

# Habad Hasidism

History, Thought, Image

Editors

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## Achronic Time, Messianic Expectation, and the Secret of the Leap in Habad

Elliot R. Wolfson

Whatever and however we may try to think, we think within the sphere of tradition. Tradition prevails when it frees us from thinking back to a thinking forward, which is no longer a planning. Only when we turn thoughtfully toward what has already been thought, will we be turned to use for what must still be thought.  
Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*

In this essay I will focus on the motif of the leap (דילוג; שפרונג) expounded by the seven masters of the Habad-Lubavitch dynasty from Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the RaShaZ (1745–1812) to Menahem Mendel Schneerson, the RaMaM (1902–1994). This theme appears numerous times in Habad texts, but to the best of my knowledge, it has not commanded the attention of scholars. I am particularly interested in the messianic repercussions of this gesture and the achronic sense of temporality implied thereby, the time within time as the time beyond time. The line of argument to be pursued here continues the position I articulated in previous studies: to assess Habad messianism, which became especially pronounced under the leadership of the RaMaM, based on the teachings of the fifth and sixth masters, Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, the RaShaB (1860–1920), and his son Yosef Yitshak Schneersohn, the RaYYaTs (1880–1950), sociological and anthropological approaches are not sufficient. These methodologies are surely necessary to evaluate the impact of the messianic impulse on the social evolution and changes to the sect in the course of the twentieth century, particularly in

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the aftermath of the Second World War, but they are hardly adequate to comprehend the phenomenological contours of the soteriology, and with respect to this movement, it seems to me, the phenomenological explains the historical, not the other way around, in spite of the overwhelming bias of the academia.<sup>1</sup> The ideational foundation for this assertion is the further presumption, which is well attested by the recorded teachings of the masters of this tradition, that there is no objectivity that is not subject to symbolic confabulation. Hence, even though we must distinguish the signifier and the signified, the *mashal* and the *nismhal*, it is not epistemically possible to access the latter without the former.<sup>2</sup> All that exists is a manifestation of the light of the infinite, but every manifestation of that light must be a concealment, since what is hidden can be revealed only to the extent that it remains hidden. The eschatological promise of seeing the essence of the infinite light without a garment amounts, therefore, to realizing that it is not possible to behold the light but through a garment. Truth cannot be unveiled but through the veil of truth, which is to say, the veil of untruth.<sup>3</sup>

#### Leap and the Incarnation of Infinite Light

Let me commence with a passage from *Torah Or*, a compilation of the RaShaZ's sermons on Genesis and Exodus transcribed and edited by his brother Judah Leib of Yanovitch:

By means of the garbing of the Torah through corporeal activity... the new light proceeds verily from the light of the infinite, blessed be he, which is above the concatenation, and this is [the import of] what is written "There is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9), and this is not the case with respect to toiling over the Torah [עמלא דאורייתא], which is above the

1 Elliot R. Wolfson, *Open Secret: Postmessianic Messianism and the Mystical Revision of Menahem Mendel Schneerson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); idem, "Revealing and Re/veiling Menahem Mendel Schneerson's Messianic Secret," *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 26 (2012): 29–56.

2 Wolfson, "Revealing," 61.

3 Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 25–26, 115, 116–18, 122, 129, 175–76, 178, 196, 274; idem, "Revealing," 62–63.

#### Achronic Time, Messianic Expectation

sun and draws down a new light. The six hundred thousand letters of the Torah are letters of thought, and by means of thought he contemplates and looks, and the Torah is the aspect of “very deep are your thoughts” (Psalms 92:6), verily “very deep” [עמקו], the aspect of the depth of thought [עומק המחשבה], and similarly with respect to repentance it is written “from the depths” [ממעמקים] (ibid., 130:1), and that is explicitly through the garbing of the Torah in corporeality and as a parable.<sup>4</sup>

Building on a zoharic passage,<sup>5</sup> which is itself a reworking of an exegetical gloss that appears in several midrashic collections,<sup>6</sup> the RaShaZ asserts that through the performance of rituals – the garbing of the Torah by means of corporeal activity (התלבשות התורה בעשיית גשמיות) – a new light (אור חדש) materializes in the world. Significantly, at the end of the aforementioned citation, we read of the “garbing of the Torah in corporeality and as a parable” (התלבשות התורה בגשמיות וכמשל). The juxtaposition highlights that the texture of corporeality is to be discerned from the structure of the parable and the structure of the parable from the texture of corporeality. To grasp this point one must be attuned to the fact that both expressions allude to the mystery of the incarnation of the infinite light (אור אין סוף) in the twenty-two letters of thought (אותיות המחשבה), which in turn assume the form of the physical letters inscribed in the material scroll of the Torah. That the donning of the Torah in corporal form is also referred to as a parable relates to the fact that Habad masters, following the view of Solomon ben Isaac (Rashi), apply the scriptural idiom “primordial parable” (משל הקדמוני) (1 Samuel 24:14) to the Torah,<sup>7</sup> for just as the parable expresses the internal truth through its dissimulation in an exterior covering, so the letters of the

4 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah or* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2001), 8b. Cf. Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Tanya* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2010), pt. 1, ch. 40, 54a-b.

5 *Zohar* 1:223b.

6 *Vayikra Rabbah*, ed. Mordecai Margulies (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993), 28:1, p. 648; *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana*, ed. Bernard Mandelbaum (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962), 8:1, p. 125; *Kohelet Rabbah* 1:4.

7 Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 61–63; idem, “Revealing,” 61–62; idem, “*Nequddat ha-Reshimu* – The Trace of Transcendence and the Transcendence of the Trace: The

Torah are the concretization of the intellectual light (אור השכל), which is the wisdom of *Ein Sof*, concomitantly revealed and concealed in the guise of the apophatic embodiment that constitutes the physicality of this world (חומריות העולם הזה).<sup>8</sup> Simply put, the paradox at the heart of Habad-Lubavitch cosmology is that the manifestation of the invisible essence (עצמות) in nature preserves the withdrawal of the essence from nature. Alternately expressed, the finite can disclose the infinite only by occluding it, since the hidden can be exposed only by being hidden – hence the repeated appeal to the wordplay of העולם, “the world,” and העלם, “concealment.”<sup>9</sup>

The world is sustained by the vitality (חיית) of the immaterial light that is ceaselessly renewed in the materialization of the corporeal something (יש גשמי) from the actual nothing (אין ממש).<sup>10</sup> Every incarnational investiture of the nothing in something is considered novel inasmuch as the fount of illumination is the infinity that is beyond the concatenation of the worlds (השתלשלות העולמות) and hence beyond the binary of cause and effect (עילה ועלול), which is predicated on each link in the chain being bound to the link above it and to the link beneath it in an unremitting succession that is both determined by and determinative of the spatial-temporal coordinates that shape our phenomenal experience.<sup>11</sup> In the language of the biblical verse evoked in the aforementioned passage, nothing is new under the sun, that is, in the physical world, but above the sun, that is, in the metaphysical plane that transcends nature, there is innovation, the luminous overflow induced by intensive Torah study. This is the mystical intent of the oft-cited directive that words of Torah “should be as new in your eyes.” This expression, which is cited in many medieval and early modern sources as an exegetical gloss

Paradox of *Šimšum* in the RaShaB’s *Hemshekh Ayin Beit*,” *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 30 (2013): 98–99.

8 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Or*, 90b; Dov Ber Schneerson, *Torat Hayyim: Shemot* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2003), 95a.

9 See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 26–27, 52, 93, 103–14, 128–29, 132, 215, 218; idem, “Revealing,” 61.

10 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Or*, 90b.

11 Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva’aduyot 5712* (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1995), 1: 311.

on the concluding words of the verse “Take to heart these instructions with which I instruct you this day” (Deuteronomy 6:6), intimates that the Jews must believe that the Torah is revealed anew each moment as it was given at Sinai.<sup>12</sup>

The deeper philosophical significance of this axiom is that there is no time that is real but the present, which is continuously revived as the past of the future and as the future of the past. This sense of the time swerve is accessed uniquely through study of Torah, for each engagement with the text participates in and thereby rekindles the original desire (תשוקה) and the supernal pleasure (עונג עליזון) of the light of infinity to be revealed and garbed in the Torah, a process that occurred by means of the constriction (צמצום) of the light associated with the *shprung*, the leap.<sup>13</sup> The RaShaZ’s son, Dov Ber Schneersohn (1773–1827), better known as the Mittlerer Rebbe, succinctly formulated the cosmological principle that undergirds the Habad approach to the Torah, “the generation of the created being from the divine nothing [מאין אלהי] comes by way of the leap [בדרך דיליג]... and this is by means of the aspect of the contraction of the light of the divine essence [בהינת צמצום האור דעצמות אלהות] to the point that it enters in the aspect of

12 *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, ed. Louis Finkelstein (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1969), sec. 33, p. 59; *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana*, 12:5, 206–7; *Midrash Devarim Rabbah*, ed. Saul Lieberman (Jerusalem: Shalem Books, 1992), 117; Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 63b.

13 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Likutei Torah* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1996), Shir ha-Shirim, 1d, 42c; Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, *Derekh Mitzvotekha* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1993), 141b. Another layer of the symbolism, which I will not pursue in this essay, is the appropriation of the speculation of the *Idrot* sections of the zoharic literature on the hairs of the highest configuration of the divine. In Habad teaching, the leap occurs in the manner of these hairs that issue from the skull of the brain, an idea that is linked exegetically in some sources to Song of Songs 5:11. See Dov Ber Schneersohn, *Torat Hayyim: Bereshit* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1993), 62c; idem, *Perush hamillot* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1993), 69d; idem, *Maamerei Admor ha-Emtza’i: Derushei Hatunah* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1991), 2: 505; Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, *Or ha-Torah: Bemidbar* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2012), 3: 977; Shmuel Schneersohn, *Likutei Torah: Torat Shmuel 5629* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1992), 175; Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, *Be-Sha’ah she-Hikdimu 5672* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1991), 17, 29, 414, 554, 810, 833.



the supernal speech in the ten sayings.”<sup>14</sup> By means of devotional study, one can draw down the disclosure of the infinite light, which is above the contraction and above the order of the concatenation.<sup>15</sup> The surplus of the infinite light, manifest in the Torah, is perpetually different because eternally the same. The signaling out of the present, accordingly, does not imply that there is an ontological privileging of an immutable presence – the spatial delineation of the present as the now-time – since what is disclosed in the present is always a presence that can be present only in the absence of its own presence. In this regard, the metrics of presence is corroborated more by the something of nothing than by the nothing of something; indeed, the meontology of the Habad-Lubavitch masters posits that nothing makes something possible rather than the standard ontological presumption that something makes nothing possible.

The cryptic Habad translation of the conventional doctrine of the volitional creation from nothing is stated concisely by Menahem Mendel Schneerson: “In each and every moment the whole of creation verily comes to be anew as it was in the act of genesis. ...And the truth of this sentiment is specifically from the side of the disclosure of *yehidah*. ...Only in the aspect of *yehidah*, which is above the worlds, is it felt forthrightly that all the worlds are nothing and absolute naught [אין ואפס המוחלט], and their entire existence is a complete innovation [חידוש גמור] that is constantly regenerated in each and every moment.”<sup>16</sup> Looming at the center of the supreme (non)being – which corresponds pneumatically to *yehidah*, the aspect of the soul wherein the distinction between human and divine dissolves – is the absolutely relative nothing that is neither the presence of absence nor the absence of presence, neither the negation of predication nor the predication

14 Dov Ber Schneersohn, *Torat Hayyim: Bere'shit*, 153c. The reference to the ten sayings is the rabbinic tradition that the world was created by means of the ten divine utterances (מאמרות), which are derived exegetically from the scriptural account of creation.

