, precisely, is meant by an "archetype"? What is the history of the term, and what bearing does this have on how it is employed in its usage this thesis?

How, specifically, am I distinguishing the category of "archetype" from that of "myth"? Thus, before pursuing an historical/philological analysis of the word "tzaddiq", I will pursue a philological/historical analysis of the word "archetype", so as to prepare the way for a hermeneutical analysis of the idea of the Tzaddiq which is reflected in Hasidic literature.

Even before considering the background of the terms I am employing, however, a prior question arises concerning the setting provided by previous scholarship for a thesis such as this. How is it, indeed, that scholars until now have managed to overlook the archetypal nature of the idea of the Tzaddiq? What picture have they presented of the historical significance of Hasidism, and how might this thesis change that picture? The thesis that the Tzaddiq is an archetype may best be understood against the

background of Hasidim, and yet an understanding of Hasidism will reflexively be altered by a new perspective on the significance of the Tzaddiq. These are complex historiographical issues, and I have chosen to attempt to deal with them in detail, before pursuing my analysis of the idea of the Tzaddiq. The advantage of such an approach is that it provides a thorough orientation to the historical setting of Hasidism, and to the authors of Hasidic historiography who have provided a sense of that setting. The disadvantage is that it means setting forth "conclusions" about the significance of the Tzaddiq before discussing what the idea of the Tzaddiq is--before demonstrating that the Tzaddiq is an archetype.

Thus, while I have endeavored to provide a logical and systematic exposition of this thesis, the reader may find that considerable patience is required in order to follow it through. I have proceeded in the following order: The first chapter is devoted to a review of the modern historiography of Hasidism, the bearing it has on this thesis and the perspectives this thesis might contribute, in turn, to a view of the significance of Hasidism. The second and third chapters are devoted to clarifying the background and meaning of the terms "archetype" and "Tzaddiq", respectively. Then, in the fourth chapter, I describe the archetype of the Tzaddiq as it is conveyed in classical Hasidic texts. At the end of this chapter I endeavor to demonstrate the usefulness of an archetypal analysis to the study of comparative religion, pointing out that particularly strong parallels may be found between the archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq in Hasidism, and the archetypal idea of the Complete Human Being in the Sufi tradition.

In an excursus at the end of this thesis I have included "participant/observer" descriptions of the phenomenon of the Hasidic Tzaddiq by Jiri Langer and Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. I have placed these descriptions outside the thesis proper, as they neither prove nor disprove the thesis that the Tzaddiq is an archetype. Rather, they demonstrate the function of the Hasidic Tzaddiq, not as an idea, but in its social

manifestations. Readers who prefer to approach the subject of the Tzaddiq with a picture in mind of what it is that Tzaddiqim actually do, may wish to begin by reading the Excursus.

Personally, I was first impressed by the archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq I encountered in the teachings of R. Nahman; it is only more recently that I have pursued the implications of this idea in terms of a detailed study of its history, historiography, and the vocabulary used to describe it. My "discovery", in this sense, preceded the various "proofs" by which I have endeavored to substantiate it. Thus I have had to work backwards, in order to build a case for seeing the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq as an archetype. I would suggest, therefore, that those readers who do not require a systematic exposition--those who, like me, prefer first to "see" the idea as a whole, and only then to pursue its logical implications--may prefer to begin with the Appendix, and then read Chapters Three and Four, saving Chapter One for last.

Towards a New Paradigm

The problem of where to begin this thesis--with Hasidic descriptions of the Tzaddiq which demonstrate the archetypal nature of this idea, or with an account of the implications of approaching this figure in this way--reflects a larger problem. I have endeavored to apply a rational mode of analysis to an idea which was never intended as the object of such analysis, but which was meant to be grasped intuitively. The problem is not that "the archetype of the Tzaddiq" is a particularly difficult idea to understand or to convey in the English language, but that such an idea is not a *thing* which can be proven either to exist, or not exist. Rather, it is a way of conceiving of the Tzaddiq *function*. Framing an academic thesis so that it describes a function rather than a thing, requires an adjustment of paradigm: the implicit assumptions which

determine the kinds of knowledge that can be apprehended.¹⁰ Wherein do the implicit assumptions of my methodology depart from those of previous scholars?

The academic study of religion as it has developed from a nineteenth century *Religionswissenschaft* approach to the "science" of religion, has tended to regard matters of religion more in terms of "what" they are, than in terms of "how" they function. There is a tendency to conceive of an idea such the Tzaddiq as an entity or as an abstraction, rather than as a function or process.¹¹ Ironically, such a "scientific" paradigm continues to be the norm in the social sciences and humanities, even as the physical sciences have adapted more flexible models for understanding the phenomenal world. To cite a well-known example: in the development of twentieth century physics,

¹⁰Ken Wilber has clarified the original meaning of the term "paradigm" which "was introduced . . . by sociologist Thomas Kuhn, in a very influential book called *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. A paradigm, as Kuhn used the term, had a very precise meaning. He did not use it the way most people do now, as a type of 'super-theory' or 'world-view.' Instead, Kuhn said, paradigms are subtle, profound, far-reaching--and they are unconscious. You don't even know the paradigm exists until it is challenged by its successor. So a paradigm is a set of unconscious cognitive principles and assumptions that define what type of data you are even able to see in the first place." [The italics are mine.] "The Great Chain of Being: an Interview with Ken Wilber" *The Sun* no. 164, July 1989.

¹¹Moshe Idel has pointed out that there is a problem with framing Kabbalistic material in terms of abstract philosophical categories, when the material itself reflects a more flexible and dynamic approach. "Modern scholars, including [Gershom] Scholem . . . overstressed the importance of the speculative over the mystical; Kabbalistic symbolism is envisaged as a way to penetrate the texts and to understand the divine structure, rather than as a path to experiencing the divinely revealed texts. According to these scholars, Kabbalah is less a religious phenomenon using philosophical terminology . . . than a philosophy reminiscent of other brands of speculations, albeit expressed in strange terms." *New Perspectives*, p. 14.

While Idel raises questions that have not been asked before about the "scientific" value of Scholem's research, there is another side to this issue he does not directly acknowledge. Scholem is certainly not the first Kabbalistic author to mix philosophy into his interpretations. Although doubt has been cast on the accuracy of his apprehension of other people's contributions to Kabbalah, Scholem and his school may in fact have been unintentionally creative as Kabbalists. Thus his original philosophical interpretations of Kabbalah might be viewed not in terms of its being correct or incorrect, but in terms of their being yet another interpretation of Kabbalah. It is my opinion that it is not possible to study a field such as Kabbalah without consciously or unconsciously, poorly or well, making a contribution to it.

it was discovered that it is not useful to describe an electron *either* as a particle *or* a wave. Instead of asking "what is it?" the more fruitful question was discovered to be, "how does it behave?" Thus it was observed that electrons function in a way which sometimes fits the one model, and sometimes the other.¹²

In a similar vein, it is not my aim to prove that the word Tzaddiq as it is used in Hasidism, and in the sources from which it drew, is always and exclusively meant to refer to an archetype, and never describes a particular mythic hero. On the contrary, beginning with the Talmud and continuing in the Zohar, the archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq is often associated with the larger-than-life figure of Rabbi Shim'on bar Yohai. As I hope to demonstrate in Chapter Three, such accounts emphasize the personal greatness of R. Shim'on, *along with* a distinctly impersonal conception of his role as a Tzaddiq. Nor would I claim that the Hasidic literature of the Tzaddiq never refers to particular individuals. What I do wish to show is the degree to which classical Hasidic literature, building on earlier precedents, endeavors to elaborate on an archetypal conception of the figure of the spiritual Master.

The shift in paradigm which this thesis represents, relates not only to how the function of the Tzaddiq is conceived, but to the context in which it is understood. I am pointing towards a "self-understanding" which is expressed not only *by* the Hasidic Masters, but *in* the tradition they collectively represent. This, I realize, may mean

¹²"The apparent contradiction between the particle and the wave picture was solved in a completely unexpected way which called in question the very foundation of the mechanistic world-view--the concept of the reality of matter." Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975), 56. One might object that the "concept of the reality of matter" and religious ideas represent two entirely different orders of reality, so that it is not possible to draw parallels between them. But this is precisely the point: whether consciously or unconsciously, assumptions about the nature of the material world are reflected in our approach to the "matter" of religion. Thus, if it is desirable to approach certain aspects of physics with questions of "how", rather than of "what", it should be evident that such an approach might also have something to offer the study of mystical religion.

opening myself to charges of anthropomorphism. I am indeed conceiving of Hasidic tradition as a corporate entity which resembles a human being not in its having a physical body, but in its having a "psychology" of its own. By that I mean that the "tradition" represented by Hasidic literature would have been a living system of knowledge, with its own process of assimilating past experiences and incorporating them in itself, even as it continued adapting itself to its environment.¹³ Elsewhere, I have defined the word "tradition" as "a living system of knowledge communicated by word, example, and shared experience."¹⁴ Such a "system" of knowledge implies the existence of smaller systems within itself, and larger systems around it.¹⁵ Thus, when speaking of "the Hasidic tradition of the Tzaddiq" I am locating this tradition, vertically, within the context of earlier developments of the Jewish idea of the Tzaddiq,

¹³In Peter Russell's discussion of "General Living Systems Theory" on pp. 27-31 of *The Global Brain* (Los Angeles, J. P. Tarcher, 1983), he presents James Miller's "nineteen subsystems of a general living system", which he applies to "human society" as well as the human body and the biosphere. While interesting correspondences may be found between a number of ways in which information is processed in these systems and in a spiritual tradition such as Hasidism, I believe it would be stretching the analogy to insist that correspondences to all nineteen of these exist! Also discussed is the "self-organizing" property, which is "a living system's ability to maintain a high degree of internal order despite a continually changing environment" (31). It is on the basis of both kinds of criteria, according to Russell, that James Lovelock distinguishes a "living system" such as the planet earth from a non-living entity such as a machine. Thus in general terms, I believe that a movement such as Hasidism might be considered a "living system" as well.

¹⁴I present a general argument for a "psychology of traditions" approach, and an analysis of its implications for the study of Jewish mysticism, in my article "The Psychology of Traditions: a New Paradigm in Judaic Studies", in *Religious Studies: Issues, Prospects and Proposals* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991). For a discussion of this definition of tradition, see p. 269.

¹⁵I have in mind Fritjof Capra's definition of a "system", which is at the heart of his understanding of the "new paradigm" he applies to a variety of fields of knowledge: "An integrated whole whose properties cannot be reduced to those of its parts is called a system. Living organisms, societies, and ecosystems are all systems. . . . Living systems are organized in such a way that they form multi-levelled structures, each level consisting of subsystems which are whole in regard to their parts, and parts with regard to larger wholes." *The Turning Point* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982), 43.

and horizontally, within the Hasidic tradition as a whole. But the Hasidic tradition itself is located within the larger tradition of Kabbalah, which in its turn is located within the larger mystical Jewish tradition, which in turn partakes of the Jewish tradition as a whole.¹⁶ Thus a specific reference to the idea of the Tzaddiq in the work of a particular Hasidic author is to be understood not only as a reflection of his personal experience and thought, but as a specific point of reflection within this much larger "tradition". I am seeking an understanding of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq which takes into account the traditional system of knowledge in which the idea appears.

It is against the background of what Arthur Green has already accomplished in his studies of the idea of the Tzaddiq, and in the light of a significant perspective I believe he has overlooked, that it has been possible to write this thesis. At least in theory, Green himself has been an outstanding advocate of approaches to the study of Jewish sources which allow for a rediscovery of religious meaning.¹⁷ Specifically, he has spoken of the challenge of understanding religion "*in its own terms*":

¹⁶The term "Kabbalah", which means "tradition", is generally taken to mean the tradition which clearly emerges in mystical Jewish literature of the twelfth century, in which Jewish Scriptures and Commandments and especially Hebrew prayer are subjected to mystical interpretation in terms of the theory of Ten Sefirot. As Idel, particularly, has pointed out, "Kabbalah" does not in fact refer to a single monolithic tradition, but comprises a number of (sometimes competing) streams, which have appeared within the larger context of orthodox Jewish tradition. Moreover, in addition to the major tradition of Sefirotic Kabbalah, which Idel designates as "theosophical" Kabbalah, there is a minor stream of "prophetic" or "ecstatic" Kabbalah, represented mainly by the work of Avraham Abulafia, which is based on the intrinsic mystical significance of the Hebrew alphabet. Thus I would consider all Jewish traditions which relate in some way to a mystical understanding of the Ten Sefirot, the Four Worlds, and/or the Hebrew alphabet--which means virtually all of Jewish mysticism since the twelfth century, including Eastern European Hasidism, and certain earlier sources such as the *Sefer Yetzirah*, a part of the tradition of "Kabbalah". Earlier Jewish mystical and quasi-mystical literature, such as the Heikhalot literature, or for that matter, references in the Talmud to a cosmological conception of the Tzaddiq, might be considered to be a part of "the Jewish mystical tradition" but not to be of "Kabbalah". I generally prefer the appellation "mystical Jewish tradition", however, since it emphasizes the fact that Jewish mysticism has developed within the framework of Rabbinic Judaism, rather than as something separate from it.

Scholars of religion are beginning to speak of the need to study religion *in its own terms*, and are viewing its interpretation in the language of social sciences as inappropriately reductionistic. This is not to say that they support the truth claims of any particular tradition, but that they recognize the religious as representing a unique domain of human experience that cannot be explained away by reference to social or psychological needs. . . . In its retreat from functionalistic modes of explaining all human behavior, including religion, part of the academy is admitting, with much caution, that the great religious and mythical systems represent insightful mappings of the human psyche, and that their teachings, while not reflecting accurate history, geography, astronomy, or physics, do offer the one who knows how to read them a profound view of the collective inner experience of humanity.¹⁸

It is in this spirit that I hope to show that the archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq represents a significant insight into the religious experience of humankind. And yet, even in an expression such as "insightful mappings of the human psyche" the danger of reductionism lurks. It is important to bear in mind, for example, that although a psychological dimension may be emphasized in many Hasidic teachings, the teachings themselves do not represent a specifically psychological approach. Hasidic sources are not concerned with mapping "the collective inner experience of humanity", but with mapping the divine typography and showing how it may be revealed in the experience of the individual. Thus, if I were to interpret the figure of the Tzaddiq, for example, in terms of a Jungian "archetype" (considered as an element of the "collective unconscious"), I might make an interesting contribution to the field of Jungian psychology, but I would be doing an injustice to the study of Jewish tradition. Religion, I believe, deserves to be studied in terms of what it proposes to be: not merely

¹⁷In "Scholarship is Not Enough", (*Tikkun* July/August 1987, pp. 38-39), Green acknowledges the importance of being "fully aware of historical development, of comparative studies, of the social and psychological factors underlying theological claims, and so forth." Yet, "without rejecting these," he proposes that "we must move beyond them." Green speaks of a kind of scholarship in which "the scholar of exegesis or hermeneutics will present a model of past re-rereadings of text that can open the possibility of new readings in the future."

¹⁸Arthur Green, "Jewish Studies and Jewish Faith", *Tikkun*, vol. 1 no. 1, 1986, p. 88.

as a cultural artefact, or even a product of human creativity, but as an apprehension of the Divine.

That scholars have neglected to ask such a fundamental question as the nature of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq is, I believe, indicative of the wide-spread problem of reductionism in the academic study of Kabbalah. Modern scholars have tended to analyze Jewish mystical texts in terms of philosophical, socio-historical, and psychological categories, effectively reducing these texts to "nothing but" a source of data for philosophical, socio-historical, and psychological analysis. Such approaches, of course, have value in providing a picture of the possible intellectual, social and personal implications of the texts that have reached our hands, but they are extremely limited as a means of illuminating the ideas (not to mention the experiences!) these texts represent. Thus while the specific problem I am addressing in this thesis concerns the nature of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq, it implies the broader question of how to read Jewish mystical texts.

Since an academic approach, especially in the humanities, tends to look towards categorization as a method of analysis, I have chosen the category of "archetype" as a means of apprehending the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq. Thus I am offering to answer a phenomenological question about the nature of the Jewish spiritual Master ideal which has generally been overlooked. The lack of interest in considering an area such as spiritual leadership in the light which traditional Jewish sources might shed reflects, I believe, a broader problem not *in* the field of Jewish mysticism as much as *with* the field as a whole. Mystical sources of Jewish tradition are generally regarded as anything but a source of mystical knowledge. Thus, by proposing that the Tzaddiq is an archetype I am attempting to provide a single solution to a two-fold problem. I mean the category "archetype" to indicate not only the nature of the Hasidic leadership

ideal, but to be an example of a mode of analysis which affords contemporary students of religion access to the wisdom of the Jewish mystical tradition.

By considering the Tzaddiq as an archetype, I mean to convey the nature of an idea which is central to Hasidism, and much of mystical Judaism. How then might my success or failure in this endeavor be determined? Let me suggest the following criteria for evaluating a thesis such as this: Does it afford an insight into a significant aspect of the traditional sources which otherwise would be overlooked? Is it appropriate to the context provided by the tradition in which these sources appear? And is it both significant to specialists in the field and understandable to general students of religion? I hope that by demonstrating the thesis that the Tzaddiq is an archetype, I will succeed in fulfilling all of these criteria.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND IMPLICATIONS OF HASIDIC HISTORIOGRAPHY

I am proposing that the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq be considered an archetype on the basis of how this idea is understood in the context of Hasidic tradition. Yet there is another sort of context which has a bearing on this thesis: the context provided by the modern academic study of Hasidism. Although, early in this century, Hasidism was the first area to be cultivated in the academic study of Jewish mysticism, it is only recently that scholars have begun to seriously study classical Hasidic texts. And yet the approach I am proposing challenges assumptions already well-established in the field. It is with the idea in mind of making space for a fundamentally new perspective on the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq that I will present, in this chapter, a critical review of the relevant contributions of other scholars.

Indeed one might ask, if the Tzaddiq *is* an archetype, why has no one else come forward with such a thesis until now? To be able to answer this question it will be necessary to review the history of modern Hasidic historiography, its methodological assumptions, and the causes and implications of the directions it has taken. How have previous scholars viewed the general significance of the Hasidic movement? How have such views reflected on their understanding of the role of the Hasidic Tzaddiq? How, indeed, might the perspective on the Tzaddiq which I am presenting here, reflect on an understanding of the movement as a whole?

While many modern scholars have written about the Hasidic movement, there are two outstanding figures who have tended to shape the direction of subsequent scholarship in the field: Martin Buber and Gershom Scholem. A third major figure

deserving special consideration is Arthur Green. Although Green's work in Hasidism is somewhat limited by the horizons which these and other scholars established before him, it is Green, more than anyone else, who has investigated the Tzaddiq as an idea, both in Hasidism and in earlier Jewish mysticism. Thus Green, more than any other scholar, represents the state of the art of the academic study of this particular subject. Therefore, even as I attempt to introduce the broad field of research in Hasidism available in English in this chapter, I have organized my approach in terms of a detailed analysis of the claims and contributions of these three scholars.

Buber's Interpretation of the Hasidic Tzaddiq

Contemporary readers both inside and outside the academic world, are likely to have first encountered the Hasidic figure of the Tzaddiq in the writings of Martin Buber. Buber was the first, and remains the most prominent, of a number of modern authors who have drawn the attention of a general audience to the Hasidic movement. Gershom Scholem, who more than any other scholar has established the study of Jewish mysticism as a rigorous academic discipline, has pointed out that "most of us, when we speak about Hasidism, probably think primarily in terms of concepts that have become familiar through Buber's philosophical interpretation."¹ Given the focus of this thesis, Buber's presentation of the idea of the Tzaddiq as it is embodied in the figure of the Hasidic Master is worthy of detailed consideration. Scholem himself acknowledged that his personal decision to devote his efforts to the study of Jewish mysticism was inspired by Buber's early Hasidic works.² And yet Scholem regarded the enormous

¹Gershom Scholem, "Martin Buber's Interpretation of Hasidism", in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1971), 229-30.

²See Gershom Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem: Memories of My Youth*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1980), pages 44, 73, 112.

influence of Buber's Hasidic writings as something of a mixed blessing, since "despite Buber's own frequent indications, many authors . . . have not in the least been aware that Buber's work *is* an interpretation and that there might be a problem in relating the interpretation to the phenomenon itself."³

The Question of Sources

I would like to begin by presenting Buber's interpretation of the idea of the Tzaddiq, and then go on to consider Scholem's critique of Buber's approach, and the broad implications of Scholem's work for subsequent research concerning the Hasidic Tzaddiq. There is, however, one aspect of Scholem's critique which might be useful to pursue before proceeding any further. Scholem was concerned not only with liberties that Buber took in his interpretation of Hasidism, but with the literature on which he based it. Thus Scholem pointed out that Buber avoided the voluminous literature of Hasidic *Sefarim* (literally "Books") which record the actual discourses of the Hasidic masters:

The most important of these works were written between 1770 and 1815, when Hasidism emerged from bitter polemics as a force in East European Jewry and sought to spread its views and manner of life orally and in writing. These teachings contain the teachings of the great saints of Hasidism, the Zaddikim, which, by the way, often cite as illustration epigrammatic sayings or short anecdotes. An even more extensive literature of the same type came into being after 1815, but for the most part it contains only variations of the basic motifs that were set forth and developed in the older works. . . . This literature embraces well over a thousand volumes.⁴

If Buber ignored these teachings of the Hasidic Masters, on what did he base his writings about Hasidism? Scholem describes

an equally extensive body of legends, biographies, and tales concerning the miracles of the Zaddikim and of collections of their memorable sayings. This

³Scholem, "Buber's Interpretation", 230.

⁴Ibid., 233.

genre of legends developed at the end of the eighteenth century and enjoyed an ever-increasing popularity among the Hasidic masses. . . . The main features of the Hasidic legends crystallized during the first half of the nineteenth century, in many instances incorporating much earlier legends of different origin, which were then transferred to the great personalities of Hasidism. Since about 1860, several hundred volumes of this genre have appeared. . . .⁵

Why did Buber prefer these often apocryphal tales to the writings which record the original words of the Hasidic Masters themselves? In addressing this question, Scholem levels his most devastating critique of Buber's work:

The legends possess a considerable advantage and appeal and lend themselves more easily to a subjective interpretation than the theoretical writings in which a train of thought is more carefully developed and carried through. . . . Apparently Buber regarded these sources as far too dependent on the older Kabbalistic literature to be regarded as genuinely Hasidic. . . . When Buber claimed that the legends of the Hasidim were its truly creative achievement, he . . . had to contend that the originality of the movement genuinely manifested itself only in a genre of literature which almost certainly came into being nearly fifty years after the theoretical writings which Buber had so decisively shoved aside. Such a position is simply not tenable.⁶

Buber's fixation on what he considered to be the original elements in Hasidism pointed him *away* from the literature which reflects the thought of the Hasidic Masters, in which they relate their own view of the Tzaddiq to the larger mystical Jewish tradition. It is from criticism such as this, and Buber's attempts to defend his work, that the well-known "Buber-Scholem Controversy" arose.⁷ As we shall see, the limitations of Buber's approach to Hasidism have only been partially corrected by subsequent scholarship.

And yet, although it is based mainly on the tales, Buber's general analysis of the character of the Hasidic Master remains unparalleled in the works of subsequent

⁵Ibid., 233-4.

⁶Ibid., 235.

⁷See Maurice Friedman, "The Interpretation of Hasidism: Buber versus Scholem" in *Martin Buber's Life and Work* vol. 3 (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1983), 280-99. I find that while Friedman endeavors to emphasize the creative merits of Buber's approach to the study of Hasidism, he does not effectively answer Scholem's specific criticisms, such as the one related above.

authors. Thus, although they require further corroboration, his conclusions are worthy of serious consideration. Indeed I have found that at least as far as his conception of the Tzaddiq is concerned, the general lines of Buber's analysis are in large measure confirmed by the writings of the Hasidic Masters. An exploration of the areas of agreement, and the differences, itself may be instructive.

The Tzaddiq as "Helper"

Buber developed his theories of the general nature of the Hasidic movement in philosophical works such *Hasidism*, and *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*,⁸ and related Hasidic tales which illustrate the distinctive personalities of various Tzaddiqim in his well-known *Tales of the Hasidim*. It is in the Introduction to the first volume of the *Tales*, however, that Buber specifically addresses the question of the nature of the Hasidic Tzaddiq. There he characterizes the Tzaddiq not as a saviour with a panacea for the ills of the world, but as a "helper" who facilitates others progressing towards their goals. According to Buber:

All that is necessary is to have a soul united within itself and indivisibly directed to its divine goal. But how, in the chaos of life on our earth, are we to keep the holy goal in sight? . . . A helper is needed, a helper for both body and soul, for both earthly and heavenly matters. This helper is called the zaddik. . . . It is he who can teach you to conduct your affairs so that your soul remains free, and he can teach you to strengthen your soul. . . . He does not lighten your soul of the struggle it must wage in order to accomplish its particular task in this world. . . . The zaddik must make communication with God easier for his hasidim, but he cannot take their place.⁹

Buber continues in this passage to acknowledge that in the course of history Hasidism in fact departed from the ideals expressed by its early and greatest

⁸Martin Buber, *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*, ed. Maurice Freedman (Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities, 1988), and *Hasidism* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948).

⁹Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim: The Early Masters*, trans. Olga Marx (New York: Schocken, 1947), 5.

proponents. Thus he declares that "everything else is distortion and signs of it appear relatively early." Hasidim would often come to look upon their Rebbe less as someone who might help them to grow, than as someone who could guarantee that their spiritual and material needs be met.¹⁰ Buber's focus (not unlike my own) is on correctly understanding the vision which the Hasidic movement originally proclaimed for itself, rather than accounting for the ways in which it failed to fulfill this vision, and eventually degenerated.

While I do not know that Buber had this particular source in mind, R. Naḥman of Bratzlav describes the work of the Hasidic Master along lines quite similar to those he sets forth above, in his discourse "The Master of the Field". There he describes the Tzaddiq by way of the simile of a gardener in the field of souls. Such a "Master of the Field" is not described as being, himself, the divine goal, or even as an intermediary to God. Rather, he is described as engaged in the work of helping others to find their own place, and to grow, within the "field" of the soul:

Know, that there is a "field" . . . and the "trees" and "grasses" are like holy souls growing there. And there are various naked souls who wander about outside the field, awaiting and anticipating restoration [*tiqqun*], that they be enabled to return and enter into their places. . . . And they are all of them seeking and anticipating a Master of the Field, who would be capable of occupying himself with the need of their restoration. . . . This Master of the Field supervises and makes constant efforts to water the "trees" and grow them And when his eyes are illuminated . . . then he can look into each one, individually, to bring him to the totality [*takhlit*].¹¹

¹⁰See the Appendix for descriptions of more or less degenerated uses in Hasidism of the *kvittel*: a written petition addressed to the Rebbe and accompanied by a donation, used as a means of petitioning God for the fulfillment of spiritual and material needs.

¹¹Naḥman of Bratzlav, *Liqqutay Moharan* (Jerusalem: Meshekh Hanahāl, 1990), folio 65a. The translation is my own. The last word, which I have translated as "totality", is the Hebrew word *takhlit* (in Yiddish, *takhlis*), which means, in this context, the "goal" or "purpose" or more literally the "totality" of existence.

One of the striking features of this teaching is that rather than communicating the disciple's perspective regarding the spiritual master, it communicates the perspective of a master, or potential master, regarding work with others. The practical function of the Tzaddiq is described in terms of the responsibility such a figure assumes, for safeguarding and supporting the integrity of each individual entering his "field", or sphere of active influence.

R. Nahman proceeds, in this text, to list the qualifications for "one who wishes to gather himself and introduce himself that he might be the Master of the Field". He "must be an upright and mighty man, a warrior, a wise man and a very great Tzaddiq." Given the emphasis on the centrality of the Tzaddiq in the chapters before and after this one, and in the bulk of R. Nahman's teachings, as in the Hasidic teachings of other Masters, preceding them, there is no question in my mind that the term "Master of the Field" is a metaphorical paraphrase of the term Tzaddiq. Including the term "Tzaddiq" at the end of the list of qualifications would seem to be a further indication that such a person is, of course, to be a Tzaddiq. It may also be meant to indicate, perhaps with a touch of irony, that along with all other qualifications it is necessary for such a person to be a "righteous" person, according to the original biblical definition of the term.

Buber describes the nature of the help such a Master provides his disciples, by emphasizing that "one man can take the place of another only as far as the threshold of the inner sanctum."¹² "Within these limits" however, according to Buber,

the zaddik has the greatest possible influence not only on the faith and mind of the hasid, but on his active everyday life. . . . Not the teachings of the zaddik but his existence constitutes his effectiveness . . . not that he is there as an intellectual leader but as the complete human being with his whole worldly life in which the completeness of the human being is tested. As a zaddik once said: "I learned the Torah from all the limbs of my teacher."¹³

¹²Buber, *Tales: Early Masters*, 5.

¹³*Ibid.*

Elsewhere in his teachings, R. Nahman also speaks of the "completeness" of the Tzaddiq.¹⁴ In the quotation from the Master of the Field, however, he is less concerned with the Tzaddiq's being complete than with his bringing his disciples to their own "places" (or "inner sanctum"), in order that they might reach a "totality" of their own. Clearly, Buber's emphasis on the respect of the Tzaddiq for the spiritual integrity of the individual disciple is borne out by Nahman's text.

Yet Buber's emphasis on the Tzaddiq's sharing his "active everyday life" with his disciples appears to reflect his involvement with the tales, over and against the Hasidic discourses. His emphasis on the Tzaddiq being a teacher of "worldly life", as opposed to being an "intellectual leader", can only be supported by deliberately opposing the value of the Hasidic tales, which often reflect daily life transactions, to the Hasidic teachings, with their impressive intellectual (and imaginative) content. If Buber had focussed on the discourses of the Hasidic Masters, as well as on the tales told about them, he would have had to have given more weight to the role of the Tzaddiq as an agent of mystical prayer, and indeed, as a source of mystical teaching. The discourses facilitate an interior view of what the Hasidic masters understood their function to be, while the tales show how they expressed themselves outwardly, in relation to others. Yet tales and the teachings, alike, convey a sense of the Tzaddiq as an accessible model of contact with the Divine.

Substance and Form

There are instances in which Buber's description of the Hasidic conception of the Tzaddiq do indeed appear to be based upon formal Hasidic teachings. How then did he employ upon these sources? For example, in discussing the nature of the master-

¹⁴See the discussion of "Completion" in the section on "R. Nahman's Tzaddiq and the Complete Human Being" in Chapter Four.

disciple relationship between Tzaddiq and Hasid, Buber makes reference to the analogy of "substance and form", a common motif in the early Hasidic discourses:

One of the great principles of hasidism is that the zaddik and people are dependent on one another. Again and again, their relationship is compared to that between substance and form in the life of the individual, between body and soul. The soul must not boast that it is more holy than the body, for only in that it has climbed down into the body and works through its limbs can the soul attain its own perfection. The body, on the other hand, may not brag of supporting the soul, for when the soul leaves, the flesh falls into decay. Thus the zaddikim need the multitude, and the multitude need the zaddikim. The realities of hasidic teaching depend on this inter-relationship.¹⁵

Much the same teaching is expressed in one of the earliest Hasidic books, *Toldot Ya'aqov Yosef*, by R. Ya'aqov Yosef of Polnoy. In the appendix at the end of *The Zaddik*, a study of the thought of R. Ya'aqov Yosef, the author, Samuel Dresner, points out that "even though the *Toldot*, the earliest of his books, was published in 1780 . . . there is every indication that he commenced writing them many years before. The evidences of early material in his books . . . [is] indicative of the period of time, at least twenty-seven years, which was spent in the writing of his books."¹⁶ The *Toldot* makes the following statement:

Within a single man, the soul should not act arrogantly toward the body . . . for the soul descends into this world in order to perform the commandments in a perfect manner *by means of the bodily limbs*. . . . Thus, all the more so, the body should not act arrogantly toward the soul, boasting that she nourishes the soul, for when the soul is divided from the body, the body putrefies. *They are each in need of the other* as a man and his wife, each one being only half a person. So it is, in general, that the scholars and zaddikim should not say that they do not need the common people, for they are the bearers of the Torah, and many commandments are fulfilled through the people. All the more so, the people

¹⁵Buber, *Tales: Early Masters*, 7.

¹⁶Samuel Dresner, *The Zaddik: the Doctrine of the Zaddik According to the Writings of Rabbi Yaakov Yosef of Polnoy* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1960), 245. Dresner proceeds to cite the caution with which the *Toldot* (who may also be referred to, in Hasidic fashion, after the name of his most important work) specifies direct and indirect quotations from the Ba'al Shem Tov as evidence that they are likely to be authentic.

should not say that they do not need the scholars, nor act arrogantly toward them because they support them, since the reverse is really true.¹⁷

There is strong correspondence between Buber's description and that which is found here in the *Toldot*. The only element which appears to be missing from Buber's version, is the traditional Jewish understanding that it is in the fulfillment of the Commandments of the Torah that the purpose of life is realized. I am concerned, however, that Buber's quotation, as well as this quotation from the *Toldot*, may be misleading in a more fundamental regard. Buber's discussion of the "inter-relationship" of body and soul, between the multitude and the Tzaddiq, suggests a relationship not only of mutuality, but of equality. This would seem to be reinforced (certainly for the modern reader) by the reference to man and wife. This is further confirmed by the closing lines of teaching cited above: "So it is that *each is only a half*. If both form and matter, individually and collectively, unite, then they become one complete man."¹⁸

Clearly, both parts are regarded as necessary for the creation of a greater whole. Yet in a Hasidic view, there is a hierarchical relationship between "form" and "matter", and what they represent: they are by no means equal. This is spelled out in a teaching Dresner quotes earlier in his book, which originally appeared much earlier in the text of the *Toldot*:

Man is created out of form and matter, which are two opposites, matter tending toward material domination [qlippot]¹⁹ and form yearning for spiritual things.

¹⁷Dresner, *The Zaddik*, 138, translated from folio 72b of the *Toldot*. The italics are Dresner's. The passage continues with a quotation from the Talmud: "The world is sustained because of Hanina my son", a reference to a rabbinic model of the Tzaddiq tradition which I will consider, at length, in Chapter Four.

¹⁸Ibid. Again, the italics are Dresner's.

¹⁹The Hebrew term *qlippot* recalls the theory that sparks of the Divine which are trapped within material "shells". While the "shell" nature of *qlippah* may be regarded as being negative, particularly in Lurianic Kabbalah, I would translate it in this context of this teaching in more descriptive terms, such as "density", "opacity", "externalization" or "exteriorization", rather than in terms of the moral judgement implied by "material

The purpose of man's creation is that he should convert matter into form, creating a unity. As this is the purpose of the creation of the individual man, so it is with the nation as a whole. The masses are called "the people of the earth," because their concern is with the earthly, material things, and so they are "matter." The zaddikim, who engage in Torah and prayer, are "form". The purpose of all this is that matter should be transformed into form. . . .²⁰

Here it is indicated that there is a natural polarization between matter and form, between the people and the Tzaddiq. The "unity" which is to be desired between them is not a simple matter of merging the two, of establishing an equal partnership, or even of establishing an equitable truce or mutual accommodation between them. Rather, this "unity" is meant to be the product of a process of transformation by which "matter" is freed from the restrictions implied by materiality, and is released or revealed to be "form". Thus it becomes clear that the teaching of the *Toldot* with which we began, which corresponds to Buber's teaching, was not meant to stand on its own but to provide a balance or corrective to the earlier one just cited. Given an understanding of the fundamental tension between matter and form, and having established the idea that spiritual yearning is meant to win over and transform the human identification with gross material things, it is pointed out that this should not be misunderstood as a one-sided denigration of the material realm in favor of the spiritual. The practical application of this idea is that those who are Tzaddiqim (or who aspire to be) should not look down upon the rest of the community, and isolate themselves from them. The task at hand does not require separation of a spiritual elite for the purpose of purification, but rather, the creation of a bond of mutual support between those who are focused on spiritual pursuits and those who are focused on the material world in the interest of ultimately transforming the material into the spiritual.

Thus Buber's description of the mutual "need" which the Tzaddiq and the people have for one another is not in itself incorrect, but it is informed by an assumption which

domination".

²⁰Ibid., 136, quoted from folio 5c of the *Toldot*.

Buber prefers to overlook: that the Tzaddiq is superior to the ordinary person, just as the soul is superior to the body, and "form" is superior to "matter". I do not mean to say that Buber exaggerates the importance of the bond between the Tzaddiq and his community, but I do mean to say that his description lacks precision.

While Buber minimizes the Hasidic view of the qualitative difference between master and disciple, he also overlooks an idea in Hasidism which bridges them: the idea of the Tzaddiq as an innate potential which might be developed within the individual. This is indicated in a number of passages in the *Toldot*, for example, in a later passage on the subject of "form and matter":

The principal purpose of the creation of man, who was made out of form and matter, is that he should strive all his days to turn matter into form. After he has achieved this in himself, he should endeavor to transform others, for *the zaddik is the form or soul of the whole world*, while the wicked are the matter or body of the whole world. The zaddik must strive all his days to change matter into form, to bring the wicked under the wings of the *Shechinah* [divine presence], which is the goal and purpose of everything.²¹

The *Toldot* slides, in this passage, from a discussion of the task of the individual to refine himself or herself, to a discussion of the planetary significance of the Tzaddiq. Just as all people contain "form" as well as "matter" within themselves, so everyone has the potential of transforming wickedness into righteousness and functioning as Tzaddiqim, who are "the righteous", for the sake of the world. It should be borne in mind that the early Hasidic masters began as disciples of the Ba'al Shem Tov, and then of the Maggid of Mezerich; generations of Hasidic Masters began as disciples of other Masters. Thus it should come as no surprise that at the very beginning of the Hasidic movement, the Ba'al Shem Tov's secretary should indicate that it is possible for an ordinary person to proceed towards becoming a Tzaddiq.²²

²¹Dresner, *The Zaddik*, 137, quoted from folio 99a of the *Toldot*.

²²The *Toldot*, however, did not appear to view himself as a Tzaddiq, and certainly did not gather disciples around himself. The significance of his contribution

A careful examination of the language the Toldot employs, reinforces this point. He declares that "the wicked *are*", in the plural form, whereas "the zaddik *is*", as a singular ideal. Nor are "the wicked" conceived of as evil beings who must be condemned and destroyed; rather, the category of "the wicked" is considered in terms of the raw material of the world, which is characterized by multiplicity and which exists to be transformed by the singular principle of the Tzaddiq. Thus the term *tzaddiq* is employed, in this passage, in a double-meaning: it is both the individual person who is righteous, and the "form of the world" as a whole. The function of the Tzaddiq is described as that of the universal "soul of the world", which has the capacity to transform the many "wicked" souls with which the world is populated, and reunite them with the Divine. By means of the figure of the Tzaddiq, the idea of a cosmic struggle between good and evil is recast as an interface between the many and the One.

This analysis of the idea of the Tzaddiq as it is reflected in the Toldot's writings on "matter and form" anticipates the thesis that the Tzaddiq is an archetype. Buber himself, however, developed no "two-fold" understanding of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq which might embrace both a cosmic function by which the purpose of the creation is fulfilled, and the actual occupation of individuals serving in this capacity. Such a cosmological understanding of the role of the Tzaddiq, reflecting ideas of earlier Kabbalah, tends to be more typical of the Hasidic discourses than of the tales. Let me, however, point out here that rather than elevating the Tzaddiq principle to the point

to the Hasidic movement was that, by framing the teachings of the Ba'al Shem Tov in terms of a concern with an objective function of the Tzaddiq, subsequent Hasidic Masters were enabled to see themselves as progressing towards Tzaddiq-hood. In an unpublished essay, "The Community in the Eyes of the Zaddik: according to the Teachings of Rabbi Yaakov Yosef of Polnoy", Menachem Kallus has assembled material which supplements the material presented in Dresner's *The Zaddik*, and demonstrates how Rabbi Ya'akov Yosef presented a step-by-step program by which ordinary Jews might advance, by degrees, towards becoming a Tzaddiq.

where it is out of reach, such a cosmological dimension actually places it within the grasp of the ordinary individual.

Here, indeed, we touch upon an irony of early Hasidic literature: the teachings which were the product of a spiritual elite present a broadly inclusive notion of the function of the Tzaddiq, with which the reader is invited to identify, while the popular tradition of the tales in which particular Tzaddiqim are lionized, relegate them to the status of a spiritual elite! Nevertheless Buber appropriately down-played this tendency of the tales to place the figure of the Tzaddiq on a pedestal, out of reach. Buber's feeling for his subject is such that he conveys what I believe to be a correct impression of the function of the Hasidic Tzaddiq, though not necessarily for the right reasons.

The Interdependence of Master and Disciple

One of the outstanding points of Buber's analysis is his emphasis of the interdependence of the Hasidic Master and his disciples:

The teacher helps his disciples find themselves, and in hours of desolation the disciples help their teacher find himself again. The teacher kindles the soul of his disciples and they surround him and light his life with the flame he has kindled. The disciple asks, and by his manner of asking unconsciously evokes a reply, which his teacher's spirit would not have produced without the stimulus of the question.²³

What is the basis for such an analysis in Hasidic literature? These "hours of desolation" would appear to correspond to the teachings in which Hasidic authors describe "the descent of the Tzaddiq".²⁴ In Gershom Scholem's essay entitled, "*Tsaddik: the Righteous One*", he presents the idea that for the Tzaddiq, personally,

²³Buber, *Tales: Early Masters*, 8.

²⁴While Dresner devotes two chapters of *The Zaddik* to this subject of "The Descent of the Zaddik" (pages 148-190) and a third to his deliberate exposure to "Transgression and Danger" (191-221), he is mainly concerned with the Tzaddiq's "descent" as an extension of his identification with the (sinful) people. According to Dresner the Tzaddiq does not really sin, but takes risks, and may, for example,

there are periods of ascent and of descent, corresponding to the pulse of life generally. The higher state could easily be seen as one of pure absorption, or even ecstasy, while the lower state is one in which the tasks of active life are performed, with ceaseless consciousness of the Holy. . . . Such fluctuations are a continuous part of the *Tsaddik's* life with God, even when his life is not viewed in relation to its function for his fellowman."²⁵

Scholem quotes a source related in the name of the Ba'al Shem Tov, which describes the psychological "fall" of the Tzaddiq as a necessary part of the process of the Tzaddiq's own development: "the righteous, before they come to new clarity and a high level, fall down from their level."²⁶ Like Dresner, he affirms that "whether or not this fall is a necessary precondition for his own ascent, or whether it is undertaken or submitted to voluntarily out of a sense of mission, in either case the fall of the *Tsaddik* is connected with the life of the community" ²⁷

But what has become of Buber's idea of the disciples lifting up their Master? In general terms, Scholem indicates that the Tzaddiq

receives no less than he gives. By attempting to lift up his contemporaries, he himself is raised; the more he fulfills his function as the center and head of the community, the more his own spiritual stature grows. By becoming a medium and vessel for others, the stream of life flowing through him endlessly heightens the intensity of his own life.²⁸

Scholem substantiates this view with a quote from the *Toldot*:

And when the multitude of the people ascend one level, the head of the generation also ascends upward. . . . When you have a company and [a] joining together of [yourself] with the children of Israel to lift them up [so] that they will

deliberately open himself to public criticism. But he is not described as being so vulnerable as to need assistance from his disciples in order to "find himself again".

²⁵Gershom Scholem, in his chapter "*Tsaddik: the Righteous One*", in *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah* trans. Joachim Neugroschel, ed. and rev. Jonathan Chipman (New York: Schocken Books, 1991) (originally published in German in 1962), 137.

²⁶Quoted in the name of the Besht by R. Moses Elkanah of Zborov", *ibid.*, note 101, page 292.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 139.

²⁸*Ibid.*

return to the good way, you will also receive great good from this and they will take you olive oil--that they may draw down the flux called oil upon yourself as well.²⁹

When the people are lifted up, presumably by virtue of the leadership of the Tzaddiq, the Tzaddiq who is the "head of the generation" receives an anointing of blessings by virtue of being at the head of their ascent. But even in the co-operative model expressed in this quotation, there is no mention of the idea that the ascent of other people serves to off-set the descent of the Tzaddiq.³⁰ I am not aware of any references in Hasidic teachings to disciples lifting their master in "hours of desolation", or at the time of the Tzaddiq's "descent". Thus I am left wondering whether this idea of the personal dependence of the master upon his disciples is Buber's own idea, or whether it is substantiated by teachings and tales with which I am unfamiliar. Although Buber immediately follows the quotation cited from him above with two "miracle tales" intended to "demonstrate the lofty function of discipleship", neither of these tales addresses this specific point.³¹

Along with Buber's sense of the importance of the spiritual and emotional support which disciples provide for their Rebbe, the quotation cited earlier stresses the importance of their questions as a stimulus which "unconsciously evokes a reply" that would be impossible "without the stimulus of the question". This point, like the last, has for me the ring of truth, although it too is not confirmed by any Hasidic texts I

²⁹Ibid., 292-3, n. 106. This quotation, taken from folio 64b of the *Toldot*, (which Scholem appears to have rendered quite literally, and therefore awkwardly,) does not appear in Dresner's book. Dresner himself does not emphasize this idea of others raising up the Tzaddiq.

³⁰Scholem points out that the well-known Hasidic phrase adapted from the Talmud, which describes the Tzaddiq risking "descent for the sake of ascent", does not specifically appear "in any of the hundreds of sayings attributed to the Besht by the Rabbi of Polonnoye." (ibid., n. 103)

³¹See Buber's *Tales: Early Masters*, page 8. While in both of the tales which Buber cites the master is able to influence heaven only with the help of his disciples, in neither case is the master, personally, in need of lifting up.

know.³² In this case, however, Buber's insight might be broadly inferred from a variety of tales in which disciples' question are instrumental in triggering the quality of the response that they receive.

One of Buber's strengths as a writer (which might also be regarded as a scholarly liability) is his ability to imaginatively recreate a Hasidic milieu. Inasmuch as the delivery of the Hasidic teachings, which Buber generally neglected, might be described in terms of a story-like setting, he employed his talents in portraying this milieu as well. The following description provides a sense of the context in which Hasidic discourses would have originally been delivered:

On the sabbath when, at the third meal, he expounds the Scriptures and reveals what is hidden, his teaching is directed toward them: they are the field of force in which his words make manifest the spirit in expanding circles, like rings widening on the waters. And this meal itself! We can approach an understanding of its tension and bliss only when we realize that all--each giving himself utterly--are united into an elated whole, such as can only form around an elated center, which through its very being, points to the divine center of all being.³³

According to Kabbalistic tradition, the "third meal" which begins in the later part of Saturday afternoon focuses on the coming of the Messiah. As the light of the Sabbath day begins to wane, people sitting together at a table at which only a little food is served, yearn together to bring the light of "a time which is entirely Sabbath" into the approaching darkness of the week-day world. Buber's description of the setting for

³²In a variety of oral teaching situations in the Sufi tradition, however, I have encountered the idea that the quality of teaching a teacher can provide is dependent upon the opening created by the question of the student. The onus, therefore, falls upon the student, to put together the kind of question which enables the teacher to teach. This principle is expressed, in general terms, by Reshad Feild in *The Alchemy of the Heart* (Matthew Shoemaker ed., Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books, 1990), page 4: "There are two things that we need One is the ability to listen and the other is the ability to ask a question. Sometimes I sit in front of hundreds of people and when we have a 'question and answer' period nobody asks a real question. Most people merely want to talk, or they want to attract attention, or express how important they are An actual question comes from the heart, not an intellectual question. . . . Listening requires effort and a desire to know, and so does asking a question."

³³Buber, *Tales: Early Masters*, 9.

Hasidic discourse, situates itself in this reflective atmosphere of the Saturday evening meal. Hasidic discourses might also be delivered, however, in the more exuberant atmosphere of a Friday night or Festival meal, although this then would leave a twenty-four hour delay until the end of the Sabbath, when the discourse might be written down. Buber's description of the function of the Tzaddiq at the center of the community--as the focal point of yearning and joy reflected in each of the individuals in the circle--conveys a shared sense of the Tzaddiq "within".

Together, the Rebbe and his *hasidim* constitute a greater whole. The light of the communion they share at the table of their Rebbe would also filter into the relationships between *hasidim* in daily life. This is an area in which the tales provide a valuable source of insight. On the basis of his reading of the tales, Buber concludes that the relationships among individual *hasidim* might be seen as an extension of their connection with their Rebbe:

Their common attachment to the zaddik and to the holy life he embodies binds them to one another, not only in the festive hours of common prayer, and of the common meal, but in all hours of everyday living. In moments of elation, they drink to one another, they sing and dance together, and tell one another abstruse and comforting miracle tales. But they help one another too.³⁴

Buber describes how the intimacy of the Tzaddiq with God allows him to know and accept himself, and the people who come to him. The Tzaddiq "who, by truthful turning to God attains a stage where he loves himself in God, i.e. in perfection, can help a man who confides in him to love himself even so, that is, truthfully, instead of the deceptive perspective of egoism."³⁵ By knowing his own humanity, as well as the spark of divinity within him, the Tzaddiq helps those around him both to accept and to elevate themselves. This connection of the Tzaddiq both within and without, reflects

³⁴Ibid., 10.

³⁵Buber, *Hasidism*, 175.

on the entire community. Thus, whatever the Tzaddiq "accomplishes in each individual he accomplishes in the coherence of the Whole."³⁶

An Overview of Buber's Approach

I have focused, thus far, on specific claims which Buber makes regarding the Hasidic figure of the Tzaddiq, and on the relation of these claims to specific texts. Indeed, Buber's depth of feeling for his subject, combined with the fact that it is he who introduced it to the modern world, makes it is easy to forget that he is at best a secondary source of information about Hasidic sources. An interpretation of Buber is at best only an interpretation of an interpretation, rendering the original sources that much more remote. Yet bearing these reservations in mind, it might be helpful to take a broader view of Buber's approach to this subject at this point. How, indeed, have other scholars viewed Buber's understanding of the figure of the Tzaddiq?

To judge by the title, *Buber on God and the Perfect Man*, Pamela Vermes would seem to have devoted her book to an exhaustive study to this very subject.³⁷ Actually, the book is a more of general analysis of Buber's life and spiritual vision. Yet Vermes has addressed a brief chapter to Buber's understanding of the Tzaddiq in Hasidism, which she has entitled, appropriately enough, "The True Helper". Vermes endeavors to show just how the Tzaddiq serves as a "helper", by summarizing the various characterizations of the role of the Tzaddiq represented in Buber's tales: the Tzaddiq as an embodiment of the Torah, as an ascetic, a lover of nature, a lover of his fellow human beings, as an ecstatic lover of God, as a man of humility, a healer, and a man of insight into souls. She cites examples of the teaching styles of various Hasidic

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Pamela Vermes, *Buber on God and the Perfect Man*, (Chico, Ca.: Scholars Press, 1980).

masters: Reb Avraham of Stretyn's emphasis on unifying oneself, Reb Menahem Mendl of Kotzk's insistence on the truth, Reb Shneur Zalman's systematic development of the intellect and contemplation, and Reb Mended of Vorki's teaching of silence as a way of worshipping God.³⁸ Yet, according to Vermes,

none of these Hasidic leaders were selected by Buber as specific patterns of perfection, and none of their specific virtues, teachings or talents. It was the *zaddik* in his role at the centre of the community whom he postulated as the perfect man, the *zaddik* as an elevating and sanctifying force, in touch with above and below, bringing together man and man, man and God, and man and his own self. It was the *zaddik* as a reflection, in his own person and example, of God the ever-present Helper. It was the *zaddik* leading and guiding his people, and assisting each to persevere in his own *imitatio dei*.³⁹

Vermes, like Buber, effectively points beyond the simple idea of the Tzaddiq as a "helper", to indicate how the notion of a "foundation of the world" is applied in Hasidic lore to the function of a point-of-contact bridging a variety of realms. By describing the Tzaddiq as bringing together "man and man, man and God, and man and his own self", Vermes indicates that the Tzaddiq functions as a central point bringing coherence and unifying the social, spiritual and psychological realms. I would differ with Vermes, however, and indeed with Buber, on the choice of the word "perfection" to summarize the role of the Tzaddiq.⁴⁰ I believe that the word "completion" better expresses the comprehensive function of the Tzaddiq as someone "in touch with above and below", especially in light of Buber's own emphasis on the interdependence of master and disciple. The principle which the Tzaddiq represents is not an abstract and

³⁸Ibid, 148-149. It is interesting that the figures Vermes selects are relatively "late", 19th century Hasidic masters. This may reflect a view of the later masters as more specialized and easily identifiable than early masters, such as the Maggid of Mezeritch, who are more closely related to the example of the Ba'al Shem Tov. Conversely, it seems to me that the early masters were more comprehensive examples of the idea of the Tzaddiq *per se*.

³⁹Ibid., 149.

⁴⁰See the last quotation from Buber, above.

other-worldly "perfection", but a potential for completion within the life of this world.⁴¹

As we have seen, Buber did not try to substantiate his views of the Tzaddiq with specific references to Hasidic material. And yet, as this thesis develops, it will become even more apparent that such material confirms the general sense which Buber conveyed, of the connecting function of the Tzaddiq. Buber's main limitation is that he emphasized the outwardly visible expressions of the Tzaddiq, in the role of spiritual counsellor and friend. While it is natural for a scholar's approach to the object of study to be informed by his or her own interests and inclinations, it is a mistake to confuse those aspects one finds most attractive with all that there may be. Clearly, in the eyes of a humanist such as Buber, the most striking and appealing function of the Tzaddiq was the quality of his contact with other people; yet the Tzaddiq is associated in Hasidic tradition with other less visible functions, such as intercessory prayer. Moreover, because Buber concentrated on the tales and not on the teachings, he neglected formal Hasidic theory, even as it relates to the Tzaddiq's public role. However, within these limitations, Buber succeeded in showing how the Hasidic figure of the Tzaddiq provided his disciples with an accessible model, linking the world in which they lived with the Divine.

⁴¹In my reading of Hasidic texts I have found references to *shlaymut* ("wholeness", or "completion") much more common than references to *temimut* ("simplicity", or "perfection"). *Shlaymut* implies a comprehensive embrace of both exalted and grounded consciousness. See the discussion of "Completion" in the section on "R. Nahman's Tzaddiq and the Complete Human Being" in Chapter Four.

Buber's Peers and his Progeny

In the first half of this century, Simon Dubnow pioneered the development of a social analysis of the history of Hasidism.⁴² Until the contributions of scholars in recent decades, Dubnow stood virtually alone as a social historian of the Hasidic movement. Buber's retelling of Hasidic tales, on the other hand, is reflected by the efforts of a number of other authors both in his day and in our own. Beginning with the publication of Minkin's (aptly titled) *Romance of Hassidism*⁴³ and Horodezky's *Leaders of Hassidism*,⁴⁴ followed by Buber's two volumes of *Tales of the Hasidim*⁴⁵ (some of which had appeared in German publications as early as 1917), an entire genre of twentieth century literature has arisen, characterizing Hasidic life as a romantic ideal. Outstanding among such efforts is Jiri Langer's *Nine Gates to the Chassidic Mysteries*,⁴⁶ a work which gushes with enthusiasm for Hasidism, but which has a touch of authenticity attributable to the fact that, early in this century, the author himself made the journey from modern Prague to Hasidic Court of Belz, and immersed himself in a Hasidic way of life.

Also deserving mention is Louis Newman's *Hasidic Anthology*, an encyclopedic collection not of stories, but of short Hasidic aphorisms which are arranged sequentially, according to author and school.⁴⁷ More a collection of anecdotal wisdom

⁴²Simon Dubnow, *The History of The Jews in Russia and Poland* (Philadelphia: 1916).

⁴³Jacob Minkin, *The Romance of Hassidism* (New York: Macmillan, 1935).

⁴⁴S.A. Horodezky, *Leaders of Hassidism* (London: Hasefer, 1928).

⁴⁵In addition to Buber's *Tales of the Hasidim: Early Masters*, there are the *Tales of the Hasidim: Later Masters*, trans. Olga Marx (New York: Schocken, 1948).

⁴⁶Jiri Langer, *Nine Gates to the Chassidic Mysteries* trans. Stephen Jolly, (New York: David McKay, 1961).

than a compilation of formal Hasidic teachings, Newman's collection complements Buber's compilation of the Hasidic tales. Thus there has arisen a modern genre of neo-Hasidic literature, which is mostly based upon the popular nineteenth century collections of Hasidic aphorisms and tales.

Perhaps the most notable of these "portraits" of Hasidic Masters to have been produced in recent years, are by Elie Wiesel. In *Souls on Fire* and *Somewhere a Master*,⁴⁸ Wiesel relates many of the same Hasidic tales as were told before, by both Buber and Langer. But despite the opposition which Wiesel has posited between the role of story-teller and that of historian, he differs from his predecessors mainly in the attention he has devoted to locating these tales within their historical settings.⁴⁹ Yet Wiesel's analysis, like both Buber's and Langer's before him, is strongly colored by his personal outlook and distinctive story-teller's voice. While much of this literary

⁴⁷Louis Newman, *Hasidic Anthology: Tales and Teachings of the Hasidim* (New York: Bloch, 1944).

⁴⁸Elie Wiesel, *Souls on Fire: Portraits and Legends of Hasidic Masters* (New York: Random House, 1972), and *Somewhere a Master: Further Hasidic Portraits and Legends* (New York: Summit, 1982).

⁴⁹Thus Wiesel introduces a tale about the Ba'al Shem Tov as a form of personal history (*Souls on Fire*, 5), saying that "it describes events that may or may not have happened . . . in quite the way that they are told. Viewed from the outside, all of these tales are incomprehensible; one must enter them, for their truth may be measured only from the inside. Whether accurately retold or invented outright by his admiring contemporaries, they must be passed on exactly as the narrator received them in his childhood." Wiesel goes on to declare that "it is not surprising that the Baal Shem should have fared so poorly with lay historians, who were, after all, 'outsiders.' He eludes them. Nothing about him can be said with certainty. . . . Unable to draw a line--any line--between mythical and real being, between fiction and testimony, they are embarrassed." *Ibid.*, 7-8. I agree that a story-teller may choose to base his craft on childhood memories, or on some other special standard of authenticity; I quite agree that the job of the religious historian is to attempt to draw a line "between mythical and real being, between fiction and testimony". But Wiesel exaggerates when he indicates that this would be for the sake of arriving at a purely external account of what happened, and denies his own role, not only as a storyteller but as an historian. I would suggest that the task of the religious historian is a subtle and demanding one, which embraces both the subjective and objective poles Wiesel has opposed to one another: it is to attempt to correctly apprehend the *religious* significance of traditions that have reached our hands.

love-affair with a Hasidism reconstituted by modern authors may not qualify as objective academic research, it might be considered a modern, quasi-religious phenomenon, which is a worthy object of study in its own right.⁵⁰

Scholem's Approach to the Hasidic Tzaddiq

As Buber and his contemporaries pursued the study of Hasidism, Gershom Scholem was endeavoring to establish the broad field of Jewish mysticism as a legitimate academic discipline. In the light of Scholem's contributions, the academic study of Hasidism has come to be regarded not as genre on its own, but as a specific area of this much larger field. As we have seen, Scholem criticized Buber for endeavoring to separate Hasidism from its moorings in the Jewish mystical tradition. Yet Scholem was nevertheless appreciative of Buber's ability to identify and describe aspects of the movement that might continue to inspire the modern reader:

While the enthusiasm of certain other apologists for Hasidic teaching . . . was essentially naive and their books were an odd mixture of charming simplicity and dullness, in Buber we have a deep and penetrating thinker who not only admires intuition in others but possesses it himself. He has that rare combination of a probing spirit and literary elegance which makes for a great writer. When an author of such stature and such subtlety set down with untiring seriousness what to him seemed the very soul of Hasidism, it was bound to make a deep impression on our age. In one sense or another we are all his disciples.⁵¹

The irony of this analysis is that considering the kind of standards which have become the norm in contemporary scholarship in Hasidism and Kabbalah, "we are all disciples" of Gershom Scholem, much more than of Martin Buber! This presents a

⁵⁰Neal Rose's D. H. L. dissertation, *Buber the Story-Teller*, which contrasts Buber's versions of tales of the Baal Shem Tov and Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav with the earlier versions from which he drew, is one such post-modern study of the modern "romance" of Hasidism.

⁵¹Scholem, "Buber's Interpretation", 229.

special problem, of accounting for the thesis that the Tzaddiq is an archetype in the light of Scholem's work. Indeed, this thesis might be seen as building on a foundation which Buber prepared in his sympathetic presentation of the Hasidic Tzaddiq as an accessible model; by relating the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq back to earlier Jewish sources, and by adding a mystical to a human understanding of the function of this figure, I am supplementing Buber's work considerably, but am not directly contradicting it. Scholem, to his credit, introduced the approach of tracing the development of mystical ideas in the course of Jewish history--an approach, indeed, which is often reflected in the traditional sources themselves. Yet Scholem made a curious exception in the case of the Hasidic Tzaddiq, an idea which he saw fit to remove from earlier Tzaddiq traditions. In order to re-evaluate the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq in the light of earlier sources, it will therefore be necessary to review and remove obstructions which Scholem erected, and which continue to stand in the way.

As we shall see, there are good reasons why Scholem's approach has superseded Buber's, in academia if not for the general reading public. It is the cogency of Scholem's critique of Buber, and the broad conclusions which subsequent scholars have drawn from it, that makes it necessary to challenge Scholem's conclusions regarding the figure of the Tzaddiq, so as to make room for a different approach.

Scholem's critique of Buber's approach to Hasidism extends beyond Buber's decision to focus on the tales instead of on the Hasidic teachings. Scholem felt that Buber's perception of the movement was focused too narrowly in terms of his own spiritual agenda, that by excluding elements of the movement he found unappealing, he presented a distorted picture of it:

Buber, to whom no one denies possession of an exact knowledge of Hasidic literature, does not write as a scholar who gives clear references to support his contentions. Buber combines facts and quotations to support his purpose, namely, to present Hasidism as a spiritual phenomenon and not as a historical one. . . . First, Buber omits a great deal of material which he does not even consider . . . [such as] the magical element, which he continually explains away or minimizes, and the social character of the Hasidic community. Secondly, the material that he does select, he often associates closely with his own interpretation of its meaning.⁵²

Although a measure of selectivity is necessary and desirable in scholarly research, we have seen that Buber's lack of concern with substantiating his claims on the basis of Hasidic texts (not to mention eye-witness reports) limited the scope of his analysis. Scholem's contention is that Buber sacrificed historical accuracy in favor of his own imagined "spiritual" ideal. And yet if not for the sense that, beyond its being an historical event, Hasidism might have a "spiritual" significance for the modern student of religion--a sense which Buber most convincingly conveyed--I see no reason for scholars to devote special efforts to studying it.

