

Hasidic Spirituality for a New Era

The Religious Writings of Hillel Zeitlin

SELECTED, EDITED, AND TRANSLATED BY
ARTHUR GREEN

PRAYERS INTRODUCED AND TRANSLATED BY
JOEL ROSENBERG

FOREWORD BY
RABBI ZALMAN M. SCHACHTER-SHALOMI



PAULIST PRESS
NEW YORK • MAHWAH

2012

@53

(1124 782011) 37C 3

HASIDISM THEN AND NOW

his call so very much seems to strike a tone that might yet find response.

Szliska 60 is no more, but Yavneh still waits to be created.

WHAT DOES YAVNEH WANT? (Y)

(A Dialogue) self-interview

What does Yavneh want?

Yavneh wants to bring the old Hasidism, that of the BeSHT,³ back to life and establish it on foundations that are more acceptable in the present time of "Messiah's footsteps."

Of what does this old BeSHTian Hasidism consist?

Three loves: the love of God, the love of Israel, and the love of Torah.

How did the BeSHT understand the love of God?

Until the BeSHT, even the purest love of God (and we speak here only of the love of God in its purest form. Those who love God because He gives them health, length of days, glory, and wealth, are not being considered here at all) was conceived only like the love of a glorious king or a great sage. Maybe, in the best case, it was like the way one loves a father. But the BeSHT came and taught that one must love with a terrible thirst, a terrible burning, terrible suffering that fills the entire soul and body in such a way that no room for anything else remains.

Was the BeSHT the first to conceive of the love of God this way?

Long before the BeSHT there were those who saw the love of God as entailing suffering as long as the person remains in the body and does not have an actual "outpouring of the soul."

Who were they?

R. Eleazar Rokeach, R. Yehudah he-Hasid,⁴ and in the time of the BeSHT, R. Hayyim Ibn Attar.⁵

Romantic agony³⁷ of true faith
Hasidut Ashkenaz - BeSht - Hayyim Attar
Maccan
1696 - 1743

1871-1912

Mopilew : Hzbza / Hszkzleh -

1884/13: maskilic writings in Heb.

He orphaned → science, philo, Russian, Spinoza

1896 (= opp. of Hasidim)
Pilgrimage to Odessa to meet Abrahm Halpern
1896 - Homel / Brenner / Sender Baum @ 24

Positivism : Spencer, Darwin, John Stuart Mill

Dostoevsky / Tolstoy

Nietzsche

Pessimism = new religion

Crisis: Baum's suicide

1904 meets Shostov

1902 William James

1906 : Reyzer - Adich

1905/6 Papiroms

1907 Move to Warsaw; 1911 - 1912

1909 - Reclains early Hasidim

1910 - From Spinoza - Besht

1913 משה לייב

WW I : Messianic Outburst

mystical diary

Most pop. Ad. Journalist

Shtetl 60 = major lit. salary, replaces Peretz

And how did such enlightened Jews as R. Bahya Ibn Pakuda,⁶ Maimonides, and many others understand the love of God?

They understood "love" as an act of the mind, of consciousness, of knowledge.

And did R. Eleazar Rokeach, R. Yehudah he-Hasid, R. Hayyim Ibn Attar, and the BeSHT think that "love" is not an act of mind, consciousness, or knowledge?

They respect these as well. But they demand that the love of the Most High take in the entire person. It is the highest form of passion, the desire of all desires. It embraces all particular wills, all of a person's senses, the totality of passion, all one's lust for life, all thoughts, all words, all deeds!

Did they come to this all-consuming love just out of their own souls, or were they somehow aided by the ancients?

They saw this love in the words of the poet: "As the hart pants after streams of water, so does my heart pant for You, O God"... "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God" (Ps 42:2-3)... "Who else do I have in heaven? I want none but You in the earth.... My flesh and heart wear away, O rock of my heart; God is my portion forever" (Ps 73:25-26).

If Rokeach, Yehudah he-Hasid, the BeSHT, and Ibn Attar saw this in the words of the poet, what did they add to it?

Everyone knows these words of the poet. But they are taken as just that: poetry, meaning unique and special moments of divine inspiration. Along came the Rokeach, R. Yehudah, Ibn Attar, and the BeSHT, and they made it a requirement for every individual in every hour and moment, like the air we breathe.

And what did the BeSHT in particular add to this?

For the Rokeach, R. Yehudah, and Ibn Attar, this all-consuming love was a positive commandment, alongside all the others. But for the BeSHT it is the foundation of everything. He never stops talking about it in all his teachings, stories, and aphorisms.

And how did the BeSHT understand the love of Israel?

He once said to someone: "Believe me, I love the worst Jew in the world much more than you love your favorite child." This is what love of Israel meant to the BeSHT.

oral
lore

And what did the love of Torah mean to him?

If you understand "Torah" only as sharp-minded, expert, deep learning, you can find love of Torah among other great sages and righteous folk, perhaps even more than in the BeSHT. But the BeSHT's love of Torah touches especially upon the light of Torah, the hidden light, attachment to God through the letters of the Torah, the "worlds, souls, and divinity" that exist within every letter. Those letters combine to form words, and out of the joining of these words are formed awesome unifications, bringing near the coming of messiah.

And why do you call all this a "return to the original Hasidism" of the BeSHT? Why don't you simply say: "to Hasidism"?

Because today's Hasidism is very far from the pure Hasidism of the BeSHT.

felt crisis

In what way has today's official Hasidism turned away from the pure Hasidism of the BeSHT?

Simply in the fact that it no longer possesses that love of God, Israel, and Torah.

What do you mean?

Routinized

Very simple. Today's *hasidim* still *talk* about all these things. But they mix all sorts of incidental things in with them—fanciful interpretations, homilies, intellectual games—until the real point is obscured. Second—and this is really the main thing—for some of today's *hasidim* their Hasidism has become a purely external matter. They study without a real taste for it; they pray in the same way. They pursue wealth and glory no less, and sometimes even more, than non-*hasidim*. They're always busy praising their own *rebbe*s and castigating all the others, along with their disciples. They've set up *rebbe*s' courts and dynasties and get all involved in the politics of these. They spend

Yezrah

Drinks in intentional communities

Zohar

Behter circle

New religious movement

more maximalist renewal

mystical vocabulary

seeking essential hasidic core

Beht

= Jesus

Hasidism

church

learn

Long hist of real & fantastic intentional communities
shows thru hist. of Judaism

a good part of their lives fighting about rabbis, ritual slaughterers, and other religious officials. They consider only themselves to be proper Jews and everyone else to be nothing at all. They make Hasidism consist entirely of external manners, outer dress, and outward customs. They regularly mix fanaticism with piety. They chase away the young people over petty and foolish matters, sometimes pushing them far from Jewish religious life with their very hands....

Are you claiming that today's *hasidim* contain even less true and pure Judaism than the non-*hasidim*?

God forbid! First, I'm only speaking here about a portion of today's *hasidim*, not about all. Certainly there are other sorts of *hasidim* present today as well: those who bear a deep inwardness, a deep attachment, a passionate love of God. They have love for all Jews, a love of truth and a longing for peace, a strong, clear understanding of all that is happening around them. Second, even the other *hasidim*, those of outwardness and dress, still have lots of good qualities, things that belong to all Jews. Whatever failings a contemporary *hasid* may have, he still bears a certain sense of shame, a fear of God, a brokenness, something of modesty, humility, a leaning toward lovingkindness, goodness, and love. But all—the inward *hasidim*, those who concentrate on the externals, and just ordinary Jews—today need a new light that will shine into their souls, a Hasidism of the future, rays of messiah's light.

Does Yavneh want to be that "Hasidism of the future," that "ray of messiah's light"?

That Hasidism is not yet here. The rays of messiah's light show themselves hardly at all, only to those most pure of sight. But Yavneh wants to *prepare* for that future. Yavneh seeks, bit by bit, to qualify individuals for it. It wants to create vessels to contain that light, which must come sooner or later.

And in what way will the "Hasidism of the future" be differentiated, not only from today's external Hasidism, but from that which is inward, and even from the Hasidism of the BeSHT?

Differentiated from inward Hasidism and from that of the BeSHT? Not at all! On the contrary, it will be built entirely on the Hasidism of the BeSHT. But what then? It will go farther, broader, and deeper, appropriate to these messianic times.

What will that "going farther," in both breadth and depth, consist of?

In the time of the BeSHT it was enough for Israel to shine a light for itself. In these times, in a time when a world has been destroyed and a new one is being built,⁷ Israel has to be a light for itself and for all peoples, as in the verse: "I the Lord call you in righteousness and hold fast to your hand, making you as a covenantal people, a light to the nations" (Isa 42:6). And scripture also says: "Is it easy for you to be My servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the guarded ones of Israel? I have made you a light unto the nations, so that My salvation may reach the ends of the earth" (Isa 49:6). And it also says: "Then I will turn all the nations toward a clear tongue so that they all might call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him together" (Zeph 3:9).

And in what else?

