

Establishing Boundaries of Orthodoxy in the Modern Era

The Near Schism of the Early Chasidim



I. What was it?

Dr. Rachel Elijah, *The Origins of Hasidism*, available: www.academia.edu/3428448/The_Origins_of_Hasidism
Israel Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760), who was described by his students as a person "who is above this world and beyond the order of time" was a mystic who was interested in blurring or obscuring the borders between the spiritual and the material dimensions of existence as well as in transcending the borders between the divine presence and human consciousness. He attempted to liberate his followers from the bondage of reality by placing them in a new vantage point where the divine constantly illuminates the profane and the mundane is constantly yearning to the divine. In the Hasidic consciousness the divine presence exists in every place, every time, every word and every thought, and vice versa: every concrete manifestation is perceived as a concealment

of the divine being that sustains it. In order to consolidate this new consciousness the Besh't stated time and again that "The whole earth is full of his glory and there is no place void of him... divinity is in every place".

The Hasidic ideas were influenced by previous mystical literature, as will be noted below, however, whereas kabbalah relegated mystical practices to an elite few who separated themselves from the community and followed a pious way of life in order to devote themselves to sacred matters, the Baal Shem Tov saw every Jew as having the mystical potential to recognize the animating divine essence that suffuses everything. His students stated time and again that just as God is present equally everywhere, so all may equally approach God through their thoughts and achieve unity with him: "Every Jew contemplating... how God literally fills the higher and lower [levels] and heaven and earth literally, the whole universe is literally full of his glory". "Everyone must worship God in all His dimensions, for everything is for the sake of the Highest, because God wants to be served in all modes... God can be served in everything". This conception, which saw in each person "a divine portion from above", which asserted that "everyone was created on earth below to do great and wondrous things . . . to hint at the higher world", and which did not hesitate to say that "everyone can reach the level of our teacher Moses of blessed memory", reflected a new perception of man and a new perception of equality and freedom as part of an outlook that overturned conventional hierarchies which discriminate among different people, different access to study of Kabbalah and different modes of worship.

II. Early Opponents

שו"ת נודע ביהודה מהדורא קמא - יורה דעה סימן צג

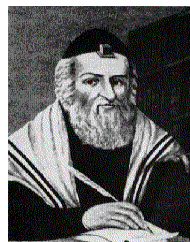
ועל הרביעית אשר שאל בנוסח לשם יחוד אשר חדשים מקרוב נתפשט ונדפס בסידורים הנה בזה אני משיב עד שאתה שואלני נוסח אמירתו יותר ראוי לשאול אם נאמר כי טוב באמירתו. ולדעתי זה רעה חולה בדורנו ועל הדורות שלפני זמננו שלא ידעו מנוסח זה ולא אמרוהו והיה /והיו/ עמלים כל ימיהם בתורה ובמצות הכל ע"פ התורה וע"פ הפוסקים אשר דבריהם נובעים ממקור מים חיים ים התלמוד עליהם נאמר תומת ישרים תנחם והם חיים אשר עשו פרי למעלה וגדול מעל שמים חסדם. אבל בדורנו הזה כי עזבו את תורת ה' ומקור מים חיים שני התלמודים בבלי וירושלמי לחצוב להם בורות נשברים ומתנשאים ברום לבבם כל אחד אומר אנכי הרוואה ולי נפתחו שערי שמים ובעבורי העולם מתקיים אלו הם מחריבי הדור. ועל הדור היתום הזה אני אומר ישרים דרכי ה' וצדיקים ילכו בהם וחסידים יכשלו בהם. והרבה היה לי לדבר מזה אבל כשם שמצוה לומר דבר הנשמע כך מצוה שלא לומר דבר שאינו נשמע וה' ירחם עלינו.