Nevertheless, Scholem expresses a legitimate concern that by playing off the existential aspect of Hasidic lore against its traditional setting, Buber denied the metaphysical underpinnings of Hasidic teaching:

The great masters of Hasidism . . . transferred its basic meaning from the sphere of divine mysteries to the world of man and his encounter with God. According to Buber, this was the really creative aspect of Hasidism. And since in the last analysis it is the creative impulse which matters, he felt justified in almost completely ignoring the Kabbalistic or "gnostic" element in Hasidism. For him it is nothing more than a kind of umbilical cord which must be severed as soon as the new spiritual creation exists in its own right if we are to see and understand the new phenomenon in its authentic mode of being.⁵³

This, indeed, is the great limitation of Buber's work: while he was correct in identifying the emphasis on the experience of the individual which characterizes Hasidic teaching, he sought to extract it from the metaphysical context in which the

⁵²Ibid., 230-1.

⁵³Ibid., 232.

meaning of such experience was understood. And yet Scholem was in agreement with Buber, that Hasidic literature is not particularly "creative" in its presentation of Kabbalistic ideas:

Although one may say that the Hasidim never lost their enthusiasm for the teachings of the *Zohar*, the Bible of the Jewish mystics, and for the Lurianic Kabbalah, and although no page of a Hasidic book can be understood without constant reference to these traditions, it still remains true that, in elaborating the theosophical doctrines of the Kabbalah, the Hasidic writers did not prove themselves particularly creative. All students of Hasidism are agreed that its most valuable contribution lies somewhere else. The Hasidic writers use the old formulas, concepts, and ideas, only giving them a new twist.⁵⁴

Scholem expresses the view that unlike the *Zohar* and the major works of Lurianic Kabbalah, Hasidic works do not represent a particularly innovative contribution to mystical Jewish thought.⁵⁵ While Hasidic teachings tend to be woven out of earlier Kabbalistic and Rabbinic materials, they do not, indeed, generally represent a special contribution to "the theosophical doctrines of the Kabbalah".⁵⁶ I agree with Scholem that the "new twist" which Hasidism contributed is less a philosophical development than a psychological application of existing metaphysical theory to the experience of the individual. Scholem describes how such an approach is applied:

Hasidic writers are fond of reinterpreting the conceptual language of Kabbalah, which originally refers to the mysteries of the Godhead, in such a manner that it seems to concern the personal life of man and his relation to God. . . . In the

⁵⁴Ibid., 236.

⁵⁵A statement such as "all students of Hasidism are agreed", however, begs to be contradicted. Indeed, in subsequent studies I hope to focus on the creative genius of R. Nahman of Bratzlav, and his original contribution not only to the literature of Hasidism but to the literature of Kabbalah, which may be found in his teachings as well as in the tales he told.

⁵⁶We do well to remember that in the first half of this century, when Buber was active and Scholem first presented *Major Trends*, the academic study of religion generally approached it more as a matter of philosophy and belief than of faith and practice. The kinds of approach represented by scholars such as Mircea Eliade and Wilfred Cantwell Smith had yet to make its mark.

writings [for example] of Rabbi Dov Baer of Mezritch . . . we find page after page in which he almost systematically takes up individual Kabbalistic concepts in order to explain their meaning as key-words for the personal life of the pious. They do not for this reason lose their original meaning, which in fact continues likewise to appear, but they gain an additional level.⁵⁷

This I find is an accurate representation of the creative contribution of Hasidic literature. It is a contribution which Buber ignored, because of his investment in seeing Hasidism not as a development of Kabbalah, but as a reaction to it. Buber's rejection of the Kabbalistic elements of Hasidism is especially unfortunate in the case of his interpretation of the Tzaddiq. In this case, as it happens, his interpretation would have been supported and expanded had it been informed by more of a Kabbalistic perspective. Buber, however, was attached to a view of Hasidism in which "Kabbalism became Ethos" and (most unfortunately, from the perspective of this thesis) "*personality takes the place of doctrine*".⁵⁸ That is why he preferred the Hasidic tales to the discourses: they had little or no Kabbalistic content, and therefore supported his differentiation of the life-affirming values of Hasidism from the anti-worldly "Gnostic" tendencies he associated with Kabbalah.⁵⁹

And yet, for all of the incisiveness of his critique of Buber, Scholem himself did little to improve the state of Hasidic research. Although this was clearly what Buber overlooked, Scholem produced no major study of the movement based on Hasidic texts, and never demonstrated an approach to the study of Hasidic literature. Perhaps this was because Scholem accepted Buber's thesis that the Hasidic teachings, themselves, did not express the originality of the movement. Or perhaps, more specifically, this was

⁵⁷Ibid., 236-7.

⁵⁸Friedman, *Buber's Life and Work*, 281. The italics are Friedman's, but they effectively highlight the crucial difference in emphasis.

⁵⁹Moshe Idel has recently suggested that scholars of Kabbalah have been slow to come to terms with new research into Gnosticism which suggests that it may have been Jewish sources which influenced Gnosticism, more than the other way around. See *New Perspectives*, pp. 30-2.

because Scholem did not see the Hasidic teachings contributing to what interested him: the development of Jewish mystical philosophy. At any rate, Scholem succeeded in demolishing Buber's view of the significance of Hasidism, without replacing it with another coherent view of the movement's significance.

Scholem's Analysis of Hasidism

In *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, Scholem set forth an historical over-view of the entire field of Jewish mysticism which has influenced Jewish scholarship ever since. In the last chapter of that work, "Hasidism: the Latest Phase", Scholem does not in fact demonstrate the contribution of a Hasidic "phase" to the larger history of Jewish mysticism. Rather, he discusses the obstacles found standing in the way of doing so. Early in the article Scholem excuses himself for contributing little to this area of study, because he has "no wish to compete with the excellent collections of Hasidic anecdotes and epigrams . . . contained for instance in the writings of Martin Buber."⁶⁰ Yet, he points out, "there is still room for further attempts to interpret Hasidism, particularly in its relation to the whole of Jewish mysticism."⁶¹

Reviewing Scholem's essay, one is struck by the degree to which he has taken up Buber's concern for identifying a uniquely "creative" element of Hasidism. Here, Scholem is not satisfied with saying that the creative contribution of Hasidism is to be found, not in *what* it taught, but in *how* it applied earlier Kabbalistic ideas to the experience of the individual. He focuses, instead, on the problem of identifying the seminal idea that motivated the entire movement:

The impression one gets [from a comparison with earlier Kabbalistic sources]

⁶⁰Scholem, *Major Trends*, 327.

⁶¹Ibid.

is that no element of Hasidic thought is entirely new, while at the same time everything has somehow been transformed; certain ideas are more strongly emphasized than before, while others have been relegated to the background. A consistent attitude inspires these changes, and we have to ask ourselves wherein it is to be found.⁶²

Scholem recapitulates the spirit of early Hasidism, as follows:

The first fifty years of Hasidism after its founder's death (1760-1810), its truly heroic period, are characterized by . . . [a] spirit of enthusiasm which expressed and at the same time justified itself by stressing the old idea of the immanence of God in all that exists.⁶³

This is the period that was productive of the classical works of Hasidic literature which are the central focus of this thesis. By emphasizing that the Hasidic idea of divine immanence was derived from earlier Kabbalistic sources, Scholem implicitly rejects Buber's claim that the originality of the movement is to be found in its emphasis on the "here and now". But, Scholem asks, if it is not the immanence of God, what other creative idea might have inspired the Hasidic revival? He declares, in sweeping terms, that "this enthusiasm was anything but Messianic."⁶⁴ Elsewhere, Scholem clarifies his position:

I am far from suggesting that the Messianic hope and the belief in redemption disappeared from the hearts of the Hasidim . . . [as] there is no single positive element of Jewish religion which is altogether lacking in Hasidism. But it is one thing to allot a niche to the idea of redemption, and quite another to have placed this concept with all it implies in the center of religious life and thought. This was true of the theory of *Tikkun* in the system of Lurianism and it was equally true of paradoxical Messianism of the Sabbatians; there is no doubt what idea moved them most deeply, motivated them, explained their success. And this is precisely what Messianism had ceased to do for the Hasidim . . .⁶⁵

⁶²Ibid., 340.

⁶³Ibid., 336. Here, and in the quotations to follow I have related all of the author's parenthetical comments in parentheses (), and reserved the use of brackets [] for comments of my own.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid., 329-30.

Given that Scholem often presented Hasidism as the direct product of ideas of Lurianic Kabbalah,⁶⁶ and the Sabbatian movement, his mention of these particular examples is not at all surprising.⁶⁷ In this case, however, he avoids over-emphasizing the influence of either the Sabbatian fascination with messianism or the Lurianic theory of *tiqqun* ("restoration" of the divine sparks) in the formation of Hasidism. But if it is not these ideas which distinguish Hasidic thought, what idea does? Scholem presents his conclusions, as follows:

There are two things about the movement which are particularly remarkable. One is the fact that within a geographically small area and also within a surprisingly short period, the ghetto gave birth to a whole galaxy of saint-mystics, each of them a startling individuality. The incredible intensity of creative religious feeling, which manifested itself in Hasidism between 1750 and 1800, produced a wealth of truly original religious types which, as far as one can judge, surpassed even the harvest of the classical period of Safed.⁶⁸

Scholem points to the sudden appearance of a great many spiritual masters of an extraordinarily high caliber as the feature which makes Hasidism an outstanding

⁶⁶In Scholem's essay, "The Neutralization of Messianism in Early Hasidism", in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, he discusses how Hasidism adapted one of its central ideas, the "lifting of the sparks" of the Divine which are trapped within the material world, from Lurianic Kabbalah. Scholem emphasizes (p. 190) that the "abstract" and "utopian" Lurianic doctrine became specifically "*transformed*" in Hasidic teaching into an individual and personal concern with raising the sparks of the people and even the possessions appropriate to the individual, that one might have attracted into one's life. According to Scholem, the original element in the Hasidic approach to this idea is that it "places on everyone a special responsibility with regard to the sphere of his intimate day-to-day life and his surroundings."

⁶⁷Recently, this view has been called into question. In his discussion of "Expulsion and Kabbalah" in *New Perspectives*, 264-7, Idel questions Scholem's "implicit assumption . . . that a given cultural and religious phenomenon is closely intertwined with or dependent upon its immediate historical predecessors. . . . Lurianic Kabbalah therefore logically follows zoharic Kabbalah; Sabbatianism, the Lurianic school; and Hasidism, Sabbatianism." Idel offers evidence that Cordoverian Kabbalah was likely to have been more of an influence on Hasidic thought than Lurianic Kabbalah. Moreover, the links in Scholem's historical evidence are weak enough for him to conclude (267) that whether "Scholem's assertions concerning an alleged Sabbatian-Hasidic linkage . . . will prove to be justified remains to be seen."

⁶⁸Scholem, *Major Trends*, 337.

phenomenon in Jewish history. Buber made much the same point, even more strongly: "the zaddikim offer us a number of religious personalities of a vitality, a spiritual strength, a manifold originality such as never, to my knowledge, appeared together in so short a time-span in the history of religion."⁶⁹

But rather than seeing in this phenomenon an arrow which points to the answer to his question, Scholem discards this valuable bit of evidence. He then attempts to make a virtue out of necessity, by declaring that the second remarkable thing about the Hasidic movement "is the fact that this burst of mystical energy was unproductive of new religious *ideas*, to say nothing of new theories of mystical knowledge."⁷⁰ Thus Scholem confesses:

If you were to ask me: what is the new doctrine of these mystics, whose experience was obviously first hand, more so perhaps than in the case of many of their predecessors? What were their new principles and ideas? . . . I should hardly know what to answer. In previous lectures it was always possible to lay down a blueprint, so to speak, of the spiritual architecture of the subject-matter and to give a more or less precise definition of the ideational side. In the case of Hasidism, certainly a creative religious movement, we cannot do so . . .⁷¹

This is a striking admission on the part of a scholar of the calibre and authority of Gershom Scholem. Until this point, Scholem had developed a well-informed perspective on the Kabbalistic component of Hasidic teaching. Yet here Scholem abruptly abandons the case he has been building, concede that "the new element must therefore not be sought on the theoretical and literary plane, but rather in the experience of an inner revival, in the spontaneity of feeling generated in sensitive minds by the encounter with the living incarnations of mysticism."⁷² In other words, Scholem has

⁶⁹Buber, *Hasidism*, 4.

⁷⁰Scholem, *Major Trends*, 338. The italics are his.

⁷¹*Ibid.*

⁷²*Ibid.* As he proceeds, however (pp. 339-40), Scholem makes it clear that the Hasidic movement did not reject theoretical teaching in favor of personal experience,

affirmed that "*personality* takes the place of *doctrine*" in Hasidism, which is precisely Buber's view! But whereas, for Buber, this emphasis on a living experience which cannot be accounted for in Hasidic texts is an indication of the virtue of Hasidism, for Scholem it is indicative of a serious lack. Thus as Scholem continues, he shifts from admitting a lack in his own ability to discern the "blueprint" on which the Hasidic movement was based, to indicating that there is something nebulous about the movement itself!

The truth is that it is not always possible to distinguish between the revolutionary and conservative elements of Hasidism: or rather, Hasidism as a whole is as much a reformation of earlier mysticism as it is more or less the same thing. You can say if you like that it depends on how you look at it. The Hasidim were themselves aware of this fact. Even such a novel thing as the rise of Zaddikim and the doctrine of Zaddikism appeared to them as being, despite its novelty, well in the Kabbalistic tradition.⁷³

But the worthy question which Scholem appears to have suddenly forgotten, is not whether Hasidism was "revolutionary" or "conservative" (it may indeed be seen either way, or both ways at once) but what idea determined its development? Here, indeed, it seems that the answer is staring Scholem in the face, and he is determined not to see it. If one is seeking the kind of idea which would have inspired and supported the dramatic appearance of "a wealth of truly original religious types", the obvious place to look would be in the theoretical literature relating to those "types". Scholem implies that the Hasidim deluded themselves by assigning a place of the idea of the Tzaddiq in the Jewish mystical tradition. Yet even if one did not know about the earlier

but rather transformed theoretical teachings in the light of such experience. Here again Scholem cites the important example of the Maggid of Mezeritch: "If one studies the writings of Rabbi Baer of Meseritz, the most important follower of the Baal Shem and the real organizer of the movement, one sees immediately that in them the old ideas and conceptions, all of which duly make their appearance, have lost their stiffness and received a new infusion of life by going through the fiery stream of a truly mystical mind." Thus Scholem reiterates the point that it is by turning towards such teachings rather than away from them, that the genius of Hasidism is to be found.

⁷³Ibid., 338.

background of this particular idea, it would make sense to assume that the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq, like the Hasidic ideas of the Messiah, the immanence of God, and the "lifting the sparks", would have not been a "novelty", as much as a new application of a traditional idea which is related, in Hasidism, to the experience of the individual. Of course, in the light of the research that Green has put together in "*The Zaddiq as Axis Mundi*", it is clear that the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq reflects an idea which was established much earlier, in Talmudic and Kabbalistic sources.⁷⁴

Once it has been acknowledged that these, indeed, are the origin of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq, what emerges as truly remarkable is that such an ancient, esoteric idea should have suddenly transformed the face of the Jewish community of Eastern Europe. As I proceed, in the course of this thesis, to articulate the archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq, I believe it will become increasingly apparent that this would have served as precisely the kind of "blueprint" which would have generated the "spiritual architecture" of the Hasidic movement, which Scholem sought and did not find. Insofar as any single idea may account for such a thing, I believe it was the idea of the Tzaddiq which was the seminal idea that gave the life to the Hasidic movement. Certainly it is obvious that the sudden emergence of a great quantity and quality of spiritual masters,

⁷⁴In note 4, on page 343 of "*Axis Mundi*", Green discretely takes Scholem to task, specifically pointing out that Scholem's claim only takes into account the earlier ethical meaning which the term *tzaddiq*, while it ignores the earlier spiritual meaning the term. "Gershom Scholem . . . seems to largely ignore the second rabbinic usage of the term. In seeking to make the point that throughout pre-BeSHTian Hasidic [that is, Rabbinic] literature *hasid* is always a more extreme category of description than the relatively normative *zaddiq*, he has selected the rabbinic *zaddiq*-usages only from the former of the two categories. . . . Might one not better speak of a second rabbinic usage of the term . . . which is picked up by the early Kabbalah and much emphasized in the Zohar, thence passing on into Hasidism, where the terminology of the Zohar as well as that of the early rabbis becomes essential in the formulation of a new ideal type?" Green points out that "Isaiah Tishby has already disagreed with Scholem on his treatment of the term *zaddiq* in (the Hebrew) vol. 2 of *Mishnat ha-Zohar* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1961), 663ff."

which Scholem and others have acknowledged to be the outstanding feature of the Hasidic movement, is more closely related to the idea of the Tzaddiq than any other metaphysical idea.

Nor is the analysis which Scholem presents in *Major Trends* something that he later outgrew and discarded. Indeed, as his career proceeded, Scholem continued to insist that the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq is an anomaly. He explicitly expressed this view in his address entitled "Three Types of Jewish Piety", which he delivered at the Eranos Foundation, a scholarly conference in Switzerland oriented towards the psychology of Carl Jung. In this address Scholem described the Tzaddiq as only an ethical ideal, except that in the case of the Hasidic movement it somehow managed to usurp the spiritual function which properly belonged to the figure of the Hasid:

A very curious metamorphosis of terms has . . . taken place here. Never would it have occurred to earlier generations, neither in literature nor in life, to give the title of Hasidim to people who admired Hasidim. But this is precisely what has happened here. People who admired the living embodiments of Hasidic ideals called themselves Hasidim--a rather paradoxical, if not to say scandalous usage of the word--and the true Hasidim, those who live up to the ideal, came now to be called Zaddikim. This novel turn of the terminology is surely highly confusing. A Zaddik in the Hasidic sense has nothing to do with what the term meant in the traditional usage . . . but rather connotes the 'Super-Hasid'.⁷⁵

There is genuine insight as well as humorous exaggeration and an element of serious distortion here. Since pre-exilic times, a Hasid had meant a person of great *hesed*, meaning "loving-kindness" or "devotion". Elsewhere Scholem described the ideal of the Hasid as someone who acts with "such radical exuberance and punctiliousness that an entire world is revealed to him in the fulfillment of a commandment".⁷⁶ In a sense, therefore, he is right in saying that the Hasidic Tzaddiq

⁷⁵Gershom Scholem, "Three Types of Jewish Piety" in *Eranos Lectures 3: Jewish and Gnostic Man* by Gilles Quispel and Gershom Scholem (Dallas: Spring, 1972), 44.

⁷⁶Scholem, "The Righteous One", 90.

represented a kind of "Super-Hasid". That is, the Tzaddiq in Hasidism is an exemplary model of the ancient ideal of extreme devotion to God. Scholem may therefore be justified in saying that the meaning of being a "Hasid" was reduced, in Hasidic usage, to describing persons who had not necessarily attained such piety themselves, but were merely in favor of such a thing.

However, the supposition that the Hasidic figure of the Tzaddiq suddenly appropriated a spiritual preeminence which had previously belonged to the Hasid, is entirely unwarranted and incorrect. The Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq is based on earlier conceptions of the Tzaddiq as "the foundation of the world"; such a conception of the function of the Tzaddiq, which is both cosmological and mystical, was never shared by the figure of the Hasid.⁷⁷ In this essay, however, Scholem conveniently overlooks the entire pre-Hasidic tradition of the Tzaddiq as a figure with a special function in the order of things.⁷⁸

Ironically, Scholem shut the door on the possibility of an archetypal understanding of the Tzaddiq, precisely when he was addressing a forum of

⁷⁷I develop this analysis in more detail, in Chapter Three.

⁷⁸In his subsequent essay "The Righteous One", in *The Mystical Shape*, Scholem acknowledges and traces the Kabbalistic background of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq. Yet even here he maintains (p. 89) that although "Hebrew literary usage . . . tends to confuse or even conflate the terms *Tsaddik* and *Hasid* Basically, however, when used accurately . . . the righteous man, no matter how elevated his position may be, exists on a lower level than the pious one" Scholem overlooks the importance of the Tzaddiq material in the Talmud, maintaining (p. 91), that "the charismatic traits of the later *Tsaddik* in large part derive from the tradition of the *Hasid* in the Talmud". This, despite Talmudic discussions such as that in the Babylonian Talmud [*Sukkah* 45b] (considered in Chapter Three), in which the charismatic figure of R. Shim'on bar Yohai is specifically identified with a mystical conception of the Tzaddiq. Scholem concludes (p. 128) that "this basic idea [of the Tzaddiq, which Hasidism introduced, is the key to understanding the subsequent hypertrophy of the doctrine, which scholars have rightly dubbed 'Tsaddikism.'" He proceeds to discuss the Tzaddiq's "extraordinary powers as an envoy of the spiritual world and a helper of mankind", and to pursue the issue of the eventual institutionalization of the Tzaddiq ideal.

sympathetic listeners predisposed towards archetypal thinking. It is as if a world-class scholar of Buddhism discussing the Bodhisatva ideal were to deny the legitimacy of the various Mahayana traditions of a special class of "sublimely indifferent, compassionate beings who remain at the threshold of nirvana for the comfort and salvation of the world", because of his conviction that only the Theravadan notion of a monk "on the point of consecration into Buddhahood" is authentically Buddhist.⁷⁹ This indeed would be a most unfortunate position to present at an international conference of scholars interested not in sectarian controversies within the Buddhist community, but in archetypal images of spiritual development!

Moreover, Scholem's contention that the meaning of being a Hasid was diminished in the Hasidic movement is not entirely correct. Beginning with the tales of the Ba'al Shem Tov, popular Hasidic tales bear witness to a wide-spread affirmation of the ideal of radical and heart-felt devotion to God and to one's fellow human beings. What happened in Hasidism was that such devotion moved out of the sphere of the piously eccentric individual, to be lifted up as the commonly recognized ideal of the religious community. The Tzaddiq, in his role as the Rebbe or "Master" of such a community, was a model of such devotion, or *hasidut* (literally "Hasidism"), which might then be emulated by his *hasidim*, or "disciples". Thus the word "*hasid*" shifted from meaning simply a passionate "devotee" of God, to meaning the "disciple" of a particular Master, who inspired such intense devotion. "Hasidism" as a movement was based on the principle of discipleship, even as the name of the movement continued to resonate with its original devotional ideal.

⁷⁹Heinrich Zimmer, "The Way of the Bodhisatva". Chapter in *Religion for a New Generation* (2nd ed.) ed. by Jacob Needleman, A.K. Bierman, & James A. Gould (New York: Macmillan, 1977), 384. While Zimmer proceeds to locate the Mahayana ideal of the Bodhisatva within the universe of Hindu tradition in this essay, he ends by indicating what is distinctive about a Buddhist approach.

What in Jewish tradition would have prepared for the emergence of discipleship as a new dimension of the meaning of being a Hasid? Abraham Joshua Heschel has proposed that the Hasidic idea of the Hasid is an expansion of the traditional Jewish emphasis on community life:

One requirement has always been central to Judaism: if an individual is to live like a Jew, he must be bound to the community. The Baal Shem Tov added a new and vital element: to live like a Jew, one had to be bound to a rebbe, a tzaddik. . . . The term "Hasid" no longer meant a man who possessed only certain qualities, and adhered to a certain type of conduct. It came to denote a relationship--that of the Hasid to his Rebbe. One never said he was a Hasid without adding whose Hasid he was. And this has remained a keystone of Hasidism.⁸⁰

For the individual embracing Hasidism, the movement facilitated an intensification of one's bonds to Jewish community. While the Hasid continued to identify with the whole of the people of Israel, this identification was magnified in one's relationship to one's Rebbe and one's fellow Hasidim. Thus the movement offered those who participated in it both the opportunity to make a personal relationship to a Tzaddiq (and the mystical knowledge such a figure represented), and the opportunity to involve oneself in a community of spiritual seekers sharing a common enthusiasm and commitment. In the tumultuous years of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, in which religious identification was beginning to come under attack from the secular "Enlightenment", such an approach would have been appealing indeed.

At this point I will propose, as a counter to Scholem, that what is remarkable about Hasidic movement is, first of all, its extraordinary success in producing several generations of Jewish spiritual Masters, and reshaping Jewish community life around them. But the second remarkable thing is that Scholem and scholars following him have managed to overlook the power and originality of the idea of the Tzaddiq, and the

⁸⁰Abraham Joshua Heschel, *A Passion for Truth* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux), 1973, 74.

central role it played in the formation of Hasidism. By "originality" I mean both that it is a genuinely creative idea, productive of visible effects in the world, and that it is an idea which faithfully reflects its origins.

Why did Scholem overlook the power of this idea and seek to deny its legitimacy? I do not believe it was a conscious decision on his part. Before I consider the subconscious influences which may have led to his point-of-view, however, I would like to demonstrate the pervasiveness of his very limited horizons. Indeed it appears that because a scholar with the authority of Gershom Scholem stated the "novelty" of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq as an axiom requiring no further proof, subsequent scholarship has taken this peculiar assumption for granted.

"A New Kind of Leader"

The ramifications of Scholem's perspective are reflected even in a work such as Samuel Dresner's *The Zaddik*, which is based on an exhaustive study of a seminal Hasidic text and which is fundamentally sympathetic to a Hasidic outlook. In the Introduction to his book, Dresner describes the historical significance of Hasidism as follows:

The hasidic movement in Judaism, which sprang up in Eastern Europe during the eighteenth century and within the span of several decades gathered to its banner and won as loyal devotees to its teaching nearly half of the Jewish population of that area, has now disappeared. It was the last great flowering of the Jewish spirit, and succeeded in working a veritable revolution of the soul in the life of the people. It brought a renewed sense of God's presence and God's concern . . . a feeling of holy joy and devotion in performing the mitzvot [commandments]. It created *a new kind of leader*, called the zaddik, and a new kind of community, composed of the zaddik and his loyal disciples.⁸¹

Like Buber and Scholem before him, Dresner proposes that Hasidism is significant because of the success of its early leadership in elevating the religious life of

⁸¹Dresner, *The Zaddik*, 14. The italics are mine.

their generation. Dresner is, of course, aware that Hasidic groups continue to exist today; what he considers to have "disappeared" is the "revolution of the soul" attested to in the literature of the early decades of the movement. It might, however, be pointed out that the existence of enthusiastic studies of Hasidic thought, including Dresner's, demonstrates that Hasidic ideas have had an on-going influence in the twentieth century, extending beyond the traditional Hasidic milieu.

My concern, however, is with Dresner's statement that Hasidism "created a new kind of leader" in the Tzaddiq--a statement which is supported by Scholem's assessment of the movement, as well as Buber's.⁸² Thus despite the commanding title of his book, the focus of Dresner's study is not on R. Ya'aqov Yosef's conception of the Tzaddiq, *per se*, but on his conception of Hasidic leadership as a response to the social needs of the times.⁸³ Given the assumption that the figure of the Hasidic Tzaddiq represents essentially "a new kind of leader", rather than a new application of a profound and well-established idea, it makes sense to present the significance of the Hasidic Tzaddiq primarily in social terms. Here, as in much of modern scholarship in Hasidism (and in much of religious studies, generally), an emphasis on social analysis is allowed to stand in place of an analysis of a given religious phenomenon.⁸⁴

⁸²In the opening paragraph of Dresner's Introduction, he acknowledges Buber's widespread influence, and quotes the passage from Buber's *Hasidism* cited above, in which he declares that "the zaddikim offer us a number of religious personalities . . . such as never" appeared before. Later in the Introduction, he makes reference to Scholem's article "Hasidism: the Latest Phase", in *Major Trends*.

⁸³Dresner's emphasis on the Tzaddiq as a leadership ideal is reflected in the very first lines with which he opens his introduction: "The crisis of our time is a crisis in leadership. The spiritual decay and the peril of world-wide disaster cry out for exalted men to draw us out of the pit of the twentieth century. Present day thinkers are frantically searching the past for guidance. The zaddik is the supreme example of what they seek." (*The Zaddik*, 13.)

⁸⁴Following the publication of Dresner's *The Zaddik*, Zalman Schachter reviewed it in *Judaism*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Fall 1961). Schachter was impressed by the success of Dresner's book in actually conveying Hasidic teaching. "For once, we now

This is not to say that Dresner's statement, in itself, is necessarily incorrect. As Heschel pointed out, the shift by which one came to define one's Jewish identity in terms of being the Hasid of a particular Rebbe (in the sense of being his "loyal disciple"), appears to have been a genuine innovation of the movement initiated by the Ba'al Shem Tov.⁸⁵ Certainly, we know much more about the spiritual master-disciple relationship as it was defined in Hasidism in terms of the relationship of Rebbe and Hasid, than in earlier manifestations of mystical Judaism. Indeed, it is only in Hasidism that abundant evidence of a social expression of the spiritual idea of the Tzaddiq is found readily at hand; it is in Hasidism that the figure of the Tzaddiq is known to have appeared, not only as a spiritual ideal, but as a spiritual master available to his disciples as an accessible model.

While the spiritual leadership of the Hasidic Tzaddiq is entirely unprecedented in post-exilic Judaism, earlier historical precedents are difficult to determine. Talmudic

have a book that is not *about Hasidism*, but a *Hasidic book*. It fits into the general category of books of *gleanings*." As he expresses his enthusiasm for Dresner's success in putting together an academic study which is at the same time genuinely Hasidic, Schachter reflects on the problem of methodology. "Often Hasidim would reduce the books of their masters to a compendium which, derived from those writings, were organized afresh around various categories. . . . Organizing his gleanings around the theme of the *zaddik*, he gathers his materials from all the writings of Rabbi Jacob Joseph of Polono'e. Despite the fact that the book grew out of a doctoral dissertation, the author proceeds in a very Hassidic manner." Schachter appears to set aside his own reservations about Dresner's defining the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq being emphasis on in terms of a response to an essentially social problem of leadership: "Obviously the academic treatment which lies behind Dresner's *Zaddik* had to utilize some categories. . . . which often stand outside the pale of Hasidic thought. . . . [Dresner chose] historical-sociological categories . . . which are after all at least historically meaningful to us." Dresner's categories, I would suggest, are no incompatible with the spirit of Hasidism; their limitation is only that they do not penetrate very far into the depth of Hasidic thought.

⁸⁵This, however, points to an interesting question in comparative phenomenology, and even historical influence. Among the Sufis of Islam, identification with a particular *tariqa*, in the sense of a "brotherhood" which is defined by its founding Shaykh, goes back to the thirteenth century. (See *Mystical Islam: an Introduction to Sufism* by Julian Baldick [London: I. B. Tauris, 1989], 72-7.) If, indeed, no such idea penetrated Judaism until the eighteenth century, how is it that it was suddenly embraced at that time?

accounts of Tzaddiqim such as Rabbi Shim'on bar Yohai may have a historical basis, although it is much more difficult to determine what historical basis there may be, if any, for the many references in the Zohar to particular Tzaddiqim such as R. Shim'on, or even for its many references to a generic category of "tzaddiqim". Thus whatever the challenges of interpreting Hasidic teachings, and determining the historicity of the Hasidic tales, the social role of the Tzaddiq is far better documented in the literature of Hasidism than in earlier Jewish literature. Moreover, the historical proximity of the Hasidic movement to the modern era means that it has a quality of living presence it does not share with earlier developments.

Might more be found by way of historical examples of the spiritual leadership of the Tzaddiq, if the title "Tzaddiq" itself were set aside? Scholem, among others, has mentioned that R. Yehudah Loew, who is well-known as the creator of the Golem of Prague, might in fact be regarded as "the first Hasidic writer."⁸⁶ His writings serve as a model for Hasidic literature, inasmuch as they provide a pre-Hasidic popularization of Kabbalistic ideas; might they also indicate something significant about his conception of his own role, which would have served as model for Hasidic leadership?⁸⁷ What

⁸⁶Scholem, *Major Trends*, 339.

⁸⁷In *From the World of Cabbalah: the Philosophy of Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954) p. 193, the author, Ben Zion Bokser, points out the degree to which R. Yehudah Loew had influenced one important Hasidic Rebbe: "Rabbi Simha Bunam hailed Rabbi Judah Loew as his teacher *par excellence*, whose writings had greatly enriched his own religious faith. He went on pilgrimages on [sic] Rabbi Loew's grave and even expressed the hope that he might be privileged to study under him in the spirit-world after death." Bezael Safran, in "Maharal and Early Hasidism" in *Hasidism: Continuity or Innovation?* ed. Bezael Safran, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 1988), 47, points out that two other important "Hasidic masters of the nineteenth century--Rabbi Israel of Kozhnitz and Rabbi Mendl of Kotzk--made the Maharal's works required reading for their followers." One of them, the Kotzker, insisted that his Hasidim not skip over the passages in which the Maharal appeared to repeat himself, because they were meaningful. Safran points out (no. 3, p. 91), that "Gottesdiener has noted the adumbration of the Hasidic Zaddik in R. Judah Loew's work", in *Ha-Maharal mi-Prague* (Jerusalem, 1976), p. 54.

might be extrapolated about earlier models of Jewish spiritual leadership, for example, from the controversy between the two early masters of Kabbalah: the Ramban, who was a powerful rabbinical authority and an influential author of Scriptural commentaries, but who was hidden about his role as a teacher of mysticism, and R. Yitzḥaq Saginahor, who although not a prominent Jewish leader, taught Kabbalah relatively openly? In a similar vein, what might writings of and about later Kabbalists, such as Rabbis Avraham Abulafia, Moshe Cordovero and Yitzḥaq Luria, suggest about the role they assumed as spiritual master figures? To what degree do they pre-figure and/or reject the model which later would be embraced by the Hasidic Masters?

The phenomenology of the Jewish spiritual master is a vast open field which contemporary scholars have for the most part neglected, with a few notable exceptions such as Heschel's admirable study of *The Prophets*.⁸⁸ Regarding the two-and-a-half millennia stretching between the Hebrew Prophets and the Hasidic Masters, studies of the inner and outer life of influential Jewish mystics are very few and far between. One outstanding example is Werblowsky's *Joseph Karo: Lawyer and Mystic*, a spiritual biography of the 16th century mystic who, more than anyone else, defined the shape of contemporary Jewish law.⁸⁹ Yet even in such an example, the emphasis is on the theory and practice of Karo's mystical experience, more than on the theory and practice of his role as a spiritual leader.⁹⁰

⁸⁸Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1962).

⁸⁹R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo: Lawyer and Mystic* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1977).

⁹⁰Werblowsky included in this book a study of the mystical outlook of the leading Mitnagged (or "Opponent" of Hasidism), Rabbi Eliahu, the Gaon of Vilna. Werblowsky opens "Appendix F: The Mystic Life of the Gaon Elijah of Vilna" (*ibid.*, p. 311), with the following remarks: "Throughout our study of Karo's Maggid it has been repeatedly stressed that mystical (including psychical) phenomena were by no means infrequent in Jewish history and that, in fact, many well-known rabbis did have

Indeed it seems that little is known about Jewish precedents for Hasidic leadership, at least in part, because so little research has been done in this area. It may be that further research will show that the Hasidic model of the Tzaddiq, and the Hasidic movement as a whole, is less isolated a phenomenon in Jewish history than has generally been assumed. Or, it may be that such research will demonstrate, more precisely, wherein the newness of the Hasidic model of leadership resides. My remarks have been meant to indicate that such a question exists. Further research into the question of the history of the function of the spiritual master in Jewish society, as distinct from the question of the history of the idea of the Jewish spiritual master, extends beyond the scope of this thesis.⁹¹

and others did seek maggidic revelations. . . . It has been suggested that further biographical research will undoubtedly bring to light many more unsuspected cases, in addition to those already discovered by Scholem, Tishby, and others, and that the existence of treatises and manuals such as Vital's or Albottini's [sixteenth century examples] prove the widespread desire of pious souls for the gifts of the Holy Spirit." However, the emphasis in Werblowsky's mystical Jewish biographies, and the studies of the other scholars he mentions (to whom should be added the detailed studies of Avraham Abulafia by Moshe Idel), is on the mystical more than the leadership phenomenon.

⁹¹Let me acknowledge, in passing, that a century before the advent of Hasidism, the term "Tzaddiq" was associated with another public and mystical leader: the Messianic pretender Shabbtai Tzvi. Thus Gershom Scholem mentions (in "The Neutralization of Messianism in Early Hasidism", p. 362, n. 42) that "all the statements about the Zaddik in Psalms are explained as statements on Shabbtai Zvi in Israel Hazan's commentary on a large part of the Book of Psalms, composed 1679." Because it was subsequently regarded as a heretical movement, the spiritual master model advocated in the Sabbatian movement by definition falls outside the focus of this thesis, which is on "Hasidic tradition" as the Hasidim themselves conceived of it. It might be argued that if Sabbatianism was indeed as significant (though hidden) influence on Hasidic thought as Scholem suggests it was, the decision to limit the scope of this thesis to what Hasidim recognized as the sources of their tradition is artificially constrained. I would contend that continued emphasis on the question of Sabbatian influence on Hasidism (despite Scholem's acknowledgement that Hasidism effectively neutralized the Sabbatian concept of Messianism) would at this point detract from a fresh consideration of the Hasidic spiritual master idea. Let me cite in this regard, Idel's observation (*New Perspectives*, 18), that, in general terms "a balanced approach is, in this incipient stage of research in Kabbalah, utopian. To illustrate: Scholem spent years collecting every piece of evidence concerning the various stages of the Sabbatian movement, focusing on every historical detail regarding the lives of Sabbatai Sevi and Nathan of Gaza, whereas, in contrast, influential works of such central mystical figures

Hidden and Revealed Tzaddiqim

I will turn, at this point, to consider another aspect of the popular misconception of the figure of the Tzaddiq which is largely attributable to the work of Gershom Scholem. This is the idea that there is an authentic Jewish tradition of thirty-six Tzaddiqim who are "Hidden" (*Nistar*), and are responsible for preserving the world, whereas the notion of a Tzaddiq who is "Revealed" or "Famous" (*Nigleh* or *Mefursam*) is a recent Hasidic innovation.

From what has been quoted above from Scholem's article "Three Types of Jewish Piety", it would be logical to conclude that in his view the Tzaddiq is simply an ethical ideal, with no special cosmological or salvific significance. On the contrary, however, Scholem concludes this article by introducing the idea that the ethical idea of the Tzaddiq is "higher" than the charismatic (or in his terms, the Hasidic) idea, and indeed, that this represents the legitimate Jewish tradition concerning the salvation of the world:

There were two types of Zaddikim, those who are hidden and keep to themselves and those who manifest themselves to their fellow-men and are working as it were under the public eye. . . . The hidden zaddikim are of the higher order, because they are not tempted by the vanity almost inseparable from a public career. Indeed, some of them take it upon themselves to build up an image in sharp contradiction to their true and hidden nature. They may not even be aware of their true nature and go about performing their good deeds in secret without knowing that they are of the elect. . . . Legend has it that one of the thirty-six is the Messiah and would reveal himself as such, if only his generation were worthy of redemption. You can never know who these highest bearers of

as . . . R. Nahman of Bratslav were only rarely mentioned by Scholem." Thus I have chosen to set aside not only the question of a possible foreshadowing of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq in Sabbatianism, but the larger question of the relationship between the idea of the Tzaddiq and that of the Messiah in Hasidic teaching. While these questions may be worthy of investigation, I believe that it is necessary, first, to counter to the tendency of Scholem's work to give undue weight to the more marginal (and "false") Messiah figures, by conveying a sense of the more normative Jewish tradition of the Tzaddiq.

moral standards are. One of them, and this is the final moral, may be your neighbor.⁹²

In his presentation of these ideas, Scholem indulges in a kind of a partisanship which is uncharacteristic of the bulk of his work. In the second sentence, above, he passes judgement on the relative merits of the Hidden and Revealed ideals of the Tzaddiq. Moreover, he presents as his own scholarly opinion, the Mitnaggdic assertion that rather than it being virtuous for Tzaddiqim to commit themselves to public service, this virtually guarantees that they will become subject to the corrupting influence of "vanity". Thus as Scholem paints a picture of the redemptive significance of the Hidden Tzaddiq, he makes it clear that this is the figure which he personally favors.

In an essay entitled "The Tradition of the Thirty-Six Hidden Just Men", Scholem proposes to trace the history of this Jewish tradition, and its relation to non-Jewish sources. Despite the assumption reflected in the title of the essay, however, that the tradition of thirty-six Tzaddiqim is concerned with specifically "Hidden" saints, I find that the evidence Scholem has assembled points towards nearly the opposite conclusion.

Scholem presents Talmudic sources which describe thirty, forty-five, or thirty-six Tzaddiqim who protect the world. "A Babylonian teacher of the fourth century, Abbayae, was the first to introduce the number thirty-six: 'the world is never without thirty-six just men [*tzaddiqim*] who daily receive the Divine Countenance."⁹³ Scholem proceeds to acknowledge that in this earliest known reference to "thirty-six" Tzaddiqim,

⁹²Scholem, "Three Types", 45.

⁹³Gershom Scholem, "The Tradition of the Thirty-Six Hidden Just Men" in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1971), 252. In Chapter Three I trace some of the history of the Rabbinic discussion of a mystical and cosmological role of the Tzaddiq, which goes back as far as a source in the Mishnah. Indeed, the mystical and cosmological significance of the Tzaddiq are closely associated in many of the Talmudic sources.

the emphasis is more on a mystical than a cosmological role. "The motif of perceiving divinity, which is granted these just men, replaces that of preserving the world."⁹⁴

Scholem then proceeds to cite a theory of the origin of the idea that there are thirty-six Tzaddiqim who fulfill a cosmic role:

Sofia Amaisenova was the first to express the suspicion . . . that this number originates in ancient astrology where the 360 degrees of the heavenly circle are divided into thirty-six units of ten, so-called 'deans.' A dean-divinity ruled over each segment of the thus divided circle of the zodiac, holding sway over ten days of the year. . . . [In] Egyptian Hellenistic sources . . . the deans were regarded also as watchmen or custodians of the universe, and it is quite conceivable that the number thirty-six, which Abbayae read into Scripture, no longer represented these cosmological powers or forces but rather human figures.⁹⁵

Whatever one makes of such a theory, it has little direct bearing on the meaning of being a Tzaddiq. Scholem points out, however, that the role of a certain number of righteous people in preserving the world has a very close parallel in medieval Sufi lore:

As early as the tenth and eleventh centuries we find in the writings of the Islamic mystics that among these saints there are four thousand who are hidden and do not know each other. . . . According to the treatise of the eleventh-century Persian mystic Hudjwiri, they are not even aware of the special distinction of their rank. . . . Still older Islamic sources mention the number of forty saints, who . . . live unrecognized by their fellow men while contributing to the continued maintenance of the world through their good deeds.⁹⁶

Islamic Parallels

In a recent article, "The Hierarchy of the Saints in Jewish and Islamic Mysticism", Paul Fenton has expanded Scholem's research with a well-documented

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Ibid., 252-3. As an anachronistic kind of corroborating evidence, Scholem proceeds to indicate that a later "Hebrew manuscript in Munich, which contains astrological inquiries addressed to the figures of the zodiac, proves that in the Middle Ages certain Jewish authors recognized such a relationship of the two spheres. Each sign of the zodiac is divided into three 'faces,' which produces the classical number of thirty-six deans; each dean is named for one of thirty-six biblical characters from Adam and Enoch to Daniel and Ezra."

⁹⁶Ibid., 254.

investigation into the question of the parallel development of this idea, in the two respective traditions.⁹⁷ Fenton points out that references to Hidden saints go back to *hadith* traditions, which are attributed to the Prophet Muḥammed. One such source indicates that "the saints of this community are thirty who resemble Abraham."⁹⁸

Another declares that

the most envied of my saints is a believer whose possessions are few, whose joy is in prayer, who performs with perfection the service of his Master and obeys him in secret. He is hidden amongst men and none can point him out.⁹⁹

Other *hadith* literature, as well as Sufi literature beginning in the ninth century, C.E., describe hierarchies of specific numbers of saints (in which the number forty often appears), surrounding a single *qutb*, or "pole". In his *Kashf al-Mahjub*, Al-Hujwiri gives one of the fullest accounts. In it he specifies that the lower levels of saints are hidden, but that the highest are known, at least to one another:

God chooses the saints (*awliya'*) to be governors of His kingdom and favours them with the performance of diverse kinds of miracle (*karamat*). . . . through their blessing the rain falls from heaven and through the purity of their lives the plants spring up from the earth. *Among them there are four thousand who are concealed and do not know one another and are not aware of the excellence of their state, but in all circumstances are hidden from themselves and from mankind.* . . . of the officers of the Divine court there are three hundred called *akhyar* (chosen ones) and forty called *abdal* (substitutes) and seven called *abrar* (pure ones) and four called *awtad* (pillars) and three called *nugaba'* (chiefs) and one called *qutb* or *ghawth*, the "pole". *All these know one another and cannot act save by mutual consent.*¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷Paul B. Fenton, "The Hierarchy of the Saints in Jewish and Islamic Mysticism" (*Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* vol. 10, 1991). Scholem, by contrast, rarely documents his claims.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 17.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 18. My focus here is on an Islamic conception of hidden sainthood. For an Islamic conception of the role of the spiritual Master which more directly corresponds to the archetype of the Tzaddiq, see Chapter Four, the section "R. Naḥman's Tzaddiq and the Complete Human Being".

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 19. The italics are mine.

A point which Fenton does not emphasize, is that there are Islamic Sufi traditions concerning a special role of saints which are not at all concerned with their being "hidden" figure. Indeed, the strongest parallel I have found of an archetypal conception of the Tzaddiq in Jewish tradition, is the Sufi idea of the Complete Human Being. A comprehensive description of this figure, based on the twelfth century teachings of Muhyiddin Ibn al 'Arabi, is to be found in the fourteenth century work of Abd al-Karim al-Jili, which is titled, appropriately enough, *Al Insan al Kamil (The Complete Human Being)*. According to Jili, the Complete Human Being or

Universal Man is the pole around which evolve the spheres of existence, from the first to the last; he is unique as long as existence lasts. . . . However, he puts on different forms and is revealed by different cults, so that he receives multiple names. . . . At each epoch, he has the name which corresponds to the garb of the time.¹⁰¹

Here, indeed, is a "universal" and archetypal conception of such a figure as a singular principle which has been embodied differently, in a variety of religious settings. The Qur'an already provides for a perspective which affirms the validity of divine Prophets and Messengers, appearing in various cultures, before the Prophet Muḥammed. But if the idea of a Complete Human Being might be applicable to Jewish and other figures who have appeared before, or outside, the *'Uma* ("Nation") of Islam, the question arises, what is likely to have been the direction of influence between the Jewish and Islamic traditions concerning this matter?

Scholem already mentioned a Jewish source of the idea of thirty-six Tzaddiqim, going back to fourth century. With Jewish references to a mystical and cosmological role of the Tzaddiq going back well before the appearance of Islam in the seventh

¹⁰¹ Abd al-Karim al-Jili, *Universal Man*, "extracts" trans. with commentary by Titus Burkhardt. English trans. by Angela Culme-Seymour, (Sherborne, Gloucestershire: Beshara, 1983), xx. I discuss this quote more fully, in the context of a comparison of a Sufi and a Hasidic conception of the spiritual Master archetype, in my discussion of "Completion" in "The Archetype of the Tzaddiq and the Complete Human Being" in Chapter Four.

century C.E., it is obvious that if there was an exchange of ideas, the Jewish idea of the Tzaddiq that would have first of all influenced the Islamic. But Scholem has shaped his consideration of these matters specifically in terms of a tradition of thirty-six *Hidden Tzaddiqim*. Thus he concludes, rather obliquely, that "for the present we cannot determine whether this conception originated in a Jewish tradition which had already taken on a new form when it penetrated Islamic circles or whether the metamorphosis occurred in Islam and then the tradition returned to Judaism."¹⁰² Thus he appears to acknowledge that while the idea of the Tzaddiq originated in Judaism, the idea of a Hidden Tzaddiq first appeared not in Judaism but in Islam.

Fenton's new research follows the lines of Scholem's analysis. Fenton points out that the Jewish idea "that the pious acts of certain individuals remain unknown and hidden to their fellow men and indeed that these persons conceal their saintly identity" appears to be "parallel" to the Talmudic and Midrashic traditions of the Tzaddiq, but that they are "not at first connected to it". Thus although "such legends [of Tzaddiqim] existed in ancient sources there is no indication that their heroes belonged to a special category of hidden saintly men upon whom depended the welfare of the world."¹⁰³ In the case of Islam, however,

the combination of the two concepts appears in early Islamic mystical literature, particularly in Baghdad, where Jewish influence on the formative period of Sufi writings was especially strong. An irrefutable indication . . . is afforded by the early term designating a saint in Arabic, *siddiq*, which is to be related to the Hebrew word *saddiq*. Furthermore it is noteworthy that the term denoting the hidden saint is practically identical in both traditions--*mastur* in Arabic, *nistar* in Hebrew.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²Scholem, "Thirty-Six Hidden Just Men", 252.

¹⁰³Fenton, "Hierarchy of the Saints", 16-7.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 17.

Fenton proceeds to propose that "there is a possibility that such [early Jewish] legends [combining both ideas] existed in oral form."¹⁰⁵ Given the wealth of legendary material that has been collected in the various works of Midrash, and the fact that no such figures appear in this literature, this seems to me to be far-fetched. The simple fact that the language exists in Hebrew, as in Arabic, to express the idea of a *tzaddiq nistar*, makes the fact that Hidden Tzaddiqim who have some kind of cosmic or mystical role are altogether absent from this literature all the more striking! Fenton mentions, in a footnote, that "this is a popular leitmotif in Hasidic literature", while as a parallel "in the Islamic world, the great mystic Ibn 'Arabi . . . teaches . . . that the *qutb* can assume diverse disguises such as that of a 'bean-seller' or 'Mosque sweeper'."¹⁰⁶ The significant point, which Fenton does not emphasize, is that the Islamic sources expressing this idea precede the Jewish ones by several hundred years! He prudently concludes only that

there exist between the hagiographical doctrine within these two great traditions numerous points of similarity. These convergences, in the domain of technical vocabulary and numerical symbolism, allow one to suppose that there were close contacts between the two traditions at some point. As for the doctrinal parallelisms . . . further research may allow [scholars] one day to specify whether they are due simply to coincidence of an archetypal order, or to direct influence.¹⁰⁷

In short, Fenton is unwilling to speculate as to whether Judaism and Islam influenced one another regarding the Tzaddiq idea, despite the historical proximity of these two cultures. Of course, I cannot fault Fenton's respect for the power of the "archetypal order" of the Tzaddiq idea. Yet there is no denying that abundant evidence

¹⁰⁵Ibid. Fenton credits Rudolph Mach with proposing the idea of "Jewish influence on the formative period of Sufi writings" in *Der Zaddik in Talmud und Midrasch* (Leiden: Brill, 1957), 138-43.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., no. 20, p. 31.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 29.

of a Jewish idea of the Tzaddiq as "the foundation of the world" predates the appearance of the Islamic religion; nor can one deny the abundant evidence of medieval Islamic conceptions of a Hidden Tzaddiq idea, which had no Jewish precedents and no Jewish parallels for hundreds of years. It would be hard to imagine the Jewish idea of the Tzaddiq *not* having influenced the Islamic idea of sainthood, although the emergence of a Jewish Hidden Tzaddiq idea is so very late, and European, that it makes the possibility of Islamic influence appear somewhat more remote.

Scholem is more forthright about the historical relationship of these ideas. In fact he makes the astonishing admission that, whatever their relationship to Islamic sources,

in neither the ancient Jewish legend nor the later rabbinic and Kabbalistic literature up to the eighteenth century do these thirty-six Zaddikim appear as unknown and hidden. Even where there is a reference to pious individuals who do their work entirely in secret, no connection is established with the motif of the world's preservation by the thirty-six just men.¹⁰⁸

Scholem's open acknowledgment that the ideas of Hidden Tzaddiqim and Thirty-Six Tzaddiqim do not converge until the eighteenth century, has obvious consequences which he preferred to ignore. In fact, Scholem has indirectly admitted, in this paragraph, to having mistitled his essay and proceeded on a false basis. As Scholem has acknowledged, the Jewish tradition of thirty-six Tzaddiqim is not particularly concerned with "Hidden" Just Men. Or it might be said, just as well, that the Jewish "tradition" of thirty-six Just Men is an almost modern innovation! Here is yet another instance in which Scholem's scholarship has been granted unwarranted authority, and in which his conclusions, left unchallenged and unchecked, have engendered ongoing confusion.

¹⁰⁸Scholem, "Thirty-Six Hidden Just Men", 253.

The Emergence of a Jewish Hidden Tzaddiq Ideal

I do not mean to imply, however, that there is no basis in Rabbinic and Kabbalistic sources, for the later emergence a Hidden Tzaddiq ideal. As is typical of Jewish tradition, seeds of later developments may often be found quite early. R. Shim'on bar Yohai, for example, appears in the Talmud as a relatively cloistered and ascetic figure. He spent thirteen years with his son in a cave, hiding from Roman persecution and delving into the mysteries of the Torah. R. Shim'on, of course, cannot be considered an entirely Hidden Tzaddiq; not only did he spend this time with his son, but his spiritual greatness is openly proclaimed in the Talmud, and is elaborated considerably in Midrash and Kabbalah. Indeed, there is logical problem in identifying R. Shim'on, or any well-known Jewish leader as a Hidden Tzaddiq, since one who is famous, by definition, is not hidden! Nevertheless, it seems to me that the model R. Shim'on provided would give at least some support to the tendency to conceive of the Tzaddiq as a Hidden as well as a Revealed ideal.¹⁰⁹

Among the cast of characters who appear in the Zohar there are, as well, two somewhat mysterious and amorphous figures who are revealed to have been awesome masters of mystical wisdom, and are identified by the archetypal appellations of the Old Man (*Sava*) and the Child (*Yanuqa*).¹¹⁰ Certainly, these figures contribute to the

¹⁰⁹See Chapter Three for a fuller discussion of R. Shim'on as a model Tzaddiq. The fact that R. Shim'on incorporates elements of both the Hidden and Revealed Tzaddiq ideal may answer, at least in part, a question which occurred to me recently: why, of all the Rabbis of the Talmud, is it R. Shim'on who appears as the central figure of the Zohar, rather than a more obviously mystical and more central rabbinic figure such as R. Aqiva? A detailed comparison of how the Talmud portrays and the Zohar interprets these two figures might be a fruitful area for further research, relating to the larger question of Jewish models of spiritual leadership.

¹¹⁰These are very much archetypal figures in the Jungian sense of the term; that is, they are only partially personalities, and in large measure they exist as ideal types. Thus there are a number of accounts in the Zohar, both of "an old man, a donkey driver" and of a "child". See the notes listed under these names in *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment*, trans. and intro. by Daniel Chanan Matt (New York: Paulist Press,

Jewish notion that there are those who possess great spiritual knowledge and powers, and are not generally recognized in the eyes in the world. Yet they are not explicitly identified with the Zohar's idea of Tzaddiqim who maintain the welfare of the world.¹¹¹

To return to Scholem's own research, then, where does evidence of the idea of a *bona fide* Hidden Tzaddiq first appear? Scholem cites as the earliest published references to explicitly "Hidden" Tzaddiqim,

two Kabbalistic books of the eighteenth century whose authors were reputed to belong to the hidden just men: Rabbi Neta of Szinawa and Rabbi Eisik who lived . . . near Przemyśl. In the introductions to their writings, which of course were published only after their deaths, their contemporaries tell of the rumors which circulated regarding their true character.¹¹²

1983) pp. 250 and 286. The degree to which these respective figures may refer to the same character, or to a series of similar, mythologically related characters, is not entirely clear from the text. Matt himself relates the figure of the Old Man in the Zohar to Jung's idea of "the old man as archetype of wisdom".

¹¹¹It is interesting to note, however, that in both passages from the Zohar which Matt has translated, R. Shim'on informs his companions that he is well acquainted with the these characters whom they have met. In the case of the Old Man (p. 126) he declares, "You are so fortunate to have attained all this! Here you were with a heavenly lion, a powerful hero compared with whom many heroes are nothing, and you did not recognize him right away! I am amazed that you escaped his punishment! The Blessed Holy One must have wanted to save you." R. Shim'on continues by reciting the verses "The path of the righteous [*tzaddiq*] is like the light of dawn Your people, all of them righteous, will inherit the land forever. . . ." The implication would seem to be not only that the Old Man is "righteous" person, but that R. Shim'on's companions have a share in this status (perhaps along with the Jewish people as a whole), in the light of their contact with him. In the reference to the Child (p. 175), R. Shim'on relates him to the Old Man (*sava*), saying, "He is the son of an invincible rock! . . . the son of Rav Hamnuna Sava!" Then he adds, rather cryptically, "This one is not known by any name in the world, for something sublime is inside him. It is a secret! The flowing light of his father shines upon him! This secret has not spread among the Comrades." Thus, while the Zohar refers to the existence of hidden spiritual masters, their relationship to the category of Tzaddiq often referred to in the Zohar, both as a category of human beings and a function of the Divine, is rather loose and undefined. Clearly, however, the category of Tzaddiqim is not limited to such beings.

¹¹²Scholem, "Thirty-Six Hidden Just Men", 255-6. The fact that their works are published posthumously solves the logical problem of their being both "hidden" and publicly "revealed".

Scholem relates this genre of literature to later Hasidic forgeries which included "more or less moving letters which were supposedly exchanged between the master [Ba'al Shem Tov] and several of the hidden just men."¹¹³ A contemporary of the early Hasidic Masters, R. Neta of Szinawa is regarded as having been a member neither of the Hasidic nor of the Mitnaggdic camp. Yet this juxtaposition of the relatively obscure figure of R. Neta with the revealed figure of the Ba'al Shem Tov points towards common origins of the ideals of the Hidden and Revealed Tzaddiqim which they, respectively, represented. Both of them appear, more or less, in the same time and place.

Indeed, the earliest published Hasidic tales recount how the Ba'al Shem Tov himself closely guarded his hiddenness until it was time for him to reveal himself to the world. Such literature attests to a differentiation between the states of hiddenness and revealedness, from the very beginning of the popular conception of the Hasidic movement.¹¹⁴ It might thus be inferred that both these states are regarded as having a purpose, although the truly great things were accomplished by the Ba'al Shem Tov (and presumably, by other Tzaddiqim) when they were revealed. The idea that it is better to be Revealed than a Hidden Tzaddiq is spelled out, explicitly, in early theoretical works such as the *Toldot* of Rabbi Ya'aqov Yosef.¹¹⁵

¹¹³Ibid., 256.

¹¹⁴See *In Praise of the Baal Shem (Shivhei ha-Besht)*, trans. and ed. by Dan Ben-Amos and Jerome R. Mintz (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1970). The first edition of this book, the first anthology of Hasidic tales to see the light of day, was published in 1814. Thus it marks the beginning of the publication of tales, just after the publication of the last of the "classical" literature of the discourses, in 1811. See note 162, below.

¹¹⁵According to Dresner, R. Ya'aqov Yosef considered the ideal of the seclusion of the Tzaddiq to harbor an attitude of "contempt" for the people. See *The Zaddik*, 102-110.

Thus I am suggesting that not only was the idea of a specifically Revealed Tzaddiq a Hasidic innovation, which may have originated in the idea of the Ba'al Shem Tov dramatically revealing himself to the world, but that the Hasidic movement may have been responsible for the creation of the category of Hidden Tzaddiq, as well. Or it might be proposed that with Hasidic theorists such as the Toldot proclaiming that it was better to be a Revealed Tzaddiq than a Hidden one, and their "Opponents", the Mitnagdim, proclaiming a Hidden Tzaddiq ideal, the crystallization of these two conceptions would have been the mutual product of the two opposing camps.

Clearly, Scholem is unable to provide any earlier setting in which these two terms were used in contradistinction to one another. Scholem has no choice but to admit that the idea that it is specifically Hidden Tzaddiqim who are responsible for the world, appears to have been an innovation of the second half of the eighteenth century. Yet he nevertheless advocates the view that it is the Hidden and not the Revealed Tzaddiq who has a legitimate place in the Jewish mystical tradition, without indicting that this is a matter of personal preference, and despite the fact that this conflicts with the evidence he has in hand! By embracing such an apologetical approach, has Scholem placed himself, perhaps unwittingly, in the neo-Mitnagdic camp.

The Problem of "Strangeness"

I have indicated, thus far, *what* Scholem thought of the historical significance (or rather, the historical insignificance) of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq, *how* he accounted for the claim that the Hasidic Tzaddiq was a "novelty", and *how* he accounted for the authenticity of the Hidden Tzaddiq ideal. I have also shown something of *wherein* his conception has influenced subsequent Hasidic scholarship. What I have put off until now is the consideration of *why* he may have been inclined towards such a one-sided point of view. Let me begin by emphasizing that there is a

history of modern Judaic historiography, going back long before Scholem, which has sought to marginalize the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq. At the conclusion of Dresner's introductory paragraph, which I quoted earlier, he implies that it is necessary to understand this background, in order to understand how Hasidism has been conceived of in modern Hasidic historiography:

It is only natural that such a movement [as Hasidism], like all the great movements in Judaism before, should have left an indelible mark both on the thought and the life of the people. It has, but there is a strangeness in the modern Jewish attitude to Hasidism which requires comment.¹¹⁶

This "strangeness" is reflected in an attitude of alienation and even hostility towards the Hasidic figure of the Tzaddiq, which was common among academic scholars before Buber and his contemporaries made their contributions in the first half of the twentieth century. And yet, despite their efforts, Scholem appears to have resurrected a sense of estrangement towards the Hasidic Tzaddiq which has colored modern historiography (including that of Dresner!) until the present time.

After acknowledging Buber's influence in drawing attention to the positive models of leadership which the Hasidic Tzaddiqim provided, Dresner traces the virulent anti-Hasidic prejudices of the earlier founders of Jewish modern history. Dresner is impressed by "how little the learned scholars of *die Wissenschaft des Judentums* knew of hasidic literature. Ignorance, however, did not prevent them from issuing against it pronouncements whose authority has only recently been challenged."¹¹⁷ He cites as an example the work of Heinrich Graetz, whose "*History of the Jews* is still . . . the most popular work on the subject", and which now, even more than a century later, "remains in many ways unexcelled".¹¹⁸ Yet according to Dresner, when Graetz

¹¹⁶Dresner, *The Zaddik*, 14.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 15.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, 16.

treats the forbidden subject of Hasidism, *mirable dictu*, all scholarship and insight are cast away. . . . Hasidism, he says, "the new sect, a daughter of darkness, was born in gloom, and even today proceeds stealthily on its mysterious way." . . . To Graetz the Baal Shem was simply a 'wonder-worker' who would 'see into the future' and 'perform miracles.' He cannot decide whether this was deliberate 'trickery' or only 'self-delusion'. He accuses the Maggid of Mezeritch, the Baal Shem's successor, of 'indulging in vulgar jokes' and of deceit. . . . Graetz speaks of the 'Chasidean witches' Sabbath' and describes the 'hermitage' of the zaddik as 'his dirty little retired chamber' where he conducted himself as 'the papal vicar of God upon earth'.¹¹⁹

The position of scholars such as Graetz is best considered against the background of their times. The modern study of religion began its development in the nineteenth century, in the scientific-historical milieu of *Religionswissenschaft*. Wissenschaft scholarship was based on an evolutionary interpretation of the history of religion, which assumed the inevitable progress of positive science and liberal values.¹²⁰ Adapting this kind of outlook to an intellectual defence of Judaism, proponents of *die Wissenschaft des Judentums* exalted in the historical triumph of Rabbinic Judaism as the democratic product of the evolution of the earlier institutions of Israelite religion. For scholars such as these, the rise of Hasidism with its cult of the Tzaddiq--at the very dawn of the modern era!--was an embarrassing anachronism, an ancient fossil which should never have been revived and ought to be buried once and for all.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Jacques Wardenburg, in his "View on a Hundred Years Study of Religion", the introductory section of the anthology he edited, on *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion: Aims, Methods and Theories of Research, 1: Introduction and Anthology* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973), indicates that "the idea of evolution itself was a fertile idea in the second half of the 19th century, and its influence on the study of religion . . . has been quite considerable. . . . Most scholars at the time did not see evolution as an hypothesis to be verified, but indeed as a self-evident assumption." (28-29) Thus, for example, an influential thinker such as Auguste Comte conceived of religion as "only the first stage of man's mental development, followed by that of metaphysics and that of science."

