

בבית אכסניא שלהם מותר, וייתר מזה אסור לעשות מניין, רק יתפללו כולם בבית־אב או בבית־מ"מ הקבוע, והשליח ציבור שיתפלל לפני חתכה אינו רשאי לשנות שום נוסח תפלה, הן בפסוקי דזמרא או בשמונה עשרה מנוסחתא האשכנזים כפי הדבר מאז ומקדם. רק שומר ישראל, וקטורת, והפלה לדה, והיודי אחר שמנה עשרה בחול מותרים להתפלל כפי המנהג בשארית בתי מדרשי.

ב. בהשתייכות קטן הסמוד לכהנמי הגדול ג"כ חלילה לעשות שם מנין, רק פעמים כשיאחזו לכא סמוד ליוצר אור או רשות לעשות שם מנין ובאופן שלא לשנות שום נוסח כלל, כו'.

ג. בנדון שלל סעודות בשבת, וגם שארי סעודות שעושין לעצמם כל בני הקהלה, חלילה: להמנין עליהם מן אנשי הכת רק שנים מהם, מלבד ברית מילה, וישואין רשות לבצע הסעודה לקרותו כרצונו, ובלבד שלא ישבו שנים יהודיין, רק נפרדים בריחוק מקום. וגם אינם רשאים להתפחד כמנהגם, ראשיהם למטה רגליהם למעלה.³ כדרך שהלוינים עושים, וגם אסורים בריקודים ומחולות, ותוקף אחר בת"מ⁴ מחויבין אותו אנשי הכת לילך לניהם. וכמציא שבת חלילה להכת לילך אצל הש"ץ, רק שני אנשים שיהיו אצלו על שלל סעודות חוץ מבני ביתו.⁵

ד. חלילה לאותן אנשי הידועים להרים קולו בתפלתו יותר מדאי, שלא יכלילו את התפלה.

ה. שתחילה ל"י ליב מלמד: מטרנסאל מוזיום דלמטה לילך על שום סעודה על משך שנה המימה, ואם יעבור או יעמוד עליו הפסיד כמקדם.

ו. שלא ילכו אותו האנשיין על שום נדבה, רק מלמדים שיצוה הרב אב"ד, והש"ץ דקולותיו חלילה לכנות אותו בשם מנין, רק ש"ץ, ומחויב להיות נכנס לבקעלי בתים כמנהג כל הקהלות.

כל הנ"ל נעש' במוסכם כל יקורי הקהלה, ובצירוף הרב אב"ד נ"י מק"ק לעשנב. הק' מנחם מענדל בהגאון מהורר יעקב נ"י⁶; הק' עקיבא אב"ד דק"ק לאדמור⁷ 10

3. בקונטרס: רללה — סעות דמים.
4. ראה למעלה כתב ג, שלא ילכו שני מינים יחד.
5. השהה כתב א, הערה 24.
6. ברכת המזון.
7. 'הש"ץ היה כנראה ראש הבורה החסידים בלשוננו והיה עורך את המעוות השלישית עם חסידו הפקום, שהיו מכנים אותו בשם 'מגור', כפי שהמבדר מתקנה ג, מכל מקום הקהל לא העביר אותו ממשרתו, כדרך שנהג קהל וילנא במנין ר' חיים.
8. ד"ר גלבר מורה את המלמד מטאנטול עם ליב מלמד מברודי, מחבר 'התעורר, הודעות על יסוד המורים, שנחמלו בשקלוב בתקופתו, שנינו בהם חלון (תולדות יהודי ברוי' תש"י), עמ' 110, הערה 16; ד"ר גלבר לא ציין מנין לו זאת.
9. סדר החתומים בהתוספת דונבנו בהעפ"ר הוא שונה מאשר בקונטרס.
10. לדומר (ולאומיר חלינסקי).

שנאמר לעיל בא באות בית אלה, וצריך להיות בית היא, שבחילוף בית ב"ש — ש"צ, ונראה הדברים⁸². היות כל פרי מחשבתם הוא לרעה להיות טעותם רגיל על לשונם, לכל יורו מת'עצמם⁸³ כאשר ניכר מחשבתם הרעה מתוך מעשיהם המנוגים. תימק לשונם וישת'ר'ככו בהם תולעים, והתוודו את חטאתם עוונות ופשעים, אשר נעבדו לתאמתם בסדר, והרי הם סרים מכל הדרך, והיה ובתוכם האמת נעדרת, אך כמה סוררת, מראים בגלוי צדקם, והנה אך הכפירה בתוך חיקם, לא יאבה ה' סלח להם, יקום בהם מה שכתוב אמרתי אפואם⁸⁴, הם ימותו באין מוסר, והיו דראון לכל כשר, וה' אלקים אמת יתנו במעגלי צדק למען שמו, יוסף שנית יוד לקנות שאר עמו, בית רשעים ישמר ואהל ישרים יפריח, ישלח לנו גואלינו אלהו הנביא ומלך המשיח.

