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Hasidism: Discovery and Retreat

The image of Judaism among the world's religions is one of proclaimer of divine transcendence *par excellence*. The personified God of the Hebrew Bible, alone and bound by no order except that of his own making, stands supreme over all his creation. He is Father (occasionally even Mother) and Judge, King, and Lover. He has chosen Israel and entered into a covenant of intimacy with her. However close he is to his loved ones, however, indeed however much he is to be found in their very midst, his transcendence remains uncompromised; God stands over against man and world, in love as he does in judgment.

This view of Judaism, recently restated with such elegance in the 1975 Vatican guidelines for interfaith contact with Jews ("... the Jewish soul—rightly imbued with an extremely high, pure notion of divine transcendence"), is of course not completely lacking in foundation. It is largely true for the Bible itself, and even may be said to characterize the dominant strand in Jewish religion down through the ages. The fact that we shall here study, within the very heart of a group that saw itself as completely faithful to that heritage, formulations of experience that seem entirely contradictory to whatever we think of as bibli-

cal-western understandings of God, should teach us as much about the history of religions altogether as it does about the particular case of Judaism.

Hasidism is a very late movement within the history of European Judaism; its first central figure, the Ba'al Shem-Tov, died in 1760, and most of the literature we are to study comes from the turn of the nineteenth century. Much has been made recently of the fact that socially Hasidism must be seen in part as a modern movement, an early reaction from within to the breakdown of the long-established social order. Be this as it may, 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 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.

Hasidism may be characterized as a movement of mystical revival; it was a popular phenomenon, embracing the lower classes and rapidly capturing the loyalty of vast numbers of Jews throughout Eastern Europe. As will be expected in such a movement, its leaders were not primarily theologians but preachers, its doctrinal formulations were loose and easily swayed by the situation in which they were uttered, and passion readily carried the day over caution in the ways one spoke of God. 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 relentlessly against it for the first thirty years of its existence, and whose latter-day followers continue to sneer at Hasidism even to this day.

The main body of Hasidic literature, homiletical, devotional, and legendary (the oral tale was a classic Hasidic form), does not show an essential change in the typology of religious experience as recorded in the earlier Jewish tradition. Yes, there is much made of informal Yiddish conversation with the Master of the Universe, as well as of argument and even occasional chiding, but none of this was entirely new and should not concern us

here. Our interest is in the exception rather than the rule in Hasidic literature, in expressions of religious experience that seem utterly alien to the tradition out of which they emerge: A number of figures in the early days of Hasidism flirted seriously with such expressions, left striking record of them here and there, and then retreated from them. Our interest is in the inner movement in the history of Judaism to which such seeming anomalies attest, in their appearance and the reaction it caused, and in understanding the rapid retreat from them. Our contention is that Hasidism came to the threshold of a major breakthrough in religious consciousness, but one that at the same time threatened to destroy all that its Western legacy thinks is required for the preservation of the religiosocial order. At the edge of this abyss, it retreated into safer expressions of traditional Jewish piety.

The sort of material that we seek, formulations of experience that cross the bounds into the realms of pantheism, acosmicism, or mystical union, are by and large not to be found in the literature of Hasidic tales. There the religious expressions are more of the orthodox variety: the tales were frozen into writing only later, and were intended for mass consumption. The rabbis appear in the tales generally as loving children of the Father or as loyal, if familiar, servants of the King. It is to the homiletical literature of Hasidism, and then only to that of its first few generations, that we must turn for the more unusual formulations. Even there, it should be emphasized, they are often, only half expressed or combined with metaphors more to be expected in Jewish sources.

The generation of the Ba'al Shem-Tov himself left almost nothing by way of written record. All that can be authenticated as coming from the pen of the first great master himself seems to be a single letter (though a very revealing one) and a commentary to one Psalm. There are, however, a great many quotations from the Ba'al Shem-Tov contained in the writings of his various disciples. Most prominent among these sources are the works of Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye (d. 1784). We begin with one of these quotations, couched in the seemingly "harmless" language of the king and his son:

I heard from my teacher, of blessed memory, a parable that he spoke before the blowing of the *shofar*. There was a very wise king who, by means of optical illusion, made walls, towers, and gates. He commanded that he be approached through these gates and towers, and he ordered that the royal treasury be scattered at each gate. One went up to the first gate and returned, another etc. Finally his loving son struggled hard to reach his father the king. Then he saw that there was no separation between them, that it had all been optical illusion. The meaning is understood, and "the words of a wise man's mouth are gracious." [Eccles 10:12]¹

Minimally, the parable (recorded in typically clumsy and elliptical fashion) speaks of the dangers of being led astray in the course of mystical ascent. Some are so lured by the glitter of transcendental experience that they forget what the ascent was all about, returning to the world with mere illusory treasure. The truly faithful son does not have his head turned by riches; he thus comes to know that there is no real content to religious experience but the encounter with God himself.

That the Ba'al Shem was a person of such ecstatic "journeys" we know from the letter which has been mentioned: most of it is a description of just such an ascent. Here he seems to place himself over against a great deal of Kabbalistic tradition, heavily laden with detailed descriptions of the worlds above and the particular meaning of each stage of the journey.

Does the parable tell us more? Is the son also to realize that the world from which he has come is one of illusion? Is he to see that he too is nought, and that there is nothing but the king? I think not, or not yet. The phrase that would indicate the latter would be "there was no separation between them," and the Hebrew seems to suggest that intimacy is thus permitted, but not that they are actually one.

The existence of the phenomenal world is probably not at issue here, as it usually is not in the rather practically and devotionally oriented teachings of the Ba'al Shem-Tov. His concern is rather that of constructing a sort of mental monism, showing the disciple that in all his *thoughts*, wherever they may stray, there is nothing real but God. This teaching itself has rather far-reaching and potentially dangerous implications, especially since the Ba'al Shem was wont to apply it to thoughts of evil as well as

to the meaningless glitter of spiritual titillations. An understanding of this will be our reward for following closely a typically abstruse bit of homiletics, the opening passage in his disciple's *Toledot Ya'akov Yosef*, in which the teacher, referred to is the Ba'al Shem himself:

It is said in the Talmud that Joseph was liberated from prison on the New Year, as Scripture says: "He set it as witness in Joseph when he went forth upon the Land of Egypt." [Ps 81:6]

To understand this we must recall the Tikkuney Zohar's comment on: "I the Lord have not changed" [Mal 3:6]—"In relation to the wicked God does change and hide Himself . . . in various garbs, veils, and shells . . . these are chaos, void, darkness, etc. Of these Scripture says: "I shall hide My face from them" [Deut 32:20]. But for those who are bound to Him and His *shekhinah*, He never changes." So there are various garbs and veils in which the Holy One, blessed be He, is hidden.