In the time of the BeSHT Jews sought the light of Torah only in the Torah itself. Sometimes they also sought it out in ordinary folk-tales, in which they discovered a hidden light. ("Declare His glory among the nations" [Ps 96:3], according to a profound remark of Rabbi Nahman, means that "the glory of God cries forth from all things, even from tales told by the non-Jews.") But in the times of this final great purification we need to seek out the Torah-light in all the finest works of art, in all forms of worldly knowledge. We need to approach these with a certain light in our hands, with a particular kind of foresight. "A candle of the Lord is the human soul, searching out all the belly's chambers" (Prov 20:27). It will have to separate, seek out, and nullify, casting aside heaps of lies in order to get at the kernel of truth....

And in what else?

In the time of the BeSHT the class conflicts among people were not yet so sharply defined. The demand for social justice had not yet been articulated with full seriousness and honesty. Today we are undergo-

ing horrible evils that are taking place in the world. But these are leading us to a more just and honorable relationship with those who work with sweat on their brows. The "Hasidism of the future" will incorporate all that is healthy, pure, and honorable in Socialism. But it will with great bitterness cast aside all in Socialism that is petty, egotistical, merchant-like in its materialism, unjust, jealous, or vengeful. It will reject the dark and wild tyranny of the masses and of those adventurers who climb up on the backs of the masses.⁸

גדול
עגלוד

In the Hasidism of the future the love of God will shine forth and burn even more brightly than it did in the days of the BeSHT. The "Love of Israel" will be transformed into a great worldwide "Love of Humanity." Nevertheless, Israel will always be recognized as the first-born child of God, the one who has borne, continues to bear, and will continue to bear the godly light. "Love of Torah" will spread forth over all that breathes with sublime wisdom, after the inner light teaches the Jews to distinguish between that within the worldly sciences which is of the divine mind and that which is just self-proclaimed human conviction, error, and lies. "Justice, justice shall you pursue" (Deut 16:20) will be spread through all social relationships. Justice will be demanded not only of the opposing class (as both the capitalists and the proletariat do today), but people will demand justice of themselves. Pursuit of justice will be not only a public matter (as it is today), but rather one of individual concern. Each person will think not about how to avoid being exploited, but rather about how to avoid exploiting the other.

Perhaps you could outline for me, just briefly, how you see the *hasid* of the future, that for which the Yavneh member is preparing.

I'll try to do so. The *hasid* of the future will live only from his own physical labor. He will exploit no one in the world, doing not even the slightest harm to anyone. He will partake of God's own holiness, living in uninterrupted communion with the Endless. He will walk through divine fire while praying, will study Torah with an inner godly light, will seek and find everywhere the light of Torah and messianic light. In all his thoughts and deeds he will strive only for true peace and unity. He will be filled with love and compassion for every Jew and non-Jew, for every creature. He will long to raise up the form of the *shekhinah* in the holy land and to spread her light through all the

world. He will be a great seer and a great knower. In his own eyes he will be as nothing at all, having not just an external veneer of modesty but a deep inner recognition, a full consciousness that he is "just a small creature, lowly, dark, standing with but a weak mind before the One who knows perfectly." In that moment he will be a true "chariot" for the divine, a true servant of God, a faithful messenger.

ADMONITIONS FOR EVERY TRUE MEMBER OF YAVNEH⁹

(Fifteen Principles) Proletarianization
Productive labor

1. Support yourself only from your own work! Try as hard as you can to support yourself from simple physical labor and not from trade. Trade is based primarily on the deception of customers, and this means lies. And lies completely oppose what the blessed Holy One, who is Absolute Truth, demands of us ("God, our Sovereign, is truth." And, "the signet of God is truth.").

anti-bourgeois

If you are, brother, a worker, try to become an expert in your craft. Don't look forward, as so many do today, to leaving this work so that you can support yourself more easily through business. If you are not yet a worker, make the effort to become one. If you have not yet been given the opportunity to join a labor union for religious or moral reasons, try to establish, together with a few of the members of Yavneh, cooperative workshops, and the like.

2. Keep away from luxuries! Luxuries throttle the mind and the strength of a person. Luxuries bring on acts of constant deceit, leading from there to thievery and robbery. Striving for the true Jewish life, and at the same time for a life of luxuries, is like dipping in a purifying pool while holding a defiling abomination in your hand.

Therefore, choose a life of modesty, simplicity, keeping yourself far away from all external luxuries. Refrain as much as you can from various habits that cost you money, that do not benefit your body, and that harm your soul. My friend, turn your steps away from the theater and from parties. Guard yourself from smoking, from liquor, from expensive clothes, from adorning yourself with rings, and the like. Seek not to adorn your dwelling with costly decorations. It would be better if you would purify and adorn your soul, my dear friend.

3. Do not exploit anyone! If you support yourself solely by the work of your hands, the length of your days will be surrounded by modesty, calm, and humility, by abstention from indulgence, luxury, and pleasure seeking. It will simplify your task if you fulfill the great and holy commandment to every pure mortal: do not exploit anyone! Do not "use" people, seeking your own benefit without their agreement, or even with their agreement, if a full exchange of value is not received. Every person is a complete world. From the standpoint of morality and pure religion, every business abuse, in any form whatsoever, is robbery and murder.

(-)
A factory boss or supervisor who takes advantage of workers by paying them the lowest wage acceptable on the market, and not the full and proper sum for value received, is exploiting those workers. The merchant who takes unfair advantage in buying or selling exploits the people that merchant is dealing with.

(-)
Abuses are to be found today also among politicians, journalists, doctors, and the rest of the people involved in the free professions. Every pressing of advantage that is not the result of the complete, considered, free, and serious agreement of the person involved is a sin. Protect yourself from all this as you protect yourself from fire, my dear brother!

- (-)
4. Purify your family life. The family has always been a stronghold for the Jew. In the face of work, persecution, and daily troubles, the Jew found rest and comfort in quiet, pleasant, and pure family life. The family has always been the Jew's sanctuary. Even Balaam saw this, and against his will declared: "How good are your dwelling places, O Jacob" (Num 24:5).

Today, to our disaster, the anarchy of the street has broken into the Jewish family. This bulwark, the pure and pleasant Jewish family of Poland, has started to disintegrate since the time of the German conquest [World War I]. Now, this fall is deepening more and more. Further, this decline is abetted by the general moral ruin of the street, the theater, the movies, the pulp journals, and obscene literature. And a good bit of the so-called better and more serious literature abets this. Knowingly and unknowingly, many of those who declare themselves artists contribute to this decline.

Protect your soul from this catastrophe, my dear brother! Strengthen yourself to protect the quiet, the peace, and the love in your family!

5. Sanctify your sex life altogether! The preservation and sanctification of the covenant, these are the exalted bases of both interior and exterior holiness. Concerning this, we are charged: "Be holy" and "One who sanctifies oneself a little here below, will be greatly sanctified from above." "The sexual organ is the fundament of the body, sign of the holy covenant." One who is pure in this matter is holy; one who is impure in this area is defiled. In this one must be guarded not only from actual sin but also from sinful thoughts. ^{The} And the proven ways ^{fix} to this are—always to be occupied with work (at best, physical work), and also with the learning of *Torah* with concentration and depth. "There is no room for sin except in a heart that is void of wisdom," says the RaMBaM. "*Torah* is good when joined to work; the exertion of both cause sin to be forgotten." Actual work—on no account idleness. Idleness brings on all misfortune.

6. Guard yourself from forbidden foods! You will be defiled by them" (Lev 11:43). Read this as, "You will be *blocked* by them." Forbidden foods defile the body and soul; forbidden foods create vile and impure blood in the human body. If some of today's Jewish youth have a tendency to go toward evil, this is mainly an outcome of not protecting themselves against forbidden foods. Be careful, my brother, of forbidden foods, and thus you will save yourself from impurity, evil, and quick temper.

7. Sanctify your *Shabbos*! The Sabbath is not just an ordinary commandment, but the basic foundation. One who weakens the Sabbath, Heaven forbid, desecrates the God of Israel. A person who doesn't sanctify the Sabbath is like one who worships idols. "Keep" and "remember," the single God uttered at once. Unite with the holiness of the Sabbath, and in this way, commune with the blessed Holy One. The Sabbath, however, must be kept not only on the outside, but also within. This means prayer, learning, a basic stocktaking of the soul, concentration of the mind on holy and pure matters. *Shabbat* upholds the entire Jewish people. The Community of Israel and *Shabbat* are truly a pair, and in them resides the Holy Ancient of Days.
8. Keep your home holy! Not only the synagogue, the house of learning, the prayer room, but also every Jewish house is a small-scale sanctuary. When can this be said? When the house abounds with words of *Torah*, prayers, blessings, *Kiddush*, and *Havdalah*, and when these are expressed seriously, truthfully, with profound and intent sincerity! When a mother and a father, a brother and a sister, live in calm and true peace (for in a peaceful place, there is the blessing of the Father of Peace); when the children are educated in the spirit of the serious and pure *Torah*; when all the children of the house speak the Jewish tongue and are full of love, honor, and recognition for every Jewish thing.

257N
GN

The
reality

But what is today the structure of a house of an average Jewish merchant? Mostly, it is a place of selling and buying, sometimes a feverish stock market, sometimes a club for a game of cards, and sometimes a hall for parties. The father goes out in search of "pleasures," and the mother seeks her own. In the house—a constant ill will, continual arguments behind the backs of others, or worse, to their face. The daughters no longer speak Yiddish; the sons are being prepared for empty careers. Even where *Shabbat* is kept in an exterior way, it is without joyous celebration, without soul, without life. They pray, and when they have the opportunity, they fulfill commandments and customs, but everything is mechanical.