[כתב ז]

עוד הוספתי ידו להעתיק תקנת מן קהלה גאה וחסודה ק"ק לעשנב ג, שעשו גדר בעולם על הכת לייצגם, שהתחילו לפרה שם והגדילו להפליא ולהרשיע, והו לשונם: באשר שראינו רעה בעינינו, שנחברנו קטנות ומריכות מאיות אנשים הידועים הני' חסידו, שנשתק'נען] בלבם הגדלות לשנת נוסחתא של התפלה כמפי שהי' מקדם נוסחא אשכנזית, וגם עושים לעצמם חבורות חבורות, ומה גם שרבים הם המתפוצצים והכו את א' מן הראשים ומנהיגי², ראינו לעשות להעמיד הדבר על מכוני כפי שגבילו ראשונים, לא תתוודו וכו', שלא תרבה המחלוקת, ועשינו איות תקנות שיתבארו כאן, כדי להשקיע המריבות, ויהי' שלום על ישראל.

א. שלא יהי' שום מנין בקהלותינו, חוץ אצל הרבני מההדר יואל. וגם לארחים

32. על הקשר בין כת החסידים לתועת ש"צ כבר נדמו כהנבים ב, ג, ה של הקונטרס. השהה גם לחלו בהקדמתו של ר' יוסף שטיינהאנדט לספרו 'נפרון יוסף'; הקדמתו של ר' ישראל לבל לספר ויכוח (תקנ"ח); כהנו של ר' יוד ממאקוב; זמיר עריצים (תקנ"ח) דף רב; שבר שרשעים, דפים: יג/א, יד/ב, לב/ב; ע/ב; והאשה זו מונאת גם כהנה המלשונות של ר' אביגדור מנינסקי, דאה לחלו; ע"ן בם מאמר של ג. שלום: השבתאות בפולין, קובץ 'בית ישראל בפולין ח"ב, תשי"ז, עמ' 64.
33. על פי החלים עת ל רילא ווד מאומתם³⁴.
34. דברים לב, כו.
1. עיירה בגליל ברוי. ביתו שלא צוין זמן קבלתו של התקנה, לא תמכר לנו אם קהל לשוננו ותעורר לתקן בהשפעת חכם ברוי, מלוי' סיון תמננת בתוך הקונטרס.
- איש ברוי, ככל את התקנות בתוך הקונטרס.
2. על הדמת יד ומגיעה נוסחיה במתנתים, דאה ספר ויכוח, דף ג; זמיר עריצים מו, שבר משיעים עו—עו.

rabbinic tradition the obligation to pray is rabbinic, not biblical.⁴ In the Talmuds one rabbi can rebuke another who prolongs his prayers unduly by protesting 'they leave aside eternal life [= the Torah] to engage in temporal existence' [= prayer]. Scholars like R. Simeon b. Yohai, we are told, whose sole occupation was study of the Torah, would not interrupt their studies in order to pray.⁶

The Hasidic teachers were not unaware that their elevation of prayer over all other duties was a departure from what, at least, was held to be the tradition and they sought to justify their innovation by seeking to demonstrate, as religious innovators are wont to do, that the tradition, rightly understood, was really in line with their attitude. Thus R. Shneur Zalman of Liady (1747-1813), founder of the Habad group in Hasidism, in a letter addressed to Alexander of Shklov,⁷ makes the point explicitly:

Those who argue that prayer is only binding by Rabbinic law have never seen the light. It is true that the forms of the prayers are Rabbinic, and that prayers must be recited three times a day, but the concept of prayer and its essential idea belong to the very foundation of the Torah, namely, to know the Lord, to recognise His greatness and His glory with a serene mind, and, through contemplation, to have these fixed firmly in the mind. A man must reflect on this theme until the contemplative soul is awakened to love the Lord's name, to cleave to Him and to His Torah and greatly to desire His commandments. Nowadays, all this can only be achieved by reciting the verses of praise and the benedictions before and after the Shema with clear diction and in a loud voice so as to awaken the powers of concentration. All this and then perhaps! It was otherwise with regard to R. Simeon b. Yohai and his colleagues. For them the recitation of the Shema alone was sufficient for them to attain all this. It was all achieved in a blink of the eye, so humble was their heart in its covenantal loyalty. But, nowadays, anyone who has drawn near to God and has once tasted the fragrance of prayer, knows and appreciates that without prayer no man can lift hand or foot to serve God in truth, rather than as the commands of men who learn by rote.

Similarly, R. Kalonymus Kalman Epstein of Cracow (d. 1827) writes:⁸

When the Jew draws near to the form of worship that is prayer it is to the greatest thing in the whole world that he draws near, as the holy book tell us. The Talmud states explicitly that prayer is greater than good deeds.⁹ In our generation, especially, the chief method by means of which a man can refine his character, so as to approach the divine and serve God, is prayer. From the time of his coming, the holy Baal Shem Tov, may the memory of the holy and saintly be for a blessing, caused the tremendous sanctity of prayer to illumine the world for whoever wishes to draw near to God's service. However, in order for a man to attain to pure prayer it is necessary for him to engage in much service of the sages, to labour long, night and day, in the study of the Torah and in performance of good deeds so that, as a result, he may learn how truly to pray with fear and great love, as those who have discernment know full well.

