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Levi Yizhak of Berdichev on Miracles

The question of miracles and the supernatural, both theoretically and practically, was never far from the mind of Levi Yizhak of Berdichev (1740–1809).[1] Before turning to this question, however, it will be important to present Levi Yizhak in a rather specific historical context.

Levi Yizhak is a leading figure of the so-called third generation of Hasidism, a disciple of the great Maggid R. Dov Baer of Mezritch, himself a disciple of the Ba'al Shem Tov, the figure around whose image Hasidism was created. In fact it was this "third" generation that established Hasidism as a dynamic popular religious movement, as historians have shown. The BeSHT, whom Levi Yizhak never met, died before any such movement carried his banner came into being, and the Maggid, while fostering the *bet midrash* out of which the most important movement leaders were to emerge, was a somewhat reluctant supporter of popularization.[2]

The Ba'al Shem Tov had indeed been known as both a clairvoyant and a miracle worker. These qualities constituted a good portion, though not all, of his growing reputation. As tales of the BeSHT were being told and collected during this era of the "third generation," leading up to the publication of *Shivhey ha-BeSHT* just after that generation passed from the world (1815), surely the accounts of his wondrous deeds were growing, both in number and in miraculous content. The Maggid, however, eschewed miracle working. He was a purveyor of profound teachings, not of supernatural acts. While legend claims that he himself had originally been drawn to the Ba'al Shem Tov in a quest for healing and had been helped and convinced by a shamanic rite the BeSHT performed for him,[3] the impressive band of followers who constituted his circle in Mezritch came to hear his teachings, not to behold wonders. Surely the Maggid believed theoretically in the power of the *tsaddik* to affect the will of heaven, of which he writes with some frequency.[4] But he seems to have felt that it was immodest or unwise to do so blatantly, except in extreme circumstances. His disciple and Levi Yizhak's friend R. Shne'ur Zalman of Liadi is quoted (in a later

HaBaD source) as saying, "In Mezritch miracles lay about on the floor in heaps; no one bothered to pick them up."[5] There was no doubt in the disciples' minds, in other words, that R. Dov Baer would have been quite capable of performing miracles, but doing so was just not his way.

Within the Maggid's circle, Levi Yizhak was among the most prominent activists and propagandists for the spread of the new movement. He was deposed from two major rabbinic posts (and possibly an earlier one as well) due to opposition, both internal and external, to his Hasidic preaching. Following the second round of anti-Hasidic bans in 1781, he engaged in public debate with R. Abraham Katzenellenbogen of Brest-Litovsk, a leading anti-Hasidic rabbi. He was poignantly defended by his friend R. Elimelech of Lezajsk as a victim of anti-Hasidic persecution.[6]

Among the large and impressive group of young seekers and devotees who gathered around the Maggid between the early 1760s and his death in 1772, certain rough distinctions may be drawn. Levi Yizhak belongs to the group of young rabbis within the Mezritch circle, people well respected for their learning in the exoteric realm as well as for their Hasidic piety and homiletical creativity. Several of these went on to rabbinic careers, serving in various communities. These included R. Shmelke Horowitz (who was responsible for bringing along several of the others), R. Uziel Meisels, and R. Issachar Dov, later of Zloczow. A second group, including R. Shne'ur Zalman, R. Elimelech, and R. Israel Hofstein, surely had the learned credentials to serve as rabbis, but instead devoted themselves entirely to spreading Hasidism, earning their living through the support of their disciples. This led to the emergence of the Hasidic court with its distinctive economic features.[7] These two groups may be roughly distinguished from yet another group of future *preachers* within the circle, men of profound intellectual ability and spiritual depth who quoted both Aggadah and Zohar quite fluently, but who did not have the same level of Talmudic education. Prominent among these are R. Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl and R. Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir. There were also a few spiritually impressive nonintellectuals who were accepted within the group, including R. Elimelech's brother R. Zusya of Anipol and R. Leib Sarah's.