I heard from my teacher, of blessed memory, that where a person knows that God is hiding, there is no hiding. "All the workers of iniquity split apart" [Ps 92:10]. This is the meaning of: "I shall hide, hide My face from them" [Deut 31:18]; the verse means to say that He will be hidden from them in such a way that they will not know that God is there in hiding. I have also heard from him that the five words '*amar 'oyev 'eredof 'assig 'ahaleq*' ["The enemy said: I shall pursue, catch, divide"—Ex 15:9] begin with five 'alephs: the Aleph of the universe is hidden there, just as in the name SamaEL . . .

Once a person knows this great principle, that there is no curtain separating him from his God, then even if distracting thoughts come before him while he is at study or prayer, being the garb and veils in which God is hiding—since he knows God is hiding in them, there is no hiding.

This is why *ha-shanah* ("the year") is numerically one more than *Satan*: add the one of the universal Aleph, for there too is He hiding. Now we understand why it was on the New Year that Joseph came out of prison. Once Joseph knew the *New Year* (lit.: "Head of the Year"), namely that Satan plus the One who stands at the head make the New Year, for He of whom Scripture says: "His kingdom rules over all" [Ps 103:19] is hidden even within the Satanic shells—then the shells are defeated and the year is renewed. When a person knows this, "all the workers of iniquity split apart"; they were the shells that formed the prison for the *shekhinah*. Thus was Joseph, now also in the corporeal world, freed from prison: through this knowledge he had broken the bonds . . .²

Translation: True liberation comes about through the realization that God is hidden even in the seeming forces of evil. Here the Ba'al Shem-Tov goes much further than he had in our earlier parable. Not only is it the illusory beauty of heavenly ascent that may keep one from God; it is also wayward and seemingly demonic thoughts that in fact may contain him! The references to Samael and Satan are crucial here. They remind us that Hasidism emerged from circles that had only of late cut away the Sabbatian and demonic elements in their mystical theology. We also see the intellectual-spiritual means by which this cutoff had been effected. Here the archons of the demonic universe, usually treated with such utter seriousness by the Kabbalistic sources, have no power over the one who sees through them, and perhaps have no existence at all outside the unliberated mind. More significantly, such liberation happens not only through ecstatic or transcendent experience. *Awareness* itself seems to suffice: once you *know* that God is hidden in evil, you have in fact found him. A kind of abbreviated hide-and-seek, if you will, in which you don't actually have to touch the quarry to declare him found. In the heights and in the depths of man's inner universe, the Ba'al Shem tells us, there is nought but God.

What then of the phenomenal world? The earliest sources of Hasidism, as we have noted, seem concerned less to question its existence than to assure the possibility of its conversion. The old Kabbalistic image of "the uplifting of sparks" became central here: wherever a person turns, whatever he may encounter, contains sparks of divinity that seek to rise to God through him. "Know Him in all your ways" (Prov 3:6) became a kind of watchword in early Hasidism, as did the Zohar's, "There is no place devoid of Him." All, however, depended on awareness; "there is no place devoid of Him" really meant "there is no place or situation that cannot bring a person of awareness back to the presence of God." Hasidism had a penchant for extreme examples:

Through everything you see, become aware of the divine. If you encounter love, remember the love of God. If you experience fear, think of the fear of God. Even when in the toilet you should think: "here I am separating bad from good, and the good will remain for His service!"³

At this point we should stop to ask what it is in these Hasidic sources that makes them surprising to the western religious frame of mind. The notion that God is to be found everywhere? Surely the author of Psalm 139 would not be shocked. That the glories of the upper worlds and the terrors of death and the netherworld are nothing when seen from the perspective of one who has true faith in God? Again, one could find support for such a view in Scripture and tradition. No wonder that it has more than once been said of Hasidism that from a doctrinal point of view there is virtually nothing new in the movement. The *hasidim*, of course, would be the first to support this reading.

Not so quickly, however, shall we accept this point of view. Given the historical context of Jewish mystical thought, something important has already happened here. The reality of the Kabbalistic universe has begun to be called into question. The outer phenomenal world may remain relatively untouched by the earliest teachings of Hasidism, but the inner "world of truth," as the Kabbalists called it, had started to crumble. Seeking a religion in which personal piety and enthusiasm would be the highest values, the popularizing tendencies of early Hasidism found no room for the heavily arcane quality of the old Kabbalistic world view. Having turned against the aloofness of the rabbis for their Talmudic mental gymnastics, seemingly without value and beyond the reach of the common Jew, they could not but feel the same way about the infinitely complex structuring of the cosmos and the meditations on each and every of the countless spheres that had been promulgated by the post-Lurianic Kabbalists. Simplicity, wholeness of heart, personal awareness of the constant presence of God—these were to carry the day in the new movement, and intellectual mysticism would have to bow before them.

The mystics have discovered many meanings in each word of prayer. No one person can know them all. One who tries to meditate on the hidden meaning of the prayers can only perform those meditations that are known to him. But if a person joins his entire self to a word, all the hidden meanings enter of their own accord.⁴

Unable to openly deny the world of Kabbalistic gnosis (for this

too had become orthodox), Hasidism here simply undercuts its value. The same will happen to all the basic areas of Kabbalistic doctrine; it is through the simplification and veiled destruction of the typically medieval multitiered universe of Kabbala that Hasidism creates a cosmology of its own and enunciates precisely those formulations that are of interest to us here.

This step is taken in the second and third generations of Hasidic development, most particularly in the school of Dov Baer the Maggid ("preacher") of Miedzyiec. The Maggid was the second great leader of the Hasidic community, and the last single figure who commanded the loyalty of even most of the Hasidic groups. By both temperament and education a very different man from his predecessor, the Maggid brought to Hasidism an intellectual-theological sophistication that the movement had not known in its earliest days. An avid student of Kabbala long before he met and was "converted" by the Ba'al Shem Tov, he in effect sought to offer a rereading of various key terms and symbols in that tradition in the light of the new ecstatic devotion by which he was so attracted. He built around himself a school of young followers, several among them major religious *illuminati* in their own right; almost all of the major works of Hasidic thought and schools of interpretation within the movement are somehow rooted in this circle around the Maggid.