Graetz's condemnation was not limited to Hasidism. Thus he concluded that "all these absurd [Hasidic] fantasies owed their origin to the superstitious doctrines of the Kabbala which . . . still clouded the minds of Polish Jews."¹²¹ Viewed in this light, Buber's efforts to separate Hasidism from Kabbalah make a great deal of sense. Scholem, who made it his task to study and reevaluate the "superstitious doctrines" of Kabbalah which even Buber and his contemporaries had avoided, was nevertheless appreciative that

thoughtful and scholarly writers . . . [such as] Martin Buber, Simeon Dubnow, S. A. Horodezky, Jacob Minkin and others have provided us with a deeper insight into the spirit of Hasidism than we have at present of its predecessors. . . . [These] open-minded writers . . . have shown us, as the result of their investigations, that beneath the superficial peculiarities of Hasidic life there subsists a stratum of positive values, which were all too easily overlooked in the furious struggle between rationalistic 'enlightenment' and mysticism during the nineteenth century.¹²²

Thus, for all of his differences with Buber, Scholem perceived himself to be a part of a new generation that did not have to defend rational inquiry from the threat of mysticism; his was a generation that could afford to apply rational inquiry even to the study of mystical subjects, with beneficial results. From his position at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Scholem vigorously opposed those who sought a revival of the old *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, in the Hebrew language. According to Scholem's vision the time was ripe for a revival of Jewish studies in which

factors that . . . were considered positive from the world-view of assimilation and self-justification require fundamental new criticism. . . . Factors which were denigrated will appear in a different, more positive light. . . . It is possible that what was termed degenerate will be thought of as a revelation and light and what seemed impotent hallucinations--will be revealed as a great living myth . . . not the washing and mummification of the dead, but the discovery of hidden life by removal of the obfuscating masks.¹²³

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Scholem, *Major Trends*, 325-6.

Although Scholem expressed his expectation that the study of Jewish mystical lore might be a source of inspiration for the current generation in statements such as this, he himself concentrated his efforts on generating a descriptive rather than a prescriptive analysis. A comparison of their works shows that Scholem not only left the study of Hasidic sources to the hands of Martin Buber, but he left the entire prescriptive task of identifying "a stratum of positive values" from which a new "discovery of hidden life" might proceed in the hands of scholars such as Buber. Scholem's own approach sought to account for the development of the various mystical aspects of Jewish tradition without seeking to place them either in a "good" or a "bad" light.

Yet the question which concerns us here is why did the spirit of fair-mindedness and scholarly objectivity fail Scholem so dramatically, when it came to the subject of the Hasidic Tzaddiq? It would have made sense for Scholem to wish to distance himself from Buber's romantic view of Hasidic life. But why then did Scholem deny the theoretical foundations of the Hasidic Tzaddiq which Buber himself had neglected, and embrace instead Buber's view that the strength of the movement was in its personalities as opposed to its teachings? Why did he never consider that the idea of the Tzaddiq might have had a significant role in the development of the movement, especially as he sought and could not find any other idea in early Hasidic literature which might account for the genius of the movement? Why did it never occur to Scholem to at least question his own neo-Mitnaggdic hypothesis, which left him asserting, on the one hand, that the Tzaddiq is legitimately an ethical and not a mystical

¹²³David Biale, *Gershom Scholem: Kabbalah and Counter History* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1979), 11. Quoted from a letter by Gershom Scholem to the Hebrew poet Hayyim Nahman Bialik, published in *Dvarim be-Go: Pirqay Morashah u-Tehiya*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: 1976).

ideal, and asserting, on the other, that it is the Hidden and not the Revealed Tzaddiq who is the legitimate mystical model?

The fact that Scholem's most sweeping dismissal of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq was in his Eranos lecture, suggests that perhaps he was particularly uncomfortable relating this idea as an integral part of Judaism before a gentile audience. It is tempting to speculate that while Scholem felt free to pursue an interest in developments of Kabbalah that were deeply buried in the past, he was embarrassed by the fact that Hasidic institution of the Tzaddiq continues to have life in the twentieth century. There may be an institutional dimension to the "strangeness" of Scholem's attitude towards the Hasidic Tzaddiq, as well. As the secular "Enlightenment" began to spread into Eastern Europe in the beginning of the nineteenth century, just a little behind the spread of the Hasidic movement itself, and Hasidic Masters were among its most outspoken opponents. These Masters understood that it was the "Enlightenment", more than the orthodox Jewish Mitnaggdim, that presented a mortal threat to Hasidic communities and their traditional way of life.¹²⁴ Yet modern Jewish historiography originally developed in this secular milieu. Thus even as Scholem felt free to criticize *die Wissenschaft des Judentums* for its rationalist apologetics, he himself was a *Wissenschaft* product. Although he extended secular Jewish historiography to accommodate an interest in mystical developments, Scholem was acutely aware that his

¹²⁴Thus a work such as R. Nahman's *Liqqutay Moharan* does not share the focus of R. Ya'akov Yosef the *Toldot* on distinguishing the Hasidic idea of a Revealed Tzaddiq from the more Hidden model. Rather, I would say, R. Nahman's focus is on distinguishing the true function of the Tzaddiq from the empty outward form of the Hasidic institution of the Tzaddiq, and reconciling a Jewish with a secular view of the nature of the universe in which the Tzaddiq functions. I provided an example of the former in the quote from *Liqqutay Moharan* 65, at the beginning of this thesis. The latter is illustrated in the preceding folio, 64b, in which R. Nahman equates the Lurianic conception of the void with the space within the creation which accommodates *hakhmot hitzoniot*, "external sciences" or "extraneous wisdoms".

approach was quite alien to the world of the orthodox Jewish mystics, near whom he lived.¹²⁵

Just as Scholem criticized scholars following Buber for failing to recognize that his assessment of Hasidism "is an interpretation and that there might be a problem in relating the interpretation to the phenomenon itself", Moshe Idel has criticized subsequent scholars for assuming that "the works of Scholem or . . . his views of Kabbalah are tantamount to Kabbalah itself."¹²⁶ Just as Buber's conception of Hasidic life is based on a selective reading of Hasidic texts, informed by values he brought to these texts, the picture Scholem assembles of the "history" of Kabbalah is only tangentially related to what Kabbalists themselves consider to be the origins and substance of their tradition. Thus, rather than focussing on the definitive role of the Zohar, not only as the canonical text of Kabbalah but as the source of much of subsequent Jewish religious practice and belief, and on the centrality of Cordoverian and Lurianic Kabbalah for orthodox Jewish Kabbalists in the last four hundred years, Scholem devotes the best of his efforts to documenting bizarre eruptions such as the Sabbatian heresy, as well as early developments of Kabbalah which, from the point-of-view of the history of mystical Judaism, are the fragmentary remains of a series of

¹²⁵In his autobiography, *From Berlin to Jerusalem* (pages 168-9), Scholem conveys a sense of how, even in the physical location of his home, he was an outsider on the edge of the religious community which he haunted in search of holy books: "Our house lay directly beyond the still intact walls which separated the ultra-Orthodox Meah She'arim quarter from the quarters of the not-so-pious. . . . One could say that outside the walls of this Orthodox paradise, we lived almost allegorically. The National Library was at that time located two minutes up the street; two minutes down began the main thoroughfare of this quarter were the secondhand bookstores were clustered together. . . . The walls of the houses in this district were plastered with proclamations, anathemas, and curses directed at the Zionists, all their schools, and other works of Satan. . . . Thus, this Meah She'arim was a rather dialectical paradise, as is presumably the nature of paradises. We represented the snake that crawled over the walls of this paradise."

¹²⁶Idel, *New Perspectives*, 17. See Idel's discussion of "Methodological Observations", especially pp. 17-24.

experiments that failed. Yet Scholem's work is considered objective, scientific account of the "history" of Jewish mysticism, because it is related in terms of (his own) theories of cause-and-effect.¹²⁷

Moshe Idel has pointed out that while numerous scholars have commented on the differences expressed in the Buber-Scholem controversy, the points on which Buber and Scholem agreed have tended to become *de facto* orthodoxies of Judaic scholarship.¹²⁸ An outstanding example of this tendency is the agreement among scholars that the Hasidic Tzaddiq is something quite different from earlier conceptions of this figure in Jewish tradition. Although it is likely that Buber came to this position based on his affinity for Hasidism and his discomfort with Kabbalah, and Scholem, for quite the opposite reasons, their scholarship has had a conspirational effect.

While Scholem and Buber each pursued a different strategy, both of them succeeded in framing the study of Jewish mysticism as something quite removed from

¹²⁷In addition to criticizing a number of Scholem's historical conclusions in his section on "Methodological Observations", Idel points towards the potential value of phenomenological and psychological approaches to the study of Kabbalah, provided they are applied with greater sensitivity and precision than one ordinarily finds in the works of Carl Jung and Mircea Eliade. "The hybridic endeavors of Eliade to discover the 'patterns' of religion can be compared only to the attempts of Jungian psycho-analysis to unfold the archetypes of the human psyche. . . . The mechanical application of the results of such types of research to Kabbalistic materials can only obfuscate an appropriate understanding of them." (p. 23) And yet, even as Idel criticizes the approaches of Eliade and Jung as inappropriate to the language and metaphysics of Kabbalah, he subjects Scholem's conception of "history" to no parallel critique, presumably because it reflects a concept of external cause-and-effect in the determination of historical "truth" which is fundamental to academic scholarship. Thus, while he criticizes many of Scholem's findings, he builds his theories on a foundation which Scholem established. The possibility that Scholem's conception of "history", like Eliade's definition of religious "phenomena" and Jung's definition of psychological "archetypes" might be inherently incompatible with understanding Kabbalah in its own terms, is something that Idel never considers.

¹²⁸I have heard from Idel that he has written an essay which has not yet been published on various points on which Buber and Scholem agree, and which subsequent scholars have therefore taken for granted, which are nevertheless incorrect.

the understanding Jewish mystics might have of their own tradition.¹²⁹ The difference between them is that while Buber sought only those elements of Hasidic thought he might present in a sympathetic light, Scholem sought out marginal elements of mystical Judaism, such as the Sabbatian and Frankist movements, and interpreted even the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq as a kind of anomaly. In retrospect, the approaches of both men suffer from their intellectual distance from their subject matter, although this does not deny the tremendous contributions each of them made by opening the fields of Hasidism and Kabbalah, respectively, to the comprehension of modern students of religion. The challenge which remains for a new generation of scholars, is to combine Scholem's willingness to consider the texts as they stand, with Buber's intuitive feeling for what the modern reader might learn from them.

¹²⁹In his discussion "Between Scholars and Mystics" (*New Perspectives*, 25-7) Idel considers the possibility that dialogue between scholars and orthodox practitioners of the Jewish mystical tradition might indeed be fruitful for both sides. "The academician may enrich himself both as a person and a scholar through his direct contact with a mentality he attempts to penetrate. . . . On the other hand . . . the great achievements of academic studies in the fields of bibliography and history of Kabbalah turn the scholar into a potential source of information . . . even for the most erudite among the Kabbalists." This kind of thinking was foreign to the generation of Scholem and Buber. Nevertheless, Idel's own research is related, for the most part, to Scholem's academic (that is, synthetic) model of a "history of Jewish mysticism"--a construct which stands entirely outside the categories of traditional Jewish study, practice and belief. Thus, while Idel has done much to restore a sense of the importance for subsequent Jewish mystics of Cordoverian as well as Lurianic Kabbalah--those two schools of thought representing virtually the entire syllabus for Kabbalists ever since (plus Hasidic literature for Hasidim), Idel has, like Scholem, lavished considerable attention on speculations based on fragments of "early", that is twelfth century Kabbalah. In the meantime, no academic scholar of Kabbalah has yet compiled a history of the influence of mystical developments on the normative practice of Jewish religion as it is reflected, for example, in the Hebrew Prayer Book. Although less than before, an artificial distinction between "Jewish mysticism" and "Jewish tradition" has been preserved. It might be borne in mind that as the word *qabbalah* was introduced in twelfth century texts, it does not represent a separate tradition, but esoteric transmissions of Jewish tradition relating to the practice of prayer.

Following Scholem: The Socio-Historical Approach

Happily, a considerable amount of research based on Hasidic texts has recently appeared in English. Unfortunately, scholars approaching Hasidic texts are generally less interested in what they have to say about ways of approaching and understanding the Divine, than in what they may imply regarding the social circumstances surrounding their appearance. The continuing neglect of the Hasidic *idea* of the Tzaddiq may be attributed in large measure to the pervasive influence of Scholem's approach to the study of "major trends" in Jewish mysticism, considered mainly in socio-historical terms.¹³⁰ Thus, while a variety of scholars have written about the Hasidic "doctrine of the Tzaddiq", and although they may differ widely in their opinions of the Tzaddiq as a social institution, they tend to be alike in considering this "doctrine" as a product of history, rather than as an idea which may in fact have shaped it.¹³¹

An influential example is the approach of Joseph Weiss, in his *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, to the "Zaddikology" of the Maggid of Mezeritch

¹³⁰In fairness to Scholem, Idel has pointed out (*New Perspectives*, p. 11) that, in addition to pursuing an historical approach, Scholem was exceptional inasmuch as he "approached Kabbalah as a religious phenomenon, more than either his predecessors or his successors did. . . . It is, however, significant that most of Scholem's discussions on phenomenological aspects of Kabbalah were written at a relatively later stage of his scholarly activity . . . [as] the result of the need to present it to . . . [a] particular type of audience." Thus it should be acknowledged that the recently published *Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, even with its chapter on the idea of the Tzaddiq, represents a significant contribution to the study of the phenomenology of Kabbalah. It remains perplexing that precisely at the Eranos conference, where he was addressing an audience oriented towards Jungian psychology, Scholem not only overlooked the archetypal nature of the Hasidic Tzaddiq, but dismissed all notions of the Tzaddiq as a spiritual as distinct from an ethical "type"!

¹³¹I have chosen to speak in terms of the "idea" rather than the "doctrine" of the Tzaddiq. The term "doctrine" implies an element of rigidity, or of philosophical abstraction, which is in itself prejudicial and misleading. Hasidic literature discusses the idea of the Tzaddiq at length, precisely because it is not reducible to a single formula. The oft-quoted "The Tzaddiq is the foundation of the world," has no single "correct" interpretation. As I hope to demonstrate in Chapter Four, it is elaborated in a variety of ways, which nevertheless express a common nexus of meaning.

and R. Nahman of Bratzlav. Although Weiss appears, on the surface, to be dispassionate, he reflects a cynicism towards Hasidic subjects which is reminiscent of Heinrich Graetz and his contemporaries. Thus Weiss interprets the "Zaddikology" of the Maggid in terms of an elaborate rationalization for the practice of magic, and relegates the teachings of R. Nahman on the subject of the Tzaddiq to "the strange case" of a man who is wholly preoccupied with himself.¹³² In "Between *Yesh* and *Ayin*", Rachel Elijor endeavors to present a more even-handed approach to the "material Zaddikism" of the Seer of Lublin. Although Elijor attributes much of the development of the idea that the Tzaddiq is responsible for the material needs of the Hasid to the Seer of Lublin, she avoids condemning it, but presents it, rather, as possibly an appropriate response to the difficult social conditions of his day.¹³³ A focus on the social dimension tends to dominate even a simple text-based study, such as "The Doctrine of the Zaddik in the Thought of Elimelech of Lizensk", by Louis Jacobs. Thus, rather than endeavoring to penetrate and convey R. Elimelekh's mode of thinking about the figure of the Tzaddiq, Jacobs simply extracts from his teachings claims that might astonish an audience, in his day or in our own.¹³⁴

¹³²Joseph Weiss, in his articles "The *Saddik*--Altering the Divine Will" (183-93), and "Sense and Nonsense in Defining Judaism--The Strange Case of Nahman of Braslav" (249-69), in *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Oxford University, 1985). I pursue a detailed critique of Weiss's approach to both R. Nahman and the Maggid, in Chapter Four.

¹³³Rachel Elijor, "Between *Yesh* and *Ayin*: the Doctrine of the Zaddik in the Works of Jacob Isaac, the Seer of Lublin", published in *Jewish History: Essays in Honour of Chiman Abramsky* ed. by Ada Rapoport-Albert and Steven J. Zipperstein (London: Peter Halban, 1988). See, in particular, Elijor's discussion of "Material Zaddikism", pp. 425-41.

¹³⁴Louis Jacobs, "The Doctrine of the Zaddik in the Thought of Elimelech of Lizensk", a lecture delivered as "the Rabbi Louis Feinberg Memorial Lecture in Judaic Studies" and published as a pamphlet (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, 1978).

Miles Krassen endeavors to build his recent Ph.D. thesis, "Sources of *Devequt* and Faith in *Zaddiqim*" on a solid hermeneutical foundation, by giving careful consideration to earlier Kabbalistic understandings of the term *devequt* ("cleaving" or "attachment" to God), and its application within a Hasidic context.¹³⁵ Yet even as Krassen does an admirable job of pursuing the history of *devequt* as an idea, he relates to the Tzaddiq mainly as a social institution which popularizers such as Reb Meshullam Feibush (who did not consider himself to be a Tzaddiq) relegated to an elite. Because the term *tzaddiq* escapes the kind of historical-philological scrutiny which has been applied to the term *devequt*, the conventional assumption that the Hasidic Tzaddiq is a novel social institution is allowed to stand. Similarly, in *All is in the Hands of Heaven*, a study of the teachings of the Izbitzer Rebbe, Morris Faienstein considers the Izbitzer's idea of the Tzaddiq without relating it to earlier Hasidic conceptions with which he would have been familiar. Instead, Faienstein limits his interpretation of the Izbitzer's idea of the Tzaddiq to the social dimensions of "Mordecai Joseph's attempt to deal with his relationship to his former mentor, Menachem Mendel of Kotsk. . . [and his] self-perception as a leader and his perception of his fellow *zaddiqim*."¹³⁶

The outstanding exception to the sociological emphasis which tends to determine how all of these text-based studies relate to the idea of the Tzaddiq, is Arthur Green's "psycho-biography" of Rebbe Nahman of Bratzlav, *Tormented Master*.¹³⁷ Here too, however, considerations of the outward human setting are allowed to replace

¹³⁵Miles Krassen, "Sources of *Devequt* and Faith in *Zaddiqim*: the Religious Tracts of Meshullam Feibush Heller of Zbarazah", 1990.

¹³⁶Morris M. Faienstein, *All is in the Hands of Heaven: The Teachings of Rabbi Mordecai Joseph Leiner of Izbica* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1989), 63.

¹³⁷Arthur Green, *Tormented Master: a Life of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav* (University, Alabama: University of Alabama, 1979).

considerations of the inner content of the teachings. Thus, rather than explore the spiritual life of R. Nahman as it is reflected in his teachings, Green pursues the kind of psychological approach which focuses on the personality conflicts and neuroses which might be inferred from his work.¹³⁸ By focussing his study on Nahman's weaknesses and difficulties--be they real, or in the mind of the beholder--Green succeeds in deflating his hero before the reader has had a chance to discover why he might be a worthy object of study, in the first place. Thus there is little opportunity to observe how the idea of the Tzaddiq is approached by one of its most devoted, and clearly its most imaginative Hasidic proponent.¹³⁹ Once again, a consideration of a Hasidic *idea* of the Tzaddiq is set aside in favor of speculations concerning what might be inferred from such teachings about the conditions surrounding their appearance. While the

¹³⁸Green himself acknowledges that he took the work of Joseph Weiss as the model on which he based his approach: "The most serious scholarly work on Nahman undertaken to date is that of the late Joseph Weiss . . . a student of Gershom Scholem, [who] undertook a thorough critical examination of Nahman's life and thought. . . . Weiss established the key guidelines to all further study of Bratslav Hasidism. . . . he employed a method that combined the tools of intellectual history with the insights of psychoanalysis, demonstrating that in the case of so fully self-preoccupied a person as Nahman was, there can be no separation between biography and an understanding of his thought. Throughout both Nahman's teachings and his stories, Weiss has shown, the central figure of concern is none other than Nahman himself. . . . it is the clarification and justification of his own life-struggle that is constantly at the center of Nahman's attention." (*Tormented Master*, 17-8). In short, having set out from the (inherited) supposition that Nahman's teachings are a reflection of Nahman's personal problems, the teachings *per se* are understood mainly in the light of such an approach. Thus although Green makes a point of explaining that he has avoided the use of technical psychological language (18-9) he embraced a reductionist analysis that could not fail to diminish the message of R. Nahman's teachings. Neal Rose has remarked, succinctly, that "Green took a Freudian approach, where a Jungian approach would have been more appropriate."

¹³⁹In fairness to Green, I should point out that the weaknesses of his biography are to some degree compensated by two excellent Excursuses at the end of the book. The first Excursus is on the role of "Faith, Doubt and Reason" in Nahman's thought (*Tormented Master*, 285-337), and the second is on the more obscure of "The Tales" (338-371). Here Green provides an analysis which is social, historical and literary, but also psychological, not in the sense of conventional psychoanalysis but in a deeper sense reflecting a "knowledge of the soul". Would that Green had written the entire biography in the light of the insights he tags on at the end!

romanticism of Buber and the generation of Hasidic historians who followed him may be regarded as a reaction to the dogmatic rationalism of the first, Green's exaggerated "realism" marks an equally radical break with the twentieth century tradition of enthusiastic neo-Hasidic hagiography.

A Lack of Perspective

A typical if extreme example of the tendency of contemporary scholarship to evaluate the Hasidic "doctrine" of the Tzaddiq in terms of a social analysis, which suffers from a lack of perspective regarding the Jewish mystical tradition and a lack of interest in how the Hasidic Masters understood their own teachings, is Ada Rapoport-Albert's essay, "God and the Zaddik as the Two Focal Points of Hasidic Worship".¹⁴⁰ Notwithstanding the title of her essay, Rapoport-Albert is careful to state, from the beginning, that "the Zaddik was never deified" in Hasidic teachings, and "never became the object of worship in his own right."¹⁴¹ Yet she asserts that "the ordinary person" in Hasidism, "stands in relation to the Zaddik as the Zaddik stands in relation to God. Just as God is the focus of the Zaddik's religious life, so the Zaddik is the focus of the ordinary person's religiosity."¹⁴² Challenging the impression left by scholars such as Buber, who emphasized the "democratic" implications of the Hasidic movement, Rapoport-Albert declares that in their

new zeal to dispel the misguided notions, particularly regarding the first generation of masters whereby all were submissive disciples of the Besht [Ba'al Shem Tov] and inferior to him, the scholars who so aptly stressed the equality of these men with the Besht seem to have overshot their mark by drawing from this fact the conclusion . . . that the circle "democratized" various mystical and ethical

¹⁴⁰Ada Rapoport-Albert, "God and the Zaddik as the Two Focal Points of Hasidic Worship", *The History of Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979).

¹⁴¹Ibid., 322.

¹⁴²Ibid., 320.

notions previously confined to small elitist circles of Kabbalists. This "democratization" has been presented as gaining additional weight from the fact that . . . with the rise of institutionalized Zaddikism a generation or two later, the opening up of sublime mystical conclusions to the rank-and-file followers of Hasidism came to an abrupt close.¹⁴³

Rapoport-Albert grants that a spirit of mutual sharing characterized the relationship of the Ba'al Shem Tov with those we have come to think of as his disciples.¹⁴⁴ She strongly objects, however, to the idea that this spirit of direct access

¹⁴³Ibid., 311-2. In note 46, Rapoport-Albert explicitly cites Dubnow and Weiss as sources with whom she differs, and makes no mention of the work of Martin Buber, with whom, I believe, she is in most direct conflict. Her approach is the polar opposite of that which Buber expressed (in *Hasidism*, pp. 34-6): "One cannot understand the tremendous influence exerted by Hasidism on the mass of the people, unless one observes the 'democratic' strain in it, its peculiar tendency to set, in place of the existing 'aristocracy' of the spiritual domain, the equal right of all to approach the absolute Being. Inequality may prevail in all things pertaining to the outer life; into the innermost realm, into the relationship with God, it may not penetrate. . . . we are speaking of a teaching founded on human experience, and concerning itself solely with what comes to pass between man and God." Thus Buber would seem to acknowledge that Hasidism is not a strictly egalitarian movement--certainly, the Rebbe is accorded a special status--but he claims that it appealed to the masses, nevertheless, because it freed them as individuals to value and deepen their own relationship with God. Buber's view is substantiated by Hasidic teachings simplifying the approach to mystical prayer, so that a simple recitation of each of the letters and sounds of the prayer was proposed as the ideal. See Moshe Idel, "Perceptions of Kabbalah in the second half of the 18th century", in *Jewish Thought & Philosophy*, vol. 1. (United Kingdom: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991), 73-6. It is substantiated, as well, by the many teachings of the Ba'al Shem Tov, and later of R. Nahman, extolling the ideal of the simple Jew.

¹⁴⁴This has been confirmed by subsequent scholarship. Emanuel Etkes, in his article "Hasidism as a Movement--The First Stage", in *Hasidism: Continuity or Innovation?*, does a thorough job of reviewing scholarly research and reevaluating scholarly assumptions concerning the background of the rise of Hasidism. Etkes presents evidence that the circle of the Ba'al Shem Tov, like other mystical circles to be found among Eastern European Jews at that time, was made up of people who already have been considered "Hasidim", in the sense of mature spiritual seekers. "It was not the Besht who turned the members of the group into Hasidim, but rather the contrary--as they were already Hasidim, they were motivated to accept the Besht's leadership. In other words, their recognition of the Besht's authority was based on a common spiritual background and religious ideas, shared by them and the Besht. It was within the framework of this spiritual partnership that the unique virtues of the Besht became prominent." (p. 12) What then would have been the particular appeal of the Ba'al Shem Tov? "The group acknowledgement of the Besht's superior abilities was derived from the fact that he succeeded in concretizing in a most exceptional way the same ideas which attracted the groups members. The significance of the Besht's message for his disciples was not, therefore, the claim to accept Hasidism as an ideal but rather the presentation of an exemplary model of Hasidism." (p. 13)

and open sharing might also be reflected in the Hasidic conception of the relationship to God.¹⁴⁵ Rather, she declares that both "primitive" and "mature" Hasidic teachings

blocked entirely and a priori the direct route of ordinary people to God by placing the righteous or perfect men . . . the Zaddikim, in the middle of that route. To put it more poignantly . . . the majority of ordinary people could not follow the direct route to God precisely because a minority of extraordinary people were blocking it, insisting that every contact with God should be regulated, "channeled" by them.¹⁴⁶

Rapoport-Albert never defines exactly what she means by "the direct route to God". She seems to have taken over the idea from previous scholars (such as Buber?) that this was a primary and necessary ideal of the Hasidic movement, but argues that the movement in fact betrayed this ideal.¹⁴⁷ This a point which deserves more careful treatment. Certainly, to my knowledge, nowhere in Hasidic lore is the association with a Tzaddiq meant to remove from the individual Jew the opportunity--indeed, the obligation--of personally addressing God in prayer at least three times a day, not to mention in the many ritual blessings! However, beyond an affirmation of the formal

¹⁴⁵Etkes would seem to support this contention, when he points out that Hasidism did not become a wide-spread movement until a generation after the Ba'al Shem Tov, and that in his relationship with his own circle "the Besht did not go beyond the traditionally accepted conception of his age and of previous ages; namely, that worshipping God on the level of Hasidism was appropriate for only outstanding individuals and was not within the reach of the masses. His role as a carrier of a religious message was therefore restricted only to the very limited group of his friends and disciples." (Ibid., 17) "Yet", Etkes adds, "there is no doubt that the ecstatic prayer of the Besht made a deep impression upon simple Jews as well, with its outer manifestations." In this case, Etkes asks, how did the Ba'al Shem Tov come inspire a mass movement while other notable Kabbalists at that time did not? He proposes that at least part of the answer may be found in the dream of the Ba'al Shem Tov, in which he felt commanded to raise the spiritual consciousness of the entire Jewish community--and was troubled by his inability to do so. "By committing himself [at least in theory] to the fate and welfare of Klal Yisrael, the Besht provided a precedent which inspired his disciples and followers." (Ibid., 21) But Etkes adds (and this is the more significant point, certainly from the perspective of this thesis) "the Besht also provided a pattern of leadership which became a model to be followed by his disciples."

¹⁴⁶Rapoport-Albert, "God and the Zaddik", 313.

¹⁴⁷Once again, I suspect that she means to criticize the work of Martin Buber, without specifying that this is her purpose.

structure of Jewish worship, which is of course addressed to none other than God, the outlook of Jewish mystics has been that the matter of addressing God is an extremely complex issue. It is not necessarily their understanding that a "direct route to God" is an easy, or obvious, or even a possible thing to achieve. Indeed, notwithstanding the discussion of *devequt* with which she opens her article, Rapoport-Albert's argument suffers from a lack of consideration of the Kabbalistic background of Hasidic thought.

The vast and complex literature of Kabbalah is almost entirely devoted to the question of "routes" to God; it is obvious from this literature that Jewish mystics since the middle ages found this an extremely challenging and engrossing question. Going back to the earliest Kabbalistic manuscripts available, from the 12th century, much of this literature addresses the specific problem of how may the central Hebrew prayers be directed to their intended destination? This is the problem of *kavvanah*, of establishing a "direction" or "intention" that is effective in reaching and/or influencing the Divine.

As Moshe Idel has pointed out, early Hasidic Masters were indeed concerned with finding a more "direct route to God" than the ones they had inherited from previous generations of Kabbalists, as were a number of other Eastern European Kabbalists living at that time, including prominent Mitnagdim.¹⁴⁸ Since the twelfth century, the Kabbalistic approach of directing particular verses, words and even letters of the prayer to specific Sefirot had evolved into a series of elaborate schemas,

¹⁴⁸Rather than a populist uprising against Rabbinical authority, it has been shown that many of the early Hasidic Masters and their Mitnagdic Opponents shared similar scholarly and mystical inclinations. According to Yaacov Hasdai, in "The Origins of the Conflict between Hasidim and Mitnagdim" (published in *Hasidism: Continuity or Innovation?*), "not only are the *Hasidim* and *Mitnagdim* not at opposite poles of Jewish society, but among the Mitnagdim there is even a group stemming from the same circles as the founders and early leaders of *Hasidim*. To be sure, the *Mitnagdim* include rabbis and *parnassim* [patrons] belonging to the Establishment and the leadership. But the moving force in the struggle against *Hasidism* is precisely that element among the *Mitnagdim* who, in their spirit and in their ways, show an affinity to the founders of *Hasidism*."

culminating in the extremely difficult and ornate system of Lurianic *kavvanot*.¹⁴⁹ One of the ways in which the Hasidic Masters advocated slicing through the Gordian knot that had developed, was to emphasize that divinity is already immanent in the letters of the Hebrew Prayer Book, so that making special *kavvanot* would be unnecessary, and might actually impose an artificial limitation on the spiritual power of the prayers. Thus a model of mystical prayer was espoused which depended on conscious effort rather than on erudition. Thus the Maggid of Mezeritch declared that

He who uses in prayer all the *kavvanot* he knows, can do no more than use the *kavvanot* which are known to him. But when he says each word with great attachment [*hitqashrut*], all the *kavvanot* are by that very fact included since each and every pronounced letter is an entire world. When he utters the word with great attachment, surely those upper worlds are awakened, and thus he accomplishes thereby great actions.¹⁵⁰

What one needs for such prayer is the feeling of "attachment", and to carefully pronounce each of the words of the prayer. Indeed, it is a model which would be accessible to the "simple Jew" who needs to put great effort into correctly pronouncing the prayers and who might even be ignorant of their literal meaning.

Yet I believe that Rapoport-Albert is correct, inasmuch as she proposes that the Hasidic conception of the role of the Tzaddiq might also be considered in the light of this problem. Attachment to a Tzaddiq might well be considered a complementary

¹⁴⁹See Moshe Idel, "Perceptions of Kabbalah", sections III and IV, pp. 68-104. Thus the outspoken Mitnagged, R. Hayyim of Volozhin, who himself was knowledgeable in Lurianic Kabbalah, recommended that people forgo all kinds of *Kavvanot*, including those of the Holy Ari (R. Yitzḥaq Luria), and quoted from the teachings of Luria's contemporary, R. Joseph Karo, in this regard (p. 72): "Be careful not to think any thought during prayer even (thoughts) connected to Torah and Mizvot . . . since the deep inner sense of the meaning of prayer is unknown to us. Even if some of the meanings of prayer were revealed to us by our ancient rabbis, blessed by their memory, until the last (of them) . . . the Ari, blessed be his memory, who exceeded in the creation of wonderful *kavvanot*, (these meanings) are no more than a drop in comparison of the sea in general with respect to the inner deep meaning of the members of the Great Assembly, who instituted prayer."

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 73.

aspect to the emphasis on simplicity and "attachment" in directing one's prayers. This is reflected in the following saying of the Maggid:

The *Zaddik*, when he prepares to pray before his Creator, His name be blessed, certainly cleaves and binds his thought and his vitality to *Ein Sof* [the "Infinite" essence of God], may He be blessed, which is the simple Unity, without any image. And when he begins to speak, he draws the vitality of the Creator, let Him be blessed, (downward) into his speech and his words which he emits from his mouth. . . .¹⁵¹

Thus while it is up to each Jew to say all of the obligatory blessings and prayers, which are, of course, addressed only to God, the Tzaddiq is conceived of in Hasidic literature as a "channel" with the capacity of directing prayer all the way to its divine destination. Rapoport-Albert has decided, on her own authority, that the Tzaddiq does not in fact serve as a "channel" to the Divine, but only as a blockage in the flow. Her claim that the Tzaddiq stands between the Hasid and God, and interferes with their connection, directly contradicts the many Hasidic texts which go to great lengths to describe the nature of the instrumentality of the Tzaddiq.¹⁵² She is, of course, entitled

¹⁵¹Ibid., 101.

¹⁵²In Chapter Four, I cite a number of examples of the metaphor of the Tzaddiq as a "channel"; in one of these, whose sources is the Maggid, it is specified that it is the individual Hasid who makes the journey to God, by means of the "channel" which the Tzaddiq provides. The Great Maggid of Mezerich is typically more concerned with describing the function of the Tzaddiq than with defining what person or persons might fulfill it. Rapoport-Albert claims that, in the case of the Maggid, "the absence from his teachings of the social dimensions of the Zaddik's role" is "more easily attributable to his lack of interest in this dimension . . . than it is due to any conscious renunciation on his part of the unique quality of the Zaddik." It may indeed be that because they perceive a "lack of interest" in the social dimensions of the idea of the Tzaddiq, scholars have neglected the Maggid's teachings. Yet it is the Maggid, who was more interested in spelling out "what" the function of the Tzaddiq is, than "who" might fulfill this function, who is generally acknowledged to have been the main organizer of the Hasidic movement, and whose disciples established its main lineages. I certainly agree with Rapoport-Albert when she says that in the case of the Maggid, it is "regrettable that such an analysis of his teachings" as Dresner pursued with the teachings of R. Ya'akov Yosef, "has not yet been produced." (Ibid., 319.) But, I would add, it would be a pity if such an analysis were to become dominated with speculations concerning the social implications the Maggid may have deliberately chosen to leave open-ended, rather than focusing on the spiritual vision to he in fact devoted himself to elucidating.

to her own opinion regarding the validity of this Hasidic model; since the beginnings of the movement, many Jews, both religious and secular, chose to reject a Hasidic approach. What I am pointing out is that here, once again, a negative opinion about Hasidic teachings, which is couched in terms of a sociological analysis, stands in the way of a fair presentation and consideration of the substance of the Hasidic teachings.

A Sympathetic Approach to Hasidic Texts

While they do not all resemble one another, all of the works mentioned thus far reflect Gershom Scholem's assumptions concerning the novelty of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq. Yet Samuel Dresner's *The Zaddik*, while it fits within this category, might also be viewed as introducing a second category of contemporary Hasidic scholarship. This second category reflects the approach of Martin Buber more than that of Scholem, inasmuch as material from primary Hasidic texts is presented in a deliberately sympathetic light, as a harbinger of humanistic values. This is true, for example, of Dresner's enthusiastic biography, *Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev*, a sort of modern scholarly hagiography in which bits of the teachings of R. Levi Yitz_haq (set off in bold-face type) are related within a more anecdotal stream of narrative based on tales told about the man.¹⁵³

Dresner's book fits the mold set by his mentor, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, in his more complex biography of R. Menahem Mendl of Kotzk, *A Passion for Truth*.¹⁵⁴ The approach of the Kotzker Rebbe is contrasted with that of the Baal Shem Tov, on the one hand, and Soren Kierkegaard, on the other. Yet even as Heschel

¹⁵³Samuel H. Dresner, *The World of a Hasidic Master: Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev* (New York: Shapolsky, 1986).

¹⁵⁴Abraham Joshua Heschel, *A Passion for Truth* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1973).

includes fragments of teachings of the Kotzker in his narrative, the anecdotal material tends to take precedence over the discursive, while Heschel's own narrative voice--as distinctive as Elie Wiesel's--takes precedence over all. Indeed, not unlike Wiesel's Hasidic works, those of Heschel and of Dresner might be considered neo-Hasidic creations which nevertheless reflect a concern for historical context and a respect for the Hasidic sources. *The Circle of the Baal Shem Tov*, a more objective study begun by Heschel and completed by Dresner following Heschel's death, focuses on accounts of the relations between several of the Ba'al Shem Tov's disciples, though extended quotations from Hasidic texts sometimes make their way into the copious footnotes.¹⁵⁵ Although it is well-documented, this work lacks the passion and focus which drives the more original creations of its respective authors. Taken together, these works of Heschel and Dresner reflect Buber's romanticism and his search for humanistic values, even as they convey the kind of respect for Hasidic discourse which Scholem advocated. What is significant, however, in the light of this thesis, is that none of these works reassess the assumption inherited from both Buber and Scholem, that the idea of the Tzaddiq presented in Hasidism is essentially something new.

In the last fifteen years, a number of translations aimed at making primary Hasidic texts accessible to the reader of English have been produced by both the religious and the academic communities. Arthur Green's translation, *Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl: Upright Practices, The Light of the Eyes*, marks the first academic translation and interpretation of a substantial amount of Hasidic text, which is typical of the genre as a whole.¹⁵⁶ Until it appeared, the one outstanding book of Hasidic teachings available in English had been *The Tanya* of R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the

¹⁵⁵*The Circle of the Baal Shem Tov* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985).

¹⁵⁶Arthur Green, *Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl: Upright Practices, The Light of the Eyes* (Ramsey N.J.: Paulist, 1982).

first Lubavitcher Rebbe; although worthy of study in its own right, this is an atypical work, describing the psychology of the Jewish soul according to the systematic philosophy of Habad Hasidism.¹⁵⁷ In addition to other works of the Habad movement conceived along sectarian lines, a number of pietistic texts by R. Naḥman of Bratzlav have been translated, recently, by his orthodox Hasidic followers.¹⁵⁸ Although accurate and complete translations of the original tales of R. Naḥman have recently been published,¹⁵⁹ the main collection of the discourses of R. Naḥman, *Liqqutay Moharan*, remains, for the most part, untranslated. Yet along with other teachings of his, even these have begun to appear in English in bits and pieces.

Brief selections of the Hasidic discourses have also appeared in a number of scholarly anthologies, in recent years. Outstanding among them is *The Teachings of Hasidism*, by Joseph Dan.¹⁶⁰ Although Dan's social and intellectual history of the Hasidic movement (conveyed in an extensive Introduction) is essentially a summary of Scholem's views on the subject, and his selection and translation of Hasidic teachings suffers from too much of an emphasis on (in the words of the dust jacket) "Hasidic

¹⁵⁷Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Likutei Amarim: Tanya* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Kehot, 1984).

¹⁵⁸Prominent among these are *Rabbi Nachman's Fire* by Gedaliah Fleer (New York: Ohr Mibreslov, 1972) and *Gems of Rabbi Nachman* by Aryeh Kaplan (Jerusalem: Yeshivat Chasidei Breslov, 1980) Numerous booklets that have been published in the last decade by the Breslov Research Institute in Jerusalem. Other works recently published have been translations of R. Nathan's descriptions of R. Naḥman and his teachings.

¹⁵⁹Previously, Martin Buber and Meyer Levin each published versions of some to these tales. The most accessible of the complete translations of this work is *Nahman of Bratzlav: The Tales* by Arnold Band (New York: Paulist, 1978). *Rabbi Nachman's Stories* (Jerusalem: Breslov Research Institute, 1983), translated and commented upon by Aryeh Kaplan, contains extensive and highly speculative notes on the Kabbalistic symbolism of these tales.

¹⁶⁰Joseph Dan, *The Teachings of Hasidism* (New York: Behrman House, 1983).

belief and doctrine", Dan has gathered in one place a considerable amount of material translated from "classical" Hasidic texts, and arranged it thematically.¹⁶¹ *Your Word is Fire* is a more sensitive collection of brief quotations culled from early Hasidic texts, specifically on the subject of mystical prayer, selected and translated by Arthur Green and Barry Holtz.¹⁶² The strength of this work is that it not only indicates what the Hasidic Masters believed; it endeavors to convey the feeling they brought to addressing God in prayer.

Arthur Green's Approach to the Tzaddiq

Thus far I have endeavored to account both for the general state of research in Hasidism and the specific tendency of scholars following Buber and Scholem to regard the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq as a marginal development. As I have already mentioned, Arthur Green has prepared the way for a major reevaluation of the place of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq within the Jewish tradition, by locating this idea in the context of its earlier history. Unfortunately, the way in which Green frames his approach diminishes a sense of the significance of the development of the idea of the Tzaddiq.

¹⁶¹Dan himself (in the Preface of *Teachings of Hasidism*, page ix), defines "the works written by early Hasidic rabbis" as "the *classical* period of the movement (1780-1811)" (the italics are his). This date covers the period from the publication of the *Toldot Ya'akov Yosef* to the publication of *Liqqutay Moharan*, the first volume of which was published in 1808, and the second, in 1811. (The *Degel Mahaneh Ephrayim* was also published in 1811). While the works of R. Nahman represent a generation quite different from the other early authors who actually knew the Ba'al Shem Tov or were disciples of the Maggid of Mezerich, I most certainly agree that R. Nahman's work is "classical", inasmuch as it is a most excellent example of the original inspiration of the Hasidic movement.

¹⁶²Arthur Green and Barry Holtz, *Your Word is Fire: The Hasidic Masters on Contemplative Prayer* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977).

Not unlike Dresner, Green begins "The *Zaddiq* as *Axis Mundi*" with a consideration of earlier historians such as Graetz, and presents his own work as a response to their rationalist apologetics. He opens by declaring: "The history of Judaism as presented to us by the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries depicted a religious civilization which seemed to have little in common with those societies to which the emerging methodology of the history of religions was first being applied".¹⁶³ These early Jewish historians conceived of Judaism as "a world of sober theology, law and ethics", which had long ago outgrown the mythic exaggerations of primitive and oriental religions.

One of the most precious notions of modern Jewish apologetics has been the idea that in Judaism there are no uniquely holy persons. Both prophecy and priesthood ceased to function in postbiblical Israel. The rabbi, working as a scholar, teacher, and legal authority, claimed for himself neither the personal charisma of the prophet nor the sacerdotal role of the priest; every Jew had equal and direct access to God through Torah and prayer. . . . If all of Israel is holy and chosen, a "kingdom of priests," so the argument would go, there is no need for the holy man in his classic roles as intercessor, as administrator of sacraments, or as source of blessing.¹⁶⁴

Green credits "the recent work of Jacob Neusner" with having "done much to rectify this one-sided presentation insofar as the Talmudic rabbi is concerned." He further aligns himself with "Scholem's conclusions concerning the ongoing presence of mythical motifs . . . crystallized in Kabbalah". Thus defining an approach to religious symbolism in terms of "mythical motifs", Green proposes that "Mircea Eliade's insights around the symbol of *axis mundi*" might be applied to "the holy man traditions of later Judaism", as well as those of other religions.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³Green, "*Axis Mundi*", 328.

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 328-9.

Green distinguishes his approach to the idea of the Tzaddiq from that of scholars before him (including Gershom Scholem):

Outside the rabbinate, per se, such terms as *zaddiq* and *hasid* were taken by apologists to be embodiments of moral or pious perfection in the language of Jewish authors, but were not to represent what are studies of India, Africa, or Siberia as "holy man" traditions. . . . Of course any student of the history of religions, particularly in noting the minority status Jews held in the Hellenistic, Iranian, Christian and Muslim realms, all of them replete with cults of saints and holy men, must have raised his eyebrows at the ability of such a religious society as a whole to remain faithful to so lofty and rarified a position.¹⁶⁶

While earlier scholars of Judaica preferred to overlook the existence of a spiritual conception of the Tzaddiq, Green not only proposes that it exists, but implies that it is comparable to the "holy man" traditions of such far-flung places as India, Africa and Siberia. Moreover, Green suggests that the appearance of such a figure in Judaism demonstrates the likelihood of Greek, Persian, Christian and/or Muslim influences, although he does not substantiate any of these theories, or distinguish among their various implications. Indeed it appears that Green does not distinguish between a variety of "holy man" ideas because he conceives of them, collectively, as standing dialectically opposed to the idea of the Rabbi. From Green's point of view, Jewish "society" made it necessary for the Rabbis to assign a spiritual role to the figure of the Tzaddiq, although this meant compromising the "lofty and rarified a position" represented by Rabbinic tradition. Thus even as he rejects "modern Jewish apologetics", Green continues to characterize Judaism as a legitimately scholarly and egalitarian approach which is inherently opposed to the idea of charismatic leadership. Since the Tzaddiq does not represent a particularly "Jewish" idea for Green, it does not occur to him to pursue the question of the Jewish nature of the "holy man" idea which the Tzaddiq represents.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 328.

The Phenomenological Approach

Green attributes his interpretation of the Tzaddiq as an "*axis mundi*" to the phenomenological approach of Mircea Eliade. The weakness of Green's phenomenology is that it lumps together a variety of possible conceptions of "holy man" or *axis mundi* figure as they are understood in significantly different cultures, blurring the distinctions between them. Thus Green interprets the Tzaddiq as

a unique individual, a wonderman from birth, heir to the biblical traditions of charismatic prophecy as embodied in Moses and Elijah, and at the same time the rabbinic version of the Hellenistic god-man or quasi-divine hero.¹⁶⁷

Nor is this a mere inadvertency on his part, which is corrected in Green's subsequent work. In "Typologies of Leadership" he describes the Tzaddiq as "a figure at one human and mythic, a spiritualized Hercules . . . in some traditions identified with God more fully as Avatar or Incarnation."¹⁶⁸ The inapplicability of the idea that a particular person may be born as a god or become a god to a tradition such as Judaism should be obvious to anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of Jewish theology. Green's assumption would seem to be that the understanding of the exponents of a given tradition are irrelevant to the study of a religious "phenomenon". Yet it remains to be demonstrated, purely in phenomenological terms, just *how* a Hindu Avatar or Greek Hero represent the same phenomenon as a Jewish Tzaddiq. Two figures may share a common attribute--such as being described as a "world pole", or being the color red--and nevertheless differ fundamentally in their conception and function. It takes more than a common name to make for a common phenomenon; the burden of demonstrating the character of a common phenomenon rests with the person making the claim.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 331. Green bases this assessment on the conclusions of Rudolph Mach, in *Der Zaddik in Talmud und Midrasch*, 53-58.

¹⁶⁸Green, "Typologies", 132.

In a brief, three-page article entitled "Hasidism", it seems that Mircea Eliade himself has more success than Green, in identifying the nature of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq.¹⁶⁹ Eliade does not have the benefit of Green's original research; he cites only the well-known secondary sources, Scholem and Buber. And yet, even as he repeats the well-worn formula that the Hasidic Tzaddiq represents "a new type of spiritual leader", he is cognizant of the crucial point which Scholem brought to light (although Scholem himself overlooked its significance), that the Tzaddiq represented "no new mystical idea". By way of analogy, Eliade compares the Hasidic Tzaddiq to "the 'pneumatic,' the illuminate, the prophet", and speaks of "analogous phenomena . . . in Hinduism or in Islam". Eliade specifies that there is a "striking . . . analogy between the *zaddik* and the *guru*, the spiritual master of Hinduism".¹⁷⁰

While the figure of the Tzaddiq is generally regarded in Jewish tradition as specifically *not* being a Prophet, I believe that Eliade correctly conveys the Hasidic conception of the Tzaddiq. Like the ancient Hebrew Prophets, the Tzaddiq is regarded as someone who has been spiritually illuminated and who carries God's message to others, rather than as someone who is born or who becomes divine. moreover, rather than merely asserting that parallels might be found in the Hindu tradition, Eliade has indicated the specific aspect of the religions of India in which a parallel is to be found. While the Hasidic conception of the Tzaddiq has little in common with the Hindu notion of an Avatar, it does correspond to the Hindu notion of the Guru, especially inasmuch as the Guru is conceived of as a principle which is expressed in the spiritual Master, but which is to be found as a potential of the disciple, as well.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹Mircea Eliade, "Hasidism", in *A History of Religious Ideas Volume 3: From Muhammad to the Age of Reforms* (Chicago: University of Chicago), 178-80.

¹⁷⁰*Ibid.*

Eliade's assessment is simple, and is expressed in very broad terms. Likely based on Buber's descriptions of the Hasidic Masters, it conveys no profound insight into the idea of the Tzaddiq reflected in Hasidic literature. But Eliade, at least, does not misinform the reader concerning the nature of the idea of the Tzaddiq. What he says is accurate as far as it goes, and conveys a sense of the lines along which further research might fruitfully proceed.

¹⁷¹As for the analogy between the figure of the Tzaddiq and the Islamic idea of the Complete Human Being, it has already been mentioned in the discussion of "Islamic Parallels", above. the specific idea that the Complete Human Being is a potential which is to be found and activated from within the individual, is expressed by Jili (in *Universal Man*, p. xix) as follows: "Each individual of the human species contains the others entirely, without any lack, his own limitation being but accidental. . . . For as far as the accidental conditions do not intervene, individuals are, then, like opposing mirrors, in which each one fully reflects the other. . . . Only, some contain the things only by power [or "potential"], whereas others, namely, the perfect [*kamil*, "complete"] amongst the prophets and saints, contain them by action. . . ."

Green's View of the Hasidic Tzaddiq

What then is Green's understanding of the Hasidic development of the Tzaddiq idea? As this is the point at which the figure of the Tzaddiq emerges from the pages of mystical Jewish literature to clearly make its mark in Jewish history, it is a crucial point of transition. How does Green account for this transition in terms of its historical context? He begins, reasonably enough, by saying: "We now turn to the further development of this motif in eastern European Hasidism, where it was to receive its fullest and most radical treatment."¹⁷² If by "radical" Green means, not an extreme departure, but an emphatic return to the "root", I most heartily agree. But as he proceeds he makes it clear that he views its Hasidic manifestation less as the fulfillment of the Tzaddiq ideal than as some kind of distortion of it.

A new type of charismatic leader had taken central stage in the Jewish community; claims are made both for his spiritual powers and for his temporal authority which seem to go far beyond anything previously articulated in Jewish sources. Of the rich legacy of holy men and religious leaders from Israel's past, various paradigmatic figures are brought forth to justify the emphasis placed on the centrality of the *rebbe* and his boundless powers. Elements of both sacral kingship and cultic priesthood are drawn out of biblical sources in defense of the Hasidic master.¹⁷³

In his subsequent article, "Typologies of Leadership and the Hasidic Zaddiq", Green traces the themes of kingship and priesthood as well as prophetic and "even" rabbinic themes, as they were employed by Hasidic authors in their descriptions of the figure of the Tzaddiq.¹⁷⁴ Green presents these motives, however, less as illuminations of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq than as extravagant arguments employed by the

¹⁷²Green, "Axis Mundi", 337.

¹⁷³Ibid.

¹⁷⁴I find in Green's descriptions an unexpected confirmation of the thesis that the Tzaddiq is an "archetype", in the sense of a single, comprehensive, over-arching Type, which incorporates all these other "types" of Jewish spiritual leadership within itself.

Hasidic leadership for the rhetorical purpose of establishing themselves against the authority of the more scholarly Rabbinic establishment.¹⁷⁵

Returning to the "*Axis Mundi*" article, it seems that Green has built a convincing case for an organic relationship between Hasidic and earlier mystical developments of the Tzaddiq idea, only to nullify the significance of this common idea. Like Dresner, he presents the Hasidic Tzaddiq not as a traditional figure suddenly come to life, but as "a new type of (Green has added) *charismatic* leader". Although Green, like Dresner, contrasts his approach with that of the Jewish *Wissenschaft* historians, like Scholem he resembles them in his *a priori* assumption that the very existence of the Hasidic Tzaddiq is fundamentally unwarranted. Without indicating precisely how, Green suggests that the "paradigmatic figures" of pre-rabbinic Judaism have been somehow misappropriated in the Hasidic setting; by declaring that they are meant to "justify the emphasis placed on the centrality of the *rebbe*", he reduces Hasidic literature to an apologetic exercise.

Green has claimed, specifically, that the Hasidic leaders arrogated "boundless powers" to themselves, and that the "spiritual powers" of the Hasidic Tzaddiq "go far beyond anything previously articulated" in Jewish tradition. He proceeds to discuss the Hasidic ideas that certain Tzaddiqim represent the *gilgul* (the "reincarnation", or at least the emulation) of prominent figures, and the idea that at any given time there is an outstanding "Tzaddiq of the Generation". Green conveys an impression that the Hasidic conception of these ideas is somehow exaggerated, or unwarranted, although he himself points out, earlier in the same article, that expression of such ideas may be found in

¹⁷⁵Thus Green states ("Typologies", 130) that "the normative claim to authority already belonged to . . . the very sort of rabbinate against whom Hasidism was set in opposition. . . . Hasidism found its way out of this dilemma by proposing another sort of claim for its leaders, one that was highly innovative in its usage here though having the needed venerable associations in the earlier history of Judaism."

previous Kabbalistic and even in Talmudic sources.¹⁷⁶ Thus it seems to me that the Hasidic conception of the idea of the Tzaddiq is, to paraphrase Scholem, "as much a reformation" of the earlier tradition of the Tzaddiq "as it is more or less the same thing".

Green's strongest criticism of the Hasidic Masters is that they claimed unprecedented "temporal authority". This is an issue he does not pursue in the remainder of his "*Axis Mundi*" article; his declared subject, after all, is the Tzaddiq as an idea, and not as a social institution. But what, precisely, does he have in mind? Certainly, scholars are in general agreement that Hasidism did not challenge the religious authority of the rabbinic tradition (as, for example the Sabbatian movement did). Elsewhere, Green himself has stated that

Hasidism *religiously* must be viewed as a late postmedieval phenomenon. Its theological assumptions and limitations are (for the last time in Jewish history) those of the classic rabbinic-medieval world; the authority of Scripture, the inviolability of *halakhah* [the "way" of Jewish law], the mysterious truth hidden in the teachings and parables of the Talmudic sages. The entire burden of tradition is to be borne with joy, and nothing in human experience may exist that will declare any part of it invalid.¹⁷⁷

Hasidism is portrayed here as a movement--indeed, the last Jewish movement--which heroically, if anachronistically, resisted modern historical self-consciousness. I would say that it was the intention of the exponents of this movement to embrace the whole fabric of Jewish tradition, and that they sincerely felt themselves to be participants in that tradition. This is an important point, as it indicates the crucial

¹⁷⁶Compare Green's Hasidic references to *gilgul* ("*Axis Mundi*", 339-40, 342), to his earlier discussion of the notion of the Tzaddiq embodying the soul of Moses, as it first appears in Lurianic Kabbalah (337). Also, compare his references to *Tzaddiq ha-Dor* (339-41) to his earlier explanation that the idea of a single outstanding Tzaddiq of the Generation goes back to the Jerusalem Talmud, where it is attributed to both a tannaitic and an amoraic source (332).

¹⁷⁷Arthur Green, in "Hasidism: Discovery and Retreat", published in *The Other Side of God: a Polarity in World Religions* ed. Peter L. Berger (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1981), 105.

difference between a traditional sense of functioning from within a tradition, and a modern sense of appropriating or even preserving it, from outside of it. For the traditional Hasid there would have been no question of "changing" or "adapting" the tradition; yet, as participants in a process by which the tradition continually reinterprets itself in the light of its own precedents, the leading advocates of the Hasidic movement would have felt entitled to express their own understanding of the tradition. This faithful though flexible relationship is reflected in the Hasidic approach to religious observance as well as to Jewish study. Thus, according to Green,

Hasidism may be characterized as a movement of mystical revival. . . . In good Jewish fashion, absolute "orthopraxy" was maintained (only the fixed hours of prayer were loosened), though this failed to stave off the rabbinic critics of the movement who raged relentless warfare against it for the first thirty years of its existence, and whose latter-day followers continue to sneer at Hasidism even to this day.¹⁷⁸

The creativity of the Hasidic Masters was applied entirely within the framework of Rabbinic tradition. The Tzaddiqim were not an independent source of religious authority, they operated within the constraints of Jewish law, as well as the (non-Jewish) "law of the land". What sort of "authority" might they have therefore wielded? It might be said that they were invested with a spiritual and moral as distinct from religious authority, an authority which imposed itself on the minds and hearts of the Hasidim, and which became institutionalized, in later generations, as Hasidic communities and even dynasties became entrenched. But even this spiritual authority of the Hasidic Masters was not an unqualified authority. A Hasidic Master's approach to the interpretation of Torah not only had to be acceptable and comprehensible within the broad precedents of Rabbinic tradition, but as is demonstrated by the practice of opening books of Hasidic discourse with letters of approbation, stood in need of

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

confirmation by his Hasidic peers.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, it was subject to the decision of individual disciples who chose to attach themselves to a particular Rebbe, to seek his counsel and follow his teachings as well as his personal example.¹⁸⁰ The fact that Hasidim often lived outside the community where their Rebbe resided and would often travel great distances to see him, is further evidence of the degree to which the power of the Rebbe proceeded, voluntarily, from "the consent of the governed".

As for Green's contention that in addition to "temporal authority", the Hasidic Masters claimed "spiritual powers . . . which seem to go far beyond anything previously articulated in Jewish sources", it is, again, unclear what he means. Does he mean that the devotion Hasidic Masters asked of their Hasidim is unprecedented? He seems to suggest that it is rather, the miraculous powers of the Hasidic Masters which went beyond anything attributed to earlier masters of Kabbalah, but he makes no effort to document either proposition. Such sweeping statements about the novelty of Hasidic leadership once again point to the lack of research into the nature of spiritual leadership in earlier Jewish movements. Thus, while Green has corrected Scholem's assertions concerning the novelty of the Hasidic *idea* of the Tzaddiq, he has continued to characterize the institution of the Hasidic Tzaddiq as an aberration that belongs, not at the center of a spiritual history of the Jews, but somewhere on the periphery.

I would tell the story just the other way around. What is actually revolutionary about the Hasidic movement, it seems to me, is the fact that in it the figure of the Tzaddiq leapt off the pages of Jewish mystical literature to appear, as Green says, on

¹⁷⁹Rachel Elior has pointed out to me the importance of the letters of approbation by well-known Tzaddiqim usually displayed at the opening of Hasidic books.

¹⁸⁰See the Excursus at the end of this thesis, for descriptions of precisely how disciples approach Hasidic masters, particularly when they approach them for counselling.

"central stage in the Jewish community". While earlier references to the Tzaddiq may be regarded as an esoteric (or even as a merely literary) phenomenon pertaining to some other time and place, Hasidism confronts the observer with the claim that those who serve as "the foundation of the world" actually exist, and are available as accessible models. I believe it is this, rather than the introduction of new or unprecedented "claims" about the powers of Tzaddiqim, which is the great challenge presented by the Hasidic movement. It seems that this is a challenge which continues to disturb even scholars who are considering Hasidism from an intellectual distance.

Indeed it seems that in academic historiography, as in the field of Jewish history, the Hasidic sense of the reality of the Tzaddiq has had an immediately polarizing effect. For just as many of the leading Kabbalists who did not become Hasidim became "Opponents" of the movement when it first appeared upon the scene, contemporary scholars who do not relate to Hasidism with enthusiasm, tend to regard it with suspicion. Notwithstanding the fact that the "Hasidism" under consideration may have disappeared in the nineteenth century, the movement continues to elicit a stand either "in favor" of it, or "against" it. I know of no other topic in the field of Jewish mysticism which has typically commanded such a personal response from the scholars who study it.¹⁸¹ Nor do any of the features of the movement other than the figure of the Tzaddiq seem to elicit such an implicitly partisan response. Thus even as Green prepared the ground for understanding the Hasidic figure of the Tzaddiq in the context of Jewish tradition of the Tzaddiq, he continued the momentum of *Wissenschaft* scholarship in which this figure is marginalized. As in the case of Scholem, I do not believe that this was intentional or even conscious on his part. Rather it appears that the

¹⁸¹The nearest parallel that comes to mind, is the controversy currently surrounding the alleged suppression of the Dead Sea scrolls!

nature of the subject, and the conventions of modern scholarship, leave one little room to manoeuvre.

The Historical Significance of the Hasidic Tzaddiq

I expect it is obvious, by now, that I count myself among those who are positively predisposed towards Hasidism. I regard the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq as the flowering of one of the profound and central ideas of mystical Judaism, and the Hasidic movement itself as the fruit of this idea. What might such a perspective contribute to an understanding of Hasidism as an historical phenomenon? As we have seen, scholars generally agree that the Hasidic Masters, themselves, are the outstanding product of the Hasidic movement. It is they who provided the center--or rather, an array of centers--around which the whole Hasidic movement revolved. More than a novel ideology or a new religious practice, what Hasidism provided was a community of Hasidim devoted to the examples of their spiritual Masters.¹⁸²

Given such a perspective, I propose that the movement was able to grow and to propagate itself as it did, precisely because it was not based on a central personality but rather on a central *idea*. The appearance a great variety of Hasidic leaders in the decades which followed the death of the Ba'al Shem Tov (in 1760), was fostered by sermons which were subsequently published, whose primary subject was not the personality of its founder, nor of any particular leader, but the generic function of the

¹⁸²In "The First Stage", pp. 6-7, Etkes sets the stage for his own contributions to an historical understanding of Hasidism, by declaring that "Beshtianic Hasidism became a wide, popular movement. The question which the historian of Hasidism should therefore deal with is, how and why did these transformations take place. We can divide this question into two: 1) what motivated the Hasidic elite to abandon its way and to commit itself to the leadership of the masses? 2) why were the masses attracted to this new leadership? Why did they acknowledge its authority and adopt its way of worshipping God? In this paper I will relate to the first of these questions and only to the more specific contexts of the Besht's period." My aim, at this point, is to address the second. What would have set in motion the process by which Jews flocked to Hasidic Masters, in order to become their disciples?