15 Shmuel Schneersohn, *Likutei Torah: Torat Shmu'el* 5629, 25.

16 Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Kuntres Inyanah shel Torah ha-Hasidut* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2004), 14–15; also printed in Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot* 5726 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 2010), 1: 271–72.

of negation, neither the affirmation of privation nor the privation of affirmation. In the boundlessness of infinity, the perimeter that is without horizon, there is no basis to distinguish actuality and potentiality – in the infinite nothing, the potency that is fully actual is the actual that is fully potential in being nothing.<sup>17</sup> It follows, therefore, that the actuality of being at the beginning is the potentiality of the nothingness that the nothing endlessly becomes.

From the Habad perspective, each moment instantiates the origin of every actual potential *ex nihilo*, albeit from the standpoint of its inimitable singularity, the eternity (נצחיות) of time, the interminable durée (במשך זמן),<sup>18</sup> which is expressive of the compresence of the three temporal modes, the mystical valence of the Tetragrammaton. Hence, to fulfill the eternal and immeasurable will, which is incarnate in the timebound laws of the Torah, one must detect the way to worship the divine that is commensurate to the luminescence of the infinite light exclusive to each moment.<sup>19</sup> However, in contrast to the essence, which categorically surpasses all time, the light of infinity is depicted as a timeless time or a time without limit,<sup>20</sup>

17 For a more detailed discussion of this subject, see Elliot R. Wolfson, *A Dream Interpreted within a Dream: Oneiropoiesis and the Prism of Imagination* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), 244–48.

18 On this technical term in Habad sources, or the related המושך הזמן, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 281, 396 n. 66, 397 n. 72. See also Wolfson, “Revealing,” 72 and 85.

19 Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5743* (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanohos, 1993), 2: 629. In that context, Schneerson links this principle to the dictum “I was created to serve my Creator,” transmitted in the name of Simeon ben Eleazar in Mishnah, Kiddushin 4:14. “From this saying it is understood that in every moment [רגע] that a Jew (‘I’) exists (‘was created’), the aim of his existence and being in that moment is – ‘to serve my Creator.’ It follows that the Jew is obligated in every moment to ‘justify’ his existence by means of fulfilling his mission and purpose – ‘to serve his Creator.’ Hence, when in a specific moment of his existence he sees or hears a specific matter, in order to ‘justify’ his existence in that moment – he must salvage what he sees or hears in that moment in his worship of his Creator!”

20 Wolfson, “*Nequddat ha-Reshimu*,” 96–97; Elliot R. Wolfson, “Eternal Duration and Temporal Compresence: The Influence of Habad on Joseph B. Soloveitchik,” in *The Value of the Particular: Lessons from Judaism and the Modern Jewish Experience: Festschrift for Steven T. Katz on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed.

even though it, too, is beyond the distinction between transcendence and immanence, or in the locution of a passage from the *Ra'aya Meheimna* stratum of zoharic literature that informed the Habad lexicon,<sup>21</sup> that which encompasses all worlds (סובב כל עלמין) and that which fills all worlds (ממלא כל עלמין).<sup>22</sup> The natural order revolves about the light manifesting itself in these two ways as it is filtered through the concatenation of the four worlds of emanation (אצילות), creation (בריאה), formation (יצירה), and doing (עשייה). The possibility of a new light ensues from the essence of the light of the infinite (עצמות אור אין סוף), a luminosity that precedes the primordial contraction (צמצום) and thus transcends both the exteriority of the line (קו) and the interiority of space (חלל). With respect to this illumination, the efficient cause is described as the “leap above the concatenation” (דילוג למעלה מההשתלשלות).<sup>23</sup> The leap, which may be envisaged as the effort to think transcendence as the advance from place to no-place and immanence as the recoil from no-place to place,<sup>24</sup> subverts the logic of cause and effect that is characteristic of the “routine order” (סדר התמידי) marked by the term “walking” (הילוך).<sup>25</sup> The acausality implied by the link between

Michael Zank and Ingrid Anderson, with editorial assistance of Sarah Leventer (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 230–32. See also the discussion of time and eternity in Habad thought in Elliot R. Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau: Kabbalistic Musings on Time, Truth, and Death* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 107–17.

21 *Zohar* 3:225a.

22 See, however, Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Or*, 90a, where the garbing of the light of infinity through the order of concatenation is related to the aspect of immanence or “filling all the worlds,” whereas the illumination and drawing down of that light through ritual observance is related to the aspect of transcendence or “encompassing all worlds,” and it is identified further as the “way of the leap” (דרך דילוג).

23 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Or*, 8b.

24 Compare the language of Levinas in his essay “Paul Celan: From Being to the Other,” cited in Elliot R. Wolfson, *Giving Beyond the Gift: Apophysis and Overcoming Theomania* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 110.

25 Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-Maamarim 5652–5653* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1987), 15. For a detailed discussion of this motif, see Elliot R. Wolfson, “Walking as a Sacred Duty: Theological Transformation of Social Reality in Early Hasidism,” in *Hasidism Reappraised*, ed. Ada Rapoport-Albert (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1997), 180–207, and esp. 182–83 n. 6, where I discuss Habad

the primal act of contraction or withdrawal of the light and the leap is established in the following passage of the RaShaZ:

Thus the matter of “leaping over mountains” (Song of Songs 2:8) is by way of analogy [על דרך משל] for the distinction between walking and leaping, for the one who walks in an ordinary way, his feet are verily standing on the ground, and when he walks, he lifts one foot but his second foot is standing on the ground... However, with respect to the leap, he lifts his whole body and his two feet from the ground, and a vacuum and an empty space [חלל ומקום פנוי] were produced, and there is air between his feet and the ground until afterwards his feet are standing on the ground. By means of this the analogy [נמשל] of the matter of the leap can be understood: in order for the worlds of emanation, creation, formation, and doing [אבי"ע] to come to be from the light of the infinite, blessed be he, it was not possible to come about by means of the concatenation of cause and effect [השתלשלות עילה ועלול], for since he is infinite, how could the world come to be by means of concatenation wherein the effect will have some correlation [ערך] to its cause, which is not the case with respect to the worlds vis-à-vis the infinite, blessed be he? Therefore... from the beginning he contracted his light entirely [צמצם אור לגמרי], that is, the light withdrew and was comprised in its source in the luminescence [מאור]<sup>26</sup> and there were produced a vacuum and an empty space, and afterwards there was revealed

sources. On the identification of the leap and dancing (ריקוד), see Shmuel Schneerson, *Likutei Torah: Torat Shmuel* 5629, 58. On the distinction between walking (הליכה), leaping (דילוג), and jumping (קפיצה), see Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot* 5712, 1: 311–12. Walking involves both feet on the ground, the leap one foot remains on the ground, and through the jump one is elevated with both feet off the ground. In that context, the RaMaM deviates from his predecessors by arguing that only the jump is an act of worship (עבודה) that signals a breakthrough to a new level that is not a continuation or an outcome of the past (מעבר שלא לפי ערך). On the contrast between the leap with one foot and the jump with two feet, and the association of the latter with the soul of the Messiah, see Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Or ha-Torah: Bemidbar*, 3: 908.

26 In the lexicon of the RaShaZ, the word מאור, which I have translated as “luminescence,” is identical with the essence of the light of the infinity. Compare the sources cited in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 70–71, 107.

the line and the thread [קו והוט], and the illumination of the line is from the kingship of the light of the infinite, blessed be he [ה' ב"ה], and not from the essence of the light of the infinite, blessed be he [ה' ב"ה], for if the disclosure were from his essence, it would revert to its primordiality without there being any worlds. This is the [import of] what is written “your kingship is the kingship of all worlds [מלכותך מלכות כל עולמים] (Psalms 145:13), from the aspect of your kingship there was the coming to being of all the worlds by means of the line and the thread.<sup>27</sup>

The aboriginal act by which the worlds come into being from the boundless luminescence is both the withdrawal and contraction (צמצום) of the light, which is depicted metaphorically as the leap,<sup>28</sup> the act that imposes limit on the limitless, resulting in manifestation of the line and thread, that is, the capacity for boundary that emerges from the aspect of the kingship of infinity.<sup>29</sup> The causal agency of the leap defies the principle of causality, insofar as it signifies the occurrence of the event of being beyond being and nonbeing,<sup>30</sup> an event to which we cannot progress and that will of necessity

27 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Likutei Torah*, Shir ha-Shirim, 42b.

28 See Amos Funkenstein, “Imitatio Dei and the Concept of Tsimtsum in the Teaching of Chabad,” in *Studies in Jewish History Presented to Professor Raphael Mahler on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Shlomo Yeivin (Merhavia: Sifriat Poalim, 1974), 83–88 [Hebrew]. The passage from Shneur Zalman on the leap is cited and discussed on 85–86. On the doctrine of *tsimtsum* in Habad, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 84, and reference to other scholars cited on p. 336 n. 112. On the connection between *tsimtsum* and the leap, see also Dov Schwartz, *Habad's Thought from Beginning to End* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan Press, 2010), 66–67, 94–95 [Hebrew]. Apparently this theme in Habad literature influenced Abraham Isaac Kook. See Tamar Ross, “Rav Kook’s Concept of Divinity,” *Da’at* 9 (1982): 43, 59–60 [Hebrew]; Joseph Ben-Shlomo, “Lurianic Kabbalah and Rabbi Abraham Isaac ha-Cohen Kook’s Philosophical System,” *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 10 (1992): 451 [Hebrew]; Lilach Bar-Bettelheim, “The Concept of Tsimtsum in the Kabbalah of the Early Twentieth Century” (Ph.D. dissertation, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2012), 30–43 [Hebrew]. The influence of Habad on Rav Kook is discussed on 36–38.

29 See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 106, 344 nn. 221–22, and see below at n. 101.

30 My analysis of the Habad material is enriched by the thinking of Martin Heidegger,

perplex us with its strangeness and unpredictability.<sup>31</sup> If we start from the demarcation of being as the beingness of beings, then nothingness, too, is grasped as nonbeing. However, the nothingness of *Ein Sof* precedes the binary distinction into positive and negative and thus it is inappropriate to characterize it as the negation of affirmation. The first leap – in Heideggerian terms, the *leap of inceptual thinking*<sup>32</sup> – arose as a consequence of the self-concealing clearing that is the nihilating nonground, the venture of infinity into the domain of finitude that enacts the paradox of the identity of nonidentity – the not-nothing of the void that precedes the substantial nothingness, that is, the nothing that becomes something in virtue of its being nothing – in the timespace of the world that emerges as a result of the projected withdrawal, the beings that come to be in the abandonment of the superfluity of their being.<sup>33</sup>

*Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* [GA 65] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), sec. 145, 266–67; *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 209–10.

31 Martin Heidegger, *Was Heißt Denken?* [GA 8] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002), 15; *What is Called Thinking?* trans. Fred D. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray, with an introduction by J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 12: “In contrast to a steady progress, where we move unawares from one thing to the next and everything remains alike, the leap takes up abruptly to where everything is different, so different that it strikes us as strange. Abrupt means the sudden sheer descent or rise that marks the chasm’s edge. Though we may not founder in such a leap, what the leap take us to will confound us.”