In a place where there is no light and no fire, no love or devotion—there is no resting place for the almighty God.

Yavnehite! Don't allow your house to become secular and commercial. Let your house be suitable for a Jew—a small sanctuary of the Lord! See that the Jewish language is heard in your house, allow the voice of *Torah*, words of peace, heartfelt prayers, taking part in the immense and tragic mystery of Israel, and silent hopes for redemption.

יבנהי - יבנה

9. Live always amid the whole Jewish people and for the whole Jewish people. Don't be concerned about yourself, but about all of Israel. The pain of all should be your pain; Israel's joy, your joy. Every single Jewish soul is a part of the *shekhinah*, called *keneset yisrael* because She is the totality of Jewish souls. The Community of Israel is the lower *shekhinah*, the kingdom of heaven on earth. The suffering of a Jewish soul is distress to the *shekhinah*, as it were. So how can you, Yavnehite, cause pain to any Jew? Whoever works honestly and wholeheartedly for the redemption of Israel—as he understands it—is working to redeem *shekhinah*. Blessings to anyone who does something good for the Jewish people—even if his views are far from our own! Blessings to any hand that is stretched out to bring help to Jewry!

Yavnehite! In all your thoughts, all your longings, all your words and deeds, do not have yourself and only those close to you in mind, but rather the entire great holy Jewish people. Bring yourself and your loved ones into that whole. The salvation of the whole will be yours as well.

10. Remove yourself from party politics. Though you are bound to live as a part of the general society, and work especially for the community, do not join any particular party, be it ever so close to your heart. As long as the party is occupied with politics, it is bound for the furtherance of those politics to transgress the limits of justice and communion of all of *Yisrael*. If you are a member of a party, and you find it difficult to leave it, especially if the main purpose of the party is the building up of the nation—set your heart to scrutinize every act and deed of the party. Your humanity, your Judaism, your hidden

Quixotic - every young person joined up

treasure, is a thousandfold more important than even the best and loftiest party.

Whether you are a member of a party or not, you can and ought to participate in the work of any party, to the extent that it directs deeds to the building of the whole nation, and to the unification of the nation, and you are bound to remove yourself from it, when it divides Jews, or when, to achieve its purpose, it uses means that are contrary to the Jewish spirit, which is that of love, justice, and holiness.

11. Remember and never forget the three loves! The Yavnehite is bound to seek religious perfection, meaning avoidance of sin and the fulfillment of commandments in actual deeds. But we are especially bound to awareness of the three loves—the love of God, the love of *Yisra'el*, and the love of Torah.
12. Subdue pride! Pride is the most profound and strongest idol. Pride is the "strange god" within one's own body. Pride has deeply rooted itself in us, and in order to uproot it, concerted effort over decades is necessary. We must combat it all the days of our life. As long as it rests in us, it hides God, it hides others, and it hides the world outside ourselves. We cannot reach the light of truth as long as pride rests in us. "Pay attention to this cursed one—and bury it!"
13. Sanctify speech! Speech is the expression of the soul. Guard the covenant of the tongue; the holiness of the tongue. Not one word of evil speech! Not one round of gossip! No idle words at all; and it goes without saying, not to defile your tongue with filth. Do not think that there is no damage from speech. What difference does it make? A vulgar joke? Whom does it hurt? No, dear brother! A word has the power to build and destroy worlds. It is your duty, Yavnehite, to be a builder, a creator, repairing lives that have been destroyed. Therefore, let your words be holy.
14. Sanctify your inner life! Let not a day in life pass without taking stock of your soul. Learn or hear *mussar* [moral teachings] every day. Books like *The Duties of the Hearts*, *The Path of the Upright*, *The Way of the Righteous*, *Tanya*, *Select Counsels*,¹⁰ should always be your companions.

Ethical
Commandments

(H)

Even if you are busy and cannot afford more time, separate yourself for five to ten minutes every day, in your chosen corner, for a short and precise tally of your soul. And at this same time, let there be a short silent prayer in your heart:

"Sovereign of the world, set me on the right path, on the path of light."

meditative
practice

NOTE: Any reader who has firmly decided to start living in accord with the fourteen principles outlined above, even if gradually, in steps, may turn in this regard either orally or in writing to Hillel Zeitlin, Szliska 60, Warsaw.

- 15.¹¹ Broaden and deepen the activity of "B'nai Yavneh." Wherever you encounter a person who is prepared to accept the views offered in this book and to seek to live by them, hold fast to him. Teach him, enlighten him, guide him. When you find a few people in your city ready to live in accord with everything said in this book, cleave to them. Enlighten and guide them; proceed together up the pathway that leads toward God. If the way is too far for you and you find it hard to fulfill everything said here, do not turn back. Fulfill first what is *possible* for you. Afterward try to go further. The God of heaven and earth will be there to help you.

אבן/אבן

Let one small gathering extend its hand to a second, the second to a third, until there is firmly established a whole assemblage of Jews returning to God in truth and wholeness, "doing His word in order to hear the voice of His word" (Ps 103:20).

THREE ARAMAIC CHAPTERS FROM
SIFRAN SHEL YEHIDIM

*Into a Single Chamber!*¹²

To you, O children of the holy, sublime light! You know all the suffering and pain of *shekhnah*, all She has endured from the day of Adam's sin until now! You have known all the awful affliction, the loud outcries from amid the atrocities of the last years, surely the birthpangs of messiah.

רחמים

אל אלהי ישראל! מי אנכי, שהתפלל לפניך על בניך?
מי אנכי, שאזכה להתפלל לפניך על בני אברהם, יצחק ויעקב?
מי אנכי, שאזכה להתפלל לפניך על עמך הגדול והקדוש, עם ישראל?
מי אנכי ומה אנכי? בריה עניה, עלובה, כלי מלא בושה וכלמה,
הרש את חרשי אדמה, הולע ככל המולעים הרוחשים.
מי אנכי, כי אבוא לעורר את חסדך הגדול? מי אנכי, כי אבוא
לעורר את רחמך על הצאן הנדחית והעזובות?
עם גדול וקדוש ועם-זה גם - צאן נדחית ועזובות!
גדול הוא עמך - גדול הוא בסבלו את סבלך, בנשאו נצח את נסך,
בהלחמו על דבר-קדשך, על אמת-קדשך -
ועם-זה - צאן נדחית ועזובות" - צאן אובדות, צאן פזורות, צאן
לטבח יביל...
אב גדול וקדוש! רחם על בניך! רועה גדול וקדוש! רחם על צאנך!
אינני כדאי להתפלל עליהם. אבל לא אוכל עוד נשא עמלם -
עמלי. לא אוכל עוד נשא עינים - עיני!...
אינני כדאי. בודאי ובודאי, שאינני כדאי. עשה-נא המעם בעד מי
שאיננו כדאי, בעד מי שאיננו שדה מאומה...
הלא לך אוצר גנוז ושמיר - אוצר של מתנות-חנם. חנני-נא, חנני,
אבי, מן האוצר ההוא.
קח מעטה-חסד מן האוצר ההוא, משמחו ופרשו על רבואי-רבבות
עמך, על רבואי-רבבות בניך!

7. Compassion

O God, the God of Israel,
who am I that I should pray to You about Your children?
Who am I that I should merit praying to You about the children of
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?
Who am I that I should set my prayer before You about Your great and
holy people, the people Israel?

Who am I and what am I? A poor creature, wretched, a vessel brimming
with disgrace and shame!
A mere shard amid the broken clay of earth! A worm among the
worms that crawl about!
Who am I to come in hope of stirring up the greatness of Your love?
Who am I that I should come to waken Your compassion for this flock
forlorn and straying?
"A great and holy people," and, for all of that, "a flock forlorn and straying!"
Great Your people, great in bearing up Your burden, raising Your banner
up forever,
struggling for Your holiness, for Your holiness's truth.
And for all of that, "a flock forlorn and straying," a flock that's lost, a
flock that's scattered, a flock brought forth for slaughter.
O great and holy Father! Have compassion for Your children!
O great and holy Shepherd! Have mercy for Your flock!
I am not fit to pray for them. But I can bear no more their burden—
this heavy load of mine.
I can no longer bear their suffering—this suffering of mine.
I am not fit—no, surely, surely, I'm not fit.
But act, I pray, this time, for one who *isn't* fit, for one who is worth
nothing...
For have You not a treasure hidden and concealed? A treasure house
of gifts unmerited?
Bestow, I pray, such grace on me! Be gracious unto me, O my Creator,
from that place!
Just take a little lovingkindness from that treasure house—and spread
it out upon the many tens of thousands of Your people,
upon the many millions of Your children!

d part of their lives fighting about rabbis, ritual slaughterers, and religious officials. They consider only themselves to be proper and everyone else to be nothing at all. They make Hasidism contentirely of external manners, outer dress, and outward customs. regularly mix fanaticism with piety. They chase away the young le over petty and foolish matters, sometimes pushing them far Jewish religious life with their very hands....

you claiming that today's *hasidim* contain even less true and Judaism than the non-*hasidim*?

forbid! First, I'm only speaking here about a portion of today's *lim*, not about all. Certainly there are other sorts of *hasidim* presoday as well: those who bear a deep inwardness, a deep attach-; a passionate love of God. They have love for all Jews, a love of and a longing for peace, a strong, clear understanding of all that ppening around them. Second, even the other *hasidim*, those of ardness and dress, still have lots of good qualities, things that ng to all Jews. Whatever failings a contemporary *hasid* may have, ill bears a certain sense of shame, a fear of God, a brokenness, ething of modesty, humility, a leaning toward lovingkindness, lness, and love. But all—the inward *hasidim*, those who concen- on the externals, and just ordinary Jews—today need a new light will shine into their souls, a Hasidism of the future, rays of mes-; light.

s Yavneh want to be that "Hasidism of the future," that of messiah's light"?