Tzaddiq.¹⁸³ While the spiritual genius of the early Hasidic Masters is reflected in their words, the literature they produced points less to themselves than towards this commonly recognized principle of the Tzaddiq. Whether later Hasidic Rebbeim contributed to this literature, or made their mark in some other way, they and their disciples built on a foundation which is established in this early Tzaddiq literature.

Just as it is reasonable to suppose that the theory of the Tzaddiq inspired and gave shape to the emerging social realities of the Hasidic movement, it is reasonable to suppose that these realities, in turn, may have reflexively influenced the subsequent development of this theory.¹⁸⁴ I am proposing, however, that it is first of all the idea of the Tzaddiq which would have stimulated the growth of the movement. An obvious advantage of such an approach is that it is simply more comprehensive. Scholars who regard the idea of the Tzaddiq not as a genuinely creative idea, but as a defense or rationalization of a "charismatic" phenomenon, leave that phenomenon otherwise unaccounted for. While the sociological term "charisma" may be a useful description of a phenomenon which is common to all kinds of religious and even secular social organizations, it is descriptive term which does not, in itself, account for causes.

¹⁸³It is not clear if the Ba'al Shem Tov himself was a proponent of the Tzaddiq idea, though in Chapter Four we shall consider evidence pointing in this direction. The broader question of the historicity and role of the Ba'al Shem Tov has been the subject of on-going speculation and debate. Scholars are generally confident regarding the historicity of his disciples who published writings relating their own teachings, as well as traditions of the Ba'al Shem Tov. For information relating to directly to the Ba'al Shem himself, we are mainly dependent on collections of popular Hasidic tales, which were published long after his death. Sifting this material in search of authentic elements is a daunting task, analogous, perhaps, to sifting through the New Testament in search of the original words of Jesus. For a summary of current research, which includes some recent contributions to the field, see "Hagiography with Footnotes: Edifying Tales and the Writing of History in Hasidism" by Ada Rapoport-Albert, in *History and Theory* December 1988, 119-59.

¹⁸⁴Thus, in "Between *Yesh* and *Ayin*" Rachel Elior indicates (p. 441) that regarding "Material Zaddikism", "it is probable that we have here a mutual relationship between social conditions which set new spiritual and material challenges and, on the other hand, spiritualistic currents of thought. . . ."

Moreover, an examination of the historical record shows that an archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq was featured quite early in the history of the Hasidic movement. To pick up Joseph Dan's designation of the term,¹⁸⁵ the first two published authors of "classical" Hasidic literature happen to be among the strongest advocates of such a vision: R. Ya'aqov Yosef of Polnoy, whose *Toldot Ya'aqov Yosef* was published in 1780, and the Maggid of Mezeritch, whose *Maggid Dvarav Le-Ya'aqov* was published in 1781. They themselves were intimate disciples of the Ba'al Shem Tov; R. Ya'aqov Yosef was his secretary, and the Maggid was his successor, and the man whose disciples established the main Hasidic lineages. One of the Maggid's disciples, R. Elimelekh of Lezhensk, who published the most popular and influential of all Hasidic books on the subject of the Tzaddiq, the *No'am Elimelekh*, in 1787. The *No'am Elimelekh* may be regarded as a transitional work, in which the Tzaddiq is still regarded more as an archetype than as a person, even as the emphasis begins to shift to the idea of Tzaddiqim being a special class of people. Thus an archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq is to be found in literature which was already influential before the turn of the eighteenth century.

While it may be more difficult to identify an archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq in later Hasidic works, it is featured in two other notable, influential and relatively early works, which yet might be considered a part of "classical" Hasidic literature. The *Degel Mahaneh Ephrayim*, which was published in 1811, is a collection of teachings attributed to the Ba'al Shem Tov which were edited by his grandson, Reb Moshe Hayyim Ephrayim of Sudylqov. In the same year, the main section of R. Nahman's discourses, *Liqqutay Moharan*, was also published.¹⁸⁶ Unlike these other men, R.

¹⁸⁵I am holding to Joseph Dan's definition of "classical" Hasidic literature, discussed in note 162, above.

Nahman was neither a direct disciple of the Ba'al Shem Tov, nor a disciple of one of his disciples (he was, however, his great-grandson, by matrilineal descent). Yet in his controversies with more established Rebbeim, R. Nahman often expressed a passionate concern for restoring the original ideal of the Tzaddiq.¹⁸⁷

It makes sense for the appearance of a variety of spiritual Master types, which so impressed both Buber and Scholem, to have been supported by the power of the idea which is a principle subject of the greatest works of Hasidic literature. The appearance of a Tzaddiq literature early in the history of the movement demonstrates the likelihood that it served more as an inspiration than as a rationalization for the establishing of Hasidic communities. Scholem sought, and was unable to find, the particular idea which would have empowered the Hasidic movement and set its course. The archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq--embodied in one's Rebbe, while remaining an objective ideal--is just the kind of idea which Scholem sought, but did not find. And yet the question remains, why should this particular idea have been so influential?

I believe that Hasidism was able to flourish as it did, because it was based on a model which was already deeply-rooted in the religious imagination of the Jewish people. This might be expressed in terms of Heschel's insight that in addition to the "requirement" that a Jew be "bound" to Jewish community, Hasidism added a new element (or it might be said, a new interpretation of what this meant): one bound oneself to the religious community by means of one's relationship to a Tzaddiq. Viewed in these terms, the Hasidic movement might be seen as the product of the fusion of two elements that were already an integral part of Jewish life: an outward

¹⁸⁶Indeed, Dan includes all five of these works in his list of "classical" Hasidic literature.

¹⁸⁷See Green, *Tormented Master*, 52. See also Chapter 3, "Conflict and Growth", pp. 94-123, for a more psychological interpretation of Nahman's controversies with other Rebbeim.

emphasis on participation in community, and an esoteric ideal of the Tzaddiq. With the inception of the Hasidic movement this latter element would have surfaced from within the Jewish tradition to combine with the former in a kind of chemical reaction. It is this reaction which would have precipitated, in Dresner's words, both "a new kind of community" and "a new kind of leader".

Thus it was neither an emphasis on community nor the Tzaddiq ideal, but a fusion of the two which would have created what is called "Hasidism". It is likely that there were external social and historical circumstances, beyond the scope of this thesis, which facilitated such a "chemical" reaction. Certainly the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century saw many social, political, intellectual, spiritual and religious upheavals which may have echoed or even influenced the development of Hasidism. Whatever the supporting conditions of the times, however, I am proposing that it is the application of Tzaddiq ideal to a communal orientation in Judaism that yielded the Hasidic movement, with its various spiritual leaders--each of whom, in their own way, represented that ideal.

Hasidism and Democracy

Although I do not wish to enter into a discussion of the broad milieu of social upheaval which surrounded the appearance of Hasidism, I would like, at this point, to pursue one particular parallel to the development of Hasidism which may be instructive. There are two well-known and dramatic revolutions which took place at about the same time as the Hasidic teachings were being proclaimed and then published: the American and French Revolutions. A brief consideration of the relationship of those two revolutions to their spiritual and religious underpinnings might contribute new perspective to an understanding of the political implications of Hasidism.

France was a Catholic country in which people might either believe in the authority of the Catholic Church, as it was defined by the Pope in Rome, or reject it and rebel against it. The society was organized on an authoritarian basis politically as well as religiously, and the overthrow of the monarchy in the French Revolution precipitated a period of on-going bloodshed and anarchy. When the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme and Napoleon crowned himself Emperor, he too assumed a position of authority which eventually led to his demise. The American Revolution, on the other hand, generated neither a system without leaders nor a system in which leadership was identified with certain persons. Rather, it fostered a system in which potential leaders might compete with one another in good faith, seeking election by the people over whom they would rule. The majority of early Americans were Protestants of a variety of persuasions; an ad hoc "tradition" of religious pluralism informed the American Revolution. Recently, attention has been drawn to the role in the establishment of American democracy of esoteric brotherhoods, such as the Masons, which were invested with neither temporal nor religious authority, but which deeply influenced the thinking of America's "Founding Fathers".¹⁸⁸ Thus it appears that in America, in contrast to France, spiritual teachings which were not formally identified with either the

¹⁸⁸In "Were Our Founding Fathers Occultists?" (*Gnostica* vol. 4, no. 9 [July 1975]) the author, Bob Hieronimus, cites "hard-core" evidence that at least nine of fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence were initiated and listed as members of Masonic organizations, and "soft-core" evidence that fifty-three of the signers attended Masonic functions. It has been claimed, as well, that at least three of them have been associated with the Rosicrucians. According to *The Temple and the Lodge* by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh (London: Jonathan Cape, 1984) 260, "at the time of the Constitutional Convention, Freemasonry was . . . the only real organisational apparatus of any kind operating across state boundaries, throughout the newly independent colonies." While "the Constitution was a product of many minds and many hands, not all of them Freemasonic . . . there were ultimately five . . . guiding spirits behind the constitution--Washington, Franklin, Randolph, Jefferson and John Adams. Of these, the first three were not only active Freemasons, but men who took their Freemasonry extremely seriously--men who subscribed fervently to its ideals, whose entire orientation had been shaped and conditioned by it."

political or the religious establishment informed the creation of a system in which leadership functions had an integrity of their own, which was distinguishable from the persons serving in political office.¹⁸⁹

In Hasidism, too, the leadership function of the Tzaddiq was distinguished from the leader's personal identity. Thus rather than either monarchy or anarchy, Hasidism, like democracy, generated a pluralistic leadership field in which people freely choose the leaders with whom they would align themselves, supporting them as they sought popular or divine "election". Whether this support was expressed in the form of voting for President of the United States, or in believing that one's own spiritual mentor was in fact the Tzaddiq of the Generation and supporting his efforts to hasten the coming of the Messiah, a system was created in which the office was distinguished from the person who served in it. This allowed for a measure of both stability and flexibility in both systems, a competition between parties which did not lead to schism.

One would expect there to be many parallels between the Masonic teachings which informed the creation American democracy and the Kabbalistic teachings which informed the creation of Hasidism, since the Masonic teachings themselves contain many Kabbalistic elements.¹⁹⁰ However, the Kabbalistic idea of the Tzaddiq, which

¹⁸⁹According to Baigent and Leigh (*ibid.*, 258) the Masonic Lodges themselves provided the model for the idea, adopted in the United States Constitution, that if elected officials "Were deemed unworthy of the office to which they had been elected, they could be impeached or deposed--not by revolution, 'palace coup' or any other violent means, but by established administrative machinery. Nor would the dignity of the office be diminished." While "elections were not uncommon elsewhere in the eighteenth century . . . they applied only to the legislative branch of government, which was often powerless and acted largely as a rubber stamp for the executive. In the new American republic, however, the principle was brought to bear on the executive--on the head of state--as well. Here too the influence of Freemasonry is apparent."

¹⁹⁰Thus it has been pointed out, for example, that George Washington's Masonic "apron", "like many aprons of its period, resembles a Tracing Board. One of the distinctive characteristics of the American Constitution is the 'separation of powers' among the three mutually checking and balancing branches of the government, Legislative (expansive), Judicial (containing) and Executive (coordinating); we have

would have informed the social (or one might say, the political) structure of the Hasidic movement, is itself a very simple idea. What is involved here is not a complex theory of the checks and balances in the structure of government, but an understanding of the Tzaddiq as a function of both man and God which is embodied in the leader who is worthy of following.

Although I believe that they do in fact reflect a common "spirit of the times", I do not wish to strain the analogy between American democracy and Eastern European Hasidism. My argument, essentially, is that an analysis of social history in the light of the spiritual ideals that informed it may yield more interesting and fruitful insights than a reduction of spiritual teachings merely to their social implications. I would not deny that the Hasidic Masters, like America's "Founding Fathers", were conscious that the popular application of the leadership model which they were promoting, although consistent with Kabbalistic tradition, was in some sense an innovation. Nor would I deny that many of their words were intended to justify and defend the legitimacy of this model. But if it would be unjust to consider the Declaration of Independence or the United States Constitution merely as a polemic against the Royal establishment, it is all the more a pity to regard the vision which the Hasidic Masters expressed about the role of the Tzaddiq merely as a polemic against the Rabbinic establishment, or as an attempt to feather their own nest.

Corruptions may well have appeared from early on, in both systems. Yet the inspiration which people derive, even today, from the founders both of Hasidism and of American democracy, is an indication of their respective creative achievements. The

met this idea already in the Three Columns of the Tracing board". W. Kirk MacNulty, *Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991) 88. Indeed, the idea of the interrelationship of the "expansive" (Hesed), "containing" (Gevurah) and "coordinating" (Tiferet) functions of the middle triad of the Ten Sefirot, in which of these represents a different "column" or "pillar", will be familiar to students of Kabbalah.

extent to which nations other than the United States have chosen to emulate American democracy, the extent to which people who are not themselves Hasidim are interested in the Hasidic movement, speaks to an inner coherence which informed both systems. Of course, a Hasidic Rebbe, unlike an elected official, ordinarily serves for life. And Hasidism is quite different from American democracy in another significant regard: although the United States of America formally separated from the British Empire, Hasidim have always continued to regard themselves as fully a part of the Jewish community. Thus, while a Hasidic Rebbe have sometimes served as Rabbi as well as Tzaddiq, and addressed themselves to questions of Jewish law, the role of the Tzaddiq continued to be an implicit function in relation to the role of the Rabbi, as it has been ever since the Talmudic period. It is the Rabbi who defines Judaism, while the Tzaddiq may identify the life to be found within it.

Hasidism in Historical Perspective

Obviously, Hasidism represented more of a religious than a political development, and the best analogies for the Hasidic movement are likely to be found in the history of religions. Indeed, when Buber proposed that Hasidism had a "'democratic' strain in it", it was in the context of a broader discussion in which he considered how Hasidism, "like early Christianity," might be "described as a revolt of the Am-haaretz, *i.e.*, the unlearned people of the land, of the masses of the people who do not concern themselves with the study of doctrine."¹⁹¹ Without venturing, myself, into the field of early Christian scholarship, let me point out Buber's assumption that the early Church was a popular and charismatic rather than an intellectual movement, which incorporated a concern for fine points of doctrine only after the Gospel of Jesus

¹⁹¹Buber, *Hasidism*, 34-5.

had already spread. As I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Buber failed to come to grips with the fact that the mature theoretical literature of the Hasidic movement was already being published early in its history, a mere twenty years after the death of the Ba'al Shem Tov. The popular literature of the Hasidic tales, on the other hand, first began to appear in print thirty years later! Of course, there is something informal and anecdotal in the flavor of the Hasidic discourses, which are generally composed of the transcripts of Hasidic sermons. But while these sermons and books were not addressed solely to an erudite scholarly elite, they do require a basic familiarity with well-known Jewish sources--a level of Jewish education which in the modern world would be considered quite high.

Reviewing of the early history of Hasidism, Emanuel Etkes, considers it likely that the immediate circle of the Baal Shem Tov would in fact have represented a kind of spiritual elite. Taking into consideration the sequence and content of early Hasidic literature, he breaks down the unfoldment of the movement in the latter decades of the eighteenth century as follows:

During the sixties, under the guidance of the Magid, Hasidism successfully spread its teachings to the public; . . . Hasidism, it would seem, focused its efforts even then on the more educated elements to society. The popular element became a significant part of the Hasidic movement only in . . . the generation of the Magid's disciples. The two circles of activity which had lived separately during the Besht's period were now united into one whole: that community, for whom the Hasidic leader strives to solve its earthly problems, is that same community in which the Hasidic leader serves as a model and guide in the worship of God. This development is clearly expressed in the writings of Yaacov Yosef, published in the 1780s, although probably reflecting the seventies; Yaacov Yosef questions whether it is possible to bridge the gap between the high standards of Hasidic worship of God and the poor spiritual level of the masses. Hasidism's response was the institution and the theory of the Tzadik.¹⁹²

The archetypal model of the Tzaddiq, bridging heaven and earth, would have been embraced by an ever-widening circle of enthusiastic disciples, who at least in

¹⁹²Etkes, "The First Stage", 22-3.

the early decades of the movement related to this model not only as a description of their Masters, but as a potential to be fostered within themselves. Thus the Hasidic movement would not have been a revolt of the masses against the religious elite, but rather a gradual expansion and dissemination of the teachings of a spiritual elite which were gradually adopted and applied on the level of a mass movement. Hasidism represented an effort to reorganize and recreate the religious community on the basis of esoteric principles, and it appears that, at least initially, it met with considerable success. The basis on which this was founded was the Kabbalistic idea of the Tzaddiq.

Both early Christianity and Hasidism might be characterized as charismatic movements which proclaimed what might be called "the presence of God in man". The crucial difference between them, however, is in their respective emphasis on the Person in whom God is present, and on a more subtle notion of the Function such persons represent. If, rather than the uniqueness of Jesus, the early Church had emphasized the function of the Christ as it was manifest among its (leading) members, the parallels between the two movements would be very strong indeed. As it stands, better analogies to early Hasidism may be found in the early Buddhist Sangha (which generated numerous "Buddhas", as well as the Pali Canon), and perhaps the early community of Islam, as well. It might well be argued that an archetypal idea of the Buddha (as distinct from an idea of Gautama Siddhartha, the person) inspired the spread of Buddhism, and that this corresponds to the role of the idea of the Tzaddiq in the spread of the Hasidic movement. The Prophet Muhammed was regarded as an accessible model for all Muslims following him, as well as the archetypal "seal" who contained in himself the marks of all previous Prophets. But early Islam may be more like early Christianity in its populist nature. Moreover, both Buddhism and Islam generated a new religious system, which was as much a rejection of its Hindu or Jewish and Christian background as they were a product of it. The conservative character by which

Hasidism became a staunch defender of Rabbinic Judaism is not echoed in any of these examples.

The strongest parallel to the rise of Hasidism I know of is to be found in Islamic Sufi brotherhoods which proliferated in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The obvious parallels have to do with a multi-faceted development of mysticism in both movements, characterized by the dramatic appearance of a variety of vivid personalities serving as spiritual Masters, who did not create a new religion but generated a significant body of teachings often couched as commentaries on existing Scriptures, related in the form of discourses, tales and music (and, in the case of Sufism, in poetry, architecture and art as well). Both these movements brilliantly exploited the spiritual resources of a well-established monotheistic religion, and both remained within its limits (although deliberately "heretical" developments are to be found in medieval Sufism as well). Corresponding to these external features, is the inner parallel between these two cultures which I believe is most significant. Both were based on a common idea which they sought to translate into the surrounding religious and cultural milieu: an archetypal idea of the human being who serves as the point at which Creator and creation converge.

I have yet to trace the historical development of the archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq, or even to precisely define the term "archetype". Yet I have already pointed towards two conclusions which might be summarized as follows. One, which I will develop more fully in Chapter Four, is that all "holy man" ideas are not the same, and the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq has a particularly strong parallel in the Sufi idea of the Complete Human Being. The other is that the conception of the Tzaddiq which provides a central focus of early Hasidic teaching, is likely to have been the seminal idea from which the whole Hasidic movement grew.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MEANING OF "ARCHETYPE"

I am claiming that the figure of the Tzaddiq, particularly in Hasidism, might be considered an archetype. But what precisely is the meaning of the term as I am employing it in this thesis? Its use has enjoyed a revival in recent years, which has been largely inspired by the psychological writings of Carl Jung. Popular usage is generally quite loose: any character type or pattern of relationship which follows an ancient model or a well-established pattern in a particularly striking way, is liable to be called an "archetype". This follows an unfortunate tendency to employ terms such as "archetype", "paradigm" and "myth" as synonyms for less fashionable terms, such as "model", "pattern", "motif", "symbol", "idea" and "ideal". None of these terms, however, has exactly the same meaning, and an awareness of the nuances of meaning distinguishing them is one of the few precision tools available to the hands of the student of world religion.

There is, however, a more limited and precise meaning of the term archetype, which characterizes its early usage. Two main obstacles stand in the way of such a traditional meaning being understood. The first is presented by modern dictionary definitions, which are so broad as to be of little use. The second is Jung's definition of the term, in which a traditional idea is adapted to a modern, scientific world-view which differs in its fundamental assumptions from the traditional outlook of, in this case, the Jewish mysticism. In order, therefore, to distinguish what I mean by the term "archetype" and to justify its usage, I will contrast these contemporary definitions with its meaning in the earlier sources on which they are based. Along with clarifying how

my usage of the term reflects on its original meaning, I will consider the relationship of the idea of an archetype to the specific vocabulary and general outlook of Kabbalah. I will focus, specifically, on clarifying the distinction between "archetype" and "myth". Because of the importance of this term in my thesis, and more broadly in religious studies, I am devoting an entire chapter to clarifying its meaning.

Definitions of "Archetype"

The one general (non-specialized) definition provided for the word "archetype" in the Oxford English Dictionary, is "the original pattern or model from which copies are made; a prototype." If an archetype is simply a prototype, however, what distinctive meaning does the term convey? The background of the term suggests a deeper meaning. The O.E.D. points out that the English term is derived from the Latin *archetypum*, which, in turn, is based on the Greek word *archetypon*, which combines the idea of the "first" with that of an "impress, stamp, type". Its English usage is traced back to the *Animadversions upon . . . Chaucers workes* by Francis Thynne, published in 1599, which speaks of "the originall or fyrste archetypum of any thinge." The next citation is from Francis Bacon's *Of the Advancement of Learning*, in 1605, in which he proposes: "Let us seeke the dignitie of knowledge in the Arch-tipe or first plat-forme, which is in the attributes and acts of God." The third is from *An Essay concerning Humane understanding* by John Locke, in 1690: "By real Ideas, I mean such as have a Foundation in Nature; such as have a Conformity . . . with their Archetypes."¹

There is an ontological dimension to these early English examples which disappears in later usage. Evidence of discomfort with the category of divinity has already appeared at the end of the seventeenth century, with Locke's substitution of the

¹The Oxford English Dictionary 1972 e.d., s.v. "archetype".

idea of "Nature" for that of God. Yet for Locke, as well, the archetypes continued to represent deep, implicit structures of reality. In later examples the sense of a metaphysical function is entirely lost. Thus the O.E.D. goes on to cite T.B. Macaulay's *History of England*, published in 1849, which describes "The House of Commons, [as] the archetype of all the representative assemblies which now meet." Here, indeed, an archetype is an "original pattern or model from which copies are made"; the "archetypal" function of the House of Commons is described as the prototype on which they are based. Yet while House of Commons may yet bear the dignity of an exalted ideal which serves as an inspiration for other assemblies, it no longer represents a higher order of being. The "arche" of "archetype" has been reduced from an ontological sense of "origin", to a temporal, etiological sense of an "original" model.

Although the definition it offers may in fact reflect modern usage, I find it regrettable that the Oxford English Dictionary makes no allowance the continuation of an ontological dimension of meaning.² Other dictionaries, in line with this example, also define an archetype as a prototype, so that the word has been effectively stripped of

²It should be acknowledged, however, that reference is made to a special use of the term "archetype", in the psychology of C. G. Jung (ibid.). This is defined as "a pervasive idea, image or symbol that forms part of the collective unconscious." The inapplicability of Jung's definition to a study of religious tradition such as this is considered in detail, below. Under the definition of "archetypal" the Oxford dictionary specifies further that the Jungian definition is "freely used in *Literary Criticism*, esp. [in the case] of motifs which recur in mythologies, fairy tales, etc., e.g. the Great Mother, the Wise Man, the Enchanted Prince, and by extension of any pervasive symbolic representation." This definition of an archetype, which might be shortened to a "recurring motif or pervasive symbolic representation", is quite broad. Yet it is the one which is most applicable to a variety of uses of the term, extending beyond its specialized use in psychology, or literary criticism. It is a pity that such a useful definition is listed only as a special case of a special case! Nevertheless, the weakness of such a definition is that there is little to distinguish an "archetype" from a "motif". It appears that what is meant is that, following Jung, an archetype specifies a recurring motif which is based on a human character or on human characteristics. Thus "archetype" would be taken as a fancy word for a motif, just as it has been taken as a fancy word for prototype. The question remains, is there a more specific meaning of an archetype?

its distinctive meaning.³ This may be symptomatic of the degree to which the modern era is dominated by a positivist world-view, which is uncomprehending and therefore intolerant of ideas of a hierarchy of being. Thus, by the end of the twentieth century, the meaning of a perfectly good English word which happens to reflect a metaphysical perspective, has all but disappeared.

A happy exception is to be found in Webster's International Dictionary. The first definition for "archetype" listed there, is "the original model, form, or pattern from which something is made or from which something develops."⁴ This seems at first glance not to differ greatly from the definition in the O.E.D. But it leaves open the possibility that rather than merely serving as a model from which copies are mechanically stamped out, an archetype identifies a characteristic potential which may be developed or unfolded in any of a variety of ways. This is compatible with a later definition the dictionary provides, specifically applicable to biology. An archetype is defined as either a "plan of structure deduced from the characters of the members of a natural group of animals or plants", or their "original ancestor". Thus, while the archetype of a plant might be considered, in an etiological sense, as the hypothetical ancestor from which the species developed, there is an ontological sense of the word which points towards an implicit structure or innate potential which is reflected in all

³Thus *Funk & Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary* (Text Edition) (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, Inc., 1963) defines "Archetype" as "an original or standard pattern or model: prototype". *The Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language* (Chicago: English Language Institute of America, 1975), defines it as "a model or first form; the original pattern after which a thing is made, or to which it corresponds." This is a better definition, inasmuch as it leaves the possible (ontological?) significance of the correspondence open-ended. If we turn the references to the word "prototype" in both of these dictionaries, we find much the same definition, with the stipulation that in Biology, a "prototype" is an "archetype" (meaning, of course, a prototype)!

⁴*Webster's Third International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, 1976 ed., s.v. "archetype".

members of the species. Yet there is a reservation expressed by the use of the word "deduced" in this definition: an archetype is regarded more as a mental construct than as something which is ontologically real.

A second definition in Webster's International Dictionary follows the first, which accommodates more of a sense of ontological reality. This definition is presented in the form of three sub-definitions:

2 a *in Platonism*: one of the ideas of which existent things are imitations . . .
b *in scholastic philosophy*: the idea of the divine intellect that determines the form of a created thing c *in Locke*: one of the external realities with which our ideas and impressions to some extent correspond⁵

According to these definitions, an archetype is an "idea" or "ideal", not in the sense of mental construct or hypothesis, but in the sense of a deep structure of reality which is reflected in the ideas, perceptions or things which it determines. While the Platonic and Scholastic definitions, considered alone, might still suggest a kind of etiological prototype, considered alongside Locke's definition they convey more of an ontological sense of an on-going correspondence between archetypes and their manifestations. In such a sense the archetype of a certain animal or plant would fully imply an innate dimension of all members of its type. Definitions such as these point in the direction of understanding an archetype as an implicit structure of the phenomenal world.

Etiology and Ontology

While the understanding of an archetype which will be appropriate to this thesis reflects its ontology rather than its etiology, this should not be misconstrued as a denial of the honored place accorded to etiological speculation within the Jewish mystical tradition. Since the Talmudic period, such an approach has tended to come under the

⁵Ibid.

rubric of *Ma'aseh Breishyt* (the "Account of Genesis"), as distinct from *Ma'aseh Merqavah* (the "Account of the Chariot", or spiritual "Vehicle"). There is a complementary relationship between these two kinds of mystical literature: the first speaking in etiological terms of the path by which God created the world, and the second describing the path in creation leading back to God. As it happens, Hasidic literature, as well as earlier mystical literature relating to the idea of the Tzaddiq, tends to emphasize this second idea of re-connecting Israel, and the world, with God.⁶ Thus, the figure of the Tzaddiq as "the foundation of the world", in contrast with other archetypal conceptions of the human being in Kabbalah,⁷ is typically understood not as an agency of the creation of the world,⁸ but as the agency of its physical preservation and its spiritual sustenance.⁹

⁶Even when reference to mystical conceptions of the creation of the world occurs in this literature, it tends to be employed so as to illustrate this Path of Return. See, for example, folio 67 of *Liqqutay Moharan II*, in which the letters of the first word of the Bible, "In-the-beginning" (*BREISHIYT*) are rearranged to spell "Master of the House" (*ROSH BAYIT*), which is interpreted in terms of the states of consciousness of the Tzaddiq who supervises the created world. Thus the figure of the Tzaddiq is equated with the fundamental principle of creation, and absorbs the values which had been invested in *Ma'aseh Breishiyt*. See the discussion of "R. Nahman's Tzaddiq and the Complete Human Being" in Chapter Four, for a fuller discussion of this text.

⁷By way of contrast, the figure of *Adam Qadmon* (Primordial Adam), as it is described in the Lurianic Kabbalah of the sixteenth century, is very much a prototype of the creation of the world; it is an "archetype" precisely in the etiological sense of being "the original pattern or model" for the entire creation. See Gershom Scholem, "The Mystical Shape of the Godhead", in *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead* pp. 39, 43, and 46.

⁸We do find something of an exception to this rule in a couple of early references in the Midrashic (interpretive) literature of the Talmudic period. In *Midrash Rabbah* for the Book of Genesis (8:4), there is an account in which, before the creation, God "turned to look only at the deeds of the *zaddiqim* so that the sight of the wicked would not dissuade Him from man's creation", and another in which "God took counsel with the souls of *zaddiqim* for advice concerning the future of this humanity He was creating". (Green, "*Axis Mundi*", 331.) In both these examples, however, these *tzaddiqim* are consulted, not so much as a blueprint for the creation of the world, but as partners with God or participants in divine consciousness. They are only agents or models of creation, insofar as one reads this into the idea of God "consulting" with them. This particular quotation may nevertheless show something of the development

Is it therefore to be assumed that the idea of the Tzaddiq is an ontological and not an etiological archetype? Dividing the definition of the term in this way does not yield entirely satisfactory results. First of all, it is not entirely *incorrect* to consider the Tzaddiq an archetype in the sense an "original model" from which tzaddiqim are made. To do so would simply indicate an original model or primary idea to which tzaddiqim conform. Clearly, the category of Tzaddiqim would not be identifiable without there first being a model to which they might be related. But while this may be true, for purposes of this thesis it is not very important. By itself it offers no special insight into the idea of the Tzaddiq. Ontology and etiology express, in this instance, two sides of the same coin, and it is not the coin that is needed.

The significance of considering the Tzaddiq as an archetype is not that it defines the model Tzaddiqim represent, but that it indicates the distinctive character of this kind of a model, which is reflected in the idea of the "foundation of the world". An archetype, in this sense, is not only more than a prototype, it is more than an ontological model considered only in reference to its own species. Rather, the idea of an archetype to which I am pointing subsumes both a prototypical and an ontological function in a larger function relating to the universe as a whole. An archetype is, in this sense, a Supertype; that is, it is a typical representation of a deep structure, not only of the

of an archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq. To whatever degree it may represent an early, etiological conception of human beings providing a model for creation, this is an idea which later shifted from the figure of the Tzaddiq to that of Adam Qadmon.

⁹To some degree the Tzaddiq is also a figure pointing towards the eventual redemption of the world. Thus, there is a link in the teachings of Rebbe Nahman, and in other Hasidic sources, between the idea of the Tzaddiq and that of Messiah. Unfortunately, the concentration by scholars such as Scholem on the Messianic idea has obscured the centrality of the idea of the Tzaddiq. One of the aims of this thesis is to redress the imbalance created by such scholarship, and to establish a sense, not only the centrality, but of the character of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq. It might then be possible in subsequent research to consider the idea of Messiah in the context of the idea of the Tzaddiq, and not only vice versa.

members of a certain class of beings, but of the entire universe.¹⁰ It is an image, or idea, or most essentially a *function* of the unity of existence.

Stipulative Definitions

For the sake of clarity I will propose, at this point, two definitions of the term "archetype" as it has been employed thus far. An archetype is:

- a) a deep or implicit structure or model which identifies the essential characteristics of a particular type
- b) the function of such a model which relates all members of its type to the unity of existence or to the Divine.

It is this second definition, with its religious or spiritual implications, which is of course the focus of this thesis.

The relationship of the members of a given type to their archetype may sometimes correspond to another idea, which has been described, in recent years, in terms of the "Holographic Paradigm". An archetype is like a holographic image, inasmuch as it is a single figure which implicitly contains other instances of the same thing, within itself. The term "holography" originally described

a method of lenseless photography in which the wave field of light scattered by an object is recorded on a plate as an interference pattern. When the photographic record--the hologram--is placed in a coherent light beam like a laser, the original wave pattern is regenerated. A three-dimensional image appears.¹¹

If the plate is broken this pattern may also be regenerated, though in less detail, from any of its pieces. Thus "*any piece of the hologram will reconstruct the entire image.*"¹² In *The Holographic Paradigm*, this "paradigm" is considered as a means of

¹⁰I have in mind here the etymology of the word "uni-verse", which implies "turning towards unity".

¹¹Ken Wilber, "A New Perspective on Reality", in *The Holographic Paradigm and Other Paradoxes: the Leading Edge of Science*, edited by Ken Wilber (Boston: Shambhala, 1982), 6.

¹²*Ibid.*, italics of the author.

describing a perspective found among a variety of mystical traditions which might now be applied to contemporary science, especially physics and psychology. The focus of this thesis is, of course, in the opposite direction: applying a holographic paradigm, or more accurately, a holographic example of an archetypal paradigm as a means of illuminating the Jewish mystical tradition.

The Archetype of the Torah

Viewed from such a perspective, the Torah is probably the supreme archetype of the Jewish tradition. Although the revelation of the Torah on Mount Sinai is the outstanding Jewish myth, this is not what I mean here. Nor do I mean the literary contents of the Five Books of Moses, or the physical characteristics of certain parchment scrolls. What I mean is the conception of the Torah as a model linking Creator and creation, which contains the entire creation within itself.¹³ Thus, Moshe Idel points to an early, anonymous Kabbalistic author who declares (with circular logic) that "the Torah, beginning with the first pericope until the last one is the shape of God, the Great and Formidable, blessed be He, since if one letter is missing from the Scroll of the Torah, or one is superfluous . . . that scroll is disqualified, since it has not in itself the shape of God."¹⁴ He quotes, as well, the prominent early commentator on the Zohar, Yosef Gikatilla who argues (perhaps more convincingly) that

¹³In Islamic lore the archetypal function of Scripture is described in terms of *Um al-Kitab*, "the Mother of the Book".

¹⁴Moshe Idel, "Infinites of Torah in Kabbalah", published in *Midrash and Literature*, ed. by Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick (New Haven: Yale University, 1986), 141-157. Although he does not employ the term "archetype", specifically, an archetypal view of the function of the Torah might be inferred from this article as a whole. Idel himself characterizes the function of Torah in Judaism by way of cosmic imagery (142), describing how "authoritative rabbinic Jewish texts were regarded as but pleiades of stars rotating around the Bible."

the whole sacred scripture teaches that there is a God, because in its inmost content there is nothing but God . . . for it was dictated by God, and nothing can proceed from God but what is Himself, and is divine. *The sacred scripture is this in its inmost content.* But in its derivatives, which proceed from the inmost content but are on a lower plane, the sacred scripture is accommodated to the perceptions of angels and men."¹⁵

Thus the manifest form of the Torah expresses an "inmost content" which serves an archetypal function relating God to the phenomenal world. But an archetype is a model which relates not only to God, but which contains, within itself, numerous members or parts. There is a hint of this idea in Gikatilla's reference to "derivatives . . . on a lower plane . . . accommodated to the perceptions of angels and men."

Moshe Idel, like Gershom Scholem before him, characterizes the Kabbalistic idea of Torah not in terms of its archetypal nature, but in terms of its "infinity". Scholem, indeed, has provided a history of the development of what might be considered the archetypal/holographic idea of Torah. He begins with a reference in late work of Midrash (Numbers Rabbah), in which

every word, indeed every letter [of the Torah] has seventy aspects, or literally, 'faces.' It does not occur in the Talmud but was developed from a Talmudic theme . . . that every commandment that issued from God's mouth in the Revelation at Mount Sinai was divided and could be heard in all seventy languages. . . . [Later, in the Zohar,] the seventy languages were dropped and the new formula was born. . . . The different aspects are secrets that can be discovered in every word. 'In every word shine many lights.'¹⁶

This expresses the archetypal idea of one (Torah) containing the many (seventy translations, or even a multitude of lights), within itself. The holographic idea that there are many who, reflexively, contain this one, emerges later in Kabbalistic literature:

The last and most radical step in the development of this principle of the infinite meaning of Torah was taken by the Palestinian school of Kabbalists who flourished in the sixteenth century in Safed. They started from the old conception that the souls of Israel who went out of Egypt and received the Torah

¹⁵Ibid., 150. The italics are mine.

¹⁶Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism,*?

at that time numbered 600,000. "Consequently there are 600,000 aspects and meanings in the Torah. According to each one of these ways of explaining the Torah, the root of a soul has been fashioned in Israel. In the Messianic age, every single man in Israel will read the Torah in accordance with the meaning peculiar to his root. And thus also is the Torah understood in Paradise."¹⁷

Thus the Torah is regarded as a model which not only bridges God and the world, but which is embedded within many (human) representatives. Not only does each soul in Israel reflect the Torah, but each individual reflects it uniquely. Such an idea shows a degree of differentiation which extends beyond the "Holographic Paradigm". Thus R. Moshe Cordovero, the first major figure of Tzefat Kabbalah, emphasized that there is a special portion of Torah which pertains to each of the 600,000 souls: "and to none other than he, whose soul springs from there, will it be given to understand it in this special and individual way that is reserved to him." The archetypal idea which is expressed in the model of Torah, is an idea not only of implicit unity, but of implicit unity which is reflected in a system of tremendous diversity. The archetype of Torah is reflected not only within a single type--the type of the Jewish soul--but is reflected, within that type, in the forms of 600,000 individual types.

Yet I sense something lacking in the notion of the Torah as an archetype. Shortly, I shall consider the conception of an archetype in the psychology of Carl Jung. Although there are serious limitations to Jung's conception of the term, Jung has contributed a psychological dimension to its modern usage, by which an archetype might be considered as function to be found specifically within human beings. It is in the sense that an archetype is a human capacity as well as a divine function, that it is

¹⁷Ibid. Scholem points out that in this quotation from the writings of Reb Hayyim Vital, each of the 600,000 souls--who through *gilgul*, or transmigration, continuously constitute the people of Israel--are linked to each of the "600,000" letters of Torah, although the Torah, in fact, contains only about 340,000 letters. Even less of a problem is the fact that there may be more than 600,000 Jews in the world at any given time: more than one person might share the same "soul root" (*shoresh neshamah*).

particularly appropriate to identify a mystical conception not of the Torah but of the Tzaddiq, as an archetype.

Let me therefore add, at this point, two stipulative definitions of the term "archetype" which are meant as a further refinement of the definitions I offered above, and which emphasize a psychological dimension, and are particularly applicable to this thesis:

a) a capacity which is typical of (a certain class) of human beings, which expresses a function of the Divine or the universe as a whole b) a function of the Divine, or of the universe as a whole, which is expressed as a capacity which is typical of (a certain class) of human beings

Both definitions, in this case, are meant to describe one and the same phenomenon. Out of respect for the metaphysical spectrum of the early English usages of the term, I have purposely not differentiated between an archetype as a function of the universe *or* of the Divine. Nor have I limited it to being a capacity of all, or only of a certain class of human beings. The essential feature of this definition is that it identifies the unity of all existence with a function to be found within human beings, which is simultaneously human and divine.

Jung's Definition

The definitions of an archetype I have proposed, above, differs quite markedly from Jung's definition, although it fits much of the actual usage of the term by Carl Jung and others following him. Such definitions, moreover, reflect the sources in antiquity which inspired Jung's usage of the term, as well as, most likely, its early English usage. Jung himself used the term "archetype" in a specialized sense which is quite different from what it meant in the traditional sources. At this point I would like to consider, in detail, Jung's definition of the term, and show how my own is more suitable to the study of tradition such as Judaism.

As in our discussion above, the Platonic "ideas" provided Jung with a point of departure:

"Archetype" is an explanatory paraphrase of the Platonic "idea". For our purposes this term . . . tells us that . . . we are dealing with archaic or--I would say--primordial types, that is, with universal images that have existed since remotest times.¹⁸

Jung departed from Plato and Platonists, inasmuch as he did not regard the archetypes as "primordial types" or "universal images" having an ontological existence within the consciousness of the Divine, or even within "Nature". He assigned them, instead, to "a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us."¹⁹ Thus he introduced the idea that archetypes are latent possibilities which might be activated within the psyche of the individual. It was not Jung's intention to contribute a psychological perspective to a fundamentally metaphysical

¹⁸Jung, *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1969), 4-5.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 4.

idea, but rather, to displace metaphysics altogether. Thus he located these "universal images" entirely within a psychological context.

Jung considered these archaic images to be "universal" in the sense of being universally dispersed within the human psyche. That they might be considered as a connection to the universe as a whole or to the Divine, was not of primary importance. This purely psychological category of archetypes included, for Jung, a variety of typical figures, such as the Mother, the Child, the Trickster, the Wise Old Man, as well as the Anima (or feminine aspect, especially of a male), and the Animus (or masculine aspect, especially of a female). While ideas of the Great Mother or the divine Child might be drawn from religious imagery, other ideas might be found elsewhere.

To distinguish a psychological from a metaphysical use of the term, Jung identified the "common psychic substrate" in which his archetypes appear, with a "collective unconscious" of the human race. According to Jung, the two terms imply one another: the archetypes are the contents of which the unconscious is the container.

In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature . . . (even if we tack on the personal unconscious as an appendix), there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents.²⁰

Thus Jung's archetypes do possess a kind of ontological value; they represent a "psychic system" which is superior to the specific manifestations which they inform. But if these archetypes are "pre-existent forms", what is their origin? What meaning or purpose do they express? Jung's pragmatic approach avoided positing any ultimate order or purpose:

I have often been asked where the archetypes or primordial images come from.

²⁰Ibid., 43.

It seems to me that their origin can only be explained by assuming them to be deposits of the constantly repeated experiences of humanity. . . . The archetype is a kind of readiness to produce over and over again the same or similar mythic ideas.²¹

From Jung's perspective, the idea of an archetype need not imply a divine origin or destiny; they are simply accretions of collective human experience. Functionally, they represent an unconscious habit or "a kind of readiness" of experience to take shape in certain forms. A vital feature of these tendencies, however, is that they are not merely passive shapes, but active, effective forces. Thus he declared that "there are present in every psyche forms which are unconscious but nonetheless active--living dispositions, ideas in the Platonic sense, that preform and continually influence our thoughts and feelings and actions."²²

By emphasizing that archetypes are *living* dispositions, Jung drew attention to the idea of an "impersonal" and "universal" dimension of existence which actively influences all other levels: thought, feeling and action. Archetypes, according to Jung, are more than ideas, in the sense of abstract mental constructions. They are profoundly influential functions. Jung was particularly concerned with distinguishing the function of archetypes from the contents of myth. "These products are never (or at least very seldom) myths with a definite form, but rather mythological components which, because of their typical nature, we can call . . . *archetypes*."²³

From such a perspective, both secular folklore and religious teachings would be regarded as cultural fabrications whose mythological contents indicate archetypal dispositions which, at a deeper level, formed them. An archetype itself is not to be

²¹Anthony Storr, ed., *The Essential Jung* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1983), 70.

²²Jung, *Archetypes*, 4-5.

²³Jung, *Archetypes*, 153.

confused with the images by which it is described.²⁴ Were it not already well-established that Jung meant archetypes only as *psychological* dispositions, it would be tempting to read into his conception of the archetypes an idea which is common to much of mystical religion. That is, the idea of an "imaginal world" higher than the physical realm, which alludes to an utterly transcendent level which is higher still, and which cannot be expressed in words or even symbols.²⁵ Thus, while there is no Hebrew term which exactly corresponds to the word "archetype", an archetypal realm is spoken of, in various ways. 'Olam Ha-Atzilut or "World of Emanation" is named in Kabbalah as that realm in which the possibilities of the Divine are adjacent (*atzel*) to one another, in which they might first appear.²⁶ In some Kabbalistic systems, the archetypal realm might be associated with the next world down, the World of Conception or Creation, *Briah*. Similarly, Islamic Sufi teachings describe the *Alemi Imkan* or "World of Possibilities".²⁷ Such divine "Worlds" are different from Jung's "collective unconscious" inasmuch as they describe, in ontological terms, a higher order of reality, standing in a direct hierarchical relationship with the Infinite, or Absolute.

²⁴One analogy which immediately comes to mind is the opening statement of the *Tao te Ching*, by Lao Tsu: "The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name. The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth. The named is the mother of ten thousand things." (translated by Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English. New York, Random House/Vintage Books, 1972. Folio One) The Tao, in this sense, names the unnameable archetype by virtue of which creation comes into existence.

²⁵"The imaginal world is more than the corporeal world, since it is situated closer to the World of Light, though it is less real than the spiritual luminous realms of the angels." William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989). See also *Sufism and Taoism: a Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts* by Toshihiko Izutsu (Berkeley, University of California, 1983), and *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi* by Henri Corbin (Princeton: Princeton University, 1969).

²⁶See Halevi, *Way of Kabbalah*, Chapter 3, "The Great Tree of Azilut", 27-36.

²⁷See J.G. Bennett, *Intimations* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1975), 74.

According to Jung, the one place *not* to look for archetypes is in esoteric religious teachings:

The term archetype . . . designates only those psychic contents which have not yet been submitted to conscious elaboration and are therefore an immediate datum of psychic experience. In this sense there is a considerable difference between the archetype and the historical formula that has evolved. Especially on the higher levels of esoteric teaching the archetypes appear in forms that reveal quite unmistakably the critical and evaluating influence of conscious elaboration.²⁸

Thus it seems that Jung would have looked with disfavor upon the thesis that a figure such as the Tzaddiq might be considered an archetype! The Tzaddiq, indeed, is just such an "historical formula" which has "evolved" as an expression of "the higher levels of esoteric teaching" and is "unmistakably" a product of "conscious elaboration". As opposed to such "products", Jung proposes that archetypes are disclosed as the data of "immediate experience". Jung's assumption would seem to be that the more such data is consciously elaborated, the more likely it is to be distorted. The logical extension of such an argument is that Jung's own detailed elaborations of archetypal ideas--not to mention the considerable literature which his followers have generated on the subject--are, by definition, distortion upon distortion! But setting aside the general problem of "conscious elaboration", it would appear that Jung considered the "higher levels of esoteric teaching", as a genre, to be especially contaminated.²⁹

If one is then to exclude the products of "the higher levels of esoteric teaching", where, indeed might archetypes to be found? What kind of evidence would point to their existence?

²⁸Jung, *Archetypes*, 5.

²⁹There is a parallel notion in the academic study of religion, particularly in the methodology of Mircea Eliade, in which it is assumed that "primitive" religions have more "natural" and therefore, presumably, more valid symbols, than the more linguistically-oriented traditions such as Judaism and Islam. See Eliade's *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, Philip Mairet, trans. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1970, first published in France, 1952).

We must now turn to the question of how the existence of archetypes can be proved. Since archetypes are supposed to produce certain psychic forms, we must discuss how and where one can get hold of the material demonstrating these forms. The main source . . . is *dreams*, which have the advantage of being involuntary, spontaneous products of the unconscious psyche and are therefore pure products of nature not falsified by any conscious purpose.³⁰

Without entering very far into the field of dream analysis, I will endeavor to point out the obvious weakness of such an approach. By considering dreams as "pure products of nature" and therefore archetypal, by virtue of their "involuntary, spontaneous" and "unconscious" nature, Jung opens the way to confusing what he himself considered the "personal unconscious", with the "collective, universal, and impersonal nature" he identifies with archetypes. Although certain dreams may break through the veneer of strictly personal associations to reveal persons or events of more general significance, dreams which convey a truly "universal image"--in the sense of being utterly transpersonal and transcultural--are, to my knowledge, extremely rare. Dreams are much more likely to convey personal and social associations which may, perhaps, be combined with more fundamental images. In short, they constitute a personal equivalent of "mythological" material. This is not to deny that archetypal material may sometimes appear in certain dreams, only to point out that there is reason to suspect that dreams, as a category, are not likely to be any more archetypal than more social forms of secular and religious story-telling.

I believe that Jung is quite right in distinguishing between the archetype itself and "the historical formula" by which it conveyed. I would nevertheless maintain that mystical religion is a singularly good place to look for such things. Rather than demonstrating the interference of "conscious elaboration", it is precisely in "the higher levels of esoteric teaching" that archetypes are most likely to have been differentiated and distilled. How then should one apply Jung's point that "one must, for the sake of

³⁰Jung, *Archetypes*, 48.

accuracy, distinguish between 'archetype' and 'archetypal ideas'.³¹ "The archetype of the Tzaddiq" is, properly speaking, the archetypal function which the term Tzaddiq represents, whereas "the archetypal *idea* of the Tzaddiq" denotes the particular ways in which this function has been conceived of in Jewish lore. It may not always be practical to speak in terms of such a formal and lengthy and cumbersome expression as the "archetypal idea" of the Tzaddiq. Moreover, if the archetype alluded to by the term Tzaddiq is intended, rather than its cultural elaboration, it is more correct to speak of the Tzaddiq "archetype" than "archetypal idea".³²

Jung's Scientific Paradigm

I have no quarrel with Jung's attempt to adapt the idea of an archetype so as to make it serviceable within the scientific field of psychology, as he conceived it. His psychological emphasis on archetypes as transpersonal functions to be uncovered *within* an individual, highlights a significant dimension of the possible meaning of the term. Yet the accompanying assumption, that an archetype is not only a transpersonal but a transcultural idea, severely limits or entirely precludes its application to a study of religion (or, for that matter, anthropology), in which the subject at hand *is* the understanding reflected in a particular culture. It would be surprising indeed to find a particular traditional culture relating to the idea of an "archetype" specifically as a transcultural idea! This would imply an extraordinary self-consciousness on the part of that culture, by which it would regard a central feature of its description of the universe as residing, simultaneously, outside of that description.

³¹This is specified in a footnote Jung attached to the last quotation cited from Jung above: *Archetypes*, 5, no. 9.

³²I suspect I am taking far less liberty than the various Jungian psychologists who speak of particular gods and goddesses, such as Hermes and Aphrodite, as "archetypes" rather than as "archetypal ideas".

Indeed, Jung's own vocabulary and definitions are by no means "culture-free". His use of the term archetype was circumscribed by what he could and could not accommodate within his own conception of a scientific world-view. Thus Jung found a way of talking about archetypes which avoided identifying them, as Francis Bacon did, as "the attributes and acts of God". He refrained from even asserting, as did John Locke, that these were "Ideas" of "Nature". And yet he was sufficiently sensitive to the origin of the word to feel compelled to address the question of the relationship of the archetypes to God. Jung recognized that in the original conception of the term, archetypes were considered as contents of the Divine and not of the collective unconscious.

Thus Jung himself admitted that "we cannot tell whether God and the unconscious are two different entities. Both are border-line concepts for transcendental contents."³³ Yet Jung was able to conceive of the notion of God only as one of the contents of the collective unconscious, and not as its container.

When I say as a psychologist that God is an archetype, I mean by that the "type" in the psyche. The word "type" is, as we know, derived from *typos*, "blow" or "imprint"; thus an archetype presupposes an imprinter. Psychology as a science of the soul has to confine itself to its subject and guard against overstepping its proper boundaries by metaphysical assertions or other professions of faith.³⁴

Archetypes imply an "imprinter" as well as a medium in which they are imprinted. By naming both the "collective unconscious"--the "collective" being the imprinter, and the "unconscious" the medium imprinted--Jung avoided taking the matter any further. This fit his model of science as an empirical pursuit which was to be kept separate from metaphysics.

³³Storr, *Essential Jung*, 329.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 263.

Jung's situation, of course, is quite different from our own. He was addressing the study of psychology in a way which he hoped would not stretch beyond the breaking point, the scientific paradigm of his day, whereas we are addressing the study of religion. As scholars of religion, a religious understanding is precisely what we are seeking to comprehend. Far from being off-limits, conceptions which relate the physical world to higher, meta-physical structures and purposes are entirely within our domain. It may be no more our task than the task of a psychologist to assert, or deny, "professions of faith". But it is our task to try to understand religion in a way which accurately reflects the understanding of proponents of religion, and which makes them comprehensible and possibly illuminating in a modern setting.

To relate traditional ideas in the modern terms is not an easy task. We are seeing how difficult it is to do justice to a single word, "archetype". Earlier, I suggested that this was an indication of the "positivist world-view" which was already making itself felt before the end of the seventeenth century. Jung himself was aware of such an issue and in his analysis took it back to a parting of the ways between Aristotle's empiricism and the metaphysical approach of Plato. The tension between these two paradigms is particularly significant, given Jung's equation of "archetype" with the Platonic "Ideas":

In former times, despite some dissenting opinion and the influence of Aristotle, it was not too difficult to understand Plato's conception of the Idea as supra-ordiante and pre-existent to all phenomena Were I a philosopher, I should continue in the Platonic strain and say: Somewhere, in "a place beyond the skies," there is a prototype or primordial image of the mother that is pre-existent and supraordinate to all phenomena in which the "maternal", in the broadest sense of the term, is manifest. But I am an empiricist, not a philosopher; I cannot let myself presuppose that my peculiar temperament, my own attitude to intellectual problems, is universally valid.³⁵

³⁵Jung, *Archetypes*, 75-76.

Here Jung lumps together an etiological idea of an archetype as a "pre-existent" prototype, and the ontological idea of a "supraordinate" image, in order to distance himself from both! And yet, though he identifies himself as an "empiricist"-- or perhaps because of it--he feels called upon to at least acknowledge that metaphysical "philosophy" exists. Actually, there is more at stake here than a liberal acknowledgement of the validity of an approach other than one's own. Jung is struggling with the difficulty of adapting a fundamentally Platonic concept, which he admires and finds useful, to the Aristotilian paradigm of modern science with which, as a scientist, he identifies himself:

As an empiricist, I must point out that there is a temperament which regards ideas as real entities and not merely as *nomina*. It so happens--by the merest accident, one might say--that for the past two hundred years we have been living in an age in which it has become unpopular or unintelligible to suppose that ideas could be anything but *nomina*. Anyone who continues to think as Plato did must pay for his anachronism by seeing the "supracelestial", i.e., metaphysical, essence of the Idea relegated to the unverifiable realm of faith and superstition, or charitably left to the poet.³⁶

Jung is describing a problem which, as a student of psychology, he shares with students of religion. The idea of an archetype is virtually incomprehensible, from a strictly materialistic point of view. To the degree that the academic study of religion is conceived of in the image of positive science, we are addressing one order of knowledge with the tools of another. To be able to focus on an archetypal idea requires a re-tooling of our vocabulary. That is why this "little" chapter, whose purpose is the clarification of a single term, has so much ground to cover. That the Tzaddiq is an archetype is demonstrable, provided one can think in archetypal terms.

Archetypal thinking, properly informed, is not sloppy thinking; it does not make of everything an archetype. This is the reason for endeavoring to delineate the marks by which an archetype might be distinguished. But a definition, by itself, does not an

³⁶Ibid.

archetype (or a thesis) make. The idea of an archetype and its application to the idea of the Tzaddiq may be assembled piece-by-piece, but it can only be grasped as a whole.

Philo's Archetype

I will attempt to reassemble the "pieces" from which Jung first constructed his idea of an archetype, so as to reconstruct the "whole" of the idea. My point of departure are the metaphysical sources from which Jung himself drew, though I will not feel compelled to impose on them an "empiricist" interpretation:

The term "archetype" occurs as early as Philo Judaeus, with reference to the *Imago Dei* (God-image) in man. It can also be found in Irenaeus, who says: "The creator of the world did not fashion these things directly from himself but copied them from archetypes outside himself". In the *Corpus Hermeticum*, God is called . . . "archetypal light". . . . The term "archetype" is not found in St. Augustine, but the idea of it is. . . . he speaks of *ideae principales*, 'which are themselves not formed . . . but are contained in divine understanding.'³⁷

Not everything in these references supports the definitions of "archetype" I proposed earlier in this chapter. The quotation from Irenaeus implies an etiological notion of archetypes, and removes them from the Divine. On the other hand, the reference in the Hermetic tradition to "archetypal light" recalls the many Kabbalistic references in which God is spoken of as in terms of "Infinite Light".³⁸ According to Jung, "when the *Corpus Hermeticum*, which probably dates from the third century, describes God as . . . the 'archetypal light', it expresses the idea that he is . . .

³⁷Ibid., 4-5.

³⁸See, for example, *Liqqutay Moharan* 64e, in which God is referred to as "the Infinite Light Itself", which is discussed in "God Within", in the section on "R. Nahman's Tzaddiq and the Complete Human Being", in Chapter Four.

pre-existent and supraordinate to the phenomenon of 'light'.³⁹ Such an idea of "archetypal light" is clearly ontological, and may be etiological as well. But only the quotation from Philo suggests the possibility of an archetype describing a function which is simultaneously human and divine.

It is Philo, the earliest source Jung cites for the use of the word "archetype", who is the most appropriate source for understanding of the use of the term "archetype" in this thesis. Philo was a Jewish mystic who expressed ideas which were congruous with Jewish tradition, in the language of the "science" of his day, which was neo-Platonic philosophy. Let me cite at some length the text to which Jung refers, as his Philonic source for "archetype". Like many mystical texts later in Jewish tradition, it is conceived as a commentary on a verse from the Hebrew Bible:

Moses tells us that man was created after the image of God and after His likeness (Gen. 1:26). Right well does he say this, for nothing earth-born is more like God than man. Let no one represent the likeness as one to a bodily form; for neither is God in human form, nor is the human body God-like. No, it is in respect of the Mind, the sovereign element of the soul, that the word "image" is used; for after the pattern of a single Mind, even the Mind of the Universe as an archetype, the mind in each of those who successively came into being was molded.⁴⁰

It is because the mind in human beings is a reflection of the Divine Mind, that Philo considers it an archetype. "Mind", thus considered, embraces all of the territory covered by Jung's conceptions of consciousness and the (collective) unconscious, and somewhat more as well. Specifically, the archetype of the Mind is that faculty in which the human and the Divine converge. Thus Philo continues:

It is invisible while seeing itself in all things . . . while it opens by arts and sciences roads branching in many directions, all of them great highways, it comes through land and sea investigating what either element contains. . . . And so, carrying its gaze beyond the confines of all substance discernable by sense,

³⁹Jung, *Archetypes*, 5.

⁴⁰*Philo Vol. 1*, trans. F.H. Colson & G. H. Whitaker (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1929), 55. This is the same reference and translation as was cited by Jung in the source quoted above.

it comes to . . . even the patterns and the originals of the things of sense which it saw Wafted . . . to the topmost arch of the things perceptible to the mind, it seems to be on its way to the Great King Himself; but, amid its longing to see Him, pure and untempered rays of concentrated light stream forth like a torrent, so that by its gleams the eye of the understanding is dazzled.⁴¹

While later metaphysicians such as Thynne, Bacon and Locke might consider "the patterns and the originals" by which the "things of sense" were created to be the archetypes themselves, for Philo these are but secondary types. Philo would certainly not have agreed with Jung's identification of "the archetypes" with a broad class of "primordial types"; he is interested in identifying a single Archetype in which all these various types are subsumed. This archetype of the Mind, as it comprehends the entire cosmos, includes all forms of knowledge within itself. Yet, according to Philo, there is a point at which even such an archetype must yield to that which precedes it, both in time and in order of importance: its own source in the Divine. Thus the archetype of the Mind is overwhelmed in the radiation of God "Himself", conceived here in terms akin to the Hermetic conception of "archetypal light".

In conclusion, Philo returns to the quotation in Genesis, in which man is described as being created in the image of God. It is not clear whether Philo means that there are various archetypes which correspond to various images, here, or whether he continues to be focussed on the single archetype of the Mind. But it is clear that Philo means to emphasize that it is indeed God Who is witnessed in the archetype of Mind as it is embodied among humankind:

Since images do not always correspond to their archetype and pattern, but are in many instances unlike it, the writer further brought out his meaning by adding 'after the likeness' to the words 'after the image,' thus showing that an accurate cast, bearing a clear impression, was intended.⁴²

⁴¹Ibid., 55-7.

⁴²Ibid., 57.

Philo's conception of the meaning of "archetype" is thoroughly mystical and metaphysical. It is remarkable, in retrospect, how much of the original meaning of the term Jung had to discard, in order to adapt it to his model of empirical science.⁴³ The one point which Jung cites from Philo--the association of the idea of an archetype with "the image of God"--he overlooks Philo's careful disclaimer, that it is not in the physical sense of an "image" that man possesses the image of God.⁴⁴ Much significant, however, is the way in which Jung, and even some of the earlier sources, confuse the idea of a singular archetype with what Philo called "the patterns and the originals of the things of sense".

Compared to the Jungian "archetypes", the archetype in Philo is a "super-archetype", that is, a single, over-arching Type embracing all possible "types"--in which all the Jungian figures, such as the Mother, the Child, the Anima and Animus would be included. Unity and divinity and all-inclusiveness, but not the highest possible level of divinity, are properties of the Philonic archetype. Jung wished to set aside the question of their divinity from the consideration of archetypes, *per se*. For Philo, what distinguishes the archetype is precisely its being a point-of-contact with the Divine. The archetype is thus a subtle form of iconography which is particularly well-suited to monotheistic religion.

⁴³I suspect that Philo's use of the term was also based, in some measure, on empirical observation: that is, that what he related in the quotations above was not mere speculation, but was based on personal experience. That Jung's own experience appears to not have penetrated to the deepest realms of mystical experience, may actually account for his success in beginning to map the territory between the previously distant poles of modern science and symbolic dimensions of experience.

⁴⁴Later, in the *Shiur Qomah* literature, the idea of man being made in the image of God would be taken far more literally, so that in the later development of Kabbalah we do not find the reluctance to assign divine significance to the physical form of man that we find in Philo. See Scholem, "Mystical Shape" in *Mystical Shape*.

I do not wish to exaggerate, however, the differences of outlook between Philo and Jung. Does Philo really mean Mind to be the only possible archetype? Are there no human examples of an archetype in Philo? Indeed, elsewhere Philo expresses himself in a way that is suggestive of Hasidic and other Kabbalistic literature, in which Prophets and Patriarchs are conceived of as archetypal figures. Abraham, along with later Prophets and Patriarchs, continues to exist after his death in the "world of ideas":

Abraham would go to the fathers, nourished in peace, in a goodly old age. The fathers, Philo tells us, can be interpreted . . . as the world of ideas in which the mind of the Sage, after the death of the body, makes its new home.⁴⁵

But in Philo as in later Kabbalah, it is Moses who is the central archetypal figure. Philo identified Moses with the Logos archetype, from which all other archetypal ideas are derived.