We turn our attention first to the *sefirot*, the graded series of ten divine emanations that form the core of all Kabbalistic expression since the thirteenth century. These serve, it will be recalled, both as the stages through which the hidden God comes to be manifest in the revealed creation and as the steps the adept must follow in his journey toward God. They represent an inner structure of the universe believed to be repeated at every level of existence, including within the soul of man as microcosm. This latter fact allowed room for the emergence of a specifically Kabbalistic psychology, usually presented in a moralizing context. This psychology, a view of the inner life of man in terms of the sefirotic structure, gained importance from the sixteenth century, especially through the influence of Moses Cordovero's popular treatise *The Palm Tree of Deborah* (*Tomer Devorah*). It is always understood in these works, however, that

the psychological import of the ten rungs is but a reflex of their role in cosmology.

In Hasidism, the sefirot have largely been relegated to the world of psychology alone.⁵ The Maggid uses the old terms frequently, but almost always in discussions of the inner life of the *hasid*: *hesed* and *din*, the right and left sides of the cosmic balance in the Kabbala, have now become *love* and *fear* in the life of the worshiper. The "seven structuring days" in sefirotic cosmology now usually refer to the range of human emotions or moral qualities that must be perfected. In fact the old Kabbalistic cosmology has been vitiated, and only the *first* and *last* of the sefirot remain significant in the Maggid's view of the universe. The first is *hokhmah* ("wisdom"), also called by the name *'ayin* ("nothing"); the last is *malkhut* or *shekhinah*, taken here (as in rabbinic sources but not in classical Kabbala) to refer to the indwelling presence of God in the world.

What follows is one of the many statements in which this "abbreviated" Kabbala appears in the writings of the Maggid's school. Using the genre of the Kabbalistic tradition itself, and piecing together a number of symbols that are taken from the medieval sources, here Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl has turned Kabbala against itself. He speaks of the two divine names, YHWH and *'Adonay*, one representing the God beyond and the other the God inherent in all things:

All the worlds depend on this—the unification of the God beyond and the God below. Now when these two names are joined together with their letters interspersed in this way (YAHDWNHY), the combined name both begins and ends with the letter *yod*. "You have made them all in wisdom" (Ps 104:24), and *yod* represents *hokhmah*, the primal source of all the letters . . . *Hokhmah* is the ultimate *prime matter*; it is called by the sages *hyle*, from the words *hayah li* ("I had it"). All things were in it; from it they emerged from potential into real existence.

Even though the *'aleph* is the first of the letters (and thus one might expect that it should be used to designate this primal substance), the *'aleph* itself is constructed of two *yods* with a diagonal *waw* between them. The first *yod* refers to primal *hokhmah*, the prime matter in which all the worlds were included. The *waw* (shaped like an elongated *yod*) represents a drawing forth and descent, the bringing forth of that potential. Thus were all the worlds

created, finally forming the second *yod*, called the lower *hokhmah* or the Wisdom of Solomon [*shekhinah*], the aspect of *'Adonay*, divinity as garbed in all things and filling the world.

When a person does all his deeds for the sake of God, he draws all things in the lower world near to the upper fount of *hokhmah*, the Creator Himself who calls all the worlds into being. By means of his awareness he fulfills "Know Him in all your ways" (Prov 3:6). This "knowing" or awareness is a unitive force; it binds together the upper *yod* and the lower *yod* so that the entire universe forms one single *'aleph*. This is why God is called "the cosmic *'aleph*."⁶

The cosmos ultimately consists of two *yods*, *hokhmah* and *malkhut*, God before or above creation and God inherent in the universe. The rest of the sefirotic world is merely the *waw*, the extension or connecting link (*da'at*) by which they are joined together. Man's task is the cultivation of his own *da'at*, in the form of awareness, so that he too may become a channel for drawing together the God beyond and the God within.

The universe may be viewed from either of these two ends. When seen from the point of view of *hokhmah*, the beginning of emanation, the world is yet nothing. Here all is pure potential; no separation from the One has yet taken place. *Hokhmah*, in a well-known play on words, is *koah mah*, undefined divine energy or potential. *Hokhmah* is a pure flow of *hiyyut*, the divine life force, and nothing more. In fact, however, "potential" existence here is conceived as already defined potential. The world as it is to be, down to every final detail, already exists in *hokhmah*.

The tree is planted from seed, and that tree bears fruit. Surely the tree, its branches, and its fruit were all there in the seed from the beginning, but in a hidden way.⁷

Though Hasidic sources refer to *hokhmah* by the Greek term *hyle*, what they really have in mind is more pure form than unformed matter.

At the other end of the sefirotic process we find *malkhut*, the presence of divinity in the things of this world. Here the physical creation has already taken place; it is God within world rather than world within God to which we now turn our attention. The sense that the world is fraught with divine presence was the essential insight of the Ba'al Shem-Tov that the Maggid had found

so renewing. He, however, sought for it a more sophisticated cosmological setting. Yes, the world is filled with divinity. All things are enlivened, or in fact reified, only by the presence of the *hiyyut* within them. All other properties they have about them, including substance, extension, and so forth, are merely the "veils" that cover and hide the *shekhinah*, the only real thing about them.

* God has made "something" (the ephemeral phenomenal world) out of "nothing" (*'ayin*; his own Self before manifestation). Man's essential devotional task, as the Maggid and his disciples frequently repeat, is to make "nothing" out of "something"—in their contemplative lives to so strip both self and world of corporeality that it is again as it was before the process of Creation began.⁸ This "stripping," however, is really a matter of seeing through a veil of illusion—knowing that God is there in hiding. By this it becomes clear that in fact the *process* of emanation through the sefirotic world, from hidden potentia to the reality of being, is no process at all. Everything 'is' in the end as it was in the beginning; the task of the devotee is to become aware of this sameness, to discover the hidden divinity within the world, and thus to see that Nothing, or God as he was before creation, is in fact all that exists. Traditional western emanation theology has thus been swept away and replaced by a very different type of religious claim: nothing but God is real, there is no duality of God and world, but only a false duality of God and illusion.