: Hasidism is not yet here. The rays of messiah's light show them- es hardly at all, only to those most pure of sight. But Yavneh ts to *prepare* for that future. Yavneh seeks, bit by bit, to qualify viduals for it. It wants to create vessels to contain that light, ch must come sooner or later.

l in what way will the "Hasidism of the future" be differenti- l, not only from today's external Hasidism, but from that ch is inward, and even from the Hasidism of the BeSHT?

Differentiated from inward Hasidism and from that of the BeSHT? Not at all! On the contrary, it will be built entirely on the Hasidism of the BeSHT. But what then? It will go farther, broader, and deeper, appropriate to these messianic times.

What will that "going farther," in both breadth and depth, consist of?

In the time of the BeSHT it was enough for Israel to shine a light for itself. In these times, in a time when a world has been destroyed and a new one is being built,⁷ Israel has to be a light for itself and for all peoples, as in the verse: "I the Lord call you in righteousness and hold fast to your hand, making you as a covenantal people, a light to the nations" (Isa 42:6). And scripture also says: "Is it easy for you to be My servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the guarded ones of Israel? I have made you a light unto the nations, so that My salvation may reach the ends of the earth" (Isa 49:6). And it also says: "Then I will turn all the nations toward a clear tongue so that they all might call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him together" (Zeph 3:9).

And in what else?

In the time of the BeSHT Jews sought the light of Torah only in the Torah itself. Sometimes they also sought it out in ordinary folk-tales, in which they discovered a hidden light. ("Declare His glory among the nations" [Ps 96:3], according to a profound remark of Rabbi Nahman, means that "the glory of God cries forth from all things, even from tales told by the non-Jews.") But in the times of this final great purification we need to seek out the Torah-light in all the finest works of art, in all forms of worldly knowledge. We need to approach these with a certain light in our hands, with a particular kind of foresight. "A candle of the Lord is the human soul, searching out all the belly's chambers" (Prov 20:27). It will have to separate, seek out, and nullify, casting aside heaps of lies in order to get at the kernel of truth....

And in what else?

In the time of the BeSHT the class conflicts among people were not yet so sharply defined. The demand for social justice had not yet been articulated with full seriousness and honesty. Today we are undergo-

rhymed couplets

Genre 7: **Prayer**, the ultimate conversation [Descendant of David, 223]

Ben Dovid (my thanks to Joel Rosenberg) Shtern zagt tsu shtern: Er lebt, er lebt!

Volkn -- tsu volkn: er shvebt, er shvebt!

Vintn tsu vintn: Trog, trog, trog!

ShaHar tsu shaHar: Tog, tog, tog!

Barg zagt tsu barg: Er shteyt! Er shteyt!

Veg zagt tsu veg: Er geyt! Er geyt!

Shtoyb zagt tsu shtoyb: Zayne trit! Zayne trit!

Gayst zagt tu gayst: Zayn gemit, zayn gemit!

Groz zagt tsu groz: Shtilerhayt! Shtilerhayt!

Vald zagt tsu vald: Zay greyt! Zay greyt!

Yam zagt tsu yam: Es tsitert der Levyosn!

Himel zagt tsu erd: Es kumt on dayn khosn!

The Descendant of David

Star to star declares: He lives! He is there!
Cloud says to cloud: He hovers in the air!
Wind says to wind: Bear the child, bear!
Dawn says to dawn: It's day everywhere!
Mountain says to mountain: He stands, he stands!
Road says to road: He walks in the Land!
Dust says to dust: His steps, do you hear?
Wind says to wind: His spirit is near!
Grass says to grass: Silence, be still!
Wood says to wood: Get ready to fulfill!
Sea says to sea: Leviathan quakes!
Heaven says to earth: Your bridegroom awakes!

Hasidic Spirituality for a New Era
The Religious Writings of Hillel Zeitlin

SELECTED, EDITED, AND TRANSLATED BY
ARTHUR GREEN

PRAYERS INTRODUCED AND TRANSLATED BY
JOEL ROSENBERG

FOREWORD BY
RABBI ZALMAN M. SCHACHTER-SHALOMI



PAULIST PRESS
NEW YORK • MAHWAH

Biblical Parallelism, iteration, word doubling,
 direct address; boldly disheveled, intimate
 The people - great/humble, zealous & lost

Who speaks?
 To whom?
 On whose behalf?

רחמים = ג ק א

אל אלהי ישראל מי אנכי, שהתפלל לפניך על בניך
 מי אנכי, שאזכה להתפלל לפניך על בני אברהם, יצחק ויעקב?
 מי אנכי, שאזכה להתפלל לפניך על עמך הגדול והקדוש, עם ישראל?
 מי אנכי ומה אנכי? בריה עניה, עלובה, כלי מלא בושה וכלמה,
 את חרשי אדמה, הולע ככל החולעים הרוחשים.
 מי אנכי, כי אבוא לעורר את הסדך הגדול? מי אנכי, כי אבוא
 לעורר את רחמין על הצאן הנדחית והעזובות?

עם גדול וקדוש ועם-יה גם - צאן נדחות ועזובות!
 גדול הוא עמך - גדול הוא בסבלו את סבלך, בנשאו נצח את יסרך,
 בהלחמו על דבר-קדשך, על אמתת קדשך -
 ועם-יה - צאן נדחית ועזובות" - צאן אובודות, צאן פזורות, צאן
 לטבח יזבל...

אב גדול וקדוש! רחם על בניך! רועה גדול וקדוש! רחם על צאנך!
 אינני כדאי להתפלל עליהם. אבל לא אוכל עוד נשא עמלם -
 עמלי. לא אוכל עוד נשא עינים - עיני!...
 אינני כדאי. כדאי ובודאי, שאינני כדאי. עשה-נא הסעם בעד מי
 שאיננו כדאי, בעד מי שאיננו שיה מאומה...
 חלא לך אוצר גנוז ושמיר - אוצר של מתנות-חנם. חנני-נא, חנני,
 אבי, מן האוצר ההוא.
 קח מעטה-חסד מן האוצר ההוא, משמנו ופרשהו על רבואי-רבבות
 עמך, על רבואי-רבבות בניך!

from last week

מטה mantle
 תולע worm

7. Compassion

O God, the God of Israel,
 who am I that I should pray to You about Your children?
 Who am I that I should merit praying to You about the children of
 Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?
 Who am I that I should set my prayer before You about Your great and
 holy people, the people Israel?

Who am I and what am I? A poor creature, wretched, a vessel brimming
 with disgrace and shame!
 A mere shard amid the broken clay of earth! A worm among the
 worms that crawl about!
 Who am I to come in hope of stirring up the greatness of Your love?
 Who am I that I should come to waken Your compassion for this flock
 forlorn and straying?
 "A great and holy people," and, for all of that, "a flock forlorn and straying!"
 Great Your people, great in bearing up Your burden, raising Your banner
 up forever,
 struggling for Your holiness, for Your holiness's truth.
 And for all of that, "a flock forlorn and straying," a flock that's lost, a
 flock that's scattered, a flock brought forth for slaughter.
 O great and holy Father! Have compassion for Your children!
 O great and holy Shepherd! Have mercy for Your flock!
 I am not fit to pray for them. But I can bear no more their burden—
 this heavy load of mine.
 I can no longer bear their suffering—this suffering of mine.
 I am not fit—no, surely, surely, I'm not fit.
 But act, I pray, this time, for one who *isn't* fit, for one who is worth
 nothing...
 For have You not a treasure hidden and concealed? A treasure house
 of gifts unmerited?
 Bestow, I pray, such grace on me! Be gracious unto me, O my Creator,
 from that place!
 Just take a little lovingkindness from that treasure house—and spread
 it out upon the many tens of thousands of Your people,
 upon the many millions of Your children!

נִשְׁבַּח ה'

messianic ecstasy

Ben Dovid [Descendant of David, 223]

Shtern zagt tsu shtern (Er) lebt, (er) lebt! verb (M)

Volkn -- tsu volkn: er shvebt, er shvebt! verb

Vintn tsu vintn: Trog, trog, trog! verb

Shakhar tsu shakhar: Tog, tog, tog! down

Barg zagt tsu barg: Er shteyt! Er shteyt! verb

Veg zagt tsu veg: Er geyt! Er geyt! verb

Shtoyb zagt tsu shtoyb: Zayne trit! Zayne trit!

spirit

Gayst zagt tu gayst: Zayn gemit, zayn gemit!

mood, spirit

Groz zagt tsu groz: Shtilerhayt! Shtilerhayt!

