

Suffering Time: Maharal's Influence on Hasidic Perspectives on Temporality

Elliot R. Wolfson

Es ist Zeit, daß der Stein sich zu blühen bequemt,
daß der Unrast ein Herz schlägt.
Es ist Zeit, daß es Zeit wird.
Es ist Zeit.

Celan, 'Corona'

In *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, Gershom Scholem offered a cursory but astute observation about Judah Loew ben Bezalel, the Maharal of Prague, and the popularization of mystical ideas that had begun before the rise of Hasidism:

I am thinking here of the now almost forgotten writings of Jehudah Loewe ben Bezalel of Prague In a sense, one could say that he was the first Hasidic writer. It is certainly no accident that so many Hasidic saints had a penchant for his writings. Some of his more voluminous tracts, such as the great book *Gevuroth Adonai* ... seem to have no other purpose than to express Kabbalistic ideas without making too much use of Kabbalistic terminology. ... The Hasidim themselves did not go so far in their popularization of Kabbalistic thought as the Exalted Rabbi Loewe, who appears to have renounced the Kabbalistic vocabulary only in order to give the widest possible range of influence to Kabbalistic doctrine.¹

Since the time that Scholem penned these words, a number of scholars have documented in more detail the impact of Maharal's literary style, his proclivity to propagate esoteric matters in the guise of the exoteric, and many of his speculative-mystical ideas on Hasidism.² Bezalel Safran

¹ Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, New York 1954, p. 339.

² Byron L. Sherwin, *Mystical Theology and Social Dissent: The Life and Works of Judah Loew of Prague*, London 1982, pp. 52-54, 131-133, 138-140, 164-165; Bezalel Safran, 'Maharal and Early Hasidism', *Hasidism: Continuity or Innovation?* edited by Bezalel Safran, Cambridge, MA 1988, pp. 47-144, and reference to other scholars cited on p. 91 nn. 1-4; Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic*, Albany 1995, p. 11. The possibility that the Maggid of Mezhibezh drew from the works of Maharal is briefly noted in David Biale, David Assaf, Benjamin Brown, Uriel Gilman, Samuel C. Heilman, Moshe Rosman, Gadi Sagiv, and Marcin Wodzinski, *Hasidism: A New History*, with an Afterword by Arthur Green, Princeton 2018, p. 77. On

offered a reasonable summation of this influence when he noted that the ‘Hasidic temper’ found Maharal’s ideas to be ‘congenial, explicated them, cast them into a system and popularized them for large groups of people.’³ Maharal’s work thus ‘provided a convenient literary and conceptual frame’ for Hasidic masters, such as Menaḥem Mendel of Vitebsk, in their attempts to transmit the teachings of Israel ben Eliezer, the Baal Shem Tov, as well as the spiritual depths of their own religious experiences to a larger audience.⁴ In this study, I will focus on a theme that, to the best of my knowledge, has not commanded the attention it deserves. I will explore Maharal’s theory of temporality and demonstrate its effect on discussions of time in Ḥasidic masters.⁵ Given the massive size of these corpora, my analysis will of necessity be limited, but it is my hope that it will shed light on a decisive dimension of Maharal’s philosophy that informed the phenomenology of time to be elicited from pietistic sources.

Time of Suffering in the Suffering of Time

I begin with a comment in Maharal’s *Derekh Ḥayyim*, an extensive commentary on *Pirquei Avot*. The relevant remark is extracted from a longer discourse in which the respite of the world to come is differentiated sharply from the disquiet of this world.

p. 150 mention is made of extensive use of Maharal’s books made by Israel Hopstein, the Maggid of Kozhenits, who also initiated their republication beginning in the late eighteenth century, thereby widening their readership among Ḥasidim. See also p. 345 where the influence of Maharal on Yehudah Leib Alter, the leader of the Ger Ḥasidim, is noted.

³ Safran, ‘Maharal and Early Hasidism’, p. 90.

⁴ Ibid., p. 91.

⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 90, where Safran briefly notes that Maharal’s notion of a ‘mystical realm’, which is ‘beyond time’, is employed by Menaḥem Mendel of Vitebsk. The category of ‘higher than time’ (*le-ma‘lah me-ha-zeman*) in early Ḥasidism, especially in the teachings of the Maggid of Mezshirech and some of his disciples, is discussed by Moshe Idel, “‘Higher than Time’: Observations on Some Concepts of Time in Kabbalah and Hasidism”, in *Time and Eternity in Jewish Mysticism: That Which is Before and That Which is After*, edited by Brian Ogren, Leiden 2015, pp. 197-208, an expansion of the comments about the Maggid’s ideal of cleaving to thought in Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, New Haven 1988, pp. 48-49. No mention is made of the possible influence of Maharal in either study. But compare the brief remarks in Idel, *Hasidism*, p. 224. See the reference to the study of Idel on the Sabbath in kabbalistic and Ḥasidic sources cited below, n. 195.

The sages alluded to this matter in the tractate Megillah,⁶ ‘In every place that it says ‘it was in the days of’ [*wa-yehi bimeï*],⁷ it is the language of affliction [*ša‘ar*].’ ... The language ‘it was’ [*wa-yehi*] relates to a being that is not at rest [*hawwayah bilti nahah*], and thus it denotes affliction. But when it says ‘it was in the days of’, this indicates that the being is in time, and every being in time is a being that has no rest, for time is dependent on motion that has no cessation. Therefore, in every place that it says ‘it was in the days of’, which is a being dependent on time, there is no being at rest, and every being that is without rest is one of affliction.⁸

Maharal’s analysis rests on the grammatical rule of the *waw ha-hippukh*, that is, the prefix of the consecutive or conversive *waw* that converts the perfect tense of the predicate into the imperfect tense. If the *waw* of reversal is placed before a verb that relates to the past, the word denotes a futuristic event, but if it is placed before a verb that relates to the future, the referential meaning changes into the past. An example of the former is *we-hayah*, whose literal meaning ‘and it was’ is transposed into ‘and it shall be’; an example of the latter is the expression *wa-yehi*, whose literal meaning ‘and it shall be’ is transposed into ‘and it was’. From this syntactical principle, Maharal draws the following philosophical truism:

⁶ Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 10b. The exegesis of the word *wa-yehi* as a sign of distress is transmitted by either R. Levi or R. Yonatan as a tradition that has been received from the men of the great assembly (*anshei kenesset ha-gedolah*), traditionally thought to be a synod of sages, scribes, and prophets, which was operative from the early Second Temple period until the early Hellenistic period. After a discussion about this principle, it is reported in the name of R. Ashi that the expression ‘and it was in the days of’ (*wa-yehi bimeï*) unflinchingly indicates misfortune.

⁷ Genesis 14:1, Isaiah 7:1, Jeremiah 1:3, Ruth 1:1, and Esther 1:1.

⁸ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Derekh Hayyim*, edited and annotated by Joshua David Hartman, vol. 4, Jerusalem, 2007, 4:18, pp. 385-386. Compare the almost exact language in Shlomo Ephraim Luntschitz, the disciple of Maharal, in his *Keli Yeqaar*, in *Miqra’ot Gedolot Oz we-Hadar ha-Mevu’ar*, vol. 1, Jerusalem 2011, p. 61 (ad Genesis 1:14): ‘All things that fall under time have in them affliction, as our rabbis, blessed be their memory, said ‘In every place that it says *wa-yehi*, it is naught but the language of affliction’, and they concluded specifically that in the place that it says *wa-yehi bimeï*, it is the language of affliction. The reason for the matter is that everything that is dependent on days, that is, time, has affliction, but all the supernal existents, which are above time and over them time does not rule, do not have any affliction. Therefore, it says *yehi me’orot* [written] defectively [without the *waw*], for all entities beneath the sun have misfortune and affliction because time destroys everything.’

‘Moreover, *wa-yehi* itself with the *waw ha-hippukh* is the being that does not rest, for *yehi* is the language of the future, and there is here no beginning to being at all. But *wa-yehi* is speaking about the being that has begun and does not rest And every being that does not rest is surely a matter of affliction.’⁹ Analogously, the expression *wa-yehi bime’i* connotes the coming to pass of an event both in the past and in the future, simultaneously an antecedent and an aftermath. The bending of the temporal arc intimated by this midrashic exegesis challenges the standard view of time as a linear progression through three discrete points of past, present, and future—stereotypically contrasted with the depiction of time as cyclical¹⁰—and proffers instead the notion of the same that is repeatedly unique; the past event recurs in the future as that which has not yet occurred. Translated into Heideggerian terms, the *waw ha-hippukh* bespeaks the repetition of the again that is altogether otherwise.¹¹

The stance promulgated by Maharal thus defies the dyadic distinction between the diachronic and the synchronic perspectives on time, postulating instead a third alternative wherein the present is portrayed as the channel through which past becomes future and future becomes past.¹²

⁹ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Derekh Hayyim*, vol. 4, 4:18, pp. 385-386.

¹⁰ For a survey of the scholarly assumption that linear time is characteristic of the biblical worldview as opposed to the Hellenistic conception of cyclical time, see Eunsoo Kim, *Time, Eternity, and the Trinity: A Trinitarian Analogical Understanding of Time and Eternity*, Eugene 2010, pp. 32-36.

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, translated by Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu, Bloomington 2012, § 33, p. 58; *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* [GA 65], Frankfurt am Main 1989, p. 73. For my previous discussions of this Heideggerian notion, see Elliot R. Wolfson, *Giving beyond the Gift: Apophasis and Overcoming Theomania*, New York 2014, pp. 243-244; idem, ‘Retroactive Not Yet: Linear Circularity and Kabbalistic Temporality’, in *Time and Eternity in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 33-34.

¹² Compare the formulation of Nishida Kitarō, *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness: Three Philosophical Essays*, translated with an introduction by Robert Schinzinger, Honolulu 1958, pp. 164-166: ‘Time is, in the end, neither to be thought from the past, nor from the future. If the present is regarded merely as the moment, as a point on a continuous straight line, then there is no present whatever, and, consequently, no time at all. ... Time consists essentially in the present coexistence of moments. By saying this I mean that time, as the one of the many as well as the many of the one, consists in the contradictory unity of the present. ... Touching eternity in a moment of time, the Now, means nothing else than this: that the moment, in becoming a ‘true’ moment, becomes one of the individual many, which is to say, the moment of

On occasion, Maharal communicates the point more technically by referring to the present as the moment (*et*) that is not characterized by the duration of time (*hemshekh ha-zeman*) as opposed to other commonplace units such as an hour (*sha'ah*). Insofar as the moment is the instant (*rega*) that has no temporal magnitude—a present that resists representation except as nonpresent¹³—no moment is like another moment (*we-ein et zo ke-mo zo*). The diremptive nature of the instant is such that what takes place therein is renewed recurrently in a moment that is distinctive (*u-mithaddesh lo davar be-et meyuhad*).¹⁴ Even though we habitually assume a degree of homogeneity—a semblance of continuity that undercuts the obdurate discontinuity that would prove to be psychosocially disorienting—each moment is a heterogeneous intermingling of stasis and change whereby the constancy of the constant is determined by the indeterminacy of the intermittent and the indeterminacy of the intermittent by the constancy of the constant.¹⁵ The unpredictability of the moment transforms its presentness into absolute futurity (*attid legamrei*). Maharal concludes, ‘Everything that comes to be constantly in each moment is in the present and will also be in the future, and thus it is expressed in the language of the future.’ The inversion of past and future is attested in Maharal’s exegetical conjecture that the word *az*, literally ‘then’, applies to

the eternal present which is the unity of opposites. Seen from the other side, this means nothing else than that time is constituted as the self-determination of the eternal now. The fact that in the present the past has passed and not yet passed, and the future has not yet come and yet shows itself, means not only, as it is thought in abstract logic, that the past is connected with the future, or becomes one with it; it also means that they become one, by negating each other, and the point, where future and past, negating each other, are one, is the present. Past and future are confronting each other, as the dialectical unity of the present. Just because they are the unity of opposites, past and future are never connected, and there is an eternal movement from the past into the future.’ See below, n. 112.