Here we clearly see how an influential Hasidic author strives to reconcile the traditional view of the supremacy of Torah study with the new Hasidic emphasis on the supremacy of prayer. His solution is that, indeed, the study of the Torah and the performance of good deeds are essential and that without them prayer is futile. But—and a complete transvaluation is involved in the qualification—these are essential as aids to prayer. They are the guarantee that the worshipper will be capable of offering his prayers 'with fear and great love'. In another passage¹⁰ R. Kalonymus Kalman, commenting on Jacob's dream, notes that a Midrash reads homiletically that Jacob awoke from his learning (*mi-mishnato*, instead of *mi-shenato*, 'his sleep'). The Midrash, of course, suggests that Jacob saw his vision of the divine because he was learned in the Torah. But R. Kalonymus Kalman boldly turns the Midrash on its head to suggest that, on the contrary, once Jacob had experienced true prayer he saw that his learning was only a dream in so far as he had imagined that by it he could come to love God. Jacob, remarks our author, had hitherto known only that man can draw near to God through the study of the Torah. When, however, he prayed to God in the place of his dream, he experienced such a powerful feeling of nearness to God that he came to realise that the true awakening of the spirit is through prayer alone. Jacob, speaking of prayer, then declared, 'Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not'. After remark-

The substitution of the Lurianic Prayer Book for the traditional one is a constant cause of offence to the Mitnagedim. The complaint appears in practically all the anti-Hasidic documents.⁷ The Mitnagedim were prepared to tolerate the use of the Lurianic rite for the few mature Kabbalists. In the anti-Hasidic proclamation issued at Brody in Galicia in 1772 an express exception was made for the Kabbalists in the *stiebel* (conventicle) in the *klaus* of Brody. But for the immature, argued the Mitnagedim, it was strictly forbidden both to set up such conventicles and to use the Lurianic Prayer Book. For the light it throws on the whole polemic the Brody proclamation (written in Yiddish) must be quoted in part:⁸

These people [the Hasidim] who create new customs for themselves build for themselves high places⁹ so as to be apart from the holy community. They form separate *minyanim*¹⁰ and do not pray with the rest of the community in the synagogues and houses of learning set aside for public use. They depart from the coinage of prayer, coined by the great Codifiers responsible for the order of prayer in these lands. And these same people taunt and insult the angels of God [the rabbis]. They allow the correct time for the recitation of the Shema and the Prayers to go by. Especially, do they change the version of the Prayer Book to one that is not in use in these lands. This prayer Book [the Ashkenazi] has been instituted by the great scholars of old so that it is forbidden to turn aside from it either to the right or the left. Nowadays, one finds these wicked men, sinners with their bodies, of incomparable wickedness. They cast off the yoke, forsaking eternal life only to indulge all day in song. They form themselves into groups and sects. They despise the Oral Law in general and declare that they study only the Kabbalah. They use in their prayers the Prayer Book of the man of God, the holy *Ari*, of blessed memory, and, without doubt, they are guilty of lopping off the branches. . . .¹¹ Therefore, the above-mentioned holy community issues a great and terrible anathema . . . that from this day onwards God forbid that any change should be made from the Ashkenazi version of the Prayer Book in any synagogue or in any of the *minyanim* which are allowed in private houses by the laws of our community. It goes without saying that no one must have the temerity to use the Prayer Book of the godly *Ari*, his memory for the life of the world to come, or of any of the other Kabbalists into whose secret counsel the souls of these wicked men have not been admitted.

God forbid, too, that any man should use in his prayers any other Prayer Book than that of the Ashkenazim, which we have by tradition from the scholars of old, with the exception of the remnant called by God, who pray in the first *stiebel* at the side of the *klaus* in our community. It is clear beyond doubt that the men who have set aside that place for their prayers are full of the revealed learning, the Talmud and the Codes, and they have made progress, too, and have acquired fame in the secret learning of the Kabbalah. These have used the Prayer Book of the *Ari*, of blessed memory, for many a long year, and they followed their custom in the presence of the rabbis of old, the famous great scholars of our community, who did not prevent them from following their custom because it was known that from their youth they studied, in the main, Talmud and Codes. And they were outstanding in piety, knowing their Master and having the correct intentions [*Kavvanot*]. These famous men referred to are permitted to pray, as is their custom, out of the Prayer Book of the holy man of God, the *Ari*, may his memory be for a blessing, but no one else is allowed so to do. Outside that *stiebel*, God forbid that any *minyan* should alter even one letter of the Ashkenazi version of the Prayer Book. They should have nothing at all to do with the secret wisdom. Nor should they follow any of the Sephardi customs, only the customs of this land. God forbid that we should change any of the customs of our fathers. Furthermore, our concession [to the men of the *stiebel*] only applies to men of thirty years and over. But God forbid that any under the age of thirty should attach themselves to the above-mentioned *stiebel*.

The Hasidic reply was forthcoming in a letter by R. Eleazar son of the Hasidic master R. Elimelech of Lizensk, disciple of the Maggid of Meseritch. This letter was first published as an Appendix to the first edition of R. Elimelech's *Noam Elimelech* (Lemberg, 1788) and has appeared in all subsequent editions of the work.¹² The part of the letter relevant to our theme reads:

I asked my master, my father, my teacher and mentor, may his light shine, to tell me the reason why we have altered the standard version of the Prayer Book. This was his reply. Behold, the *Bet Yosef*,¹³ of blessed memory, who is the foremost of the Codifiers, of blessed memory, quotes these versions [of Luria]. Afterwards, the *Rama*,¹⁴ of blessed memory, who is also first of all the Codifiers, came and he investigated and introduced all the rules for the generality of Israel. He saw what a great illumination is contained

in this version [of Luria], so great that the world is unworthy to use it, so that he established for us the Ashkenazi version which applies to all men of our degree. But he certainly did not intend to prevent the Zaddikim, who have cleansed themselves from filth and who are strict with themselves to a hair's breadth, from using the version recorded by the *Bet Yosef*, of blessed memory. And both these and these are the words of the living God.