Vald zagt tsu vald: Zay greyt! Zay greyt!

(+) Yam zagt tsu yam: Es tsitert der Levyosn!

קִיבֵּץ מִיָּמִין - הַיָּם

(+) Himel zagt tsu erd: Es kumt on dayn khosn!

The Descendant of David

Star to star declares: He lives! He is there!
Cloud says to cloud: He hovers in the air!
Wind says to wind: Bear the child, bear!
Dawn says to dawn: It's day everywhere!
Mountain says to mountain: He stands, he stands!
Road says to road: He walks in the Land!
Dust says to dust: His steps, do you hear?
Wind says to wind: His spirit is near!
Grass says to grass: Silence, be still!
Wood says to wood: Get ready to fulfill!
Sea says to sea: Leviathan quakes!
Heaven says to earth: Your bridegroom awakes!

Germanic compound etc. last heroic couplet

History - as - creation

1871-1912

Mopilew : H2ba / H2k2zh -

1884/13: maskilic writings in Hb.

H orphaned → science, philo, Russian, Spinoza

1896 (= opp. of Hasidim)
Pilgrimage to Odessa to meet Abrahm Halpern

1896 - Homel / Brenner / Sender Baum @ 24

Positivism : Spencer, Darwin, John Stuart Mill

Dostoevsky / Tolstoy

Nietzsche

Pessimism = new religion

crisis: Baum's suicide

1904 meets Shostov

1902 William James

1906 : Reyzer - Adich

1905/6 Papiroms

1907 Move to Warsaw; 1911 - 1912

1909 - Reclains early Hasidim

1910 - From Spinoza - Besht

1913 מלחמה / מלחמה

WW I : Messianic Outburst

mystical diary

Most pop. Ad. Journalist

Slutz 60 = major lit. salon, replaces Peretz

And how did such enlightened Jews as R. Bahya Ibn Pakuda,⁶ Maimonides, and many others understand the love of God?

They understood "love" as an act of the mind, of consciousness, of knowledge.

And did R. Eleazar Rokeach, R. Yehudah he-Hasid, R. Hayyim Ibn Attar, and the BeSHT think that "love" is not an act of mind, consciousness, or knowledge?

They respect these as well. But they demand that the love of the Most High take in the entire person. It is the highest form of passion, the desire of all desires. It embraces all particular wills, all of a person's senses, the totality of passion, all one's lust for life, all thoughts, all words, all deeds!

Did they come to this all-consuming love just out of their own souls, or were they somehow aided by the ancients?

They saw this love in the words of the poet: "As the hart pants after streams of water, so does my heart pant for You, O God"... "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God" (Ps 42:2-3)... "Who else do I have in heaven? I want none but You in the earth.... My flesh and heart wear away, O rock of my heart; God is my portion forever" (Ps 73:25-26).

If Rokeach, Yehudah he-Hasid, the BeSHT, and Ibn Attar saw this in the words of the poet, what did they add to it?

Everyone knows these words of the poet. But they are taken as just that: poetry, meaning unique and special moments of divine inspiration. Along came the Rokeach, R. Yehudah, Ibn Attar, and the BeSHT, and they made it a requirement for every individual in every hour and moment, like the air we breathe.

And what did the BeSHT in particular add to this?

For the Rokeach, R. Yehudah, and Ibn Attar, this all-consuming love was a positive commandment, alongside all the others. But for the BeSHT it is the foundation of everything. He never stops talking about it in all his teachings, stories, and aphorisms.

And how did the BeSHT understand the love of Israel?

He once said to someone: "Believe me, I love the worst Jew in the world much more than you love your favorite child." This is what love of Israel meant to the BeSHT.

oral
lore

And what did the love of Torah mean to him?

If you understand "Torah" only as sharp-minded, expert, deep learning, you can find love of Torah among other great sages and righteous folk, perhaps even more than in the BeSHT. But the BeSHT's love of Torah touches especially upon the light of Torah, the hidden light, attachment to God through the letters of the Torah, the "worlds, souls, and divinity" that exist within every letter. Those letters combine to form words, and out of the joining of these words are formed awesome unifications, bringing near the coming of messiah.

And why do you call all this a "return to the original Hasidism" of the BeSHT? Why don't you simply say: "to Hasidism"?

Because today's Hasidism is very far from the pure Hasidism of the BeSHT.

felt crisis

In what way has today's official Hasidism turned away from the pure Hasidism of the BeSHT?

Simply in the fact that it no longer possesses that love of God, Israel, and Torah.

What do you mean?

Routinized

Very simple. Today's *hasidim* still *talk* about all these things. But they mix all sorts of incidental things in with them—fanciful interpretations, homilies, intellectual games—until the real point is obscured. Second—and this is really the main thing—for some of today's *hasidim* their Hasidism has become a purely external matter. They study without a real taste for it; they pray in the same way. They pursue wealth and glory no less, and sometimes even more, than non-*hasidim*. They're always busy praising their own *rebbe*s and castigating all the others, along with their disciples. They've set up *rebbe*s' courts and dynasties and get all involved in the politics of these. They spend

Yezrah

Drinks in intentional communities

Zohar

Behter circle

New religious movement

more maximalist renewal

mystical vocabulary

seeking essential hasidic core

Beht

= Jesus

Hasidism

church

learn

Long hist of real & fantastic intentional communities
shows thru hist. of Judaism

a good part of their lives fighting about rabbis, ritual slaughterers, and other religious officials. They consider only themselves to be proper Jews and everyone else to be nothing at all. They make Hasidism consist entirely of external manners, outer dress, and outward customs. They regularly mix fanaticism with piety. They chase away the young people over petty and foolish matters, sometimes pushing them far from Jewish religious life with their very hands....

Are you claiming that today's *hasidim* contain even less true and pure Judaism than the non-*hasidim*?

God forbid! First, I'm only speaking here about a portion of today's *hasidim*, not about all. Certainly there are other sorts of *hasidim* present today as well: those who bear a deep inwardness, a deep attachment, a passionate love of God. They have love for all Jews, a love of truth and a longing for peace, a strong, clear understanding of all that is happening around them. Second, even the other *hasidim*, those of outwardness and dress, still have lots of good qualities, things that belong to all Jews. Whatever failings a contemporary *hasid* may have, he still bears a certain sense of shame, a fear of God, a brokenness, something of modesty, humility, a leaning toward lovingkindness, goodness, and love. But all—the inward *hasidim*, those who concentrate on the externals, and just ordinary Jews—today need a new light that will shine into their souls, a Hasidism of the future, rays of messiah's light.

Does Yavneh want to be that "Hasidism of the future," that "ray of messiah's light"?

That Hasidism is not yet here. The rays of messiah's light show themselves hardly at all, only to those most pure of sight. But Yavneh wants to *prepare* for that future. Yavneh seeks, bit by bit, to qualify individuals for it. It wants to create vessels to contain that light, which must come sooner or later.

And in what way will the "Hasidism of the future" be differentiated, not only from today's external Hasidism, but from that which is inward, and even from the Hasidism of the BeSHT?

Differentiated from inward Hasidism and from that of the BeSHT? Not at all! On the contrary, it will be built entirely on the Hasidism of the BeSHT. But what then? It will go farther, broader, and deeper, appropriate to these messianic times.

What will that "going farther," in both breadth and depth, consist of?

In the time of the BeSHT it was enough for Israel to shine a light for itself. In these times, in a time when a world has been destroyed and a new one is being built,⁷ Israel has to be a light for itself and for all peoples, as in the verse: "I the Lord call you in righteousness and hold fast to your hand, making you as a covenantal people, a light to the nations" (Isa 42:6). And scripture also says: "Is it easy for you to be My servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the guarded ones of Israel? I have made you a light unto the nations, so that My salvation may reach the ends of the earth" (Isa 49:6). And it also says: "Then I will turn all the nations toward a clear tongue so that they all might call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him together" (Zeph 3:9).

And in what else?

In the time of the BeSHT Jews sought the light of Torah only in the Torah itself. Sometimes they also sought it out in ordinary folk-tales, in which they discovered a hidden light. ("Declare His glory among the nations" [Ps 96:3], according to a profound remark of Rabbi Nahman, means that "the glory of God cries forth from all things, even from tales told by the non-Jews.") But in the times of this final great purification we need to seek out the Torah-light in all the finest works of art, in all forms of worldly knowledge. We need to approach these with a certain light in our hands, with a particular kind of foresight. "A candle of the Lord is the human soul, searching out all the belly's chambers" (Prov 20:27). It will have to separate, seek out, and nullify, casting aside heaps of lies in order to get at the kernel of truth....

And in what else?