The issue of *zimzum*, or the contraction of the infinite God in order to allow for the world's existence, is treated by the Maggid in similar fashion. *Zimzum* was a major pillar of the new Kabbala elaborated by Isaac Luria and his followers in the sixteenth century, a system that, as Gershom Scholem has shown, originated partially in reaction to the cataclysm that had befallen Spanish Jewry in the preceding generations. Luria no longer accepted the old notion of graded emanations to explain the emergence of the multiform universe from the depths of the one and undivided God. He sought an explanation of a rather more dramatic and total sort. If God was alone before creation, he claimed, then God was and filled all; there was no empty space beside him. To claim that God existed alongside an eternal void

would be to capitulate to an ultimate dualism, one that by implication might see evil as being co-eternal with God. Rather, he taught, the first step in creation was a contraction within the all-pervading God, one that allowed for a void within which creation could take place.

Scholem has shown how succeeding generations of Lurianists (his doctrine dominated Kabbalistic circles for some two hundred years after his death, and is still the path followed by Kabbalists of Near Eastern origin) could use this notion of *zimzum* in nearly either theistic or pantheistic ways.⁹ For the Kabbalist who took *zimzum* literally, God indeed had vacated primal space, and creation was from without, the work of a transcendent God. Those who tended to pantheism claimed rather that full *zimzum* was impossible, that even in the divine act of withdrawal his presence was confirmed, and that the void was never truly empty of God at all. For them the creation from without was more an activation of the underlying divine presence (*reshimu*), and the God who inhered in the universe was central to their religious lives. It has also been demonstrated, primarily through the work of Isaiah Tishby, that the entire myth of *zimzum* is a myth of divine self-purification and of the origins of evil; the all-containing God contracts in purity before creation, leaving in the void those "roots" of evil that are to inhabit the universe there created.

The Maggid, as will be expected, follows those Kabbalists who do not take *zimzum* literally, those who believe in the continued presence of divinity in space even after the primal contraction. He goes further than his predecessors, however, reducing *zimzum* to a gracious act of a loving father-God who performs it in a semi-illusory way in order to allow psychological "room" for his child to exist.

Since it was the primal will of God that the righteous among Israel exist in each generation, He contracted His brilliance, as it were, just as a father reduces his mental level and speaks of childish things with his small child . . . *zimzum* took place for the sake of Israel, and it was love that brought it about.¹⁰

A teacher studies with his pupil. If the pupil is greatly concerned with what his teacher is saying and pays close attention to him, the teacher may open the gates and reveal his wisdom. Even though he

may not be able to share all of his abundant wisdom with him, a student who is almost a peer can attain to nearly all that his teacher has to offer. If, however, the student is dull and slow to understand, the teacher has to contract his great wisdom and teach him on his own level. Were he to offer him too much, trying to reveal to him the most profound depths, the student would only become confused and turn aside from learning. Then he would not even acquire that bit which is within the range of his abilities. Thus must a teacher reduce his wisdom down to his student's level . . . *Zimzum* took place so that the world could properly exist. Without it we would not be able to bear the brilliance of His light, and our existence would be negated.¹¹

The last phrase here will be of interest to us a bit further along, but for now we are interested in the change in *zimzum* itself. The concept has here been psychologized: it is the human *mind* that must be left room to exist alongside the great light of God, rather than the world itself that must perforce exclude him. Here the potential Gnostic sting of *zimzum* has been removed; we are no longer speaking of the world's origins and the roots of the demonic, but rather of God's abundant love and his patience with man's small-mindedness or his willingness to allow for our humanity. Once again, as with the *sefirot*, a myth that accounted for a degree of distance between God and man has been undercut, allowing for a full immediacy of divine presence. The father's mind, we must realize, is not *really* reduced to childish dimensions; it is rather by a willful act of compassion that he offers the child the appearance of proximity to the child's mental level. This is done, of course, in a pedagogic context: the father hopes bit by bit to expand his child's mind.

We have approached early Hasidism to this point very much from the perspective of its *theology*, seeing the development of doctrine as would the intellectual historian. Here we must say that such a point of view will not do for us. These changes in formulation of ideas accompany and reflect a change in the modality of religious experience of those who bear them. We shall not be so naïve as to try to define which of these changes first, the doctrine or the experience; here as elsewhere in the history of religion a good case could be made for either. But we must remember that Hasidic thought is promulgated against the background of an intense and ecstatic feeling of the all-pervading

presence of God. The prayer-life of the earliest conventicles was denounced for its wild shrieks and uncontrolled jumping and shaking; there was about them an aura of spiritual frenzy that was compared (and not only by enemies) to both madness and drunkenness. We will do well to bear this *Sitz im Leben* in mind as we examine now some selections of teaching from the Maggid's school in which the horizons of western religious living seem most radically to be expanded.

We begin with a passage of devotional instruction:

The proper intention with which to recite the word "One" of the *shema* ("Hear O Israel the Lord is God the Lord is One") is that there exist nothing in the entire world except for God, whose "glory fills all the world." The main intent is that man make himself into absolute nothing. There shall be nothing of him but his soul, which is "a part of God above." Thus is there nothing in the world but God who is One. This is where one's thoughts should be turned while saying "One": the whole world is filled with His glory and there is no place devoid of Him, be He blessed.¹²

This call for spiritual self-annihilation is of course common to many mystical literatures; by its very nature it also calls forth an immediate revision of traditional cosmology. If annihilation of self and world leads to a "higher" state, it must perforce also lead to a greater "truth" in understanding what the world really is. Devotion and cosmology (statements of "you should feel" and statements of "the world is") are often combined with one another in the sources.

This is a high rung: when a person constantly considers in his heart that he is near to his blessed Creator and is surrounded by Him on all sides. He should be so attached to Him that he has no more need to reassure himself that this is the case: he should rather see the Creator, blessed be He, with his mind's eye, and that He is the "place of the world." This means that He was before He created the world and that the world stands within the Creator, blessed is He. He should be so attached that his sight is chiefly upon God, rather than seeing the world first and the Creator only second . . . Such a person merits to have the "shells" fall away from him. It was they that had brought darkness, separating God from man and blinding the mind's eye from the sight of the Creator.