THE ROSH HODESH IYAR, 1772 EDICT

Not long thereafter, on the first day of the Hebrew month of *Iyar*, a letter bearing the signatures of the GRA, R. Samuel b. Avigdor, *Av Bet Din* (head of the Rabbinical Court) of Vilna, and sixteen judges was sent to R. Abraham Katzenellenbogen of Brest-Litovsk:

Our brethren in Israel, you are certainly already informed of the tidings whereof our fathers never dreamed, that a sect of the "suspects" [*Hashudim* instead of "*hasidim*"] has been formed . . . who meet together in separate groups and deviate in their prayers from the text valid for the whole people. They are wise men in their own eyes, and wonder-workers, and whoever sits among them, even an ignoramus incapable of reciting the *Shema Yisrael*, immediately upon joining them comes to merit this world and the next in one hour. . . . They are the same who, in the middle of the *Shmoneh-Esreh* prayer, interject obnoxious alien words [Yiddish] in a loud voice, conduct themselves like madmen, and explain their behavior by saying that in their thoughts they soar in the most far-off worlds. . . . The study of the Torah is neglected by them entirely, and they do not hesitate constantly to emphasize that one should devote oneself as little as possible to learning and not grieve too



Taken from *The Hasidic Movement and the Gaon of Vilna* by Eligah Schochet

much over a sin committed. Similar ugly deeds on their part have been fully delineated for us and verified by fit and truthful witnesses testifying to their ugly deeds and perverted ways. . . . Owing to our many sins they have succeeded in leading astray in many locales the sons of Zion faithful to halakha. . . . Every day is for them a holiday. . . . They that sanctify and purify themselves (to go unto the gardens behind one in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the detestable thing, and the mouse shall be consumed together, saith the Lord).¹¹ They receive reward for having departed from the Torah . . . and they consistently mock the angels of the Lord and desecrate the men of greatness in the presence of ignoramuses. . . . When they pray according to falsified texts they raise such a din that the walls quake . . . and they turn over like wheels, with the head below and the legs above. . . . Yet all this is only a little fraction, only a thousandth part of their disgusting practices . . . as the aforesaid *Hashudim* have themselves admitted to us. . . . Praised be God that that which has been committed by them has, with the help of heaven, been brought to light here in our camp, for by the most careful inquiries and investigations they have had to make a complete confession. . . . Therefore do we now declare to our brethren in Israel, to those near as well as far: . . . All heads of the people shall robe themselves in the raiment of zeal, of zeal for the Lord of Hosts, to extirpate, to destroy, to outlaw, and to excommunicate them. We here have already, with the help of His name, brought their evil intention to nought; and, as here, so should they everywhere be torn up by the roots. . . . Do not believe them even if they raise their voices to implore you . . . for in their hearts are all seven horrors. . . . So long as they do not make full atonement of their own accord, they should be scattered and driven away so that not two heretics remain together, for the disbanding of their associations is a boon for the world.¹²

III. Issues with Mitzvos

Nefesh Hachaim 4:1

ותחלה אשים דברתי בענין עסק התורה לשמיה, מהו ענין לשמיה. כי גם זה פרי חטאת, לכמה המונעים עצמן מעסק התורה הקדושה, בחשבכם כי ענין לשמיה פרושו, בדבקות גדול בלי הפסקה. וגם רעה חולה יותר מזה, שסוברים בדעתם שעסק התורה בלא דביקות אין כלום, וילא שום תועלת ח"ו. לזאת, כשוראין עצמן שאין להם הולך לזאת המדרגה, שיהא למינם בדבקות תמיד, לא יתחילו כלל ללמד, ועל כן תפוג תורה ח"ו. ומהמשך הענינים יתבאר א"ה ממילא מעלתה של התורה הקדושה והאדם העוסק בה כראוי.

Nefesh Hachaim Intro to 4 (4)

לזאת, הנהר בנפשך מאד, שאל ישיאך יצרך לאמר, שעקר הכל תראה שתהא אד עסוק כל ימיה לטהר מחשבתך כראוי, שתהא דבקות מחשבתך בבוראך בתמידות כל תמוט, ולא תשוב מפני כל להניח טהר מחשבתך בשום עת כלל, והכל לשם שמים, באמרו לך שכל עקר תורה ומצות המה דוקא כשהם בכונה עצומה ובדבקות אמתי, וכל זמן שאין לב האדם מלא לעשותם בכונה קדושה ובדבקות וטהרת המחשבה, אינה נחשבת למצוה ועבודה כלל, כאשר כבר למד המלך זקנו וקסיל, לסמות צינים, ולהביא ראיותיו ממקרא ומשנה ותלמוד ומדרשים וספר הזהר, כענין "הטעם לרע העו" (והדריו טו) וכנהנה רבות עמו חבילות ראיות.