The Logos on the one hand is the totality of all the "ideas" which reside in the intelligible world; on the other hand, the Logos is the single supreme "idea", from which all other archetypal ideas emanate. Allegorically, Moses is the *hieros logos*, a phrase difficult to render in English, though the idea is not. *Hieros* can mean sacred, or it can mean priestly.⁴⁶

Moses represents the Sacred Word; there is even a hint in the term "hieros logos", of Moses functioning as a kind of High Priest of the Word.⁴⁷ The figure of Moses represents that point from which all "ideas" or "words" are gathered, and from which they all proceed. Here, indeed, is a foreshadowing of R. Nahman of Bratzlav's

⁴⁵Samuel Sandmel, *Philo's Place in Judaism* (Ktav: New York, 1971), 185.

⁴⁶Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: an Introduction* (New York, Oxford University, 1979), 95.

⁴⁷Ordinarily, we might think of Moses as the Prophet and Aaron as the Priest. But according to Sandmel interprets him (Ibid., 96), "when Philo speaks of Scripture as *hieros logos*, he means that Scripture, properly understood, is the purity of thought which is also Moses. Scripture as utterance is speech . . . represented allegorically as Aaron. He who has been inducted into the process of allegory can move from the "speech" of Aaron, that is the literal sense of Scripture, into the "thought" of Moses, who is the Logos.

"Tzaddiq who is the archetype of Moses", from whose "melody" "all of the 'melodies' of all of the wisdoms and philosophies of the world go forth, as they are all gathered and annihilated in that one."⁴⁸

Contemporary Conceptions of the Singular Archetype

Philo's notion of a singular archetype--which might be identified with the Mind, or with a figure such as Moses--closely resembles the Hasidic idea of the archetypal Tzaddiq who is "the foundation of the world". Such idea of an "archetype" might barely be recognizable, today, were it not for the contributions of Carl Jung. And yet it is only by going beyond Jung's "archetypes" that it is possible to recover a traditional usage of the term, which is appropriate to the Jewish mystical tradition.⁴⁹

How might this idea of a singular archetype be understood in a contemporary context? Let me return, briefly, to the work of Carl Jung. Though his approach to "the archetypes" generally reflects what he elsewhere identified as a "polytheistic" as distinct from a "monotheistic" approach,⁵⁰ Jung did consider the question of a single archetype

⁴⁸R. Nahman of Bratzlav, *Liqqutay Moharan*, folio 64e. The translation is my own. For a fuller text, see "God Within" in "R. Nahman's Tzaddiq and the Complete Human Being", in Chapter Four.

⁴⁹I previously explored a number of the ideas in this chapter, and specifically pursued the implications of this distinction between a traditional and a Jungian world-view, in an article "The Limits of Jung: the Spiritual Journey Beyond Images and Symbols", published in *Gnosis* no. 10, Winter 1989, 52-55. There I contrast Jung's "anthropomorphic view", which "conceives of the world as being made in the image of man", with "the traditional, theomorphic view" which grants that the world as it appears to us "is indeed made in the image of man", but which affirms, as well, that "the human being has been made in the image of a greater Reality, of which we are not fully aware."

⁵⁰Storr, *Essential Jung*, 329.

in which all others might be gathered and united. This he associated with what he called the "God-image":

Empirically it can be established . . . that there is in the unconscious an archetype of wholeness which manifests itself spontaneously in dreams, etc., and a tendency, independent of conscious will, to relate other archetypes to this centre. Consequently, it does not seem improbable that the archetype of wholeness occupies such a central position which approximates it to the God-image.⁵¹

With some hesitation, Jung identifies the quality of wholeness and integration with the image or idea of "God". Although he does not equate this idea of God with either the Imprinter of the archetypes or the medium on which they are imprinted, he does relegate to it the status of an Archetype among archetypes. "The God-image does not coincide with the unconscious as such, but with a special content of it, namely the archetype of the self."⁵² And if one wished to increase one's awareness of this "self", so as to facilitate the integration which the God-image represents, where would Jung recommend a person to turn?

The self does not become conscious by itself, but has always been taught, if at all, through a tradition of knowing (the *purush/ atman* teaching, for instance). Since it stands for the essence of individuation, and individuation is impossible without a relationship to one's environment, it is found among those with whom individual relations can be established.⁵³

Thus we have come full circle. Having broadened the meaning of the term "archetype", Jung returns to the kind of principle which Philo first identified in his idea. Jung now identifies this as a specific kind of archetype, the archetype of "wholeness", of the "God-image" or "the self". Moreover, he asserts that knowledge of the self can be related, "if at all", through a mystical "tradition of knowing", enabling a person to

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³C.G. Jung, *Aion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973) 167.

cultivate such knowledge in relationship with others in one's environment. Presumably Jung means the kinds of relationship which a spiritual teaching, spiritual fellowship and the Master-disciple relationship have traditionally represented. Moreover, it seems that he has arrived at the very example of the Hindu Guru which Mircea Eliade offered as an analogy for the Hasidic Tzaddiq! Having narrowed and refined his notion of an archetype, Jung would seem to have at last become reconciled, if reluctantly, to the advantages of "the higher levels of esoteric teaching".

Perhaps the most striking feature of Jung's conception of such a singular Archetype is that it "stands for the essence of individuation". Unlike the Mother or the Trickster or the Anima and Animus, such an Archetype represents not the development of particular characteristics or talents, but the development of the totality of one's human capacity. By identifying this idea with the "God-image", Jung would seem to suggest that such human development already implies the idea of the Divine.

Zolla's Synthesis

Has anyone taken this idea one step further, attempting to harmonize the modern conception of an "archetype" found in Jung with a more traditional, metaphysical perspective? In his monograph on the subject, simply titled *Archetypes*, Elemire Zolla seems to have done just that. Zolla declares that "archetypes are not to be defined and counted, because they lie too deep for words." A second time he declines to offer a definition, because "in the process of definition their ineffable essence is lost."⁵⁴ Nevertheless, in the course of his discourse, Zolla provides a number of useful descriptions of the nature and function of the archetype. He nearly defines it as

⁵⁴Elemire Zolla, *Archetypes* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 55.

follows: "An archetype is what can permanently order objects into sets, gather together emotions, and direct thoughts."⁵⁵ Thus,

what we actually perceive is ultimately decided on the archetypal, or what used to be called the divine level . . . the difference is not in the substance, but in the awareness. Matters archetypal are still supreme, but nowadays goals beyond the grasp of a generation have become too remote. Our minds can no longer seize the whole picture, nor follow the string of causes from the ordering units of the cosmos to the surrounding physical reality.⁵⁶

Zolla is proposing a metaphysical perspective in which it is understood that the universe is descended from an archetypal and ultimately a divine order of being. It is because our grasp of nature is bounded by the affairs of our own generation--because we are immersed only in the "secular", in the sense of that which is temporal--that we tend to be blind to a meta-historical view in which an archetypal dimension appears.

Archetypes describe a dimension of existence from which apparent existence derives: "Archetypes are something alive, more alive than living creatures, because they are life-giving, meaning-giving." Thus the archetype of the human form is that which accounts for the function of the whole, even for physical health:

The archetype or shaping form is constantly at work directing cells to build, heal and mend the ever-faltering, always dying body, according to the ideal or archetypal pattern. The archetype is not a mere notion it is the moulding, healing energy, the living presence of what makes hale, whole and holy--the monad, the engendering gender. When a man is close to his archetype he is daemonic, genial, near to perfection perfected, which consists in the total disappearance of everything which is not the working out of the archetypal model.⁵⁷

The significance of the archetypal lies not in the creation of a multiplicity of types, but in the underlying unity to which the "arche" type points. There is a psychological as well as a theological question at stake here: the archetype implies not only an understanding of the underlying unity of the Divine, but that such unity is the

⁵⁵Ibid., 70.

⁵⁶Ibid., 48-49.

⁵⁷Ibid., 60.

underpinning of human nature. Here Zolla picks up where Jung's notion of "individuation" left off:

We are deluded into believing that 'concrete individual' is something beyond the combination of typical traits. But 'individual' means something indivisible, which is only true of metaphysical Oneness. True concreteness--in the sense of 'grown together' (*cum crescere*) into a unity, a monad--is not to be found in what words and types point at, but in the opposite direction, in what enables us to use and assemble meaningfully the finite words and types: in archetypes, that are relatively infinite, and that lead back to the primal source, *arche* itself, metaphysical experience.⁵⁸

It is because human beings already possess the capacity for comprehensive knowledge, because we are comprehensive beings, that we can comprehend the relation of all kinds of parts to a larger whole. The archetypes are apparently infinite, because there are manifold guises which indicate the relation of the many to the One. But to consider "the archetypes" as a multiplicity is to lose sight of the uniting function which the archetype itself represents.

Only by transcending words, images, impressions, will-o'-the-wisps, does one touch truth: not by prizing the 'raw' impression above its 'baked' expression, but by realising both are delusions and that truth lies in reaching the source of impressions and words--the archetype that gathers them into its mould. . . . If we reach towards the archetype that is the source of the appearance, the type of the objects, and therefore its true meaning, we shall cease to seek for truth among appearances.⁵⁹

Schaya's Kabbalah

In *The Universal Meaning of Kabbalah*, a philosophical study by Leo Schaya, the kind of metaphysical conception of the archetype which Zolla develops in general terms is applied specifically to the tradition of Kabbalah. Schaya presents a Kabbalistic view of the human being as an archetype, represented in terms of the relationship of "heaven" and "earth":

⁵⁸Ibid., 49.

⁵⁹Ibid.

The 'figure of the all' *in divinis* is man's own archetype, his uncreated being: 'Man above' . . . whereas the 'image of the all' is his cosmic manifestation, his created being: 'man below'.⁶⁰

The creation of subtle worlds "above", as well as the material creation "below", is understood to be in accordance with this human prototype:

God created the world and all that exists in contemplating 'man above', who is none other than the infinite unity of the ten *Sefiroth*. He created everything in the image of 'man', for he wished to be glorified by the 'mystery of man': he wished man, everywhere above and below, to be his expression, his revelation, his symbol.⁶¹

In Schaya's summary of Kabbalistic thought, an etiological and ontological conception of the centrality of the human archetype combine. But the question might arise, why should it be "the mystery of *man*" that is so exalted? Is this mere flattery on the part of God, and gross vanity on the part of human beings? Rather, there is a perception that the innate function of the human being is to serve as that which reconciles, not only the various aspects of human nature, but the various creatures and the creation as a whole. Because the implicit nature of the human being is the true archetype of the Divine, it is the destiny of man to raise what is expressed in the terms of Lurianic Kabbalah as the "sparks" that are hidden in all of creation:

All that exists aspires, consciously or otherwise, to become integrated into the universal and divine being of man, who links the lowest world with the supreme 'self' of all things; and God has given to each thing, according to its peculiar ability, the power to rise, through manifold transformations, up to the integral 'form' of man, which is the archetype of all archetypes: divine being.⁶²

The characterizations of the function of the archetype we find in Schaya and Zolla and indeed, in Philo, are both descriptive and prescriptive. The pictures they provide of the archetypal function of the human being can be imagined, but they cannot

⁶⁰Leo Schaya, *The Universal Meaning of Kabbalah*, (London: George Allan & Unwin, 1971) 117.

⁶¹*Ibid.*

⁶²*Ibid.*

be verified by the physical senses or by rational proofs. These authors are nevertheless recommending that we, their readers, allow such pictures to influence our vision of the universe, although they may be verified (as Jung would say, "if at all"), only by mystical (or to use Zolla's word, "metaphysical") experience. My reason for citing these examples in this thesis is, of course, descriptive. My purpose is creating a frame of reference for understanding the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq as an archetypal idea.

It would be natural for the reader to ask, at this point, about the contemporary relevance of an archetypal approach? Might the archetype of the Tzaddiq be something more than a literary and philosophical curiosity, an artifact of the history of religions? Earlier in this thesis I presented the problem presented by an academic approach to the study of religion which is based on out-moded conceptions of science. What might be yielded, however, were students of the physical sciences approach the study of religion in search of insights which might have some bearing on research in their own field? What might an understanding of an archetype derived from mystical religion contribute to the broadening of a scientific world view?

The Holographic Paradigm

As the discussion has proceeded thus far, it has been expressed in terms of the significance of idea of the Tzaddiq as a holograph, on the one hand, and on the other in terms of a metaphysical sense of an archetype. Yet, by way of the "holographic paradigm", there are those who would point modern science in the direction of a rediscovery metaphysics. "The fundamental question that is under consideration is whether mind results as an emergent property from the interaction of an organism with its environment, or whether mind reflects the basic organization of the universe (including the organism's brain)."⁶³ Given that there is, indeed, a "basic organization

of the universe", a structure of knowledge more fundamental than the collection of data from the senses and the application of reason, the appearance of such a structure may be precisely what an archetype describes. What the idea of a holograph implies, is one specific aspect of the function of an archetype: the capacity of individual members to reflect a greater whole.

In the implicate, holographic domain, the distinction between points becomes blurred; information becomes distributed as in the example of the surface of a pond. What is organism (with its component organs) is no longer sharply distinguished from what lies outside the boundaries of the skin. In the holographic domain, each organism represents in some manner the universe, and each portion of the universe represents in some manner the organisms within it.⁶⁴

This is expressed most succinctly in the following quotation from a Buddhist sutra:

In the heaven of Indra there is said to be a network of pearls so arranged that if you look at one you see all the others reflected in it. In the same way, each object in the world is not merely itself but involves every other object, and in fact *is* every other object.⁶⁵

What the model of an archetype adds to this "holographic paradigm" is the idea of the human being as the nexus of such an interface. Applying this holographic model to an understanding of what an archetype is, leads to yet a further refinement of the definitions provided above:

an archetype is a universal or transcendent function which is demonstrated in certain exemplary human beings and is dispersed among others, in whom it exists as an innate capacity

Thus the idea of "the archetype of the Tzaddiq", specifically, would be based on the notion that there is at least one individual Tzaddiq who is, in the language of Jewish tradition, "the foundation of the universe".⁶⁶ It assumes that the "Tzaddiq" function of

⁶³"What the Fuss Is All About" by Karl Pribam, in *The Holographic Paradigm*, 33.

⁶⁴Ibid., 33-4.

⁶⁵Ibid., Wilber "Karl Pribam's Changing Reality", 25.

such an individual is dispersed among others, who relate to it inside as well as outside of themselves. These others are most often considered, in Jewish sources, in terms of the "Hasidim" or disciples of Tzaddiqim, or in terms of the Jewish people as a whole. They might also be considered (most exclusively) in terms of other, lesser Tzaddiqim, or (most inclusively) in terms of humanity as a whole. However it may be reflected in others, the archetype of the Tzaddiq which is represented in individual Tzaddiqim constitutes a convergence of the human and the Divine, which is reflected in others as well as in themselves.

Such a definition is not only applicable to a Jewish idea of the Tzaddiq. Thus Mahayana Buddhist traditions refer to "Buddha-nature", suggesting that Gautama Siddhartha, and other Buddhas as well, represent an archetype which is universally dispersed as the implicit nature of human and perhaps even other forms of sentient life. The "Christhood" of Jesus might also be considered in such archetypal terms. Such a view of Jesus as an exemplar of the archetype of the Christ may or may not be compatible with Christian theology, in which Jesus is regarded as a Person who is uniquely divine.

Archetype versus Myth

I believe it will be useful to ask, at this point, how such an idea of "archetype" might be distinguished from the idea of "myth"? Inasmuch as I intend to distinguish the archetypal conception of the Tzaddiq from a mythic "holy man" idea, the distinction of

⁶⁶In Hebrew, *yesod 'olam*. In the geo-centric cosmology reflected in the Jewish mystical tradition, the meaning of the word *'olam* embraces this "world" as well as the entire "universe" (of which it is the focal point), and more generally, the category of "space" (as it relates to the categories of "time" and "self"). While the word may also mean "eternal", the usual meaning of *yesod 'olam* assumes that the Tzaddiq, by serving as the "foundation" of this world, fulfills a cosmic function.

these terms is of critical importance to this thesis. By "myth" I mean a story which assumes ultimate significance. Because of the ultimate significance of the story, the main character or characters of such a story assume ultimate significance as well, not as examples or as types but as concrete entities. Thus, as Jung pointed out, while archetypes may in fact be the "components" of myth, the two realms should not be confused.

The clearest discussion I have found which distinguishes these two terms and applies them to a larger framework, is by Ken Wilber. In Wilber's paradigm, which he applies to individual development as well as the development of societies as a whole, myth replaces a more primitive, "magical" view of reality, but is prior to the acquisition of reason.

We usually think of the mythic structure as wildly imaginative and dreamlike, and the rational level as dry and unimaginative. In fact, it is exactly the opposite. The mythic structure, despite all its gods and goddesses, its demons and spirits, is in fact very concrete and literalistic. It believes these myths as a matter of concrete fact, not as symbolic and visionary. Moses really did part the Red Sea, Christ really was born of a virgin, God really did rain bread down from heaven, and so on.⁶⁷

It is only after learning to extrapolate, rationally, and therefore to consider alternative models, that one becomes free of the oppressive yoke of mythic. The popular fascination with the realm of "myth" actually confuses the mythic and the archetypal level:

We take the freedom of reason and mix it with the fantastic aspects of myth, and the result is a romantic notion of myth as imaginative, free, and transcendental. But when you are actually *in* the mythic structure, it's nothing of the sort. It's hardheaded, concrete, and unimaginative. It's fundamentalist.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Ken Wilber, "The Great Chain of Being", 8.

⁶⁸Ibid.

It is only after the rational stage of experience is supplanted, in turn, by an "existential" experience of the limits of rationalism and a degree of dissatisfaction with it, that genuine mystical development becomes possible:

The rational and existential levels combine to strip us of childish and adolescent approaches to spirit. They clean out the magical and mythical notions of spirit as a cosmic parent who doles out reward for belief or eternal damnation for disbelief.⁶⁹

Wilber divides the varieties of mystical experience according to "psychic, subtle, and causal" realms. "The psychic is the beginning of genuinely transcendental of spiritual development", a realm in which "paranormal events can occur", and which mainly "operates by vision". "The causal", on the other hand, "is non-dual-mysticism, which finally and totally transcends the subject/object or self/other duality." But it is "the subtle level" which is "the source of theistic mysticism--the direct relation of the soul to God", and is the principle area addressed by the Jewish mystical tradition in general, and the Tzaddiq tradition in particular.

The subtle is the home of the archetypes, in the Platonic, Buddhist, and Augustinian sense. It is also the realm of audible illuminations, spiritual illumination, experiential realms of ascended knowledge, and expanded awareness. This is the soul proper, the highest point of individual identity, beyond which lies total release of the knot of the soul into absolute spirit itself.⁷⁰

I am not concerned with entering, at this point, into a detailed analysis of Wilber's characterization of the archetypes and the subtle realm, in relation to the psychic and the causal. Suffice it to say that archetypes as they are perceived at this level of religious life, are understood as models of functions of the Divine rather than as concrete entities. I am not saying that they are not considered real, within the traditions in which they appear, that they are considered to be "just metaphors". Quite the

⁶⁹Ibid., 9.

⁷⁰Ibid., 6.

contrary, they are considered more real than the elements of the phenomenal world from which they obtain their symbolic descriptions; it is in relation to the greater reality of God, that they are considered to be metaphorical.

One way of distinguishing between archetype and myth is to say that while both appear as artefacts of religious tradition, a myth is an object of religious belief whereas an archetype is a description of a divine function. A person may therefore affirm, or deny, the truth of a particular myth, while an archetype is more or less transparent to the function it represents. One simply employs a particular archetype in ones apprehension of the Divine, or does not employ it, in much the same way as one takes a bus or a train to arrive at a given destination.

Hebrew Equivalents of "Archetype"

At this point the question might arise, how specifically appropriate is such a concept of an archetype to the Jewish mystical tradition? We have already seen that such a definition of "archetype" is not likely to be found in a dictionary of the English language. What may be more surprising--or even alarming, given the topic of this thesis!--is that no such a term is to be found in Hebrew dictionaries, either.⁷¹ And yet the kind of idea suggested by an "archetype" as it has been defined in this chapter, is expressed in Hebrew sources.

Since the appearance of Kabbalah in the twelfth century, Jewish mystical symbolism has been expressed, primarily, in terms of the Ten Sefirot.⁷² To what degree is Sefirotic symbolism specifically archetypal? The symbolism of the Zohar, for example, is expressed in terms of a variety of metaphors and personifications, such as "Father", "Mother" and seven leading Jewish figures: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph and David, who are generally understood (in both traditional and modern scholarship) to be circumlocutions for specific Sefirot.⁷³ To the degree that these

⁷¹The modern Hebrew term *avtypus* which literally means "father-type", helps us very little, since it is simply a translation of "archetype" or "prototype".

⁷²"The mainstream in Kabbalistic thought undoubtedly is the theosophical Kabbalah, whose dominant conceptions is that of a complex and dynamic structure of divine powers commonly known as Sefirot. This term . . . has been interpreted since the late twelfth century as designating manifestations that are either part of the divine structure or directly related to the divine essence, serving as its vessels or instruments; almost universally, these powers number ten. . . . Classical Kabbalistic theosophy [represented, first and foremost, by the Zohar] includes both an elaborate anthropomorphical hierarchy and dynamic interrelationships among the components of this hierarchy." Idel, *New Perspectives*, 112. See also Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 207-239, and *Kabbalah*, 88-116.

⁷³"The Zohar rarely describes the entire sefirotic system. It even avoids the term *sefirot* and instead speaks of lights, levels, links, roots, garments of the King,

characters or functions are understood as possibilities which manifest within the individual, and not only in "higher" worlds, the Sefirot might well be considered as archetypes as I have defined them. Such a psychological approach to the Sefirot is, indeed, a hallmark of Hasidic thought, but it is found in much of earlier Kabbalah as well.⁷⁴

The idea that it is man who is the primary theatre of Divine manifestation, that it is the human being who determines the activity of the Sefirot, is stated explicitly by a sixteenth century Kabbalist, Mayer ibn Gabbai:

The supernal entities to the lower entities are comparable to the shadow [compared] to the form; just as the form stirs, thus the shadow stirs.⁷⁵

Moshe Idel interprets this statement as follows:

Man, being the basic pattern of the higher structure, is able to influence its state by his activity; ontological resemblance serves the theurgical goal. This far-reaching presentation of man as the archetype of the revealed aspect of the Deity is a highly significant departure from the opposite metaphor, in which man is the shadow of the supernal. . . . No longer is the image of God understood as the

crowns of the King, and dozens of other images for the individual *sefirot*. The reader must interpret the symbolism and identify the corresponding *sefirah*." Daniel Chanan Matt, translation and introduction, *Zohar: the Book of Enlightenment*, 33.

⁷⁴Idel distinguishes the "theosophical" approach of the Zohar and its interpreters from the approach of "ecstatic" Kabbalists such as Avraham Abulafia, who spoke directly and unambiguously of the existence of the Sefirot within the human soul and even the human body. (*New Perspectives*, 146-147) While the intellectual foundation of Hasidic thought is provided by theosophical Kabbalah, Idel attributes the psychological emphasis in Hasidism to the influence of ecstatic Kabbalists such as Abulafia: "The psychological understanding of the Sefirot occurs in an explicit way in ecstatic Kabbalah and, later on, in Hasidism; this phenomenon is probably related to their shared interest in extreme forms of *devekut*. When a certain mystical system focuses on inner experiences more than on theurgical activity, the entities to be activated are no longer the objectively existing divine Sefirot but rather the human spiritual Sefirot." I would add, however, that this dichotomy between "ecstatic" and "theosophical" Kabbalah can be over-emphasized. Even given the theurgical range of activity of the Sefirot in the Zohar, they may nevertheless appear as archetypes descriptive of the function of God in man. I pursue this subject specifically as it relates to the function of the Sefirah "Tzaddiq" in the Zohar, in Chapter Three.

⁷⁵Ibid., 176.

basic archetype; now, the human image is regarded as the original, reflected by the divine structure.⁷⁶

Within the tradition of theosophical Kabbalah, the Ten Sefirot represent a comprehensive framework within which all divine possibilities are integrated. Given that they describe an area in which the functions of God and of man overlap, it should come as no surprise to find the figure of the Tzaddiq is related to this framework, and associated with a particular Sefirah. It is related specifically to *Yesod*, the "Foundation" on which the entire structure rests, the point of contact between all higher dimensions and the material world. Nor is the name of this Sefirah a coincidence; the Talmudic interpretation of Proverbs 10:25, in which the Tzaddiq is understood to be "the foundation of the world", most likely preceded the association of one of the Sefirot with the name "Foundation" in medieval Kabbalah.

Yet, while the range of symbols which represent the Sefirot in a text such as the Zohar is extremely broad, the Sefirot themselves represent a specific and limited set of archetypes. Thus while the Sefirot well may be considered archetypes, archetypes referred to outside of Kabbalah are not necessarily be Sefirot; the two terms are not equivalent. The Sefirot represent a very specific archetypal system.

The term *behinah*, which is emphasized in Hasidic literature, most especially in the writings of R. Nahman of Bratzlav, is a more general and open-ended term than Sefirah. Meaning the "quality" or literally the "test" of a thing, it expresses a kind of linking function by which symbolic associations can be made. As a "Sefirah" is more specific than an "archetype", a *behinah* is even more general. A *behinah* is any element which may relate an idea or person of thing to another, although, especially in R. Nahman's usage of term, it often implies a divine aspect or quality. Thus, building upon the many Kabbalistic references to the Sefirah of Tzaddiq, Hasidic references may

⁷⁶Ibid.

be found to the *beḥinah* of Moses, or of the Tzaddiq, or in R. Nahman's words, to "the Tzaddiq who is the *beḥinah* of Moses".⁷⁷ The figure of the Tzaddiq is associated with the kind of connection to the Divine which is represented by Moses.

Given that the Tzaddiq is already associated with the Sefirah of Foundation, and that there is no intermediate term in classical Hebrew between Sefirah and *beḥinah*, I believe that what is meant, precisely, is "the Tzaddiq who is the Moses archetype". That is, the Tzaddiq who expresses the archetype which Moses represents, functions as a bridge between man and God. This is ground I cover more thoroughly in Chapter Four. My intention, thus far, has been to show how it is possible that the idea of an archetype (in a Philonic sense of the word) may be expressed in Jewish mysticism, although no traditional Hebrew term has exactly that meaning.

⁷⁷*Liqqutay Moharan*, 64e. See "God Within" in "R. Nahman's Tzaddiq and the Complete Human Being", in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HISTORY OF THE ARCHETYPE OF THE TZADDIQ

The Etymology of the Term

An archetypal idea of the meaning of the term "Tzaddiq" which first emerges in Rabbinic literature, is more clearly defined in medieval Kabbalah. Yet the idea of the Tzaddiq first began as a simple ethical ideal, which only later took on a special spiritual significance. The earliest references to a Tzaddiq figure (from the perspective of Jewish tradition, as well as from an historical point of view) appear in the Hebrew Bible. What were these biblical references and how do they relate to later development of the Tzaddiq idea?

The first place in the Bible where the term *tzaddiq* appears, is Gen. 6:9, where Noah is identified as *iysh tzaddiq tamim*, "a simple righteous man". In Gen. 18:23-28, the term "righteous" refers to the kind of ordinary, upstanding citizens who would have justified the city of Sodom being spared. Continuing through Exod. 23:7-8, Num. 23:10, and Deut. 16:19 and 25:1, "the righteous" refers, simply enough, to people who are regarded as being worthy by virtue of their righteousness. As much as it is certainly a desirable thing, in the context of the Five Books of Moses being a Tzaddiq connotes nothing exceptional. None of the outstanding personalities--neither Moses, nor Abraham, Isaac or Jacob--are identified specifically as "righteous", within the biblical text itself. In Exod. 9:27, Pharaoh concedes that "Yh-h¹ is (the) Righteous", yet this

¹In keeping with Jewish practice, I am avoiding spelling out all four letters of the Divine Name, even in English.

does not refer to a special divine quality, but rather is an acknowledgement that the human quality of being just is applicable to the God of Moses.

As we move on to references appearing later in the Hebrew Bible, it is apparent that even the quotation from Proverbs 10:25, read in the context of the passage as a whole, does not assign any special spiritual function to the figure of the righteous. The verse simply declares that "the wicked (person) disappears like a passing whirlwind, but *the righteous is established forever.*" (The italics are mine.) This might be understood as an amplification of Proverbs 10:3, which says that "God will not starve the righteous person (or "righteous soul", *nefesh tzaddiq*). Following it, however, Proverbs 11:30 suggests that the righteous, along with the wise, have a special function in teaching others or nourishing them spiritually: "The fruit of the righteous is a Tree of Life, as the wise reaps souls (or "informs souls", *loqayah nefashot*)."²

In Psalm 14:5 we find a general observation that "Yh-h is in the circle (or "in the generation", *bdor*) of the righteous."³ This begins to suggest a special category of relationship between the righteous and God.

Perhaps the most significant reference to the Tzaddiq in the Book of Psalms, is Psalm 145:17. This Psalm, as a whole, constitutes the main section of the oft-repeated *Ashray* Prayer. Since the adoption of this prayer into the Hebrew liturgy for both daily

²In Chapter One I presented R. Nahman's characterization of the Tzaddiq as a "Master of the Field" whom he describes as nourishing souls, like a gardener caring for growing trees. Yet Nahman makes no explicit reference to this passage, neither there (*Liqqutay Moharan* 65a), nor, to my knowledge, elsewhere (such as in section 66, where he compares the relationship between the Tzaddiq and his disciples to that between the trunk of a tree and its branches). It may be that the influence of Proverbs 10:25 on later Jewish mysticism is so strong that other references in Proverbs are lost in its shadow. One might speculate, however, that R. Nahman, as well as earlier Kabbalistic sources linking the idea of Tzaddiq with the image of a tree, may have been influenced by it.

³This may also be an early source of the Hasidic notion of "the Tzaddiq of the Generation". See Chapter Four.

morning and afternoon prayers, it is likely to have shaped Jewish consciousness over the course of Jewish history, in both conscious and unconscious ways.⁴ As in Exod. 9:27, the term *tzaddiq*, as it is used here, describes a category which is applicable both to human beings and to the divine. Here, however, it suggests something more than a simple analogy between the two: *Tzaddiq YH-H bkhoh drakhav, vhasid bkhoh ma'asav*. "(A) Tzaddiq is God in all his ways, and (a) Hasid in all His deeds." The simple meaning of the verse is, most likely, that "God is both righteous and devoted". Yet it is stated in terms of a striking symmetry, not only between the idea of the Tzaddiq and that of the Hasid, but between the idea of God reflecting man and the possible idea of man reflecting God. Beginning from the assumption that being a Tzaddiq (that is, righteous) and a Hasid (that is, devoted) is a human attribute which may be applied to God, it is only a small jump to see them as divine attributes which may be descriptive of human beings. Given such an understanding, the passage may be read literally, and against the grain of its simple meaning. Thus, instead of declaring that "God is righteous (that is, a Tzaddiq) in all His ways . . ." the passage would declare that "a Tzaddiq is God in all his ways . . ." The text lends itself to being read either way.

It is not always easy to distinguish an original interpretation which gives new meaning to a text (in Hebrew, a *hiydush*), from an interpretation which illuminates the meaning it may have had, perhaps subconsciously, for previous generations of readers. I have no corroborating evidence which shows that early worshippers were as struck by

⁴The place of this prayer in Jewish liturgy has deep roots that are well documented. "The Talmud states that anyone who recites the *Ashrei* three times a day is sure of life in the world to come (Ber. 4b), and therefore it is read twice in the morning service, and at the commencement of the afternoon service." Evidence of its use "in the Psalm Scroll discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls . . . would indicate that the psalm was used liturgically as early as the Second Temple." The special regard for Psalm 145 may be related to its being "the only Psalm to bear the title *tehillah* (literally "praise") from which the entire book of Psalms takes its Hebrew name, *Tehillim*." *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1972 ed., s.v. "Ashrei", by Raphael Posner.

the ambiguity of Psalm 145:17 as I am. Certainly, I do not mean to suggest that they conceived of both the Tzaddiq and the Hasid primarily as attributes of God, simply on the basis of this verse.⁵ What I am suggesting is that this passage may have contributed to a sense of an overlapping of the categories of the human and the divine, particularly as they related to the functions of the Tzaddiq and Hasid. With the application of these functions to God, as well as to human beings, that which they described may have been conceived, reflexively, as extending beyond the ordinary human category. Thus I am suggesting that the "ways" of the Tzaddiq and the "deeds" of the Hasid may, over time, have come to be considered as areas of divine activity, or more exactly, as areas in which the human and the divine converge.

Such an ambiguous readings of *tzaddiq* and *hasid* in Psalm 145:17 is certainly less far-fetched than reading Proverbs 10:25 to declare that "the Tzaddiq is the foundation of the world"! And yet this is precisely what the Rabbis did. One of the striking features of the cosmological and mystical idea of the Tzaddiq which emerges in the Talmud, is that it does not owe its existence to a single outstanding personality, but to a single, rather attenuated, text. The text-oriented approach of the Rabbis provided a structure which allowed for both continuity and flexibility in Jewish tradition. Though they discouraged prophetic revelations which might result in new scriptures, the rabbis in fact welcomed *hidushay Torah*, new interpretations of Scripture which might open avenues of understanding diverging quite far from the plain meaning of the text.

Here, then, we encounter the remarkable elasticity of Jewish tradition. It is an elasticity which was supported, among other things, by Hebrew grammar. Hebrew is

⁵The thesis that the mystical union of man and God does indeed have a place in Jewish tradition, which was denied by Scholem and others, has recently been demonstrated by Moshe Idel. See "Unio Mystica in Jewish Mysticism" in *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 59-73.

full of denominatives, verbs derived from nouns.⁶ As Jewish thought developed and the Hebrew language grew, liberties were taken in the opposite direction, as well. Thus in this short phrase three such transformations took place: the idea of a righteous person acquired substance as the figure of "the Righteous", the verb "founded" turned back into a noun, "foundation", and the adverb, "forever", also became a noun, meaning "universe" or "world". (The modifiers, "is the" and "of the" are implicitly understood.) Thus, rather than simply, if hyperbolically, describing the Tzaddiq as being "established forever" (*yesod 'olam*), the passage was interpreted literally, but wildly out of context, so as to identify the figure of the Tzaddiq with the very "foundation" (*yesod*) of the "world" (*'olam*), meaning the planet earth, or even the entire universe.⁷ Thus a new figure emerged, or at least, a new concept emerged of the Tzaddiq, as the foundation of the world.

The Rabbinic Origins of the Archetype of the Tzaddiq

To trace the development of the archetypal conception this phrase represented, it will be helpful to locate it within the historical context of the Rabbinic tradition in which it emerged. In the years preceding the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., and especially in the years which followed it, the role of the Rabbi in the religion of Israel replaced the centrality of both Prophet and Priest. With the adaptation of Rabbinic Judaism to the conditions of the diaspora, the emphasis which had previously

⁶"One of the commonest and oldest privileges that men took for themselves is that of turning a noun into a verb." Edward Horowitz, *How the Hebrew Language Grew* (New York: Jewish Education Committee, 1960), 205.

⁷The Hebrew word *'olam* combines the notion of on-going time ("forever") and on-going space. It was employed in a way which embraces an expanded sense of "universe" as well as the more immediate sense of "the world". Indeed, given a geocentric conception of the universe, the two imply each other.

been placed on sacred Person (Prophet, Priest, and King), and sacred Place (the Holy Land, Jerusalem, and the Holy Temple) shifted to sacred Scripture (the Torah, or Five Books of Moses, the entire canon of the Hebrew Bible, and later the Mishnah and the entire Talmud). Jewish religion structured itself as a tradition of laws, customs and folklore based upon the interpretation of the Torah, with the Rabbi serving as scholarly interpreter and pious representative of that tradition.

By becoming a portable, text-based tradition, Judaism was enabled to adapt itself and survive into the present era. The conservative yet flexible emphasis on textual interpretation as the mode of cultivating, preserving and the transmitting tradition, accommodated earlier elements of the tradition, such as an attachment to the land of Israel, the memory of the functions of both Prophet and Priest, and the expectation of a Messiah, which at least began as the expectation of the restoration of national sovereignty under a divinely anointed King. Such elements were accommodated, at least as literary themes. But for the sake of the unity and coherence of this tradition, it was essential that the centrality of the Torah and the authority of the Rabbis interpreting it not be compromised. Thus, as the Rabbinic tradition sought to define itself in the context of its increasingly Christian, and later, Islamic surroundings,

the associations of further claims to revelation with faiths that established themselves as being other than Judaism, and the defined and closed canon of scriptural authority . . . led Judaism, at least formally, to declare that it was done with prophecy. "Better sage than prophet" counsels one rabbinic saying (*Baba Batra* 12a). . . . [Yet] Jewry, even before the emergence of Kabbalah, was dotted occasionally with various figures who claimed one degree or another of direct access to heavenly truth.⁸

With the crystallization of the biblical canon, it was no longer considered desirable to be a Prophet who might bring down further revelations, and threaten the authority of the Bible as it was understood by the Rabbis; with local congregational

⁸Ibid., 146.

prayer replacing Temple sacrifices of animals and grain, it was no longer possible to function as much of a Priest.⁹ The Rabbi became the source of explicit religious authority, but such authority encompassed neither the implicit prophetic function of making contact with the Divine, nor the implicit priestly function of extending a tangible sense of such contact to the larger community. As religious authority became identified with scholarship, these charismatic functions (that is, functions related to the "gifts of the holy spirit") became marginalized.

Formally speaking, prophecy had ended with the destruction of the Temple; prophetic voices had been "taken from the prophets and given" either to the sages or to "fools and children"--depending on which version of the ancient saying one chooses. Since then, again in a formal sense, we "pay no attention to heavenly voices."¹⁰ Of course, we know that such pronouncements were often observed in the breach . . . especially in the sorts of popular mystical circles from which Hasidism sprang.¹¹

Even as the shift to a Rabbinic conception of Jewish tradition was taking place, people who had charismatic abilities continued to appear. And while divine intercession was not to be expected of the Rabbis, the Rabbis themselves did not regard this as necessarily an objectionable thing. It was recognized, particularly in emergency situations, that having members of the community who were good at obtaining results from God might be highly desirable, provided they did not undermine Rabbinic authority and unravel the fabric of Rabbinic tradition. Thus it appears that after a period of struggle and adjustment, the role of divine intercession was assigned to the figure of the Tzaddiq, and being a "Righteous" individual came to mean more than

⁹The lineages of Priests and Levites ("Cohen"s and "Levy"s, etc.) continue to be traced into our day, but they have a very limited role in contemporary synagogue ritual.

¹⁰The first of these Talmudic references is to *Baba Batra* 12a, and the second, *Eruvin* 7a.

¹¹Arthur Green, "Typologies of Leadership and the Hasidic Zaddiq", in *Jewish Spirituality* vol. 2, ed. Arthur Green (New York: Crossroads Press, 1987), 129.

maintaining a certain standard of ethical behavior. What sort of picture might be put together from existing sources, of just how and why this took place?

Charismatic Models for the Tzaddiq

It is in and around the tumultuous First Century C.E. that the origins may be found, not only for the Christian tradition of the Christhood of Jesus, but for the Jewish tradition of the archetype of the Tzaddiq. Geza Vermes has suggested that other Jewish charismatics of this period provide a context for understanding the historical role of Jesus.¹² They also provide a context for understanding the origins of the Tzaddiq tradition. While these historical parallels, moreover, must be considered quite separate from the development of the notion of Christhood in Christian theology, within the Jewish tradition no such dramatic break between history and theology occurs. Jewish wonder-workers of the First Century B.C.E. and the First Century C.E. not only provide an historical background for the idea of the Tzaddiq which emerges in the Second Century Rabbinic literature, but they are cited within this literature, and in subsequent Tzaddiq literature, as exemplars of the role of the Tzaddiq upon whom the Tzaddiq tradition is based.

There are stories in both the Mishnah and Gemmara about the Jewish wonder-workers of this period, not all of whom were considered Rabbis. The miracles they performed included casting out demons, invoking healing, and bringing rain, and receiving direct communications from God, via a *Bat Qol* or divine "Voice" (literally, a "daughter of a Voice"). These men made a strong impression on their Rabbinic

¹²See the section by Geza Vermes on "Jewish Charismatics" (69-80) in *Jesus the Jew* (Glasgow: William Collins Sons, 1973). I have chosen not to enter into a discussion of whether Jesus might indeed be regarded as an historical example of a Jewish charismatic (or "Hasid", in Vermes's usage of the term), though Vermes makes a case for viewing him in this light.

colleagues, who, by their own accounts, both appreciated them and had difficulty integrating them within the emerging Rabbinic tradition.

The Mishnah tells us about Honi the Circle-maker, a Galilean wonder-worker who lived a little before the time of Jesus, and who is not identified as a Rabbi. In a time of drought in Israel, Honi called for much-needed rain by forming a circle around himself¹³ and issuing God the following ultimatum:

Lord of the world, thy children have turned to me because I am as a son of the house [an informally adopted family member] before thee. I swear by thy great name that I will not move hence until thou be merciful towards thy children.¹⁴

We are told that Honi was successful not only in bringing rain, but in commanding God to deliver a substantial rainfall. The leader of the Sanhedrin (Rabbinical Academy) at that time, R. Shim'on ben Shetaḥ, responded to reports of Honi's actions with grudging admiration. He declared:

"If you weren't Honi, I would excommunicate you. But what can I do with you, since you sin (*mithateh*) before God, and He does what you want, just like a son who misbehaves (*hoteh*) towards his father, and he does for him what he wants. Of you Scripture says (Prov. 23:25), "Your father and mother shall be happy with you, your parent rejoice."¹⁵

God's indulgence of Honi is taken as evidence that he is indeed accepted as a member, so to speak, of God's household. This notion of being included with God in the realm of divine endeavor, might be seen as beginning to prepare the way for an archetypal conception of the role of the Tzaddiq.

¹³The text, *'agal 'igul*, might be read "he caked a cake". Some scholars would suggest that rather than merely drawing a circle around himself, Honi formed a circular "cake" of earth such as those which may be formed to hold moisture around a tree, and then placed himself, like a tree, at its center. See *'Olamam Shel Hakhamim* (Tel Aviv: Everyman's University, 1977), 53. Although this is not a crucial distinction, it not only suggests an element of sympathetic magic, but corresponds to the motif of the Tzaddiq being a tree, of which a number of examples may be found in this chapter.

¹⁴Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*, 70, quoting Mishnah Ta'anit 3:8.

¹⁵This translation, from Mishnah Ta'anit 3:8, is my own. In *Jesus the Jew*, Vermes quotes a part of this response in a way that does not convey its full power.

The Talmudic relates a more detailed account of the actual prayer technique of R. Hanina ben Dosa, who lived towards the end of the First Century. R. Hanina was known for his prodigious concentration in prayer.¹⁶ Thus, when the son of R. Yohanan ben Zakkai, the outstanding rabbinical authority of the day, became extremely ill, R. Yohanan asked R. Hanina to pray on his son's behalf. Skeptical Rabbis checked and found that indeed, the son of Rabbi Yohanan, who was at home some distance away, revived at the time of Hanina's prayer! When they ask him if he was therefore a prophet, Hanina replied:

I am no prophet, nor am I a prophet's son, but this is how I am favoured.
If my prayer is fluent in my mouth, I know that he (the sick man) is favoured;
if not, I know that it (the disease) is fatal.¹⁷

Hanina's response indicates an element of submission to the will of God which is not apparent in the story of Honi. He functions in relation to God neither as the commander nor as the commanded, but his cooperation is such that his very request serves to monitor the divine response. His method of prayer suggests area of convergence of the human and the divine. Indeed, there seems to be a foreshadowing, here, of the emphasis elaborated in later Hasidic teaching in which the Tzaddiq is identified specifically as a "channel", and as a mouth-piece for words in which divinity is manifest.¹⁸ R. Yohanan himself does not contend with R. Hanina; referring to himself in the third person, he acknowledges that his own prayers would not have been

¹⁶Vermes relates the following anecdote (ibid., 73): "When Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa prayed, a poisonous reptile bit him, but he did not interrupt his prayer. They (the onlookers) departed and found the same 'snake' dead at the opening of its hole. 'Woe to the man', they exclaimed, 'bitten by a snake, but woe to the snake which has bitten Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa.'"

¹⁷Ibid., 75, quoting the Babylonian Talmud, Brakhot, 34b, and the Talmud Yerushami, 9d.

¹⁸See Idel, "Perceptions of Kabbalah", 73-6.

efficacious: "Though ben Zakkai had squeezed his head between his knees all day long, no attention would have been paid to him."¹⁹

Although neither of them claimed to be a Prophet, both Honi and Hanina are related within the Rabbinic tradition to the Prophet Elijah. The reference relating Hanina to Elijah is indirect:

The world was created [in a negative sense] for the sake of Ahab the son of Omri and [in a positive sense] for the sake of Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa. For Ahab this world, for Hanina the world to come.²⁰

The obvious intention of this passage is not to suggest an affinity between Hanina and Ahab, but between Hanina and Ahab's unnamed nemesis, Elijah. Clearly, the implication is that the world was created for the sake of Hanina inasmuch as he fulfilled a role like that of Elijah. The fact that Elijah's name is not mentioned, strengthens the sense that Hanina corresponds to Elijah not in a personal sense, but in the sense of his being, like Elijah, someone whose closeness to God fulfills the purpose of God's creation. As Vermes puts it, "although the prototype of the wicked is King Ahab, that of the benefactor of mankind is not Ahab's contemporary, Elijah, but the prophet's latter-day heir, Hanina."²¹ Actually, as Elijah lived in the eighth century B.C.E., it is he who would have been the "prototype", in the sense of the original prophetic type. I believe it would be more accurate to say that the effect of this passage is to indicate the Prophetic "archetype" to which Honi corresponds.

The Midrash Rabbah compares Honi to Elijah as follows: "No man has existed comparable to Elijah and Honi the Circle-Drawer, causing mankind to serve God."²²

¹⁹Vermes, *Jesus*, 74.

²⁰Ibid., 77, quoted from the Babylonian Talmud, *Brakhot* 61b.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., 72, quoted from *Genesis Rabbah* 13:7.

In this case Elijah is named directly, and yet there is an element of indirection in the construction of this statement, as well. It begins by declaring that both men were outstanding individuals, and one would expect it to conclude with a characterization of their special abilities or their nearness to God. Instead, it seems to take the spiritual attainments of these men for granted; the point that is made is that their use of their capacities succeeded in drawing others to God. Here, indeed, we find a new element in the emerging idea of the Jewish spiritual Master: such a person not only offers prayers or performs miracles for the benefit of others, but does so in a way which inspires others and strengthen their relationship to God.

Although apparently exclusive claims are made for both Hanina and Honi, I think there is justification for regarding this simply as a matter of literary convention. Even if the respective authors of these statements originally meant to claim that only Hanina, or only Honi, resembles Elijah, subsequent readers of both texts can be expected to have gathered that they identified, between them, a special category of people who are like Elijah. Thus I am suggesting that these texts not only point towards special individuals, but towards a special *type* of individual--a type, represented by the Prophet Elijah, which is no longer formally identified as "Prophecy" and which remains, for the time being, unnamed. Such individuals bring about miracles by means of prayer, but there is an emphasis, as well, on the inspiration they provide for others, and on their own being somehow fulfilling the purpose of the creation of the world.

There is evidence, as well, outside of Rabbinic literature that such men left a deep impression upon the Jewish community. Thus we find Josephus writing of Honi as "a certain Onias, who, being a righteous man and dear to God, had once in a rainless period prayed to God to end the drought, and God heard his prayer and sent rain."²³

²³Ibid.

Here, indeed, we find an early reference to a wonder-worker as a "righteous man", that is, a Tzaddiq! It may be that the intention of Josephus was simply the ethical sense of the term, that he simply meant to indicate that Honi, although not a Rabbi, was nevertheless "righteous" and divinely authorized. Yet this quotation nevertheless provides an early example of the charismatic individual being identified as a Tzaddiq. Whatever Josephus's intention may have been, subsequent readers, seeing such a statement, might well have begun to associate the term Tzaddiq with a category of people who have a special talent for intercessory prayer.

An Early Charismatic "Tzaddiq"

Before concluding this discussion of early models of the spiritual role of the Tzaddiq, I should mention one more figure who appeared somewhat earlier, and was specifically identified with the term "Tzaddiq". Back in the third century B.C.E., a charismatic figure known as Shim'on ha-Tzaddiq was the High Priest in Jerusalem. He is a difficult figure to pin down historically; not all scholars are convinced that the accounts of him in the Talmud, in Josephus, and in the Second Book of Maccabees, are based upon the same figure.²⁴ But the historicity of the individual is not my primary concern, here; it is the emergence of precedents, be they historical or legendary, for what would later be defined in terms of a spiritual idea of the Tzaddiq.

Shim'on ha-Tzaddiq opens the actual teachings of the popular "Pirkey Avot" section of the Mishnah with an authoritative statement which effectively summarizes the Rabbinic world-view: "On three things the world stands: on (the study of) the Torah, on worship (*'avodah*), and on redemptive deeds of loving-kindness (*gemilut*

²⁴See the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, s.v. "Simeon the Just", by Uriel Rappaport. Also, the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Simeon the Just", by Schulim Ochser. Except for the references to the Mishnah, and where otherwise noted, my references are based upon the latter article.

hasadim).²⁵ There, he is identified as one of the last Members of the Great Synagogue (*anshay knesset ha-gdolah*), and the chain of scholars which produced both Hillel and Shammai may be traced back to him. He is identified in the Talmud (Yoma 39b; Men. 109b; Yer. Yoma 4:3) with seven miracles that occurred in his service as High Priest. In particular, the miracle that the fire on the altar required little wood, and that the Eternal Light in the Temple never failed, suggest that he had a special ability to invoke the presence of the Divine. The Talmudic sources go on to describe how, one year, on the Day of Atonement, instead of being ushered into and out of the Holy of Holies by a figure clad in white, he was accompanied by a figure clad in black, and only on his way in; from this he knew soon he would die, as indeed he did, seven days later. Shim'on ha-Tzaddiq represents the spirituality of a by-gone era in one particularly significant way. It is said (Yoma 30b; Sotah 7) that it was following his death that the practice was abandoned of reciting the Tetragrammaton (the four letter proper name of God) aloud in prayer.

The best-known tale related in the Talmud (Yoma 69a) regarding Shim'on ha-Tzaddiq relates to his charisma, both in the sense of his possessing extraordinary spiritual powers, as well as in the more popular sense of personal magnetism and political influence. The story is about his meeting with Alexander the Great. Upon seeing Shim'on approaching, Alexander immediately dismounted from his chariot and prostrated himself before him, and explained that he had seen him in a vision, in which Shim'on had predicted his victory. Shim'on ha-Tzaddiq then forestalled a looming religious and political disaster, by explaining to Alexander that following his victory, it would not be possible to put up a statue of him in the Holy Temple. He could,

²⁵Mishnah Avot, 1:2. (The translation is my own.) Might his reference to that upon which "the world stands", be seen as a foreshadowing of the idea that it is the Tzaddiq who is "the foundation of the world"?

however, guarantee Alexander's immortality among the people of Israel in another way: by declaring that all sons of priests born that year be named "Alexander"!

According to Josephus, the reason Shim'on was called "the Tzaddiq" was "because of the piety of his life and his benevolence toward his compatriots", and according to ben Sirah, "because he took thought for his people."²⁶ Thus it appears, in the case of this very early Tzaddiq figure, that the notion of *tzaddiq* was already being associated with a sense of concern, not only for one's own righteousness (as in the biblical model of Noah), but for the welfare of others. And yet, even as he may have been the earliest model of a spiritual conception of the role of a Tzaddiq, Shim'on ha-Tzaddiq is recalled in Jewish tradition very much as a mythic hero. This is exemplified in the following poem by Ben Sirah, which was later incorporated into synagogue services for the Day of Atonement:

Great among his brethren and the glory of his people was Simeon . . .
in whose time the House was renovated, and in whose days the Temple was
fortified. . . . How glorious was he . . . when he came out from the sanctuary
[on the Day of Atonement]! Like a morning star from between the clouds
and like the fall moon on the feast days.²⁷

Charismatic versus Rabbinic Authority

Although there were rumblings in the sources considered thus far, an acute crisis had yet to appear between the religious authority of the Rabbis, and the spiritual authority of the charismatic individual. The best evidence of such a break is *not* to be found, I believe, in the Talmudic accounts of Jesus, as they reflect, retroactively, a defense of Judaism against the development of Christianity, and "partake rather of the nature of vituperation and polemic against the founder of a hated party".²⁸ Concerning

²⁶Oscher, "Simeon the Just".

²⁷Rappaport, "Simeon the Just".

R. Eli'ezer ben Hyrkanus, on the other hand, we find the Talmud preserving a sensitive and detailed account of a confrontation between the nascent Rabbinic establishment and a charismatic Rabbi whom it respected but nevertheless rejected.²⁹

It is worth noting from the outset that in the Talmudic record of the crisis involving R. Eli'ezer, he is not presented primarily as a miracle-worker, nor as an outstanding model of devotion to God and his fellow man. Rather, he is a Rabbinical authority whose judgement in matters of *halakha* (the "way" of Jewish law) reflected a prodigious knowledge of earlier precedents, and a conservative commitment to them. Thus his approach to Jewish law was implicitly opposed to that of innovators such as R. Aqiva.

There was one outstanding occasion, the "Tale of Akhnai", when he substantiated his halakhic rulings on the basis of divine support.³⁰ According to the

²⁸Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, (New York: Macmillan, 1925), 18-9.

²⁹Klausner (*ibid.*, 36-47) points to accounts in the Talmud in which R. Eli'ezer, who lived in the generation immediately following Jesus, when questioned whether "such-a-one" (meaning Jesus) had a place in the world to come, would not deny it, and admitted that his fondness for a saying of the *Minim* (Christian "Sectarians") was the cause of his being arrested by the Roman authorities. (The rather obscure saying, "For the hire of a harlot hath she gathered them, and unto the hire of a harlot shall they return," would seem to mean something like the expression in contemporary "computerese", "garbage in, garbage out".) Moreover, a number of sayings of R. Eli'ezer "bear a resemblance to sayings in the Gospels. For example, his saying, 'Everyone who has a morsel of food in his basket and says, What shall I eat tomorrow? is of little faith' (*Sota* 45b), corresponds to the saying in Matthew (vi. 30-34) The short prayer of R. Eli'ezer, 'Do thy will in heaven above and give comfort to them that fear thee here below and do what is good in thine eyes' (*Berchoth* 29b; *T.Ber.* III, II) corresponds to the prayer which Jesus taught . . . 'thy will be done, as in heaven so also on earth' (Matt. vi. 9-11; Luke xi. 2); and to the passage in the Gospel, 'Glory to God in the highest and peace to the children of men' (Luke ii. 14)." (p. 44) Indeed, further understanding of the affinity between R. Eli'ezer and Jesus may facilitate a better understanding Jesus in a Rabbinic context.

³⁰The oven is called *akhnai*, which means "serpent", and the account is known as "the Tale of Akhnai". While the term may have originally referred to the name of the owner of the oven, it has been associated with this particular kind of oven, which is made of overlapping tiles, and which might therefore be associated with the skin of a snake. The Gemmara offers the theory for the name, "that they encompassed it with arguments as a snake, and proved it unclean." Is there buried here, the suggestion that

Talmudic editor, R. Eli'ezer brought forth "every imaginable argument" against the consensus of his colleagues in the Sanhedrin (Rabbinical Academy), who denied that a certain kind of oven could be made ritually acceptable for Passover use.³¹ Once all of his rational arguments in defense of the use of such an oven were rejected, R. Eli'ezer resorted to a number of super-natural proofs: at his command a tree spontaneously uprooted itself and moved to another place, a stream ran backwards, and even the walls of the House of Learning in which this disputation was taking place, began to totter. None of these proofs are accepted, however, by his colleagues. Nor does he appear to have exclusive command of such phenomena; at the command of R. Yehoshua the walls stopped falling, and out of respect for both Rabbis, it is related, "they are still standing thus inclined".

in this tale the Rabbinic tradition swallows its claim of being privy to divine revelation, and therefore its premise for existence? The expression resurfaces in the Zohar, and later in the seventeenth century Kabbalah, where it is related to the idea of the Tzaddiq. Thus Gershom Scholem, in n. 58, on p. 289 of *Mystical Shape*, referring to his article "Righteous One", mentions "an extremely peculiar mythical motif containing something truly archetypal, in the Jungian sense [but not necessarily in ours]. According to the Kabbalistic idea, the righteous live in Paradise in caverns--evidently corresponding to burial caverns in this world. In *'Emek ha-Melekh* (Amsterdam, 1648), one of the most important texts of the later Kabbalah, we find the following passage (f. 88d): "All of the caves of the righteous are in the form of an 'akhna'i", that is, a serpent biting its own tail, as mentioned in the *Sifra di-Tseni'utha* (Zohar, II, 179a), in order to sweeten the sting of the Serpent." . . . *'Emek ha-Melekh* uses this image of the Uroboros as an eschatological image for the final resting place of the righteous, in which everything returns to its original harmony and unity [and] . . . the poison of the serpent no longer kills, but is "sweetened"--that is, taken up and absorbed in the eschatological harmony of all things."

³¹I have taken direct quotations and generally paraphrased the account related in Baba Mezi'a, 59a-b. See *The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nezikin*, vol. 1, trans. Isidore Epstein (London: Soncino Press, 1935), 352-355. Vermes touches on this incident only very briefly, in his section on "Charismatics and Pharisees" (80-82), perhaps because his focus is on parallels between the ministry of Jesus and that of contemporary wonder-working rabbis, and not on the fate of charismatics within the Rabbinic tradition. Vermes does mention (81), in reference to this affair, that "the one sphere in which supernatural proof was judged totally inadmissible was the definition of lawful conduct (*halakhah*)." Thus Vermes presents the rejection of R. Eli'ezer as a *fait accompli*, rather than as a painful part of the process by which Rabbinic tradition came to define its own authority in terms of a consensus of the scholarly elite, as opposed to a charismatic dictatorship.

R. Eli'ezer then asks for proof "from heaven". Indeed a *Bat Qol* cries out, "Why do ye dispute with R. Eli'ezer, seeing that in all matters the halakhah agrees with him!" But R. Yehoshua refutes the Voice on the basis of scriptural evidence, quoting Deut. 30: 12, "for it is not in heaven . . . (the original verse continues, "but on earth, to do all the words of this Torah.)" R. Yirmiyahu interprets this in democratic terms (based on a deliberate misreading of Ex. 23:2), to mean "incline after the majority".³²

It is further related that Elijah the Prophet observed that the divine response to all of this was to laugh, "My children have prevailed over Me (*nitzhuni*)! My children have prevailed over Me!" So ends the debate, with God, as it were, submitting to the collective authority of the Rabbis. Although it is indicated that this was a cry of laughter, I am impressed by what seems to me to be an ironic and painful element in this divine acknowledgement of the restriction of the authority of the divinely inspired individual, in favor of the scholarly elite.

The Talmud goes on to describe the bitter practical consequences of this parting of the ways for those on both sides of the question. In the face of this dramatic confrontation, all of the vessels R. Eli'ezer had declared kosher were burnt, and the Sanhedrin voted to excommunicate him. R. Aqiva volunteered to be the one to let him know, "lest an unsuitable person go and inform him, and thus destroy the whole world." A model of discretion, he dressed in black and sat some distance away. When R. Eli'ezer asked what happened, R. Aqiva responded, "Master, it appears to me that thy companions hold aloof from thee." R. Eli'ezer then tore his clothing, removed his shoes, joined R. Aqiva sitting on the ground (all of these being signs of mourning), and wept.

³²The original quotation actually declares, "do not incline after the majority, for evil!"

It is recorded in the Gemmara that "the world was then smitten": a third of the olive, wheat and barley crops were destroyed, and "everything at which R. Eli'ezer cast his eyes was burned up." Fore-shadowing, perhaps, the tradition that "the Tzaddiq is the foundation of the world", the welfare of the world appears to have been very much tied to the fate of R. Eli'ezer. But it seems to have been the "world" of Rabbinic Judaism which was most directly affected. Following R. Eli'ezer's excommunication, Rabban Gamliel, who was the President of the Sanhedrin, as well as R. Eli'ezer's brother-in-law, narrowly escaped drowning at sea. Ima Shalom (literally, "Mother Peace"), who is both the sister of Rabban Gamliel and the wife of R. Eli'ezer, tries to prevent her husband from reciting the *Tahanun* prayers (of mourning for the Holy Temple), because she fears the consequences of his giving vent to his wounded feelings. Sure enough, one day she inadvertently allows him to recite these prayers and just as she discovers her mistake, she hears it announced that her brother has died!

Later, on his deathbed, R. Eli'ezer was visited by Rabbis Yehoshua and Aqiva, along with R. El'azar ben Azariah. He declared, "I shall be surprized if they die a natural death . . . because they did not come to study under me." (Indeed, R. Aqiva is later horribly martyred by the Romans, with iron combs.) Then he continued, "Woe for my two arms, that are like two scrolls of the Law and that are about to depart from the world. For were all the seas ink, and all the reeds quills, and all the people scribes they would not suffice to write all the Scripture and Mishnah I learned . . . and my pupils have taken no more than a paint brush takes from the palette." When R. Eli'ezer died, R. Aqiva tore his clothing and his hair and wept, "Woe is me for thee, Rabbi! Woe is me for thee, Rabbi! For thou hast left a whole generation orphaned." Quoting II Kings 2:12, he cried out, "My father! My father! 'The chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof! I have many coins to change, but no one to accept them.'" R. Yehoshua also wept "Rabbi! Rabbi!" He declared the ban against R. Eli'ezer annulled, and indeed,

many of his rulings were later restored. In defense of R. Eli'ezer, R. Yehoshua said "You should not seek to refute the lion after he is dead." The Rabbis generally acknowledged that "with the death of Eliezer, the scroll of the Law was hidden away."³³

By voting to excommunicate R. Eli'ezer, the rabbis sealed their conviction that it is the consensus of learned scholars, rather than the God-given powers of the charismatic individual, which would be regarded as the source of religious authority in Judaism. Yet the Rabbinic tradition expresses considerable ambivalence, even as it documents a crucial turning-point in its own development. It is to the credit of the advocates of this newly emerging tradition that they were sufficiently candid to preserve a detailed account of their decision, and the high price it exacted.