It can be seen that R. Elimelech is more circumspect than his teacher, the Maggid. While the Maggid declares that it is the Lurianic version that is applicable to all (*darar ha-shaveh le-khol nefesh*), R. Elimelech uses this very same term of the Ashkenazi version. It is, basically, according to R. Elimelech, only the Zaddikim who are worthy of using the Lurianic version. But in that case, R. Elimelech goes on to ask, what justification is there for the ordinary Hasidim to use the Lurianic version? 'If you will ask, behold, there are many people who have not reached the degree of which I have spoken and who, none the less, use this version in their prayers and who attach themselves to the elevated Hasidim and they themselves are called Hasidim?' His reply is that Israel believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses (Exod. 14: 31). By believing in Moses ordinary folk have a share in the elevated stage of prophecy to which Moses had attained. By the same token those who have faith in the Zaddik and are attached to him have a share in his sanctity and are, therefore, allowed to use the Lurianic version even though, basically, its use is only sanctioned for the Zaddikim. Thus the use of the Hasidic Prayer Book served to advance the cause of Zaddikism, of which R. Elimelech was one of the most vigorous exponents.

However, R. Eleazar is evidently not too convinced of the force of his father's argument. He continues that if anyone does not accept this notion of sharing the Zaddik's sanctity he can still use the Lurianic version if he purifies himself from sin, and R. Eleazar gives detailed instruction on how this may be achieved. He concludes that once a worshipper has tasted the fragrance of the Lurianic version he will never again be able to use any other. Even though people will contend with him for using this version he will ignore them and suffer rather than give it up.

Because of their opposition to the ideas of the general community and their adoption of the special Prayer Book, the Hasidim were forced to congregate in their small *shtetls*. This was a constant offence mentioned in the trenchant diatribes of the Mitnaggeim, as we have seen.¹⁵ Eventually, the Hasidim made a virtue of necessity. To this day the Hasidim, on the whole, prefer prayer in the homely and informal *shtetl* to prayer in a large synagogue. A further reason for the later use of the *shtetl* was that the Hasidim of a particular dynasty would be found in small groups in many of the larger towns and, not being able to afford to purchase a large synagogue, which in any event would be too large for their needs, preferred to hire a small room where like-minded folk could worship together.¹⁶ In the 'court' of the Zaddik a large synagogue was far from being an unusual feature.

Although the traditional preference is for prayer to be recited in the large synagogue of the town and is opposed to worship in small conventicles, the Hasidim were able to point to a Responsum by the famous sixteenth-century legal authority R. David Ibn Abi Zimra in which the importance of like-minded persons worshipping together overrides the advantages of worship in a large congregation.¹⁷ This responsum deals with a group which separated itself from the general community to pray, together with their teacher, in a synagogue of their own. The Hasidim were able to use the fortuitous references to the 'teacher' and adapt these to the Hasidic Zaddik. The responsum has such an uncanny resemblance to the particular needs of the Hasidim that, were it not for its undoubted authenticity, one would imagine it to have been invented by a contemporary Hasid.

The Responsum in question declares:

We read in the Talmud that one should not rise to offer prayer when one has been joking or in a frivolous state of mind or gossiping or quarrelling or in a bad temper. We read further that R. Hanina would refuse to pray on a day on which he had lost his temper. We read further that no man should offer his prayers unless his mind is serene. We read further that Samuel would not pray in a house in which there was beer because the smell of the beer would disturb him and prevent him from concentrating on his prayers. From all this you can learn that a man should offer

his prayers neither in a place in which his thoughts are disturbed nor at a time when his powers of concentration are set at naught. Consequently, if an individual or a number of persons are in a state of enmity or bad temper or hatred or contention with the community, their prayers are unacceptable and it is forbidden for them to pray there [in the synagogue of the community] since his [the individual worshipper at loggetheads with the community] thoughts are disturbed and he is unable to concentrate on his prayers. It applies all the more if they [the members of the community] are always in the habit of vexing him to his face and all the more if the cause of the vexation concerns the leaders of the congregation. Were I not afraid I would go so far as to say that it is better for a man to recite his prayers in private than to pray together with people with whom he cannot get on. There is another reason, too, why a man should only pray in a place which his heart desires. The reason for this is that when a man gazes at someone with whom he is on friendly terms his soul is awakened to concentrate adequately, his mind is enlarged and his heart is gladdened. The spirit of the Lord can then rest upon him, as prophecy declares. In the books of wisdom it is further declared that when a man has his teacher in mind and directs his heart to him then his soul becomes bound to the soul of his teacher and some of the flow of grace that belongs to the teacher rests upon the disciple. The disciple then acquires an additional soul, which they [the Kabbalists] call 'the mystery of impregnation while both master and disciple are alive'. This is referred to in the verse, 'But thine eyes shall see thy teacher' [Isa. 30: 20] and this is the meaning of, 'That they may stand there with thee . . . and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them' [Num. 11: 17]. And so our holy master [R. Judah the Prince] used to pray that if he could only have seen the face of his teacher he would have reached a most elevated stage. All the more if the teacher has the same intention so that one calls to the other, this one to give, the other to receive. It is for this reason that R. Jose said that a man does not have the merit of learning the Torah from everyone. On the basis of this the rabbis permit a man to go away to study the Torah even if his father forbids him to go, so that by going he disobeys his father. For a man does not have the merit of learning the Torah from everyone. This very reason applies to prayer. For when a man looks at his friend or his relative or his teacher or one who pleases him, his soul is awakened to an elevated degree of concentration and an additional spirit from on high rests upon him. This matter is attested to by the intellect.