DOING MITZVOS AT THE PROPER TIME

Be alert to the yetzer hara's maneuvers. Today he tells you: "Torah and mitzvot without devotion are worthless, so elevate your thoughts to Heaven. Before doing a mitzvah or praying, concentrate your thoughts on preparing for the mitzvah." But when you are finally ready, the time for the mitzvah or the *tefillah* has passed. The yetzer hara makes you believe that a mitzvah done with *kedushah* and pure intention — even after its set time has passed — is more precious to G-d than a mitzvah performed at the proper time but without deep *kavanah*. And with his smooth talk, he gets you accustomed to disregarding the time when a mitzvah or *tefillah* must be performed. You will end up thinking that it is permitted to do a mitzvah or *daven* after the prescribed time. Ultimately, you will be left

NefeshHachaim intro to 4 (8)

ואתה הקורא, אל תדמה שמלבי הוצאתי הדברים, כי את כל זאת בחנתי וגסיתי, כאשר נתתי לבי לדרש ולתור, ועיני ראו רבים אשר יחפצו קרבת אלוקים, ונכשלים כמו אלה הדברים הנ"ל, אשר מפייהם אלי נאמרו מלכם. ובעיני ראיתי במקום אחד איזה אנשים, שהרגלו בזה זמן כביר עד שכמעט נשכח מהם זמן תפלת המנחה שקבעו לנו רז"ל. ואדרבה, נקבע בלבם מרב ההרגל, כמו דין והלכה, שתפלת המנחה, עקרה אחר צאת הכוכבים. וכשאדם אומר לחברו נתפלל תפלת מנחה, הוא משיבו, נראה ונעין אם כבר נראה הכוכבים ברקיע, וה' יסלח להם, וכיפר לשוגה ופתי:

Dear reader, do not think that I dreamed these things up. I have checked, examined and researched these matters. I have seen many people who, striving for closeness to G-d, stumbled with regard to these things as they themselves have told me. I have witnessed several people who had been accustomed to this practice for so long that they have almost forgotten that the Minchah prayer must be recited at a set time prescribed by the Rabbis. Instead, out of habit, they accepted as Halachah that the proper time for the Minchah prayer is mainly after the stars appear, and when a man says to his friend, "Come, let's *daven* Minchah," the other answers, "First let's make sure the stars have already appeared in the sky." May G-d forgive them and pardon the unwitting and the ignorant.

IV. IssueswithLearning

Nefesh Hachaim 4:1

וגם כמה מאותן אשר קרבת אלוקים יחפצו, המה בחרו לעצמם לקבוע כל עקר למינם בספרי יראה ומוסר כל הימים, בלא קביעות עקר העסק בתוה"ק, במקראות והלכות מרבבות, ועדין לא ראו מאורות מימיהם, ולא נגה עליהם אור התורה, ה' יסלח להם, כי כוננתם לשמים, אבל לא זו הדרך ישפן בם אור התורה.

There are many sincerely devout people who occupy themselves almost exclusively with the study of books on piety and religious devotion rather than making the study of Torah their main concern. They shy away from Torah and halachah texts, may G-d forgive them. They mean well, but this is not the way toward attaining the light of the Torah.¹

having done the mitzvah neither at its set time nor with the proper *kavanah*.

Listening to the yetzer hara's blandishments leads to the total ruination of the Torah. Imagine a Jew sitting at the *seder* on the first night of Pesach. If he would prepare for the mitzvah of eating a *kezayis* (the prescribed olive-measure) of matzah in holiness, purity and devotion, by the time he would be ready to eat the matzah, dawn will have broken! All his holy intentions are now unacceptable. But if one eats the *kezayis* of matzah at the prescribed time, even without the extraordinary holiness and purity, he will be blessed for fulfilling the mitzvah as prescribed in the Torah.