32 Heidegger, *Beiträge*, sec. 115, p. 227; *Contributions*, 179.

33 Heidegger, *Beiträge*, sec. 117, p. 250; *Contributions*, 181. Heidegger describes the leap as the “clearing for the self-concealing [*Lichtung des Sichverbergens*], i.e., for being as event [*Ereignis*].” In a manner consonant with the notion of the leap espoused by Heidegger, which in part echoes the view of Schelling (see below, n. 34), the leap in Habad denotes the primal act of nihilation through which beings are revealed in their concealment and concealed in their revelation. See Martin Heidegger, *Die Geschichte des Seyns* [GA 69] (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1998), 168. It goes without saying that the intellectual and socio-cultural worlds of Heidegger and the Habad masters are radically dissimilar. Moreover, given the by-now acknowledged antipathy toward and at times overtly prejudicial depictions of Jews scattered about Heidegger’s writings, attested beyond the critical years of 1933–34 when he assumed the rectorship at the University of

Freiburg, it is understandable that utilizing the German thinker, who exhibited an allegiance to and complicity with Nazi ideology of marginalizing the Jews, to illumine the Habad masters might strike readers as reprehensible. And yet, in my judgment, juxtaposing these ostensibly incongruent fields of discourse can augment our understanding of both. To express my methodological assumption briefly, I suggest that Heidegger's thought belongs together with Habad to the extent that the togetherness is determined by the belonging rather than the belonging being determined by the togetherness. Hence, in contrast to the more conventional comparative-historical approach, my conviction is that Heidegger provides us with an apparatus to gain access to what remains unthought in Habad and thus can serve as a speculum through which to examine both the divergence and convergence of the two paths. On the matter of the unthought in Heidegger and its application to Habad, see Wolfson, "Revealing," 29–43. It is noteworthy that even with regard to this topic we can find instruction in the Habad tradition itself. Thus, Dov Ber Schneersohn, *Sha'arei Orah* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1997), 86b, refers to the root of Haman, the archenemy of the Jewish people from the nation of Amalek, as the "aspect of the knowledge of the shell," that is, the attribute on the demonic side that corresponds to the attribute of knowledge on the side of holiness. Compare Dov Ber Schneersohn, *Torat Hayyim: Shemot*, 440b; Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, *Derekh Mitzvotekha*, 94b. An earlier source for this symbolism, which likely influenced the Habad masters, is Hayyim Vital, *Ets Hayyim* (Jerusalem: [n.p.], 2004), 32:2, 36b: "Balaam also was from the aspect of the shell attached to this knowledge as it is written 'and he knew the supernal knowledge' (Numbers 24:16) verily." See also Hayyim Vital, *Sha'ar ha-Pesukim* (Jerusalem: [n.p.], 1912), 37b: "Balaam is the aspect of the evil of Moses, and thus the nations of the world arose and appointed Balaam. Moses is from the supernal knowledge of *ze'eir anpin*, which is in the foundation of the father, and hence it is called supernal... You already know that Balaam is from the shell that corresponds to knowledge, and this is what is written 'he knew the supernal knowledge'." Compare Yaakov Tzvi Yalles, *Kehillat Yaakov* (Lemberg, 1870), 12b: "Haman is from the root of Amalek... Haman is from the aspect of knowledge of the shell [דעת דקליפה] like Sisera, and he is sustained from the aspect of knowledge of holiness [דעת הקדושה], and all the holy sparks of Cain fell into the depth of the shells of knowledge." See *ibid.*, 15b. On the status of Balaam and Moses in the rabbinic, zoharic, and Lurianic corpora, see Shaul Magid, *From Metaphysics to Midrash: Myth, History, and the Interpretation of Scripture in Lurianic Kabbalah* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 143–95, and esp. 170, where the aforementioned passage from *Sha'ar ha-Pesukim* is cited. In some Habad contexts as well, the knowledge that is linked to the demonic shell is associated with Balaam, who was portrayed rabbinically as the prophet of the Gentile nations on a par with Moses, based in part on the scriptural depiction of his knowing the "supernal knowledge." See Dov Ber Schneersohn, *Torat Hayyim: Bere'shit*, 118d; *idem*, *Torat Hayyim: Shemot*, 561b; *idem*, *Ner Mitsva ve-Torah Or* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1995), 146b. I hope to elaborate on the matter in my study

Schelling's Naturphilosophie and Habad Acosmic Naturalism

The conjecture regarding the affinity between Heidegger and Habad is reinforced by pondering the perspective on the leap in the following passage from Schelling's *Philosophie und Religion*, published in 1804: "In a word, there is no continuous transition from the Absolute to the actual; the origin [*Ursprung*] of the phenomenal world is conceivable only as a complete breaking-away [*Abbrechen*] from absoluteness by means of a leap [*Sprung*]. ...There is no positive effect coming out of the Absolute that creates a conduit or bridge between the infinite and the finite. ...The Absolute is the only actual; the finite world, by contrast, is not real. Its cause, therefore, cannot lie in an *impartation* [*Mittheilung*] of reality from the Absolute to the finite world or its substrate; it can only lie in a *remove* [*Entfernung*], in a *falling-away* [*Abfall*] from the Absolute."<sup>34</sup> The possible influence of

*Heidegger and the Kabbalah: Hidden Gnosis and the Path of Poiesis*. For a previous attempt to illumine Habad through aspects of Heidegger's thought, see Wolfson, "Revealing," 32–51, and esp. 66 n. 144.

- 34 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion (1804)*, translated, annotated, and with an introduction by Klaus Ottmann (Putnam: Spring Publications, 2010), 26 (emphasis in original). I have taken the liberty to correct some errors and modify the translation based on the original *Philosophie und Religion* in Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Sämmtliche Werke 1804*, edited by Karl Friedrich August Schelling, vol. 6 (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1860), 38. After completing my essay, I discovered that the passage from Schelling is cited and discussed by Paul Franks, "Rabbinic Idealism and Kabbalistic Realism: Jewish Dimensions of Idealism and Idealist Dimensions of Judaism," in *The Impact of Idealism: The Legacy of Post-Kantian German Thought*, Vol. 4: *Religion*, ed. Nicholas Boyle, Liz Disley, and Nicholas Adams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 237–38. Franks duly notes the "recognizably Lurianic direction" of Schelling's remark and draws the further implication that "the fall of the human is an image of the fall that is creation itself, which is an exile of divinity from the world, demanding reparation." I concur that in Lurianic teaching creation is a fall but I would contend that the divine is exiled in the world rather than from the world. See Elliot R. Wolfson, "Divine Suffering and the Hermeneutics of Reading: Philosophical Reflections on Lurianic Mythology," in *Suffering Religion*, ed. Robert Gibbs and Elliot R. Wolfson (London: Routledge, 2002), 101–62, esp. 115–17. A detailed analysis of Schelling and Shneur Zalman of Liadi, and those who magnified his teachings, is a desideratum. What I offer here are just chapter headings, so to speak,



kabbalistic motifs on Schelling and the probable channels of influence through Latin translations of zoharic and Lurianic texts (published in Christian Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala Denudata*), original treatises of Christian kabbalah, and the writings of European philosophers (particularly in their interpretation of Spinoza spearheaded by Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi and Johann Georg Wachter), hermetists, alchemists, and theosophists influenced by Jewish esotericism and the occult (Jacob Böhme, Henry More, Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont, Friedrich Christoph Öttinger, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, and Franz von Baader) has been documented by previous scholarship.<sup>35</sup> My purpose here is not to review that evidence but to point out the striking similarity between Schelling and Shneur Zalman: the shift from infinity to finitude is explained by the falling-away

and perhaps one day I will prepare a more extensive study on this topic. Many have opined on the intellectual relationship of Schelling and Heidegger. For the purposes of this analysis, see especially Douglas Hedley, "Schelling and Heidegger: The Mystical Legacy and Romantic Affinities," in *Heidegger, German Idealism, and Neo-Kantianism*, ed. Tom Rockmore (Amherst: Humanity Books, 2000), 141–55.

- 35 For references to the influence of kabbalah on Schelling, see Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 392–93 n. 2. On Rosenzweig's linking the Lurianic teaching about the "interiorization of God," which precedes the "self-externalization," and the "dark ground" of Schelling's thought, see Wolfson, *Giving Beyond the Gift*, 80 and references cited on 346 nn. 332–33. See also the wide ranging analysis of Miklós Vassányi, *Anima Mundi: The Rise of the World Soul Theory in Modern German Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), and the succinct remark about Schelling on 387; Franks, "Rabbinic Idealism," 219–45, esp. 232–41; idem, "Peirce's 'Schelling-Fashioned Idealism' and 'The Monstrous Mysticism of the East,'" *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 23 (2015): 732–55, esp. 745–51. On the occult nature of Hegel's philosophical incursions, see Cyril O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel*, with a foreword by Louis Dupré (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) and Glenn Alexander Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001). Magee discusses the influence of kabbalism on Hegel on 150–86. See as well idem, "Hegel's Philosophy of History and Kabbalistic Eschatology," in *Hegel and History*, ed. Will Dudley (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 231–46. A related but separate issue is Schelling's classification of philosophy as esoteric and inaccessible, a perspective he shared early on with Hegel. See Paul Franks, *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 82 n. 135, 327–29, 374–76.

or the removal from the Absolute rather than through a bestowal of reality from the Absolute to the world, an explanation that parallels the contraction/withdrawal (*tsimtsum*) of the light of *Ein Sof* according to the Habad interpretation of this kabbalistic motif.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, the act of detachment or elimination from the infinite is designated by Schelling and the Habad-Lubavitch masters as a leap, which, in both cases, conveys the sense of agency outside the parameters of temporal causation. Through the fracture that results from this evacuation, the *unity* (*Einheit*) of the Absolute – expressed as the identity of two *unitive modes* (*Einheiten*) of the Idea, being-within-itself and being-within-the-Absolute – becomes two, that is, *difference* (*Differenz*).<sup>37</sup> When this difference is properly scrutinized, it becomes apparent that what Schelling intends is the quantitative differentiation that subsumes all qualitative opposition such that the sameness of the indifferent ( $A = A$ ) morphs into the indifference of the same ( $A = B$ ).<sup>38</sup> In becoming two, therefore, the one inevitably evolves into

36 See Christophe Schulte, “Zimzum in the Works of Schelling,” *Hyun* 41 (1992): 21–40, German version “Zimzum bei Schelling,” in *Kabbalah und Romantik*, ed. Eveline Goodman-Thau, Gert Mattenklott, and Christoph Schulte (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer, 1994), 97–118. See also Christophe Schulte, *Zimzum: Gott und Weltursprung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2014), 296–323. See also Jürgen Habermas, “The German Idealism of the Jewish Philosophers (1961),” in *Philosophical-Political Profiles*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 21–43, and idem, “Dialectical Idealism in Transition to Materialism: Schelling’s Idea of a Contraction of God and Its Consequences for the Philosophy of History,” in *The New Schelling*, ed. Judith Norman and Alistair Welchman (London: Continuum, 2004), 43–89, esp. 53–61. For further analysis, see Paul Franks, “Inner Anti-Semitism or Kabbalistic Legacy? German Idealism’s Relationship to Judaism,” *International Yearbook of German Idealism* 7 (2010): 254–79. See also Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 99–105; idem, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, 34–42. For an earlier, albeit brief, attempt to interpret Habad doctrine in conversation with Schelling’s notion of absolute indifference and the nonground (*Urgrund*), see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 101–2. Finally, one can detect a complementary affinity to the kabbalistic doctrine in Heidegger’s depiction of the ground as a pulling-away or leaping from the ground, which may betray the influence of Schelling. See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 343 n. 198, and idem, *Giving Beyond the Gift*, 80–81, 347 n. 336.

37 Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, 33; *Philosophie und Religion*, 45.