During the first three decades of Hasidism's spread (1765–95), the Mezritch circle was in competition with several individuals and groups that lay outside it. Prominent among these were the circle of R. Yehiel Mikhl of Zloczow in Eastern Galicia, the group around R. Pinhas of Korzec and

R. Barukh of Miedzybozh, the grandson of the BeSHT. R. Barukh, the first to claim Hasidic authority by dint of family lineage, was a decidedly nonintellectual figure who saw himself primarily as heir to the wonder-working abilities of his grandfather.[8] In the Zloczow circle too there was not the disdain of miracle working that was found in Mezritch. By the last decade of the eighteenth century, such independent figures as R. Aryeh Leib of Shpola were also making a name for themselves as miracle workers, healers, and intercessors in prayer.

Levi Yizhak's major work, *Kedushat Levi*, appeared in two sections. He published homilies on Hanukkah and Purim, plus some other incidental *derashot,* in Slawuta, 1798 (reprinted in Zolkiew, 1806). The larger *Kedushat Levi 'al ha- torah* appeared in Berdichev, 1811, shortly after its author's death. Before the end of the eighteenth century, the bookshelf of printed Hasidic writings was still quite small. Books generally fell into two categories: *derashot* following the order of the Torah (*Toledot Ya'akov Yosef, No'am Elimelech*, etc.) and random collected teachings (*Maggid Devaraw Le-Ya'akov, Likkutim Yekarim*, etc.), often in brief form, including those now defined as *sifrut ha-hanhagot* or "conduct literature," i.e., instructions for moral behavior. Levi Yizhak's was the first Hasidic work dealing specifically with Hanukkah and Purim, considered two of the "minor" holidays on the Jewish calendar. Indeed there are few books in the entire prior Jewish canon devoted exclusively to these. The notable exception, and Levi Yizhak's obvious inspiration, are the writings of the MaHaRaL of Prague (1525–1609), *Ner Mitsvah* on Hanukkah and *Or Hadash* on Purim. The writings of the MaHaRaL were known to Levi Yizhak's teacher, the Maggid, and in general are thought to have had significant influence on Hasidic authors both early and late.[9] This is most likely because they felt in him a kindred spirit, one shaped by the contours of Jewish mystical thought while declining to include technical and abstruse Kabbalistic symbolism in his writings.

The main theme in Levi Yizhak's discussion of both holidays is that of the hidden miracle, or the relationship between revealed and hidden ways that God acts in history. The notion of hidden miracles is one that Levi Yizhak derives from the RaMBaN, whom he quotes copiously on this subject.[10] While it is not the purpose of this essay to offer a full history of this idea, it is fair to say that one may trace a line of thinking from

RaMBaN through MaHaRaL and into Levi Yizhak. Levi Yizhak repeatedly makes it clear that the hidden miracle, that which takes place without seemingly violating the laws of nature, is the more impressive to him. The essential Hasidic message is that God is present within this world and is accessible to people living in an ordinary state of consciousness (*katnut*). The message of the "hidden miracle" is that this world as it exists is the scene of divine self-revelation, one accessible to those simple Jews so loved by Levi Yizhak.

The treatise on Purim and Hanukkah (treated in that order) begins with this notion. Levi Yizhak quotes the Talmud's discussion of whether Israel freely received the Torah at Sinai, given the legend of God's holding the mountain over their heads as a warning against rejecting the divine word.[11] The Gemara's resolution *"hadar kibluhah bi-yemey Mordechai ve-Esther"* ("they reaccepted it in the days of Mordecai and Esther") gives him the opportunity to say that it was only the discovery that God is present within the seemingly natural world that allows us mere mortals to discover the divine presence and hence to serve God freely and joyously. The "mountain held over their heads" is thus a symbolic representation of what happens in the supernatural moment when the ability to deny God's presence is absent. Accepting the Torah in such circumstance might not carry over into ordinary time. That is why the story of Esther is told in a *megillah*, because it "reveals" (a play on *megillah/megalleh*) a this-worldly divine presence that would otherwise be hidden. Similarly, the festival is called Purim, "lots," because it takes place in the natural world, one in which the person has alternatives, and therefore free choice, about whether to discover God's presence and to accept the yoke of His service. This can only take place in the realm of *katnut*, for in the state of Sinai-like *gadlut* one is so surrounded by the intense experience of divinity that there remains no alternative but to accept it.