But one has to be very cautious [not to get too close to] their "glowing coal," that is to say, not to contemplate and reflect on things that we are not permitted to scrutinize too deeply. As the Mishnah³ puts it: Warm yourself by the fire of the Sages.

אָבֵל צָרִיד לְהִזְהַר מְאֹד בְּגַחְלָתוֹ, שֶׁלֹּא לִיכַנֵּס לְהִתְכוּוֹן וּלְחַקֵּר בְּדַבְרֵי שֵׁי אִין הַרְשׁוּת נְתוּבָה לְהִתְכוּוֹן בָּהֶם יוֹתֵר מְדִי, כְּאִמְרַם שֶׁם "וְהָיוּ מִתְחַמֵּם כְּנֶגֶד אוֹרָן שֶׁל חֻקִּים", הֵינּוּ, שֶׁלֹּא לְהִתְרוֹחֵק מִלְּהִתְכוּוֹן כָּלֵל בְּדַבְרֵיהֶם, כִּי לֹא יִהְיֶה מְאוֹרֵם כָּלֵל, וְגַם לֹא יִתְקַרֵּב

This means: Don't turn away completely from pondering the Rabbi's words, for then you will not benefit from their wisdom at all. On the other hand, don't get too close, so that you will not be burned. Stay at a safe distance, as the Mishnah continues: Beware of their glowing coal, lest you be burned.

The same holds true for the word *Makom*; everyone knows that its plain meaning is "place" or "space." When we reflect on it, we discover that [by choosing this appellation] the Sages hinted at an important idea. The reason for calling Hashem *HaMakom* is explained by the Rabbis⁴ in connection with the verse, "He [Yaakov] came [bamakom] to a familiar place" (Bereishis 28:11): [The Gemara asks:] Why is the Holy One, blessed be He, given the byname of *Makom* (Place)? Because He is the *Makom* (Place) of the world, but the world is not His place.

Commenting on the verse, "Behold, there is a place with Me" (Shemos 33:21), the Midrash⁵ says: [Hashem says:] The place [of the world] is dependent on Me, but I am not dependent on the place [of the world]. The simple meaning of this remark is that just as the place supports an object [standing on it], so is Hashem the Place that supports and sustains the worlds and all creations. If G-d forbid, He would remove His attention from creation for an instant, all the worlds would cease to exist, as it says, "You are keeping them all alive" (Nechemiah 9:6).

This is the cornerstone of the Jewish faith, and for this reason, the Zohar describes G-d as "the Soul of all souls." Just as the soul animates and sustains the body [so Hashem animates and sustain the worlds]. [In the same vein,] the Gemara in

יוֹתֵר מְדִי, שֶׁלֹּא יִכְוֶה כְּנֶ"ל, רַק מְנַגֵּד, כְּמוֹ שֶׁסִּיֵּם אַחֵר זֶה "וְהָיוּ וְהָיָה בְּגַחְלָתוֹ" וְכוּ':
וְהָיָה כִּי תִבְתֵּן מְקוֹם גַּם כּוֹ, הַגֵּם שֶׁשְּׁשׂוּטוֹ מוֹכּוֹ, אָבֵל כְּשֶׁנִּדְרַק בּוֹ נִמְצָא שֶׁכָּלְלוּ וְרָמוּוּ בּוֹה עוֹר עֲנִין גְּדוֹל.
כִּי עֲנִין מֵה שֶׁהוּא יִתְבַּרֵּךְ נִקְרָא מְקוֹם. פֶּרֶשׁוּהוּ ז"ל בְּבִרְאשִׁית רַבָּה (פס"ח) עַל פְּסוּק "וַיִּפְגַּע בְּמְקוֹם" (בראשית כח. יא) "ר"ה קָשֶׁם ר"א אָמַר, מִפְּנֵי מֵה מְכַוֵּן שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַקְּרוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְקוֹרְאִין אוֹתוֹ מְקוֹם, שֶׁהוּא מְקוֹמוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם וְאִין עוֹלָמוֹ מְקוֹמוֹ". וּבִשְׁמֹת רַבָּה סוּף פֶּרֶשֶׁה מ"ה, וּבִתְנַחֲמוּמָא פֶּרֶשֶׁת תִּשְׁאָ "וַיֹּאמֶר ה' הִנֵּה מְקוֹם אֲתִי" (שְׁמֹת לֵג, כא) אָמַר רִיב"ח וְכוּ', אֲתֵרִי טַפְלָה לִי וְאִין אֲנִי טַפֵּל לְאֲתֵרִי. וְכֹן אֵיתָא בְּשׁוּחַר טוֹב תַּהֲלִים מְזֻמֹּר צ'.