¹³ For a more detailed analysis of the problem of the present and the metaphysics of presence, particularly according to Husserlian phenomenology, see Rudolf Bernet, ‘Is the Present Ever Present? Phenomenology and the Metaphysics of Presence’, *Research in Phenomenology* 12 (1982), pp. 85-112, and idem, ‘La présence du passé dans l’analyse husserlienne de la conscience du temps’, *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 88 (1983), pp. 178-198.

¹⁴ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Netiv ha-Avodah*, ch. 18, in *Netivot Olam*, Berkowitz edition, Jerusalem 2015, p. 173.

¹⁵ See Michael North, *What Is the Present?*, Princeton 2018, pp. 31-32, 35-39.

the moment that is without temporal duration.¹⁶ We may deduce further that the moment epitomizes the paradox of being in but not of the spatial world subject to the sovereignty of time conventionally conceived.¹⁷

I shall return momentarily to Maharal's notion of the durationless moment, but at this juncture, we would do well to contemplate what is portended in his appropriation of the rabbinic idea that the word *wa-yehi* conveys an element of sorrow. Specifically, how does this relate to the reversibility of the timeline? To understand this we must delve more deeply into the comportment of the temporal as an abiding ephemerality. As Maharal reiterates in many of his treatises, time is dependent on the movement of bodies—the Aristotelian perspective that he likely derived from Maimonides¹⁸—and movement invariably entails variation, which is inherently evil. It follows that anything corporeal subject to temporal fluctuation—in contradistinction to the divine matter that is incorporeal and hence immutable—is a cause of anguish.¹⁹ We note, parenthetically, that the dependency of time on physical matter²⁰ underlies the supposition

¹⁶ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Gur Aryeh ha-Shalem*, edited and annotated by Joshua David Hartman, vol. 3, Jerusalem 1991, pp. 292-293. See below, n. 70.

¹⁷ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Netiv ha-Bittahon*, ch. 1, in *Netivot Olam*, p. 564. In light of this passage, and many parallels from Maharal's corpus that could have been cited, I take issue with the conclusion of Benjamin Gross, *The Eternity of Israel: The Messianic Doctrine of the Maharal of Prague on Exile and Redemption*, Tel-Aviv 1974, p. 220 (Hebrew), that Maharal's eschatology precludes the possibility of exerting pressure on the historical process either by constricting time into one moment or by locking it into a cyclical duration. I concur that Maharal rejected the feasibility of calculating the historical time of the messianic redemption (see *ibid.*, pp. 240, 246-247), but I do not agree that this implies that it is impossible for one to withstand the experience of time compressed as the instant of eternity.

¹⁸ Gross, *The Eternity of Israel*, pp. 241-243.

¹⁹ For example, see Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Neṣaḥ Yisra'el*, edited and annotated by Joshua David Hartman, Jerusalem 1997, ch. 36, p. 672; *idem*, *Gevurot ha-Shem*, edited and annotated by Joshua David Hartman, vol. 1, Jerusalem 2015, ch. 7, pp. 347-348. The inescapable torment of time is related to Maharal's view that history mimetically reflects the dialectical pattern of nature. See André Neher, *The Exile of the Word: From the Silence of the Bible to the Silence of Auschwitz*, translated by David Maisel, Philadelphia 1981, p. 234: 'In the sixteenth century, the Maharal of Prague showed how history copies nature: there is no construction without ruin, no rise without a fall, no development toward a higher condition without a previous erosion within.'

²⁰ On the identification of time and body, see Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Gevurot ha-Shem*, vol. 3, Jerusalem 2019, ch. 46, pp. 365-367, 397; *idem*, *Be'er ha-*

that space and time are the same.²¹ Maharal elaborates the nexus between time, change, and evil in *Or Hadash*, his commentary on the scroll of Esther:

Know that, according to the grammar, *wa-yehi* instructs about a continuous being that is not completed, and this is the duration of time, and if this were a being that already happened and was completed, there would be here no time, for time is a being that prevails and time does not elapse. ... *Wa-yehi* has within it future and it has within it past, for *yehi* is the language of the future, and the *waw* turns it into the past, and thus it has past and future. And this matter instructs about the duration of time, for time is welded from the past and the future, and this is the duration of time In any event, *wa-yehi* instructs about the being that is incomplete, and this is the duration of time. A being that is in time is change because the essence of the being is to change from one matter to another, and all change is evil. Therefore, it is presumed that in every place that it says *wa-yehi* it is naught but misery.²²

In suffering time as transient beings, we partake in the suffering that is time.²³ The inexorable tensiveness of our finitude—the ontologizing of

Golah, edited and annotated by Joshua David Hartman, vol. 2, Jerusalem 2003, 6:4, p. 187.

²¹ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, edited and annotated by Joshua David Hartman, Jerusalem 2000, ch. 26, p. 390: 'time and place are one matter as is known to those who understand.' Compare Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Derashot Maharal mi-Prag*, edited and annotated by Hayyim Pardes, Tel-Aviv 1996, p. 79: 'Time and place belong and are related to one another, for place is in the earth and time depends on the celestial order and the spheres.' See Sherwin, *Mystical Theology*, p. 142. As Sherwin remarks, p. 225 n. 1, Friedrich Thieberger and Benjamin Gross compared Maharal's theory of time to Bergson. With regard to the identification of space and time, I do not see any affinity to the Bergsonian perceptive. Indeed, for Bergson, the routine approach to time depends on the attempt to measure the mobility of duration (*la durée*) and thereby translate it into the immobile spatial time of science. Ironically, the closest analogy to Bergson's signature notion of time as duration is Maharal's depiction of the moment as without duration. For a different interpretation of the identification of space and time in Maharal, see Elliot R. Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau: Kabbalistic Musings on Time, Truth and Death*, Berkeley 2006, pp. 55-56.

²² Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Or Hadash*, edited and annotated by Joshua David Hartman, Jerusalem 2014, pp. 147-149.

²³ For a wide-ranging and erudite discussion of this theme, see Raymond Tallis, *Of Time and Lamentation: Reflections on Transience*, Newcastle upon Tyne 2017.

time that would preclude any opening to the radical alterity of infinitivity—points to the inescapably tragic and solicitous complexion of our being in the world.²⁴

Time Out of Time: Eternality and the Temporal Transcendence of Temporality

The negative assessment of time is tempered by Maharal's embrace of the moment to which I have already alluded. By speaking of the moment as

²⁴ I am here indebted to the analysis of Emmanuel Levinas, 'Martin Heidegger and Ontology', *Diacritics* 26 (1996), pp. 11-32, esp. 27 and 32. For my own treatment of the inherently tragic sense of being in Heidegger's thought, see Elliot R. Wolfson, *The Duplicity of Philosophy's Shadow: Heidegger, Nazism, and the Jewish Other*, New York 2018, pp. 109-130. I regret that I forgot to mention Levinas's 1932 essay in my discussion, and I was kindly reminded of that oversight by Michael Fagenblat, who commented on my examination of tragedy in Heidegger's thought that it was 'all there' in Levinas. I accept that Levinas is to be given credit for grasping at this early stage the inherently tragic nature of Heidegger's notion of solicitude and the finitude of human existence that emerge from his identification of ontology and time, but the interested reader will see that my examination incorporates many elements that were not in Levinas's purview, including discussing the theme as it appears in the totality of the Heideggerian corpus without being limited to material published before 1932, principally *Sein und Zeit*. One would do well to consider the summation of Heidegger's thought in Hannah Arendt, 'What is Existenz Philosophy?', *Partisan Review* 1 (1946), p. 49: 'Heidegger's philosophy is the first absolutely and uncompromisingly this-worldly philosophy. Man's Being is characterized as Being-in-the-world, and what is at stake for this Being in the world is, finally, nothing else than to maintain himself in the world. Precisely this is not given him; hence the fundamental character of Being-in-the-world is uneasiness in the double meaning of homelessness and fearfulness. In anxiety, which is fundamentally anxiety before death, the not-being-at-home in the world becomes explicit. 'Being-in-the-world appears in the existentiel mode of not-being-at-home.' This is uneasiness.' Although Arendt does not use the word 'tragic' in her characterization of Heidegger's thought, she clearly understood that his evaluation of the human being entailed the agonizing awareness that it is impossible for one to become oneself in the world except by confronting the nothingness of self that is laid bare in the departure from the world. In her own words, 'Death may indeed be the end of human reality; at the same time it is the guarantee that nothing matters but myself. With the experience of death as nothingness I have the chance of devoting myself exclusively to being a Self, and once and for all freeing myself from the surrounding world' (p. 50).

lacking duration, Maharal introduces an aspect of eternity that both impedes and upholds the contingency of the temporal flux. That is, the moment cannot be dissected into past, present, and future as distinct modalities allocated to a spatial continuum; the flowing presence of the now is not only the connective tissue that loops a present that is no longer and a present that is not yet²⁵ but it is the chiasmic in-between of the present that concomitantly transmutes the past into future and the future into past.²⁶ Not yet, on this score, is absolutely now because absolutely now can only be what is not yet. From this it follows that eternity is instantiated in the temporal not yet. As such, the threefold compresence of the instant—the interval of permanent impermanence that is always the same because always different²⁷—affords the Jewish people the possibility

²⁵ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Derekh Ḥayyim*, edited and annotated by Joshua David Hartman, vol. 5, Jerusalem 2008, 5:6, p. 221.

²⁶ My discussion here reflects the influence of Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis: On the Theory of History and Politics*, translated by M. J. Hanak, based on the abbreviated version translated by Gerhart Niemeyer, edited with an introduction by David Walsh, Columbia 2002, pp. 325 and 329, previously cited and analyzed in Wolfson, *Alef*, p. 57.

²⁷ Wolfson, *Alef*, pp. 71-72. Consider Franz Rosenzweig's description of the language of love as the moment in which everything is 'equally present, equally fleeting and equally alive,' and his depiction of revelation as being 'always new because it is immemorially old,' cited in Wolfson, *Giving*, pp. 62-63. The chiasmic nature of time was expressed as well by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, edited by Claude Lefort, translated by Alphonso Lingis, Evanston 1968, pp. 267-268: 'The *Urtümlich*, the *Ursprünglich* is not of long ago. It is a question of finding in the present, the flesh of the world (and not in the past) an "ever new" and "always the same". ... In what sense the visible landscape under my eyes is not exterior to, and bound synthetically to ... other moments of time and the past, but has them really *behind itself* in simultaneity, inside itself and not it and they side by side "in time" The *Stiftung* of a point of time can be transmitted to the others without "continuity" without "conservation," without fictitious "support" in the psyche the moment that one understands time as chiasm Then past and present are *Ineinander*, each enveloping-enveloped—and that itself is the flesh (emphasis in original). The characterization of the present as simultaneously *toujours neuf* and *toujours la même* is reminiscent of Heidegger's description of repetition as the again that is altogether otherwise; see above, n. 11. On the Husserlian background of the notion of the interweaving, *Ineinander*, of the present and the past of the invisible in the living present, see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology: Including Texts by Edmund Husserl*, edited by Leonard Lawlor with Bettina Bergo, Evanston 2002, p. 16.

of experiencing the immaterial transcendence materialized ideally in the

Compare Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Institution and Passivity: Course Notes from the Collège de France (1954-1955)*, foreword by Claude Lefort, text established by Dominique Darmaillacq, Claude Lefort, and Stéphanie Ménasé, translated by Leonard Lawlor and Heath Massey, Evanston 2010, p.157: 'Dreams are not temporally circumscribed acts. Thus, the ubiquity of dreams thanks to our symbolic matrices—And also, they are transtemporal. Waking consciousness: time of consciousness and time of its object—Oneiric consciousness: it touches all times and does not incorporate this cleavage. The question arises, with respect to dreams, of knowing whether it makes sense to say that it began at such and such moment, and ended at such and such moment.' The idea expressed by Merleau-Ponty in his later works is a continuation of his privileging the thickness of the pre-objective present in the *Phenomenology of Perception* as the zone in which being and consciousness coincide. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Donald A. Landes, London 2012, p. 457. See Mauro Carbone, *The Thinking of the Sensible: Merleau-Ponty's A-Philosophy*, Evanston 2004, pp. 8-9; Scott L. Marratto, *The Intercorporeal Self: Merleau-Ponty on Subjectivity*, Albany 2012, pp. 114, 118-125. For a more elaborate discussion of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological depiction of time as a sequence that is simultaneously the coexistence of multiple moments in the one moment that is accessible as a field of presence, see Glenn A. Mazis, *Merleau-Ponty and the Face of the World: Silence, Ethics, Imagination, and Poetic Ontology*, Albany 2016, pp. xiv-xv, 230-231, 311-312, 315-316. Mazis is correct to argue that, for Merleau-Ponty, this quality fosters the analogy of time and the oneiric phenomenon as well as the relationship of silence and language. Concerning the latter theme, see Stephen A. Noble, *Silence et langage: Genèse de la Phénoménologie de Merleau-Ponty au seuil de l'ontologie*, Leiden 2014. The delineation of the moment as the compresence of the past, present, and future in the instant that has no duration brings to mind the quality of time within the dreamscape that is in the status of the always now that is different because the same and the same because different. This insight is buttressed by a numerology affirmed in the concluding section in Ḥayyim Viṭal, *Mavo She'arim*, Jerusalem 2016, p. 447: the letters of the Aramaic term for dream, *ḥelma* (8 + 30 + 40 + 1), have the numerical sum of 79, which is the same sum as the words *hayah* (5 + 10 + 5 = 20), *we-howeḥ* (6 + 5 + 6 + 5 = 22), and *we-yihyeh* (6 + 10 + 5 + 10 + 5 = 36), with the addition of one for the word itself (*im ha-kolel*). The numerology grounds the idea that the time of the dream is like the moment in which there is no duration but a convergence of what was, what is, and what will be. The dreamtime thus emulates the eternal temporality that is the esoteric connotation of the Tetragrammaton. See Elliot R. Wolfson, *A Dream Interpreted within a Dream: Oneiropoiesis and the Prism of Imagination*, New York 2011, pp. 252-255, 319 n. 42. See below, n. 133.