38 Daniel Whistler, *Schelling’s Theory of Symbolic Language: Forming the System of*

three.<sup>39</sup> As Schelling points out, “during the process of production, the one unity necessarily becomes three, for an image [*Bild*] of the in-itself [*An-sich*] can be produced only by subordinating the two unitive modes as mere attributes. The being-with-itself [*In-sich-selbst*], separated from the other unitive mode, involves being immediately in the difference between reality and its possibility (the negation of true being); the general form of this difference is time [*Zeit*], since any thing that has the complete possibility of being in another rather than in itself is temporal [*zeitlich*], and therefore time is the principle and necessary form of all that is nonessential.”<sup>40</sup>

Remarkably, in consonance with Habad teaching, Schelling identified the difference emerging from the nondifferentiated unity as the two that becomes threefold – this would correspond conceptually to the depiction of the infinite will of *Keter* as the intermediary between the limitless and the limited<sup>41</sup> – that is also the nature of time, which applies most directly to the visible universe, that which optically has the character of being in another rather than being in itself. Moreover, just as the world in Habad cosmology is accorded the status of nothing vis-à-vis the infinite essence, so Schelling refers to the world as nonessential (*Nicht-Wesen*) or as a nonbeing (*Nicht-seyn*) that “can no more come into being as not come into being.”<sup>42</sup> Schelling’s assertion that the only thing actual is the Absolute and the world is not real reverberates with the claim in Habad sources that the world is annihilated as naught and nothing (*כאין ואפס*) in the light of the infinite.<sup>43</sup>

*Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 94–116, esp. 102–4. Needless to say, many have written on this topic. For a succinct presentation, see Alfred Denker, “Three Men Standing over a Dead Dog: The Absolute as Fundamental Problem of German Idealism,” in *Schelling: Zwischen Fichte und Hegel*, ed. Christoph Asmuth, Alfred Denker, and Michael Vater (Amsterdam: B. R. Grüner, 2000), 381–401.

39 The logic of Schelling’s thought parallels the dictum in *Zohar* 1:32b, “Three emerge from one, one is established in three. It enters between two, and the two sustain the one, and one sustains several sides, and then everything is one.”

40 Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, 33 (translation slightly altered); *Philosophie und Religion*, 45.

41 For discussion of this motif, see Wolfson, “*Nequddat ha-Reshimu*,” 83–84.

42 Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*, 32; *Philosophie und Religion*, 44.

43 See the texts of Shneur Zalman of Liadi cited in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 105 and 160.

Although the terminology is not exactly the same, I surmise that Schelling would have concurred with the Habad teaching that the compression of infinity in the form of the finite is commensurate to the expansion of the finite into the formlessness of infinity. The spatio-temporal world is the disclosure of the light to the extent that the light is concealed therein, and hence in relation to the being of the infinite, the finite is nonbeing. To speak of the cosmos in this way is not to deny the principle of Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* that nature is a progressive disclosure of the Absolute, but it does accentuate the paradox that the disclosure of the presence of the Absolute perforce must be the concealment of the absence of the Absolute, that the luminal darkness contracting into light is the expansion of that light into the constricted forms of the determinate beings that make up the world perceived through the cognitive prism of space and time.

The same can be said about Habad cosmology: to speak of the physical world as nothing (אין) in relation to the essence (עצמות) of *Ein Sof* is not to deny the autonomy of the material realm; on the contrary, Habad is distinguished by its reversal of the traditional metaphysical hierarchy and its avowal that in the messianic future human consciousness – exemplified by the Jewish people – will discern that the body is elevated over the soul and that nature is divinity.<sup>44</sup> As I have argued, however, underlying these propositions is the semiotic transubstantiation of the somatic; that is, the body that is extolled is a transfigured corporeality made of letters rather than corruptible matter.<sup>45</sup> What is affirmed, therefore, is the unity of the spiritual and the physical and thus the material can divulge the immaterial it obscures. One is reminded of Schelling's comment concerning the alleged duality of soul (*Seele*) and body (*Körper*), mind (*Geist*) and matter (*Materie*), in the introduction to *Ideen zu Einer Philosophische der Natur*, published in 1797 and revised in 1803: "One can conceal from oneself the finality of this antithesis by deceptions of all kinds, can insert between mind and matter any number of physical intermediaries, which come to be ever more and more tenuous. But sometime, somewhere, a point must surely

44 Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 147, 149, 357 n. 83; idem, "Revealing," 57.

45 Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 130–60.

come where mind and matter are one, or where the great leap [*große Sprung*] we have so long sought to avoid becomes inevitable.”<sup>46</sup> Evocatively, Schelling deploys the term leap to demarcate the transition from dualism to monism, but the monism he affirms does not eviscerate the material or the mental. Mind and matter are identical in virtue of their being different. Writ large, the phenomenal world is the theophany of the infinite light to the extent that the light is hidden therein and hence the nothingness of infinity becomes the somethingness of finitude just as the somethingness of finitude is restored to the nothingness of infinity. For Schelling and the Habad masters, the unlimited both is and is not revealed by the limited – revealed as what is not revealed and not revealed as what is revealed.

In *Vom Ich als Princip der Philosophie oder über das Unbedingte in menschlichen Wissen* (1795), Schelling expressed the matter of the beginning in Fichtean terms as the absolute I (*absolute Ich*) going out of itself and opposing a Not-I (*Nicht-Ich*) to itself.<sup>47</sup> Nature is the self-limitation of the infinite and unconditional self-positing I, which divides into the I and Not-I. The unconditioned I may posit the Not-I out of its own freedom, but the question that endures is if this Not-I can betray an authentic sense of alterity. Within an emanative-monistic scheme, is it possible for the other not to be reduced to an aspect of the same? In *Philosophie Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kriticismus* (1795), Schelling wondered if it was indeed imaginable to step out of the Absolute and move toward something that is opposed to it.<sup>48</sup> In *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der*

46 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature as Introduction to the Study of This Science 1797, Second Edition 1803*, trans. Errol E. Harris and Peter Heath, with introduction by Robert Stern (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 40; *Ideen zu Einer Philosophie der Natur*, in *Sämmtliche Werke 1797–1798*, ed. Karl Friedrich August Schelling, vol. 1, pt. 2 (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1857), 53.

47 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Vom Ich als Princip der Philosophie oder über das Unbedingte in menschlichen Wissen*, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Friedrich August Schelling, vol. 1, pt. 1 (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856), 175.

48 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Philosophische Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kriticismus*, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. 1, pt. 1, 294: “Wie komme ich überhaupt dazu, aus dem Absoluten heraus und auf ein Entgegengesetztes zu gehen?”

*menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände* (1809), Schelling addressed the problem in language that exhibits an astonishing resemblance to the kabbalistic theosophy appropriated by Habad in its effort to sketch how the inclusivity of the infinite is such that it must possess even the capacity to be exclusive, the capacity to be less than infinite, and thus difference is incorporated in the sameness of what is indifferently the same: “In the circle out of which everything becomes, it is no contradiction that that through which the One is generated may itself be in turn begotten by it. Here there is no first and last because all things mutually presuppose each other, no thing is another thing and yet no thing is not without another thing. God has in himself an inner ground of his existence [*innern Grund seiner Existenz*] that in this respect precedes him in existence; but, precisely in this way, God is again the *prius* of the ground in so far as the ground, even as such, could not exist if God did not exist *actu*.” What is distinct and divided from God cannot come to be in God but must become “in a ground different from God.” However, since nothing is truly outside of God, “this contradiction can only be resolved by things having their ground in that which in God himself is not *He Himself* [*was in Gott selbst nicht Er Selbst ist*], that is, in that which is the ground of his existence. If we want to bring this way of being closer to us in human terms, we can say: it is the yearning [*Sehnsucht*] the eternal One feels to give birth to itself [*sich selbst zu gebären*]. The yearning is not the One itself but is after all co-eternal [*gleich ewig*] with it.”<sup>49</sup> The paradox of the all-encompassing One longing to be other than itself can only be explained by positing an aspect that is coeternal with but not identical to the One, an aspect that Schelling also identifies as the will (*Wille*), the “primal Being [*Urseyn*] to which alone all predicates of Being apply: groundlessness

49 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. and with an introduction by Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 28 (emphasis in original); *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände* in Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Friedrich August Schelling, vol. 7 (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1860), 358–59.

[*Grundlosigkeit*], eternity [*Ewigkeit*], independence from time [*Unabhängigkeit von der Zeit*], self-affirmation [*Selbstbejahung*].”<sup>50</sup> It is through this “divining will” that the “eternal act of self-revelation” (*Selbstoffenbarung*) of the infinite is enacted in the world.<sup>51</sup> Schelling’s depiction of the will in relation to the One bears an extraordinary likeness to the Habad description of *Keter* in relation to *Ein Sof*.

Distinguishing himself from Fichte in *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* (1833/34), Schelling writes that the beginning (*Anfang*) is not the finite or human I but the infinite subject (*unendliche Subjekt*) that “can never stop being subject, can never be lost in the object, become mere object.” The “pure substantiality” (*reinen Substantialität*) of the absolute subject (*das Subjekt überhaupt*) is “free of all being [*frei von allem Sein*], and although not nothing [*nicht nichts*], yet as nothing [*als nichts*]. Not nothing because it is yet subject, as nothing because not object, because it does not exist in objective being [*weil nicht im gegenständlichen Sein seiend*].” The beginning is marked, therefore, by the unconditional and infinite subjectivity (*Subjektivität*) “becoming-finite” and “becoming-object.”<sup>52</sup> It follows that in its “pure essentiality” (*reinen Wesentlichkeit*), the subject is deemed “as nothing [*als nichts*] – completely devoid of attributes – it is until now only Itself, and thus, as such, a complete freedom from all being and against all being [*eine völlige Freiheit von allem Sein und gegen alles Sein*]; but it inescapably attires itself [*sich selbst anziehen*],<sup>53</sup> for it is only a subject *in order that* it become an object to

50 Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations*, 21; *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, 350.

51 Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations*, 29; *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, 359.

52 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, translation, introduction, and notes by Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 114 (emphasis in original); *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie: Münchener Vorlesungen*, ed. Arthur Drews (Leipzig: Dürr’schen Buchhandlung, 1856), 99.

53 I have modified Bowie’s translation of *sich selbst anziehen* as “attracts itself,” although in the parenthetical gloss, he adds that the expression conveys “the sense of ‘putting on’ and thus being inauthentic, and of ‘drawing itself to’ itself.” I agree that the primary meaning here is “putting on” in the sense of being garbed, but I do not think Schelling was trying to communicate a sense of put on as a mode of

itself [*denn nur dazu ist es Subjekt, daß es sich selbst Objekt werde*], since it has been presupposed that nothing is *outside* it that could become an object for it; but *as* it attires itself [*sich selbst anzieht*], it is no more as *nothing* but *as* something [*ist es nicht mehr als nichts, sondern als Etwas*] – in this self-arrayment [*Selbstanziehung*]<sup>54</sup> it makes itself into something; the origin of all becoming something [*Ursprung des Etwas-Seins*], or of objective, concrete being, then, lies in this self-arrayment.”<sup>55</sup>

The kabbalistic resonances in Schelling’s system are evident to the attentive ear, and especially striking is the proximity of his ideas to the translation of the earlier theosophic teachings in the Habad sources. Just as in the latter *Ein Sof* is depicted as the essence that is neither being nor nonbeing, and thus outside the dyad of the ontological economy,<sup>56</sup> so Schelling refers to the subjectivity, which appears as nothing but is in fact neither nothing nor something, as the essence (*Wesen*) that cannot “negate

inauthenticity or withdrawing. On the contrary, what he is transmitting is the notion that the infinite subject becomes an object to itself through a gesture of arraying.