וּלְפִי פֶּשׁוּטוֹ ר"ל, כְּמוֹ שֶׁמְקוֹם, הוּא סוֹבֵל וּמְחֻזֵּק אִיזוֹה דְּבַר וְחִפְזֵי הַמִּנְחָ עֲלָיו, כּוֹ בְּרַמְיוֹ זֶה הַבּוֹרָא אֵרוֹן כֵּל יִתְבַּרֵּךְ שְׁמוֹ, הוּא הַמְּקוֹם הָאֲמִתִּי הַסּוֹבֵל וּמְקַיֵּם הָעוֹלָמוֹת וְהַבְּרִיּוֹת כֻּלָּם, שֶׁאִם ח"ו יִסְלַק כּחוֹ מֵהֶם אֵף רַגַע אַחַת, אִפְסֵי מְקוֹם קַיּוּם וְחַיּוּת כָּל הָעוֹלָמוֹת, וְכֹמ"ש (נחמיה ט. ו) "וְאֵתָהּ מְחִיָּה אֵת כֻּלָּם".

וּמִצַּד זֹאת הַבְּחִינָה הוּא שֶׁדְּמוּהוּ רז"ל כְּבִיכּוֹל כְּעִנִּין הַנִּשְׁמָה אֶל הַגּוּף, וְכֹמ"ש בְּזֵהרָה שֶׁהוּא יִתְבַּרֵּךְ הוּא נִשְׁמָתָא דְּכָל עֲלָמִין, שֶׁכְּמוֹ שֶׁבְּאֲדָם לֹא נִרְאָה בְּחוּשׁ רַק הַגּוּף, וְהַנִּשְׁמָה אֵף שֶׁהִיא מְלֵאָה אֵת כָּל הַגּוּף הִיא בְּבַחֲבִינַת הַסֵּתֵר לְעִינֵי בָּשָׂר, וְנִגְלִית לְעִינֵי שָׁכֵל, כּוֹ כְּפִי הַשְּׁגָתִינוּ הַנִּגְלִית, נִרְאָה מְצִיאוֹת הָעוֹלָמוֹת וְהַבְּרִיּוֹת כֻּלָּם, וְשֶׁהוּא יִתְבַּרֵּךְ שְׁמוֹ מִתְפַּשֵּׁט וּמִסֵּתֵר כְּבִיכּוֹל בְּפִנְיִמִיּוֹת כֻּלָּם לְהַחֲיוֹתָם וּלְקַיְּמָם, כְּעִנִּין הַנִּשְׁמָה שֶׁמִּתְפַּשֵּׁט וּמִסֵּתֵר בְּפִנְיִמִיּוֹת כָּל פְּרִטֵי חֲלָקֵי אֲבְרֵי הַגּוּף, לְהַחֲיוֹתוֹ.
וְכָל הַשְּׁמֹת וְהַכְּבוֹדִים וְהַתְּאָרִים וְהַמְדוּת עֲלָיו יִתְבַּרֵּךְ שֶׁמְצִינּוּ

Related by the Rav in his essay Halakhic Man [36], pp. 60–61.

Once my father was standing on the synagogue platform on Rosh Hashanah, ready and prepared to guide the order of the sounding of the shofar. The shofar-sounder, a God-fearing Habad hasid who was very knowledgeable in the mystical doctrine of the Alter Rebbe, Reb Shneur Zalman of Lyady, began to weep. My father turned to him and said: "Do you weep when you take the lulav? Why, then, do you weep when you sound the shofar? Are not both commandments of God?"