So too does Levi Yizhak explain the Talmud's surprising statement that "all the festivals will be canceled in the future, except for Purim."[12] The major festivals of the year are structured around the story of the Exodus and Sinai. Those were supernatural events, which there will be no need to recall in the messianic future. Nature itself will be so transformed—here Levi Yizhak quotes the prophet's vision of the wolf lying down with the lamb—that the supernatural will have been rendered superfluous. In this we seem to have a new state, not the temporary suspension of nature by

the effecting of God's will (or the *tsaddik*'s), but a new responsiveness of nature itself to do what is needed.

The exact quality of the hidden miracle in Levi Yizhak's treatise is not entirely clear or consistent. He seems to be looking toward a God who is ever concerned with Israel's welfare and acting in their behalf, the same as he expects of the *tsaddik*. In the Hanukkah narrative, God acts behind the screen of military activity, allowing the smaller and weaker army to defeat its enemies ("*masarta* . . ."). In the Purim story, God acts within the heart of the king to turn his will toward Israel's benefit.[13] In a particularly impressive passage he suggests the order of the year reflects an increasingly open revelation of God's presence.[14] Hanukkah is the first festival to occur within profane time (i.e., after the fall sacred season). The victory of the Maccabees could be seen as an entirely natural one, the result of military prowess. The hand of God that gave them victory remains almost entirely hidden. Next comes Purim, when Israel did not act in battle to defend themselves (he conveniently ignores the embarrassing closing chapters of Megillat Esther). Israel relied only on Esther's machinations and the king's will.[15] Here humans were less powerful, so the positive result was a greater revelation of divine interference, meaning that the miracle was somewhat less hidden. Only from there does the year proceed to Pesah, an event that took place "without arousal from below," when the hand of God in history was entirely revealed.

In these passages, *nes nistar* seems to mean the active, conscious hand of God in controlling historical events, but one exercised from behind the scenes.[16] On reflection, however, Levi Yizhak tells us that all miracles, but especially these, exist for the purpose of demonstrating to us that all of life is in fact miraculous. That which appears to be natural or ordinary (*hergel*)[17]—the rising and setting of the sun, for example—is in fact an act of divine will. That ties him quite closely to the position articulated clearly by Nahmanides in his comment to Exodus 13:16:

> From the great and famous miracles, a person comes to admit the hidden miracles, which are the foundation of the entire Torah. A person has no portion in the Torah of Moses until we believe that all our affairs and everything that happens to us are miracles. There is no "nature" or "way of the world" about them. This applies to both the individual and the collective.

While scholarship has shown that Nahmanides elsewhere demonstrates a significantly more nuanced view of the role of miracles (in fact one closer to that of Maimonides than is widely thought), it seems that this passage was the crucial one in Levi Yizhak's understanding of the medieval sage. "Nature" is but an illusory outer cloak that garbs the hidden activity of the divine will in every moment of existence. If that is the case, however, then "miracle" and "nature" seem to be differentiated primarily as attitudes of the beholder. The same sunrise can clearly be described as both, depending upon the religious consciousness (or lack thereof) in the one who sees it. To be a religious human being is to appreciate "Your miracles that are with us daily, evening, morning, and noon." This seems somewhat different from his descriptions of Hanukkah and Purim. While these are hidden miracles, they nevertheless seem to be described as *extraordinary* events of divine interference. But the sunrise is not that. Of course, the banishing of *hergel* means that everything is indeed to be seen as extraordinary. But then there is no ordinary, no rule to which these events become exceptions. In other words, if *everything* is to be seen as miracle, is *anything* any longer a miracle, except in the eye of the beholder?