Think that the Creator, blessed be He, is endless and surrounds all

the worlds, that His blessed influx flows downward from above by means of channels throughout the worlds. We are ever walking about in God, blessed be He, and we could not make a single movement without His influx and life-flow.¹³

Note that the language remains very much that of western theism: God is primarily referred to by the term "Creator," even though the world view here has rather little to do with that which is usually called Creation. The exhortation to ever concentrate our sight on God rather than on the world could easily be supported by passages of a more moralizing intent throughout medieval pietistic literature. The sense that every movement of the human body is controlled by God also has its well-known precedents in the philosophical (or antiphilosophical) literature of medieval Judaism and Islam. The full constellation, however, remains startling. Here the notion that all is God is approached with a radical enthusiasm that is previously unknown in Jewish sources.

The final statement of this, the "All is God" spoken plainly, is that which we should most be surprised to find within Judaism. The wide freedom of interpretation permitted within the tradition, combined with the various philosophical and mystical influences upon later Judaism, might eventually lead to a carefully guarded formulation that in fact meant nearly the same thing—but surely pious Jews could not say it out in just so many words. Even within the loose dogmatic structure of Judaism that would seemingly have to be perceived as heresy. It is especially interesting, then, for us to quote from a precious document that was never intended for publication, an early nineteenth-century letter from one important *HaBaD* Hasidic disciple to another, in which he outlines the real meaning of Hasidism and the reasons for its persecution. The letter reflects an inner controversy within that particular school, the details of which are not essential for our purposes here. The writer is Rabbi Yizhak Isaac Epstein of Homel (1780–1857):

Listen, please, my beloved friend! Do not say that this is, God forbid, heresy and philosophy. . . . And all *hasidim* . . . have this faith. And it is generally sensed when reciting the Eighteen Benedictions. That is to say, after all the goodly meditations while reciting the

songs of praise and reciting the *shema*, with the higher and lower unification, then it is sensed that, in Yiddish, all is God. . . .

All *hasidim* share this faith. As for the opponents . . . they do not have this faith except in exceedingly great concealment, exactly as it was when Israel was in Egypt. Even though God to them also is the single object of faith, they have nonetheless no room for this faith that all is God.¹⁴

The letter is written in a thorough mixture of Yiddish and Hebrew, as was common for letters between scholars at the time. No particular note is taken of this fact. When he first comes to the key phrase, however, he says "in Yiddish," meaning "I am telling you this in plain Yiddish, in which there can be no misunderstanding." The letter is significant because here in private (alas!) communication he was able to shed all the Hebrew circumlocutions ("the whole world is full of His glory," etc.) and say exactly what he meant: *Als iz Göt* (alles ist Gott).

The fact that this document comes from within the *HaBaD*/Lubavitch school is no accident. Among the many disciples of the Maggid, it was Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745–1813), the great systematizer of Hasidic thought and the founder of *HaBaD*, who maintained the greatest consistency in promulgating this aspect of his master's teaching. The second portion of his *Tanya*, even now the daily read spiritual guidebook of *HaBaD Hasidim*, is a brief tract on mystical cosmology. It works chiefly around the notion of *zimzum* and the contemplation of God's oneness, forming a contemplative exercise to accompany the recitation of the *shema*. It is structured, however, as an exposition of a biblical verse, one that has a long history in the realm of Jewish mystical speculations: "Know this day and set it upon your heart that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is none else." (Deut 4:39) In the course of Shneur Zalman's reading it becomes quite clear that the concluding phrase is rather to be taken as: "There is nothing else," for nothing but God may be truly said to exist:

Now behold, after these truths, that anyone who carefully considers the matter [will realize] that every created and existing thing should really be considered as nought when compared with the power of the maker and the breath of His mouth in the creature, always giving it being and bringing it forth from nothingness. All these things appear

to us to be extant and real only because we cannot conceive or see with the eyes of the flesh the power of God in His creatures or the breath of His mouth in them. But if permission were given the eye to see and conceive the life and spirit flowing by the word of God into every creature, the physical aspect of creatures and their substance would not be seen by us at all. They are completely unreal in the light of the life-flow and spirit within them. Without this spiritual essence they would be as nothing, quite as they were, before, the six days of creation. And the breath/spirit flowing into them out of the mouth of God alone takes them constantly out of nothingness and non-being, causing existence. Therefore it is said: "There is nothing without Him" [Is 45:6]—literally.¹⁵

Shneur Zalman's disciple, Aaron, of Staroselje, another important systematizer of Hasidic thought, emphasized a strand in the Maggid's thought that distinguished "God's point of view" from the limited perspective of man. From God's point of view, taught Aaron, there has been no *zimzum*, there is nothing outside of God, and the phenomenal world may not be said to exist. It is only from man's viewpoint this world has existence. Of course it is from within our own perspective that we must conduct our daily, and even our religious, lives. More on that below.

It was not only in the Maggid's school that the new experience of Hasidism was giving birth to surprising ways of religious speaking. A younger, contemporary, of Shneur Zalman, and one often thought to be his very antithesis as a type of Hasidic thinker, was arriving through somewhat different formulations at many of the same ideas. Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav (1772-1810) was the great-grandson of the Ba'al Shem-Tov and the founder of a unique sect within the Hasidic community, one for which he still stands as first and only master.¹⁶ Nahman was a theologian of paradox, one who filled his traditional-sounding homilies with contradictions so intense that they seemed to force conventional theology, even Kabbalism, to a breaking point. Note first how he subverts the meaning of an old adage, originally meant to show how impossible it was for man to truly know his maker:

Eternal life belongs only to God, who lives forever. But he who is included in his root in God also has eternal life. Since he is included in the One and is One with God, he lives eternally just as God does. . . . The basis of this inclusion within God is knowing Him, as

the sage says: "If I knew Him, I would be Him." The core of a person is his mind; where the mind is, there is the whole person. One who knows and attains to a divine understanding is really there. The greater his knowing, the more fully, he is included in his root in God.¹⁷

Frequently Nahman's teaching involves a dialectical movement through stage after stage of religious discovery, doubt or challenge, and new integration within an expanded faith. In one of the homilies in which he speaks of this ascent, he describes its highest point in the following way:

When one finally is included within *'eyn sof*, his Torah is the Torah of God Himself and his prayer is the prayer of God Himself. There is a Torah of God, to which our sages have referred as follows: "I was first to fulfill it"; "The Holy One, blessed be He, clothes the naked, visits the sick" etc.; "How do we know that the Holy One, blessed be He, puts on *tefillin*?" There is also a prayer of God, of which the sages say: "How do we know that the Holy One, blessed be He, prays? From the verse: 'I shall grant them joy in My house of prayer'" (Is 56:7).