Torah. In *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, Maharal educes the point exegetically from the verse 'For every time and moment for everything under heaven' (Ecclesiastes 3:1):

It is appropriate to say of the body, which falls under time, 'for every time' [*la-kol zeman*]. But the matter that is solely an intellect, and this is the receiving of the Torah, is not a physical entity, and this matter is not under time. Concerning this it says 'and moment for everything' [*we-et le-khol hefes*], for the present [*ha-attah*], which joins past and present, is not temporal [*eino zeman*]. That is to say, the matter that is intelligible [*muskal*] does not fall under time, and it comes to be in the present [*na'aseh be-attah*].²⁸

The presumption regarding a present that is not temporal—effectively, a present without duration and hence a time that is not in time—provides the reason why the Torah was revealed in the third month after the Israelites exited Egypt (Exodus 19:1): 'Since the Torah is intelligible [*sikhilit*], and does not fall under time, the third was suitable for it, for as we have said, the present, which is not temporal, belongs especially to the Torah. Because the present is the third, for the present joins the time [*meḥabber ha-zeman*], and it is the third, therefore the Torah was given in the third month ... as it is written "and moment for everything".'²⁹

Reiterating this notion in *Neṣaḥ Yisra'el*, Maharal writes, 'The matters that are under time, as all corporeal entities, which are under time, and even the giving of the commandments, for the commandments—that is, their fulfilment—are consequent to the person who is physical, and therefore there was a set time that circumcision was given to Abraham. But the Torah, since it is exclusively intellectual, does not fall under time. However, the moment [*et*] is pertinent to this, for the present is not temporal [*ki ein ha-attah zeman*] Thus, it says 'and moment for everything', for the present is not temporal, and in the present that was prepared for this it was appropriate for the Torah to be given.'³⁰ From Maharal's standpoint, the moment (*et*) signifies the interlude of the present (*attah*) that is not beholden to the constraints of quotidian time. Hence, rather than viewing the instant as a mathematically constructed point that has no extrinsic extension or mobility,³¹ it can be delineated as the hypertime, the secondary order of time that is the frame of reference against which we measure the oscillating dilations and contractions of the

²⁸ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, ch. 25, p. 376. Compare *ibid.*, ch. 39, p. 597.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, ch. 25, p. 377. See text cited below at n. 68.

³⁰ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Neṣaḥ Yisra'el*, ch. 27, pp. 558-559.

³¹ Tallis, *Of Time and Lamentation*, pp. 140-141.

gravitational field of time's movement.³² The paradigm of time that is outside time—the hypertime of the present that cannot be represented as presence in the sequence of events but which nevertheless is the unconditional marker that safeguards the provisional drift of time³³—is personified by the Torah, which Maharal identifies as an incorporeal intellect. Of the many passages in Maharal's colossal corpus where this theme is enunciated, I will cite from *Gur Aryeh*, his Pentateuchal commentary:

And similarly the Torah is beyond time [*al ha-zeman*] in accord with the gradation of the Torah, for time depends on the sun and the movement of the sphere, and the Torah is above [the sun] And with respect to all entities that are beyond time the matter of time is indifferent [*we-khol ha-devarim asher hem al ha-zeman kol inyan ha-zeman shaweh*], and nothing is in time except for time [*we-eino bi-zeman zulat zeman*]. Therefore, they said that each man is obligated to look upon himself as if he left Egypt,³⁴ for the cause [that redeemed] those who left is the same cause in each and every generation, and there is here no distinction. With respect to other things that are under time, since they fall beneath time they are dependent on time, and it is not said about them that one should see as if it were constantly so. However, with respect to a few divine matters [*devarim elohiyyim*] it is said thus, with respect to the gradation that is above time and that is independent of it, it is spoken of in this way.³⁵

Building on the midrashic interpretation of the formulation connected to the promise of the land of Canaan to the Israelites 'and has given it to you' (Exod 13:11), 'So that it should not be in your eyes like the inheritance of your fathers, but rather it should be in your eyes as if [*ke-illu*] it were given to you today',³⁶ Maharal infers that the bequeathing of the land is a pledge that is dependent on a metaphysical force that transcends the exigencies of time and hence it is incumbent on every Jew to regard that pledge as if it were renewed unremittingly in each generation. Similarly, since the Israelites departed from Egypt by being conjoined to the supernal gradation that is above the order of time (*seder ha-zeman*),³⁷ throughout the course of history, the experience of

³² Ibid., p. 148.

³³ Ibid., p. 41.

³⁴ Mishnah, Pesahim 10:5.

³⁵ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Gur Aryeh ha-Shalem*, vol. 3, pp. 254-255.

³⁶ *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, edited by Hayyim S. Horovitz and Israel A. Rabin, Jerusalem 1970, Bo, 18, p. 70.

³⁷ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Gur Aryeh ha-Shalem*, vol. 3, p. 354. Compare Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Gevurot ha-Shem*, vol. 1, ch. 36, p. 162: 'Moreover, know

redemption must be relived as if it were happening *de novo*. Precisely what is beyond time can be revived endlessly in time. Finally, the same dynamic applies to revelation: the rabbinic exhortation to reenact the Sinaitic epiphany when one studies Torah³⁸ is based on the assumption that the latter is an eternal composition impervious to temporal vacillation. Maharal articulates this point frequently in his treatises, and here I will cite an illustrative passage from *Netivot Olam*: ‘Torah is not like other corporeal things, which are things that are under time, and if a person behaves with Torah as if it were a temporal entity and his study of Torah is according to an hour and according to time, he does not acquire Torah ... for this is a matter of the intellect that is not under time and it is permanent without time’.³⁹

The matter is explicated by Maharal in terms of the contrast between *mišwah*, the commandment, which is corporeal and thus temporal, and Torah, which is incorporeal and thus eternal.⁴⁰ The Torah, the gift conferred exceptionally on Israel, has the capability to deliver observant Jews from the snare of nature and to lead them to the final felicity (*hašlahah ha-aḥaronah*), the life of the world to come.⁴¹ Following older

that it was impossible for Israel to depart from servitude except by means of the holy One, blessed be he, himself, and not from the side of a constellation [*mazzal*] and not by any other aspect except this Therefore, Israel did not go out by means of a gradation in which there is time but by means of a gradation that has no time, for all things fall under time and are created in time except for God, blessed be he, who does not fall under time. ... Israel went out to freedom through the divine gradation that has no time.’

³⁸ *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana*, edited by Bernard Mandelbaum, New York 1962, 12:21, p. 219. See the parallel in *Midrash Tanḥuma*, edited by Solomon Buber, Vilna 1885, Yitro, 13, 38b. See below, n. 99.

³⁹ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Netiv ha-Torah*, ch. 3, in *Netivot Olam*, p. 18.

⁴⁰ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, ch. 14, pp. 217-221; ch. 25, p. 376.

⁴¹ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, ch. 9, p. 149; idem, *Derekh Ḥayyim*, edited and annotated by Joshua David Hartman, vol. 6, Jerusalem 2010, 6:9, p. 322. For discussion of Maharal's understanding of Jewish suffering related to the alienation of Jews from this world, see Shalom Rosenberg, *In the Footsteps of the Kuzari: An Introduction to Jewish Philosophy*, edited by Joel Linsider from a translation by Gila Weinberg, vol. 1, New York 2007, pp. 122-123. Despite the fact that the Jewish people belong to another world, Rosenberg insists that, according to Maharal, their role is to transform this world by observance of the laws of the Torah. For a similar interpretation, see Marvin Fox, ‘The Moral Philosophy of MaHaRaL’, in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, edited by Bernard Dov Cooperman, Cambridge, MA 1983, pp. 167-185, esp. 169-172.

philosophic and kabbalistic texts, Maharal depicts the latter as both the conjunction of the particular intellect (*sekhel perati*) of the human and the universal intellect (*sekhel kelali*) of the divine⁴² and as the restoration of the sundry entities in the material world to the immaterial essence of nondifferentiated unity to the point that there is no palpable separation between the spiritual and the physical, God and the cosmos.⁴³ Torah is variously described as the ‘absolute intellect’ (*ha-sekhel ha-gamur*),⁴⁴ the ‘supernal intellect’ (*ha-sekhel ha-elyon*),⁴⁵ or the ‘divine intellect’ (*ha-sekhel ha-elohi*),⁴⁶ that comprises the ‘rational order’ (*seder sikhli*) or ‘intelligible order’ (*seder ha-muskal*)⁴⁷ by means of which the world was created, and thus it belongs to the ‘intelligible matters [*ha-inyanim ha-sikhliyim*] whose actions are not in time since they do not fall under time and they do not act by means of the movement from which there is time, and according to the gradation of their importance they act without time ... the act of God, blessed be he, is completely without time.’⁴⁸

Maharal lucidly enunciates the kabbalistic understanding of halakhah as the somatic means for the soul to flee the bondage of the somatic.⁴⁹ Cast in temporal terms, the rootedness of the Jew in the metaphysical realm

⁴² Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Tiferet Yisra'el*, ch. 39, p. 597, and references to other sources cited in n. 33.

⁴³ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Neṣaḥ Yisra'el*, ch. 47, p. 789; idem, *Tiferet Yisra'el*, ch. 14, pp. 217-218, 221-223.

⁴⁴ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Tiferet Yisra'el*, ch. 26, p. 391; see passage from *Derashot Maharal mi-Prag* cited below, n. 59.

⁴⁵ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Netiv ha-Torah*, ch. 1, in *Netivot Olam*, p. 10.

⁴⁶ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Netiv ha-Torah*, ch. 3, in *Netivot Olam*, p. 17.

⁴⁷ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Tiferet Yisra'el*, ch. 8, p. 132; idem, *Derekh Ḥayyim*, edited and annotated by Joshua David Hartman, vol. 3, Jerusalem 2007, 3:14, p. 361; idem, *Derekh Ḥayyim*, 5:22, p. 531. See also *Derashot Maharal mi-Prag*, pp. 8, 31, 49.

⁴⁸ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Gur Aryeh*, vol. 3, p. 215.