Many of the Hasidim, especially in the early days of the movement, attended the courts of the Zaddikim or associated with the Hasidic groups in defiance of both their parents and the community leaders. It must have been encouraging to the rebels to find an acknowledged legal authority of the standing of R. David Ibn Abi Zimra giving them a clear dispensation to form their own congregations for prayer even when this involved separation from the community and disregard of the fifth commandment.

R. Elimelech of Lizensk, disciple of the Maggid of Meseritch, teaches that every limb and organ of the Zaddik is under the control of his soul.¹² As his soul journeys in the higher realms in prayer, it influences the body to make gestures of an entirely uncontrived nature. Because of their spontaneity, the gestures of the Zaddik do not appear odd or grotesque. On the contrary, so attractive do they appear that they are not infrequently copied. Naturally, such imitation of the Zaddik's gestures is not authentic and invites ridicule.¹³ R. Nahman of Bratzlav,¹⁴ great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, states that the way to set the heart on fire for God is by motion, since rapid motion generates warmth. When wax is attached to an arrow the wax melts when the arrow is released from the bow at great speed. However, R. Nahman goes on to say that he refers not to the movements of the body but to those of the soul as it speeds from one contemplative idea to the other.

Some of the early Hasidim took the notion of physical movement in prayer to absurd extremes. It is reported that the followers of R. Abraham of Kalisk and R. Hayim Haikel of Amdur (both disciples of the Maggid of Meseritch, though their corybantism did not meet with the Maggid's approval) used to turn somersaults in their prayers.¹⁵ The Hasidim of the Rabbi of Amdur, we are told, used to say, while engaged in these acrobatics, *Ein Gotts uegen in fun Rebbers uegen* ('For the sake of God and for the sake of the rabbi'). It is extraordinary, but such is the mystery of the *zeitgeist*, that at approximately the same time the 'Shakers' emerged in Manchester (where they were called 'Shaking Quakers') and later flourished in America.¹⁶ The Shakers practised a rolling exercise which consisted in doubling the head and feet together, and rolling over like a hoop. It would seem that the practice of turning somersaults in prayer was derived in part by the Hasidim from their doctrine of self-annihilation, to which attention has been called in a previous chapter. The self was overturned, as it were, seeking nothing for itself and desiring only the glory of God. As part of the process the Hasid would deliver himself up completely to the Zaddik through whose prayers he would be led to God.

In a book published in Altona as early as 1768, only eight years after the death of the Baal Shem Tov, the fiery R. Jacob Emden writes of the Hasidic gestures in prayer:¹⁷

I trembled when I heard only recently that a new sect of foolish Hasidim had arisen in Volhynia and Podolia, some of whom have come to this country, whose sole occupation is to study moral and Kabbalistic works. They prolong their prayers for half the day, far longer than the Hasidim of old who used to spend no more than an hour¹⁸ in prayer itself. Moreover, these men perform strange movements, weird and ugly, in the prayer of the Eighteen Benedictions. They clap their hands and shake sideways with their head turned backwards and their face and eyes turned upwards, contrary to the ruling of the rabbis¹⁹ that the eyes should be directed downwards and the heart upwards. The Tanhuma only advocates that the eyes should be directed upwards when the Kedushah is recited and even then they should be closed.²⁰ R. Menahem Azariah in a Responsum forbids any movement at all in prayer. ²¹ I stormed the bartlements time and again in order to discover some compromise whereby some slight and gentle motion of the body to and fro might be permitted, and this alone is permitted in order to bestir the vital powers. The teachers of old used to recite their prayers without any physical sensation. There is a maxim, based on the Zohar, 'When they stood, they let down their wings' [Ezek. 1: 24].²² But these men make wings for themselves wherewith to fly in the heavens. Ask yourself if they would dare to do so in the presence of a king of flesh and blood. Why, he would have them thrown out so that their limbs would be shattered and their bones broken. Verily, if I ever see those who do these things, which our fathers, of blessed memory, the true Hasidim, never dreamed of doing, I shall break their legs with a bar of iron.

It is reported even of a Hasidic master like R. Shneur Zalman of Liady, founder of the intellectual movement in Hasidism known as Habad and opposed to the more bizarre antics of some of his colleagues,²³ that he used to bang his hands on the wall during his prayers so that blood would be found on his hands.²⁴ Eventually, the Hasidim were obliged to place soft hangings on the wall so that the rabbi would not come to harm. The letter written by the rabbi to Alexander of Shklov is interesting in this connection.²⁵ In the year 1787 the rabbis of Shklov issued a proclamation against

סדר ספירת העומר

The Omer is counted each night from the second night of Pesah until the night before Shavuot. See laws 220-223.