We thus find that there exist a Torah of God and a prayer of God: When a person merits to be included within *'eyn sof*, his Torah and his prayers are those of God Himself.¹⁸

The Talmudic sages had told these tales in the course of humanizing God; the biblical God is transformed by them into a picture of the ideal rabbinic Jew, studying Torah, performing the commandments, and even saying his prayers. Little might they have thought that a mystic of a millennium and a half later would use their descriptions as an avenue of identification with God in a wholly different manner, claiming through his prayer and study to so ascend through the rungs of being that his own study and prayer be those of God. There is almost no distance that need be traversed between this position and the much more shocking version of the same formulation reported in Nahman's name by his faithful (and usually rather conservative) disciple:

I heard from Rabbi Nathan: . . . our master said . . . that you have to reach such a state of self-negation that you come to God's Torah and prayer and are able to say: "May it be my will!"¹⁹

Prayer here has reached its apex and transformation: so intently

has; the worshiper said "May it be *Thy* will" that his own will is finally utterly negated, and he may fully identify with the will of God. Behold where all this pious talk of humility and self-abnegation has finally led! Here Hasidism, indeed Judaism, comes as close as it ever has to violating that ultimate taboo of western religion; that of the devotee proclaiming "I am God."

At the psychological-devotional root of this entire complex of ideas stands the experience of the negation or transcendence of self, and the discovery, in the wake of that experience, that it is only God who remains. One would expect that this apex of mystical transformation would be greeted with great if trembling exultation. Indeed, that is the case in certain of the Hasidic accounts. There are some that see this as the source of prophecy as well, including indications that ecstatic prayer, following such an experience, is overtaken by a state of divine possession, one in which, "the *shekhinah* speaks through his mouth." At the same time, we can find in any number of Hasidic renditions of this mystical moment a great hesitation, a hesitation that seems to treat negation of self as more a danger than a blessing. We have heard the Maggid say that *zimzum*, of the sort he proposes, must take place, else "our existence would be negated." But is not the negation of our existence precisely the goal of the religious life he so avidly preaches? Why not, to use a metaphor commonly found in these sources, stare directly into the sun and be blinded by its light? Nahman too warns us that we must maintain an awareness of the void whence God has departed; lest "the space not be empty and all would be *'eyn sof* (endless God)."²⁰ But what could be better, from the point of view of an unequivocal mysticism? Here Hasidism totters at the brink and returns, refreshed and renewed, but on the road to that compromise that would make it synonymous with ultra-orthodoxy only a few generations later. It is upon this return and compromise that we must now seek to focus our attention.

It is possible in viewing any period in the history of Kabbala to see the imperfect grafting of a mystical branch on the non-mystical tree of biblical/rabbinic Judaism. Insist as the mystic may that his views represent the true intent of the earlier sources, and weave as he may a seemingly convincing thread of argument through an impressive array of such quotations, the

necessary transformations of earlier meanings can always be found. Whether it is "nothingness" that has reappeared as "the Nothing" or creation that has taken on the new garb of emanation, the mystic in Judaism is ever a daring interpreter of the original sources. At the same time, most of the mystics were deeply committed to maintaining the normative in the daily life-patterns of rabbinic Judaism. Hasidism has in common with the Kabbalistic writings of the thirteenth century (including the *Zohar*) a need to defend what each saw as the authentic rabbinic tradition, the one against the inroads of medieval rationalism and the other against an array of enemies, including heretical mysticism, petrified Talmudism, and, after the turn of the nineteenth century, the advent of modernity. Reinterpretation was thus to function in part to underscore the value of the normative, to strengthen it by a deepening of its meaning. Given the nature of Judaism, the norm at issue was the *halakha* or the life of the commandments.

The old Kabbala had devoted a great part of its energies to just that: the literature of *sodot ha-mizvot* or esoteric rationales for the commandments occupies a major part of Kabbalistic writings. Hasidism however turned aside from this literary genre (with a few noteworthy exceptions) and in fact devoted rather little of its intellectual attention to the commandments themselves, despite its full commitment to a life-pattern that was entirely within the traditional rabbinic mold. It rather tended, as Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer has noted, to focus its attention on the two areas of contemplative prayer and the worship of God through the uplifting of corporeal things; while avoiding the rather major question of interpreting the commandments.²¹ The fact is that the commandments constituted a problematic *datum* for the radically spiritualized value system that Hasidism was proposing. It ultimately was for this reason, we shall suggest, that Hasidism saw itself forced to retreat from its own mystical insights.

The old Kabbala had preached a carefully graded ascent to God through the many rungs of being. In the course of such a journey, an uplifting of the commandments through successive grades of spiritualization could prove an appropriate accompaniment to the mystical voyager. In each "world" or rung the

same deed might gain a new level of symbolic meaning, providing at once a richness of texture and that constancy which the mystic so frequently seems to need. Hasidism, however, has little patience for the grades and rungs of ascent. If the *Hasid* seeks to rush up to God all at once in a sudden burst of ecstatic fire, would not the commandments seem to hold him back? For one who sought to see through the illusion of material existence, must there not have been a certain impatience with a religious life that kept him so very bound to earth? The commandments, after all, require the body; pure spirit cannot don the *tefillin*, wave the *lulav*, or eat the *matzah*. Their proper performance, moreover, requires a wealth of knowledge and awareness of bodily things, constant reminders of the limits of mortal existence in both space and time.