⁴⁹ I have discussed this topic in several of my studies. See, most recently, Elliot R. Wolfson, ‘Judah ben Solomon Canpanton’s Leqaḥ Ṭov: Annotated Edition and Introduction’, *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 43 (2019), pp. 23-29. This cardinal principle of the rabbinic-kabbalistic ethos is epigrammatically expressed, utilizing a play on words from *Sefer Yeṣirah* (A. Peter Hayman, *Sefer Yeṣira: Edition, Translation, and Text-Critical Commentary*, Tübingen 2004, § 18, pp. 98-100), by Isaac Meir Morgenstern, *Sefer Liqquṭei Yam ha-Ḥokhmah: Mo'adim*, Jerusalem 2019, p. 165: the affliction (נגי) of physical desire must be subdued by the delight (ענג) of the words of Torah. See the discussion below on *avodah be-gashmiyyut*.

beyond time empowers the Jew to sanctify time in the physical world.⁵⁰ Adopting an ostensibly dualistic posture, Maharal states unequivocally that the Torah, which is the intelligible matter (*davar sikhli*) that is 'entirely good', stands in diametric opposition to the corporeal that is 'entirely evil.'⁵¹ The ascetic—almost gnostic—implications of this dualism are reinforced by Maharal's explanation that the Torah was revealed in the desert to impart that one must become like a desert by separating oneself

⁵⁰ The principle is stated cogently by Raphael Moshe Luria, *Seder Leil Shimmurim*, Jerusalem 1990, p. 21. Commenting on R. Jonah's explanation of the expression *meqaddesh ha-shabbat we-yisra'el we-ha-zemannim*, 'he who sanctifies the Sabbath, Israel, and the festive seasons', that Israel is sanctified (*meqaddesh yisra'el*) because they sanctify the festive seasons (*meqaddeshim ha-zemannim*) through the power of the sanctity of the Sabbath (*qedushshat ha-shabbat*), Luria writes, 'We must explain his words why is it specifically through the power of Sabbath that they could sanctify the festive seasons. Israel has in them a holiness from the perspective of the essence of their substance [*mi-šad ešem mahutam*] that was sanctified in the giving of the Torah. We must expound this explanation, for the drawing forth of holiness on the festive seasons was not possible except by one who is above the aspect of time since he then overpowers the time of the mundane and he can sanctify it and make it as a holy day Time is a creation like all the other creatures, and if Israel sanctify the festive seasons, it is incumbent on them to ascend above the aspect of time, and then they can sanctify temporality. This is not possible except by means of the power of Sabbath.' The notion that the Jewish people have the capacity to determine the appointed times of the festivals because they are conjoined to the divine and are therefore above time is expressed by Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Or Torah*, edited and annotated with indices by Jacob I. Schochet, Brooklyn 2006, sec. 393, p. 416. The passage is found as well in the collection of the Maggid's teachings *Or ha-Emet*, Benei Beraq 1967, 7a, and see Idel, 'Higher than Time', pp. 205-206. Idel suggests that the union of divine and human intellects in the Maggid presupposes a 'Neoaristotelian psychology and theology' but, in the final analysis, he displays a 'much more Neoplatonic propensity.' See the earlier formulation in Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, pp. 48-49. Bracketing the question of historical taxonomies, I would suggest that the speculation of the Maggid on this matter likely reflects the influence of Maharal. This may also be the case with regard to the notion of the primordially of the intellect (*qadmut ha-sekhel*) used by the Maggid; see *Maggid Devarav le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 93, p. 161. For discussion of this expression, see Gershom Scholem, *The Latest Phase: Essays on Hasidism by Gershom Scholem*, edited by David Assaf and Esther Liebes, Jerusalem 2008, pp. 268-276 (Hebrew).

⁵¹ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Derekh Hayyim*, vol. 1, 1:2, p. 173.

from bodily desires to merit receiving the Torah.⁵² By withdrawing from the physical, the Jew attains the highest degree of holiness, an internal perfection that corresponds to the topographic preeminence of the holy of holies.⁵³ Through hardship the body is diminished so that the soul can attain the world to come, an ontic plane utterly separated from the physical.⁵⁴ Interpreting the injunction attributed to R. Meir, 'Do less business and busy yourself with Torah',⁵⁵ Maharal opines, 'By being engaged in the Torah, a person removes himself from the matter of the world [*mesalleq ha-adam ašmo me-inyan ha-olam*] and is conjoined to the divine gradation [*u-mitdabbeq be-madreigah elohit*].'⁵⁶ This is the import as well of the rabbinic maxim⁵⁷ that the Torah is not sustained except by one who kills himself over it: 'The person, who is corporeal, is not worthy of the intelligible gradation except by discarding the matter of his body entirely [*yesalleq inyan ha-guf shelo legamrei*] until the point that his body is not considered as anything in his eyes, and he kills himself and eradicates himself for the sake of the intelligible Torah.'⁵⁸ Returning to this talmudic dictum in his sermon on the Torah, Maharal writes, 'Since the Torah is the absolute intellect, and the intellect is entirely separate from the body, how is it possible for two opposites to be in one subject, that is, the Torah, which is an absolute intellect, and man who is corporeal? Therefore, it is impossible for the Torah to exist except in one who kills himself and removes his body entirely. However, when one removes his body entirely, then surely the rational Torah will subsist in him, and if not the Torah will not subsist in him.'⁵⁹

⁵² Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Derashot Maharal mi-Prag*, p. 54. Compare *Derekh Ḥayyim*, vol. 1, 1:2, p. 181. On Maharal's depiction of the Torah as the meta-natural order through which the impulses of nature are to be controlled, see Safran, 'Maharal and Early Hasidism', p. 65.

⁵³ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Netiv ha-Perishut*, ch. 1, in *Netivot Olam*, p. 420.

⁵⁴ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Derashot Maharal mi-Prag*, p. 8.

⁵⁵ Mishnah, Avot 4:10.

⁵⁶ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Derekh Ḥayyim*, vol. 4, 4:10, pp. 197-198.

⁵⁷ Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 83b.

⁵⁸ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Derekh Ḥayyim*, vol. 4, 4:10, p. 199. See *ibid.*, *Derekh Ḥayyim*, vol. 6, 6:5, p. 112; *idem*, *Neṣaḥ Yisra'el*, ch. 7, pp. 182-183; *idem*, *Hiddushei Aggadot*, 4 vols., Benei Beraq 1980, 1:43, 3:118.

⁵⁹ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Derashot Maharal mi-Prag*, pp. 54-55. I note, parenthetically, that Maharal's rhetorical use of the expression *shenei hafakhim be-nose eḥad* may have been an important conduit for the ubiquity of this idea in Ḥasidic sources. On the utilization of this motif in Ḥabad thought, see Rachel Elijor, *The Paradoxical Ascent to God: The Kabbalistic Theosophy of*

The portrayal of the Torah as intellect beyond time serves as the ideational basis for the belief that revelation of what is received and reception of what is revealed are ongoing; one can, indeed must, reexperience the Sinaitic theophany repetitively, for in every moment both text and interpreter are fashioned anew, fashioned anew precisely because conceived long ago.⁶⁰ Maharal's insistence that the Torah does not fall under time does not signify that the law is atemporal, but rather that it exhibits the hypertemporal measure of time that transcends the threefold division into past, present, and future. In the moment of revelation, what was and what will be are compresent in what is indefatigably never the same. From the rabbinic notion of *mattan torah* or *qabbalat torah*, expressions that convey the twofold gesture of the gift of revelation—the giving of the gift that the recipient, no matter his or her credentials, is unworthy to receive and the receiving thereof that elevates the recipient to the level of the giver⁶¹—we comprehend the property of time that is independent of body, and consequently independent of space, a time that can be attributed without contradiction to incorporeal beings that are eternal.⁶²

Habad Hasidism, translated by Jeffrey M. Green, Albany 1993, pp. 97-100; Elliot R. Wolfson, *Open Secret: Postmessianic Messianism and the Mystical Revision of Menahem Mendel Schneerson*, New York 2009, pp. 2, 145, 303 n. 7.

⁶⁰ Maharal's appropriation of the rabbinic notion of an ongoing revelation of the Written Torah is expanded by him to include the Oral Torah. At the same time, however, Maharal adamantly insists that there is a decline in generations that has created a chasm distancing the reader of his own time from the wisdom expressed by the rabbis. On this theme, see Jacob Elbaum, 'Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague and His Attitude to the Aggadah', *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 22 (1971): 30-31; Giuseppe Veltri, 'Science and Religious Hermeneutics: The 'Philosophy' of Rabbi Loew of Prague', in *Religious Confessions and the Sciences in the Sixteenth Century*, edited by Jürgen Helm and Annette Winkelmann, Leiden 2001, pp. 133-134. The possibility of recovering the ancient wisdom of the rabbinic sages is predicated on the hermeneutical bridging of past and present, a possibility strengthened by the ontological conjecture concerning the time of the moment as the novel recurrence of what has never been.

⁶¹ See Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menahem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5731*, vol. 3, Brooklyn 2018, pp. 250-252.

⁶² Maharal distinguishes three different levels of immaterial being, which correspond to three forms of holiness implied in the Trisagion (Isaiah 6:3): the soul (*nefesh*), which has a force (*koah*) in the body; the intellect (*sekhel*), which has a connection (*heqsher*) with the body; and God who is completely

Support for this interpretation may be extricated from the following remark of Maharal in his commentary on the talmudic aggadot: ‘Just as there are actual days for physical human beings, so there is a time that is not actually time [*kakh yesh zeman we-eino zeman mammash*], and it applies to entities that are not corporeal [*devarim bilti gashmiyyim*].’⁶³ The paradoxical locution *time that is not actually time* compels us to ponder what kind of time that might be. We learn more of this time that is not really time from a previously cited passage in *Tiferet Yisra’el* wherein Maharal addresses how the Torah, the pristine form of intellect beyond temporal demarcation, is manifest in historical time.⁶⁴ Maharal distinguishes between *zeman*, the mode of transience that applies to corporeal beings subject to generation and corruption, and *et*, the mode of temporality that may be attributed to intelligible beings not subject to generation and corruption. The latter is described more specifically as the present (*attah*) that unites past (*avar*) and future (*attid*). Hence, the time in which the Torah is given, the time of revelation, divulges something axiomatic about the disposition of time more generally: in the time of the moment, which is experienced at all times as the moment of time that liminally exceeds the allocation of time, the present is the middle (*emša*) that bridges past and future, a bridging that sustains the distance of what is bridged by placing in proximity what must be kept apart. Here we detect an application of a logical structure that Maharal applies to a variety of speculative schema in his philosophical presentation of Jewish piety. Rather than regarding the intermediary as that which unites opposites dialectically,⁶⁵ I would argue that the third term should be construed as the belonging together of opposites that are the same in virtue of being different; that is, in contrast to the sublation of antinomies presupposed by the Hegelian dialectic, the stance I am proposing—in line with Heidegger—maintains that the convergence of the divergence preserves rather than dissipates the sense of difference. The truth of the intermediary dictates, against the law of noncontradiction, that A and not-A are equally

separate from all things bodily. See Judah Loewe of Prague, *Netiv ha-Perishut*, ch. 1, in *Netivot Olam*, p. 420.

⁶³ Judah Loewe ben Bezalel, *Hiddushei Aggadot*, 3:101.

⁶⁴ See above, n. 28.

⁶⁵ André Neher, *Le Puits de l'exil; Tradition et modernité: la pensée du Maharal de Prague (1512-1609)*, new edition, revised and enlarged, Paris 1991, pp. 47-56, 133-143; and see the critique offered by Gross, *The Eternity of Israel*, pp. 68-69 n. 28.

characteristic of A.⁶⁶ Applying this nonconceptual conceptuality—thinking within the space of nonthinking⁶⁷—to Maharal’s cogitations on the nature of temporality, the juxtaposition of past and future in the present discloses the department of the *hypertime*, that is, the fixed point of the now-time that is outside the partition of time—a point that does not display punctiform extensionality—but through which all time must move:

Since the Torah does not fall under time and its classification, as every intelligible matter is not under the category of time, it was not appropriate for it to be given except in the third month, for as we already know every [aspect of] time is divided into past and future, and the present is the third that mediates between them and that fastens time together, for by means of it the past and future time are conjoined. ... The term *et* is apt for the intelligible matter since it does not fall at all under time Hence, the present unites the

⁶⁶ The position I have attributed to Maharal is well attested in Ḥabad-Lubavitch literature. See Elliot R. Wolfson, ‘*Nequddat ha-Reshimu*—The Trace of Transcendence and the Transcendence of the Trace: The Paradox of *Šimšum* in the RaShaB’s *Hemshekh Ayin Beit*’, *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 30 (2013), pp. 92-105, esp. 93-94. When I wrote that study, I referred to the paradox of the intermediary as the coincidence of opposites. I would amend my language today and speak instead of the juxtaposition of opposites. Coincidence presumes a surmounting of difference, whereas juxtaposition sustains it.