Another complication in Levi Yizhak's understanding of hidden miracles is the role of humans, and particularly the *tsaddik,* in bringing them about. In general, Levi Yizhak is a great believer in the importance of "arousal from below" and the central role humans play in the governance of this world. His teacher, the Maggid, had already offered a most daring reading of *retson yere'av ya'aseh*.[18] In the infinite and unchanging Godhead there is no specific will that determines the fate of individual persons or human events. The inner *ayin*, so central to the mystical God-concept of Kabbalah, lies beyond such concerns. But the roots of *hesed* do reach that high, for the act of emanation itself could only come about as a result of the flowing forth of divine love. That love is specifically focused on Israel and the *tsaddikim*, the ultimate goal of Creation and the ones who will restore the cosmic balance by uplifting and restoring the flow of energy to its Source. Hence their desires are of utmost importance; God's love for them permits them to implant a particular desire within the divine mind in their moments of ecstatic union.[19] The verse is thus to be read (ungrammatically): *retson yere'av ya'aseh* "[God's] will is made by those who fear Him."

In several particularly revealing passages, Levi Yizhak uniquely goes beyond the Maggid in this line of thought, depicting God as intention-

ally retiring from the scene of worldly involvement in order to extend the rule of His beloved, Israel and the righteous. God places control over the lower world in their hands, causing all things to do their bidding.[20] This position, which might be designated as a "mystical humanism," is a belief that humans do indeed control the affairs of this world, but they have that power due to an intentional act of divine withdrawal. This depends, of course, on the full self-effacing righteousness of the human actors. You need to be acting for God's sake, often characterized as the sake of *shekhinah*, rather than to show your own powers.

In the Purim story, Mordechai is seen as such a figure.[21] A mystical devotee in the way of the Maggid's teachings, Mordechai contemplated the origins and purpose of existence itself. He ascended into the place of cosmic nothingness, and there he was able to direct the flow of a hidden miracle onto the historic plane.[22] A parallel passage, *Kedushat Purim* 2, 346–47, depicts him as a sage who knew all seventy human languages, thus having access to the seventy *sarey ha-umot* and their workings. Here music enters the scene alongside language. He was able to sing the proper melody of the *sar* opposing Israel and thus to overcome its power. Another passage, KLS 354–55, depicts a similar "singing contest" between King David and Nebuchadnezzar who sought but failed to defeat the power of the Psalmist to arouse and thus shape the divine will in defense of Israel.

The recent Rand edition of *Kedushat Levi*,[23] supplied with a full index of sources, makes it clear that the Talmudic passages about the power of the *tsaddik* to undo divine decrees (*Mo'ed Katan* 16b; *Ta'anit* 23a) are among Levi Yizhak's very favorite rabbinic quotations. These passages are quoted by others of the circle as well, but nowhere as frequently as in *Kedushat Levi*.[24] Levi Yizhak's unusual emphasis upon them is part of the mystical (or is it "magical?") humanism mentioned above. He sees a world in which righteous people are called upon to take action, to shape the course of history, rather than to depend upon a God who, without man's help, is off in the realms of mystical obscurity. The venerable Kabbalistic notion of "Israel add to the power above" or that human actions fulfill a divine need is now transformed to the realm of "conducting the world." Righteous Israel are God's helpers—but in effect His surrogates—in ruling the world.

Hidden miracles, an outsider might say, are not performed, but only claimed. If the sick child is healed, or the enemy kept away from the city gates, the *hasid* can say that it was the *tsaddik*'s prayers that caused this to

happen. No one sees a hidden miracle in the hour when it is happening. The case of Mordechai, therefore, is a relatively easy one. The Jews were saved in otherwise unexplained ways. It must have been the efforts of the *tsaddik* that caused this to happen. But what of revealed miracles? Is the *tsaddik* called upon to perform these as well? In Levi Yizhak's treatise on Hanukkah and Purim, devoted almost entirely to the question of miracles, there is no indication that this is the case. He seems in this sense to be a faithful disciple of the Maggid, not interested in turning the wonder-working potential of being a *tsaddik* into reality.