VI. Aftereffects

Torah Lishma by Rabbi Norman Lamm p. 127

modesty in kabbalistic studies, while the Hasidim were concerned with the dangers inherent in excessive preoccupation with kabbalistic study. Thus, R. Baruch Halevi Epstein reports the following comment made by the third of the *HaBaD* Zaddikim, R. Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, to the former's father, R. Yechiel Michel Halevi Epstein, a confirmed Mitnaged: "Anshei Shelomenu [i.e., the Hasidim] do not appreciate the great kindness that the Gaon [of Vilna] did for us when he opposed us . . . for were it not for the controversy, then there would have been cause to worry . . . for the ecstatic fervor and uplifted spirit inherent in the new movement . . . would have ultimately resulted in the scorching of the Talmud by the fire of Kabbalah, and this hidden Torah would have diminished the image of the revealed Torah" (*Mekor Barukh*, 2:619).

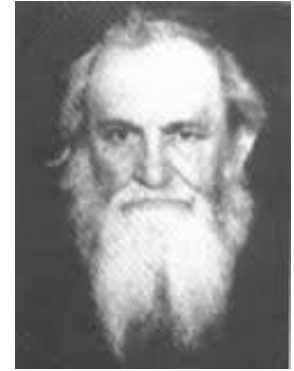
Divrei Harav p. 108

בבית וואלאזין מקובל המעשה הבא. כשהתחילה המחלוקת על החסידות, נסעו האדמו"ר הזקן ורבי לוי יצחק ממברדיטשוב לוויילנא לדבר עם הגר"א. הם הלכו ל"יקלויז של החסיד" (כך היה נקרא בית הכנסת של הגר"א בוויילנא), שם היה הגר"א יושב ולומד בעליית הבית. האדמו"ר הזקן ורבי לוי יצחק התחילו לעלות במדרגות לחדר הגר"א, אבל מיד כשהרגיש שמישהו רוצה להיכנס, סגר את הדלת ולא נתן להם להיכנס. הסיבה לכך היתה, שכאשר הגר"א ראה את תואר פני האדמו"ר הזקן "און ווי שייך סיאי געווען, און וואס פאר א כוח המושך האט ער געהאט" (=וכמה יפה שהוא היה, ואיזה כוח משיכה שהיה לו), חשש שאם האדמו"ר הזקן ייכנס אליו וידבר אתו, ינצח אותו ויעשה אותו חסיד, עד שלבסוף ילכו שניהם יחד להפיץ חסידות. ולכן ברח דרך החלון....¹

The Rav p. 147

What do I know about Habad? I know quite a bit, since as a child I had a melamed who was a Habad hasid. Instead of teaching me Gemara, he taught me hasidut. Even today, I still know sections of the *Tanya* by heart, especially the Sha'ar ha-Yihud ve-ha-Emunah, dealing with faith and the attributes of the Almighty. It was my father who taught me Gemara and enabled me to master the rabbinic idiom. Nevertheless, if not for my Habad melamed, I would today be lacking in an entire dimension of knowledge. Many of my drashot are based upon the knowledge imparted to me by that melamed. Those who enjoy my drashot owe him a thank-you. His name was Reb Baruch Yaakov Reisberg, and I remember that he told me that he was a descendant of the author of the *Tanya*, the founder of Habad.

I vividly recall how Reb Baruch would teach *Tanya*. During this period, my father would visit the hadarim in Khaslavichy on either Thursday or Friday. The melamed had lookouts who would inform him when the rabbi was on his way. Immediately, the volumes of *Tanya* would be hidden. The *Tanya* was a small book, and it was easy to hide. We would quickly take out the large gemorot and shout as if deeply involved in talmudic study. Somehow we always shouted when we studied Gemara. My father would look around and not notice anything out of the ordinary.