Some say the following meditation before the blessing:

לשם יחוד קדושה ברוך הוא ושכינתה ברחילו ורחימו
ליתור שם יייה ברייה ברחימא שלום בשם כל ישראל.

הנינו מוכן ומזומן לקיים מצות עשה של ספירת העומר. כמו שפירשנו בתורה, ופירשנו לך מפרמטרת השבת, מיום הביאכם את-עמר התנופה, שבע שפירות תמימות תהיינה: עד מפרמטרת השבת השביעית תספורו חמשים ויום, והקרבנות מנחה חדשה ליהוה: ויהי לכם ארבע אלהינה עליונה, ומעשה ידעו כוננה עליונה, ומעשה ידעו כוננה:

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם

אשר קדשנו במצותיו, ואננו על ספירת העומר.

4. היום ארבעה ימים בעומר. נצח שבחוד	1. היום יום אחד בעומר. חוד שבחוד
3. היום חמשה ימים בעומר. הוד שבחוד	2. היום שני ימים בעומר. נבורה שבחוד
2. היום שלשה ימים בעומר. יכוד שבחוד	3. היום ששה ימים בעומר. תפארת שבחוד
1. היום יום אחד בעומר. טוב בעין	4. היום יום אחד בעומר. טוב בעין
5. היום חמשה ימים בעומר. כ טוב בעין	2. היום שני ימים בעומר. טוב בעין
6. היום שלשה ימים בעומר. יכוד שבחוד	3. היום ששה ימים בעומר. טוב בעין

COUNTING THE OMER

When the Temple stood, on the day after the first day of Pesah an offering was made of an Omer (approximately nine pounds) of new barley grain. There then began a count of forty-nine days – seven complete weeks – and on the fifth day, the festival of Shavuot was celebrated. When the Temple was destroyed, the Sages ordained that we should continue to count the days as a memory of this practice. The forty-nine days, connecting the exodus from

COUNTING OF THE OMER

The Omer is counted each night from the second night of Pesah until the night before Shavuot. See laws 220-223.

Some say the following meditation before the blessing:

For the sake of the unification of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Divine Presence, in reverence and love, to unify the name *Yod-Heh* with *Vav-Heh* in perfect unity in the name of all Israel.

Lev. 23
I am prepared and ready to fulfill the positive commandment of Counting the Omer, as is written in the Torah, "You shall count seven complete weeks from the day following the [Pesah] rest day, when you brought the Omer as a wave-offering. To the day after the seventh week you shall count fifty days. Then you shall present a meal-offering of new grain to the LORD." May the pleasantness of the LORD our God be upon us. Establish for us the work of our hands, establish the work of our hands. Ps. 90

ברוך Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe, who has made us holy through His commandments, and has commanded us about counting the Omer.

16 Nisan	19 Nisan
1. Today is the first day of the Omer.	4. Today is the fourth day of the Omer.
17 Nisan	20 Nisan
2. Today is the second day of the Omer.	5. Today is the fifth day of the Omer.
18 Nisan	21 Nisan
3. Today is the third day of the Omer.	6. Today is the sixth day of the Omer.

Egypt with the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, are a time of preparation and growth – of leaving a world of slavery and getting ready to enter a world of personal, social and spiritual responsibility. The Jewish mystics attached special significance to this period of the year as one in which the various facets of the soul were cleansed, one by one.

This latter is found in the *Shaare Tzion* but there is no reference there to 'the Hidden and Concealed One', which appears to be an even later addition.⁹ The meaning of this phrase is that the unification is performed through En Sof, 'the Hidden and Concealed One' (God as He is in Himself). The Sefirot do not enjoy any independent existence apart from En Sof and the unification is performed in and through En Sof.¹⁰ In the *Shaare Tzion* and in many later versions there is added, after the words 'love and fear': 'to unite the name *yod he* with *vav he* in complete unification'. The meaning of this is that in the Kabbalistic scheme the four letters of the Tetragrammaton stand for the Sefirot. Thus the *yod* represents Hokhmah and the *he* Binah. These two 'higher' Sefirot play their part in the unification process so that when Tiferet is united with Malkhut there takes place, too, the unification of the Sefirot. The last two letters of the Tetragrammaton, *vav* and *he*, represent respectively the Sefirot Tiferet and Malkhut. Hence the formula: 'to unite the name *yod he* [= Hokhmah and Binah] with *vav he*' [= Tiferet and Malkhut].