⁶⁷ My thinking about nonthinking and conceptualizing nonconceptuality is informed by Heidegger’s rendering of inceptual thought as the fugal conjuncture of *beyng*, which is by nature nonconceptual (*unbegriffliches*), and by Blumenberg’s notion of *Unbegrifflichkeit* to elucidate the historical phenomenology undergirding his metaphorology. Regarding the former, see Heidegger, *Contributions*, § 13, p. 30; *Beiträge*, p. 36; Pauli Pylkkö, *The Aconceptual Mind: Heideggerian Themes in Holistic Naturalism*, Amsterdam 1998. Regarding the latter, see Hans Blumenberg, ‘Prospect for a Theory of Nonconceptuality’, in *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*, translated by Steven Rendall, Cambridge, MA 1997, pp. 81-102, and *idem*, *Theorie der Unbegrifflichkeit*, edited by Anselm Haverkamp, Frankfurt am Main 2007; Anthony Reynolds, ‘Unfamiliar Methods: Blumenberg and Rorty on Metaphor’, *Qui Parle* 12 (2000), pp. 77-103, esp. 97-98. A comparison of Heidegger and Blumenberg on this topic would prove instructive. On the face of it, the suggestion that Blumenberg’s turn to metaphorology is a turn away from Heidegger’s analysis of *Dasein* and world as it relates to *Technik* seems too simplistic. See Rüdiger Campe, Jocelyn Holland and Paul Reitter, ‘From the Theory of Technology to the Technique of Metaphor: Blumenberg’s Opening Move’, *Qui Parle* 12 (2000), pp. 105-126, esp. 125 n. 33.

time [of the past and the future], for the end of the past and the beginning of the future is the present, as is known to those who know [and apprehend] the matter [and the content of the substance] of time. The present, therefore, is the third that joins together the time that is divided into two parts, past and future, but it is not essentially time [*zeman ba-ešem*]. Thus the third month alone was selected for the giving of the Torah, as it is written ‘and moment for everything’ (Ecclesiastes 3:1), for the moment [*et*] is the intermediary and the third that is in between the two boundaries of time.⁶⁸

With this in mind we can explain the paradoxical expression *time that is not actually time* that Maharal ascribes to the Torah and other incorporeal entities. This time, which is not subject to the taxonomy of temporal phenomena, is the time of the present that binds past and future and thereby endows cohesiveness and coherence to the chronicle of history with a beginning, middle, and end. The three existential ecstasies of time correspond theologically to creation, revelation, and redemption—a narratological model of history that distinguishes the Jewish people from other nations whose time is bound to the sun or the rotation of the sphere,⁶⁹ the eternal cycle of return that has no beginning or end, and, hence, no possibility for authentic novelty or creativity in the middle. The esoteric significance of the metaxy of the now is elucidated from the scriptural narrative that ties the epiphany at Sinai to the third month. This seemingly insignificant detail underscores that the temporal modality appropriate to the eternity of the Torah is the ‘distinctive present wherein there is no division of time at all’ (*he-attah ha-meyuḥad she-ein bah ḥilluq zeman kelal*).⁷⁰ The transtemporality of the moment—the word *et* alludes to the time that has no temporal duration and therefore is above time (*u-mipnei she-eino hemshekh zeman hu lema‘lah min ha-zeman*)⁷¹—accounts for its

⁶⁸ Judah Loewe ben Bezalel, *Derashot Maharal mi-Prag*, pp. 79-82.

⁶⁹ For instance, see Judah Loewe ben Bezalel, *Gur Aryeh ha-Shalem*, edited and annotated by Joshua David Hartman, vol. 2, Jerusalem 1990, pp. 19-20; idem, *Gur Aryeh ha-Shalem*, vol. 3, p. 255; idem, *Gur Aryeh ha-Shalem*, edited and annotated by Joshua David Hartman, vol. 4, Jerusalem 1991, p. 105.

⁷⁰ Judah Loewe ben Bezalel, *Gevurot ha-Shem*, vol. 3, ch. 47, p. 470. The point is derived exegetically from the word *az*; see *ibid.*, p. 472, and above at n. 16, and the following note.

⁷¹ Judah Loewe ben Bezalel, *Gevurot ha-Shem ha-Shalem*, Berkowitz edition, Jerusalem 2015, ch. 65, p. 514. In that context as well, the point is connected to the exegesis of the word *az*. It is possible to detect the influence of Maharal on the decoding of the word *az* in Menaḥem Naḥum of Chernobyl, *Yesamah Lev*, printed in *Me’or Einayim*, Benei Beraq 2015, p. 834: the one who worships God must draw the *alef*, which is the master of the world, *aluf shel olam*, into

inimitability and volatility, the instant marked, as in the Sabbath at the end of creation, by the ‘reception of form [*qabbalat ha-šurah*], which is being without movement [*hawayah beli tenu’ah*] ... a spontaneous being in which there is no being [*ha-hawayah pit’omit we-ein ba-zeh hawayah*], for every being is in time. ... That is to say, the reception of form is the completion of being [*hashlamat ha-hawayah*] And this matter is not called ‘work’ [*mela’khah*], for there is no work here that has movement; on the contrary, this matter is the acquisition of completion and rest [*qinyan ha-shelemut u-menuhah*]. ... The reception of form is on the Sabbath ... and thus the reception of form has no need for a temporal reality [*hawayah zamanit*], and this is not called ‘work’, for work involves movement, and movement is related to the body, but the completion of the world in its totality ... is not in time at all [*eino bi-zeman kelal*].⁷² The time of the present, which is not in the present of time, undergirds the spontaneity of revelation as well as the sabbatical rest that seals the act of creation and the salvific repose of messianic redemption. All three occurrences transpire in a moment in which rest is motion and motion is rest, where there is no discrepancy between the streaming of time and the steadfastness of eternity, where time has been eternalized and in the temporalization of eternity and eternity temporalized in the eternalization of time.

The recurrence of the past in the present does not entail the quantifiable and predictable repetition of the identical but rather the indeterminable and incalculable iteration of an original occurrence of the same, a recapitulation of what is incomparable, the interminable termination that opens the possibility of thinking about the relation of time to eternity in a manner that is decidedly nonbinary. Eternity designates neither timelessness nor the endless duration of time; it is the mutual simultaneity and succession of past, present, and future in the moment that is a replication of the same difference that is differently the same. From the human perspective, the moment is, as Hannah Arendt put it, the ‘non-time-space in the very heart of time’, the present situated between the memory of an infinite past and the anticipation of an infinite future;⁷³ from the divine perspective, however, that moment has no past and no future, and thus it warrants neither recollection nor expectation; it is the quintessential

the *zayin yamim*, seven days, which correspond to the seven attributes, and by so doing, the worshipper is conjoined to the divinity that is above this world.

⁷² Judah Loewe ben Bezalel, *Tif'eret Yisra'el*, ch. 40, pp. 615-616.

⁷³ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, introduction by Jerome Kohn, New York 1977, p. 13.

hypostatization of time in the Tetragrammaton as the union of past, present, and future, a time that flows motionlessly without duration. In the words of Maharal, ‘In this name there is he was, he is, and he will be [*hayah howeh we-yihyeh*], and it is all in this name to indicate that his being is in all times, which are past, present, and future, and he is one in them and his mind does not change.’⁷⁴ The contemporaneity of the three temporal modes constitutes God’s eternity: ‘He, may he be elevated, is eternal [*nishhi*], he was, he is, and he will be ... and all the times are in him.’⁷⁵ Far from being a timeless state or a tenseless time,⁷⁶ eternity is saturated with an overabundance of time that renders each moment past, present, and future all at once.

Infinity and the Eternity of Time in Ḥasidic Sources

Maharal’s interpretation of the Tetragrammaton as the signpost that heralds the temporal eternity of God’s eternal temporality had a profound bearing on many Ḥasidic masters, a perspective poetically captured by Abraham Joshua Heschel, ‘Time, however, is beyond our reach, beyond our power. It is both near and far, intrinsic to all experience and transcending all experience. It belongs exclusively to God. Time, then, is *otherness*, a mystery that hovers above all categories.’⁷⁷ As Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye succinctly expressed the point, ‘Just as he, may he be blessed, is eternal, he was, he is, and he will be [*hayah howeh we-yihyeh*], so too is his name, blessed be he, for he and his name are one.’⁷⁸ The tripartite compresence signified by the Tetragrammaton communicates that God transcends time. In this spirit, Menaḥem Naḥum of Chernobyl writes:

⁷⁴ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Gur Aryeh ha-Shalem*, vol. 3, p. 104.

⁷⁵ Judah Loew ben Bezalel, *Derashot Maharal mi-Prag*, p. 229.

⁷⁶ For a theological discussion and survey of these different philosophical options, see Kim, *Time, Eternity, and the Trinity*, pp. 44-47, 156-158.

⁷⁷ Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*, New York 1951, p. 99. On the primacy allocated to time in Heschel’s religious phenomenology, see the sources cited in Wolfson, *Giving*, pp. 322-323 nn. 184-190. For discussion of the topic of eternity and time in the Ḥasidic appraisal of the divine, see Ariel Mayse, ‘Reflection: Eternity in Hasidism: Time and Presence’, in *Eternity: A History*, edited by Yitzhak Y. Melamed, New York 2016, pp. 231–238.

⁷⁸ Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, *Toledot Ya’aqov Yosef*, Korzec 1780, 2c. Like other Ḥasidic masters, perhaps in an effort to combat antinomian tendencies, Jacob Joseph utilizes this theme to ground the idea that the commandments of the Torah, which derive from the essence of the divine personified in the name, are likewise eternal. See *ibid.*, 63b, 64b, 84c, 116a, 125c, 194b.

As it is written in the holy *Zohar*, ‘when it arose in his will to create the world’,⁷⁹ verily in his will, from him and within him [*minneih u-veih*], without any arousal from below For the beginning of the ascending of thought [*seliqat maḥashavah*] that arose in his incomposite will to create the world was truly from him. And all of this is because the creator, blessed be he, was, is, and will be in a single occurrence as one [*be-fa’am aḥat ke-eḥad*], since he is not in time [*she-eino bi-zeman*] as he is above temporality [*lema’lah mi-zemanniyyut*], for time is created by the creator, and thus in relation to him past, present, and future are homogeneously one [*ken ešlo shaweh he-hayah we-ha-howeh we-ha-yihyeh ke-eḥad*].⁸⁰

In a second passage of this author, we discern that the compresence of the three temporal modes in the moment that is above time not only describes *Ein Sof* but it can be achieved by the Jew in an ecstatic state of mystical union, a state of mindfulness in which one’s matter has been transposed into form: ‘It is known that God, blessed be he, is above time, for with respect to God, blessed be he, that he was, he is, and he will be are equal, for he was, he is, and he will be in one instant [*hayah howeh we-yihyeh berega eḥad*] because the creator, blessed be he, is infinite and he has no beginning and no end. Hence, the one who merits the resplendent light, which is the aspect of the one, by becoming unified with the blessed One [*she-na’aseh aḥdut immo yitbarakh*], he is also above temporality [*lema’lah mi-zemanniyyut*] and he can see from one end of the world to the other, the past, future, and present, as has been said, and not like the nations of the world.’⁸¹ From a third passage, we get a better sense that Menahem Naḥum considered the quality of eternity, which transcends time, a component of the temporal: ‘It is known that the Torah consists of the names of the holy One, blessed be he, and God, blessed be he, was, is, and will be, living and persisting eternally, and similarly is the Torah . . . and certainly, in each moment and time [*be-khol et u-zeman*], the Torah is garbed [*mitlabbeshet*] in accord with the needs of the moment and the time.’⁸² God’s eternity is hypostatized in the fact that the Torah recurrently

⁷⁹ *Zohar* 1:86b.