Against the background of such an experience, it is not difficult to project that the Rabbis would have sought to define a function, distinct from the office of Rabbi, to which the use of charismatic powers might safely be relegated. In contemporary terminology, they needed a way of differentiating between "religious" authority--the authorization to decide matters of *halakha*--and an implicitly "spiritual" connection to God. Although "Prophecy", in the sense of divine and poetic inspiration, as well as knowledge of the future, might be wished away upon children and the insane, it continued to be acknowledged within the Rabbinic tradition that there were individuals in the Jewish community who had access to the Divine. Sorcery (*kishuf*) was condemned in the Mishnah, yet following the destruction of the Second Temple, the Rabbis did not want to label all exercise of para-normal powers as demonic, when they

³³I have based this paragraph, and taken its direct quotations, from the account of the death of R. Eli'ezer in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, s.v. "Eliezer ben Hyrcanus", by Yitzhak Dov Gilat. The Talmudic references are to Snh. 68a; TJ Sha. 2:6, 5b; Nid. 7b; Git. 83a and Sot. 49b.

might in fact be wielded by righteous persons for righteous purposes in alignment with the will of God. Heschel summarizes the transition as follows:

Rabbi Shimon ben Shetah, one of the most prominent scholars of the Second Temple period, known for the vigorous action he took to eradicate witchcraft, looked askance at miracle working. He considered Honi's action impudent. Scholars who followed the teachings of Rabbi Yishmael did not accept the audacious belief that tzaddikim had a say in Heaven, and later generations made rare mention of it. However, during the period of the Amoraim in Palestine, the belief that the tzaddikim could influence God's decisions was apparently widely accepted. "Tzaddikim govern the actions of the Holy One, blessed be He." "The Tzaddik decrees, the Holy One fulfills." "The Holy One decrees, the tzaddik annuls."³⁴

The Intolerance of Tzaddiqim

In the light of the traumatic confrontation with R. Elie'ezer, it makes sense for the Rabbis to have chosen the figure of the Tzaddiq to represent the righteous and charismatic individual. The most central example of such a Tzaddiq to emerge in the Talmud and Midrash is the Second Century Rabbi, Shim'on bar Yoḥai. Yet the problem of such characters imposing the use of their powers in an intolerant and dictatorial way, continues with R. Shim'on. Thus the Talmud relates a story which demonstrates the hazard of the empowerment of R. Shim'on: When they emerged from twelve years of seclusion in a cave, where they were hiding from the Romans and penetrating the secrets of the Torah, R. Shim'on and his son, R. El'azar, saw a farmer "engaged in plowing and sowing. Enraged at such concern for temporal matters, whatever they cast their eyes upon was immediately burnt up." R. Shim'on was then instructed by a Heavenly Voice to go back to his cave for another year. Whereas it had been declared that the world was created for the sake of R. Ḥanina ben Dosa, here the Bat Qol declares "Have ye emerged to destroy My world: Return to your cave!" When

³⁴Heschel, *Passion for Truth*, 70.

they came out, a year later, it is related that "wherever R. Eleazar wounded, R. Shimon healed. Said he to him: 'My son! You and I are sufficient for the world.'"³⁵

Thus concern is expressed in the Jewish tradition that the powers, even of those who are most saintly and spiritually advanced, may develop out of step with the needs and realities of this world. Even as the spiritual power of the Tzaddiq is distinguished from the more socially circumscribed authority of the Rabbi to legislate religious law, it remains subject to abuse. And yet, despite his mistake, R. Shim'on emerges as the model of the Tzaddiq ideal. The respect which is accorded to R. Shim'on is perhaps not so difficult to understand when he is considered in the context not only of R. Eli'ezer but, for example, of Moses, who according to the biblical account, also had difficulty tolerating the conditions of the world. Thus he killed the Egyptian, and struck the rock, and descending from Mount Sinai he cast down the Ten Commandments.³⁶

Tzaddiq versus Hasid

It would therefore have been reasonable for the Rabbis to have identified the charismatically gifted individual with the model of the "righteous", as a safeguard against the abuse of divine powers for selfish pursuits. There is, perhaps, yet another reason why this term was chosen, in preference to a second characterization of a type of Jewish piety (as distinct from a formal religious role) which was already well-established by the beginning of the Common Era? I am referring to the figure of the Hasid, which Gershom Scholem regarded as the legitimate Jewish conception of a spiritual type.³⁷ In the references in the Talmud, the *hasidim rishonim*, or "Original

³⁵See Isidore Epstein, *Babylonian Talmud: Seder Mo'ed*, vol. 1, Shabbath 33b, 15-7.

³⁶Exodus 2:11-2, Numbers 20:11-2, Exodus 32:19-20.

Hasidism", are characterized in terms of an "utter devotion to fulfilling the *mitzvot* [commandments] with a total disregard for any danger".³⁸ I suspect that it is precisely this element of extremism which discouraged the Rabbis from identifying the charismatic individual with the model of the Hasid. Rather than encouraging fanaticism, they may have hoped, by employing the term Tzaddiq, to undercut it.

Thus it made sense for the Rabbis of the Talmud to identify the charismatic individual with the moderate figure of the Tzaddiq, although they would have had to stretch the description of this simple, ethical ideal considerably, in order to make it cover the figure of the charismatic spiritual master. And yet, in the reference by Josephus to Honi, as well as in the figure of Shim'on ha-Tzaddiq, there were precedents which may well have paved the way for a more spiritual connotation for the term. How and when did a specifically spiritual idea of the Tzaddiq first make its appearance?

The Tzaddiq in Rabbinic Literature

In "The *Zaddiq as Axis Mundi*", Arthur Green specifies that "it is possible to delineate two general strands" in the Rabbinic literature of the Tzaddiq. Thus an ethical conception of the Tzaddiq continued to develop, even as a spiritual conception of this figure emerged:

It is in the former sense primarily that Joseph is the archetypical *zaddiq*: his righteousness is acquired through suffering, and passes its greatest test in his conquest of passion when confronting the advances of Potiphar's wife. In the latter sense, it is rather Moses who is the ideal type, recognized from birth as containing the hidden light of creation or as being the bearer of the divine presence in the world.³⁹

³⁷See Chapter One. Indeed, in *Jesus the Jew*, 69, Vermes refers to characters such as Honi as "the ancient *Hasidim* or Devout".

³⁸Elazar Hurvitz, s.v. "Hasidim", in the *Encyclopedia Judaica*.

³⁹Green, "*Axis Mundi*", 331. Green's use of the term "archetypical" is simply a paraphrase for "ideal type". Midrahshic accounts of Moses' birth are clearly more mythical than "archetypical", in the sense in which I am using the term.

Green cites an early midrashic reference in which these two strands are intertwined. In Midrash Rabbah 8:4, God looks ahead to the deeds of mankind before creating Adam, deliberately turning towards "the righteous" and not "the wicked", so as not to be dissuaded from creating human beings. In this case it appears that it is the simple ethical meaning of the term that is intended. Yet a parallel interpretation following the first (in Midrash Rabbah 8:7), and attributed to a different Rabbi, describes God taking counsel with the souls of the Tzaddiqim before the creation--not of man, but of the world. Green suggests that "the same Aggadic [legendary] motif seems to have slipped into the second usage."⁴⁰ I believe that this is something more than an accidental "slippage", however. Going back to the midrashic source, the passage presents itself as a commentary on I Chronicles 4:23, which declares: "These were the makers . . . among plantations and hedges; there they dwelt with the king in his work."⁴¹ The implication is that these Tzaddiqim dwelt with God in Eden, where they actually participated in the creation of the world.

Thus I believe that there is an element of "slippage", here, not from an ethical to a spiritual conception of Tzaddiqim, but from a mythic to an archetypal understanding of their spiritual function. The assumption that certain Tzaddiqim existed before the creation of the world, and were partners with God in creation, opens the door to a theological challenge to there being single divine Creator. But given that such a Midrash may never have been meant to be taken literally, how would it have been understood?⁴² As I understand it, the Midrash is indicating that the reflection of God

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²For a discussion of the principle that Aggadah is not meant to be taken literally, see Judah Goldin "Freedom and Restraint of Haggadah", in *Midrash and Literature*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick (New Haven: Yale University, 1986).

which takes place in the minds of Tzaddiqim--or, the reflection in the minds of Tzaddiqim which is an innate capacity of the mind of God--is somehow fundamental to the very origin and purpose of the creation. Thus an etiological description of Tzaddiqim coming "first" is meant to imply an ontological understanding of their being primary to the creation.

Thus the Midrash quoted above provides an overview of the entire (ethical and spiritual) Tzaddiq tradition. The specific jumping off point for a spiritual view of the Tzaddiq is "a particularly oftquoted dictum" from the Mishnaic Rabbi, El'azar ben Shamu'a, which is quoted in the Talmud (Tractate Haggigah 12b):

Upon what does the earth stand? . . . R. Eleazar ben Shamu'a says:
Upon a single pillar, and *zaddiq* is its name. Thus scripture says:
"*Zaddiq* is the foundation of the world."⁴³

This seems at first glance to be quite different than later (Talmudic and subsequent) traditions, which speak of each generation being sustained by a certain number of Tzaddiqim. This is connected, however, to subsequent traditions, by the understanding of R. El'azar's "single pillar" refers to a singular principle rather than a single person. Such an understanding then makes sense, for example, of the statement of R. Shim'on bar Yohai which is related in the Midrash (Genesis Rabbah 35:2):

"The world cannot exist without thirty *saddiqim* similar to our father Abraham. If there are thirty, twenty, ten or five *saddiqim* in the world, my son and I are among them. If there are two, we are they, and if one, it is I."⁴⁴

Green remarks that R. Shim'on "seems to shock us with his immodesty"⁴⁵ when he makes this declaration, but I very much doubt that the intention of the author of this

⁴³Green, "*Axis Mundi*", 331.

⁴⁴Although Green quotes this text, I have related the longer version cited by Paul Fenton in "Hierarchy of the Saints", p. 16, because of the importance of the association of the number thirty with Abraham in the discussion in the *Zohar Hadash*, cited below. Green includes only the second and third sentences I have quoted above.

⁴⁵Green, *Axis Mundi*, 332.

passage was to outrage a (modern) sense of propriety. Quite the contrary, it seems to me that the main idea of this passage is that whatever the number of Tzaddiqim who are in the world, the *function* of the Tzaddiq may be represented even in a single Tzaddiq. This is something which Bar Yohai knows, and bears witness to in this quotation, on the basis of experience which he has shared with his son, and most essentially, based upon his own experience.

This point emerges that much more strongly when it is considered in the context of the statement in the Babylonian Talmud (*Sukkah* 45b), which the Midrash most likely echoed:

Simon b. Yohay said: "I saw that the meritorious were few. If they be a thousand, my son and I are of them. If they be a hundred, my son and I are of them. If they be but two, they are my son and I." Are these numbers not a little low? Has it not been said that the first line of those who approach the Holy One blessed be He is eighteen thousand parasangs long? R. Simon's estimation applies only to those who contemplate God through a transparent mirror, whereas the other figure corresponds to those who contemplate him through an opaque mirror. But are those who contemplate him through a transparent mirror so few? Abaya said however that they are no less than thirty-six righteous ones who daily welcome the Divine Presence.⁴⁶

This then is the quotation which Scholem identified as the source of the tradition of there being specifically thirty-six Tzaddiqim, which emphasizes their level of mystical attainment. Elsewhere in the Babylonian Talmud (*Hullin* 92a), the numbers thirty, and forty-five, are mentioned as well:

R. Yohanan says: "There exist forty-five saints who sustain the world. I do not know whether thirty are here (in Babylon) and fifteen in the Land of Israel, or the opposite (. . .) R. Judah says that (the first figure) refers to the thirty gentile saints who sustains the nations of the world."⁴⁷

The striking thing about this quotation is that it presents the function of the Tzaddiq as a truly universal function which is ramified throughout the world and is

⁴⁶Fenton, "Hierarchy of the Saints", 15.

⁴⁷Ibid.

fulfilled by non-Jewish as well as Jewish Tzaddiqim. The assumption of most of the literature of Hasidism and Kabbalah is that Israel is the central People of the world, and the Tzaddiq their central figure. As far as I know, this more universal application of the Tzaddiq idea is not to be found in later Jewish mysticism. This is particularly ironic, given that in the Middle Ages, Islamic ideas of a certain number of saints who maintain the world developed side-by-side with the Jewish idea of the Tzaddiq.

The Medieval Archetype of the Tzaddiq

The material presented above, taken together, demonstrates the Midrashic roots of the conception of the Tzaddiq as an archetype. If this is not clearly the meaning of any single statement considered in isolation, such a picture emerges from the cumulative momentum of the Tzaddiq tradition, taken as a whole. Within this tradition what is first implicit later is made explicit. The idea that the singularity of the Tzaddiq function exists within the multiplicity of its representatives is thus stated explicitly in the medieval *Bahir*, in the quotation I cited in the Introduction to this thesis:

There is a single pillar that reaches from earth to heaven and *zaddiq* is its name. It is named for the *zaddiqim*. When there are *zaddiqim* in the world, it is strengthened; when there are not, it becomes weak. It bears the entire world, as Scripture says: "*Zaddiq* is the foundation of the world" (Prov. 10:25). If it is weakened, the world cannot exist. For that reason, the world is sustained even by the presence of a single *zaddiq* within it.⁴⁸

As it is the first major book of Kabbalah, the *Bahir* is likely to be an important work in tracing the history of mystical ideas of Judaism. This quotation clarifies R. El'azar's original idea, by specifying that numerous Tzaddiqim contribute collectively to the function of a single "pillar". Even if this weren't exactly what was meant in the earlier quotations from R. El'azar ben Shamu'a and R. Shim'on bar Yohai (and I believe

⁴⁸Green, "*Axis Mundi*", 333.

it is), this is clearly the meaning such material assumed in the eyes of medieval Kabbalists. Here, as in the quotation from R. El'azar, the Tzaddiq is not meant literally to be a pillar; it is the idea of the Tzaddiq being a "foundation" which is expressed this image of a pillar-like function. What the image describes, is the function of the archetype of divine support for the world, which is "strengthened" by the people who participate in it.

Later, in the *Zohar Hadash*, R. Shim'on is projected into a mystical adventure which consolidates and builds upon such a view:

"Abraham will surely be" (Gen. 18:18); YiHYeH (=will be) has a numerical equivalent of thirty.

One day Rabbi Simeon went out and saw that the world was completely dark, that its light was hidden. Said Rabbi Eleazar to him: "Come let us see what it is that the Lord desires." They went and found an angel in the form of a great mountain with thirty lashes of fire issuing from its mouth.

"What are you planning to do?" Rabbi Simeon asked the angel.

"I seek to destroy the world, for there are not thirty *zaddiqim* in this generation." Thus the Holy One, blessed be He, said concerning Abraham: "He will surely be," meaning that Abraham was equivalent to thirty."

Said Rabbi Simeon: "I beg of you, go before the Holy One and tell Him that I, the son of Yohai, am to be found in the world. . . . If there are not thirty righteous ones in the world, let it be twenty, as it is written: "I shall not do it for the sake of twenty" (Gen. 18:31). And if not twenty then ten . . . and if there are not ten, let it be two--my son and I. . . . And if there are not two, there is one, and I am he, as it is written: '*Zaddiq* [in the singular] is the foundation of the world.'"

In that hour a voice went forth from heaven saying: "Blessed is your lot, Rabbi Simeon, for God issues a decree above and you nullify it below! Surely of you it was written: 'He does the will of them that fear Him' (Ps. 145:19)."⁴⁹

Just as earlier, both Honi and R. Hanina were equated with Elijah, here R. Shim'on is equated with Abraham. It would appear that the author of this narrative was impressed by the quotation in Midrash Rabbah which spoke of thirty Tzaddiqim being

⁴⁹Ibid., 334. Although published somewhat later, the material in the *Zohar Hadash* reflects the same period as much of the *Zohar*, which first saw the light of day about a century after the *Bahir*. If, indeed, R. El'azar ben Shamu'a were the R. El'azar intended here, it might be a further confirmation that it is the entire Tzaddiq tradition that is the indirect subject of this tale. This, however, is unlikely, as the name of R. Shim'on's son is also El'azar.

"similar to our father Abraham", and decided that this opened the door to equating one with thirty. As Abraham might be counted for thirty Tzaddiqim, so might R. Shim'on, as indeed a mathematical proof was found to substantiate the idea that if even a single Tzaddiq will truly "be", it is equivalent to thirty.⁵⁰ Once again, the message seems to be that the function of the Tzaddiq--embodied in an actual Tzaddiq--is more important than any tally of Tzaddiqim.

Green is interested in this passage as an example of the exaltation of R. Shim'on. Certainly, this is a dramatic portrayal of Shim'on's heroic mastery of both angel and God, which results in his saving the entire planet from destruction! Yet even as it dramatizes R. Shim'on's heroism, it serves to illustrate that the essentiality of the Tzaddiq function which transcends both number and personality.

The Nature of the Tzaddiq According to the Bahir

This archetypal function is, however, only hinted at. It is not explicitly identified as a "function". Rather, by being named "Tzaddiq", it would seem to identify a person. Thus, in the passage below, the *Bahir* speaks of a single Tzaddiq, in apparent contradiction to the quotation cited earlier:

The Holy One, blessed be He, has one righteous man [Tzaddiq] in His world, and he is very precious to Him, because he maintains the world and he is the foundation. He (God) provides for him and lets him grow and cultivates him and guards him. He is loved and treasured above, loved and treasured below; feared and sublime above, feared and sublime below; comely and accepted above, comely and accepted below; and he is the foundation of all souls.⁵¹

⁵⁰This is based on the *gematria* (numerical equivalent) of the consonants in the Hebrew word *YiHYeH*, with the number thirty. Thus 10 (Y) + 5 (H) + 10 (Y) + 5 (H) = 30. A hidden irony of this tale may be that between Abraham and R. Shim'on, it is R. Shim'on who is the better bargainer. With Abraham, after all, God agreed to save Sodom only if ten of the Righteous had been there, whereas in the case of R. Shim'on God agreed to save the entire world, and on the basis of only a single Tzaddiq!

⁵¹Scholem, "The Righteous One", 94. Aryeh Kaplan, in his translation of *The Bahir* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1979), regards the Tzaddiq less as a "he", however,

Does the identification of the Tzaddiq as a person in this quotation contradict the earlier identification of the Tzaddiq as a "pillar" to which persons contribute? Are we talking about two different uses of the word Tzaddiq, one an abstract Sefirah, and the other a unique person? Are we, to borrow the terminology of Christian theology, speaking of two Persons rather than one? Again I would propose that the solution is to be found in reading individual passages in the context of the tradition which is comprise--and in this case, in the context of the text of the *Bahir* itself. Given that the two references appear together in a single book, it hardly seems likely that they would be meant to conflict with one another, or to describe two different phenomena. Even if it were suggested that these texts reflect two different sources, they are presented in the *Bahir* as complementary sections of a single work. Thus it is reasonable to expect that readers of the *Bahir* would consider these references to the exaltation of the Tzaddiq to be applicable to that single archetypal function which the *Bahir* states elsewhere that the human Tzaddiq represents.

Moreover, on close examination it appears that an element of ambiguity is to be found even within the single passage quoted above! The passage leaps from characterizing the Tzaddiq (apparently personally) as someone "very precious" to God, to characterizing the (presumably impersonal function of) "the foundation of all souls". It is significant that no particular name is given to such a Tzaddiq. Indeed it seems to me that the tension which makes this passage interesting, derives from its skirting very close to the heretical view that it is a particular person who created everyone else--without, of course, affirming such a view. Readers are thus left to determine for themselves that what is meant is that the *function* of such a person, who is a Tzaddiq, which is invested with such potency. Yet this potency regarding the engendering of

than as an "it": "The Blessed Holy One has a single Righteous One (*Tzadik*) in His world, and it is dear to Him because it supports all the world. It is the Foundation (*Yesod*). This is what sustains it, and makes it grow, increasing and watching it. . . ."

souls, has an almost sexual connotation. While no particular person is mentioned as being this Tzaddiq, it is not stated explicitly that this is an impersonal "function" of the Tzaddiq. Thus the passage conveys the feeling that what so impresses both those who are "above" (the angels) and "below" (the aware among humankind), is that what maintains the world and originates human souls, is a divine function which is nevertheless to be found in a real human being.

The *Bahir* supplies further evidence that a personal and impersonal conception of the Tzaddiq describe one and the same figure. Thus it states, explicitly, that the creative power of the Sefirah of Yesod is embodied in the person who is a Tzaddiq. This is described in graphic terms, in the following quotation:

*The Righteous One who is the foundation of the world is in the middle [of the arrangement of the Sefirot] . . . and he is the prince. . . . And in his hand he holds the souls of all living things, for he is the Life of the World, and every term of creation spoken about (in Scripture) takes place through him. And of him it is written: "and he ceased from work and rested" (Exod. 31:17), for he is the principle of the Sabbath.*⁵²

Here, once again, the tradition of the Tzaddiq reflects upon itself. The identification of the Tzaddiq as the agency through which the words of creation were spoken, calls to mind the Midrash in which God consulted with the Tzaddiqim before creating the world. A new element, however, is introduced here: by identifying the Tzaddiq with "the principle of the Sabbath" the Tzaddiq is associated not only the origin and maintenance of creation, but with the completion in which all things finds rest, and achieve their purpose. Moreover, this passage invests the Tzaddiq with actions and attributes, such as "the Life of the World", ordinarily reserved for God. One is therefore lead to wonder, what is their precise relationship? The *Bahir* puts an account of the relationship between the Tzaddiq and God, directly into the mouth of God:

⁵²Ibid., 96. The italics are mine. Kaplan, again, renders this more impersonally (ibid., 69) as "The 'Righteous, Foundation of the World' is in the center . . ."

It was I who planted this tree, so that all the world could delight in it, and I engraved all within it, and called its name "the All"; for all hangs from it and comes from it and all need it, and all look upon it and set their hopes upon it, and from thence all souls emanate.⁵³

Clearly, the "tree" of the Tzaddiq has its origin in a higher source, represented in this passage by the "I" of God. And yet the "tree" of the Tzaddiq is the "Life of the World" in the sense of the point from which all things, individually and collectively, obtain their vitality. The Tzaddiq is, moreover, described very much in terms of a holographic paradigm, a central image in which "all"--souls, and aspirations--are "engraved".

"Heavenly" and "Earthly" Tzaddiq in the Zohar

The references in the *Bahir* to the Tzaddiq as the origin of souls, would seem to suggest an anthropomorphic conception of the Sefirot in which the Sefirah Yesod corresponds to the male sexual organ. Thus it seems that Yesod represents a generative function (in relation to souls, if not to bodies), although it was still placed, in the *Bahir*, above the Sefirot of Netzah and Hod.⁵⁴ Green describes how, in the Kabbalistic view which emerged a hundred years later, "in the speculative universe of thirteenth-century Kabbalah, particularly as manifest in the Zohar", the term Tzaddiq

⁵³Ibid., 98. This identification of the Tzaddiq with "the all" hearkens back to I Chronicles 29:11, which Kabbalists took as a source for the names of the seven lower Sefirot: "To you, Yh-h, is the Greatness and the Severity and the Beauty and the Eternity and the Grace, for all in heaven and on earth is to You, the Kingdom . . . (and rule as head of all.) The one unaccounted for Sefirah, Yesod, was identified with "All".

⁵⁴Scholem describes (ibid., 93) how "in *Sefer ha-Bahir* and some of the earlier texts of the Spanish Kabbalah influenced by it, *Tsaddik* assumes the position of the seventh *Sefirah*; in this tradition, the *Sefiroth* of *Netsah* and *Hod* follow . . . it. The reason for this doubtless the fact that these older schema knew nothing of the sexual symbolism of these *Sefiroth*, which (e.g., in numerous places in the *Zohar*) correspond to the male testicles, from which the seed flows. In *Sefer ha-Bahir*, these *Sefiroth* merely represent two legs." I am not convinced, however, that being situated between two legs excludes a sexual implication for the Sefirah of Tzaddiq!

has become a conventional term for the ninth of the ten divine emanations (*sefirot*): the same word thus designates an aspect of the divine Self and a particular group of humans. This ninth level of divinity is otherwise commonly referred to as *yesod* ("foundation"). . . . *Zaddiq* is the foundation of the world . . . as the [male] reproductive organ is the foundation of the human body. It is this ninth emanation, standing in the central sefirotic column, which serves as the vehicle through which divine life flows into the feminine *malkhut* or *shekhinah*, the last of the sefirot, and thence into the corporeal world.⁵⁵

Despite the fact that the Zohar places the Sefirot Netzah and Hod above Yesod, it appears to restrict the creative and generative function the Tzaddiq is assigned in the *Bahir*, and emphasizes more of a sustaining and preserving function. It is in the Zohar that the centrality of the Tzaddiq becomes firmly established in Jewish tradition.⁵⁶ Here, a dual meaning for "Tzaddiq" emerges; it is both as a generic term for members of the spiritual community (those whose spiritual activities are effective), and the divine function which is found in such individuals. All of the divine energies represented by higher Sefirot are channeled into manifestation via the Sefirah which is most often identified in the Zohar not as Yesod, but simply as "Tzaddiq".

The question remains, to what degree are the human and Sefirotic function of Tzaddiq differentiated in the text of the Zohar? Green has claimed that "the same

⁵⁵Green, "*Axis Mundi*", 332-333.

⁵⁶Isaiah Tishby states that whereas earlier mystical sources tended to gravitate towards the use of one term or the other, in the Zohar the term "*Zaddik*" is used far more frequently than *hasid*, both as a general term for virtuous people and also more specifically for 'the sons of the palace' who have attained the height of mystical experience. Sometimes the use of *zaddik* is connected with the use of the term by the [Talmudic] rabbis whose statements are interpreted and explained by the kabbalists, and sometimes it stands on its own, in a mystical context with no reference at all to earlier sources. The term *hasid*, which occurs only rarely, is used either with or without some elaboration, but I have not found a single instance of its being used as a description of the exceptionally pious, as it is in the *Hovot ha-Levavot* and the *Sefer Hasidim*" which are, respectively, outstanding pre-Kabbalistic Spanish and German pietistic works. Tishby proceeds, in this chapter, to illustrate the relative status of the terms Tzaddiq and Hasid in the Zohar. In one instance, for example (p. 1415) "the *hasid* is a superior type of *zaddik*, while above him there stands the *zaddik* with mystical propensities." "The Righteous and the Wicked", in *The Wisdom of the Zohar: an Anthology of Texts* vol. 1, texts arranged and trans. into Hebrew by Fischel Lachower and Isaiah Tishby, English trans. David Goldstein (Oxford: Oxford University, 1989), p. 1410.

word" Tzaddiq "designates an aspect of the divine Self and a particular group of humans." While this is not wrong, I believe that the opposite statement would be more correct. That is, "an aspect of the divine Self" and "a particular group of humans" are two ways in which the Zohar expresses the singular function of the Tzaddiq. I am suggesting that by the use of a single term, a single phenomenon is indicated--a phenomenon which is reflected, as the *Bahir* first indicated, both among those "above" and "below".

The text of the Zohar itself speaks of "the Tzaddiq above" and "the Tzaddiq below", indicating an emphasis either on the idea of the Sefirah, or the person in whom it is manifest. Yet I do not believe that these are intended to represent two distinct entities. Indeed, the Zohar addresses this issue, explicitly declaring that:

"Tzaddiq is the foundation of the world", (Proverbs 10) is written just like that [*stam*]. And the reason is, that whether it is the Foundation above or the Foundation below, it is all "Tzaddiq". And the Congregation of Israel is encompassed [*itklelet*] by the Tzaddiq, from above and below. The Tzaddiq on this side and Tzaddiq on that side, both inherit her, as it is written (Psalm 30:7) "Tzaddiqim shall inherit the earth."⁵⁷

While a formal distinction may be made between the Tzaddiq, or Foundation, "above" and "below", these figures of speech represent but a single function. Indeed, references to "Tzaddiq" both in the singular and plural are cited in this passage as evidence for there being but a single Tzaddiq. Thus the relationship between the Tzaddiq and the Congregation of Israel, or the earth, or all that is represented in the Sefirah of Malkhut (the "Kingdom" or manifestation of God on earth) is but a single relationship, though it may be viewed from either "above" or "below".

Unfortunately, an exaggerated sense of separation between the two aspects of Tzaddiq tends to characterize the approach of modern scholars, such as Scholem, Tishby and Green. Scholem, for example, introduces the following texts as illustrations

⁵⁷Zohar I, "Vayehi", folio 245b. The translation is my own.

of "the function of the lower *Tsaddik*".⁵⁸ The first of them, in chronological sequence, is from the Zohar:

The Holy One, blessed be He, sowed this light in the Garden of Eden, and He arranged it in rows with the help of the Righteous One, who is the gardener in the Garden. And he took this light, and sowed it as a seed of truth, and arranged it in rows in the Garden, and it sprouted and grew and produced fruit, by which the world is nourished. This is the meaning of the verse "Light is sown for the righteous . . ." (Psalm 97:11). And it is written "The garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth" (Isaiah 61:11). What are "the things that are sown in it"? *These are the sowings of the primal light, which is always sown. Now it brings forth and produces fruit, and now it is sown as at the beginning.* Before the world eats this fruit, the seed produces and gives fruit, and does not rest. Consequently, all the worlds are nourished through the supply of the gardener, who is called the Righteous One. . . .⁵⁹

The intriguing quality of this passage derives, I think, not only from its description of a "garden" of primal light in which is the flowering of Truth, but also for its description of a function which is at once inside and outside of time, whose agent is a gardener who is both human and the Sefirotic Tzaddiq. The passage serves to illustrate the function of the Tzaddiq in terms of a source of light which is more ontological than etiological. Just as fruit contains its own seed, as it were, the Tzaddiq who is in the world contains the archetypal function of the Tzaddiq within himself, "now . . . as at the beginning."⁶⁰

The second passage Scholem cites as evidence of "the function of the lower *Tsaddik*" is from a sixteenth century Kabbalist who mentions other sources, but who

⁵⁸Scholem, "The Righteous One", 113.

⁵⁹Ibid., 113-4. The italics are mine. This text, which appears in the Zohar, vol. 2, folios 166b-167a, also appears in volume 1 of Tishby's *Wisdom of the Zohar*, p. 442.

⁶⁰It is easy to see how R. Nahman's description of the function of the Tzaddiq as a gardener in the field of souls in his teaching the "Master of the Field" (cited in Chapter One) might have been inspired by such a passage, although he was not at all concerned with questions of etiology versus ontology implied in this passage, but only with the practical vocation of the Tzaddiq.

may have been aware of the passage from the Zohar above, as well, as this passage clarifies and expands its meaning:

"The Holy One blessed be He sows the deeds of the righteous in that heaven whose name is *'Aravoth* (the uppermost of the seven heavens), and it bears fruits." The Heavenly *'Aravoth* is equated with the "Righteous One of the World" and of its Foundation, for all the good oil flowing from the "white head" (i.e., *Kether*; cf. Ps. 133:2) to all sides mingle therein and *the deeds of the righteous are emanated from there*, and the seeds of peace are sown there. For (in terms of its substance) the seed is drawn from the brain and reaches the tip of the phallus, and is emptied into its mate; and this is the secret of its bearing fruits, by way of the mystery of true union and unification. And *the cause of all this lies in the deeds of the righteous who ascend upwards with the perfection of their meditation, and are reflected and absorbed in that firmament*; and this is the sowing of which we have spoken. . . .⁶¹

Here is a technical assignation of the location of the "garden" of the Tzaddiq to the *'Aravoth*, the Seventh Heaven. There is also an explicitly sexual development of the symbolism of the Sefirah of Tzaddiq, in which the agency of the Tzaddiq is equated with the phallus, while the seed the Tzaddiq contain, or conveys, is equated with Keter, the very highest of the Sefirot, the first appearance out of the undifferentiated Infinite. Here, again, the symbol of the seed--in this case, the analogy is to human seed--indicates that the cause is implicit in its own effect. Thus the relationship between the Tzaddiq "above" and "below" is compared to that between the brain, in which semen is said to be created, and the physical organ in which appears. There is an apparent contradiction in the text above, between the idea that it is "the deeds of the righteous" which are "the cause of all", and that "the deeds of the righteous are emanated" from "the white head". I believe that such a paradox is, however, intentional, that the process is meant to be circular, so that the Sefirah Tzaddiq can only function by way of the deeds of Tzaddiqim, but these deeds have their origin not in the realm of human activity but in the highest metaphysical source. Thus the human Tzaddiq is both an

⁶¹Ibid., 113. This quotation is taken from Mayer ibn Gabbai's *'Avodat HaKodesh*, published in 1531. Again, the italics are mine.

expression of the Sefirah, and by his actions, its source. Once again it is shown that these two aspects of Tzaddiq are inseparable, that they describe two aspects of the function of a single system. The potency of the Sefirah of Tzaddiq--which is actually conceived, in this case, as an aspect of Keter--is inseparable from the function of the activity of human Tzaddiqim.

Whatever the difficulties presented by the two texts above, it is clear that they describe the function of the Tzaddiq as a whole, and are not restricted to "the function of the lower Tzaddiq". It is unfortunate that scholars become attached to precisely those conventional distinctions between the "lower" and "higher" Tzaddiq which the authors of texts such as these go to great lengths to overcome! Yet it seems that a belief in such an artificial dichotomy appears unnecessarily constrained Green's choice of Zohar texts by which he might illustrate the motif of Tzaddiq as *axis mundi*:

The frequent associations of the *zaddiq* with pillar, foundation, etc., which we could easily be tempted to seize upon in our search for *axis mundi*, refer almost always to God as *zaddiq*. Our primary interest here is in his human counterpart, of whom the Zohar but rarely says: "He who knows these secrets and serves with wholeness, cleaving to his Lord . . . [ellipses of the author] draws blessing into the world. Such a man is called *zaddiq*, the pillar of the cosmos. (Zohar 1:43a)⁶²

To speak of "God as Tzaddiq" in addition to "his human counterpart" is, I believe, to miss the point. Although a book such as the Zohar is almost entirely taken up with the various possible relationships between different Sefirot, one does not find the "human" and "divine" Tzaddiq relating to one another as two different entities, any more than one finds the comic book character Superman meeting with Clark Kent! Rather, in the Zohar as in the *Bahir* before it, and in the subsequent Kabbalistic texts which followed, attention is lavished on subtle descriptions which indicate precisely how the human and Sefirotic dimensions of the Tzaddiq imply one another. The human

⁶²Green, "Axis Mundi", 333.

and Sefirotic Tzaddiq do not meet, because where the Tzaddiq appears is precisely where the split between man and God has been overcome.

Green himself cited a quotation which explicitly makes this point: "Who knows these secrets and serves with wholeness, (such inner knowledge and its outward manifestation being the essential qualifications of a Tzaddiq) . . . is the pillar of the cosmos." Such a person is not considered to be "like" such a function of the Divine, but rather, *is* that function. Indeed, where else would such a "pillar" be found?

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not mean to claim that every reference to "Tzaddiq" in Kabbalah is meant to refer equally to the Sefirah and to actual Tzaddiqim, any more than I would claim that every reference to Malkhut in this literature equally means the Sefirah Malkhut, the People Israel, the physical world and the divinity that is expressed in it. Emphases shift, and the purpose of a particular text may be to highlight a particular aspect of a given Sefirah. What I am claiming is that it is a mistake to artificially impose a separation between a given Sefirah in its "heavenly" emanation, and its concrete manifestation. Thus, from a Kabbalistic point of view, the Sefirah Malkhut implies the existence of the world, as the existence of the world implies the existence of Malkhut. In much the same spirit I would venture to say that not only does the existence of the world depend upon the existence of the Tzaddiq, but that without Tzaddiqim the Sefirah of Tzaddiq has no real existence. In a given context it may be the human manifestation of the Sefirah that is emphasized by the use of the term "Tzaddiq", or it may be the principle behind it. But the archetype of the Tzaddiq is not the one *or* the other. Rather, the Tzaddiq describes a single slippery "pole" which is at one end a Sefirah and at the other, a human being.

Thus I believe it was quite unnecessary for Green to have avoided the many passages in the Zohar which illustrate the Sefirotic function of the Tzaddiq in terms of *axis mundi* imagery, because they appeared to refer to "God as Tzaddiq". Whether is

the Sefirah or the human being that is emphasized, in the words of the Zohar itself, "it is all "Tzaddiq"!

The archetype of the Tzaddiq is often described in sources such as the *Bahir* and the Zohar, in terms of *axis mundi* imagery. Such imagery is meant to be metaphorical: the Tzaddiq is not a pillar, but only "like" a pillar. But the Tzaddiq itself is not meant to be a metaphor, but to be really divine. It is not the human personality of the Tzaddiq that is divine, but the Sefirotic function such persons embody.

The Microcosmic Tzaddiq

Although he avoids the Zohar's descriptions of the Sefirah of Tzaddiq, Green cites a pair of quotations which illustrate, beautifully, the function of the "human" Tzaddiq as a microcosmic figure. The Zohar describes both Abraham and Jacob as figures who contain the Land of Israel within themselves. This microcosmic function is exemplified, predictably enough, in the figure of R. Shim'on bar Yoḥai.

R. Abba began: "The Lord said to Abram after Lot had departed from him . . . raise up your eyes and see . . . all the land which you see I will give you and your seed forever." (Gen. 13:14-15) Was Abraham to inherit all that which he saw and no more? How far can a man see? Three, four, perhaps five miles But once Abraham had looked in the four directions, he had seen the entire land God lifted him up over the Land of Israel and showed him how it was the connecting-point of the four directions, and thus he saw it all. *In the same way, he who sees R. Simeon sees the entire world; he is the joy of those above and below.*⁶³

All that is scouted out in Abraham's far-reaching vision is contained in a Tzaddiq such as Bar Yoḥai. While Abraham saw the Land as "the connecting-point of the four directions", the function of R. Shim'on is not to see such a "connecting-point" but to be it, and thus to contain the universe within himself. This aspect of containing is emphasized further in the example which followed the one above:

⁶³Green, "*Axis Mundi*", 335-6, "based on sources in *Gen. Rab.* 44:12 and *Hul.* 91b." The italics are Green's.

R. Hiyya began: "The land upon which you are lying will I give to you and your offspring." (Gen. 28:13) Was it only the place which God promised him, no more than four or five ells? Rather at that time God folded the entire Land of Israel into those four ells, and thus that place included the entire land. If that place included the whole land, how much more clear is it *that R. Simeon, lamp of the world, is equal to the entire world!*⁶⁴

In the case of Jacob, the issue is not his vision as much as what he himself contains in himself. As "Jacob's ladder" was projected from within him (midrashic sources emphasize that the angels "ascended and descended", and therefore originated with him on earth), Jacob already suggests a figure containing vast possibilities. Thus with the example of Jacob following that of Abraham, it is clear that the Tzaddiq is a microcosm in which the macrocosm may be found.

What is the role of R. Shim'on in all this? He would seem to be considered very much the mythic hero, as indeed he is considered, almost literally, as larger than life. Thus Green emphasizes that a Tzaddiq such as R. Shim'on

stands at the center of the cosmos, the place where the four directions meet. He is thus the earthly extension of that element within the Deity which is called *zaddiq*, a this-worldly continuation of the . . . pillar of the Sefirotic world."⁶⁵

The problem with such an analysis is that it both says too little and too much. Green confuses the Kabbalistic image of the pillar, which is meant only as a metaphor, with the Kabbalistic function of the Sefirah of Tzaddiq. The person who is a Tzaddiq is not an "earthly extension" or a "this-worldly continuation" of the Sefirotic "pillar". Rather, the image of a pillar is a description of the function of such a person.

But along with introducing an artificial separation between the Sefirah and the person who embodies it, Green opens the door to confusing a mythic and an archetypal conception of what a figure such as R. Shim'on represents. If this were a truly mythic conception of a holy man figure, if R. Shim'on were actually considered to be greater

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid., 336.

than Abraham and Jacob, the logical conclusion would be that their way had in some sense been superseded by his. The Christian idea that the way of Jesus has replaced that of Moses, is an obvious example of this. But it is unthinkable, in the context of the Rabbinic tradition, for one of the Rabbis to supersede Abraham or Jacob, not to mention Moses! Rather, it is because the status of these figures is quite secure, that the author of the Zohar is free to indulge in lavish praise of R. Shim'on, without presenting any serious threat.

Here, indeed, is an indication of the deeply synthetic outlook of Jewish tradition. Hyperbolic praise of R. Shim'on is quite permissible, because it is understood that he only reveals that which may already be found within the very first Patriarchs of Israel. Thus the deeply conservative orientation in Judaism, by which new insights are seen as being implicit in the text of the Bible, and in which the role of Moses as the greatest of all Prophets is enshrined for all time, has served to facilitate archetypal rather than a mythical mode of thought.⁶⁶ Thus even as mythical tendencies appear in the Zohar, they are employed in the service of an archetypal orientation.

The Holographic Tzaddiq

From the microcosmic idea that the whole world (or at least, all of the Land of Israel) is included within the Tzaddiq, it is only a small jump to the idea that all people (or at least, all of the People of Israel) are included within the Tzaddiq. But it is yet another step to the Jewish application of the holographic paradigm, in which these others are also seen as containing the Tzaddiq archetype within themselves. This is a

⁶⁶Much the same principle informs the approach to prophetic typology in the Sufi literature of Islām, in which the Prophet Muḥammed is seen not as representing something new and unique, but as a synthesis of the aspects of divine wisdom which are to be found in early Prophets. See Muhyi-d-din Ibn 'Arabi, *The Wisdom of the Prophets (Fusus al-Hikam)*, trans. from Arabic with notes by Titus Burckhardt, trans. from French by Angela Culme-Seymour, (Aldsworth, Gloucestershire: Beshara, 1975.

significant aspect of the idea of the Tzaddiq, which is clearly indicated in the text of the Zohar, which appears to have escaped the notice of other scholars. *Not* recognizing this idea, and the other aspects of the idea that the Tzaddiq is an archetype, previous scholars have had difficulty conceiving of the nature of the Tzaddiq in the Zohar. Thus Elijah Tishby introduces the idea of the "the Righteous" as an ethical category opposed to the Wicked. Tishby sets out from the premise that the Sefirah Yesod and the human Tzaddiq are two different things, and then has to back-track to point out that

with regard to the *zaddik* the Zohar stresses the link between him and *Yesod*, the divine Righteous One, who is symbolized by the sign of the covenant of circumcision. . . . And following this correspondence the Zohar portrays the essential characteristic of the *zaddik* as chastity, a determination to maintain the covenant: "He who does not maintain (the covenant) as he should is not called '*zaddik*.'" The earthly prototype of the *zaddik* is Joseph. "Whoever is circumcised and maintains the sign of the covenant is called '*zaddik*.' Come and see [the proof] from Joseph, who throughout his life was not called '*zaddik*' until he maintained that covenant, the sign of the holy covenant. When he maintained it he was called '*zaddik*,' "Joseph the '*zaddik*.'"⁶⁷

What Tishby says is quite correct, or is certainly not incorrect, as far as it goes.

Yet Tishby himself felt the need to add the disclaimer, that the author of the Zohar

does not stick to this definition, departing from it in two directions. On the one hand, ordinary good Jews, who keep the commandments and lead a good life, are called *zaddikim*, even if they have not distinguished themselves particularly in "maintaining the covenant." And, on the other hand, the Zohar points out that there are other qualities and characteristics, both religious and moral, that are essential to the *zaddik's* way of life, and these are not less important than chastity.⁶⁸

Tishby emphasizes the Zohar's interpretation of the phallic symbolism of Yesod in terms of the covenant of circumcision, and its application in sexual ethics, only to have to down-play this emphasis in order to put it in perspective. What I believe he misses is that the Zohar uses the symbolism of "the covenant" as a device for

⁶⁷Isaiah Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1413-4. Based on Zohar II, 23a, and Zohar I, 153b-154b.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 1414.

associating the People of Israel with the quality of Tzaddiq. This idea emerges in a passage from the Zohar which is very much akin to the material he has quoted. I am quoting not from an obscure passage, but from the opening lines of the Zohar's first detailed exposition of the idea of the Tzaddiq, a commentary on the second chapter of Genesis (which follows an extended discussion of *Ma'aseh Brayshit*), which opens with the words "these are the generations of Noah":

R. Hiyya opened: (Isaiah 60) "Your people are all Tzaddiqim and shall eternally [*l'olam*, "for the world"] inherit the earth. The creation of the work of My Hands shall praise Me." All of Israel who make efforts with Torah, who know [and practice] the ways of Torah, shall merit, because of this, the world to come. Come and see, "all of Israel have a share in the world to come." Why is this? It is because they keep the covenant "for the world" [*l'olam*] that it is established, as it is said (Jeremiah 30:3), "if not for My covenant, day and night, I would not have enshrined the laws of heaven and earth."⁶⁹

This teaching hangs on a pun: that the Hebrew adverb *l'olam*, which ordinarily means "eternally", can be read literally to mean "for (the sake of) the world". Thus the idea of faithfulness in keeping the commandments is linked to the idea of sustaining the earth. The Zohar continues:

Because of this, Israel, who keep the covenant and receive it, have themselves a portion in the world to come. Not only this, but because of this they are called "Tzaddiqim". From here we learn that everyone who keeps this covenant "for the world" [*l'olam*] is called "Tzaddiq". Where do we learn this? From Joseph. Because he kept it as a covenant "for the world", he merited to be called "Tzaddiq". And therefore it says, "your people are all Tzaddiqim, and 'for the world' shall inherit the earth."⁷⁰

It is not only a share in the world to come that is the destiny of Israel, it is to share in the function of the Tzaddiq, which is maintaining the world in the here-and-now. The significance of Joseph in this regard, beyond his being a model of chastity, Joseph is that he is a model of the application of religious principles "for the world". This is most likely based on the idea that Joseph kept the commandments of the Torah

⁶⁹Zohar I, 59b. The translation is mine.

⁷⁰Ibid.

in the midst of the world, even in a place such as Egypt, where he lived and functioned quite outside the context of the community of Israel.⁷¹

Further on in this chapter, the idea is developed that all (male members) of Israel are Tzaddiqim, because they are all circumcised (provided, it is stipulated, they do not violate their sexual "covenant")! Thus, according to the text above, while learning and following the Torah is the obvious way "in" to participating in the Tzaddiq function, it seems that the author of the Zohar did not wish to tie the function of the Tzaddiq too closely to scholarship. In a society in which all males were circumcised as a matter of course, the function of circumcision would have been inclusive rather than exclusive; it would have served as a conceptual hook on which to hang the idea that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the archetype of the Tzaddiq. Thus it was emphasized that this was the common destiny which people (Jewish males, at least) were virtually born to fulfill.

Tishby is quite correct in pointing out that the author of the Zohar does not "stick to" an ethical definition of Tzaddiq; once the idea of the covenant of circumcision has been developed, it is replaced by other ideas of the significance of the Tzaddiq. Yet rather than indicating that the author of the Zohar is inconsistent, this has to do with the archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq being of primary importance in the Zohar, while the various analogies and images are employed chiefly because of their value as illustrations.

Tishby himself observed that "there is hardly a single topic in the Zohar that does not have some connection with the character and function of the *zaddik*".⁷² This

⁷¹Thus Tishby quotes a commentary by R. Moshe de Leon (the original publisher and possible author of the Zohar) that "however one looks at it, Joseph was a *zaddik* only when he was outside the Holy Land and subject to an alien God, although not in his power." *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 151, no. 58.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 1451, n. 60.

then appears to be *the* central issue of the central work of the Jewish mystical tradition. And yet the character and function of the Tzaddiq is an issue which scholars like Tishby have barely grasped. The lack of precision which tends to characterize academic discussions of the idea of the Tzaddiq comes from a tendency to take the ideas and images which appear in Kabbalistic texts, too much at face value. The possibility that the Jewish mystical sources, with all of their flamboyance and freedom of association, have a specific understanding to convey, is generally overlooked. There is, as Idel has pointed out, a lack of sensitivity to Kabbalistic hermeneutics.

Yet a closer reading of this literature shows that its Rabbinic and Kabbalistic authors portray the Tzaddiq as an archetype which not only bridges the human and divine, but whose divine and human dimensions mutually imply one another. Moreover, in at least one prominent location it is stated, quite explicitly, that the archetype of the Tzaddiq is a universal potential which relates to each member of the religious community. This archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq, which first appears in the Talmud and Midrash to become a central focus of Kabbalah, is then refined even further in the theoretical literature which appears in the early decades of the Hasidic movement.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ARCHETYPE OF THE TZADDIQ IN HASIDIC TEACHING

It has been demonstrated, thus far, that as the spiritual tradition of the Tzaddiq unfolded from the Rabbinic to the Kabbalistic stage of development, implicit assumptions of earlier strata of the tradition were made increasingly explicit. This trend continues with the classical literature of the Hasidic movement. Indeed, one might expect that if the Tzaddiq were truly considered a function which is at once human and Sefirotic, somewhere in the course of the development of this idea a concise description of this two-fold function would have appeared. Is any explicit description to be found of how the Sefirah of the Tzaddiq actually functions within the individual?

The "Shvil" of the Tzaddiq

Precisely such a description may be found in the dynamic image of a *shvil*, meaning a "channel" or "path", which, beginning with the earliest Hasidic teachings on the subject of the Tzaddiq, supplemented and eventually replaced the more static image of a pillar. In the following teaching related by R. Ya'akov Yosef of Polnoy in the name of the Ba'al Shem Tov, it is stated that the spiritual Master is not only a person whose prayers make their way to God; rather, such a person defines the path by which God's bounty or influence (*shefa*) makes its way to earth. More than having access to such a path, such a person is conceived of as *being* the path:

The Talmud states that "a heavenly voice came forth and said: The whole earth is sustained for the sake of (*bi-shevil*) Hanina My son. . . ." But in the name of my teacher: Hanina My son forged a path (*shevil*) or a pipeline to draw divine bounty into the world. This is the meaning of "the world is sustained by the *shevil* of Hanina My son." The words of the wise are gracious. To me it appears that he not only made such a pathway or pipeline, but that he himself was called *shevil* or channel, since the bounty flowed through him.¹

In this teaching, the spiritual Master figure has yet to be explicitly identified as a Tzaddiq. By describing R. Hanina as a "channel", and avoiding designations such as "Prophet", "Rabbi", or even "Tzaddiq", the focus is placed not on his outward role but on his inner function. By lifting the word *shvil* out of its original context, the Besht holds it up as a means of expressing the objective function he knew himself to be serving as a "channel" for the Divine. It is a function which R. Ya'akov Yosef would have witnessed in his Master, and which he endeavored to relate in teachings such as this.

The Chernobyler's View of the Tzaddiq

The word "channel" continued to serve as a key, even as the use of the term "Tzaddiq" became established in Hasidic usage. R. Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl was one of the early Hasidic Masters, and serves as a bridge between the circle of the Ba'al Shem Tov and that of the Maggid of Mezerich.² In the following teaching from R. Menahem Nahum, an archetypal sense of the role of the Tzaddiq as "the foundation of the world" is explicitly identified with the principle of a *shvil*, or "channel". This is further reinforced by a second, more radical idea, that the "I" of God is to be found within the Tzaddiq:

¹Green, "Typologies", 131. (Quoting *Ben Porat Yosef* 80b; based on *Berakhot* 17b)

²"As a young man he [R. Menahem Nahum] visited the Baal Shem Tov and came to be considered a follower of his. And at the Baal Shem Tov's death he joined with those disciples who accepted the Maggid's leadership and was one of the eldest among the circle of disciples in Mezerich." Green, *Menahem Nahum*, 21.

The fact is that "*zaddiq* is the foundation of the world" (Prov. 10:25). He is the foundation and the channel through which divine bounty and life flow down into the world and to all creatures. It is all by his *shevil*, for he sets out the pathway and the road which this life-flow will follow. By means of his constant attachment to the Creator he becomes a dwelling for the letter Aleph, the cosmic Aleph that lives within him. Thus Scripture says: "I shall dwell in their midst" (Exod. 25:8). Thus he is truly a part of God, and has a place, as it were, with Him. . . .³

Along with familiar motifs a new element appears here: the Hebrew letter Aleph is seized upon as a central symbol, not only because it is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet (thereby implying all of creation within itself), but also because it is the first letter of the Hebrew word *aniy*, or "I".⁴ Thus the letter Aleph is employed not only as a symbol of the divinity which flows through the Tzaddiq, but as a symbol of the divinity which may be identified with him. Thus the Hasidic conception of the attachment (*devequt*) of the soul of the Tzaddiq to God implies a kind of union in which the "I" of the Tzaddiq accommodates the "I" of God. So much for the relationship of the Tzaddiq to the Creator. What then of the relationship between the Tzaddiq and the creation? The teaching continues:

He also has a place among created beings, however, since he shares with them the letters *Dalet Mem* (=DaM, blood); the animal soul is contained in his blood just as it is in all creatures. How right and proper, then, that he be the intermediary between the blessed Creator and the full world, binding all to Him so that bounty flow [sic] to His creatures along the path that he, the *zaddiq*, has set out by his devotion and attachment. Thus did the rabbis say of the verse "for this is the whole of man (Eccl. 12:13)--the entire world is created by the *shevil* of this one."⁵

The Tzaddiq travels to God by way of his "devotion and attachment", and through them he attains a wholeness which makes him a "channel" bestowing divine influence upon the whole world. Nor is this a momentary achievement; as in the

³Ibid., 132. Based on *Meor 'Eynayim*, "Yitro", quoting *Yoma* 338b.

⁴The written character of the Hebrew letter Aleph is itself an image of *axis mundi*, a vertical slash with one "hand" reaching up, the other reaching down: א

⁵Green, "Typologies", 132.

earlier, Kabbalistic sources, what is described is an on-going process uniting the human manifestation of the Tzaddiq with the Divine source, so that the creation is constantly renewed:

They said it in the present tense . . . for Creation is constant. "He renews each day the work of Creation." By the constant flow of His life into His creatures the act of creation is ever taking place. This is the meaning of "this is the whole of *ADaM*"--it refers to the *zaddiq*, who unites in himself Aleph with *DaM*. Constant creation happens only through his path.⁶

The Tzaddiq has been identified as the "intermediary" between Creator and creation, and the daily renewal of the creation of the world is said to take place by no function other than this. (As there are no capital letters in Hebrew, there is, I think, a deliberate ambiguity regarding whether it is "He", God, or "he", the Tzaddiq, who is renewing and bestowing life upon the creation.) More than a passive receptacle, this "path" of the Tzaddiq is regarded as the "place" where the "I" of the Creator and the creation converges. Here is a clear statement of an archetypal idea of the "I" of the Tzaddiq, but a holographic application of this idea to the I of others is not made explicit. It would seem that the attachment of the Tzaddiq to God is identified as the sole point of contact between the world and its source in the Divine. The words of a certain well-known wonder-working Rabbi of the First Century come to mind in this regard: "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."⁷

Nothing is expressed here that was not already implicit, for example, in the poetic expressions of the *Bahir*, but the function of the Tzaddiq is "fleshed-out" more fully than before. There are a number of details in the Chernobyler's description which might be easily missed. The service the Tzaddiq provides is described as going

⁶Ibid.

⁷John 14:6, King James translation. This teaching of Jesus might have a significantly different implication if in the original Aramaic it said ". . . except through I".

both ways: even as he serves the creation by opening the way for the flow of energy from the Divine, he provides a service to God by "binding all to Him". Moreover, there is a personal as well as a transpersonal dimension to the creativity of the Tzaddiq. The exact path by which bounty flows to God's creatures is not handed down from above, but rather, is determined by the Tzaddiq's own chosen "path" of devotion.

And yet, in another sense, the function of the Tzaddiq has become more an implicit than explicit, here. Unlike the story in the Midrash about R. Shim'on, the Tzaddiq is not presented as a magical hero with the task of saving the world from disaster; more like the Tree described in the *Bahir*, the Tzaddiq is the path by which the world receives its daily sustenance from the Divine. A sense is conveyed of the function of the Tzaddiq as a function of the Divine, but there is little sense of the human relationship between the person who is a Tzaddiq and God.

The Maggid on the Tzaddiq and the Will of God

Seeking a more comprehensive understanding of the Hasidic view of the Tzaddiq, I turn to the teachings of Rabbi Dov Baer, the Great Maggid (Preacher) of Mezerich. Later, I shall return to the earliest Hasidic teachings on the Tzaddiq, those which may be attributed to the Ba'al Shem Tov. In the case of the teachings of the Besht, however, there is always some question as to precisely where his teachings leave off and later interpretation of the disciples relating them begin. While the Maggid of Mezerich was one of these disciples, his teachings have an authority which is clearly his own. More than anyone else, it was the Maggid of Mezerich who actually established the Hasidic tradition of the Tzaddiq. Following the death of the Ba'al Shem Tov in 1760, the founders of the main lineages of Hasidic Masters were attached to him-- Masters ranging from the enthusiastic R. Elimelekh of Lizhensk to the sober R. Shneur

Zalman of Liadi, the first Lubavitcher Rebbe). (One outstanding exception is R. Nahman of Bratzlav, who nevertheless grew up in a Hasidic milieu which the Maggid had been instrumental in creating, and was himself a great-grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov.) While it is difficult to determine where legend leaves off and history begins in the case of the Ba'al Shem Tov, the Maggid was clearly the "founder" of the Hasidic movement, at least in an administrative sense of the word. As his discussions of the idea of the Tzaddiq demonstrate, he was probably its most important architect, in a theoretical sense as well.

From certain teachings, such as the one from the Chernobyler Rebbe considered above, one might mistakenly surmise that the function of the Tzaddiq was conceived of in Hasidism purely in mystical and metaphysical terms, which have little to do with such practical affairs as intercessory prayer. In the Jewish mystical tradition, however, spiritual functions are generally understood not only as abstract ideals, but in terms of their concrete application. Thus the Zohar, for example, is not concerned with describing the Sefirot in terms of an abstract hierarchy of emanations, but as a dynamic system that is constantly being reshaped in response both to the holy and sinful activities of man. And thus the Maggid of Mezerich was very much concerned about the role of the Tzaddiq as a channel for prayer, and the question of the relationship between the will of the Tzaddiq and the Will of God.

This is territory which has been mapped before. The teachings of the Maggid regarding this subject were discussed by Joseph Weiss in his article, "The Saddik--Altering the Divine Will". Unfortunately, Weiss analyzes the "Saddikology" of the Maggid in terms of the category of "magic".⁸ This, unfortunately, is a classic example of the use of a tool of academic analysis which does not fit the material at hand. The

⁸Joseph Weiss, *Studies*, (New York: Oxford University, 1985), 183-93.

Maggid himself does not describe the action of the Tzaddiq as directly manipulating the world via magical devices, but as influencing the Will of God so as to bring benefit the world.⁹ Thus the subtlety of the Maggid's conception of the interplay between the will of the Tzaddiq and that of God--that by challenging and overturning His harsh decrees, the Tzaddiq actually pleases God--is needlessly complicated by Weiss's consideration of whether or not this constitutes magical activity.

Nevertheless, Weiss brings some remarkable material to light in the course of his study, which is worthwhile to consider here. He quotes a parable of the Maggid of Mezerich about "a father who has a little son who wishes to take a stick and ride on it like a horse." The father, he tells us, "takes pleasure in this. And he helps (the game along) and gives him the stick."¹⁰ By way of interpreting his own parable, the Maggid explains that God permits Tzaddiqim to rule both higher and lower worlds,

in order that they may be governed at their behest. And we do not hereby infringe the honor of His blessed essence. . . . To this end, He contracted Himself in the worlds in order that He might be amused by the pleasure of the *Saddikim* who receive delight from those worlds. And that is (the meaning of the verse) "He performs the will of those who fear Him." For the term *raṣon* ["will"] does not belong to the *En Sof* ["the Infinite"], but it means those who fear Him--viz., the *Saddikim*--may perform the Will.¹¹

What most impresses Weiss about this text, is that "the I/Thou relationship vanishes in the Maggid's parable, and the father is presented as a mere onlooker." Weiss's assumption that there ought to be an "I/Thou" relationship between the Tzaddiq

⁹Moshe Idel has suggested a distinction between the category of "magic", implying a kind of direct and external manipulation of the world through certain formulae which does not requiring recourse to the Divine, and that of "theurgy", meaning the activation of divinity (e.g., acting upon the Sefirot through making certain *kavvanot* or "intentions" in Jewish prayer), so as to draw divine influences into the world. Although magical elements may also be found, it is mainly theurgy which characterizes the approach to influencing the Divine in Hasidism and Kabbalah. See "Ancient Theurgy" and "Kabbalistic Theurgy" in *New Perspectives*, 156-199.

¹⁰Joseph Weiss, 186-7.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 187.

and God, like Rapoport-Albert's assumption that there ought to be a "direct route" between the ordinary Jew and God,¹² shows a gap in their understanding of the Kabbalistic background of Hasidic thought. The idea of *tzimtzum*, or divine "withdrawal", was derived from the metaphysical theories of Lurianic Kabbalah. The interesting feature of this text is that it is given an existential meaning. Thus rather than acting in direct relationship to God, the Tzaddiq is left more or less alone, to ride on his "horse". Thus Weiss may be justified in saying that in the face of God's withdrawal, "the *Saddikim* act in the world as in their own domain". Yet he is hasty in drawing the conclusion that this renders "the exact determination of the place and tone of the parable in the no-man's-land between magic and religion".¹³

What Weiss has neglected to take into account is the dialectical development of the argument of this passage. As was demonstrated earlier, in the *Bahir*, Kabbalistic authors often make statements which appear, at first, to be shocking, only to reconcile them with a more traditional view which is then illuminated by a new perspective. It would be a mistake, in such a case, to pick up the more radical "side" of the argument over and against the other, and assert that it is the claim of the author.

In this particular discourse the resolution of the tension created by the statement that it is Tzaddiqim who govern worlds "at their behest" occurs almost casually, in the reference to Tzaddiqim as "those who fear Him". Thus it is suggested that while the Tzaddiqim are allowed to "play" with the world, their actions are by no means a matter of caprice. Behind the freedom and empowerment to which God has entitled them is the understanding that their actions are deeply informed by the "fear" of God. To put it a little differently, I would say that it is their awareness and respect for the Divine, their

¹²See "A Lack of Perspective" in the section on *Following Scholem: the Socio-Historical Approach*, in Chapter One.

¹³Ibid.

sensitivity to the divine perspective,¹⁴ which authorizes the Tzaddiqim to be the agents of the divine Will.

Where such thinking departs from earlier biblical and rabbinic thought is not so much in the powers it relegates to Tzaddiqim, but in the conception of God it represents. After all, Abraham and Moses also argued with God (see Gen. 18:17-33 and Ex. 32:7-14) for the purpose of altering the divine Will. The idea of God in biblical narrative as a personal "Thou", is supplanted in medieval Kabbalah by the idea of God as the undefinable Infinite (*ayn sof*) which is disclosed by way of the Ten Sefirot. But while God is specifically identified in this teaching with the Infinite and not with the Sefirot, traces remain even here, of a more personal idea of God. Thus God is personified as a benign father; though He is removed, He is not entirely absent; having set the stage, He continues to give authorization and assistance.

As the conception of divinity becomes more abstract with the development of Jewish mysticism, there is a shift in responsibility for divine influence in the world to the human representatives of the Divine. It is a shift of emphasis from God's conduct of the world being revealed *to* man, to its being revealed *through* man. Yet even as it might be said that God has given the Tzaddiq command of the world via the "stick" of the *axis mundi* or the Sefirah of Yesod, it should be pointed out that God remains an "Essence" existing within the creation in "contracted" form. To be "contracted within" is not to be entirely absent; neither the Sefirot nor humankind are essentially separate from God. But God allows the Tzaddiqim the pleasure of performing the function of ruling the world on behalf of the Divine.