A number of early Hasidic writers refer to the formula in its simple form, e.g. R. Jacob Joseph of Pulnoye;¹¹ R. Elimelekh of Lizensk;¹² R. Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev;¹³ and R. Shneur Zalman of Liady.¹⁴

Landau's Responsum is addressed to 'Rabbi Baer, head of the holy communion of Goitein' (= Kojetzin in Moravia). The first part reads,

With regard to the fourth question you have asked regarding the formula *le-sheM yihud*, which has only very recently become popular and has been printed in the Prayer Books, behold, in this connection I reply: Rather than ask me the correct formula to be recited, you should have asked whether it should be recited at all. In my opinion this is the grievous evil of our generation. To the generations before ours, who did not know of this formula and never recited it but laboured all their days in the Torah and the precepts, all in accordance with the Talmud and the Codes whose words flow from the spring of living waters, the verse can be applied, 'The integrity of the upright shall guide them' [Prov. 11:3]. They are the ones who produced fruit on high and whose love was higher than the heavens. But in this generation they have

forsaken the spring of living waters, namely, the two Talmuds, Babylonian and Palestinian, to hew out for themselves broken cisterns. They exalt themselves in their arrogant hearts, each one saying, 'I am the seer. To me are the gates of heaven open. Through my merit does the world endure.' These are the destroyers of the generation. To this orphaned generation I apply the verse, 'The ways of the Lord are right, and the just do walk in them; but the Hasidim do stumble therein' [Hos. 14: 10]. There is much for me to say in this connection but just as it is a duty to speak when people will listen it is a duty not to speak when people will not listen.¹⁵ May God have mercy on us.

The verse, 'The ways of the Lord . . . ' speaks of 'transgressors' (*posheim*) for which Landau has substituted the word Hasidim. It is rumoured that for the second printing of the *Noda Biyudah* the Hasidim bribed the printers to restore the original wording. When Landau heard of it he is reported to have said, 'I turned the transgressors into Hasidim while they have turned the Hasidim into transgressors'¹⁶ though it is extremely unlikely that this actually happened.

Landau then takes up the legal question of whether any express formula is required before the performance of a *mizvah*. The questioner had argued that 'it is essential to express verbally that one has the "secret intention"' (i.e. that the *mizvah* is being carried out with the Kabbalistic motive of unification). His proof is from the Talmudic passage¹⁷ in which it is stated that when a man divorces his wife he must state verbally that the bill of divorce (the *get*) is being written for this particular woman (*lishmah*). Similarly, the questioner argues, when a vow is made it is only binding if expressed verbally. Landau replies that on the contrary the Talmudic passage quoted suggests the exact opposite. In that passage a distinction is made between a *get* and a sacrifice offered on the altar, which must also be done with that particular sacrifice in mind (*lishmah*), i.e. a sin-offering must be offered as a sin-offering, not as a burnt-offering or a peace-offering. Now the Talmud there states that while the intention of offering a sin-offering as a burnt-offering or a peace-offering invalidates the act, there need be no express intention or any verbal declaration that the sin-offering is being offered as such, unlike in the case of the *get*

thoughts) is great, 'as we have seen clearly demonstrated'. This remark obviously refers to the mystical heresies of the pseudo-Messiah Sabbatai Zevi, against whose crypto-followers there was a determined inquisition in Prague in Landau's day.

In the latter part of the Responsum, Landau deals with another legal problem raised by the questioner. Is not the formula an offence against pronouncing the divine name? Landau observes that in his youth he had heard people reciting the formula and they used the expression 'the name *yod he'*. While it might be argued that the name *yah*, formed from these two letters, should not be pronounced, and this is by no means certain, there can be no objection to pronouncing the individual letters, *yod, he*, in full. On these grounds there can be no objection but, as he has stated, there are weightier objections to the formula.

This latter part of the Responsum reads:

Your honour writes that it is good to have the knot firmly tied between word, thought and deed. But the Men of the Great Synagogue arranged for us the prayers and benedictions and there is nothing that is not hinted at in the forms of these prayers and benedictions. The benediction is the awakening of speech and thought. Where a benediction has been ordained before the performance of a *mitzvah* it is unnecessary to say anything other than the benediction before the performance of that *mitzvah*. Where no benediction has been ordained it is my habit to state verbally, 'Behold, I am about to do this in order to fulfil the command of my Creator'. This is sufficient. Nothing more is required. As for 'intention', this refers only to the meaning of the words of the prayers. All the *tikunim* ['perfections'] on high follow automatically on the deeds. However, in connection with your honour's casuistic discussion regarding the formula 'to unite the name *yod he* with *vav he'*, whether this falls under the heading of pronouncing the divine name, and you refer to the discussion by the Tosafists as to whether this embraces the pronunciation of the first two letters of the name, so far as I can recall from my youth, I heard these people saying, '*yod he* with *vav he'*, each letter in full, and this does not offend against pronouncing the divine name. But I have already revealed my opinion that silence is to be preferred and that the thing should sink into oblivion. Even in the mind there should only be the thought of the meaning of the words [of the prayers and benedictions, that is, and

not the Kabbalistic mysteries]. In this way you will walk in safety and not stumble in anything. More than this one should not elaborate on these matters, and I must be brief because of my heavy schedule. With kind regards, Ezekiel Landau.