⁸⁰ Menahem Naḥum of Chernobyl, *Yesamah Lev*, printed in *Me’or Einayim*, pp. 920-921.

⁸¹ Menahem Naḥum of Chernobyl, *Me’or Einayim*, pp. 245-246. On the possibility of transforming the physical act of eating, which is subsumed in the temporal, to a higher state of divinity that is above time by affixing specific times to eating through the proper mindfulness (*da’at*), see *ibid.*, pp. 418-419, and see below, n. 209.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 358.

begets a different garb compliant to the demands of the moment.⁸³ Based on the zoharic identity of God and the Torah, it follows, moreover, that if the former is infinite, the latter will be as well. ‘Thus, the Torah is eternal, for the Torah and the holy One, blessed be he, are one,⁸⁴ and it must be infinite insofar as it was, it is, and it will be, and inasmuch as it is germane to every person and in every time.’⁸⁵ Again, we see that eternality is not antithetical to temporality but it is rather its fullest incrementalization. Just as the infinite is accessible only through the cloak of the finite, so the eternal is apparent only through the façade of the temporal. Metaphorically, the eternal can be compared to the liminal state of twilight (*bein ha-shemashot*), the transitional moment—the in-between wherein one enters and the other departs fleetingly like the blink of the eye (*ke-heref ayin*)⁸⁶—that is neither day nor night,⁸⁷ the intermezzo that divides and thereby conjoins the nocturnal attribute of judgment and the diurnal attribute of mercy in the showing of the nonshowing. This is the mystical

⁸³ Ibid., p. 427: ‘Moreover, the Torah is eternal and is appropriate in every time, for if this were not the case, there would be, God forbid, only narrative accounts [*sippurei ma’asim*] of a previous time.’ And *ibid.*, p. 682: ‘Thus, the Torah in all of its principles is operative everlastingly in each moment and time according to the alteration of the times, the moments, and the generations [*lefi hishtannut ha-zemannim we-ha-ittim we-ha-dorot*], and it gives advice on how to be bound to his blessed name.’

⁸⁴ *Zohar* 2:90b.

⁸⁵ Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl, *Me’or Einayim*, p. 279. See *ibid.*, p. 481: ‘The light of *Ein Sof*, blessed be he, overflows in the letters [*mushpa be-ha-otiyot*] and in everything that is created by the letters, which are all the worlds and their fulness, for the Torah and the blessed holy One are one, and the power of the agent is in the recipient [*we-khoah ha-po’el ba-nif’al*]. ... The vitality of the life of the light of *Ein Sof*, blessed be he, overflows in the concealment of the letters that are garbed and hidden in this matter, and particularly with respect to the Torah, the light of *Ein Sof*, blessed be he, overflows in the letters.’ Compare the tradition about the Torah being garbed in this world transmitted in the name of the Maggid in Ze’ev Wolf of Zhitomir, *Or ha-Me’ir*, 2 vols., Jerusalem 1995, 1:244, and see *ibid.*, 2:77. On the study of Torah as the means to comprehend the incomprehensible infinitivity of the divine, see Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow, *Degel Maḥaneh Efrayim*, Jerusalem 2013, pp. 36-38. On the eternality of the Torah, related specifically to the ability of making a tabernacle for God in one’s heart ‘in every moment and in every time’ (*u-ve-khol et u-ve-khol zeman*), see *ibid.*, pp. 316-317.

⁸⁶ Following the rabbinic description of twilight in Babylonian Talmud, *Berakhot* 2b; *Shabbat* 34b.

⁸⁷ The prooftext cited is Zechariah 14:7.

intent of the adage that divine salvation comes like a blink of the eye (*teshu'at yhwh ke-heref ayin*),⁸⁸ that is, 'salvation that is according to nature requires time, for nature is in time, but the salvation of the Lord, which is above time and nature, is something that is called twilight, that which unites the two but is neither day nor night, merely the blink of the eye for which time is not appropriate.'⁸⁹ Analogously, the rectification of repentance (*tiqqun ha-teshuvah*) occurs as if in a second (*ke-rega*), since it ensues from the state before the world was created, that is, from a state that is above temporality (*lema'lah mi-zemanniyyut*), and hence everything can be repaired in a blink of the eye without any endurance of time (*shehiyyat zeman*). By cleaving to the source that is above time, the repentant becomes a new creation (*beri'ah hadashah*) in time, albeit outside the division into past, present, and future.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ See, for instance, Isaac ben Judah Abarbanel, *Yeshu'ot Meshiho*, edited and annotated by Oren Golan, introduction and indices by Moshe Zuriel, Ashkelon 2018, pt. 2, 1:1, p. 54; Samuel ben Isaac di Uceda, *Midrash Shmu'el*, Benei Beraq 1989, 5:4, p. 362; Menahem Azariah da Fano, *Asarah Ma'amarot im Perush Yad Yehudah*, Jerusalem 2014, Ma'amar ha-Ittim, 6, p. 477; Samuel Nathan Nata Shapira, *Megalleh Amuqot al ha-Torah*, Benei Beraq 2001, p. 367; Isaiah Horowitz, *Shenei Luhot ha-Berit ha-Shalem*, 5 vols., Jerusalem 1993, 4:181; Eliezer Papo, *Pele Yo'es*, Jerusalem 1986, pp. 235 (s.v. *safiy*), 303 (s.v. *teshu'at yhwh*). On the slightly different formulation, *yeshu'at yhwh ke-heref ayin*, see Tobias ben Eliezer, *Midrash Leqah Tov al Esther*, in Solomon Buber, ed., *Sifrei de-Aggadata al Megillat Esther*, Vilna 1886, 4:17, p. 103; Moses ben Judah ibn Makhir, *Seder ha-Yom*, edited and annotated by Abraham Yehiel ha-Levi Deutsch, Jerusalem 2015, p. 345.

⁸⁹ Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl, *Me'or Einayim*, p. 629. On the similar connotation of the rabbinic description of twilight as the blink of the eye signifying a time that is without time, see Elliot R. Wolfson, 'Kenotic Overflow and Temporal Transcendence: Angelic Embodiment and the Alterity of Time in Abraham Abulafia', *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 18 (2008), pp. 161-162.

⁹⁰ Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl, *Me'or Einayim*, p. 714. I previously cited this passage in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, p. 396 n. 60, and see also Idel, 'Higher than Time', p. 207. On the messianic implications of repentance occurring in one instant—a time that is in time as the time above time—in Ḥabad thought, see the passages cited and analyzed in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 279-280, and idem, 'Revealing and Re/veiling: Menahem Mendel Schneerson's Messianic Secret', *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 26 (2012), pp. 64-65, 84-85. Repentance is described frequently in Ḥabad sources as exceeding the natural world and being beyond the disparity of permissible and forbidden indispensable to the nomian framework of the Torah. See Wolfson,

The resistance to bifurcating eternity and temporality is repeated often in Ḥasidic literature. Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye pithily formulated the principle, ‘Because the Torah is eternal, it must be for every person and for every time.’⁹¹ Rather than being the nullification of time, God’s eternity is its perpetual implementation.⁹² In *Yosher Divrei Emet*, the collection of dicta from Meshullam Feibush Heller of Zbarazh, we read in language that betrays the influence of Maharal:

For all the commandments are intellectually eternal [*niṣḥiyyot ba-sekhel*] even though pragmatically they are in time and in action [*she-be-fo‘al hem bizeman u-ve-ma‘aseh*]. In the intellect, they are everlastingly eternal [*tamid niṣḥiyyim*], for the Torah is his divinity [*elohuto*] and his divinity is eternal. As all the disciples of the Besht say in his name, the entirety of the Torah needs to be found incessantly in every time in the way of wisdom and intellect.⁹³

Elaborating this notion, Qalonymous Qalman ha-Levi Epstein, the disciple of Elimelekh of Lyzhansk, wrote, ‘It is known that our holy Torah is eternal and exists in every moment and time, since the holy spirit is a

Open Secret, pp. 55-56, 180-182, 274; idem, ‘Revealing and Re/veiling’, pp. 28, 67.

⁹¹ Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, *Toledot Ya‘aqov Yosef*, 7b. See *ibid.*, 8b, 14c, 15a, 17b, 18d.

⁹² The same paradox is applied to the intractable philosophical question of why the world was created at a particular point in time and not before if the divine will is eternal and not subject to temporal change. The response beckons the ‘deep secret’ (*sod amiq*) that the temporal arousal of the will at the moment of creation is a facet of its eternity. See *Keter Shem Tov*, edited and annotated by Jacob Immanuel Schochet, Brooklyn 2004, sec. 348, pp. 215-216; *Sefer Ba‘al Shem Tov al ha-Torah*, 2 vols., Jerusalem 2007, 1:40-41. See also the collection of the teachings of Dov Baer, the Maggid of Mezhirech, edited by Meshullam Feibush Heller of Zbarazh, *Liqqutei Yeqarim*, Jerusalem 1974, sec. 131, 37b: ‘When the blessed holy One gazes [*mistakel*], this is the establishment [*qiyyum*] of all the worlds, for above there are no hours or time, for in one instant [*be-rega eḥad*] the influx comes from the supernal wellspring that flows continually, and its nature is to benefit and to overflow to his creatures provided that the recipient is worthy to receive.’ A partial transcription of this passage appears in *Keter Shem Tov*, sec. 111, p. 120. Note that the denial of time to the supernal realm does not preclude the description of the divine effluence overflowing in one instant, the interval of time that is outside of time. See below at n. 161.

⁹³ Meshullam Feibush Heller of Zbarazh, *Yosher Divrei Emet*, Jerusalem 1974, sec. 32, 19a-b For parallel versions, see *Keter Shem Tov*, sec. 393, p. 239; Aharon Perlow of Apta, *Or Ganuz la-Ṣaddiqim*, Jerusalem 2008, p. 54.

matter that has no interruption. Even though in the moment the holy spirit is articulated it concerns the matter that is in that time [*inyan she-hu be-otto zeman*], the eternal and infinite matter [*inyan niṣḥi we-ein sof*] is garbed in that holy spirit.⁹⁴

The centrality of this idea in early Ḥasidism is attested as well by the following comment of Menaḥem Mendel of Vitebsk:

This is the matter of man's worshipping his creator all the days of his life: none of the times [*ha-ittim*] are the same—'a time to love and a time to hate' (Ecclesiastes 3:8). For this is the whole of man, that he changes every moment and every second . . . and this is the matter: he takes off a form and puts on a form [*posheṭ ṣurah we-lovesh ṣurah*] . . . The matter of a man's variation in his worship of God is also called garments [*malbushim*]⁹⁵—the clothes one wears in the morning are not what one wears in the evening.⁹⁵

Expressed in this passage is the temporal underpinning of Ḥasidic psychology: the temperament of the human—in contrast to the angelic, animal, vegetative, and inanimate forms of life—is to change from moment to moment, and in this sense, it is typified by the periodic modification of form required by the worship of God.⁹⁶ Consonant with

⁹⁴ Qalonymous Qalman ha-Levi Epstein, *Ma'or wa-Shemesh*, Jerusalem 2008, p. 203.

⁹⁵ Menaḥem Mendel of Vitebsk, *Peri ha-Areṣ al ha-Torah im Be'ur Ṭa'am ha-Peri*, 3 vols., Jerusalem 2011, 1:107–108.