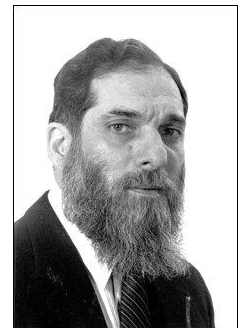
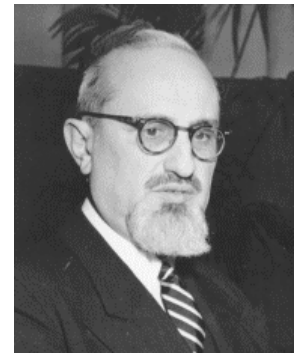


The Rav II p. 181

...new sound and more intense, the sun suddenly peeked out of the clouds and shined forth over the *shtiebel*. Then the Rebbe began to speak, and his followers huddled around him to digest every word. After the words of Torah, the hasidim once again broke out in tumultuous song until the whole building shook. Suddenly, the snow melted, the grass sprouted forth, the barren trees bloomed again, and the birds joined the hasidim in praising the Almighty.

As the hour was late, the *Bet ha-Levi* glanced at his watch and suddenly told his student in a sharp tone: "Nu, nu, it is time for the Minhah [afternoon] prayers." The spiritual rapture of the gathering was broken, the weather outside once again turned bleak, the trees once again became bare, and the earth returned to a barren wilderness.

After finishing the story, the Rav turned to the student who was not happy about studying a classic hasidic text and exclaimed: "This story is about you!"



Dr. Isadore Twersky *Religion and Law*

A tense, dialectical relationship between religion in essence and religion in manifestation² is at the core of the Jewish religious consciousness—its legal configuration and its historical experience. Halakah is the indispensable manifestation and prescribed concretization of an underlying and overriding spiritual essence, a volatile, magnetic and incompressible religious force designated as Judaism. The tension flows from the painful awareness that manifestation and essence sometimes drift apart, from the sober recognition that a carefully-constructed, finely-chiseled normative system cannot regularly reflect, refract, or energize

interior, fluid spiritual forces and motives. Yet, if the system is to remain vibrant, it must.³ If halakah is a means for the actualization and celebration of ethical norms, historical experiences, and theological postulates, then external conformity must be nurtured by internal sensibility and spirituality. This *concordia discordantium*⁴—prophecy and law, charisma and institution, mood and medium, image and reality, normative action and individual perception, objective determinacy and subjective ecstasy—is the true essence of halakah and its ultimate consummation, but this harmonious, mutually-fructifying relationship between law and experience is not always attainable. Hence, in short, the titanic Heraclitean struggle rather than the placid Hegelian synthesis is the historic and conceptual focus of this story.⁵ When the spiritualizing speculative quest, in philosophic, mystical or pietistic terms,⁶ is overshadowed, then the incidence of atrophied patterns of behavior sets off attempts to restore the ideal equilibrium: to see that action is reflective and deliberate, that the religious performance is both an expression of as well as stimulus to experience, deep and rich, full and fresh.⁶

Rav Joseph Soloveitchik – "A Tribute to the Rebbetzin of Talne," *Tradition* (32:5)

What is torat imekha? What kind of a Torah does the mother pass on? I admit that I am not able to define precisely the massoretic role of the Jewish mother. Only by circumscription I hope to be able to explain it. Permit me to draw upon my own experiences. I used to have long conversations with my mother. In fact, it was a monologue rather than a dialogue. She talked and I "happened" to overhear. What did she talk about? I must use a halakhic term in order to answer this question: she talked me-inyana de-yoma. I used to watch her arranging the house in honor of a holiday. I used to see her recite prayers; I used to watch her recite the sidra every Friday night and I still remember the nostalgic tune. I learned from her very much.

Most of all I learned that Judaism expresses itself not only in formal compliance with the law but also in a living experience. She taught me that there is a flavor, a scent and warmth to mitzvot. I learned from her the most important thing in life - to feel the presence of the Almighty and the gentle pressure of His hand resting upon my frail shoulders. Without her teachings, which quite often were transmitted to me in silence, I would have grown up a soulless being, dry and insensitive.