54 In this case as well I have modified Bowie’s rendering of *Selbstanziehung* as self-gravitation.

55 Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 115 (emphasis in original; translation altered); *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, 101.

56 For the earlier kabbalistic perspective, see Elliot R. Wolfson, “Nihilating Nonground and the Temporal Sway of Becoming: Kabbalistically Envisioning Nothing Beyond Nothing,” *Angelaki* 17 (2012): 31–45. Especially relevant is my summation in *Giving Beyond the Gift*, 78, which can be applied equally to Schelling’s idea of the infinite and the Habad view of *Ein Sof*: “The *Ein Sof* of the kabbalah may be envisaged as the self-negating negativity that yields the positivity of the entangled manifold that constitutes the fabric of the world, the effluent emptiness that is the womb of all becoming. When seen from the perspective of the infinite, the multiplicity of finite beings appear to be illusory, but one attuned to the nothingness that is at the core of everything comprehends that the illusionary nature of the world is not to deny its existence but to indicate the interconnectivity of all that exists. For the kabbalists, the *Ein Sof* is the linguistic signpost that marks this interrelationality, the eternal unfolding that is continuously unfolding in time, a process that cannot be uttered in language because each and every thing is constantly becoming the nothing it was not. The infinite nothingness cannot be constricted by images of affirmation or negation, since the negative images presuppose the positivity they ostensibly negate. Hence, to say of *Ein Sof* that it is nothing is as erroneous as saying of it that it is something.” See *ibid.*, 171–74, 197–98.



itself as *essence*, for it is not just essence in general, but *in an infinite manner*.<sup>57</sup> Insofar as the essence is devoid of all attribution, it is considered to be like nothing but it cannot actually be nothing, since it is everything.<sup>58</sup> Meontologically, it is free from all being and, in some sense, against all being. In and of itself the subject is illimitable and therefore cannot be enclosed within the computable boundaries of an object. However, since there is nothing outside the subject, the process by which finite and contingent beings evolve from the infinite and necessary essence – what Schelling calls “construction” (*Konstruktion*)<sup>59</sup> – requires that the subject becomes an object to itself. Tellingly, Schelling also refers to this process as *Selbstanziehung*, which I have rendered as “self-arrayment,” to capture that the metaphor of investiture delineates how the infinite subject, which can never cease being a subject, becomes objectified as nature. We find a comparable symbol employed by kabbalists, and the Habad masters based thereon,<sup>60</sup> who typically speak of the sefirotic gradations and the worlds that emanate therefrom as the vestments by which the infinite nakedness is

57 Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 116 (emphasis in original); *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, 102.

58 Compare Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *The Ages of the World, Third Version (c. 1815)*, trans., with an introduction by Jason M. Wirth (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 24 [*Die Weltalter* in Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Karl Friedrich August Schelling, vol. 8 (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1861), 235]: “The Godhead is nothing [*nichts*] because nothing can come toward it in a way distinct from its being [*Wesen*] and, again, above all nothingness because it itself is everything. It certainly is nothing, but in the way that pure freedom is nothing. It is like the will that wills nothing, that desires no object, for which all things are equal and is therefore moved by none of them. Such a will is nothing and everything. It is nothing insofar as it neither desires to become actual itself nor wants any kind of actuality. It is everything because only from it as eternal freedom comes all force and because it has all things under it, rules everything, and is ruled by nothing.”

59 Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 116; *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, 101.

60 See especially the passage cited in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 104–5. Although this is from the seventh Rebbe, Menahem Mendel Schneerson, it is based on ideas expressed by his predecessors going back to Shneur Zalman of Liadi. For citation and analysis of other sources, see *op. cit.*, 116–17, 136, 178–79, 234, 332 n. 58.

adorned.<sup>61</sup> As Schelling notes, through the self-arrayment the subject that was nothing is transposed into something, and hence the origin of the nothing becoming something lies in the self-arrayment of the essence. The first being to come forth, the *primum existens*, which is the “first contingency,” commences with “dissonance” (*Dissonanz*), that is, unlike the infinite subject, it is no longer identical with itself. Although the infinite subject has nothing outside itself, and even antecedent to the “arrayment of being” (*Zuziehung des Seins*), it is infinite “in its being *in* and *before* itself,” Schelling asserts nonetheless that we can speak of this subject as infinite “only in as much as it still had finitude before itself, but for that reason it is not yet posited there as infinite; to posit itself as infinite it must have cleansed itself [*sich gereinigt*] from this possibility of also being the finite. Thus finitude itself becomes a means for it to posit itself *as* infinite (i.e., as freedom from being [*als Freiheit vom Sein*], for no other concept is connected here with the word ‘infinite’). Only through real opposition [*Gegensatz*] could it be raised into its true essence, could it reach itself *as* infinite.”<sup>62</sup>

What Schelling is arguing here is a restatement of his contention in the third version of *Die Weltalter* (c. 1815) regarding the actualization (*Verwirklichung*) of the Godhead: “But since the Godhead can only actualize itself from out of its free eternity, there must be something between free eternity and the deed of actualization that separates the deed from eternity so that eternity remains free and inviolable. This something can only be time, but not time within eternity itself, but rather time coexisting with eternity. This time outside of eternity is that movement of eternal nature where eternal nature, ascending from the lowest, always attains the highest, and, from the highest, always retreats anew in order to ascend again. Only in this movement does eternal nature discern itself as eternity.”<sup>63</sup> Again, I note the philosophical kinship with kabbalistic speculation on time and eternity, and particularly as it is expressed in

61 See Wolfson, “Divine Suffering,” 113–14.

62 Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 116 (emphasis in original; translation slightly modified); *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, 101–2.

63 Schelling, *The Ages*, 79–80; *Die Weltalter*, 306–7.

Habad thought: the Godhead is beyond all time but its eternality should not be reckoned as the aggregate of all successive moments of time taken together; it is rather the movement of eternal nature by which the everlasting is displayed in every moment that comes to be and passes away.<sup>64</sup> Time is, as Schelling paraphrases Pindar, “only the simulacrum [*Scheinbild*] of eternity.”<sup>65</sup>

To grasp the subtlety of Schelling’s point, we would do well to consider his portrayal of the *Ungrund* as that which posits an opposition of coincidence in opposition to the coincidence of opposition. In *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*, the “original ground” is said to be “before all ground and before all existence, thus before any duality at all. ...Since it precedes all opposites, these cannot be differentiated within it or be in any way present in it. Thus it cannot be designated as the identity of opposites, but only as their absolute *indifference*.”<sup>66</sup> The “indifference” (*Indifferenz*) of the *Ungrund* precludes the possibility of positing a resolution of antinomical forces in the absolute. “Let the following commentary be made on what was just said: real and ideal, darkness and light, or however else we wish to designate the two principles, can never be predicated of the unground *as opposites* [*als*

64 See Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, 40–42.

65 Schelling, *The Ages*, 80; *Die Weltalter*, 307. For discussion of the reference to Pindar, see the editor’s comment in Schelling, *The Ages*, 145 n. 85. On the genealogy of time in Schelling, see David Farrell Krell, *The Tragic Absolute: German Idealism and the Languishing of God* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 117–30.

66 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom and Related Matters*, trans. Priscilla Hayden-Roy, in *Philosophy of German Idealism*, ed. Ernst Behler (New York: Continuum, 1987), 276 (emphasis in original); *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände*, in Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7 (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856), 406. For this text, and the following two references to this treatise, I have used an alternative translation to the one cited above in n. 49. This section is derived from Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 100–4. The reader interested in the fuller argument between Hegel and Schelling should consult that reference. Some of the material is reworked as well in Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, 35–40.

*Gegensätze*]. But nothing hinders their being predicated of it as non-opposites [*Nichtgegensätze*], i.e., in disjunction and each *for itself*; whereby, however, this very duality (the actual twofoldness of the principles) is posited.”<sup>67</sup> Schelling’s view is a response to the Hegelian logic of the identity of difference summed up in the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807) in the statement that the “opposite is not merely *one of two* – if it were, it would simply *be*, without being an opposite – but it is the opposite of an opposite, or the other is itself immediately present in it.” For Hegel, accordingly, opposites are dialectically resolved in the unity that comprises a thing and its opposite: “Only thus is it difference as *inner* difference, or difference *in its own self*, or difference as *infinity*.”<sup>68</sup> From Schelling’s perspective, this inner difference is no difference at all, since the difference so-named is part of a self-identical essence. By contrast, he strives to maintain a bona fide sense of difference by affirming the unity of identity and indifference,<sup>69</sup> that is, a unity that embraces the disjunction of opposites coexisting as non-opposites. “For precisely because the unground is related to both as total indifference, it is impartial to them. If it were the absolute identity of both, then it could only be both *simultaneously* [*zugleich*], i.e., both would have to be predicated of it as *opposites*, and would themselves thereby be one again. Thus from this neither-nor [*Weder-Noch*], or from this indifference [*Indifferenz*], duality [*Dualität*]... immediately breaks forth, and *without* indifference, i.e., *without* an unground, there would be no twofoldness [*Zweiheit*] of the principles.”<sup>70</sup> In Schelling’s post-Identity-Philosophy, the *Ungrund* is prior to all opposition and even beyond the overcoming of opposition by preserving the twofoldness of an irreducible duality; it is this quality, above all else, that justifies the term “absolute indifference.”

67 Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations*, 277 (emphasis in original); *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, 407.

68 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller with analysis of the text and foreword by J. N. Findlay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 99 (emphasis in original).

69 See Bernhard Rang, *Identität und Indifferenz: Eine Untersuchung zu Schellings Identitätsphilosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2000).

70 Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations*, 277; *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, 407 (emphasis in original).

In *Die Weltalter*, Schelling writes that the duality (*Zweiheit*) is found “in the primordial beginnings of nature [*Uranfängen der Natur*]” and thus the “ground of the antithesis [*Gegensatzes*] is as old as, nay, is even older than, the world... just as in everything living, so already in that which is primordially living, there is a doubling [*Doppelheit*] that has come down, through many stages, to that which has determined itself as what appears to us as light and darkness, masculine and feminine, spiritual and corporeal. Therefore, the oldest teachings [*ältesten Lehren*] straightforwardly represented the first nature as a being with two conflicting modes of activity.”<sup>71</sup> From the beginning, then, there is the doubling of the infinite that renders the first principle, with regard to itself, in a state of contradiction (*Widerspruch*), for if it were not so, it “would be constantly One and would never become Two. It would be an eternal rigidity [*Unbeweglichkeit*] without progress.”<sup>72</sup> Reminiscent of the symbolic representation of the divine in kabbalistic theosophy, Schelling characterizes God by the equally primal propulsion to overflow and the compulsion to withdraw, the impetus to bestow on the other and the inclination to retreat from the other: “Therefore, two principles are already in what is necessary of God: the outpouring, outstretching, self-giving being [*sich gebende Wesen*], and an equivalently eternal force of selfhood, of retreat into itself, of Being in itself [*in-sich-Seyns*]. That being and this force are both already God itself, without God’s assistance.”<sup>73</sup> Schelling explicitly rejects the Hegelian dialectic whereby this antithesis would be overcome, insisting that “what has been set against each other has the same essentiality and originality. The force with which the being closes itself off, denies itself, is actual in its kind as the opposite principle. Each has its own root and neither can be deduced from the other. If this were so, then the antithesis would again immediately come to an end. But it is impossible *per se* that an exact opposite would derive from its exact opposite.”<sup>74</sup> If the two primordial forces of contraction and expansion were fully apart, without reciprocal