In the time of the BeSHT the class conflicts among people were not yet so sharply defined. The demand for social justice had not yet been articulated with full seriousness and honesty. Today we are undergo-

ing horrible evils that are taking place in the world. But these are leading us to a more just and honorable relationship with those who work with sweat on their brows. The "Hasidism of the future" will incorporate all that is healthy, pure, and honorable in Socialism. But it will with great bitterness cast aside all in Socialism that is petty, egotistical, merchant-like in its materialism, unjust, jealous, or vengeful. It will reject the dark and wild tyranny of the masses and of those adventurers who climb up on the backs of the masses.⁸

גדול
אגודת

In the Hasidism of the future the love of God will shine forth and burn even more brightly than it did in the days of the BeSHT. The "Love of Israel" will be transformed into a great worldwide "Love of Humanity." Nevertheless, Israel will always be recognized as the first-born child of God, the one who has borne, continues to bear, and will continue to bear the godly light. "Love of Torah" will spread forth over all that breathes with sublime wisdom, after the inner light teaches the Jews to distinguish between that within the worldly sciences which is of the divine mind and that which is just self-proclaimed human conviction, error, and lies. "Justice, justice shall you pursue" (Deut 16:20) will be spread through all social relationships. Justice will be demanded not only of the opposing class (as both the capitalists and the proletariat do today), but people will demand justice of themselves. Pursuit of justice will be not only a public matter (as it is today), but rather one of individual concern. Each person will think not about how to avoid being exploited, but rather about how to avoid exploiting the other.

Perhaps you could outline for me, just briefly, how you see the *hasid* of the future, that for which the Yavneh member is preparing.

I'll try to do so. The *hasid* of the future will live only from his own physical labor. He will exploit no one in the world, doing not even the slightest harm to anyone. He will partake of God's own holiness, living in uninterrupted communion with the Endless. He will walk through divine fire while praying, will study Torah with an inner godly light, will seek and find everywhere the light of Torah and messianic light. In all his thoughts and deeds he will strive only for true peace and unity. He will be filled with love and compassion for every Jew and non-Jew, for every creature. He will long to raise up the form of the *shekhinah* in the holy land and to spread her light through all the

world. He will be a great seer and a great knower. In his own eyes he will be as nothing at all, having not just an external veneer of modesty but a deep inner recognition, a full consciousness that he is "just a small creature, lowly, dark, standing with but a weak mind before the One who knows perfectly." In that moment he will be a true "chariot" for the divine, a true servant of God, a faithful messenger.

ADMONITIONS FOR EVERY TRUE MEMBER OF YAVNEH⁹

(Fifteen Principles) Proletarianization
Productive labor

1. Support yourself only from your own work! Try as hard as you can to support yourself from simple physical labor and not from trade. Trade is based primarily on the deception of customers, and this means lies. And lies completely oppose what the blessed Holy One, who is Absolute Truth, demands of us ("God, our Sovereign, is truth." And, "the signet of God is truth.").

anti-bourgeois

If you are, brother, a worker, try to become an expert in your craft. Don't look forward, as so many do today, to leaving this work so that you can support yourself more easily through business. If you are not yet a worker, make the effort to become one. If you have not yet been given the opportunity to join a labor union for religious or moral reasons, try to establish, together with a few of the members of Yavneh, cooperative workshops, and the like.

2. Keep away from luxuries! Luxuries throttle the mind and the strength of a person. Luxuries bring on acts of constant deceit, leading from there to thievery and robbery. Striving for the true Jewish life, and at the same time for a life of luxuries, is like dipping in a purifying pool while holding a defiling abomination in your hand.

Therefore, choose a life of modesty, simplicity, keeping yourself far away from all external luxuries. Refrain as much as you can from various habits that cost you money, that do not benefit your body, and that harm your soul. My friend, turn your steps away from the theater and from parties. Guard yourself from smoking, from liquor, from expensive clothes, from adorning yourself with rings, and the like. Seek not to adorn your dwelling with costly decorations. It would be better if you would purify and adorn your soul, my dear friend.

3. Do not exploit anyone! If you support yourself solely by the work of your hands, the length of your days will be surrounded by modesty, calm, and humility, by abstention from indulgence, luxury, and pleasure seeking. It will simplify your task if you fulfill the great and holy commandment to every pure mortal: do not exploit anyone! Do not "use" people, seeking your own benefit without their agreement, or even with their agreement, if a full exchange of value is not received. Every person is a complete world. From the standpoint of morality and pure religion, every business abuse, in any form whatsoever, is robbery and murder.

(-)
A factory boss or supervisor who takes advantage of workers by paying them the lowest wage acceptable on the market, and not the full and proper sum for value received, is exploiting those workers. The merchant who takes unfair advantage in buying or selling exploits the people that merchant is dealing with.

(-)
Abuses are to be found today also among politicians, journalists, doctors, and the rest of the people involved in the free professions. Every pressing of advantage that is not the result of the complete, considered, free, and serious agreement of the person involved is a sin. Protect yourself from all this as you protect yourself from fire, my dear brother!

- (-)
4. Purify your family life. The family has always been a stronghold for the Jew. In the face of work, persecution, and daily troubles, the Jew found rest and comfort in quiet, pleasant, and pure family life. The family has always been the Jew's sanctuary. Even Balaam saw this, and against his will declared: "How good are your dwelling places, O Jacob" (Num 24:5).

Today, to our disaster, the anarchy of the street has broken into the Jewish family. This bulwark, the pure and pleasant Jewish family of Poland, has started to disintegrate since the time of the German conquest [World War I]. Now, this fall is deepening more and more. Further, this decline is abetted by the general moral ruin of the street, the theater, the movies, the pulp journals, and obscene literature. And a good bit of the so-called better and more serious literature abets this. Knowingly and unknowingly, many of those who declare themselves artists contribute to this decline.

Protect your soul from this catastrophe, my dear brother! Strengthen yourself to protect the quiet, the peace, and the love in your family!

5. Sanctify your sex life altogether! The preservation and sanctification of the covenant, these are the exalted bases of both interior and exterior holiness. Concerning this, we are charged: "Be holy" and "One who sanctifies oneself a little here below, will be greatly sanctified from above." "The sexual organ is the fundament of the body, sign of the holy covenant." One who is pure in this matter is holy; one who is impure in this area is defiled. In this one must be guarded not only from actual sin but also from sinful thoughts. ^{The} And the proven ways ^{fix} to this are—always to be occupied with work (at best, physical work), and also with the learning of *Torah* with concentration and depth. "There is no room for sin except in a heart that is void of wisdom," says the RaMBaM. "*Torah* is good when joined to work; the exertion of both cause sin to be forgotten." Actual work—on no account idleness. Idleness brings on all misfortune.

6. Guard yourself from forbidden foods! You will be defiled by them" (Lev 11:43). Read this as, "You will be *blocked* by them." Forbidden foods defile the body and soul; forbidden foods create vile and impure blood in the human body. If some of today's Jewish youth have a tendency to go toward evil, this is mainly an outcome of not protecting themselves against forbidden foods. Be careful, my brother, of forbidden foods, and thus you will save yourself from impurity, evil, and quick temper.



7. Sanctify your *Shabbos*! The Sabbath is not just an ordinary commandment, but the basic foundation. One who weakens the Sabbath, Heaven forbid, desecrates the God of Israel. A person who doesn't sanctify the Sabbath is like one who worships idols. "Keep" and "remember," the single God uttered at once. Unite with the holiness of the Sabbath, and in this way, commune with the blessed Holy One. The Sabbath, however, must be kept not only on the outside, but also within. This means prayer, learning, a basic stocktaking of the soul, concentration of the mind on holy and pure matters. *Shabbat* upholds the entire Jewish people. The Community of Israel and *Shabbat* are truly a pair, and in them resides the Holy Ancient of Days.
8. Keep your home holy! Not only the synagogue, the house of learning, the prayer room, but also every Jewish house is a small-scale sanctuary. When can this be said? When the house abounds with words of *Torah*, prayers, blessings, *Kiddush*, and *Havdalah*, and when these are expressed seriously, truthfully, with profound and intent sincerity! When a mother and a father, a brother and a sister, live in calm and true peace (for in a peaceful place, there is the blessing of the Father of Peace); when the children are educated in the spirit of the serious and pure *Torah*; when all the children of the house speak the Jewish tongue and are full of love, honor, and recognition for every Jewish thing.

257N
GN

The
reality

But what is today the structure of a house of an average Jewish merchant? Mostly, it is a place of selling and buying, sometimes a feverish stock market, sometimes a club for a game of cards, and sometimes a hall for parties. The father goes out in search of "pleasures," and the mother seeks her own. In the house—a constant ill will, continual arguments behind the backs of others, or worse, to their face. The daughters no longer speak Yiddish; the sons are being prepared for empty careers. Even where *Shabbat* is kept in an exterior way, it is without joyous celebration, without soul, without life. They pray, and when they have the opportunity, they fulfill commandments and customs, but everything is mechanical.

In a place where there is no light and no fire, no love or devotion—there is no resting place for the almighty God.

Yavnehite! Don't allow your house to become secular and commercial. Let your house be suitable for a Jew—a small sanctuary of the Lord! See that the Jewish language is heard in your house, allow the voice of *Torah*, words of peace, heartfelt prayers, taking part in the immense and tragic mystery of Israel, and silent hopes for redemption.