Are the Tzaddiqim a special class of individuals who are magically empowered to get whatever they want? That is the direction in which Weiss is pointing. Yet it

¹⁴The word *yirah*, which is ordinarily translated as "fear", shares the root of the word *roeh*, "to see"; thus it may carry these more subtle implications.

appears to me that the Maggid himself addresses this question in a discourse which Weiss relates, which interprets, further, the verse with which the last teaching concluded (Psalm 145:19) "He performs the will of those who fear Him":

He does not mean to say (literally) that the Holy One blessed be He fulfills the will of the righteous [Tzaddiqim] and God-fearing as such; for will (*raṣon*) has the meaning of desire (*ta'avah*), and the will of man proper may long for anything; and this verse does not mean to suggest that the righteous and God-fearing may long for material benefits. But prayer (also) is called *raṣon* as it is written, "and as for me, my prayer to you is a time of *raṣon*" (Psalm 69:14). And behold the Holy One, blessed be He, craves the prayers of the *Saddikim*, and He Himself imparts to them the will to pray--in accordance (with the scriptural verse) "From man are the orderings of the heart and from God the answer of the tongue . . ." (Proverbs 16:1)--and then his prayer is acceptable.¹⁵

The kind of interaction between the human and the divine described here does, after all, suggest a kind of "I/Thou relationship"! For although God is both the source of the will to pray and the One to whom prayers are addressed, God does not dominate the relationship and is not in total control. God is dependent on man to give shape to the divine Will in the form of prayers, just as man is dependent God both for the ability to pray and the fulfillment of prayer. What emerges might well be described in terms of "dialogue".

It is interesting to note that the Maggid has referred to God, in this case, not as "the Infinite" but as "the Holy One blessed be He" (*haqadosh barukh hu*). According to Kabbalistic teaching this is the Name of God which corresponds to the Sefirah of Tiferet, which may be characterized as the center or totality of the Sefirotic realm. This then suggests that it is at the heart of the process of creation--rather than at its source in the Infinite, above and beyond the creation--that the Will of God and man may meet and mutually define one another. Thus it is understood that prayer which truly reflects the Will of God represents a convergence of the human and the Divine.¹⁶

¹⁵Weiss, *Studies*, 185-6.

The reference to God's "answer of the tongue" hearkens back to the Talmudic R. Hanina ben Dosa, who determined, in this way, if his prayers had been answered. By citing Hanina's technique of intercessory prayer, the Maggid identifies the function of the Tzaddiq with that of the charismatic wonder-working figures of the Talmud. Indeed, he continues the teaching quoted above by warmly referring to Rabbi Hanina as "our teacher":

The latter phrase means as our teacher has written, "if my prayer flows readily from my mouth." And this is the meaning of the verse, "He does the will of those who fear him." It means to say that his prayer is performed and (at the same time) accepted and all this arises for the one to whom the Holy One blessed be He sends "the tongue's answer" and He does this because he was a righteous and God-fearing man prior to that; therefore He sent him a "will" (prayer) which should be proper and acceptable.¹⁷

The prayer of the Tzaddiq is empowered by God, and to receive such empowerment must be in accordance with the divine Will. The Maggid points out that being righteous is, indeed, an essential characteristic of being a Tzaddiq. Thus a Tzaddiq is not merely a magician; it is not the knowledge of technique but alignment to the Divine which makes the prayers of Tzaddiqim effective.

The Hasidic Tzaddiq in Relation to Jewish Tradition

How did the Hasidic Masters relate their view of the Tzaddiq to earlier developments? It is clear from the reference to R. Hanina ben Dosa mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, that the Maggid was concerned with relating the Hasidic figure of the Tzaddiq to precedents in the Jewish mystical tradition. In the following description of the role of the Tzaddiq in informing the Will of God, the Maggid refers

¹⁶This kind of convergence was expressed most simply and sweepingly by the Hasidic Rebbe Pinhas of Koretz, when he declared that "prayer is not to God. Prayer is God."

¹⁷Joseph Weiss, 186.

to the example of Moses, which he relates to the Patriarchs as well as to other charismatic figures of the Mishnah and Talmud: Honi the Circle-maker, who was successful in compelling God to bring much needed rain, and indirectly to R. Eli'ezer ben Hyrcanus, the charismatic Rabbi who ran afoul of his rabbinic colleagues:

"And all Thy children are taught of the Lord" (Isaiah 54:13). This applies to the prayer of Onias the circle maker, who, as one might say, *changed* the will of the Creator, blessed be His Name. And also Moses, our teacher, peace be upon him, as it is stated in the *Zohar* (on the verse) "Remember to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" (Exodus 32:13) . . . one might say, he seized the Almighty and altered His Will, blessed be His Name, and thus R. Joshua declares, "we do not heed the *bath kol*," and the Holy One blessed be He has said, "My children have overcome Me." And this is the meaning of the verse "Thy children are taught (*limmude*) of the Lord," that they, as it were, teach (*lomedim*) the Lord, blessed be His Name.¹⁸

By choosing a text which speaks of "*all thy children*" the Maggid indicates that the example of the Tzaddiq does not refer to a single individual alone, but implies its application to a wider circle. Considering this passage along with the one in which the Tzaddiq is conceived of as a child given a hobby-horse by God, suggests that the Maggid saw his disciples as "children" growing up to become responsible for the affairs of man and God. It was, indeed, these disciples who went on to spread the Hasidic movement, establishing and leading communities throughout Eastern Europe. It therefore would have been of great importance to the Maggid to elucidate the kind of model which these "children" in his care might follow.

In the passage above, the Maggid appears to have effortlessly blended biblical and Talmudic models of the Tzaddiq, but a remarkable substitution has in fact taken place. The fact that the rabbinic authority represented by R. Yehoshua was directly opposed to the charismatic authority of R. Eli'ezer (and, we might imagine, of a Hanina as well) is conveniently overlooked. By avoiding the explicit mention of R. Eli'ezer, the Maggid effectively merges his spiritual authority with the rabbinical independence

¹⁸From *Maggid Devarav le-Ya'akov*, translated by Joseph Weiss and quoted in *Studies*, 187-8.

and freedom of interpretation represented by his opponent, R. Yehoshua. Thus the interpretive autonomy of the Rabbi and the spiritual authority of the charismatic are merged and incorporated in the Maggid's Tzaddiq ideal.

Rabbi and Rebbe

How, precisely, did the Hasidic model of the Tzaddiq relate to the institution of the Rabbi as it existed at that time? Unlike R. Eli'ezer, the Hasidic Masters were primarily concerned with spiritual teaching rather than with deciding matters of religion. Ever since its beginnings in Rabbinic tradition, the spiritual conception of the role of the Tzaddiq had been removed from that of a Prophet who relates a new message from the Divine, alters religious law and practice, generates new Scriptures and possibly creates a new religion, and had also been distinguished from that of the Rabbi. The integrity of the canon was preserved as its Rabbinic interpretation continued to grow, and this was a canon which now included not only the Torah and the rest of the Hebrew Bible, but which was understood to include the interpretation of the Torah in the Talmud, and in subsequent Rabbinic commentaries. In an informal sense, it was a canon which was also understood to include the Zohar, which was loosely structured as a mystical interpretation of the Torah, and which since the sixteenth century had assumed a quasi-canonical status as the basis for extensive Kabbalistic commentaries, according to the Schools of Moshe Cordovero and Yitzḥaq Luria. Thus, the fact that the figure of the Tzaddiq was understood in Hasidism, as earlier, as functioning entirely within the framework of Rabbinic tradition--the fact that Hasidic Tzaddiqim behaved like Rabbis in interpreting Torah by means of traditional commentaries--was a formal limitation which effectively allowed for tremendous freedom of expression. Like the very designation of the Tzaddiq as "the Foundation of the world", this was a legacy of Kabbalah. In the words of Arthur Green,

medieval kabbalists had already called for complete freedom of interpretation so long as no matter of law is to be affected. This claim is found echoed in Hasidism, [most] explicitly so in the literature of [Rebbe Nahman] of Bratslav. We see in Hasidism a sort of compromise: homiletical license has indeed been given to the *rebbe*, while legal authority has remained in the hands of the *rav*. . . . traditionalism in legal matters providing a safe context for theological radicalism and spiritual boldness.¹⁹

Inasmuch as both were interpreters of Jewish tradition, there was room for some overlap between the function of the Hasidic Tzaddiq, his role as Rebbe, and that of the Rabbi or Rav. Although it is tempting, from a modern perspective, to draw a clear distinction between the religious function of the Rabbi and the spiritual function of the Tzaddiq, as the leader of a community both functions are likely to have been combined, to some degree, in the Hasidic conception of the Rebbe. Gershom Scholem cites two Hasidic interpretations which shed light on this point:

Highly illuminating in this regard are two popular definitions of the Hasidic *Tsaddik*--or, as he was known in the Yiddish vernacular, the *rebbe*, in contrast with the purely rabbinic scholar, the *rav*. The difference in spelling of the two Hebrew words consists of an additional *yod*, or "point," in the word *rebbe*. The *rebbe*, says one definition, is a *rav* . . . who has attained that hidden point where he touches the Divine. The second definition interprets the numerical value of the Hebrew letter *yod*, ten, as alluding to the ten men that constitute a *minyan*, a religious community Thus, says the second definition, a *rebbe* is a *rav* . . . with a living community . . . of people who have been awakened and touched by the divine spirit.²⁰

¹⁹Arthur Green, "Typologies of Leadership", 151. Thus, while the "radicalism and boldness" of Hasidic thought had as its external support the legal conservatism of *halakhah*, it was internally supported by the much more radical innovations of medieval Kabbalah.

²⁰Gershom Scholem, in his chapter "*Tsaddik: The Righteous One*", in *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead* (New York: Schocken, 1991), 133. Scholem proceeds to point out that although the Hasidic ideal of the Tzaddiq "advocated by the Rabbi of Polnoye and the Maggid of Mezhierech was that one be at once both a *rav* and a *rebbe* . . . this ideal was only realized sporadically in the course of the Hasidic movement", so that "the two types remained separate, and the *Tsaddikim* became a special type of essentially spritualistic and charismatic figures." We should bear in mind, however, that while Hasidic Rebbeim were not always regarded as rabbinic authorities in matters of Jewish law, their role as interpreters of the Torah--like that of many generations of Kabbalistic Masters before them--involved them directly in the rabbinic occupation of Torah interpretation.

Thus the Rebbe is considered to be more deeply connected to God than a Rabbi needs to be, and more deeply connected to his community than a Rabbi needs to be! The idea of the Hasidic Master was built upon the models of charismatic leadership provided by both the Bible and the Talmud, and upon a spiritual idea inherited from Talmudic and Kabbalistic sources describing the Tzaddiq as "the foundation of the world", and yet it incorporated, as well, a spiritualized notion of the role of the Rabbi. Thus it might be said that the figure of the Tzaddiq was incorporated within the Rebbe, or else that the Rebbe was a Tzaddiq serving in the capacity of a spiritual leader of a community.

Tzaddiq and Preacher

Gershom Scholem points out one other model of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq which deserves consideration, although this one is not explicitly acknowledged in early Hasidic literature: the model of the *mokhiah* ("warner") or *maggid* (popular "preacher"). The very fact that the man most responsible for establishing the foundations of Hasidism is known as the *Maggid* of Mezerich, despite his having impressive rabbinical credentials, is a strong indication of the importance of this model. According to Scholem,

this element entered Hasidism, not so much from the theory of earlier Kabbalah, as from the practical life of Polish Jewry during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The *mokhiah* was a person who took upon himself the task of teaching others the path to be followed in order to fulfill the ethical ideal. . . . The very presumption involved in the act of preaching in public must have kindled resentments; in order to overcome this, they needed minimally to embody their radical demands in their own persons. Even so, a tangible antagonism frequently existed between the talmudic scholars and these preachers of repentance . . . that is well documented even prior to the time of the Baal Shem Tov. These *mokhihim* attacked the scholars, in whom intellect had stifled all religious feeling.²¹

²¹Ibid., 122-3.

Against the background of such a tension between the office of Rabbi and Preacher, we can understand the desire of the founders of Hasidism to establish a leadership model which would be distinguishable from the conventional model of the Rabbi, without condemning Rabbinic Judaism and without separating from it, and without denying the possibility that such spiritual leaders might serve as Rabbis as well. In contrast with members of his circle like the Maggid of Mezerich and R. Ya'aqov Yosef, neither the Ba'al Shem Tov (who, ironically, was called "Rabbi" Israel) nor many of his disciples' disciples, had strong rabbinic credentials. "In this context," Scholem points out, "we must not forget that the majority of early Hasidic leaders, particularly the most important ones, held the position of *mokhiah* rather than that of rabbi in their communities." Thus he reasons that "in Hasidism, the *mokhiah* and the Kabbalistic *Tsaddik* were merged into one figure."²²

Scholem's proposition that these two figures were "merged" is supported by placing certain examples of early Hasidic writings and the *Mokhiah* literature that preceded it, side-by-side. Scholem points out that these *Mokhihim* "needed to embody their radical demands in their own persons" because of the vulnerability of their position as itinerant preachers, supported neither by established institutions nor (necessarily) by scholarship. This, in turn, points to a vital relationship between the inner life of the preacher and of the persons addressed. Thus I find the words of an early seventeenth century *Mokhiah* whom Scholem quotes, Abraham ben Eli'ezer of Shebreshin, anticipate the Hasidic literature of the *Tzaddiq*:

There are books on medicine filled [with information on medicines] like the stormy sea, yet one who is not expert in them and their terminology through what he has learned from others could not use them to heal his severe illness . . . for their benefit is in what he has learned through the actions of his teacher, for action is the greatest example. . . . So it is in the ways of repentance: a person will not be so aroused from a book as he will be aroused and awakened by one

²²Ibid., 123-4.

who preaches with weeping and a loud and bitter voice, reminding him of incidents and occurrences that break a man's heart.²³

I am proposing that this simple principle of preaching from the heart on the basis of one's own experience, and thereby allowing others to identify with what one says, is likely to have contributed to the Hasidic idea that the Tzaddiq contains others within himself. Thus the informal tradition of the heart-felt preacher would have combined with the Kabbalistic idea that the entire universe represented by the Sefirot exists primarily within the individual, and would have lent substance to it.²⁴

R. Ya'aqov Yosef of Polnoy echoes this Mokhiah idea when, speaking in the name of the Ba'al Shem Tov, he sets forth the doctrine that the Tzaddiq includes the entire community of Israel within himself. It is because of the correspondence between that which exists inside and outside the individual, that the Tzaddiq may benefit others by his own inner work:

The entire world constitutes a unity, a complete structure (*komah shlemah*) (i.e., reflecting the totality of the *Sefiroth*)--this one is the head, this one the eye, that one the leg. If, therefore, a man commits a sin, something of that sin is mirrored even in the Whole Ones of Israel (i.e., the Righteous). If (the *Tsaddik*) eradicates and erases the stain that he finds in himself and does penance before God, because of this that sinner will also repent. . . . And this is what is meant by "peace be upon Israel" (Ps. 128:6)--when the faithful in Israel, the heads of the generation, are whole, then the masses of the people are also humble.²⁵

²³Ibid., 123.

²⁴See the discussion of "Hebrew Equivalents" in Chapter Two.

²⁵Gershom Scholem, *Mystical Shape*, 127-8. Scholem concludes that "this basic idea is the key to understanding the subsequent hypertrophy of the doctrine, which scholars of Hasidism have rightly dubbed 'Tsaddikism.'" He proceeds to discuss the Tzaddiq's "extraordinary powers as an envoy of the spiritual world and a helper of mankind", and to pursue the issue of the eventual institutionalization of the Tzaddiq ideal. I can only surmise that the negative bias which enters Scholem's analysis of the Hasidic idea of the Tzaddiq, may either be a cause or a product of his failure to recognize the "basic idea" staring him in the face: that it is the archetypal nature of the Tzaddiq, by which he contains the entire community within himself, which is "the key to understanding" the enormous power of the Tzaddiq idea, and the remarkable fruit it bore in the Hasidic movement.

This text jumps from the idea that the Sefirotic "structure" is contained within the human archetype, to the idea that those who have realized this archetype contain the community of Israel within themselves. Thus it is stated that the "Whole Ones of Israel" serve not only to reflect the Divine, but also to reflect the human community. Scholem acknowledges that "the Baal Shem Tov focuses directly upon the *Tsaddik's* activities on behalf of his generation", conceiving of such a figure not in relation to God alone, but as integrally related to the entire community. Scholem continues, "The figure of the *Tsaddik* who remains hidden does not much interest him, even though his followers speak a great deal about the special class of the 'hidden righteous' who operate anonymously, in solitude or unrecognized by society."²⁶

The Hasidic Usage of "Tzaddiq"

And yet, although he credits the Ba'al Shem Tov with introducing the Hasidic ideal of the spiritual Master who has an inner connection both with God and with the members of his community, Scholem doubted whether it was the Besht himself who identified such a figure with the name "Tzaddiq". According to Scholem, "the Baal Shem Tov himself was not referred to by his followers as a *Tzaddik*. In his own statements--so far as those are recognized as authentic--he used various terms to represent the ideal representatives of his doctrine."²⁷ While the term "Whole Ones of Israel" employed by R. Ya'aqov Yosef in the quotation above is likely to be authentic, Scholem proposes that the use of the term "Tzaddiq" in teachings attributed to the Besht was most often substituted for another term. This then would typify the

²⁶Ibid., 127.

²⁷Gershom Scholem, *Mystical Shape*, 121.

teachings of R. Moshe Hayyim Ephrayim of Sudylqov, the grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov, whose teachings were recorded later than those of the Toldot:

In those passages where his grandson, rendering the Baal Shem's words, uses the word *tsaddik*, older formulations of the same or similar utterances employ such phrases as "a fit person" (*adam kasher*), "a wise man" (*hakham*), "a true scholar" (*talmid-hakham amiti*), or even "the perfect man" (*ha-adam ha-shalem*) or "the head of the generation" *rosh ha-dor*). *Tsaddik* is only one of these terms, and by no means the most frequent or obvious. . . . This terminological unclarity disappeared only when the Baal Shem's disciple, Rabbi Dov Baer of Mezhirech, and especially the latter's disciples, established the *Tsaddik* as a necessary institution of Hasidic life.²⁸

If, indeed, it was the Maggid who established the use of the term "Tzaddiq" as the definitive ideal of the Hasidic movement, this adds support to the view that it was he who was the architect as well as builder of the Hasidic movement.

The Leader Contains the People

The Hasidic idea that the Tzaddiq is a *shvil* serves to clarify an earlier Kabbalistic conception of what I would call a "vertical" connection between the Tzaddiq and God. Another Kabbalistic idea which is clarified in Hasidic texts, is that there is a "horizontal" connection between the Tzaddiq and other people. The idea that the Tzaddiq contains others within himself is related in the Besht's teaching about the "Whole Ones" of Israel, as well as in the Chernobyler's description of the flesh-and-blood Tzaddiq "binding" all creatures to the Divine. But the holographic idea that individuals contain the archetype of the Tzaddiq within themselves is expressed more explicitly in classical Hasidic teachings, typically in terms of the idea that Moses contains all of Israel within himself.

²⁸Ibid.

The Kabbalistic school of R. Yitzhaq Luria, which originated in the sixteenth century, provided the conceptual framework for a Hasidic understanding of this holographic paradigm. Green provides the following summary of the relevant teachings:

Kabbalists saw the soul of Adam as containing within it all those souls that were born in all future generations. . . . A less well-known but perhaps equally significant part of the Kabbalistic myth is the notion that the soul of Moses contained within it the souls of all Israel. Each Jewish soul, according to Luria, is related to one of the six hundred thousand mystical letters of the Torah. Each Israelite has a particular soul-root which is also manifest in a letter of Scripture. The soul of Moses, however, contains *all* of these; it is called the *neshamah kelalit*, the general or all inclusive soul. It is because Moses' soul contains both the entire Torah and the entire people that he becomes the instrument of revelation.²⁹

While I agree with his analysis, Green sees these ideas as pointing to conclusions quite different from my own. He emphasizes that

Kabbalah comes much closer to containing a notion of original sin than most writers on Judaism have been willing to ascribe. . . . The old rabbinic sources had already seen Sinai as the event which redeemed Israel from the curse of Eden. If all souls were tainted by the sin of Adam, the Kabbalists now claim, all the souls of Israel are redeemed by their presence in the soul of Moses as he ascends the mountain. . . . Primarily, of course, the way to achieve this access is through Moses' Torah; in this sense Kabbalah remains faithfully rabbinic. (Else it would be precisely that Christian faith garbed in the symbols of Jewish esoterica which some Renaissance humanists indeed hoped it would be!)³⁰

As Green points out, Moses' soul is understood in Lurianic Kabbalah as containing in itself both the Torah and the people Israel. Green focuses on the problem of sin and redemption, which does appear in Hasidic lore, but which I find is often absorbed in Hasidic teachings within the larger issue of the function of the Tzaddiq. While the Hasidic sources do not, of course, deny the importance of the Torah and the Commandments, by conceiving of them as aspects of Moses they assume a secondary importance--in theory, though not in practice. Inasmuch as the Commandments

²⁹Green, "*Axis Mundi*", 336. The italics are his.

³⁰Ibid., 336-7.

themselves may be subsumed within the character of Moses (much as Jesus claims to "fulfill" and not "destroy" the law), it is not the role of the Commandments, alone, which distinguishes Jewish from Christian faith. The Jewish idea of Moses as the Tzaddiq, as it is expressed in the Hasidic sources, is in itself quite different from the Christian idea in which Jesus is identified personally and uniquely with the Christ. The question, once again, is what is the nature of the idea of the Tzaddiq?

"Moses" According to the Degel

What distinguishes the idea of the Tzaddiq expressed in Hasidic lore is that it is not tied to an historical conception of Moses--or Adam, or R. Shim'on bar Yohai, or R. Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, any particular individual. Yet the example of Moses provides Hasidic lore with a central image of the archetypal function of the Tzaddiq. One of the primary sources of Hasidic traditions going back to the Ba'al Shem Tov, along with R. Ya'akov Yosef, is the Besht's grandson, R. Moshe Hayyim Ephrayim of Sudylqov. Like "the Toldot", "the Degel" is popularly referred to by the title of his book, *Degel Mahaneh Ephrayim*. Like "the Toldot", "the Degel" shows care in attributing certain of his words to the Ba'al Shem Tov. While the authenticity of these teachings may be more difficult to ascertain, inasmuch as the teachings of the Degel confirm the those of the Toldot, both in style and content, they serve to reinforce our knowledge of the foundations of Hasidic thought.

This teaching of the Degel, quoting the Besht, speaks of a figure "like Moses" who (as in the teaching of the Toldot) has not been formally identified with the figure of the Tzaddiq:

According to the saying of our rabbis, may their memory be a blessing, "one who learns Torah for its own sake (*lishma'*) merits many things (or "words", *dvarim*) . . . and the secrets of Torah are revealed to him, so that he is made like an over-flowing spring, like a river which does not cease." [Mishnah Avot 6] And thus, in every generation, the "heads" and "eyes" of the generation are

aspects (*behinot*) of Moses, as it says in the Gemmara, "that's brilliant, Moshe!" Thus he called one of his companions "Moses", which is the [Sefirah of] Da'at [Knowledge]. Whoever possesses the aspect of Da'at may be called "Moshe".³¹

The reference here to "the 'heads' and 'eyes' of the generation" certainly recalls the teaching related by the Degel in which "the Whole Ones of Israel" serve the Jewish community, "this one [as] the head, this one the eye". The figure who does this is considered a "Moses" in the sense of a model Torah scholar. Such a person, who learns Torah not for fame or for livelihood but as an act of service to God, becomes a channel for the divine flow. Thus a link is established between the rabbinical notion of the study of "Torah for its own sake" and a more mystical idea of communion with the Divine via participation in Da'at, the Sefirah of divine Knowledge.

Most significantly, this teaching presents "Moses" and "Da'at" specifically in terms of "aspects". Aspects of what? "Da'at", as a Sefirah, is clearly an aspect of God. The precise meaning of Moses as an aspect is a little more difficult to determine. The quotation from the Talmud declares that anyone who comes up with a particularly good interpretation of the Torah deserves to be congratulated and called a "Moshe". This then is the basis for the idea that people can attain a level of divine knowledge, defined as Da'at, which represents the same principle as Moses. But precisely what kind of "knowledge" is meant here? Is it a matter of scholarly attainment? The Degel proceeds to clarify this point:

And to understand this matter: "he is made like an over-flowing spring," is by way of "the Torah of loving-kindness [*hesed*] is upon his tongue." (Proverbs) That is, that the Torah is entirely loving-kindness. Thus one who binds himself with Torah and recites "Torah for its own sake", ". . . is made like an over-flowing spring", that is, like a spring from which living waters are constantly flowing.³²

³¹Moshe Hayyim Ephrayim of Sudylqov, *Degel Mahaneh Ephrayim* (Lodz: Shim'on Rotenberg, facsimile edition published in Israel by Books Export Enterprises) ""Yitro"" , 67. The translations from this source are my own.

³²Ibid.

For the person who is involved in the deepest levels of the study of Torah, the entire affair is transformed into a matter of love. Such activity brings one to the source of grace. Thus it would seem that the Rabbinic principle of studying "Torah for its own sake" is understood, in a Hasidic context, as a kind of activity in which the conscious mind reaches the subconscious mind, in which the intellect is joined to the heart:

Thus he constantly draws forth loving-kindnesses [or "continues the flow of grace", *mamshikh hasadim*], the aspect of "water", upon himself and upon all creatures, each one according to his nature. Although it is not revealed and made visible to the eye, these graces are nevertheless complete loving-kindnesses, and shall be revealed at the end. And it is called "like an unceasing river" because he is constantly, every moment, and every second, drawing forth graces, the aspect of "water", upon himself and upon all creatures, without ceasing at all. And thus he sweetens all of the consequences [or "judgements", *dinim*], so that they are sweetened and transformed into complete loving-kindnesses.³³

At first the role of a "Moses" is presented as a matter of spiritual *gnosis* accompanying the study of the Torah, which affords one access to the Sefirah of Da'at. Now it emerges that more than the mystical experience of an individual is at stake. Words of Torah represent a function whereby widespread karmic consequences of human actions are "sweetened". They enable the Sefirah of Hesed ("Grace" or "Loving-kindness") to temper the severity of a strict accounting for human actions that is the function of the Sefirah of Gevurah ("Rigor"), which is also known as Din ("Judgement"). Thus, more than a mystical exegete, the Moses-like figure is someone who, through study, is in a position to draw down the continuing flow of grace which sustains the world.

This builds on the Rabbinic idea that if people received the consequences of their actions, both individually and collectively, it would be too much for them to endure. Thus, in addition to the haphazard efforts of individuals, and the coordinated efforts of the entire community at the High Holidays in fasting, repentance and prayer,

³³Ibid.

there are certain "Moseses" who are constantly involved in protecting "creatures" (*baey 'olam*, literally "those who come by way of the world") from the natural consequences of their actions. While this is a special function, it is not an exclusive one. Just as anyone may bring forth a profound and original understanding of Torah, it is possible for anyone to participate in this function as well. Thus it appears to me that this text does not really mean to say that such action is accomplished only by the study of Torah. It is more likely that the reference to the study of Torah is meant to be emblematic of a kind of esoteric activity which might also be accomplished in other ways, such as prayer. Read in the broader context of Hasidic tradition, which tends to emphasize prayer more than study, the point would not be that study is the sole means of a "Moshe" securing the flow of grace, but that it is an example of such means of grace.

This teaching has not yet explicitly introduced the idea of a "Tzaddiq like Moses" which would later become one of the foundations of Hasidic thought. Following Scholem's assumption, however, I take the fact that the specific term "Tzaddiq" is not employed as the generic description of that function which earlier, and later, would be associated with that term, as an indication that this is a teaching which has come down in the original words of the Ba'al Shem Tov, or nearly.³⁴

The Maggid's Vision of the Archetype of the Tzaddiq

Having considered the teachings of the Besht, as well as earlier Kabbalistic and Rabbinic precedents, the time has come for a definitive statement of the archetype of

³⁴Elsewhere in this teaching, the Degel quotes the Besht as interpreting the phrase *Torah lishma'* as meaning "for the sake of the word and letter itself", while acknowledging that the Holy Ari interpreted it as "for the sake of [the letter] *hay*." The Degel concludes that "most likely the matter is one [and the same, in both cases]." It is clear from this remark that the Ba'al Shem Tov is not the only source the Degel is aware of, but it also indicates his level of care for not confusing his sources, even when he perceived an essential agreement between them.

the Tzaddiq according to Hasidic teaching. The discourse on the Tzaddiq by the Chernobyler Rebbe which I presented at the beginning of this chapter is not quite such a definitive statement but might be seen as preparing the way. The most concise and authoritative statement I know of comes from the Great Maggid of Mezerich.³⁵ The Maggid begins by developing the early Hasidic notion of the Tzaddiq as "a" Moses, who includes the entire community of Israel within himself. He then reviews the main points of the history of this idea, before introducing his own original insight into the function of the Tzaddiq:

We begin with the Zohar's interpretation of "One generation passes and another comes." (Eccles. 1:4). There is no generation which does not have a Tzaddiq like Moses (Zohar 1:25a; Gen. R. 56:7). This means that Moses included the entire 600,000 of the generation. Thus the rabbis said: a woman in Egypt gave birth to 600,000 from one womb (Cant. Rab. 1:15:3). This is why "One generation passes and another comes" is said in the singular and not the plural: it refers to the *zaddiq* of the generation . . . as Scripture tells us that "*Zaddiq* is the foundation of the world."³⁶

Here it seems that the early Kabbalistic idea that a single Tzaddiq, if necessary, can do the job alone, has developed into the idea that each generation is provided with at least one outstanding "Tzaddiq of the Generation". The Maggid quotes a discussion in the Zohar in which the Tzaddiq is conceived of as a comprehensive figure who includes within himself not the universe of space, expressed in terms of the Land of Israel, but the universe of person, expressed as the 600,000 souls of Israel.³⁷ Implied here, as well, is the idea of Lurianic Kabbalah that the souls of Israel are constantly

³⁵Although I have yet to test this thesis, I suspect that the teachings of the Maggid themselves may be seen as a "whole picture" or holograph, which is reflected and amplified in its various parts (though not in its entirety), by the various Hasidic authors following him.

³⁶Arthur Green, "*Axis Mundi*", 338.

³⁷This then would correspond to the Kabbalistic idea that there are three essential categories of existence: Space (*'olam*), Time (*shannah*) and Person (*nefesh*). See Adin Steinsaltz, *The Thirteen Petalled Rose*, trans. Yehuda Hanegbi (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 6ff.

reincarnating. Yet the emphasis in his reference to the idea of "the Tzaddiq of the Generation" is not on a single person who has returned from the past, but on a singular function. Indeed, the term itself involves a bit of a pun: the idea of there being an outstanding Tzaddiq in a given generation is tied to the idea of the Tzaddiq belonging to the particular "generation" the Tzaddiq serves and sustains.³⁸ As he continues, it becomes even clearer that the Maggid is more concerned with the archetypal function of the Tzaddiq than with a particular personality:

Now it is known that *yesod* has the power to ascend and draw the divine abundance forth from above, because it includes all. [Yesod = "all".] The same is true of the earthly *zaddiq*: he is the channel who allows the abundance to flow down for his entire generation. Thus the rabbis said: "The whole world is sustained for the sake [*shevil*] of Hanina My son." This means that Hanina brought the divine flow forth for all of them, like a pathway through which all can pass; R. Hanina himself became the channel [*shevil*] for that flow.³⁹

The Maggid recapitulates the old tradition of R. Hanina as the model Tzaddiq. Although he makes an apparent distinction between the Sefirah Yesod and "the earthly Tzaddiq", the point he is making here, as in the earlier sources which the Maggid obviously knows, is that the earthly Tzaddiq, himself, is the channel for the function of Yesod, through which the divine *shefa* reaches the creation. His original contribution is in the last line:

In the same way was he (the *zaddiq*) the ladder of which it is said: "They go up and down on it" (Gen. 28:12). Just as he has the power to cause the downward flow of divine bounty, so can his entire generation rise upward through him.⁴⁰

³⁸Green is appropriately cautious about jumping to conclusions about the Maggid's conception of this figure. "It is not clear whether the Maggid believed in a *single zaddiq* who was the pillar of a given generation or whether he accepted the notion that there might be more than one such figure in the world at a given time. While this passage seems to point to a singular figure . . . many other passages in his writings and those of his disciples seem to point in the other direction." *Ibid.*, 338-9.

³⁹Arthur Green, "*Axis Mundi*", 338.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

Ultimately it is not Moses so much as Jacob, or rather Jacob's ladder, which provides the Maggid with his ultimate example of the archetypal function of the Tzaddiq. His original *hidush* implies that just as the angels first ascended and then descended from Jacob (a theme which is expounded in Midrash), the path of the Tzaddiq leads from earth to heaven. The Tzaddiq not only brings down the divine flow, but himself provides a "ladder" by which others may climb up to God.

From such a perspective, the Tzaddiq is more than an expert at prayer. He is more than someone who intercedes on behalf of others, brings redemption from sin, brings material and spiritual blessings, protects the world as a whole, and gives vitality and meaning to life. Whether they know it or not, the Tzaddiq is someone who contains the members of his spiritual community within himself. And yet even this does not fully express the function of the Tzaddiq. That the Tzaddiq inspires others was said long ago about Honi and R. Hanina, and even about Shim'on ha-Tzaddiq. Here is perhaps an expression of the higher octave of this function. The spiritual Master is the vehicle in which disciples make their way to God. The obvious implication of such a teaching is that those who are aware of this function of the Tzaddiq have the opportunity to make use of it.

Earlier I cited the Toldot's presentation of the seminal idea that the Tzaddiq (that is, each of "the Whole Ones of Israel") constitutes an archetypal figure which serves not only as a point of contact with the Divine, but as a reflector of the human community. The complement of this idea is that the Tzaddiq is a mirror which reflects the condition of others back to them, an agency which allows others to know themselves. This is expressed by the Maggid of Mezerich in terms of the metaphor of a mirror: "the *Tsaddik* is called a mirror, for everyone who looks at him sees himself as in a mirror."⁴¹

How does this self-knowledge which the Tzaddiq reflects to others, relate to his function of enabling others to "rise upwards through him" in the knowledge of God? How is it that the Tzaddiq may enable others to gain access to the Divine? Elsewhere, the Maggid speaks of the Tzaddiq having access to *qadmut ha-seikhel*, literally "the precursor of consciousness", that is, a "prior" or "primordial consciousness". Scholem translates this term as "the unconscious", and draws the following conclusion:

I have found no terser, finer, or more exhaustive definition of the nature and function of the Hasidic *Tsaddik* than an utterance made by the Maggid in 1770: "The *Tsaddikim* make of God, if one may phrase it thus, their unconscious."⁴²

While I believe that Scholem's use of the term "unconscious" is justified, care should be taken with how this term is understood. (Scholem himself makes no special effort to explain what he means.) It seems to me that it refers to the deep foundations of the consciousness of the Tzaddiq. Surely it must include a transpersonal realm, an area of consciousness which is shared among people. This is very much the kind of realm which Jung named "the collective unconscious", the realm in which dreams have more than personal significance, in which souls relate to one another as souls, and universal symbols (what Jung would call "the archetypes") appear. But the Maggid is stating, as if in answer to Jung, that the unconscious does not end with products of "the collective". The Tzaddiq identifies a channel by which others may connect themselves to God, because the consciousness of the Tzaddiq is rooted in the Divine.

Indeed, these words of the Maggid point to the idea that within the archetype of the Tzaddiq is what Philo identified as the archetype of the Mind. That is, consciousness itself may be realized as a divine attribute which contains in itself the entire creation, leading up to the point where it is entirely overwhelmed in God.

⁴¹Gershom Scholem, *Mystical Shape*, 134.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 139.

Clearly, the archetype of the Mind is reflected in the consciousness of every human being. And yet, although it is implicit in the psyche of every human being, the Tzaddiq is a human who has realized this primordial consciousness in which all of humanity is included and meets with the Divine. As in R. Nahman's example of the Tzaddiq as the "Master of the Field" of the soul, it is in the "field" of such a being that others may find the way to connect themselves to God.

Point of Contact

I would like to pause, at this point, to amplify the Maggid's vision of the Tzaddiq by considering a parallel vision. Indeed, the closest parallel I have found to the archetypal function of the Tzaddiq is the Sufi principle of *rabita*, or Point of Contact. In his *Meccan Revelations*, the great medieval Muslim saint, Muhyiddin ibn al 'Arabi, accounts for this principle as follows:

It is known that the First Existent Being, though it is One in Entity, in respect to its Essence also possesses the property of relationship with the cosmos that becomes manifest from It. . . . There must also be an interconnecting factor (*rabit*) which is conceived of between the Essence and the relationship, so that the Essence can accept this relationship.⁴³

The metaphysical principle of a divine archetype which serves as the first Point of Contact between the divine Essence and the creation, may also be identified with the person in whom this function is found. This is expressed in the contemporary Sufi teachings of Murat Yagan, as follows:

In Islamic Sufi language, *rabita* simply means "connection". . . . "Point of contact", which is the root of *rabita*, means the connection with your higher self. Higher selves are like members belonging to a Masonic Lodge. They are very tightly connected with each other. They belong to a fraternity. They are stuck to one another with law, understanding and unison. When you connect yourself to a

⁴³William C. Chittick (trans. and commentary), *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 360.

person who has found his higher self, your higher self will be accessible to you, because your higher self and this person's higher self belong to this Masonic Lodge.⁴⁴

By "higher self", what is meant is a "higher" or inner capacity of the individual which is related to the Divine. The "Masonic Lodge" to which the higher self of Master and disciple (as well as saints and Masters of past generations) belong, relates to the Maggid's notion of primordial consciousness, which Scholem translated as the "unconscious". This is made clear in an earlier discussion of the same subject:

When you learn how to shift yourself to your subconscious mind and you start using the faculties of your subconscious mind you become more advanced in it, because your subconscious mind is infinite. Your intellectual mind is finite. Its kingdom is only in the realm of intellect, of reason, of rational thinking. The subconscious mind's language is myriad and through subconscious you take your journey to the Infinite. . . . As it develops and the mind starts working as a whole, you don't give up your intellectual part, but your intellectual part now works under the light of subconscious mind rather than under the light of reason.⁴⁵

In both teachings, it seems, the person who represents such a "Point of Contact" serves to connect the individual to an area of consciousness in which souls are connected with each other in their fundamental connection with the Divine. This is an area one relates to through one's connection to one's higher self, by means of a connection with a person who has already developed such a connection. Yagan continues:

So, if you have a *rabita*, there is a higher hand on you. But to establish this *rabita* is not easy. Your intellectual acceptance of the person is not enough. Your faith is not enough. Only your submission is not enough. But when you start with those things, the result of that development, to a certain level, brings to life this connection: the reality of the connectedness comes up.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Murat Yagan, "Accepting Point of Contact", page 1. Unpublished transcript of a talk given in Vernon, B.C., on January 10, 1987. Kebzeh Foundation Collection, Vernon, B.C.

⁴⁵Murat Yagan, "Point of Contact", 5. Unpublished transcript of a talk given in Vancouver, B.C., in May, 1984. Kebzeh Foundation Collection, Vernon, B.C.

⁴⁶Yagan, "Accepting a Point", 1.

Hasidic teachings generally elaborate the nature of the Tzaddiq phenomenon, but say very little about how to relate to such a figure. While Islamic Sufi teachings do tend to emphasize submission to one's Sheikh, or spiritual Master, neither tradition has much in the way of instructions as to how to make such a relationship work. Here is an indication of why this may be the case: the totality of the relationship by which someone outside leads one to make contact with the Divine within oneself, cannot be reached by a single thought, feeling or action. Relating to such a figure is a process which does not lend itself to systematization. As in the Maggid's example of Jacob's ladder, however, the instrumentality of the Point of Contact is clearly emphasized:

The Point of Contact by which you reach anything is the point by which you get a hold of this thing. Thus, when you drink a cup of tea, your first Point of Contact with the tea is the handle of the cup. Then, you contact the tea with your lips.⁴⁷

How does such a technical function relate to the function of a particular human being?

Suppose that you are looking for an isolated island somewhere in the Pacific Ocean for the purpose of prospecting for a certain ore. Your first Point of Contact with the island will be when you hear of it. The second will be when you put your finger on the map. The third will be a person who can tell you how to get there. Then, once you have set foot on the island, you will need a fourth Point of Contact in the form of a person on this island who can tell you all about it.

You will need a fifth Point of Contact who is knowledgeable about prospecting, and a sixth who is knowledgeable about refining the ore, and a seventh who is knowledgeable about [all of these things, including] shipping and marketing the finished product. Through the process of making contact with all of these persons, you may become an accomplished businessman concerning the whole operation. Then, you won't need a Point of Contact anymore. You will be the thing itself.⁴⁸

Thus far, all of these Points of Contacts make it possible for one to learn what one needs, to make the connections one needs, in order to do ones own (spiritual) work.

⁴⁷Yagan, "Point of Contact", 1.

⁴⁸Ibid.

The possibility even exists of outgrowing the need for these various Points of Contact, by learning to do what they do, oneself. But this in itself points to a comprehensive function which can best be served by a single person who already possesses comprehensive knowledge:

But if in the first place you could have met the person who later in the process happened to be the seventh one in the line, you could have avoided going through all of the previous ones. You might have been put in the hands of the person from who you could have gotten all of the necessary contacts to proceed in your own interest. I would like to draw attention to the fact that in this analogy, your Points of Contact are not your "guides". They are only the instruments in your hand for establishing your own guidance. If we apply this analogy to the seeker of Truth, the meaning and function of the Point of Contact . . . we come to see that anything which can be instrumental in our search can be a Point of Contact, but it would be fortunate if we could meet a Point of Contact who is at the highest possible station of attainment, in the first place.⁴⁹

Just as there are distinctions to be made between various Points of Contacts, there are distinctions to be made between various Tzaddiqim. All of these stand, however, in contrast to the comprehensive figure of a singular "Tzaddiq of the Generation", who comprises the comprehensive function of a Tzaddiq, of Point of Contact, within himself or herself. whether or not there is, in fact, more than one individual who serves in this capacity in a given generation. Thus it is the Tzaddiq, or Point of Contact, whose knowledge is most complete, who most completely embodies the archetype of the spiritual Master. What both teachings seem to imply is that such a Master provides the disciple with all that one needs not only to connect with God, but ultimately to become another Master who may perform this function for others.

⁴⁹Ibid, 1-2.

R. Elimelekh's Conception of the Tzaddiq

It is not surprising, given the strength of the teachings of the Maggid of Mezerich, that they provided a foundation for the spread of the Hasidic movement. The popularization and spread of Hasidism, however, contained the seeds of its own decline. It was one of the Maggid's disciples, R. Elimelekh of Lezhensk, who wrote an enormously popular book, the *No'am Elimelekh*, which more than any other established the idea of the Tzaddiq in the popular imagination of the Jews of Eastern Europe. R. Elimelekh was not an original thinker of the order of the Maggid of Mezerich or the Ba'al Shem Tov. His primary concern was conveying the greatness of the Tzaddiq, and he only indirectly offered a glimpse of the inner workings of such a figure. His work is loosely constructed and resembles, stylistically, the rambling discourses by which both the Toldot and the Degel related the commentaries of the Ba'al Shem Tov. And yet, although the *No'am Elimelekh* lacks the intensity and authority which characterizes the teachings of the Maggid, or R. Nahman, there is a sense of an archetypal dimension of the Tzaddiq which continues to inform his work. Thus, while the popularity of the *No'am Elimelekh* may be attributed to its accessible style, and perhaps to the fact that the time had simply come for an easily readable book about the idea of the Tzaddiq, I believe that it is this archetypal sense of the figure of the Tzaddiq--veiled as it is--which attracted readers to this work.

The following quotation shows how ideas of the spiritual Master, going back to the Besht, are summarized and related to the figure of the Tzaddiq:

It appears to me as follows: the Tzaddiq, by way of his engagement in "Torah for its own sake", and his offering his heart to the Place [of the Divine],

blessed be--through this he lifts up and raises the *dinim* to their roots, and sweetens them there, and fulfills the action of compassion and loving-kindness.⁵⁰

For all of R. Elimelekh's obvious enthusiasm, caution is expressed in his characterization of the heart of the Tzaddiq being offered "to" the Divine, rather than serving "as" that Place. A little further on in this teaching, an interesting development appears. R. Elimelekh gives a detailed description of what is involved in Tzaddiqim lifting up and sweetening the *dinim*, and addresses himself to the question of the relationship between earlier generations of Tzaddiqim and those who later follow:

Every single day of the Tzaddiqim . . . they go up above, until they reach the Creator, blessed be, and repair [*mitaqnim*] the channels of the influences [*hatzinorot hahashpa'ot*]. And afterwards, when another Tzaddiq rises up like them, he too repairs the channels, and draws down the [positive] influences, more than the original Tzaddiqim. That is, that which the original Tzaddiqim repaired and activated continues forever, and every Tzaddiq who comes afterwards adds *tiqqun* to the *tiqqun* of the first ones. And this is "their estate", that is, their inheritance which they give as an eternal inheritance [or, "which they give the world to inherit", *morishim l'olam*]: it shall be forever.⁵¹

This passage describes the Tzaddiq phenomenon as a developing phenomenon. The contemporary Tzaddiq is not only a means of recapitulating the past greatness of a Moses, a Hanina, or a Ba'al Shem Tov. However far back one may consider the "original Tzaddiqim" to go, it is understood that Tzaddiqim, today, contribute something new to the channeling function which the great one of the past established. There is a sense of a transmission which, rather than losing power, gains in power as it is relayed.

R. Elimelekh's interpretation refers to the quotation from Isaiah 60:21, "Your people are all Tzaddiqim, and shall eternally inherit the earth" As in the reference to this quotation in the Zohar,⁵² a pun is employed by which rather than "eternally",

⁵⁰Elimelekh of Lizhensk, *No'am Elimelekh* (Cracow: Josef Fischer, 1896, facsimile edition published in Israel by Books Export Enterprises) "Trumah", 47. The translations from this work are my own.

⁵¹Ibid.

"*l'olam*" is taken as meaning "for the world". And yet although R. Elimelekh is likely to have been familiar with this passage in which the Zohar introduces its theory of the Tzaddiq, he does not focus on the idea of all Israel being (in some sense) Tzaddiqim. The subject which interests him here is *tiqqun*, which is usually translated as "repair" or "restoration", but which has a range of meaning which is difficult to render in the English language.

From the way in which R. Elimelekh employs the term, the "repairs" effected by succeeding generations of Tzaddiqim are more than problems that have been solved, or damage that has been undone. He employs a notion in which *tiqqunim* are invested with a positive existence, which continues and accumulates from one generation to the next. These *tiqqunim*, which subsequent generations of Tzaddiqim add to the contributions of former generations, seem to represent additional channels bringing down positive influences from the Divine, or perhaps, the conversion of channels which had brought down evil into channels manifesting good. Thus the focus on the function of a "channel" has shifted away from a focus on the figure of the Tzaddiq, to the function of the *tiqqunim* which they effect.

How then might R. Elimelekh's departure from the traditional emphasis on the Tzaddiq being the channel, be accounted for? Bearing in mind that R. Elimelekh (along with his brother, Reb Zusya) is particularly well known in Hasidic lore for his devotion and faithfulness as a disciple before he became a Master himself,⁵³ I find it unlikely that he would have deliberately ignored or objected to the teachings of his Master, the Maggid of Mezerich. It is possible, however, that he had the sense of participating in a situation in which the quantity of Tzaddiqim was increasing even as

⁵²Volume I, folio 59b. See the section on *The Holographic Tzaddiq* in *The Medieval Archetype of the Tzaddiq*, in Chapter Three of this thesis.

⁵³See Buber, *Early Masters*, as well as Langer, *Nine Gates*.

the quality was decreasing--a situation which he himself encouraged, by popularizing the institution of the Tzaddiq in his writings. Thus out of humility or perhaps out of prudence, he did not want to identify fully himself and his peers with the archetype of the Tzaddiq. Thus he emphasized the function of the *tiqqun* of the Tzaddiq, rather than the function of the Tzaddiq, per se. By detaching himself and his peers from such a channel, he was able to visualize it as something that they might contribute to, rather than as something they embodied imperfectly.

By doing so, R. Elimelekh made the institution of the Tzaddiq acceptable to a wider, more uninitiated audience. Unlike the original disciples of the Ba'al Shem Tov, much of his audience would have been unfamiliar with the subtleties of Kabbalistic thought. Although by attaching themselves to Hasidism they were taking a standing against the secular "Enlightenment", they were more likely than previous generations to have been influenced by a rationalist outlook. The thought that an aspect of God is actually manifest in Tzaddiqim, and ultimately in oneself, rather than attracting such people, would have been likely to alienate them. Thus it seems that whether or not this was done deliberately, beginning with R. Elimelekh Hasidic teaching was diluted, so as to make it more palatable for public consumption.

And yet the idea that the "channel" created by Tzaddiqim has a real existence which is not diminished in modern times, is nevertheless preserved in this teaching. The notion of an objective function of the Tzaddiq has not been denied, but has been removed from its place within the Master and disciple. It is ironic, but indicative the process of reification, that later generations of Hasidism (who were probably unfamiliar with other Hasidic sources) are likely to have considered this book "so profound that few can ever hope to understand it."⁵⁴

⁵⁴Jacobs, "Doctrine of the Zaddik", last page. (Page numbers are not included in this pamphlet).

The "Reincarnation" of the Tzaddiq

The simplification of the idea of the Tzaddiq presented in the *No'am Elimelekh* by no means diminishes the importance of this idea; if anything it inflates it. And yet it conveys this idea with a good deal more subtlety and refinement than modern scholars have noticed. Thus, in his published lecture, "The Doctrine of the Zaddik in the Thought of Elimelech of Lizensk", Louis Jacobs focuses on how the Hasidic idea of reincarnation is employed in these teachings so as to emphasize the specialness of the individual Tzaddiq:

The occult aspect of Zaddikism has sometimes been overlooked by biased admirers of Hasidic spirituality ignorant of this side of Hasidism or refusing to admit that there is any such thing.⁵⁵ It has not been sufficiently noted, for example, that the doctrine of the Zaddik's role is bound up with the belief in *gilgul*, the transmigration of souls. There are three ways, say Elimelech, in which a man can become a Zaddik: his ancestors may have been Zaddikim and he inherits his charismatic gifts from them; he may have been named after a famous Zaddik; or he may have been a Zaddik in a previous existence. Although it is possible for one lacking any of these qualifications to become a Zaddik, through his own efforts in subduing his instincts and rising to God, this is both extremely difficult and very rare.⁵⁶

Within the *No'am Elimelekh*, a number of ways are mentioned by which a person might qualify as a Tzaddiq. Going back to the text which Jacobs cites as his reference, the qualifications for being a Tzaddiq are presented as follows:

There are three levels [of spiritual attainment] which cause a person to be a Tzaddiq. The first is from the side of *gilgul* ("recycling", or "reincarnation"), in which one was a Tzaddiq in the first *gilgul*, and because of this it is easy for one to be a Tzaddiq now, as well. Second, because of the merit of one's ancestors who were Tzaddiqim, that because of their merit it is distributed among them, in honor of the distinguished household, that there continue to be Tzaddiqim among them. Third, because the Eternal, blessed be, ruled at the creation of the world that there shall be names such as "Reuven", and names such as "Shim'on", and now, when a certain person has himself a *gilgul* in the world

⁵⁵This might be meant particularly as a criticism of Martin Buber.

⁵⁶Jacobs, "Doctrine of the Zaddik". For this a subsequent quotations, see notes 19, 20 and 21. (I am referring to note numbers, in lieu of page numbers.)

and is named by the name of a certain Tzaddiq who already was in the world, it causes that person to also be a Tzaddiq, because he has awakened the light of the Tzaddiq who is in the world on high.⁵⁷

I have avoided using the word "reincarnation" in my translation, because it seems to me that R. Elimelekh may be speaking of *gilgul* in a broader sense, of one's entering the cycle of life with a certain affinity of the soul. This then would be not so far removed from the second "level", which speaks of a momentum for sainthood a given family maintains. Thus the emphasis seems to me to be not on "who" one is, as a single entity continuing from one lifetime to the next, as much as on "what" a person may have inherited from one's family, from a certain Tzaddiq, or even from "oneself". In a similar vein, being named for a particular Tzaddiq is not an automatic means of becoming one; the significance of receiving the name of a Tzaddiq is that it signals a predisposition for being "awakened in the light of the Tzaddiq" represented by that name.

My interpretation is substantiated as the text proceeds to specify that the first kind of Tzaddiq is not distinguished by knowledge gained directly from "past lives", but by knowledge which has been made available in the realm between lifetimes:

The differentiation between a Tzaddiq who is of the quality of "the original *gilgul*" and the Tzaddiq who is of the quality of "the merit of one's ancestors" is such, that the Tzaddiq of the quality of "the original *gilgul*" benefits from advice obtained because he was already in the world on high, and heard everything--what in the future would be in the world. And that is why he has this power to give advice. But the Tzaddiq because of "the merit of the fathers" is not like this. And this is what David the King said, upon him be peace: "grace me with Your advice, and You shall have me follow honor", which means that he would pray for himself, that he would be a Tzaddiq, or [at least] on this level, that people who benefit from his advice, or at the very least, because of the honor of his ancestors.⁵⁸

This discourse opens with what would seem to be a concern with the classification of Tzaddiqim, and then develops into a consideration of the qualities

⁵⁷No'am Elimelekh, "Bamidbar", 69.

⁵⁸Ibid.

which characterize Tzaddiqim. Some Tzaddiqim have knowledge based on experience previous to this life and some are granted knowledge because of their family line, and thus two kinds of knowledge have been distinguished. Yet no less a figure than King David is related, only approximately, to one or another of these qualities. From this example of the application of his theory it appears that R. Elimelekh did not divide up the world nearly as neatly as Jacobs would have us believe. What had appeared at first as an "either/or" kind of designation turns out to be a much more general kind of description.

As for Jacobs's conclusion that it is "extremely difficult" for someone lacking any of these three kinds of qualifications to become a Tzaddiq, he substantiates this with a second source, which on close examination appears to be making another, nearly opposite, point:

There are two varieties of Tzaddiqim: there are Tzaddiqim who were sanctified by their fathers who were holy and [God-]fearing and complete . . . and there are Tzaddiqim who are called "Nazarites" because of their separation from themselves . . . and these Tzaddiqim will not be able to fall quickly from their holy level, because they have nothing on which they are leaning, and they are surrendered in their [way of divine] knowledge, and regard themselves with open eyes, constantly and without ceasing. But the "holy Tzaddiqim" who were sanctified by their fathers, though they be full of Torah and [the fulfillment of] Commandments, because "the merit of the ancestors" is their support, they can sometimes come, because of this regard and greatness, to therefore fall quickly from their level.⁵⁹

Here we have an argument not favoring but rather opposing the institution of Hasidic lineages transmitted from father to son, which were already beginning to characterize the world of Hasidism. At the very least, this is a warning about the tendency of such developments to foster complacency and corruption. Clearly, R. Elimelekh viewed the whole business of inherited Tzaddiqhood as unreliable, and

⁵⁹*No'am Elimelekh*, "Emor", 63a-b. I have checked this reference carefully, and it is this discussion at the "beginning" of "Emor" which is what Jacobs specifies in note 21 of his essay.

certainly less desirable than attainment through one's own pious efforts! Yet Jacobs draws the conclusion that "the semi-magical aid of either parental endowment or the force of a special name or the mysterious rebirth of the holy man are generally necessary" to make one a Tzaddiq. He cites as an additional source for this conclusion, a text which is a little less damaging to his claims:

Thus the person must be serving the Creator, blessed be, on the following levels: the one, that he must proceed constantly with attachment [to the Divine, *devequt*] and also must constantly be anxious about his service; also, he must achieve mastery in his service, to eliminate all of the *dinim*; and if he does not make nothing of all these, then he will need to enter into *gilgul* for this . . . as one comes to recycling [*gilgul*] because of these, to restore them [*litaqnam*], and not because of sin, heaven forbid.⁶⁰

There is an emphasis here on humbleness, on the need for Tzaddiqim, or potential Tzaddiqim, to be constant in their spiritual efforts, which is not conveyed in Jacobs's interpretation. The text mentions *gilgul* in relation to the Tzaddiq's fulfilling his vocation, yet there is a subtlety here, as well, which Jacobs has overlooked. *Gilgul*, in this context, is less a cause than a consequence of the Tzaddiq phenomenon. Rather than a "mysterious" reason for becoming a Tzaddiq, *gilgul* is the result of a high but incomplete level of spiritual attainment, in which the consequences of past actions have not entirely been eliminated, so that they provide the momentum for completing the task in a future life.

Therefore I have once again avoided translated the term *gilgul* as "rebirth" or "reincarnation", because these terms carry associations which may not necessarily be applicable. The question of the precise meaning of *gilgul* in Hasidic tradition deserves detailed study, beyond what is possible here.⁶¹

⁶⁰*No'am Elimelekh*, "Ki Tisa", 52b.

⁶¹Gershom Scholem devoted a chapter in *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead* to "*Gilgul: The Transmigration of Souls*" (197-250), in which he discusses the meaning of *gilgul* in the Jewish mystical tradition. Although he discusses Hasidic applications of this idea, Scholem focuses more on Hasidic conceptions of the soul than

The "Reincarnation" of "Moses"

Jacobs refers to a specific application in the *No'am Elimelekh* of the idea of *gilgul* to the case of Moses. This is an interesting example, in which he interprets *gilgul* in terms of the deliberate projection of unfinished work into the future, and implies less of mythic sense of the hero who reincarnates than but an archetypal idea of the momentum of the Tzaddiq. This is based on the notion just considered: that a Tzaddiq may restore, in the future, that which was not completed in his own lifetime. Jacobs summarizes this material as follows:

The soul of Moses often returns to earth to inhabit the body of a Zaddik, which is why Moses died outside the promised land. Had Moses entered the land and carried out the special precepts that can only be performed there, he would have had nothing further to rectify and there could have been no justification for his return to earth.⁶²

While this is a neat little summary of what R. Elimelekh has to say on the subject, the opening words, "the soul of Moses often returns", say both too little and too much. For R. Elimelekh does not appear to mean that the soul of Moses returns and takes possession of the bodies of people who then become Tzaddiqim. Nor does he portray Moses, as such, entering the wombs of certain women so as to reincarnate.⁶³ Rather, it is the "aspect" (*behinah*) of Moses which is said to return, not "often", but constantly, in every generation. Let me carefully examine the text:

The reason that the Holy, blessed be, transported Israel by way of the desert, was that when they went forth from Egypt and received the Torah . . . because of the greatness of their holiness, they had the power in their hands to sweeten the *dinim*. That is why they were guided by way of the desert, which is the place and root of the *dinim*--in order that they might sweeten the *dinim* (as it is because of this that the scapegoat is sent to the desert, where the root of the *dinim* and

on the exact literal or metaphorical connotations which *gilgul* assumes in a Hasidic context.

⁶²Louis Jacobs, note 25.

⁶³Both these modes of *gilgul* are discussed by Scholem, "*Gilgul*", 221-3.

"shells" are located, as is known). And if only the generation of the desert had entered the Land of Israel, there would not have been any exile for Israel [in later generations], because the *dinim* would have been sweetened entirely, to their roots.⁶⁴

It appears to have been the practice of R. Elimelekh to avoid speaking evil of the Children of Israel, as he avoids making any direct reference to the Golden Calf, or to any of the sins of Israel in the desert! Rather, he opened this teaching with the question of how the generation which saw the Hand of God at the Red Sea and then stood at Mount Sinai and received the Torah, could have fallen so low? What is most astonishing to the modern reader of this text, however, is not the fallen state of the People Israel in the desert (which is familiar to us from the biblical text), but the tremendous (missed!) opportunity which R. Elimelekh ascribes to the desert experience: the opportunity to clear all residual consequences (or "karma") and secure a glorious destiny for future generations to come.

This tragic blunder of Israel has as its complement, the (also unspecified) *felix culpa* of Moses.⁶⁵ According to R. Elimelekh, it is indeed fortunate that Moses did whatever he did, which barred him from entry to the Land of Israel, in accordance to the theory of the unfinished work of the Tzaddiq which we considered above. It was this that allowed something of himself to remain, and to be made available to future generations:

And because the generation of the desert did not enter the Land of Israel, our Rebbe Moses [*Moshe Rabbeinu*], upon him be peace, also had to die in the desert, so that in every single generation he would undergo *gilgul*, in the soul of a Tzaddiq, and there would be, in every generation, Tzaddiqim like him who would be able to sweeten the *dinim*. For if our

⁶⁴*No'am Elimelekh*, 89a.

⁶⁵Indeed, we have a very good illustration of the Hasidic doctrine of "deliberate sin" in this story, a subject which Rebbe Elimelekh discusses more fully elsewhere in the *No'am Elimelekh*. It is the issue of the place of "deliberate sin" in Hasidic doctrine, and its relation to Sabbatian sources, along with the question of significance of the *mokhiah* model, which dominates Scholem's discussion of the Tzaddiq in Hasidism, in his chapter "*Tsaddik: The Righteous One*".

Rebbe Moses, upon him be peace, had come to the Land of Israel, he would not have been able to undergo *gilgul*, for then he would have accomplished all of the Commandments which are bound up with the Land of Israel. And now that he has died in the desert, he still has not accomplished the Commandments which are bound up with the Land of Israel, and he can undergo *gilgul*.⁶⁶

Such a discussion does not really set forth a specific "doctrine of the Tzaddiq". Nor does it set forth of a clear doctrine of reincarnation. What we have, once again, is a Hasidic expression of the rabbinic genre of Midrash: an interpretative retelling of an event first narrated in the Bible, which is not meant to be taken literally, but is intended as a figurative interpretation offering insight into contemporary life as it might be reflected in the biblical text.

Indeed it is hard for me to imagine that R. Elimelekh literally intended that people should believe that Moses could not fully perfect himself because he was unable to perform the agricultural Commandments related to the Land of Israel. The value of citing this idea would be, first of all, that it calls to mind a correspondence between the various Commandments and the various limbs of the body--an idea which first appeared in the Talmud and later became an important element of Lurianic Kabbalah. Thus the figure of Moses is related to the microcosmic idea of achieving *tiqqun* within oneself. Such an idea allows R. Elimelekh to speak of an unfinished momentum relating to Moses, the model Tzaddiq, without specifically ascribing sin to him. (Thus we find that the notion of the sin of Moses, like the notion of the sin of Israel, has been discreetly set aside.) The fact that Moses was unable to enter the Land of Israel is thus cast as a deliberate and purposeful sacrifice.