71 Schelling, *The Ages*, 6; *Die Weltalter*, 211–12.

72 Schelling, *The Ages*, 12; *Die Weltalter*, 219.

73 Schelling, *The Ages*, 6; *Die Weltalter*, 211.

74 Schelling, *The Ages*, 6; *Die Weltalter*, 211.

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contact, there would be no unity, and we would be forced to posit two deities in the vein of Zoroastrianism: “The antithesis rests on this, that each of the two conflicting powers is a being for itself, a real *principle*. The antithesis is only as such if the two conflicting principles conduct themselves as actually independent and separate from each other.”<sup>75</sup> In another passage, Schelling articulates his position in language that is well aligned with one of the most distinctive elements of kabbalistic ontotheology:

The pure Godhead [*laute Gottheit*] is indivisibly the eternal Yes and the eternal No and the free unity of both. From this it automatically follows that the Godhead can be the eternal No = B only insofar as the Godhead is, as such, at the same time the ground of Itself as the eternal Yes. Then from this the reverse also necessarily follows. As B or the eternal No, it is the Godhead only insofar as it is at the same time A, that is, that it posits Itself as the eternal Yes.<sup>76</sup>

To say of the divine essence that it is simultaneously negative and positive is not to conflate the two to the point that difference is effaced, but rather to postulate the nonduality of oppositional forces, the indifference – a state of “nondivorce” (*Ungeschiedenheit*), which is not “free from all difference but rather it is an indifference negating difference” (*nicht eine von aller Differenz freie, sondern eine sie verneinende*).<sup>77</sup> “For since God is not the cause of the Other through a special volition but through God’s mere essence, the Other is certainly not the essence of God, but it belongs to God’s essence, indeed, in a natural and inseparable way. It therefore follows that if the pure Godhead = A, and that the Other = B, then the full concept of the living Godhead which has being is not merely A, but is A + B.”<sup>78</sup> The other is clearly distinguished from God’s essence but it is also said to come to be from that essence and not from a discrete act of will. The

75 Schelling, *The Ages*, 10 (emphasis in original); *Die Weltalter*, 217.

76 Schelling, *The Ages*, 85; *Die Weltalter*, 313.

77 Schelling, *The Ages*, 87; *Die Weltalter*, 317.

78 Schelling, *The Ages*, 42; *Die Weltalter*, 258.

concept of the living Godhead, therefore, must be charted formulaically as A + B, the self and the other. This resounds with another fundamental tenet of kabbalistic theosophy, accentuated in the disciples of Isaac Luria: the potential for boundary must be located within the boundless, for if that were not the case, the largesse of the boundlessness would be confined and the negativity of its infinitude negated. The paradox of *tsimtsum* seeks to account for the emergence of difference within indifference, but, in the end, that very possibility is subverted since the other is configured as a manifestation of the same – darkness is an aspect of light, absence a facet of presence, evil an iteration of good. The initiatory act is a self-begetting that results in the splintering of the light beyond light into light and darkness, the fissuring of the being bereft of being into the polarity of being and nonbeing.

The logic compels us to confront the question again: how can that which is purely subjective become objective? We may presume that this is possible only if the potential to become objective is contained in the subject, but then the inference would be that there is no object that is not a manifestation of the subject, no other that is not part of the same. Toward the conclusion of the chapter on *Naturphilosophie* in *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, Schelling comes around to this very point:

Now I can indeed think of God as the end and just the result of my thinking, as He was in the old metaphysics, but I cannot think of Him as result of an *objective* process; furthermore, this God which was assumed as result could, if He is God, not have *something outside Himself* [*nicht etwas außer Sich*] (*praeter se*). ...From this – from the last moment, it follows that this God must after all be determined at the end as He also was already at the beginning, therefore that the subject which goes through the whole process is already God at the beginning and during the process, before it also posited in the result *as* God – that in this sense God is admittedly *everything*, that the subject going through nature is also God, only not *as* God [*daß auch das durch die Natur hindurchgehende Subjekt Gott ist, nur nicht als Gott*] – thus God only *outside* His divinity [*also Gott nur außer seiner Gottheit*] or in His externalisation [*Entäußerung*] or in His otherness [*Anderheit*], as

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an other of *Himself* [*als ein anderer von sich selbst*], as which He only is at the end.<sup>79</sup>

In kabbalistic parlance, if the vessel is itself a manifestation of light, there does not seem to be room for an actual sense of difference, a Not-I that is not comprised within the absolute I. The externalization of the infinite yields an otherness that, at best, can be designated the other of Himself, but such an other is veritably no other at all. It is relevant to mention in this connection a second remark in *Zur Geschichte der neuen Philosophie*: “But Spinoza is, of course, an emanationist, admittedly not a physical one but a logical one; he also admittedly does not maintain an external being-separated from its source of that which flows out, as emanation is usually understood (for whether emanation has ever and in any system been comprehensible in this way, e.g. in the Jewish Kabbala, is still a big question); rather, what follows from God remains in God [*sondern das aus Gott Folgende bleibt in Gott*], and, as such, his doctrine can be called an immanent doctrine of emanation.”<sup>80</sup> It is beyond my concerns to discuss Schelling’s interpretation of Spinoza, but it is noteworthy that he raised doubt about whether the doctrine of emanation in the kabbalah implies that the emanated is separated from the emanator. He is right to note the paradox of transcendence and immanence: what issues from God remains in God.

### Leaping Beyond the Semblance of the Leap

Let me turn to a second passage from *Torah Or* in which the acausal and metacosmic nature of the leap is further elucidated in terms that confirm the comparison to Schelling:

It is known that the infinite... is above the entire concatenation of emanation, creation, formation, and doing... and also what is called nominally “encompassing” [סובב] and “filling” [ממלא] is by way of descent

79 Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 132–33 (emphasis in original); *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, 124.

80 Schelling, *On the History of Modern Philosophy*, 78; *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, 52.



and drawing forth in the world as is known. If so, how did the light descend so much to be garbed in the depth of the descent in the underside of all the concatenation, which are the separate worlds?... But the matter is that, in truth, it is impossible that there should be descent like this in the way of the concatenation from cause to effect through gradation... but rather by way of a great leap, which is not through gradation at all, and this is [the import of] “Set out, my beloved, swift as a gazelle” (Song of Songs 2:17); that is, by way of analogy, the movement of the gazelle is swift and in a great leap but not through any gradation, and so, too, is the aspect of the descent of the divine light to be with Israel when they are in exile amongst the idol worshippers.<sup>81</sup>

Infinity is the emptiness beyond the concatenation of the worlds and thus beyond the distinction between transcendence and immanence. The limitless is delimited in the dual aspect of all-encompassing and all-permeating, the nothing that both embraces and pervades all beings in the field of space and time – a process of incarnation referred to metaphorically as “descent” (ירידה) and “drawing forth” (המשכה) – through the mechanism of the “great leap” (דילוג גדול), a term that signifies an action that is not circumscribed by the normal sequence designated as “gradation” (מדרגה). The reader is introduced to another image, which is reiterated frequently in Habad literature, to facilitate the understanding of the leap, the alacrity of the gazelle, one of the figurative ways to refer to the providential protection of the divine presence that Israel enjoys in exile. The swift motion denotes an act of causation that is not subject to the temporal and spatial constraints of linear causality.<sup>82</sup> The transition from spirituality (רוחניות) to materiality (גשמיות), from the containment (התכללות) of all potencies in the soul to their division (התחלקות) in the body, is effectuated through a transvaluation, or literally, that which skips over any order or semblance (דילוג הערך), that is, the act of

81 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Or*, 116c. The passage appears almost verbatim in Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Or Torah: Bere'shit* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2013), 1: 167–68.

82 See Judah Loewe of Prague, *Or Hadash*, ed. Joshua D. Hartman (Jerusalem: Makhon Yerushalayim, 2014), 1: 76–77.

plunging from one state to its opposite without any similitude or relationship that connects them in a bond of mutuality.<sup>83</sup> Through the leap, then, one jolts to a new ground that could not have been anticipated or foreseen, a radical irruption that signals the inherent indeterminacy that proceeds from the “sublimity of the essence of the infinite” (רוממות דעצמות אין סוף).<sup>84</sup>

The RaShaB makes explicit the implications of the earlier discussions when he notes that the lights of the emanation are the disclosure of the concealment of the light of infinity, which is derived from the line that is contiguous with and conjoined to the infinite. The extension of the line thus issues from the infinite light by way of the leap of contraction (בדרך דילוג הצמצום).<sup>85</sup> We would not ordinarily think of these two images together, but their apposition underscores the fact that the leap, too, is an act of delimitation that results in the descent of the boundless light of the essence and its being garbed in the worlds that are the links of the chain of becoming.<sup>86</sup> To cite his words: “By means of the contraction the light enters into the aspect of division [התהלקות], since through the contraction the light is concealed and there remained the empty space [מקום פנוי], and the emanation of the light afterward came by way of the leap of contraction, which is not through [the order of] progression. ...And similarly, with respect to the emanation of the light of the infinite, blessed be he, in the worlds by means of the leap of contraction, the light of infinity is completely hidden and there remained the vacuum, and consequently the light emanates without any progression, and by means of this he enters into measure and boundary in the aspect of division.”<sup>87</sup> The materialization (הגשמה) of the nondifferentiated light (אור פשוט) in the worlds of differentiation can only come about through the

83 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Likutei Torah, Devarim*, 95b; Dov Ber Schneerson, *Torat Hayyim: Shemot*, 477a; Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Derekh Mitzvotekha*, 130a. See also sources cited in Wolfson, “Revealing,” 66 n. 144.

84 Dov Ber Schneerson, *Torat Hayyim: Bere'shit*, 72d; idem, *Torat Hayyim: Shemot*, 242a.

85 Shalom Dovber Schneerson, *Be-Sha'ah she-Hikdimu 5672*, 17, 29, 414, 833, 995, 1020.

86 Ibid., 555.

87 Ibid., 940–41. Compare Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5713* (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanohos, 1997), 1:266.

garbing (התלבשות) of that light in the aspect of the vessels,<sup>88</sup> which results in the distinction between interior and exterior,<sup>89</sup> the potency to overflow and the capacity to receive, engendered respectively as masculine and feminine.<sup>90</sup> Expressed in a different terminological register, the leap of contraction occasions a disclosure that is concurrently a concealment, an expansion of light (המשכת האור) that is a removal of light (סילוק האור).<sup>91</sup> The leap of the overflow (דילוג השפע) is the contraction that fosters the outpouring of light, the display of the garment (לבוש) that is the concealment (העלם) that makes disclosure (גילוי) possible.<sup>92</sup> The ultimate revelation – the seeing of the name YHWH, which comprises the unification of past, present, and future, and is thus above space and time, in and through the vestment of Elohim, which is the numerical equivalence of the word for nature (הטבע)<sup>93</sup> – consists of the exposure of the secret manifesting what is hidden by hiding what is manifest. In the future, what is finally exposed is the dissimilitude of the world as the place where divinity is revealed by being concealed. The unveiling of the concealment of the concealment – the discernment that the compression of the divine light in physical nature is a form of expatriation – is the final and decisive disclosure.

The descent of divinity apposite to the banishment of creation applies as well to the historical revelation: “Hence, in the time of the giving of the Torah, it is also written ‘The Lord descended on Mount Sinai’ (Exodus 19:20), for then there was also an aspect of descent in the aspect of the great

88 Shalom Dovber Schneerson, *Be-Sha'ah she-Hikdimu*, 945, 952.

89 Ibid., 950.

90 Ibid., 1030.

91 Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5711* (Brooklyn: Vaad Hanochos BLahak, 1994), 1:331.