יבנהי - יבנה

9. Live always amid the whole Jewish people and for the whole Jewish people. Don't be concerned about yourself, but about all of Israel. The pain of all should be your pain; Israel's joy, your joy. Every single Jewish soul is a part of the *shekhinah*, called *keneset yisrael* because She is the totality of Jewish souls. The Community of Israel is the lower *shekhinah*, the kingdom of heaven on earth. The suffering of a Jewish soul is distress to the *shekhinah*, as it were. So how can you, Yavnehite, cause pain to any Jew? Whoever works honestly and wholeheartedly for the redemption of Israel—as he understands it—is working to redeem *shekhinah*. Blessings to anyone who does something good for the Jewish people—even if his views are far from our own! Blessings to any hand that is stretched out to bring help to Jewry!

Yavnehite! In all your thoughts, all your longings, all your words and deeds, do not have yourself and only those close to you in mind, but rather the entire great holy Jewish people. Bring yourself and your loved ones into that whole. The salvation of the whole will be yours as well.

10. Remove yourself from party politics. Though you are bound to live as a part of the general society, and work especially for the community, do not join any particular party, be it ever so close to your heart. As long as the party is occupied with politics, it is bound for the furtherance of those politics to transgress the limits of justice and communion of all of *Yisrael*. If you are a member of a party, and you find it difficult to leave it, especially if the main purpose of the party is the building up of the nation—set your heart to scrutinize every act and deed of the party. Your humanity, your Judaism, your hidden

Quixotic - every young person joined up

treasure, is a thousandfold more important than even the best and loftiest party.

Whether you are a member of a party or not, you can and ought to participate in the work of any party, to the extent that it directs deeds to the building of the whole nation, and to the unification of the nation, and you are bound to remove yourself from it, when it divides Jews, or when, to achieve its purpose, it uses means that are contrary to the Jewish spirit, which is that of love, justice, and holiness.

11. Remember and never forget the three loves! The Yavnehite is bound to seek religious perfection, meaning avoidance of sin and the fulfillment of commandments in actual deeds. But we are especially bound to awareness of the three loves—the love of God, the love of *Yisra'el*, and the love of Torah.
12. Subdue pride! Pride is the most profound and strongest idol. Pride is the "strange god" within one's own body. Pride has deeply rooted itself in us, and in order to uproot it, concerted effort over decades is necessary. We must combat it all the days of our life. As long as it rests in us, it hides God, it hides others, and it hides the world outside ourselves. We cannot reach the light of truth as long as pride rests in us. "Pay attention to this cursed one—and bury it!"
13. Sanctify speech! Speech is the expression of the soul. Guard the covenant of the tongue; the holiness of the tongue. Not one word of evil speech! Not one round of gossip! No idle words at all; and it goes without saying, not to defile your tongue with filth. Do not think that there is no damage from speech. What difference does it make? A vulgar joke? Whom does it hurt? No, dear brother! A word has the power to build and destroy worlds. It is your duty, Yavnehite, to be a builder, a creator, repairing lives that have been destroyed. Therefore, let your words be holy.
14. Sanctify your inner life! Let not a day in life pass without taking stock of your soul. Learn or hear *mussar* [moral teachings] every day. Books like *The Duties of the Hearts*, *The Path of the Upright*, *The Way of the Righteous*, *Tanya*, *Select Counsels*,¹⁰ should always be your companions.

Ethical
Commandments

(H)

Even if you are busy and cannot afford more time, separate yourself for five to ten minutes every day, in your chosen corner, for a short and precise tally of your soul. And at this same time, let there be a short silent prayer in your heart:

"Sovereign of the world, set me on the right path, on the path of light."

meditative
practice

NOTE: Any reader who has firmly decided to start living in accord with the fourteen principles outlined above, even if gradually, in steps, may turn in this regard either orally or in writing to Hillel Zeitlin, Szliska 60, Warsaw.

- 15.¹¹ Broaden and deepen the activity of "B'nai Yavneh." Wherever you encounter a person who is prepared to accept the views offered in this book and to seek to live by them, hold fast to him. Teach him, enlighten him, guide him. When you find a few people in your city ready to live in accord with everything said in this book, cleave to them. Enlighten and guide them; proceed together up the pathway that leads toward God. If the way is too far for you and you find it hard to fulfill everything said here, do not turn back. Fulfill first what is *possible* for you. Afterward try to go further. The God of heaven and earth will be there to help you.

אבן/אבן

Let one small gathering extend its hand to a second, the second to a third, until there is firmly established a whole assemblage of Jews returning to God in truth and wholeness, "doing His word in order to hear the voice of His word" (Ps 103:20).

THREE ARAMAIC CHAPTERS FROM
SIFRAN SHEL YEHIDIM

*Into a Single Chamber!*¹²

To you, O children of the holy, sublime light! You know all the suffering and pain of *shekhnah*, all She has endured from the day of Adam's sin until now! You have known all the awful affliction, the loud outcries from amid the atrocities of the last years, surely the birthpangs of messiah.

רחמים

אל אלהי ישראל! מי אנכי, שהתפלל לפניך על בניך?
מי אנכי, שאזכה להתפלל לפניך על בני אברהם, יצחק ויעקב?
מי אנכי, שאזכה להתפלל לפניך על עמך הגדול והקדוש, עם ישראל?
מי אנכי ומה אנכי? בריה עניה, עלובה, כלי מלא בושה וכלמה,
הרש את חרשי אדמה, הולע ככל המולעים הרוחשים.
מי אנכי, כי אבוא לעורר את חסדך הגדול? מי אנכי, כי אבוא
לעורר את רחמך על הצאן הנדחית והעזובות?
עם גדול וקדוש ועם-זה גם - צאן נדחית ועזובות!
גדול הוא עמך - גדול הוא בסבלו את סבלך, בנשאו נצח את נטך,
בהלחמו על דבר-קדשך, על אמת-קדשך -
ועם-זה - צאן נדחית ועזובות" - צאן אובדות, צאן פזורות, צאן
לטבח יבול...
אב גדול וקדוש! רחם על בניך! רועה גדול וקדוש! רחם על צאנך!
אינני כדאי להתפלל עליהם. אבל לא אוכל עוד נשא עמלם -
עמלי. לא אוכל עוד נשא עינים - עיני...
אינני כדאי. בודאי ובודאי, שאינני כדאי. עשה-נא המעם בעד מי
שאיננו כדאי, בעד מי שאיננו שדה מאומה...
הלא לך אוצר גנוז ושמיר - אוצר של מתנות-חנם. חנני-נא, חנני,
אבי, מן האוצר ההוא.
קח מעטה-חסד מן האוצר ההוא, משמחו ופרשו על רבואי-רבבות
עמך, על רבואי-רבבות בניך!

7. Compassion

O God, the God of Israel,
who am I that I should pray to You about Your children?
Who am I that I should merit praying to You about the children of
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?
Who am I that I should set my prayer before You about Your great and
holy people, the people Israel?

Who am I and what am I? A poor creature, wretched, a vessel brimming
with disgrace and shame!
A mere shard amid the broken clay of earth! A worm among the
worms that crawl about!
Who am I to come in hope of stirring up the greatness of Your love?
Who am I that I should come to waken Your compassion for this flock
forlorn and straying?
"A great and holy people," and, for all of that, "a flock forlorn and straying!"
Great Your people, great in bearing up Your burden, raising Your banner
up forever,
struggling for Your holiness, for Your holiness's truth.
And for all of that, "a flock forlorn and straying," a flock that's lost, a
flock that's scattered, a flock brought forth for slaughter.
O great and holy Father! Have compassion for Your children!
O great and holy Shepherd! Have mercy for Your flock!
I am not fit to pray for them. But I can bear no more their burden—
this heavy load of mine.
I can no longer bear their suffering—this suffering of mine.
I am not fit—no, surely, surely, I'm not fit.
But act, I pray, this time, for one who *isn't* fit, for one who is worth
nothing...
For have You not a treasure hidden and concealed? A treasure house
of gifts unmerited?
Bestow, I pray, such grace on me! Be gracious unto me, O my Creator,
from that place!
Just take a little lovingkindness from that treasure house—and spread
it out upon the many tens of thousands of Your people,
upon the many millions of Your children!

d part of their lives fighting about rabbis, ritual slaughterers, and religious officials. They consider only themselves to be proper and everyone else to be nothing at all. They make Hasidism contentirely of external manners, outer dress, and outward customs. regularly mix fanaticism with piety. They chase away the young le over petty and foolish matters, sometimes pushing them far Jewish religious life with their very hands....

you claiming that today's *hasidim* contain even less true and Judaism than the non-*hasidim*?

forbid! First, I'm only speaking here about a portion of today's *lim*, not about all. Certainly there are other sorts of *hasidim* presoday as well: those who bear a deep inwardness, a deep attach-; a passionate love of God. They have love for all Jews, a love of and a longing for peace, a strong, clear understanding of all that ppening around them. Second, even the other *hasidim*, those of ardness and dress, still have lots of good qualities, things that ng to all Jews. Whatever failings a contemporary *hasid* may have, ill bears a certain sense of shame, a fear of God, a brokenness, ething of modesty, humility, a leaning toward lovingkindness, lness, and love. But all—the inward *hasidim*, those who concen- on the externals, and just ordinary Jews—today need a new light will shine into their souls, a Hasidism of the future, rays of mes-; light.

s Yavneh want to be that "Hasidism of the future," that of messiah's light"?