But when we turn to Levi Yizhak's better-known work, *Kedushat Levi 'al ha- torah*, published immediately after his death, this is no longer the case. In the essay mentioned in note 2, I have pointed to a reconstructed debate among the Maggid's circle with regard to Moses' action and liability at *Mey Merivah (*Num. 20:7–14*)*. Some voices, including that of the Maggid himself,[25] explain that Moses' sin lay in striking the rock rather than speaking to it. The *tsaddik*, they are claiming, is essentially one who has to work through speech, *dibbur*, continuing the work of *dor ha-midbar*, the generation when wonders could be effected by speech alone. I take this to mean that the power of the *tsaddik* lies in his teachings—the approach of the Maggid—rather than in supernatural deeds. This is the stance of the Mezritch school in the face of such figures as R. Baruch of Miedzybozh and others, who are presenting themselves as wonder-workers. The way to spread *hasidut,* the Maggid and his followers insist, is through its teachings, not through visible miracles.

But Levi Yizhak demurs from this view. In a most daring reading, he ascribes to Korah the notion that the coming generation, those going into the land (one has to read *ha-nikhnasim la-arets* as referring to *artsiyyut,* a commonplace in Hasidic interpretation) can be approached in the same way as "the generation of speech."

> "Korah took . . ." (Num. 16:1). There are the generation of the wilderness and the generation that entered the Land of Israel. *Dor ha-Midbar* refers to speech; they accomplished everything by speaking. There are *tsaddikim* who accomplish everything by speaking and do not need to perform any deed. "The generation that entered the land of Israel" refers to action; they needed to do some deed. That is why Joshua, when doing battle with the thirty-one kings, had to perform some act with

the javelin and the ambush (Josh. 8:18–19). Moses, who lived in the generation of *midbar*, needed no such act; he did it all through speech . . .

The Torah of Moses is parallel to speech, since he accomplished all by speaking. But it becomes garbed through the *middot* in the world of action as well. Of this Scripture says: "I am first and I am last (Is. 44:6), [meaning that God is present on the highest and lowest levels].

When Korah saw that this generation would not enter the Land of Israel, he had no faith that Moses' Torah could become garbed in action. . . . Korah believed only in the world of speech . . . and not that it could be garbed in the world of action.[26]

Korah denied that "the teaching of Moses is garbed also in the world of action." "Action" here refers to deeds in the physical realm that demonstrate God's power (i.e., miracles). The Korah position described here, I am suggesting, is rather close to that of Levi Yizhak's own revered teacher.

What leads to Levi Yizhak's seeming impatience with this view of the Maggid and others in his school? For this we have to turn to the best-known quality of Levi Yizhak: his love of ordinary Jews and his concern for their needs. This quality, while reinforced and perhaps also exaggerated by later legends about the *tsaddik* of Berdichev, is found readily within the pages of *Kedushat Levi* itself. A strong advocate for the spread and popularization of the Hasidic message, he is exceptionally forgiving toward the people and their lesser sins. He sees the most important task of the *tsaddik* as that of defending Israel, including their defense before heavenly judgment. He believed that ordinary Jews could not be reached by "speech" or teachings alone. They needed to see deeds done by the *tsaddikim* that would convince them of their powers. This meant a willingness to engage in demonstrable miracles, acting in a visible way that will convince people of the *tsaddik*'s powers above as well as his concern for their worldly needs.

In this internal debate within the Maggid's circle, Levi Yizhak is supported by R. Elimelech, who understands the high stakes involved. He suggests that the *tsaddik* indeed does have to act in order to convince the people, even if he will suffer punishment at God's hand because of it.