92 Dov Ber Schneerson, *Perush ha-Millot*, 70d.

93 Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Sihot Kodesh 5726* (Brooklyn: [n.p.], 1986), 98: אז די וועלט אערט אזא מין וועלט אז זי הערט אן ניט אלקות בגימטריא הטבע נאר זי הערט אן דעם היה הוה ויהיה כאחד דא למטה אין זמן ומקום וואס דאס איז דאך א שינוי כללי ניטא שינוי אין א פרט. For a paraphrase of this passage, see Eli Rubin, “Divine Zeitgeist – The Rebbe’s Appreciative Critique of Modernity,” available at [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/2973252/jewish/Divine-Zeitgeist-The-Rebbs-Appreciative-Critique-of-Modernity.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2973252/jewish/Divine-Zeitgeist-The-Rebbs-Appreciative-Critique-of-Modernity.htm). For a parallel, see Schneerson, *Kuntres Inyanah shel Torah ha-Hasidut*, 5; idem, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5726*, 1: 261.

leap that was not through a progression [בהדרגה], to dwell physically on Mount Sinai... Nevertheless, this descent and leap are not as great as the aspect of the great leap of the garbing of divinity [התלבשות אלהות] in the aspect of the exile of the presence [גלות השכינה].<sup>94</sup> Just as the imprisonment of the *Shekhinah* in the spacetime continuum comes about through a leap, so the elevation of the *Shekhinah* from the state of captivity and her eventual return to *Keter*, the inwardness of the supernal delight [פנימיות עינג העליון],<sup>95</sup> must transpire through the leap of repentance, the act of piety that exceeds the bifurcation into permissible and prohibited indispensable to the mechanics of ritual observance and the economy of lawful exchange.<sup>96</sup>

#### Redemption and the Passing Over of the Undergoing

The redemptive connotation of the leap is elicited from the narrative about the deliverance of the Israelite slaves from Egypt, the passing-over that is commemorated ritually in the festival of Passover. In another typically dense passage from *Torah Or*, we read why the emancipation was called Passover:

[O]n account of the aspect of the leap,<sup>97</sup> for “the Lord will pass over the door etc.” (Exodus 12:23), that is, the aspect of the consciousness [בחינת המוחין] emanated not in the order of progression [כסדר בהדרגה] but in the aspect of the great leap ...[דילוג גדול] and this is the matter of the garbing of the aspect of the consciousness of the father in the aspect of the diminution [הלבשת בחינת מוחין דאבא בבחינת הקטנות], which is the aspect of the unleavened bread ...and this is the aspect of subjugation... [אתכפיא]...

94 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Or*, 116d–117a.

95 See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 94, 119, 300, 318 n. 43, 340 n. 160, and 375 n. 41; idem, “*Nequddat ha-Reshimu*,” 87–88 n. 41.

96 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Or*, 117b.

97 Compare the commentary of Rashi to Exodus 12:11: “The sacrifice is called פסח on account of the leap and the skipping, for the holy One, blessed be he, skipped over the homes of the Israelites from amongst the homes of the Egyptians, and would jump from Egyptian to Egyptian and the Israelite in the middle was rescued.”

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which is the aspect of the nullification of the will [ביטול רצון] only in the aspect of diminution, and by means of this it is garbed and it dwells especially from the aspect of that which encompasses all worlds [סובב כל עלמין] but it comes in the aspect of the great leap... and this is the matter and the aspect of the elevation of the feminine waters to the aspect of the void [התהוה], which is the aspect of the encompassing... which is by means of the aspect of subjugation especially in the aspect of the nullification, for it is impossible to be drawn to the aspect of the encompassing except through the aspect of the nullification alone, and not through the aspect of transformation [אתהפכא]. The reason is that through the aspect of the nullification the matter comes to the aspect of the actual nothing [אין ממש], and by means of this there is aroused as well from the aspect of true nothing [אין האמיתי], which is the aspect of the encompassing that is in the concealment [העלם], which is not the case of the aspect of transformation, which is the aspect of something [יש].<sup>98</sup>

Redemption requires the great leap, the drawing down of consciousness (מוחין) in a way that departs from the expected or natural order, and this results in the arrayment of the consciousness of the father in the aspect of diminution, the aspect of subjugation (אתכפיא) as opposed to the aspect of transformation (אתהפכא) – that is, the suppression of one thing by its opposite rather than the metamorphosis of one thing into its opposite – which entails the nullification of the will (ביטול רצון). This is also depicted as the elevation of the feminine waters to the primordial state of the void, which is the aspect of the encompassing that is in a state of concealment, that is, “the aspect of the nothing that is not revealed at all in the aspect of the something [כלל] יש כלל.”<sup>99</sup> As the RaShaZ put it in *Likutei Torah*,<sup>100</sup> the scriptural act of the divine passing-over imparts that redemption involved the disclosure of the *Shekhinah* triggered by the illumination of the aspect of the light above the concatenation of the four

98 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Or*, 114c–d. Compare Dov Ber Schneersohn, *Sha'arei Orah*, 55a.

99 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Or*, 114d.

100 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Likutei Torah*, Tzav, 13d.

worlds, the aspect of the kingship of the infinite (מלכות דאין סוף), a technical term, as we have seen above, that designates the final dimension, as it were, of infinity, attributed to *Keter*, sometimes referred to as the aspect of *Atik*, the potential for difference lodged within the unity of indifference, the point at the center of the void that is void of any center, the point lacking in any measurable punctiformity.<sup>101</sup> Thus, in a passage from *Torah Or*, we find the following elaboration:

The light of infinity [אור אין סוף] is the kingship of the infinite [מלכות דאין סוף], for within it is all of the contraction [הצמצום]... The aspect of contraction takes place in the light to produce an empty space [מקום פנוי] and a vacuum [חלל]; everything is in relation to the light of infinity, in the light precisely, and not in the actual substance and the essence [במהות ועצמות ממש]. And the intention of this contraction is that afterward by means of human worship in this world, which comes to be through the contraction, it will extend until there is a disclosure of the kingship of the infinite as it was before it was created. That is, just as the light was prior to the contraction, so will the disclosure verily be below, and the contraction will not be concealed at all. As it is written, “I am the first and I am the last, and apart from me [there is no god]” (Isaiah 44:6), that is, “I am the first,” as it was prior to the contraction, and “I am the last,” that is, as it is written “The Lord alone shall be exalted [in that day]” (ibid., 2:11). “Apart from me,” that is, through the intermediary of the aspect of contraction and concealment, there will also be [the discernment that] “we have no king but you,”<sup>102</sup> and thus there will be a disclosure of the nullification [גלוי הבטול] and there will not be concealment and hiddenness [הסתר והעלם]. And this

101 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Tanya*, pt. 3, ch. 20, 130b: “The light of the infinite [אור דאין סוף] is garbed only in *Hokhmah*, and this is what is written [*Sefer Yetzirah* 1:7] ‘their beginning is fixed in their end,’ for *Keter* is the intermediary between the emanator and the emanated, and within it there is the final aspect of infinity, which is the kingship of the infinite [מלכות דאין סוף].” Compare Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Or*, 35d; Dov Ber Schneersohn, *Torat Hayyim: Shemot*, 603a.

102 This is one of the refrains in the supplicatory prayer *Avinu Malkenu*, recited on the ten days of repentance between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and, according to the Ashkenazi tradition, on every fast day.

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drawing forth [המשכה] is by means of the Torah, and this is [the import of] “and the Torah is light” [ותורה אור] (Proverbs 6:23), for it extends the aspect of the disclosure of the light of infinity, so that as it was prior to the contraction it will also be after the contraction.<sup>103</sup>

For the purposes of this study, the most important detail of this long and intricate discourse is that there are phases of the light of infinity: prior to, during, and after the contraction. The manifestation at the end will be homologous to the manifestation at the beginning: as the latter was a showing of the light prior to the contraction, so the former. What this consists of is the disclosure of the nullification, that is, an exposing of the concealment of the concealment so that there will be no more concealment to conceal.

Expanding on this nexus of themes, the Mitteler Rebbe wrote:

On the first night of Passover there is the aspect of the most sublime level and gradation that is not found in other festivals and Sabbaths... and this relates to the fact that there was then the aspect of the emanation from the essence of the light of infinity verily in the aspect of the leap of the gradations [דילוג המדרגות], as it is written “The voice of my beloved... leaping over mountains” (Song of Songs 2:8), and this is what is written “the Lord will pass over” (Exodus 12:23), not in the order of the concatenation of the ten *sefirot* in the aspect of cause and effect ...And all of this is on account of the fact that there is them the aspect of this leap from the perspective of himself [מצד עצמו] without the cause of the elevation of the feminine waters through the arousal from below at all but rather through the aspect of the arousal from above from the perspective of his essence and his true substance alone [מצד עצמותו ומהותו האמיתי לבד] to which none of the worlds can reach at all, and he can never be comprehended, for thought cannot grasp him at all, since he is above the

103 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Or*, 39a. On the leap (דילוג), which is above the gradation of the concatenation (הדרגת ההשתלשלות), and the manifestation of the aspect of the kingship of the infinite (מלכות דאין סוף), also identified as the root of the matter of redemption connected to Passover, see Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, *Or ha-Torah: Shir ha-Shirim* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2013), 1: 265–66.

#### Achronic Time, Messianic Expectation

will [רצון] and the delight [תענוג], and above wisdom [החכמה]... for this is the aspect of the inwardness and essence of the light of infinity, which is in the inwardness of *Keter*.<sup>104</sup>

A perfect homology is established between creation and redemption. Both acts arise from the essence of the light of infinity, the interiority of *Keter*, which is above the will and above wisdom. The gesticulation suitable to that incomprehensible aspect of the Godhead is the self-releasing withdrawal of the leap, the advance forward by stepping-back, the passing-over that is the undergoing. The process is reenacted ritually through the consumption of the unleavened bread (מצה) on Passover: “The eating of the unleavened bread is preparation for the receiving of the Torah on Pentecost, for concerning the receiving of the Torah, it says ‘in the diadem with which his mother crowned him’ (Song of Songs 3:11), which is the aspect of the disclosure of the will of all wills and the cause of all causes... Therefore, it was necessary at first to eat the unleavened bread, which is the aspect of the nullification... however, this disclosure is of its own accord [ממילא], that is, the arousal from above that is not by means of the arousal from below, and hence it is called Passover [פסח], which connotes the leap [לשון דילוג].”<sup>105</sup> On Passover the revelation was in the form of a miracle, which involved the leap that was not regulated by the natural concatenation from gradation to gradation or by the standard pattern of theurgical influence, that is, the arousal from above is not incited by an arousal from below.<sup>106</sup> Just as, theosophically, the leap is unrelated to a causal series, so, anthropologically, the leap signifies the liberating possibility of the break

104 Dov Ber Schneersohn, *Torat Hayyim: Shemot*, 94c.

105 Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Likutei Torah*, Pekudei, 5b; Tzav, 16d. Compare Dov Ber Schneersohn, *Torat Hayyim: Shemot*, 87a, 90c; Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, *Or ha-Torah: Shemot* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2013), 1: 295–96; idem, *Or ha-Torah: Devarim* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2013), 2: 623; Shmuel Schneersohn, *Likutei Torah: Torat Shmu'el 5629*, 100 and 308.