We see this tension in Hasidism through a rather frequent need by Hasidic authors to justify corporeal existence, indeed to justify God's creation of the material world altogether. Usually the justification is portrayed in the garb of the age-old contest of men and angels. Now man is proven God's best-beloved creature because he, unlike the hosts of heaven, can make spirit out of mere matter; the fact that he can uplift the sparks of God's light from among the *qelipot* of darkness represents not only his vindication but the greatest triumph of creation itself. The *Maggid* was also apparently responsible for an apt if rather grotesque image, according to which the King turns aside from the exquisite music of the angelic choirs in order to listen to the prayers of mortal man, his talking parrot. But the preference for a life of pure spirit is not the only challenge that Hasidism had to meet in its defense of rabbinism. The other side of the coin, as it were, was equally problematic. The Ba'al Shem's followers had insisted that divinity is to be found throughout all of creation, that "the power of the doer in the deed" could be attested everywhere. Why, then, we may ask, in the cow and not the pig? How can one distinguish holy from profane, permitted from forbidden, pure from taboo—distinctions which lie at the very essence of *halakhah*—if all is holy? We see Levi Yizhak of Berdichev, a leading proponent and popularizer of the *Maggid's* teachings, struggling with this question:

"We should understand the nature of the snare by which the serpent seduced Eve to transgress God's commandment. The snake argued as follows: Were not heaven and earth created by the word of God? Is it not well known that all the worlds and everything in them were brought into being by the divine utterances ("Let there be . . .") and word? Is not the very root of their existence and life-essence drawn from the utterance of God, the source of all life, whose words continue to live? If this is so, how is it possible that the Tree of Knowledge, also the creation of God's word, could be harmful and cause death? Was not it too created from the source in the Life of Life?"

Therefore, said the serpent, even though God did say "You shall not eat," etc., what place does this statement have? Was the Tree not created by the word of God? . . . If this is so, surely it gives life and not death. Even though God said "You shall not eat," why not obey His first saying, that which created the tree, rather than this one?²²

Of course Levi Yizhak will find an answer to the "snake," invoking the raising up of sparks; the need to separate and purify, and so forth. But the questions here placed in the mouth of the serpent are not accidental. Some challenger, either in Levi Yizhak's circle or within his own self, was demanding an answer.

The dangers to the commandments from this embrace of God in all creation are also seen in the tendency of early Hasidism to want to expand the notion of commandment, allowing it to embrace the full range of human activities. The author of *Me'or Eynayim* occasionally lets slip such a phrase as "eating, drinking, and the rest of the commandments," and it does not seem from the context that *kashrut* restrictions are what he has in mind. The *Maggid* himself shared in this tendency, toward a limitless expansion of the rubric of *mizvah*:

The sages said: "God wanted to lend merit to Israel; therefore He multiplied Torah and commandments for them." This means as follows: The commandments themselves are six hundred and thirteen. But when a person fulfills: "Know Him in all your ways" [Prov 3:6] he may fulfill many many more times 613, endlessly, for all his deeds are for the sake of heaven. He is fulfilling the command of his Creator in every moment . . . that is why they say that He "multiplied" the commandments. This term applies properly to that which is without limit. If there were only six hundred thirteen, why would the sage have called them "multiplied"? Our interpretation resolves this ques-

tion: For the one who knows God in all his ways there is no end to his commandments. . . .²³

If the commandments are without limit, however, what place is there for the very specific commandments of the tradition? Why not celebrate the presence in some other and more original way? Here one cannot but sense, as did some of Hasidism's more astute opponents, that religious enthusiasm is on the verge of spilling over into religious anarchism.

The Talmudic sages, in the course of claiming that there was no life of piety outside of the commandments, had expended much effort in the projection of rabbinic *halakhah* back onto the heroes of the Bible, much as we have seen them ascribe it to the Lord himself. In this the patriarchs were a particular problem, having lived before the Torah was given and thus seemingly having been unaware of the divine commandments. Not so, concludes the dominant rabbinic voice on the subject: Abraham observed every one of the commandments, even down to restrictions promulgated by the rabbis themselves. The echo of anti-Pauline polemic is not hard to trace in this Talmudic dictum. Now in Hasidism we find the rabbis challenged (by reinterpretation, of course!) on this uniquely touchy of subjects. The demurral is heard through several voices in the Maggid's school. The rabbis do not mean that Abraham knew all the laws and commandments, but rather that through his love of God, his single act at the *'aqedah*, or whatever, he did all that we do as we follow God's commands. Once again Levi Yizhak expresses the challenge with particular clarity:

There are two ways to serve God: one is a service by means of total dedication, and the other is the service through the commandments and good deeds. The difference between them is this: one who serves through dedication alone, without commandments and deeds, is truly in the Nought, while the one who serves by means of the commandments is serving Him through some existing thing. The commandments are in existence. Therefore, the one who serves in dedication and is wholly within the Nought cannot cause divine blessing to flow down upon himself: "he" does not exist, but is fully attached to God. The one who serves through deeds, however, is still attached to being, and thus he can bring blessing forth.

Now within the service of God through commandments and actions

there may still be both of these aspects of non-being and being. In doing that which is pleasing to the Creator alone, one may be said to be in a state of Nought, while he who does that commandment in order to bring blessing down upon himself is yet attached to being. In fulfilling the Creator's will one is intending to reach the Nought, while that selfsame commandment also binds you to existence, since the commandments partake of existence, and you draw forth blessing. Thus there are people who sustain themselves through their deeds.

Our sages tell us (Yoma 28b) that our father Abraham observed the entire Torah, even the details of how to prepare Sabbath food on a festival, before the Torah was given. We have tried to understand how he came to know the Torah. By separating himself from the corporeal and looking into his own 248 limbs, each of which corresponds to one of the 248 commandments and receives its life from that source, he was able to know them all. Each of the limbs receives its life from a particular commandment, and without it that limb could not be: thus he saw that the head is sustained by *tefillin* and all the rest; he knew the entire Torah before it was given.

It was for this same reason, however, that Abraham was not able to serve God through the commandments before he entered the Land of Israel. Outside the land he was not able to fulfill those commandments, which apply only to one living in the land itself; thus various limbs in the system of correspondences would have been lacking. . . . Therefore, as long as Abraham was outside the land, he served God through total dedication alone: he cast himself into the fiery furnace and underwent various other great trials, all before he entered the land. When he entered the land, however, he was able to fulfill all the commandments and thus be a complete being, one possessing all his limbs. At that point he turned to the commandments as his way of service. In the Land of Israel he no longer needed to be dedicated unto death, for he had the commandments. As for the binding of Isaac: there too he was fulfilling an explicit command of God.