: Hasidism is not yet here. The rays of messiah's light show them- es hardly at all, only to those most pure of sight. But Yavneh ts to *prepare* for that future. Yavneh seeks, bit by bit, to qualify viduals for it. It wants to create vessels to contain that light, ch must come sooner or later.

l in what way will the "Hasidism of the future" be differenti- l, not only from today's external Hasidism, but from that ch is inward, and even from the Hasidism of the BeSHT?

Differentiated from inward Hasidism and from that of the BeSHT? Not at all! On the contrary, it will be built entirely on the Hasidism of the BeSHT. But what then? It will go farther, broader, and deeper, appropriate to these messianic times.

What will that "going farther," in both breadth and depth, consist of?

In the time of the BeSHT it was enough for Israel to shine a light for itself. In these times, in a time when a world has been destroyed and a new one is being built,⁷ Israel has to be a light for itself and for all peoples, as in the verse: "I the Lord call you in righteousness and hold fast to your hand, making you as a covenantal people, a light to the nations" (Isa 42:6). And scripture also says: "Is it easy for you to be My servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the guarded ones of Israel? I have made you a light unto the nations, so that My salvation may reach the ends of the earth" (Isa 49:6). And it also says: "Then I will turn all the nations toward a clear tongue so that they all might call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him together" (Zeph 3:9).

And in what else?

In the time of the BeSHT Jews sought the light of Torah only in the Torah itself. Sometimes they also sought it out in ordinary folk-tales, in which they discovered a hidden light. ("Declare His glory among the nations" [Ps 96:3], according to a profound remark of Rabbi Nahman, means that "the glory of God cries forth from all things, even from tales told by the non-Jews.") But in the times of this final great purification we need to seek out the Torah-light in all the finest works of art, in all forms of worldly knowledge. We need to approach these with a certain light in our hands, with a particular kind of foresight. "A candle of the Lord is the human soul, searching out all the belly's chambers" (Prov 20:27). It will have to separate, seek out, and nullify, casting aside heaps of lies in order to get at the kernel of truth....

And in what else?

In the time of the BeSHT the class conflicts among people were not yet so sharply defined. The demand for social justice had not yet been articulated with full seriousness and honesty. Today we are undergo-

rhymed couplets

Genre 7: **Prayer**, the ultimate conversation [Descendant of David, 223]

Ben Dovid (my thanks to Joel Rosenberg) Shtern zagt tsu shtern: Er lebt, er lebt!

Volkn -- tsu volkn: er shvebt, er shvebt!

Vintn tsu vintn: Trog, trog, trog!

ShaHar tsu shaHar: Tog, tog, tog!

Barg zagt tsu barg: Er shteyt! Er shteyt!

Veg zagt tsu veg: Er geyt! Er geyt!

Shtoyb zagt tsu shtoyb: Zayne trit! Zayne trit!

Gayst zagt tu gayst: Zayn gemit, zayn gemit!

Groz zagt tsu groz: Shtilerhayt! Shtilerhayt!

Vald zagt tsu vald: Zay greyt! Zay greyt!

Yam zagt tsu yam: Es tsitert der Levyosn!

Himel zagt tsu erd: Es kumt on dayn khosn!

The Descendant of David

Star to star declares: He lives! He is there!
Cloud says to cloud: He hovers in the air!
Wind says to wind: Bear the child, bear!
Dawn says to dawn: It's day everywhere!
Mountain says to mountain: He stands, he stands!
Road says to road: He walks in the Land!
Dust says to dust: His steps, do you hear?
Wind says to wind: His spirit is near!
Grass says to grass: Silence, be still!
Wood says to wood: Get ready to fulfill!
Sea says to sea: Leviathan quakes!
Heaven says to earth: Your bridegroom awakes!

Hasidic Spirituality for a New Era
The Religious Writings of Hillel Zeitlin

SELECTED, EDITED, AND TRANSLATED BY
ARTHUR GREEN

PRAYERS INTRODUCED AND TRANSLATED BY
JOEL ROSENBERG

FOREWORD BY
RABBI ZALMAN M. SCHACHTER-SHALOMI



PAULIST PRESS
NEW YORK • MAHWAH

Biblical Parallelism, iteration, word doubling,
 direct address; boldly disheveled, intimate
 The people - great/humble, zealous & lost

Who speaks?
 To whom?
 On whose behalf?

רחמים = ג ק א

אל אלהי ישראל מי אנכי, שהתפלל לפניך על בניך
 מי אנכי, שאזכה להתפלל לפניך על בני אברהם, יצחק ויעקב?
 מי אנכי, שאזכה להתפלל לפניך על עמך הגדול והקדוש, עם ישראל?
 מי אנכי ומה אנכי? בריה עניה, עלובה, כלי מלא בושה וכלמה,
 את חרשי אדמה, הולע ככל החולעים הרוחשים.
 מי אנכי, כי אבוא לעורר את הסדך הגדול? מי אנכי, כי אבוא
 לעורר את רחמין על הצאן הנדחית והעזובות?

עם גדול וקדוש ועם-זה גם - צאן נדחות ועזובות!
 גדול הוא עמך - גדול הוא בסבלו את סבלך, בנשאו נצח את יסר.
 בהלחמו על דבר-קדשך, על אמתת קדשך -
 ועם-זה - צאן נדחית ועזובות" - צאן אובודות, צאן פזורות, צאן
 לטבח יזבל...

אב גדול וקדוש! רחם על בניך! רועה גדול וקדוש! רחם על צאנך!
 אינני כדאי להתפלל עליהם. אבל לא אוכל עוד נשא עמלם -
 עמלי. לא אוכל עוד נשא עינים - עיני!...
 אינני כדאי. כדאי ובודאי, שאינני כדאי. עשה-נא הסעם בעד מי
 שאיננו כדאי, בעד מי שאיננו שיה מאומה...
 חלא לך אוצר גנוז ושמיר - אוצר של מתנות-חנם. חנני-נא, חנני,
 אבי, מן האוצר ההוא.
 קח מעטה-חסד מן האוצר ההוא, משמנו ופרשהו על רבואי-רבבות
 עמך, על רבואי-רבבות בניך!

from last week

מטה mantle
 תולע worm

7. Compassion

O God, the God of Israel,
 who am I that I should pray to You about Your children?
 Who am I that I should merit praying to You about the children of
 Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?
 Who am I that I should set my prayer before You about Your great and
 holy people, the people Israel?

Who am I and what am I? A poor creature, wretched, a vessel brimming
 with disgrace and shame!
 A mere shard amid the broken clay of earth! A worm among the
 worms that crawl about!
 Who am I to come in hope of stirring up the greatness of Your love?
 Who am I that I should come to waken Your compassion for this flock
 forlorn and straying?
 "A great and holy people," and, for all of that, "a flock forlorn and straying!"
 Great Your people, great in bearing up Your burden, raising Your banner
 up forever,
 struggling for Your holiness, for Your holiness's truth.
 And for all of that, "a flock forlorn and straying," a flock that's lost, a
 flock that's scattered, a flock brought forth for slaughter.
 O great and holy Father! Have compassion for Your children!
 O great and holy Shepherd! Have mercy for Your flock!
 I am not fit to pray for them. But I can bear no more their burden—
 this heavy load of mine.
 I can no longer bear their suffering—this suffering of mine.
 I am not fit—no, surely, surely, I'm not fit.
 But act, I pray, this time, for one who isn't fit, for one who is worth
 nothing...
 For have You not a treasure hidden and concealed? A treasure house
 of gifts unmerited?
 Bestow, I pray, such grace on me! Be gracious unto me, O my Creator,
 from that place!
 Just take a little lovingkindness from that treasure house—and spread
 it out upon the many tens of thousands of Your people,
 upon the many millions of Your children!

נִשְׁבַּח ה'

messianic ecstasy

Ben Dovid [Descendant of David, 223]

Shtern zagt tsu shtern (Er) lebt, (er) lebt! verb (M)

Volkn -- tsu volkn: er shvebt, er shvebt! verb

Vintn tsu vintn: Trog, trog, trog! verb

Shakhar tsu shakhar: Tog, tog, tog! down

Barg zagt tsu barg: Er shteyt! Er shteyt! verb

Veg zagt tsu veg: Er geyt! Er geyt! verb

Shtoyb zagt tsu shtoyb: Zayne trit! Zayne trit!

spirit

Gayst zagt tu gayst: Zayn gemit, zayn gemit!

mood, spirit

Groz zagt tsu groz: Shtilerhayt! Shtilerhayt!

Vald zagt tsu vald: Zay greyt! Zay greyt!

(+) Yam zagt tsu yam: Es tsitert der Levyosn!

קִיבֵּץ מִיָּמִין - הַיָּם

(+) Himel zagt tsu erd: Es kumt on dayn khosn!

The Descendant of David

Star to star declares: He lives! He is there!
Cloud says to cloud: He hovers in the air!
Wind says to wind: Bear the child, bear!
Dawn says to dawn: It's day everywhere!
Mountain says to mountain: He stands, he stands!
Road says to road: He walks in the Land!
Dust says to dust: His steps, do you hear?
Wind says to wind: His spirit is near!
Grass says to grass: Silence, be still!
Wood says to wood: Get ready to fulfill!
Sea says to sea: Leviathan quakes!
Heaven says to earth: Your bridegroom awakes!

Germanic compound etc. last heroic couplet

History - as - creation