It is the way of the *tsaddik* to constantly seek out what is good for Israel, even if doing so appears to contain some bit of transgression. If it is for

> Israel's good, he will do it, even accepting that he might have to suffer Hell for their sake. His entire desire is to do what is good for them. The *tsaddik* could in fact bring forth the flow of blessing just by his word, without any physical act at all, but sometimes he has to do it . . . for those who do not believe.[27]

In this matter they stand squarely against R. Shne'ur Zalman, who refused to engage in such efforts. He was engaged in creating and marketing a *hasidut* that would capture the hearts of Jews in northern Belorussia, where Lithuanian attitudes and anti-Hasidic agitation were strong. He needed to show a "pure" image of the *tsaddik*, one completely free of the magical elements that were associated with Hasidism, having their roots in the Ba'al Shem Tov himself. His Hasidism was developing away from those roots, creating a Hasidism more comfortable both for him, as a refined intellectual and spiritual person, and for those of his district.

This reading of the sources works well except for one interesting fact. We have no miracle stories about Levi Yizhak. The stories about him, written and published in an era when there was no shyness about tales of *tsaddikim* and their miracles, are all accounts of personal piety and the love of Israel.[28] Levi Yizhak indeed defies the seeming will of heaven in arguing with God to see the merits of Israel, but he does not engage in miracles to bring about their salvation.

We may thus see Levi Yizhak as a figure who stands in a middle position as Hasidism begins to spread and become a dominant force in the area where he lives. He believes both in the power of the *tsaddik* to change the decree of heaven and the importance of demonstrating that power. Only this will show that the *tsaddik* can reach out to ordinary Jews and that he cares about their worldly needs. Yet he continues to hold off from doing so. The influence of the Maggid remains very strong. Perhaps so too does his disdain for wonder-workers when he sees them in action. Levi Yizhak's strong support for both Shne'ur Zalman and the young Nahman of Bratslav in their struggles with Baruch of Miedzbozh may reflect this attitude. Although attracted by his love of the people to fulfill their needs and draw them into the Hasidic fold, in the end he remains a religious intellectual and the rabbi of a major community, one for whom the self-image of *ba'al mofet*, miracle worker, is somehow beneath his dignity.

NOTES

1. A critical biography of Levi Yizhak is still a desideratum of scholarship, one I hope to fulfill together with my student Or N. Rose. Meanwhile, the volume by Samuel Dresner, *Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev: Portrait of a Hasidic Master* (New York: Hartmore House, 1974), contains some important materials. The key traditional source is Shalom Gutman's *Tif'eret Bet Levi* (Jassy, 1910).
2. This characterization of the Maggid emerges from my article "Around the Maggid's Table: *Tsaddik*, Leadership, and Popularization in the Circle of Dov Baer of Miedzyrzec," *Zion* 78, no. 1 (2013): 73–106 (Hebrew). An English version appears elsewhere in this volume.
3. *Shivhey ha-BeSHT*, ed. Rubinstein (Jerusalem, 1992), 126–29; *In Praise of the Ba'al Shem Tov*, trans. Ben-Amos and Mintz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), 81–84.
4. *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'akov* #179, ed. R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, 278–80; #127 (p. 220).
5. Hayyim Me'ir Heilman, *Beit Rabbi* (Berdichev, 1902), 6.
6. The texts of the debate as well as R. Elimelech's defense are published in M. Wilensky's *Hasidim u-Mitnaggedim* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1970), 1:168–76.
7. See Immanuel Etkes, "The Hasidic Court," in *Text and Context: Essays in Modern Jewish History and Historiography in Honor of Ismar Schorsch* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 2005), 157–86.
8. On R. Barukh, see the sources collected by Reuven Margaliot in *Makor Barukh* (Zamoszcz, 1931). The little volume *Butsina de-Nehora* (Lemberg, 1880), written later to burnish the credentials of R. Barukh, did not add much to his intellectual reputation. It is interesting to note that we have no *haskamot* by him, not even to his own brother's *Degel Mahaneh Ephraim*, published in 1810, while he was still alive.
9. See B. Safran, "Maharal and Early Hasidism," in his *Hasidism: Continuity or Innovation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 1988), 47–144.
10. The term *nes nistar* is a coinage of the RaMBaN, thought to be one of his most distinctive contributions to the history of Jewish thought. For extended discussion of the meaning of this term in the RaMBaN's writings, as well as its later misappropriation, see D. Berger, "Miracles and the Natural Order in Nahmanides," in *Nahmanides*, ed. I. Twersky (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 107–28; M. Halbertal, *'Al Derekh ha-Emet* (Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute, 2006), 149–80.
11. *B. Shabbat* 88a.
12. *Kedushat Levi ha-Shalem,* 350–51, based on (a distorted reading of) *Yerushalmi Ta'anit* 2:2
13. *Kedushat Levi ha-Shalem,* 379–80; MaHaRaL (introduction to *Or Hadash*, ed. Bnei Brak, 1972, 59) distinguishes Hanukkah from Purim. Hanukkah was in