As long as Abraham was outside the land, he was serving God from the place of Nought, and could not bring blessing upon himself. In the Land of Israel, when he turned to the commandments and was thus attached to being, he could bring blessing forth. Therefore Scripture says: "Go thee from thy land" [Gen 12:1] and RaSHI commented: "For your own benefit and good"—go, to the land for your own good, for there you will serve God through the commandments and bring forth the flow of blessing, while outside the land you serve Him through dedication and cling to the Nought, thus arousing no blessing. . . .

Now he who serves God through dedication alone sees Him with his very eye, while he who serves God through commandments and actions sees Him through a glass, since his means of service is an existing thing. This is the meaning of: "After these things, the word of God came to Abram in a vision saying" (Gen 15:1)—he saw God through a glass. And God said to him: "Fear not"—do not be afraid because you are serving Me by means of commandments and not through dedication alone; "your reward is very great"—by serving in this way you will bring forth blessing.

So when the sages said that Abraham fulfilled all the commandments, they were referring to that period when he lived in the land—but outside the land he served through dedication. In our case, however, even though we are outside the land, we are able to serve by means of the commandments—for the Torah has already been given.²⁴

A number of motifs come together in this most surprising teaching. The correspondence between the commandments and the limbs of the body is frequently discussed in both later Kabbalistic and Hasidic works; the notion that Abraham learned Torah from within is an interesting mystical adaptation of the rational Abraham known in medieval philosophical writings. But by far most significant here is Levi Yizhak's recognition that there is another way of service, and one that, from a purely mystical point of view, might even be preferable to the life of the commandments. The reader is even further tantalized by the notion that it is the purely spiritual service that is appropriate to life outside the land, in fact the locus in which Hasidim found themselves. The rather lame postscript to the effect that the situation changes once the Torah has been given is hardly very convincing.

The projection backward may also be related to a projection forward; there is a good deal of discussion in these same circles about the rabbinic belief that the commandments will be unnecessary after the final redemption. Both Scholem and Schatz-Uffenheimer have pointed to such statements as evidence of the deep-seated ambivalence toward the commandments that is to be found throughout this literature.

In the case of Nahman, ever the most daring and paradoxical of the lot, it was not only remote past and anticipated future without the *mizvot* that could be romanticized. While on the return from his famous journey to the Holy Land in 1799 he was

captured by pirates and had some rather realistic fears of being sold into bondage. The worst of such fears for a pious *Hasid*, so it would seem, would be the inability to live as a Jew. Nahman, however, managed to overcome these terrors:

He had reached the understanding of how to serve God even if he were, God forbid, not able to observe the commandments. He had attained the service of the patriarchs who had served God before the Torah was given, fulfilling all the *mizvot* even though they did not observe them in their ordinary sense. Just as Jacob fulfilled the commandment of *tefillin* by stripping the sticks and so forth; so did he come to understand how he would fulfill all the *mizvot* in this way if forced to do so in the place where he might be sold, God forbid.²⁵

This confidence that such a purely spiritual Judaism was attainable in this world might have been comforting to the young *rebbe* at the moment, but it would do little to assuage his greater fears or the fears of those around him as to Hasidism's ultimate commitment to life within the rabbinic order. Surely for Nahman, who already saw the start of western "Enlightenment" among the Jews of Russia, it was the very opposite pole that needed strengthening. No wonder that he, and especially his disciple Nathan, pulled back from such dangerous formulations. No wonder that *HaBaD*, the very heart of cosmic radicalism as it emerged from the *Maggid's* teachings, placed the very physical fulfillment of the sacred act at the core of its religious teaching. The mystical enthusiasm of the Ba'al Shem and the *Maggid* had brought them to the edge of the transcendence of religion, a transcendence which, as some saw well, was also its destruction.

NOTES

1. *Ben Porat Yosef* 55a.
2. *Toledot Ya'aqov Yosef* 7a.
3. *Zava'at RIVaSH* (Cracow, 1896) 3b.
4. *Ibid.*, 14b; *Liqqutim Yeqarim* 17d.
5. This insight is originally that of Gershom Scholem. Cf. *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1954), pp. 341ff. Here is as good a place as any to say that this essay, like all contemporary study in the field of Jewish mysticism, is much indebted to the work of Scholem and his students in Jerusalem. With regard to Hasidism the latter include particularly Joseph Weiss and Rivka Schatz-Uffenheimer. Several of the sources quoted in this

article have been previously discussed, in one context or another, by these scholars.

6. *Me'or 'Eynayim* (Jerusalem, 1966) 16d-17a. A major portion of this work, the homilies on Genesis, has been translated into English by the present writer and is soon to appear in the Classics of Western Spirituality series of the Paulist Press. It is hoped that there the reader who is unfamiliar with Hebrew will be able for the first time to read one of the central homiletical works of Hasidism in English translation.

7. *Ibid.*

8. The Hebrew reader should see the elegant summation of this idea, along with several other key concepts of Hasidism, in Hillel Zeitlin's *Be-Pardes ha-Hasidut weha-Qabbalah* (Tel Aviv, 1960).

9. A brief and highly readable summary of this discussion is to be found in Louis Jacobs' *Seeker of Unity* (New York, 1966), chapter 3.

10. *Maggid Devarav le-Ya'akov*, opening.

11. *Or Torah, wa-yetze'* (Jerusalem, 1968) 24d.

12. *Liqqutim Yeqarim* (Jerusalem, 1974) 161.

13. *Op. cit.*, 54.

14. The letter has been translated by Louis Jacobs and published as an appendix to the work mentioned in note 9.

15. *Tanya*, second section, chapter 3.

16. On Nahman see my *Tormented Master: A Life of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981).

17. *Liqqutey MoHaRaN* 21:11; cf. *Tormented Master*, p. 336 n. 59.

18. *Liqqutey MoHaRaN* 22:10.

19. *Avaneha Barzel*, p. 44; see my discussion in *op. cit.*, p. 320.

20. *Liqqutey MoHaRaN* 64:1-3.

21. *Ha-Hasidut ke-Mistiqaḥ* (Jerusalem, 1968), pp. 54 f.

22. *Qedushat Levi, bereshit* (Jerusalem, 1958) 7b.

23. *Or Torah* 147a.

24. *Qedushat Levi, Lekh lekha*, 15b-d. (Emphasis mine.)

25. *Shivḥey ha-RaḥN* II:2. The reference to Jacob is from Gen 30:37.

The Other Side of God

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