106 This idea is expressed in Lurianic texts. See, for example, Hayyim Vital, *Peri Etz Hayyim* (Jerusalem: Or ha-Bahir, 1980), Sha'ar hag ha-matzot, ch. 1, 496–97. The prohibition of engaging in sexual intercourse on the first night of Passover is related in that context to the assumption that the arousal above occurred on its own without any stimulation from below.



with everything conventional.<sup>107</sup> The sense of futurity insinuated by the leap is expressed, therefore, as the present that is resuscitated each moment as that which is simultaneously ancient and unprecedented.

This, I propose, is the most crucial and enduring facet of Habad messianism. This is not to suggest that the sociological and geopolitical components are discounted or discarded. The allegation that I have ignored these features of Habad soteriology is erroneous and easily dismissible.<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, I do insist that what drives the messianic rhetoric – what proffers the theoretical basis for the pragmatic – is a peculiar understanding of time predicated on postulating a future that is the retrieval of a past that has yet to happen. This is the center – the zero point – of the speculation about the Messiah, the notional fulcrum around which everything else rotates, the hope for a future that is continually present as the present that is persistently future. Analogous to the study of Torah, wherein novelty consists of the repetition of difference, so messianic consciousness – the expanded consciousness (מוחיך דגדלות) that is achieved through the removal of knowledge (היסח הדעת), the mystical state that is above the aspect of knowledge (למעלה מבחינת הדעת)<sup>109</sup> – stems from the dimension of the divine wherein replication and inventiveness are indistinguishable. In the discourse

107 This relates as well to the Habad idea that the hallmark of Hasidism is about breaking what is habitual. For instance, see Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5744* (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanohos, 1990), 3: 1633: "Hasidic teaching demands that the behavior will not be by way of routine." The statement is linked to the description in the Babylonian Talmud, Hagigah 9b, of the worshipper of God (עובד אלהים) as one who reviews his studies one hundred and one times as opposed to one who reviews his studies only one hundred times. The supplement of the one hundred and first time is something that could not be calculated based on what came before one hundred times. On the depiction of happiness as the disclosure of the concealment that breaks through the boundary of nature, compare Dov Ber Schneersohn, *Ma'amerei Admor ha-Emtsa'i: Derushei Hatunah*, 2: 417–19.

108 See Wolfson, "Revealing," 63–73.

109 Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5726*, 1: 253. The hasidic teaching is based on the rabbinic dictum (BT, Sanhedrin 97a) that the Messiah is one of three things (together with a scorpion and a lost object) that comes serendipitously, when a person is unaware, literally, when one's mind is distracted. See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 51, 289; idem, "Revealing," 42, 76.

delivered on the nineteenth of Kislev 5726 (December 13, 1965), the seventh Rebbe remarked that the novel interpretations of hasidic teaching (חידוש של תורת החסידות) on the part of the previous Habad-Lubavitch masters are “details that branch out from the essential point of the teaching of Hasidism – the drawing down of the new light [המשכת אור חדש] from the aspect of the interiority of *Keter* [פנימיות הכתר], verily to the interiority of *Atik* [פנימיות עתיק], the aspect of infinity that is in the head that is not known [בחינת אין סוף שברישא דלא אתידע], just as all the aspects that will be in the coming of the Messiah... branch out from the essential point of the Messiah [הנקודה העיקרית של משיח] – [the aspect of the soul called] *yehidah*, the essence of the point of the vitality [עצם נקודת החיות].”<sup>110</sup> The matter of time is not thematized explicitly in this statement, but it is not unreasonable to suggest that it is the thread that connects the Torah and the Messiah. The manifold innovations of hasidic teaching are portrayed as the new light that issues from the innermost of God, the interiority of *Keter*, also called the interiority of *Atik* and as the aspect of infinity that is in the head that is not known, which is even higher than the light of infinity that is manifest in the concatenation of the worlds that make up the multiverse.<sup>111</sup> The aspect of newness entails the identity of sameness and difference – in each moment the ancient light presents itself unceasingly as something exceptional.<sup>112</sup> Correspondingly, the Messiah is connected to *yehidah*,<sup>113</sup> the aspect of the

110 Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5726*, 1: 231–32.

111 My paraphrase is based on the unedited Yiddish transcription of this talk found in Schneerson, *Sihot Kodesh 5726*, 95: איז פנימיות הכתר און דארטן גופא פנימיות עתיק און נאך העכער דער אור א"ס וואס אין פנימיות עתיק איז רדל"א. The language is closer to the formulation in Schneerson, *Kuntres Inyanah shel Torah ha-Hasidut*, 2; idem, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5726*, 1: 258. The passage is cited in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 183. Compare Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5726*, 1: 250, where the teaching of Hasidism is said to be “above the mysteries of the Torah [רוין דתורה] as well, the mysteries of the mysteries [רוין דרוין], until the aspect of infinity that is in the aspect of the head that is not known [א"ס שבבחינת רדל"א], and it emanates and also penetrates the literal sense of the Torah.” See additional sources mentioned in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 367 n. 96.

112 Wolfson, “Revealing,” 39–42.

113 On the connection of the Messiah and *yehidah*, the pneumatic aspect that is presumed to be unique to the Jewish people, see the texts cited and analyzed in

soul rooted in the dimension of infinity that partakes of the paradox of the “again” that is always “altogether otherwise,” as Heidegger aptly conveyed the matter.<sup>114</sup>

The genuine iteration implied by this linear circularity – the present determined by the past of the future that is still to come as what has already been and by the future of the past that has already been what is still to come – is the temporal foundation of the theological categories of creation, revelation, and redemption.<sup>115</sup> A proper understanding of Habad teaching precludes separating the cosmogonic, theophanic, and eschatological.<sup>116</sup> Common to all three is the kinesis of the leap, the plunge ahead to return to where one has never been, the resurgence of the same that is always different. On this score, only what is unique is retrievable, only what is singular is repeatable.<sup>117</sup> Recurrence is not the reappearance of the identical but the duplication of the divergent wrought through the reprise of the periodic incipience of the leap across the divide of the indivisible. To live messianically is to inhabit the timespace whence the leap originates, the inwardness and essence of the light of infinity, beyond the order of the concatenation of the worlds, beyond the polarity of transcendence and immanence. In his characteristic ability to render complex ideas in more cogent fashion, the RaMaM taught, “On Passover – the door is opened, and since the holy One, blessed be he, commanded the children of Israel to open the door, certainly he himself must do so as well... for on Passover the holy

Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 129, 183, 184, 232, 275; idem, “Revealing,” 43 n. 65, 67–69, 74–75, 78. For a list of some of the Lurianic sources that influenced the Habad teaching, see Wolfson, “Revealing,” 74 n. 181.

114 Heidegger, *Beiträge*, sec. 33, 73; *Contributions*, 58. For a more detailed analysis of this aphorism, see Wolfson, *Giving Beyond the Gift*, 243–44; idem, “Retroactive Not Yet: Linear Circularity and Kabbalistic Temporality,” in *Time and Eternity in Jewish Mysticism: That Which is Before and That Which is After*, ed. Brian Ogren (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 33–34.

115 I have discussed the linear circularity of time in a number of studies. For the purposes of this analysis, see Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, 55–117; idem, “Retroactive Not Yet,” 15–50, esp. 30–37.

116 The coalescence of the three events around the image of the leap is emphasized in Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, *Or ha-Torah: Bemidbar*, 3: 778–79.

117 Heidegger, *Beiträge*, sec. 20, 55; *Contributions*, 45.

One, blessed be he, opens all the doors and all the gates for each and every Jew, and everyone, irrespective of his deeds in the course of the year that has passed, can reach the highest gradations in the way of skipping and leaping [פסיחה ודילוג], which is not through a progression at all. ...The disclosure on Passover is the disclosure of the essence and substance of the infinite, blessed be he [התגלות עצמות ומהות אין סוף ברוך הוא].<sup>118</sup>

The first redemption proleptically portends the final redemption. Hence, the leap of Passover is the messianic feat par excellence, the opening of the door of possibility<sup>119</sup> – implemented ritually in the literal opening of the door, the reaching out that brings about the opening up of openness, the futural approaching of the past in the present<sup>120</sup> – that is above the reciprocity of cause and effect required by the nomian barter of substitution. The worship (עבודה) pertinent to this level of lawfulness beyond the law is the submission of one's self (מסירת נפש), which is emblematically represented by the sacrificial Paschal lamb<sup>121</sup> and is realized pneumatically through repentance, an act that causes a change in substance (שינוי מהות) and thus occurs through the leap that happens “in one moment and in one second” (בשעתא חדא וברגעא חדא).<sup>122</sup> The connection between repentance, the leap, and Passover is clarified in the following passage from Menahem

118 Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5711* (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1995), 2: 12–13.

119 On the connection between the leap (דילוג), the opening (פתח), and Passover (פסח), see Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Or ha-Torah: Bemidbar*, 3: 780.

120 My thinking here bespeaks the influence of the description of the three-dimensional nature of time offered by Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 14–15: “But prior to all calculation of time and independent of such calculation, what is germane to the time-space of true time consists in the mutual reaching out and opening up of the future, past and present. . . . Dimensionality consists in a reaching out that opens up, in which futural approaching brings about what has been, and what has been brings about futural approaching, and the reciprocal relation of both brings about the opening up of openness.”

121 Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5711*, 2: 12.

122 Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5712* (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1997), 3: 33. The expression *בשעתא חדא וברגעא חדא* is derived from *Zohar* 1:129a. See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 281 and 284; idem, “Revealing,” 64–65 n. 140.

Mendel Schneersohn (1789–1866), the third rebbe, the Tsemach Tsedek: “This is the matter that is called Passover on account of the fact that the Lord passed over, and this is the aspect of the leap... from above to below, for he, blessed be he, leapt over the mountains, and similarly, it must be said from below to above, the aspect of repentance, which is also in the aspect of the transvaluation [דילוג הערך] and not from gradation to gradation. ...The matter of repentance is verily like the aspect of the leap from above to below on the first night of Passover.”<sup>123</sup>

The experience of Passover – the shift from narrow confinement (המיצר) to inexhaustible expansiveness (המרחב)<sup>124</sup> – instructs us esoterically about the hypernomian overcoming of the law to be realized in the future redemption by means of repentance,<sup>125</sup> the transposition from the darkness of guilt to the gleam of innocence that comes to pass in the interlude of time that is not dependent on time.<sup>126</sup> When the essence of infinity is revealed, all boundaries are dissipated and hence the dichotomy of permissible and forbidden is itself surpassed. What remains is the will divested of all willfulness but the desire to be conjoined to the essence through the unconditional giving of oneself (אויסקגעבן זיך אינגאנצן),<sup>127</sup> the renunciation of physical and spiritual needs through the leap that mimics the primal act of kenosis, the contraction of infinity that provokes the dissemination of light and the consequent manifestation of the nonmanifest in the realm of historical contingency.

123 Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, *Or ha-Torah: Bemidbar*, 3: 779–80. See *ibid.*, 798, 914.

124 Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5712*, 3: 28–29.

125 Habad masters often cite the Talmudic dictum that the future redemption will come about as a consequence of repentance. See Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 97b, and discussion in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 3 and 279. On the hypernomian character of repentance, see *op. cit.*, 66–67, 169, 171, 180–81, 274, 279–80; *idem*, “Revealing,” 67.

126 Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 55–56, 279; *idem*, “Revealing,” 64–65.

127 Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitva'aduyot 5711*, 2: 14.

# חב"ד

היסטוריה, הגות ודימוי

עורכים

יונתן מאיר • גדי שגיב

מרכז זלמן שזר לחקר תולדות העם היהודי  
ירושלים

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