⁹⁶ See Wolfson, *Giving*, pp. 321–322 n. 178, where I hypothesized that the idea that the cadence of time is determined by the liturgical demand of the distinctiveness of each moment may attest to the influence of the remark of Judah Halevi, *Sefer ha-Kuzari*, translated by Yehuda Even-Shmuel, Tel-Aviv 1972, 3.5, p. 101, that for the pious individual (*ḥasid*) the moment of prayer is 'the seed of time and its fruition', and all other times are 'like paths that lead him to this moment . . . for by means of it he is likened to the spiritual substances and he is distanced from the animals.' Just as the three times of prayer on the weekdays are the fulfillment of time, so the Sabbath is the 'fruit of the week' because that day is 'summoned for the conjunction to the divine matter.' Time, in its essence, marks the moment of transfiguration for the Jew, the angelic overcoming of his animality, a process that is realized most fully on the Sabbath, a day set aside for the spiritual union with the *amr ilāhī* (*inyan elohi*), the term used to designate the effluence of God that materializes in the physical universe but which is perceived singularly by the people of Israel; of all ethnicities, only the Jews are accorded the potentiality of being conjoined to this effluence, whence derives their prophetic-angelic status. I also suggested that this phenomenological account is indispensable for understanding the notions of temporality put forward by Rosenzweig and Heschel.

the description of the Torah being garbed differently in each interim of time, the manifold manifestations of worship are labeled as garments. What is critical to our analysis is that the persistent wavering of the temporal investiture is proportionate to the changeless stability of the infinite. Bolstering the apposition of the temporal and the eternal is the paradox of sameness and difference that underlies the notion time as the linear circle or the circular line: on the one hand, each moment a commandment is fulfilled reflects the moment the commandment was first given, but, on the other hand, each moment that commandment is fulfilled is a retrieval of the unprecedented, a genuine duplication of the same that is always the same in virtue of always being different. In the words of Menaḥem Naḥum of Chernobyl, '[With respect] to all the commandments that were commanded, when the moment and the time [*et u-zeman*] of each and every commandment comes, there is aroused [*nit'orer*] the matter that was in the moment and the time of the commandment from the ancient past [*me-az u-mi-qedem*].'⁹⁷ The implicit hermeneutical assumption that again is altogether otherwise, to invoke once more the Heideggerian formulation, is made even clearer in a second passage: 'It is [written] in the writings of the Ari, blessed be his memory,⁹⁸ that in each time of the

⁹⁷ Menaḥem Naḥum of Chernobyl, *Me'or Einayim*, p. 207.

⁹⁸ Ḥayyim Viṭal, *Peri Eṣ Ḥayyim*, Jerusalem, 1980, Miqra Qodesh, ch. 3, p. 484, writes that on each of the times of the festivals there is a glowing of the supernal lights (*hitnoṣeṣut orot ha-elyonim*) commensurate to the particular time of the given festival. On the application of this principle more limitedly to the celebration of the new year in Tishrei as the recreation of the world, see *ibid.*, Rosh Hashanah, ch. 1, pp. 545-546. For a more technical explication of this process, see Ḥayyim Viṭal, *Sha'ar ha-Kawwanot*, edited and annotated by Meir Elkoubi, Jerusalem 2019, Derushei Ḥag ha-Sukkot, 3, p. 806. The principle seems to underlie the observation of Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Shulḥan Arukh: Oraḥ Ḥayyim*, vol. 1, revised edition, Brooklyn 2008, 1:8, that even though the determination of clock time will vary from place to place, it has no effect on the sanctity of Sabbath, festivals, or other rituals, since their holiness is dependent not on terrestrial time zones but on the propitious moment (*et raṣon*) above and the supernal unifications (*yihudim elyonim*) that surpass the category of place and time; the transtemporal efflux of light illumines each place below in accord with the time that is appropriate to it. See also the comments about the appointed seasons of the festivals (*mo'adim*) in Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'aqov*, critical edition with commentary, introduction, and indices by Rivka Schatz Uffenheimer,

festive seasons such as Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacle, which occur in every year, when the aforementioned time comes it happens as it was the first time, on Passover the departure from Egypt, and on Pentecost the receiving of the Torah, and so on in each time. To understand how the Torah is received on every Pentecost when it was already given, it must be explained according to what the rabbis, blessed be their memory, said, every day it must be as new [*ka-ḥadashim*] in your eyes as the day it was given,⁹⁹ and this one must accept on every Pentecost.’¹⁰⁰ Striking the same note, Levi Yiṣḥaq of Berditchev writes,

Jerusalem 1976, sec. 64, pp. 104-105. Interestingly, in that context, the matter is cast in terms of the gender distinction between masculine and feminine days; the exodus from Egypt is the festival that is masculine in relation to all other festivals, which are feminine. The original illumination from the exodus is revealed on every subsequent Passover and other holidays. Also at play here is the widespread correlation in kabbalistic symbolism of the masculine with concealment and the feminine with disclosure. See the compilation of Dov Baer’s teachings transcribed by Levi Yiṣḥaq of Berditchev and recently published as *Dibrot ha-Maggid*, edited by Ḥananiah Leichtag, Jerusalem 2018, p. 227. Compare Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Torat Ḥayyim: Shemot*, Brooklyn 2003, 240a: ‘The secret of the Lord that is in the commandments of Sabbath and the festivals, which is the time of the disclosure of the supernal lights in the manner of the consciousness [*moḥin*] of *Abba* and *Ima* that are revealed in *Ze’ir Anpin* on Sabbath and the festivals.’ See *ibid.*, 243b-244a. In that context, the illumination from above in vessels below, which vary in accord with specific times and places, is illustrated by the example of the light of the intellect (*or ha-sekheh*) being hidden by the language of the parable (*mashal*). Through the concealment of the parabolic images—overtly described as consisting of strange matters (*inyanim zarim*)—the wisdom contained therein is revealed. Just as the *mashal* concomitantly veils and unveils the intended meaning of the *nimshal*, so the vessel that is in time discloses the light that is above time. See *ibid.*, 192a, previously discussed in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, p. 325 n. 164. On the role of *mashal* in Dov Baer, see Naftali Loewenthal, *Communicating the Infinite: The Emergence of the Habad School*, Chicago 1990, pp. 154–157, 167–173. The function of the parable in Ḥabad thought, related especially to the image of the Torah as the primordial parable (*meshal ha-qadmoni*), is examined in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 58–65, 97–98; *idem*, ‘Revealing and Re/veiling’, pp. 56–63; *idem*, ‘*Nequddat ha-Reshimu*’, pp. 98–99.

⁹⁹ The precise language is closest to Solomon ben Isaac, *Perushei Rashi al ha-Torah*, edited by Ḥayyim D. Chavel, Jerusalem 1983, p. 238 (ad Exodus 19:1). It goes without saying that Rashi’s comment is based on earlier rabbinic texts. See Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 63b; *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, edited by Louis

We must comprehend how we can say each and every year ‘the time of our freedom’ on Passover and ‘the time of the giving of our Torah’ on Pentecost when many times have well past. The matter, however, is as follows: every year when we, the children of Israel, fulfill the commandments of the creator, blessed be he, that is, the commandment to destroy the leaven and to eat the unleavened bread on Passover and all the other commandments that are dependent on it, then a great illumination is ignited for us by his great lovingkindness, just as a great illumination occurred for our forefathers at the time they exited from Egypt as a reward for the commandments that they fulfilled.... Therefore, we say on Passover ‘the time of our freedom’ and on Pentecost ‘the time of the giving of our Torah’ because there is aroused upon us the time of freedom and the time of the giving of the Torah in accord with our good actions and the fulfillment of his commandments.¹⁰¹

Although Maharal’s ruminations on time are evident in any number of Hasidic sources, this influence is most pronounced in the Ḥabad-Lubavitch dynasty.¹⁰² Given the vastness of this corpus, I will here present only a modest sampling of applicable sources to corroborate my claim. Let me begin with a statement from Shneur Zalman of Liadi’s *Sha’ar ha-Yihud we-ha-Emunah*:

The name *YHWH* indicates that he is above time [*lema’lah min ha-zeman*], for he was, is, and will be in one moment [*hayah howeh we-yihyeh be-rega*

Finkelstein, New York 1969, 33, p. 59; and additional sources cited above, n. 38. See Wolfson, *Alef*, pp. 64-65.

¹⁰⁰ Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl, *Me’or Einayim*, p. 289.

¹⁰¹ Levi Yiṣḥaq of Berdichev, *Qedushat Levi*, Benei Beraq 2016, p. 621. See *ibid.*, p. 1090: ‘It is known that all the miracles and all of the illuminations, which were revealed in previous days, are revealed in each and every year, for example, on Ḥanukkah, the miracle of Ḥanukkah and the mercies that occurred to Mattityahu the high priest, when we light the candles of Ḥanukkah; and on Purim, each and every year there are revealed the miracles and mercies that were revealed in the days of Mordecai and Esther; and similarly the illumination of Pentecost, the sanctity of the giving of the Torah is revealed each and every year; and likewise on Rosh Hashanah the illuminations of the creation of the world are revealed, as it is explained in the writings of the Ari, blessed be his memory.’

¹⁰² Sherwin, *Mystical Theology*, p. 139, notes that the influence of Maharal on the Ḥabad-Lubavitch school is enhanced by the tradition that its founder, Shneur Zalman of Liadi, is his direct descendant.

eḥad]¹⁰³ . . . and he is also above the aspect of place [*lema'lah mi-beḥinat maqom*], for he constantly brings into being the entire aspect of place from above to below, and to the four sides. Even though he, blessed be he, transcends place and time, he is also found below in place and time; that is, he is united in the aspect of his kingship [*she-mityaḥed be-middat malkhuto*] whence there issue and come to be place and time. This is the lower unity [*yihud tata'ah*] . . . that is, his blessed substance and his essence [*she-mahuto we-ašmuto*], may he be blessed, which is called by the name *Ein Sof*, fill all of the earth actually in time and place . . . for everything is in the aspect of place that is nullified in existence in the light of the infinite, blessed be he [*ha-baṭel bi-mešit'ut ba-or ein sof barukh hu*], which is cloaked in it [*ha-mitlabesh bo*] by means of the attribute of his kingship, which is unified with the blessed one. The attribute of his kingship, however, is the attribute of contraction and concealment [*ha-šimšum we-ha-hester*] to hide the light of the infinite, blessed be he, so that time and place will not be nullified from their existence entirely such that there would be no aspect of time and place in existence even for the lower beings.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Compare Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Torah*, vol. 2, Brooklyn 1998, Derushim le-Ro'sh ha-Shanah, 61a: 'Thus, as it were, above in the source of the vitality and the permutations, which is the life of lives, the light of *Ein Sof*, blessed be he, there is no division of time into past, present, and future, for there they are all integrated as one. . . . But when the vitality extends from above to below to sustain the worlds, the aspect of time comes to be. Prior to the world having been created, there was no aspect of time at all. . . . When a person places these matters on his heart that all of the world is under time, and that time is considered as an instant [*rega*] before him, blessed be he, for he is above time and before him there is no division of time at all, his heart will be like an ember of a burning fire and his soul will yearn to be conjoined to him, blessed be he.' See Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 170, p. 267, where the words of prayer are said to ascend to the infinite 'in one instant that is above time [*be-rega eḥad lema'lah me-ha-zeman*], for there is no division of time [*hithallequt ha-zeman*] there.' On the messianic implications in Ḥabad thought of the description of the now as an instant, or as the miniscule interval of time (*rega qaṭan*), see sources cited and analyzed in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 277-280, 395 n. 52, 396 n. 60.

¹⁰⁴ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Amarim: Tanya*, Brooklyn 1979, pt. 2, ch. 7, 82a-b. Regarding this passage, see Rivka Schatz Uffenheimer, *Hasidism as Mysticism: Quietistic Elements in Eighteenth Century Hasidic Thought*, translated by Jonathan Chipman, Princeton 1993, pp. 265-266. On p. 263, the author correctly notes the fundamental paradox of Ḥabad cosmology—the concealment of the divine from the world makes possible the disclosure of the divine in the world; alternatively expressed, the withdrawal is the bestowal. See Elijah, *Paradoxical Ascent*, pp. 25-31, 79-91. Compare *Keter Shem Tov*,

On the one hand, the ascription of temporal and spatial properties to God is categorically denied, since this would imply a change in the divine ipseity that is ipso facto impossible;¹⁰⁵ on the other hand, the sempiternity betokened by the ineffable name is inherently temporal and spatial inasmuch as it triggers the never-ending regeneration of the invariable in the capriciousness of the variable.¹⁰⁶ The propensity of the infinite to feign the attire of the finite is tied specifically to the attribute of *Malkhut*, the quality of judgment that delimits the limitlessness of *Ein Sof* by constricting and concealing its light to the point that it dissembles in the semblance of the autonomous spatio-temporal world.¹⁰⁷ Even so, as

sec. 354, pp. 220-222. From other passages in the works of Shneur Zalman, we may deduce that the infinite essence is outside the category of the world and thus it is beyond the ontological demarcation of transcendence and immanence, or in the technical zoharic language by which these concepts are often expressed, *sovev kol almin* and *memalle kol almin*, encompassing all worlds and filling all worlds. See Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqquṭei Torah*, vol. 1, Brooklyn 1996, Behar, 42a-b; Shlomo Zalman Schneersohn of Kapust, *Magen Avot al Sefer Bere'shit*, Berditchev 1902, 30a-b.