fact a *nes nigleh*, referring to the miracle of the lights. This was possible because Bayit Sheni still stood. Purim takes place in *galut,* where there is only *nes nistar*. Hence its heroine is named Esther, etc.

14. *Kedushat Levi ha-Shalem,* 390.
15. See *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'akov* #14 (ed. Schatz, 27–28) and #35 (54), where the Maggid says that Israel in exile are capable of receiving only hidden miracles, those deriving from *malkhut,* indicated by the name *adonay*, but not revealed miracles, which depend on the name Y-H-W-H. On the source of this view, see Halbertal, *'Al Derekh ha-Emet.*
16. This parallels the view of the RaMBaN in his comment to Genesis 17:1. See Halbertal, *'Al Derekh ha-Emet,* 159.
17. That is why the time for lighting Hanukkah candles is "*'ad she-tikhleh regel min ha-shuk*," playing on *regel/hergel.*
18. *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'akov* #7 (p. 21); #161 (p. 257).
19. The *No'am Elimelech's* version of this same idea is expressed in another verse of the same psalm. "*'Eyney khol elekha yesaberu*" (Ps. 145:15) means that the *tsaddikim* gives eyes to God, causing Him to see the sufferings of this world and thus to change His decrees. *No'am Elimelech,* ed. Nig'al (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1978), 30 and esp. 59.
20. See *Kedushat Levi ha-Shalem,* 246, 248, and elsewhere.
21. *Kedushat Levi ha-Shalem,* 154, 348.
22. See *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'akov* # 30 (ed. Schatz, 49). One is here tempted to ask whether Levi Yizhak is a very subtle reader of the RaMBaN with regard to the question of the human role in effecting one sort of divine interference or another. RaMBaN, following Ibn Ezra, ties the ability to effect miracles to one's level of *devekut*. Cf. the discussion by Halbertal, *'Al Derekh ha-Emet*, 167–73. My sense is that what we have here is a rediscovery by Levi Yizhak, within the general thought-world of Kabbalah, rather than a careful reading of particular sources.
23. *Kedushat Levi* (Ashdod: Hadrat Hen Institute, 2005).
24. Interesting to compare Levi Yizhak's usage of the *Mo'ed Qatan* passage with that of the *Me'or 'Eynayim*. The latter quotes it frequently, but always in an apologetic context, to show that it is not really the *tsaddik* but God who is negating the decree or effecting the miracle. Levi Yizhak shows no such hesitations.
25. *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'akov* #84 (146–47).
26. *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'akov* #84 (223).
27. *No'am Elimelech, Balak,* 448.
28. See, for example, *Tif'eret Bet Levi* (Jassy, 1909/10), and *Nifla'ot Bet Levi* (Pietrkow, 1911).

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