We are dealing here with a kind of instructive myth. Jacobs observes that "the striking parallel of all this to Buddhist teaching is too obvious to require further elaboration." Indeed, anyone familiar with the Mahayana literature of the Bodhisatva--in which this figure is conceived as someone who deliberately renounces the

⁶⁶No'am Elimelekh, 89a.

consummation of perfect enlightenment until every sentient being attains it--will be struck by the strength of this Hasidic parallel. But in the generous exaggeration of a story such as this, the very idea of *gilgul* itself undergoes a transformation. If this is not clear from the context thus far, it is made even clearer as the teaching continues:

And this is what Moses, upon him be peace, said, "Yh-h became enraged with me [or "in me"], also, because of you." That is, "to become enraged" [lhitanaf] is "to branch" [l'anaf] (as the letters a, 'a, h & h are exchangeable). For the souls have in them branches and branches, which are joined at the root on high. And this is [the significance of] what Moses said, "because you did not enter the Land of Israel, and did not sweeten the *dinim* to their roots, I am compelled to undergo *gilgul*, also, with you, so that there be, in every generation, a Tzaddiq who can sweeten the *dinim*." And because of this, the Tzaddiq is called "Moshe", as they say, "that's brilliant, Moshe!" . . . And thus "became enraged [or 'enbranched'], also, in me," means that "I, also, have to be a branch within the souls," that he is to expand [in meaning, *lrabbot*] And the Tzaddiq has the power to sweeten the *dinim* in his holy mouth, by way of his learning and by being engaged in Torah for its own sake.⁶⁷

Once again we find the fabric of Hasidic tradition woven of familiar threads. It seems to me that R. Elimelekh is careful not to pin down exactly how Moses manifests, in terms of *gilgul*. Just where we would expect him to explicate his notion of reincarnation, he does *not* state that Moses is the eternal "root" of the branching of the Tzaddiqim in Israel, in the sense that Moses personally reincarnates in a single Tzaddiq in every generation. Rather, R. Elimelekh faithfully reflects an archetypal sense of a Tzaddiq "like Moses", by speaking in general terms of an element of Moses which is involved in a kind of branching which continues to ramify itself for each generation.

By recalling the quotation from the Talmud, R. Elimelekh seems to be saying that the Moses function is not really so much a matter of a special birth as a matter of a kind of activity which, like the expansion (*rabbot*) of rabbinic discourse, can be emulated by individuals so that it replicates itself. Thus *gilgul* itself has become a

⁶⁷Ibid., 89a-b.

metaphor, which is later displaced by the familiar metaphor of creating new insights into Torah, which is a simple example of becoming a "Moshe".

With R. Elimelekh we come to the beginning of the end of the archetypal understanding of the Tzaddiq which inspired the early development of Hasidism. Early in the nineteenth century, such a prominent figure as the Seer of Lublin, the disciple of Rebbe Elimelekh who was most successful at amassing a Hasidic following, was less concerned with objective, archetypal ideas and more concerned with concrete issues such as remaining humble while performing miracles. At the same time R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi, a disciple of the Maggid and a peer of R. Elimelekh, established a powerful line of Hasidic teaching based on a philosophical re-definition of the term "Tzaddiq" away from an archetypal and towards more of the earlier, ethical sense of the term.

Ironically, it was R. Nahman of Bratzlav, a Hasidic Master unrelated to the lineage of the Maggid of Mezerich, who continued to develop the archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq characteristic of earlier Hasidic works. Perhaps it was *because* he was not personally connected to the Maggid that Nahman was able to find his own creative expression in developing an idea which close disciples might have believed the Maggid already perfected. Both in his teachings and in his original tales, R. Nahman presented images of the archetype of the Tzaddiq which have never been equaled, before or since. It is all the more remarkable, given his imaginative articulation of an objective understanding of the Tzaddiq function, that R. Nahman is also outstanding among the great Hasidic Masters for *not* having passed along the mantle of Tzaddiqhood to any of the disciples following him.

R. Nahman's Tzaddiq and the Complete Human Being

It is to be expected that parallels to the archetypal idea of the Tzaddiq might be found in many or most spiritual traditions, and that some will have closer affinities to a Hasidic understanding than others. I have already indicated that particularly strong parallels are to be found in the Islamic Sufi tradition. Indeed, I have found a Hasidic conception of the Tzaddiq to be virtually the same as the Sufi idea of *al Insan al Kamil*, "the Complete Human Being".⁶⁸ Let me sum up the thesis that the Tzaddiq is conceived of as an archetype in Hasidism, by illuminating it in the light of this parallel.

Given that both Judaism and Islam developed out of common monotheistic and prophetic roots, and that both shared a monotheistic perspective which rejected the ways in which Christianity mythologized Jesus, it not surprising that such a correspondence might be found. Generally speaking, a typological approach to mystical symbolism appeared side-by-side in both traditions in the Iberian peninsula in the 12th and 13th centuries--the Kabbalistic typology of the Ten Sefirot paralleling the Sufi typology of the divine Names. How then might a Sufi understanding of the idea of the Complete Human Being shed light on the much-neglected figure of the Tzaddiq?

⁶⁸Ron Kiener anticipates such parallels in his article "Ibn al-'Arabi and the Qabbalah: a Study of Thirteenth Century Iberian Mysticism" (published in Taichung, Taiwan, in *Studies in Mystical Literature*, vol. 2, n. 2, June 1982). Kiener describes Ibn al-'Arabi's conception of *Insan al Kamil*, quite aptly, I believe, as a figure who is simultaneously "cosmological", "mystical" and "human". I believe Kiener's instincts were quite correct; these three categories, taken together, point very much in the direction of an archetype! In searching for Jewish parallels, he found that Maimonides' ethical conception of *Adam Hashalaym* (literally, the "Complete Human Being") lacked a mystical dimension, and clearly fit only the "human" qualification; the Zohar's conception of *Adam Qadmon* ("Primordial Man") is "cosmological" but neither a mystic nor even a human being. Perhaps because the name "Tzaddiq" bears no apparent resemblance to the term "Complete Human Being", Kiener entirely overlooked the Zohar's conception of this figure, although it fits all three of his criteria handsomely.

I will focus on two works which reflect the mature development of the spiritual master traditions of Judaism and Islam. In a book entitled *Al Insan al Kamil*, 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili presents a distillation of Sufi thought concerning the figure of the Complete Human Being, and the knowledge such a person contains, which reflects the outlook of one who is known as "the greatest Shaykh" of Sufism, Muhyiddin Ibn al 'Arabi. The discourses of R. Nahman of Bratzlav collected in *Liqqutay Moharan*, constitute an original presentation of the idea of the Tzaddiq which, like the work of the Maggid before him, reflects and summarizes the Tzaddiq tradition of Hasidism and Kabbalah, even as it takes it to new heights.

Viewing elements of these two works side-by-side, it is apparent that they were describing much the same phenomenon and in much the same terms. And yet, although they often employ a remarkably similar technical vocabulary, there are considerable stylistic differences between the two works, which reflect the different conditions in which they appeared. R. Nahman, after all, was a Yiddish-speaking Jew whose teachings were recorded in Hebrew, in the Ukraine, at the beginning of the 19th century, whereas Jili was a Muslim writing in Arabic, in Baghdad, at the beginning of the 15th Century. As it happens, both authors died at the age of 38.

The relationship of these works is typical of the relationship between Hasidic teachings, and the more philosophical works of late medieval (Jewish) mysticism. R. Nahman's approach is an extreme example of the approach of other Hasidic authors, who applied the abstract cosmology of 16th Century Kabbalists such as Rabbis Yitzhaq Luria and Moshe Cordovero (who were closer to Jili both in time and in outlook) to their home-spun psychology in which the experience of the individual is described by way of a free association of ideas and images. Thus Jili, in effect, provides a frame which allows one to focus on the substance of Nahman's thought, without being distracted by his images and associations.

Completion

Jili identifies the Complete Human Being as "the synthesis of all the essential realities of existence."⁶⁹ Such a being "comprises in himself correspondences with all the realities of existence. He corresponds to the superior realities by his own subtle nature, and he corresponds to the inferior realities with his crude nature."⁷⁰ Nahman conveys a similar notion of the comprehensive nature of the Tzaddiq, which he also identifies with the idea of "completion" (*shlaymut*). Yet even as Nahman describes how the completeness of the Tzaddiq spans the spiritual and material poles of existence, he emphasizes the practical application of this principle in the Tzaddiq's teaching role:

This is the principle of the Completion of the Tzaddiq--that he be able to be both "above" and "below". That he might show someone who is "above", who in his own estimation seems to be on an exalted rung, that he is just the opposite. And so, on the contrary, for one who is far below, on the lowest rung, within the very earth, he shall show him that, quite the opposite, he is directly supported [*samukh*] by God. . . . Truly, the essence of completion is to be both "above" and "below", in heaven and on earth. For when he is in one world only, this is not completion. Just the two of them together . . . in the aspect of "as 'all' that is in heaven and in earth"--unifying heaven and earth.⁷¹

While the Tzaddiq has the task of teaching the proud to be humble and the alienated to be aware of their nearness to God, this is not merely a matter of preaching abstract ideals. The Tzaddiq is able to communicate the nature of these relationships to God because his own experience comprehends the poles both of nearness and distance. The Tzaddiq teaches from experience, and deepens his experience by teaching. But

⁶⁹Jili, *Universal Man*, "extracts" translated by Titus Burkhardt (Sherborne, Gloucestershire: Beshara, 1983), xix. Although Burkhardt translated the term *al Insan al Kamil* (which is also the title of Jili's book) as "Universal Man", and others translate it as "Perfect Man", I believe that the word "Complete" more closely approximates the Arabic meaning of the term *Kamil*, as I explain below.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, xx.

⁷¹*Liqqutay Moharan II*, folio 68. In all of the quotations from R. Nahman, the translation is my own.

how is it that the Tzaddiq is able to reflect the entire spectrum of human experience within himself? According to Jili this is a universal matter of human nature. The Complete Human Being is someone who has activated this innate human capacity:

Each individual of the human species contains the others entirely, without any lack, his own limitation being but accidental For as far as the accidental conditions do not intervene, individuals are, then, like opposing mirrors, in which one fully reflects the other. . . . Only, some contain the [other people and] things only by power, whereas others, namely, the perfect [or complete, *kamil*] amongst the prophets and saints, contain them by action.⁷²

We have already seen how the Ba'al Shem Tov and the Maggid conceived of the spiritual Master as a mirror in which others are reflected. Here is a more general statement of the holographic idea that each human being contains all other people--and all of existence, including the Divine--within himself or herself. This idea is developed in much of Islamic Sufi literature, as an interpretation of the famous *hadith qudsi* ("holy tradition" of the Prophet Muḥammed, related in the name of God): "Neither My seven heavens nor My seven earths contain Me, but the heart of My faithful believer contains Me." As the Jewish tradition has tended to be more focussed on the specific role of Israel than the general category of human beings, such a cosmic view of human nature is not usually expressed so explicitly in Kabbalah. Yet R. Nahman cites a Hebrew verse, Proverbs 25:3, which he interprets (out of context) in much the same vein as the well-known *hadith*: "as to the heights of the heavens and the depth of the earth, the heart of kings has no measure."

It is found that "the heart of kings" is much greater than "the heights of the heavens and the depth of the earth" See and understand and be wise to the greatness of the Creator, how the least grasps the much, as such a small bit of heart and mind may grasp, within itself, such great things! And this is only because divinity is found there, as *the essence of divinity is within the heart*. . . . It is found that the essence of the king's greatness, his enjoyment and his rule, is only in the heart, that he knows in his heart that he is king over all these states, and rules them all according to the desire and will of his heart. *And from now on understand, within yourself . . . that the heart is able to grasp, within itself,*

⁷²*Universal Man*, xix.

without measure or limit. . . . The Tzaddiq, within his heart, how fortunate he is! For the essence of the enjoyment and delight of the world to come, and all 310 worlds--is all within the heart.⁷³

Like the power and wealth of kings, the spiritual delight of Tzaddiqim reflects this capacity of the heart to contain all things within itself, even the "principle" or "essence" (*'iyqar*) of divinity. The unlimitedness of God is reflected in the unlimited capacity of the human heart. Moreover, this is a capacity which can be developed. Thus elsewhere R. Nahman speaks, much as Jili does, of those who develop their innate human "power" or "potential" (*koakh*) and put it into "action" (*po'el*). According to Nahman, what distinguishes those who are "complete" is that they have fully activated their potential for knowledge--a comprehensive knowledge of all levels of existence, reaching to the highest:

The essence of knowledge [*Da'at*] is to make use of one's knowledge, that is, to bring forth one's consciousness [*seikhel*] from potential into action. For a child also has knowledge, but with a child the knowledge is still in potential, and not in action. . . . But one who is complete in knowledge, who has brought it forth from potential into action and has grasped, in his knowledge, that which is possible for human knowledge to grasp, is then close to the knowledge of the Holy One, blessed be. . . . And then one's knowledge nurses from the knowledge of God.⁷⁴

As in the teaching of the Degel, earlier, it seems at first that what is involved is a matter of knowledge, if not intellectual knowledge than the *gnosis* of the individual. Yet as the teaching proceeds, knowledge itself grows in meaning.

But it is impossible to complete one's knowledge so as to be complete in knowledge, except through being engaged in bringing people near to the service of God. It is through this that one's knowledge is made complete, as they unify one's knowledge. . . . And this is why Abraham and Sarah made the effort to draw in converts [*legayer geyrim*], as it was through this they completed their knowledge and came close . . . to the knowledge of God, blessed be, and merited to have children."⁷⁵

⁷³*Liqqutay Moharan*, folio 191. The italics are mine.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, folio 53.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

Again R. Nahman emphasizes the typically Hasidic notion that in order to be a Tzaddiq it is not sufficient to commune with God; like Abraham and Sarah, one must put one's spiritual knowledge into action, in one's relationships with one's fellow man.⁷⁶ R. Nahman proceeds in this text to list "five things, which in itself [sic] constitutes the knowledge of God." More to the point than a consideration of the technical marks of spiritual attainment according to R. Nahman at this point, however, is his view of the nature of "Completion". R. Nahman conceives of *shlaymut* not in terms of a Greek notion of abstract and unblemished "perfection", but as a more Hebraic idea of the "wholeness" or "completion" of experiential knowledge. Rather than a special divine favor bestowed upon certain individuals, Completion is thus the fulfillment of human potential.

R. Nahman's use of the term *shalaym* accords with the Arabic etymology of the term *kamil*, which refers to an organic process by which fruit becomes "ripe" and wine becomes "mature". Thus we find that in both Jewish and Islamic mysticism, Completion is understood as the fruit of a process of maturation. It is regarded as a seasoned maturity which is the destiny of every human being, although it is recognized that there is a world of difference between those rare individuals who are fully mature and the rest of us, who are not. Thus in Jili's words:

The Prophet said that God had . . . created Adam in His form. For God is living, knowing, powerful, endowed with will, hearing, sight and speech, in the same way that man is living, knowing, etc. . . . he is then, to God that which the mirror is to the person who examines himself in it. . . . For God imposed on Himself to contemplate His own Names and Qualities only in Universal man . . . and he [who is not so] is ignorant of his own capacity, since he is the place of the divine pact, and he does not know it.⁷⁷

⁷⁶This idea is developed in Chapter One, and is expanded further in Dresner's *The Zaddik*.

⁷⁷*Universal Man*, xx-xxi.

As human beings are made in the image of God, we express the Qualities of the Divine by means of our human faculties. It is through faculties such as seeing and speaking, living and knowing, that it is possible for man to know God, and through these same faculties that the Creator knows "Himself" by means of the creation, particularly human beings, and most completely by means of those who are Complete.

R. Nahman describes specifically how the Qualities of the Divine may be revealed within the human heart:

The revelation of His Kingship cannot be grasped, except by means of the Qualities [*middot*], as it is by means of the Qualities that His divinity is grasped, and it is known that there is a Master who rules and conducts. . . . And the heart is the designer of the Qualities, that is, the wisdom of the heart And there is design [*yetzer*] for good and for ill. . . . That is: good thoughts are good design, and bad thoughts are the evil design. For the essence of the "designs" are the thoughts and wisdoms of the heart. . . . And when a person thinks in bad thoughts, he confuses the space of creation, in which is the revelation of the Qualities.⁷⁸

R. Nahman interprets the traditional notion of *yetzer hatov* and *yetzer hara'*, the inclinations for good and for evil, in terms of the individual's thoughts and "designs". The *middot* in this case are considered not as merely human "virtues", but as divine "Qualities" which can only be revealed in accordance with how they are accommodated within a person's heart. Thus it is the responsibility and creative opportunity of every individual to "design" one's thoughts so as to make one's heart a place of the revelation of the Divine.

God Within

But what of the more radical idea, hinted at in Jili, that it is through faculties expressed in man that God knows the world? In his essay on the significance of Adam as *Khalifat Allah*, "God's Representative" on earth, Ibn al 'Arabi states quite explicitly

⁷⁸*Liqqutay Moharan*, 49.

that "man is to God that which the pupil is to the eye, the pupil being that by which seeing is effected; for through him God contemplates His creation and dispenses His mercy."⁷⁹ R. Nahman expresses much the same idea, as follows:

In this way Tzaddiqim are called "the eyes of the assembly" (Numbers 15) . . . because it is through this that states of consciousness and the power of vision is made functional, and the "eyes" are opened so that the world now has a Master of the House who is in charge of the world. And this is the aspect of "In the beginning" [*BREiSHiYT*, whose consonants can be rearranged to spell]--"the Head of the House" [*ROSH BaYiT*]. "Head" is the aspect of states of mind . . . the aspect of "and I will fill him with the spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding and knowledge and in all work" [Exodus 35].⁸⁰

While R. Nahman states that Tzaddiqim serve as the "eyes of the assembly" of Israel, the implication is that they function as organs of divine perception as well. Thus it is by means of "the states of consciousness and the power of vision" which Tzaddiqim provide, that the Creator is transformed into a "Head" or "Master of the House".⁸¹ Indeed it seems that God as well as man is in need of a Complete Human Being, whose consciousness can reflect both "above and below". It is in such a being that divinity and humanity fully converge, and the creation is fulfilled.

⁷⁹Ibn 'Arabi, *Wisdom of the Prophets*, 12. I am reminded of the famous quote by Meister Eckhart: "The eye with which man sees God, and the eye with which God sees man, is the same eye."

⁸⁰*Liqqutay Moharan II*, folio 67. I have extracted this quotation from a complex passage in which R. Nahman declares that "when the praise and beauty of the true Tzaddiq is revealed, and his name is made great, this is the aspect of making His [God's] blessed Name great, as it were". Nahman goes on to indicate that both the Holy Temple and the "houses" of *tefillin* are analogous to this "House". I believe that the point of this teaching, however, is in the transformation of the divine "in the beginning", into a human "Head of the House".

⁸¹The term "Master of the House" is employed in well-known passages of the Zohar, to identify human beings who are in union with the Divine. It is applied to Moses, who is described as the "husband" of the Shekhinah, and more generally to the "perfect human being", described as the "husband" of the Torah. See the Zohar vol. 2, fols. 22b and 99a-b, translated by Daniel Matt in *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment* on pages 105 and 125, and discussed in a note on page 253.

Thus in both traditions, the cosmic design of human nature is fully realized in the archetypal figure of the spiritual Master. How then is such a universal archetype reconciled with the particular claims of Judaism and Islam? Jili openly affirms the universality of the Complete Human Being:

Universal man is the pole around which evolve the spheres of existence, from the first to the last; he is unique as long as existence lasts. . . . However, he puts on different forms and is revealed by different cults, so that he receives multiple names. . . . At each epoch, he has the name which corresponds to the garb of the time. It is thus that I discovered him in the form of my master Sharaf ad-din Ismail al-Jabarati; I did not know that he was the Prophet; I saw him as my master.⁸²

Here we find a touching confession on the part of Jili, the disciple. When he first "discovered" the existence of the Complete Human Being, he was blinded by the light of his own spiritual Master, and identified his function with him. It was only later that Jili recognized the Complete Human Being in the Prophet Muḥammed--and presumably, through him, in all the great Prophets and Masters. In Jili's language, each of these "forms" describes a single "pole". Thus the *axis mundi* figure of the Prophet Muḥammed is understood very much as an archetype: the various Prophets and Masters are expressions of a single over-arching Type, represented by Muḥammed, conveying the unity of the Divine.

The Qur'an proclaims the equality of all the Prophets even as it identifies Muḥammed as the Prophetic "seal". There is therefore no conflict between Jili's Islamic belief and his acknowledgement that the Complete Human Being has appeared in a multiplicity of "cults". Muslims think of Jesus, for example, as a Prophet sent to the Jews; from a Sufi perspective Jesus might be considered, more precisely, as a Jewish *insan al kamil*. Had Jili discovered that Judaism shared an archetypal conception of the

⁸²*Universal Man*, xx.

spiritual Master figure, this most likely would not have threatened but only confirmed Jili's world-view.

It is probably easier for a later religion to accept the validity of earlier revelations, at least in theory, than for an earlier religion to accommodate the claims of a later one. The Hebrew Bible, of course, preceded both the New Testament and the Qur'an, and generally equates other religions with idolatry. And yet, implicit in R. Nahman's idea of the Tzaddiq is a world-view which affirms the validity of a variety of faiths, much as Jili's does. Thus, by means of the metaphor of the "melody" of each faith, R. Nahman describes a hierarchy of faiths which lead up to the supreme and transcendent faith of the Tzaddiq:

It is found that every kind of wisdom, according to its quality and its rung, has a song and melody which is unique to it. And so it goes, from rung to rung, for the quality of wisdom on a higher rung has itself a higher song and melody, according to its quality It is just as we see, that even in the faith of idolators [literally, "worshippers of stars and constellations"] in their mistaken teachings, each idolatrous faith has its particular melody which they sing and arrange in their houses of worship, so just the opposite, in holiness; each faith has a song and melody.⁸³

Thus far goes religious pluralism, which includes within it a discrimination between holy and idolatrous faiths. What lies beyond?

And that melody which is unique to that faith which is high above all of the kinds of wisdom and faith which are in the world--that is, that faith in the Infinite Light [*ohr ayn sof*] Itself, which surrounds all worlds--that melody, too, is above all of the songs and melodies which are in the world, belonging to each wisdom and faith. And all of the songs and melodies of all of the wisdoms are drawn from this song and melody . . . as this is the melody which belongs to the Infinite Light Itself, which is above all. . . . As for the quality of the melody which belongs to this faith on high, there is no one who merits it except for the Tzaddiq of the Generation, who is the archetype [*behinah*] of Moses.⁸⁴

It is difficult to know precisely where R. Nahman would have drawn the line between idolatrous faiths and those which partake of "holiness". Did he mean to

⁸³*Liqqutay Moharan*, folio 64e.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*

acknowledge the "holiness" of Christianity, or at least of Islam? I find it hard to believe that R. Nahman meant to include only Jewish sects in the description above; given his orthodox milieu, he probably chose deliberately ambiguous language. Thus it seems that the difference between Nahman's analysis and Jili's is mainly a matter of emphasis: while Jili acknowledges that the Complete Human Being has appeared *within* a variety of religious groups, Nahman projects the ontological position of the Tzaddiq *above* all religious divisions. The position of the Tzaddiq is not derived from Torah but directly from God, conceived here in terms of "Infinite Light". Thus it would seem that the faith of the Moses-like Tzaddiq, from which all faiths are derived, transcends even the categories of Jewish faith.

In Islamic Sufi teaching, the Prophet Muhammed is the ultimate exemplar of *al Insan al Kamil*. The discourses of R. Nahman, like other Hasidic and Kabbalistic works, may be actually a little more flexible in this regard; while Moses is a central example of the Tzaddiq, other examples, such as Abraham, Jacob, and R. Shim'on bar Yoḥai, are cited in much the same spirit. Thus, whereas the individual Tzaddiq loosely is described in a work such as the *No'am Elimelekh* as the *gilgul* of Moses, in this particular teaching the Tzaddiq is described as the *behinah*, (the "aspect", "quality", "type" or, I am suggesting) the "archetype" of Moses. Thus even the greatest "Tzaddiq of the Generation" is identified more with the archetypal function of Moses, than with his personality. This idea of the "Tzaddiq of the Generation" closely corresponds with the Sufi idea of a single *qutb*, or "pole".

Yet R. Nahman's mention of "the Tzaddiq of the Generation", like Jili's mention of a "unique pole", may nevertheless appear to introduce an element of exclusivity and distance. How does such a unique figure relate to the innate potential of the individual? As discussed earlier, in Sufi teaching this is where the idea of a *rabita*, a "Link" or "Point of Contact" comes in. In the case of Jili, his master Sharafuddin served as the

Point of Contact by which he found his connection to Muḥammed, and presumably, within the Prophet, to God. God is often characterized in Sufi teaching as the Essence (*Dhat*) of all. Thus a Point-of-Contact who has realized the connection with the Essence within himself, identifies a Point wherein others might connect with the Essence within themselves.

Although Kabbalists more often identify God as the Infinite than as the Essence, the notion of God's being "within" is not entirely foreign to the Jewish mystical tradition. It is implied, for example, in the oft-quoted words of *Tiqqunay Zohar*, "There is no place empty of Him." Earlier in this chapter, reference was made of the Maggid's use of this same term, Essence, for God. Indeed, R. Naḥman's idea that both the "essence" of divinity and the entire creation are contained within the human heart, echoes the Maggid's idea that God is the "unconscious" of the Tzaddiq. Is there anything in R. Naḥman's teachings which specifically corresponds to the function of a Point of Contact, allowing the individual to locate access to the Divine within oneself?

R. Naḥman, indeed, has described how the Tzaddiq functions as just such a "Point" (*nequdah*), which allows others to connect with God within themselves. According to Naḥman, once a person has identified such a Point within the Tzaddiq, one can activate it in oneself and in relation to one's friends:

Everyone in Israel has in them, individually, an aspect of Tzaddiq . . . as it is written (Isaiah 60): "Your people (Israel) are all Tzaddiqim." . . . For there is in everyone in Israel a precious thing, which is a kind of a "Point" which does not exist in one's friend. . . . And this aspect, which exists in oneself more than in one's friend, pours out and enlightens and awakens the heart of one's friend. . . . It is found that everyone needs to engage in conversation between oneself and one's Maker, in order to illuminate this "point". . . . And also, everyone needs to engage in conversation with one's friends, in the fear of heaven, in order to receive awakening in one's heart from the point which is more [developed] in one's friend than in oneself.⁸⁵

⁸⁵Ibid., 34d.

Here, again, is the quotation from Isaiah in which he described how, in the future, the people of Israel will be "all Tzaddiqim", with the mystical meaning that was implied in the Zohar, and without the example of circumcision. If there was any doubt until now, it is clear at this point that R. Nahman means to entitle all of Israel to a share of the function of the Tzaddiq.

And there, within this point, love reigns, which is called "priest". And this point is the aspect of Tzaddiq, in relation to ones friend, as this point brings illumination to the heart of ones friend. . . .

And all of these points . . . are branches of the Tzaddiq, who is the Universal Point [*nequdat klaleut*] for all of Israel. That everyone needs to receive, at first, from the Tzaddiq, and afterwards they receive "this one from that", and each one shall receive from within. . . .

And this is the interpretation of "You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests"--that is, the quality of holy love, "and a holy nation"--that is, that holiness is the quality of holy love, while "and" is the quality of the heart.⁸⁶

R. Nahman brings to the archetype of the Tzaddiq, which is to be found in each member of the community of Israel, the notion of a universal "Point" which one first comes to recognize within the figure of the Tzaddiq, but which is uniquely expressed by each individual. This "Point", as R. Nahman presents it, is not an end in itself. Rather, it is the origin of a bond of love which links Master and disciple, friends to one another, members to the community, God within oneself, all within the realm of the heart.

Thus for R. Nahman, as for Jili, the notion of a "Complete" human being is very much the same. The spiritual Master represents a potential which is latent in every individual, and has already been realized in the great ones of the present and past. There is, however, an existential dimension in the work of R. Nahman's which is particularly typical of a Hasidic approach: an emphasis on the creative initiative of the individual who is actively, or potentially, a Tzaddiq. Even as the idea of the archetype of the Tzaddiq is conveyed, it is not portrayed as a *fait accompli*. What distinguishes

⁸⁶Ibid., 34h.

Hasidic literature, generally, from other mystical literature, both Jewish and non-Jewish, is an emphasis on everyone, even the Tzaddiq--or the Tzaddiq, most of all--extending oneself outwardly to others and inwardly to God, so as to continue to grow.

It is with this thought that I conclude this rather lengthy introduction to the Jewish conception of the archetype of the Tzaddiq. Although it is not to be found exclusively within Jewish tradition, I am proposing that such an archetypal approach characterizes the Jewish contribution to an understanding of the spiritual Master figure among the various religions of the world. I hope I have succeeded in introducing one of the central ideas of the Jewish mystical tradition. It is this idea, I believe, which provided the inspiration for the Hasidic movement as a whole, and which was expressed in the teachings of the early Hasidic Masters in a way which bears witness to the greatness of their being.

EXCURSUS

THE PHENOMENON OF THE TZADDIQ

In addition to the discourses of the Hasidic Masters, and the popular Hasidic tales, the main source of information on the Hasidic phenomenon of the Tzaddiq in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, are polemical anti-Hasidic accounts by various Mitnaggdim. As was demonstrated in Chapter One, even supposedly objective accounts of Hasidism by early modern historians such as Heinrich Graetz, are highly propagandistic. Are there more recent accounts which show how the idea of the Tzaddiq was realized among living Hasidic Masters? High quality sources are difficult to find. As it approached the modern era, the Hasidic movement itself went into decline. In the course of the nineteenth century, various aspects of traditional Jewish life were undermined as inroads were made by the secular "Enlightenment". Whatever remained of the Hasidic movement in Eastern Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century, was severely shaken in the First World War and utterly destroyed in the Nazi Holocaust. Of those Hasidic communities that were transplanted and therefore survived World War II, primarily to Israel and the New York City area, it is mainly the Habad movement of Lubavitcher Hasidism which has grown in recent decades, representing more than a faithful remnant. In a more informal way, the teachings of R. Naḥman of Bratzlav have attracted growing interest, and the Breslover community has grown in recent years. but that community has had no living Rebbe to guide it since R. Naḥman's death in 1810.

Yet detailed accounts are available of how Hasidic Masters conducted themselves in 20th century Hasidic Courts. I will pursue two of them here: one by Jiri

Langer and the other by Zalman Schachter. Both write as "participant observers" sympathetic to what they are observing. Although both grew up in the modern world, each of them, as a young man, chose to become a Hasid and to attach himself to a particular Tzaddiq. Although both describe Hasidic institutions which are no longer at their peak, each brings sensitivity and understanding to the behavior they describe.

Langer's Description of the Belzer Rebbe

In *Nine Gates to the Chassidic Mysteries*, Jiri Langer provides the modern reader with a general orientation to the world of Hasidism. Langer journeyed to the Ukraine in the early part of this century and became a disciple of the Rebbe of Belz.¹ Although much of his book is devoted to the same Hasidic tales which have been made famous by Buber, Langer presents them from a distinctly Hasidic point of view. In a review which followed the English language publication of the book in 1962 (it first appeared in Czech in 1937), Zalman Schachter relates that "a Belzer Hasid told me that Jiri Langer, during the later years of his master, Rabbi Issachar Dov of Belz, became his master's *Nuncio Apostolico* whenever he was needed in that task."² Langer's perspective on Hasidism is very much that of a disciple rather a Master:

His gnomic sense of Hasidic (as different from *Rebbish*) humor and whimsy create a rendition of the Hasidic material which is altogether different from the Gothic Hasidism of Buber. . . . Compare this saying (by Jacob Yitzhak of

¹In the "Foreword by Frantisek Langer" in Langer's *Nine Gates* (vii-xxxii), Langer's brother reflects on the significance of this journey: "To write this book my brother Jiri Langer has to transport himself from the living reality of the twentieth century into the mystical and ecstatic atmosphere of the Middle Ages. Nor could this be effected merely in a metaphorical way, on the wings of fantasy. It had to begin with the reality of purchasing a railway ticket at a station in Prague to a little place in Eastern Galicia."

²Zalman M. Schachter, review of "Some Recent Mystical Literature" in *Judaism*, Vol. 11, No. 3 [Summer 1962].

Lublin) as given by Langer and translated by Stephen Jouilly [sic]: 'I would rather have a rascal who admits he is a rascal than a saint who is conscious of his sainthood,' with the same in Buber's *Tales of the Hasidim*, translated by Olga Marx: 'I love the wicked man who knows he is wicked more than the righteous man who knows he is righteous.'"³

It is not his versions of the tales, however, which constitute Langer's greatest contribution to knowledge of the Tzaddiq. In the Introduction to *Nine Gates*, Langer relates his own observations of the Belzer Rebbe. He candidly reports what he's seen and heard and experienced, and yet does not assume a stance of scholarly "objectivity". By earnestly defending elements of Hasidic ideology, Langer is more a representative than an observer of Hasidic traditions. Yet, because he wrote for a modern audience, Langer relates a wealth of detail concerning Hasidic customs and beliefs which are taken for granted--and therefore escape notice--in traditional Hasidic literature. Indeed, Langer may be forgiven the gushing enthusiasm of a true believer which sometimes breaks into his descriptions, when it is remembered how extraordinary it was for a person of his generation to make the journey back from modern society to such a traditional world. Indeed, upon his return to his native Prague, Langer endeavored to keep up an orthodox, Hasidic way of life.⁴

³Ibid.

⁴Bridging the traditional world of Hasidism with that of cosmopolitan Prague was not an easy task for Langer. When he returned from his first journey to Belz, he attempted to follow a rigidly orthodox pattern in a way which alienated him from the rest of his family. It may indeed have been Langer who inspired the story "Metamorphosis" by Franz Kafka. His brother points out that upon Jiri's return, "the attitude of our family to Jiri seemed to us at the time to resemble the situation in Kafka's novel . . . in which an entire family finds its way of life completely upset when the son of the house is suddenly changed into an enormous cockroach, and consequently has to be hidden from the rest of the world. . . ." (*Nine Gates*, xvii). Langer had made friends with Kafka during the First World War. "Kafka evidently found Jiri a kindred spirit; his diary contains several Chassidic myths and legends which he had heard from Jiri." (Ibid., xxiii-xxiv).

Jiri Langer set off on his pilgrimage to the Tzaddiq of Belz in 1913, before that community suffered the shock of World War I. He gives the following account of their first meeting:

The Sabbath candles are already lit in the rabbi's house. I enter with the other guests--there is a long queue of them--to greet the saint⁵ for the first time. He has been told that I am the lad from Prague; indeed they have told him . . . that I have succeeded in plaiting (in the prescribed fashion, of course) four fringes to my *Leib-zidakl*, or vest, with my own hands. For this work of art he calls me to him once again. Once again he shakes my hand, this time lingeringly, and regards me kindly. He looks at me with only one eye. The other eye is blind. It seems to me that a ray of light shines from his seeing eye and pierces me to the heart.⁶

Langer goes on to describe the physical appearance of the Tzaddiq and his manner of dress. Later, (in contrast with his own casual introduction) he describes the more formal way in which the Belzer Rebbe received the petitions of his disciples:

The saint's entrance hall is already crowded--in Belz it is always crowded--with scores of suplicants, mostly women. Some come to ask the saint to intercede with God for success of their business, others for recovery from an illness, others for advice for or against a marriage. The needs of the Chassidim are many and varied and only he, the saint, can satisfy them through his intercession with the Most High. After reading some of the petitions, the saint asks for details before beginning to pray or give advice. He reads some petitions with obvious displeasure, especially those asking for cures. He scolds the suppliant and tells him to go to a doctor. But he wishes him a speedy recovery.⁷

Some variation is allowed for in how people may present themselves, although there are established conventions. "Those who come to Belz from Hungary kiss the saint's hand. The Poles do not."⁸ It is understood that one may derive blessings from such a Tzaddiq, regardless of how happy he may be to bestow a particular form of blessing.

⁵The word "saint", as it is used here, is almost certainly the translator's rendition of *tzaddiq*.

⁶Langer, *Nine Gates*, 5.

⁷*Ibid.*, 10.

⁸*Ibid.*, 11.

Some bring a *matbeya*, that is, a coin which the saint will endow with secret power and which then can be used as a *kameo*, or amulet. The saint places the coin on the table and draws three circles round it. He does so with obvious reluctance. But once the coin has been consecrated by the saint's hand, the suppliant receives it back with an expression of radiant joy on his face.⁹

In these examples it seems that the Tzaddiq has an objective role in connecting the suppliant with the grace of God, which does not depend on his viewing their request with favor. Indeed, even a rebuke that follows the violation of some essential point of Hasidic etiquette may be understood by a disciple such as Langer, as a blessing in disguise.

We take very good care not to catch the saint's eye during a service. As he enters the House of Study we press together in one confused mass, to leave him as much free space as possible. . . . If we are not sufficiently careful and agile he shouts at us--using words like "cattle!" or even "robbers!"--and sometimes he slips off his *gartel* (belt) and belabours the careless individual who has got in his way. But, surprisingly enough, his blows do not hurt in the least. Nor do his words. We laugh quietly to ourselves with joy, because we know that they are not insults but a high mark of honour, a secret blessing which he disguises with blows and rough words. For the Devil must not recognize them, or he may stop them from ascending to the throne of the Most High. Nevertheless we try to keep our distance from the saint; the farther we get the better it is.¹⁰

If these are the blessings that come from the Tzaddiq with a grimace, what kinds of blessings does he prefer to bestow? Langer describes how, after proper coaching, he formally presented his own request:

A *kvitel* is a small piece of paper on which one of the saint's clerks writes the name of the suppliant and . . . in a few concise words, the substance of what he is coming to ask of God. On my *kvitel* . . . I am asking God "that I may persevere in my studies and in the fear of God". Not one word more. That was how the Chassidim advised me to write it. . . . I am the last in the queue. The saint reads my *kvitel* with undisguised delight. When I come out of his room, the Chassidim are waiting for me outside, to wish me luck: "Get gepoilt!"--"Well done!"¹¹

⁹Ibid., 10-11.

¹⁰Ibid., 14-15.

¹¹Ibid., 10-11.

How, precisely, does the agency of the Tzaddiq relate to the blessings of God? Some insight may be gained into a Hasidic view of the relationship of the Tzaddiq and God, from Langer's interpretation of the custom of making a payment for the intercession of a tzaddiq:

Besides the *kvitel*, we place a *pidyen* on the saint's table; this is a small sum of money according to one's means. The saint is *in duty bound* to accept gifts. This custom was instituted by the holy Baal-Shem, and it has a metaphysical background. When the saint intercedes with God on behalf of us unworthy people, the Lord asks him: "Of what importance is this sinner to you? Have you any obligation towards him, dearly beloved son?" And the saint can reply to God: "Yes, I have an obligation towards him. He assisted me and my family." Our money offering is thus our only link, mean as it is, between us and the saint; it is the necessary prerequisite for our prayers to be heard. Hence the saint accepts gifts. But he returns the gifts of poor people immediately. From declared unbelievers he will not take any gifts at all.¹²

In Langer's descriptions one sees the mechanical function of an intermediary who can lift people's prayers to God and bring down God's blessings. The kind of help to be received from the Tzaddiq appears to take place entirely within his comprehension; there is no particular emphasis on the Tzaddiq "within" an individual. Indeed, it is regarded as something of a rarity to seek help from the Tzaddiq in one's own spiritual development.

The nature of the help of the Tzaddiq is such that it can even be rendered long-distance. Thus, "the devout who live outside Belz send their petitions and contributions to the saint's office by post, or if the matter is urgent, by telegram."¹³ Nor does an actual exchange of money, or even the forming of an intention in the mind of the Tzaddiq, appear to be essential. Thus it is believed that "the suppliant obtains relief as soon as the clerk unsticks the telegram even though the saint has not yet received the remittance."¹⁴

¹²Ibid., 11.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

This is Hasidism at its most impersonal. In contrast with the tales, we come away with no sense of the character of the Belzer Rebbe, or indeed, of Langer's own character. To paraphrase the well known aphorism about the Maggid of Mezeritch, it is not clear whether it is Torah, primarily, that Langer has learned from the Rebbe, or whether he has learned from him "how to tie his shoelaces". Langer grants that the institutions of Hasidic life which he observes are in decline. As he relates his experiences without embellishment, Langer seems to be a reliable witness of this world. The self-consciousness one might expect from modern authors poised between tradition and modernity, especially those who are documenting the trials and tribulations of the master-disciple relationship, is entirely missing from Langer's account. Sharing his discoveries but not his doubts, Langer presents the community of Belz from a vantage point within that community.

Despite its humble appearance, the world of the Belzer Rebbe is for Langer a magical realm which may sometimes impinge on mundane reality. Thus his brother recalls that when Jiri was drafted into the army for the First World War, he credited his Rebbe with his miraculous discharge. His brother fills in a different side of the story: it was only after he himself had advised the doctors assigned to the case of Jiri's court martial for refusing to bear arms on the Sabbath, that Jiri was discharged for reasons of insanity!¹⁵

While Jiri Langer keeps private his own inner sense of his Rebbe, he vividly describes a spiritual experience in which he appeared. It was this visitation from the Belzer Rebbe which prompted Langer to return to Belz a second time, for an extended period of study:

One night I cannot sleep. I am lying, facing the kitchen door, which looks towards the East. I have left the door ajar. I have just been reading some holy

¹⁵Ibid., xix.

Hebrew book in the kitchen. The kitchen windows are open, open towards the East, the East where Belz lies at the end of a train journey of a few hours more than a day and a night. . . . It is useless for me to close my eyes to induce sleep. Suddenly I am dazzled by a bright light penetrating into my dark bedroom through the half-open door. What is it?--I know that I have put out the lamp, and there is no one in the kitchen. I stare at the light, and in the middle of it, a few steps in front of me, I can see quite clearly through the half-open door--*the saint of Belz!* He is sitting in his room at Belz looking fixedly at me. On his expressive countenance shines that barely recognizable, sublime smile of his, full of wisdom. I have no idea how long the apparition lasts, but it is long enough to shake me.¹⁶

In terms of the phenomenology of religious experience, details of this account may be of interest. First Langer projected himself yearningly in the direction of his Master, and then he received a vision of him. How would such an experience have been understood within the Hasidic community?

My vision of the saint of Belz that night was a great favour. So the Chassidim said when I told them about it. To behold a living saint from far away and, moreover, while still awake, is not indeed an absolutely isolated phenomenon among the Chassidim, but it is a greater expression of God's favour than, for instance, a conversation with someone who is dead or with the prophet Elijah.¹⁷

Entirely missing from Langer's account is any sense of the Tzaddiq relating to a "Point" which is to be found within the disciple. It should be remembered that Langer has portrayed only his earliest encounters with the Tzaddiq, in a community to which he was a newcomer. Langer lived on in Prague for many years, and according to his brother, eventually found a congenial adaptation of his orthodoxy and Hasidism to his secular surroundings. During World War II Langer emigrated to Palestine, where he died of tuberculosis. He completed a book inspired by Freudian psychology on *The Erotic in Kabbalah* which, however, has not been translated into English. If, indeed, his relationship with his Rebbe may have deepened and matured and gained in psychological perspective, it is a story that has not been told.

¹⁶Ibid., 12.

¹⁷Ibid., 13.

Schachter's Description of the Function of the Tzaddiq

Fortunately, Zalman Schachter has pursued a more detailed study of the Hasidic master-disciple relationship. Schachter focuses on the formal "meetings" or encounters, known as *yehidut*, between Hasidic Tzaddiqim and those who seek them out. Unlike Langer, Schachter brought to his observations academic training in the psychology of religion. His descriptions of the *yehidut* are based upon his own experiences as a disciple of the present, and former, Lubavitcher Rebbe, and his meetings with other Hasidic Rebbeim, as well as on conversations with other Hasidim of these and other Rebbeim. It is informed, as well, by an extensive knowledge of Hasidic literature, as well as of the modern studies of Hasidism that did not exist when Langer wrote *Nine Steps*.

Schachter applies a therapeutic model to his analysis of the meeting between a Rebbe and his disciple: "The *yehidut* is a very specific and professional encounter in which the rebbe is clearly in the role of the helper, and the hasid is in the role of the one in need of help."¹⁸ The notion of Tzaddiq as helper, of course, recalls the work of Buber. But Schachter digs deeper. In the Preface to the new edition of Schachter's study, which appears under the title *Spiritual Intimacy*, he proceeds from a consideration of the therapeutic parallel, to a consideration of the Tzaddiq function which is invested in the figure of the Rebbe:

In the hasidic setting there was . . . a basic presupposition: the rebbe is a complete zaddik. . . in actual behavior he and the tzaddiq are indistinguishable.

¹⁸Zalman Schachter, "The Encounter: a Study of Counselling in Hasidism" (Ph. D. diss., Hebrew Union College, 1968), 193. Schachter refers to the "helpee" as the Hasid, although he notes that women, non-hasidim, and even non-Jews sometimes approach a Rebbe for *yehidut*. Though the typical case he is describing involves a male member of the Hasidic community, the general description of the *yehidut* would apply in these other cases as well.

The heavy moral expectation [on the part of the disciple] does not allow a transfer of the rebbe modality to those of us who would not qualify for the loftier rungs. . . . In the hasidic world-view, the rebbe was seen as a universal, general oversoul, a *n'shamah k'lalit*, and the hasidim who came to him saw him themselves as particular souls clustering about him.¹⁹

Without developing a particular theory of the archetype of the Tzaddiq, Schachter-Shalomi takes it for granted that a distinction may be made between the individual Rebbe and his Tzaddiq function. Indeed, in the light of the thesis that the Tzaddiq is an archetype, it should be apparent that a particular individual may fully represent the function of Tzaddiq and still be distinguishable as a person from that function. In a later chapter, Schachter-Shalomi outlines the kinds of training which prepare one who might become a Rebbe, and the kinds of spiritual attainments which characterize a Tzaddiq.²⁰ But here he is concerned with the question of how those who are outside the world of Hasidim, such as people involved in therapeutic counseling, might partake of the model which is specific to the figure of the Hasidic Master?

Does this mean that in a present-day encounter we cannot make any part of the rebbe function that is not part of a hasidic social setting our own? In our experience, a person who serves as rebbe is not *always* in the rebbe mode. As counseling is a function so too is rebbe-ing. . . . one is not a rebbe--rather one *acts*, one functions as a rebbe, in an inter-active and reciprocal process with others and only for the time that one is rebbe-ing. So . . . it is possible that different persons will each at times be rebbe-ing in a havurah, an affinity group. Thus in the end the ultimate function of rebbe is one of attunement.²¹

This model of one person ministering to another on the basis of the Tzaddiq function, is anticipated in R. Nahman's description of the "point" of the Tzaddiq which may be found and activated "within".²² Clearly, for R. Nahman, disciples are enabled to function in this way because of their prior contact with an individual who is fully a

¹⁹Schachter-Shalomi, *Spiritual Intimacy*, xvi-xvii.

²⁰See "How a Rebbe is Groomed" in *Spiritual Intimacy* (75-110), especially the sections on "Training" (86-91), and "Gifts of the Spirit" (101-4).

²¹Ibid, xvi-xvii.

²²See *Liqqutay Moharan*, folio 34, quoted in Chapter Four.

Tzaddiq. Schachter-Shalomi, it seems, does not subscribe to such a view. On the basis of his own experience, he perceives the Tzaddiq function as one that is situational. He points, moreover, to a synthesis of the two:

The classical rebbe-hasid encounter took place in an hierarchical environment. Thus, the democratic rhetoric in which most psychological work takes place does not harmonize easily with the hasidic model. Both are in need of reexamination in view of an emerging holistic, organic model that allows for gradations imposed by the system of hierarchy, as well as for the democratic values of the rebbe-hasid relationship.²³

Schachter-Shalomi's presumption that there are "democratic values" to the "rebbe-hasid relationship" seems a bit forced, given his acknowledgement that even in psychological work much of the emphasis on the equality of client and counselor may be rhetorical. But he does in fact provide a remarkable insight into the very special way in which Hasidic Masters actually work with those who come to them for counsel.

The Yehidut

Schachter begins his actual description of such encounters by emphasizing the importance of preparation for the *yehidut* on the part of the Hasid and the Rebbe as well. "Despite the fact that the hasid comes to the rebbe in a 'crisis' situation, the rebbe will not meet him impromptu, but will prepare to meet him 'with a face that expresses friendliness'."²⁴ The hasid prepares himself both in body and mind:

In preparation for the yehidut, the hasid will visit the miqveh [ritual bath] and immerse himself in it. He dresses in his better clothes, and girds himself with a *gartel*--a prayer sash. Upon arriving at the rebbe's, he will either write his own *quittel* or have the *gabbai* [secretary] write it. Generally, he has skipped the meal before the yehidut. He has the money for the *pidyon* ready as he seats himself in the anteroom. Then he examines his conscience and reviews the events of his life since the last yehidut. . . . He rethinks his values and centers them around the rebbe. . . . In his imagination, the hasid stands already before the rebbe as he thinks of all these things. He is convinced that the rebbe can read his mind as

²³Schachter-Shalomi, *Spiritual Intimacy*, xvi.

²⁴Schachter, "The Encounter", 194.

he sits outside and waits. He feels the lack of privacy in his own thoughts. The whole sense of expectancy and wide-openness toward the rebbe, the sense of yearning to be what the rebbe would have him be, prepares the hasid for the *t'shuvah* process [of repentance, or "return"] which is the *yehidut*.²⁵

Schachter describes, in some detail, the non-verbal interactions with which the meeting between Rebbe and Hasid most often begins:

When the *gabbai* calls him, the hasid's heart beats faster; he tenses. With his free hand, he smooths his beard, adjusts his sash and hat, touches the mezuzah [inscribed with words of Scripture] at the doorpost with a reverent kiss, and enters. He approaches the rebbe's desk and proffers the *quittel* and the *pidyon*.²⁶

The tension felt by the hasid actually helps the Rebbe to get a feeling of his condition:

A generous look on his face, the rebbe takes the *quittel* and the *pidyon*. . . . The rebbe surveys the hasid. The hasid believes that the rebbe reads his forehead. The hasid's looks, his stance, his garb, his self-consciousness--all these are noted by the rebbe as he turns to the *quittel*. Generally there is no word spoken yet, and the tension in the hasid mounts. The hasid usually remains standing before the rebbe and will refuse to sit in his presence even when invited to do so by the rebbe.²⁷

And yet, the tension felt by the hasid at the opening of the *yehidut* is shared by the rebbe as well.

The rebbe reads the *quittel* with a sense of anticipation. Will it be a complaining *quittel*? This may already be indicated by its length. . . . The more the hasid brings detail of circumstance to bear on the *quittel*, the less his insight into his condition, the more he anticipates his need to be protected against the rebbe, and the greater his defensiveness. . . . The hasid who writes a short *quittel* shows more trust in the rebbe (and in G-d).²⁸

The Rebbe at first scans the *quittel* to gain a general impression from its length, (and, if it is written by the hasid, the appearance of the hand-writing). He also takes in

²⁵Ibid., 195-196.

²⁶Ibid., 196.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., 205.

the general appearance of the person before him, what the body language may express, and in the case of a hasid appearing in traditional dress, the statement of identification with a particular Hasidic tradition which has been made. Then the Rebbe will look more deeply, at the soul presented before him.

The rebbe looks at the name in the *quittel*. . . . Having cleared his mind before the yehidut, the rebbe is flooded by impressions which take him to the root of the hasid's soul. Before he reads further, the real needs of the hasid are made clear to him, as well the way in which these needs will be met. He beholds this soul before him as it stood in the fullness of the divine thought and design,²⁹ and looks at all the blocks and arrests that have kept the hasid from materializing this design. He looks deeply into the *quittel*, reads it for its manifest content, and compares it with his estimate of what should have been written in it.³⁰

²⁹Schachter later (ibid., 208) discusses the need of the Tzaddiq to apprehend "the first vision G-d had of this soul . . . in which all the potentialities of a soul are realized in divine fullness". He cites a story Buber related in *For the Sake of Heaven* (207-208), about how one who would serve as a Tzaddiq must learn to penetrate a wealth of past-life information about the person one wishes to help:

"The Yehudi, having been appointed by the Seer to minister to the hasidim in his absence, went . . . to fulfill . . . the functions of his office. . . . At that very moment sundry strangers entered. . . . And now something came to pass that frightened him as nothing had during all his life. He looked at one of those who had entered, a very ordinary person, and looked involuntarily upon the man's forehead. In the next instant it looked to him as if a curtain were drawn apart. He stood at the brink of a sea whose dark waves assaulted the very heavens. And now they too were split asunder as the curtain had been and thus gave space for a figure, totally unlike the visitor, but with the same seal upon its forehead that was seen upon his. But already that figure was devoured by the waves; behind it stood another, different again but with that same seal. It too vanished and farther and farther the depths revealed figures after figures. The Yehudi closed his eyes. When he opened them again, nothing was to be seen but that ordinary man and the people about him and the room with its ordinary furnishings.

For a long time he did not dare to look at the next visitor. So soon as he did so the same thing took place. Again a curtain was torn asunder and again waves rolled in the abyss and again vision succeeded vision. At this point the Yehudi mastered the disturbance of his mind and decided to obey the plain and open bidding that had been given him. He observed and sought to grasp every figure. He let it sink into the depth of his memory. He forced his eyes to remain open as long as possible. And suddenly when it came to the fourth and fifth visitor he noticed a change had been accomplished within him. His vision penetrated the depths independently; with inhuman swiftness it pierced those realms it reached to the background of that row of figures and came upon the very being of the primordial."

³⁰Ibid., 196-197.

The art of being a Rebbe involves not only seeing the divine potential of the Hasid, but seeing, comprehending and identifying with the human limitations this soul has taken upon itself. A theory of reincarnation would seem to be taken for granted, but how literally or metaphorically this might be taken does not seem to be an issue.

The rebbe becomes aware of the hasid's ancestors who have accompanied the hasid in spirit into the yehidut chamber. He marks their pleading of their needs in this descendant.³¹ For a flash, he integrates all this in himself: he becomes the hasid, and, standing in his place, sees how far the hasid is from being able to accept the right counsel for himself. The rebbe is flooded with immense compassion: he sighs. . . . looking at himself, he seeks to find his own experience, in a corresponding way, in that of the hasid. In a flash of decision, the rebbe mends this problem in himself and begins to question the hasid.³²

First it was necessary to look inside the Hasid to see the depth of this soul and the history bearing upon it. Then it is necessary for the Rebbe to find the Hasid within himself, not in a psychic but a psychological sense. By his own struggle to be truthful with himself about the tendencies which separate him from God, it becomes possible for the Tzaddiq to help the person standing before him.

This is a difficult moment for them both. "The hasid blushes at the rebbe's sigh. He is sorry to have cause the rebbe grief and concern for his soul."³³ Until this point, the hasid has been passive. All of his activity has been by way of preparation. Now "he feels as if he must apologize, but the rebbe begins his questioning."³⁴ The Rebbe, who has also been receptive than until this point, now actively takes charge of the encounter. Nor does he limit himself to asking about what is written in the *qvittel*.

³¹It is not clear to me whether Schachter means this visitation by the Hasid's ancestors to be different from the vision of past lives (see n. 24 above), and perhaps to follow after it, or whether he means for it to be more or less the same thing. In either case, this psychic vision of other entities is not taken as an end in itself, but as an introduction to a deeper spiritual vision of this particular soul.

³²Langer, *Nine Gates*, 197.

³³*Ibid.*, 198.

³⁴*Ibid.*

The questioning may remove the rebbe and hasid far away from the explicit point of the *quittel*. The rebbe may inquire about the hasid's business, his family, or his progress in his study and prayer life. The hasid replies to the rebbe's questions.³⁵

As their conversation proceeds, "the rebbe may . . . ask the hasid to state what he wants despite the *quittel*."³⁶ It is important that the encounter be fresh and genuine, that it address the condition of the hasid and not be contrived. As we saw in the case of Jiri Langer, "the rebbe delights in a Ba'al Shemseque *quittel* . . . [which] is what the Apter, R' Abraham Yehoshua Heschel, called a *quittel* requesting advice and a blessing in the service of G-d."³⁷ But only if it is sincere.

The absence of such a *Ba'al Shemesque quittel* does not upset the rebbe. He expects these to be rare, and because of their rarity, all the more valuable.³⁸

The approach Schachter describes for actually delivering '*etzah*, "advice" or counsel, is not a matter of filling the hasid with new information as much as availing the Hasid of more of a panoramic perspective, in order to enable the Hasid to see him or herself as another would see him, even as God would see him. The Rebbe may, at this point, employ the technique of echoing the words of the hasid, so as to serve as a mirror reflecting the condition which the words of the Hasid imply.

The rebbe may take one of the hasid's answers and repeat it to him, either in the same manner, or with a different intonation. This shifts the level of conversation up to the plane where the *ezah* can be given. If the hasid is ready, having followed the insight, having recovered from the shock of hearing what he really wanted to hear, the rebbe will proceed. If the rebbe sees no flash of recognition of the shift of levels, he may try another tack to bring the hasid to experience himself in the necessary way.³⁹

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., 205.

³⁷Ibid., 206.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Ibid., 198.

The Rebbe is understood as being aware of higher levels of the Hasid's soul--all the way up to the universal source of souls in the archetypal figure described in Kabbalah as *Adam Qadmon*, or "Primordial Adam".⁴⁰ Being privy to knowledge of the soul, he is a figure of tremendous authority. Yet the task of the Rebbe is not to rest upon this authority and impose answers upon the Hasid do not correspond to the knowledge the Hasid has of himself or herself. Rather, it is the task of the Rebbe to mirror the Hasid so as to help him or her to stretch to a higher level of understanding. Instead of telling the Hasid what to do, it is the task of the Rebbe to provide the Hasid with a vantage point from which he will be motivated to act on his own behalf.

Often the hasid does not receive the answer he expects from the rebbe. There is no guarantee that the problem he brought to the rebbe will have a solution. The hasid notices, however, that the rebbe is about to say something significant. . . . His face takes on more authoritative lines. His voice becomes at once commanding and blessing: the hasid is "all ears" to absorb the rebbe's *etzah*.⁴¹

The *etzah* of the Rebbe is likely to start out sounding surprisingly open-ended, and end on a note of surprising firmness. Because the Rebbe's counsel is likely to touch upon the "blind spot" of the hasid, there may well be some confusion at this point. For as much as the disciple may wish to submit to the word of the master, he or she may be incredulous. "Has he really understood my question?" "Have I understood his answer?" Such confusion may open the door to a moment of doubt, which may in fact open the door to a greater sensitivity. "Is this person, in fact, capable of serving as my master--or am I capable of being a disciple?"

When the rebbe has finished, the hasid may ask a few questions about something he has not understood. He may even want to argue with the rebbe. Generally, however, the rebbe maintains his position. Although the instructions may have been clear, the hasid may not understand how the following of these instructions

⁴⁰Ibid., 208.

⁴¹Ibid., 198-199.

can solve his problem. As he stands before the rebbe, he must make an act of faith.⁴²

There really is no choice at this point. Having asked for clarification and received an answer--however satisfactory or unsatisfactory that answer may be--the Hasid who would remain a Hasid submits at this point, and "inclines his head for the blessing. . . . Once more there is a shift in the rebbe's expression and manner, and the hasid, alert to this shift, strains to catch every syllable of the rebbe's blessing."⁴³ Indeed, there is always a chance that the blessing itself will cast a new light upon the entire encounter, resolve any obscurity, and lift it to a greater wholeness.

The time for questioning is past. Once again it is the rebbe who bestows; the task of the hasid is to collect himself so as to receive all that he has been given. When the rebbe has concluded, the hasid will utter a fervent "Amen" and start moving backward. Without turning his back to the rebbe, and without taking his face off him, he moves toward the door. The yehidut is finished.⁴⁴

The *yehidut* is finished, but both rebbe and hasid have homework to do. Following the yehidut, "the hasid is generally left to work through the rebbe's counsel with the help of . . . his fellow hasidim."⁴⁵ The Rebbe has endeavored to help the hasid to see himself, but his responsibility does not end there. "The rebbe may make a few notations on the quittel, and place it where he can later use it to intercede on behalf of the hasid."⁴⁶

Thus, while some of the techniques may be the same, the yehidut is distinguished from an ordinary counselling situation by what it is expected to achieve. Schachter contrasts the external framework of the two: "The intensity of the yehidut is

⁴²Ibid., 199.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., 203.

⁴⁶Ibid., 199.

probably far greater than in any other helping encounter . . . its frequency is probably less . . . and it is probably much shorter in duration."⁴⁷ Yet, because it is "so authoritative and implicitly directive" the impact of even a single *yehidut* is likely to be great. "The hasid has faith in the direction of the rebbe working in his daily life . . . and his behavior is generally decreed by norms from without."⁴⁸ Even in a contemporary setting, the orthodox milieu of a Hasidic community provides powerful reinforcement for the counsels of the Rebbe.

Schachter's description of how the Tzaddiq functions as a "helper" fits the outward form Langer described, and fills it with meaning. The role of the Tzaddiq is both psychological and spiritual; the Rebbe finds the Hasid within himself so that the Hasid may find in the Rebbe a the mirror of his own higher wisdom. The role of the Tzaddiq as a spiritual counsellor may not be his only way of bridging the realms of heaven and earth, but for most Hasidim and non-Hasidim who make contact with a Tzaddiq, this is likely to be the Tzaddiq's most accessible function.

⁴⁷Ibid., 203. It appears that there is some variation in the amount of time that Rebbeim will allot to an encounter. "With the present [Lubavitcher] rebbe, the time varies from five minutes to a half hour, with a first interview taking up to an hour. The pattern of time spent at *yehidut* with other rebbeim is similar." Such an encounter might be sought out at by an earnest Hasid at least once a year. "Apart from emergencies and rites de passage, a *yehidut* once a year was considered the minimum in the general hasidic situation, and it remains so today. A favorite of many hasidim is to visit the rebbe on their birthday, or as close to it as they can." (202) It was the custom of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to accept those seeking his counsel only on certain nights of the week, and at certain times of the year he would be unavailable. "When rebbes were still located in small *shtetls* (villages) in Eastern Europe, such a strict regimen was not always followed. The hasid who came to see the rebbe generally came from out of town. He stayed at the rebbe's *shtetl* for at least three days . . . [and] the fact of the hasid's having to travel some distance generally gave him more opportunity to prepare himself. The rebbe of the *shtetl* was generally more easily accessible to his hasidim than the modern rebbe." (201) I have been given to understand that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is no longer publicly available for *yehidut*.

⁴⁸Ibid.

Of course, it is not possible, in a study such as this, to verify whether a given Rebbe in fact sees the "design" of the soul of his disciple as Schachter suggests he does. It is enough for purposes of this thesis, however, to appreciate that a typical Hasid would perceive that he does. Given that Schachter has based what he describes on interviews with contemporary Hasidim, as well as his own experience, he is a reliable source of information on such experience. Nor is it possible, in a thesis such as this, to verify whether a given Tzaddiq fulfills other aspects of the function of a "foundation of the world". Yet Schachter offers evidence that there is a correspondence, even today, between what Hasidim believe and experience and the classical Hasidic theory of the archetype of the Tzaddiq.

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