The Hasidic reply was not long in forthcoming, in the work *Shaar Ha-Tefillah* ('Gate of Prayer')¹⁹ by R. Hayim b. Solomon of Czernowitz and Mohilev (d. 1813). The reply is worded in such a way that it indicates that Landau was still alive when it was written. It is a not unexpected blend of deference to a great rabbinic authority and Hasidic defiance of opponents of the movement. (It should, however, be noted that R. Hayim's reply is not in any way an 'official' or 'authorised' statement. He was, to some extent, somewhat apart from the mainstream of Hasidism.²⁰) R. Hayim begins:

I opened my eyes to see the lengthy statement in the work of the great and famous Gaon, righteous and upright is he, Our Master, Rabbi Ezekiel Segal Landau, head of the Court and principal of the Yeshivah in the holy community of Prague. His heart was lifted up to speak proudly, arrogance proceeding from his mouth, to touch the anointed of the Lord, engaging in contention with the Zaddikim of our generation. Generalising, he turned them all into transgressors, applying to them the verse, 'The just do walk in them; but the Hasidim do stumble in them'. The true prophet had already foretold this, that they would say such things of the righteous Messiah, when he said, 'He was numbered with the transgressors' [Isa. 53: 12]. But the prophet goes on to say, 'Yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors'. Reading between the lines of his letter it is clear that his sole intention was to chide. For it is his sound method in all his Responsa to investigate the source of every law in the Talmud and among the early Codifiers. Yet here he did not penetrate to the depths of the law and he fell into error because he allowed his temper to get the better of him so that on this question he overlooked the simple meaning of the Talmudic discussion and the law as laid down explicitly by the early and later Codifiers, as I shall explain.

First, R. Hayim observes that the ruling is that 'the precepts require intention' (*keavvanah*).²¹ This means that before carrying out a *mitzvah* one should be aware that one is so doing. It would seem, therefore, that the case of the *mitzvah* is to be compared to

was because they argued that his apostasy was a trick wherewith to deceive the denizens of the 'Other Side' and thus perform the complete 'perfection' of the Shekhinah.⁴³ Moreover, Scholem⁴⁴ has established a close connection between Sabbatianism and the rise of Hasidism. Against such a background there is nothing surprising about Landau's opposition to a formula so mysterious in meaning, particularly when adopted so enthusiastically by the Hasidim.

An important observation of Landau on the two challenges of modernism and Hasidism is to be found in his commentary to the Talmud.⁴⁵ Here he refers to two dangerous trends, those of the 'philosophers' and the Hasidim. He accuses the Hasidim of speaking brazenly of the divine mysteries in order to impress the masses. Landau here concludes:

Do not worry that you will receive some kind of punishment for failing to pray in accordance with the mysteries, as the Hasidim of our time imagine. It is not so. There is no punishment. On the contrary, you will be rewarded for separating yourself from these matters and as a result you will inherit eternal life.

On closer examination it can be seen that there is, in fact, a direct connection between the *le-shelem yihud* formula and the Sabbatian heresy (although, chronologically, the former antedates the latter). In Sabbatianism En Sof is not the Governor of the world, but 'the God of Israel' (= Tiferet) is the true Governor of the world and the Messiah is an incarnation of 'the God of Israel'. Thus the very terms 'the Holy One, blessed be He' and the Shekhinah lend themselves very readily to Sabbatianism. The older formula may well have been adopted by the Sabbatians for their own purpose. Nor is the sexual element in the formula to be overlooked.⁴⁶

Quite remarkable is the refutation of Landau by R. Hayim Joseph David Azulai (d. 1804), the renowned Sephardi traveller and scholar. Azulai writes:⁴⁷

A man should train himself to recite *le-shelem yihud*, as is the practice in Turkey, for by so doing he demonstrates explicitly that his deeds are for the sake of God alone and then there will be no stranger in his studies or in the *mitzvoth* he performs. Take no notice of that which Rabbi Ezekiel Segal Landau writes in his

Noda Biyudah, Yoreh Deah, No. 93, in which he attacks and denigrates the recital of *le-shelem yihud*. His anger at the Hasidim of his country led him into error. It is certain that he did not have in mind those who study the true science [the Kabbalah] in holiness and humility, but he generalised. He continues to expound the idea that no special intention at all is required and that all the perfections occur automatically above as the result of our deeds. In this he deliberately disagrees with R. Simeon b. Yohai and his associates, the elevated holy ones, and with our Master the Ari, of blessed memory, in whom the spirit of the Lord has spoken and with whom Elijah, may be he remembered for good, conversed as a man speaks to his neighbour. It is undoubtedly true that whoever carries out the precepts for the sake of heaven certainly performs the perfections above, but there is no comparison at all between him and one who has the correct intentions. This is clear and obvious.

The reference to Turkey in this passage should be noted. Turkey was, of course, the home of the Sabbatians. The extraordinary parallels between Azulai and R. Hayim of Czernowitz are too close to be coincidental. Possibly, R. Hayim had read Azulai's book and adopted his actual words.

The crisis of modernism was met by the Hasidim through a much greater emphasis on mysticism and the Kabbalah. Revealing is the reports⁴⁸ of a conversation between the Hasidic master R. Sinhah Bunann of Pzhysha (d. 1827) and his disciple R. Hanoch of Alexander (d. 1870). R. Sinhah Bunann is alleged to have said to R. Hanoch:

I am astonished at the incredible degeneration in Jewish observance in the city of Prague [!], a city renowned for its men learned in the Torah, since we have been taught by the rabbis that the Torah shields against sin both at the time when one studies it and at other times as well. But the matter can be explained as follows. In former ages the revealed part of the Torah was enough. Now, however, in the time of the 'heels of the Messiah', the secret Torah [the Kabbalah] is essential. We observe that just before a lamp goes out its flame become stronger and flares up. So, too, the evil inclination did not prevail to the same extent in former times and the revealed part of the Torah was strong enough an antidote. But now, just before the redemption, the evil inclination is very powerful and as an antidote one requires the force provided by the secret doctrines.