¹⁰⁵ See Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqquṭei Torah*, vol. 1, Balaq, 70c, translated in Wolfson, *Alef*, p. 109. Compare Aaron Halevi Horowitz of Staroselye, *Sha'arei ha-Yiḥud we-ha-Emunah*, Shklov 1820, p. 1, 2a; Shlomo Zalman Schneersohn of Kapust, *Magen Avot al Sefer Shemot*, Berditchev 1902, 17b. On the attribution of primordially to God and the denial of the temporal division of past, present, and future, in part based on the language of Maimonides, see Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, *Derekh Miṣwotekha*, Brooklyn 1993, 57a-58b. According to the precise language of Ṣemaḥ Ṣedeq, God, or the essence of *Ein Sof*, is in a state of perpetual being (*hawah tamid*) that is above time entirely and even above the inestimable duration (*hemshekh ha-bilti meshu'ar*) such that there is no distinction between past, present, and future, and thus no discernible difference between before and after. See Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-Ḥaḡirah*, Brooklyn 2003, 31a; and analysis in Jacob Gottlieb, *Rationalism in Hasidic Attire: Habad's Harmonistic Approach to Maimonides*, Ramat Gan 2009, pp. 63-64, 79-80 (Hebrew).

¹⁰⁶ Compare Ḥayyim Viṭal, *Eṣ Ḥayyim*, Jerusalem 2013, 1:1, 11a: 'The great name, which is the name of the four letters *YHWH*, is called this way to instruct about his eternal being and everlasting existence, past, present, and future—prior to the creation, in the time of the perdurance of creation, and after it returns to what was.'

¹⁰⁷ Compare Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqquṭei Torah*, vol. 2, Shir ha-Shirim, 48d; 'The *Ein Sof*, blessed be he, is called the source of the delights ... but since the souls are created and finite, it was impossible for them to receive the delight from *Ein Sof*, blessed be he, himself except by means of the splendor from the

Shneur Zalman is quick to point out, ‘since the attribute of his kingship, blessed be he, is united to his substance and to his essence [*meyuḥedet be-mahuto we-ašmuto*], blessed be he, in the absolute unity [*be-takhlit ha-yihud*] ... it follows that the aspect of place and time as well will be actually abrogated in existence [*beṭelim bi-meši’ut mammash*] vis-à-vis his substance and his essence like the light of the sun that is nullified in the sun, and this is the amalgamation of the name for lordship [*adnut*] with the name *YHWH*.’¹⁰⁸ What is noteworthy for this analysis is that the spatial coordinates are derivative from the temporal emplacement of the infinite in the concurrence of past, present, and future.¹⁰⁹

The perspective of Shneur Zalman, which has reverberated in the writings of the other Ḥabad-Lubavitch masters, is made clear in Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, known as the *Şemaḥ Şedeq*: ‘Thus, the *yod* of the Tetragrammaton instructs about the contraction [*šimšum*] by which he withdrew the aspect of his essence from everything and he resided in time [*we-yishreh bi-zeman*], the aspect of the world [that is] concealment [*olam he’lem*]. ... Even though he, blessed be he, is above the category of place, he nevertheless resided as well in the aspect of place Similarly, it must be said with respect to the matter of time, even though he, blessed be he, is above the aspect of time, he nonetheless radiates from this aspect also in time.’¹¹⁰ The act of contraction/withdrawal results in the confining of the infinite light in space and time such that the world (*ha-olam*) assumes the phenomenological status of being the concealment (*he’lem*)¹¹¹ by which that light is revealed. The ontic condition that shapes the ontological enframing of the beingness of being is thus the manifestation of the

aspect of his kingship, blessed be he, which fills all worlds, from the language ‘I dwelled in their midst’ (Exodus 25:8).’ On the incarnational import of the expression ‘fills all worlds’, consider Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Torah*, vol. 2, Ḥuqat, 64d: ‘The aspect of fills all worlds is the light and divine efflux garbed and grasped in the worlds, and it results in the order and gradation of the worlds from cause to cause, each one in accord with its measure, until it is also garbed in the corporeal heaven and earth in accord with their significance.’

¹⁰⁸ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Amarim: Tanya*, pt. 2, ch. 7, 82a.

¹⁰⁹ For an elaboration of the point, see Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, *Be-Sha’ah she-Hiqdimu 5672*, 3 vols., Brooklyn 1992, pp. 920-922.

¹¹⁰ Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, *Or ha-Torah: Devarim*, Brooklyn 2013, p. 2492.

¹¹¹ On this wordplay, which is a cornerstone of Ḥabad’s meontological cosmology, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 26–27, 52, 93, 103–114, 128–129, 132, 215, 218.

nonmanifest, the exposure of what is hidden that perforce must be a hiding of what is exposed. From this vantage point, the spatial and the temporal are threads that cannot be disentangled; I would contend nevertheless that the former is an offshoot of the latter.¹¹² Concentrating on the temporal

¹¹² I respectfully take issue with the observation of Wojciech Tworek, 'Time in the Teaching of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi', PhD dissertation, University College London, 2014, p. 63, that Shneur Zalman's conceptualization of time is in spatial terms. In my judgment, the opposite is true, the spatial is conceptualized in temporal terms, especially as the latter is related to the triadic division implied by the Tetragrammaton. From another perspective, one could argue that there is coalescence of the spatial and the temporal. See Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Torah*, vol. 2, We-Zo't ha-Berakhah, 98a: 'Place and time are both created in one aspect.' Compare Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5713*, vol. 3, Brooklyn 1998, p. 23: 'Time and place are bound together and are measured one by the other, and both were created in one moment.' On the interface between time and place, see Schneersohn, *Torat Ḥayyim: Shemot*, 240a-b; Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Liqqutei Siḥot*, vol. 20, Brooklyn 2000, p. 333. Related to this claim is the emphasis placed on the unity of place and time in the realm that is above the emanation. See Schneersohn, *Be-Sha'ah she-Hiqdimu 5672*, p. 921. Curiously, the Ḥabad position has resonance with the perspective enunciated by Nishida Kitarō, *Place and Dialectic: Two Essays by Nishida Kitarō*, translated by John W. M. Krummel and Shigenori Nagatomo, Oxford 2012, p. 108: 'The dialectic of absolute negation, however, must be such that individual determination is universal determination and universal determination is individual determination, time is space and space is time. That an individual thing determines itself means that it becomes itself by negating others and in due time becomes universal by negating itself. And that the universal determines itself means that it individuates itself and in due time becomes an individual thing by negating itself.' See *ibid.*, p. 120: 'Active form is that in which the spatial is temporal and the temporal is spatial. The self-determination of the eternal now, wherein time is space and space is time, is through formative acts.' And p. 131: 'The self-determination of the eternal now wherein absolutely time is space and space is time would thus have to be thoroughly formative and creative as historical life. ... We can say that while we are born we are also not born. ... Only human beings possess a present.' See also Nishida Kitarō, *Ontology of Production: Three Essays*, translated and with an introduction by William Haver, Durham 2012, p. 72: 'What is thus conceived is the temporal as the linear determination or continuity's determination of the mediation of the continuity of discontinuity. As I said earlier, time must be both linear and circular. So the circular, as the ground of objective time, must be spatial. It may seem absurd, but contradictorily, objective time or true time can be conceived starting from the fact that the

dimensions of the mystery of the incarnation of the infinite in the finite,¹¹³ Semah Sedeq writes, ‘The explanation of the matter of how time can be

instants that can never return are arrayed simultaneously. ... To speak of time in terms of the self-determination of the mediation of the continuity of discontinuity (temporally speaking) or as the self-determination of the eternal now, each instant, instant by instant, must be thought as an infinite linear progression without regress.’ Ibid., p. 83: ‘The self-determination of the world of the eternal now, in which instants are simultaneous, the world of space-time and time-qua-space, must at its core mean reflecting the self within the self.’ On the self-determination of the singularity of the eternal now as the affirmation of absolute negation, the absolute interruption or rupture between the past that has already passed and the future that has not yet come, see *ibid.*, pp. 99-101, 113-117, 121-128, 136, 145, 158, 164-166, and the passage from Nishida cited above in n. 12. Nishida’s position is summarized in *Place and Dialectic*, p. 164: ‘The historical present refers to the *basho* wherein we can conceive the infinite past and future to be simultaneously existent. We ought to regard what has been determined as actual to be what has been determined by means of the relationship of synchronic existence between past and future, that is, the spatial relationship among the temporal. This is why I speak of the self-determination of the eternal now and say that the present determines itself. ... We ought to regard the historical present as the self-determination of the eternal now. Therein the temporal is spatial and the spatial is temporal. It is a self-contradictory world as the self-identity of absolute opposites.’ The full paradox espoused by Nishida is such that the eternal present is permanently stationary and yet constantly in flux, and hence the world is both always changing and changeless. See Nishida, *Place and Dialectic*, p. 109. On Nishida’s concept of the temporal flow of consciousness and the eternal present as the flash of timelessness concurrently within and beyond time, see Robert E. Carter, *The Nothingness Beyond God: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarō*. New York 1989, pp. 87-88; James W. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School*, Honolulu 2001, pp. 51, 58-59, 63; Robert J. J. Wargo, *The Logic of Nothingness: A Study of Nishida Kitarō*, Honolulu 2005, pp. 138-140; Peter Soares, *The Kyoto School’s Takeover of Hegel: Nishida, Nishitani, and Tanabe Remake the Philosophy of Spirit*, Lanham 2011, pp. 53-54.

¹¹³ On the use of the term incarnation to describe the paradox in Ḥabad’s cosmological meontology of the immaterial light of infinity taking on the garment of the finitude of material nature, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 71, 78, 84, 89, 97-98, 129, 138, 237, 329 n. 26, 333 n. 68. To date, the most comprehensive discussion of the topic of incarnation in Eastern European pietism is Shaul Magid, *Hasidism Incarnate: Hasidism, Christianity, and the Construction of Modern Judaism*, Stanford, 2015. Ḥabad is mentioned sporadically in Magid’s monograph.

comprised multivalently at once [*nikhlal harbeh be-vat ahat*] is in accord with what we introduced above that his essence, blessed be he, is entirely above time but in the aspect of perpetual being [*hawah tamid*], and the being of the root of time is on account of the contraction and the expansion [*šimšum we-hitpashshetut*] that was in the beginning of the creation of the world ... Hence, the aspect of contraction and expansion is what causes the prolongation of the time of the instant [*shehiyyat zeman ha-rega*].¹¹⁴

There is much to say about this complex of ideas and the intricate interplay of the spatial and the temporal that emerges from the conception of time as the instant that arises from the withdrawal of light to create a space devoid of light—the infraction of time that cannot be measured in time—but what is most apposite for our purposes is that eternity is proffered as an aspect of temporality, the limitless extension of the limit that cannot be extended. Needless to say, the corollary of this statement is equally true: time is not primarily the measure of bodies in motion but it is rather the propulsion of the eternal impulse—the essence of the light of the infinite (*ašmut or ein sof*) completely beyond the category and demarcation of the aspect of time (*lema'lah mi-sug we-geder behinat ha-zeman legamrei*), even beyond the comprehension of past, present, and future signified by the Tetragrammaton in the world of emanation¹¹⁵—that

¹¹⁴ Schneersohn, *Derekh Mišwotekha*, 59a. On the connotation of the term *rega* in Ḥabad speculation, particularly related to the messianic, see passages translated and analyzed in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 277-280, 395 n. 52, 396 n. 60. See also Wolfson, 'Revealing and Re/veiling', pp. 64-65 n. 140.

¹¹⁵ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Ma'amerei Admor ha-Zaen 5565*, vol. 1, Brooklyn 2012, pp. 322-323. See, however, *ibid.*, p. 301: 'The light of *Ein Sof*, blessed be he, is above time, and thus it is not possible to say with respect to it that there is a difference between he was, he is, and he will be, but rather he was, he is, and he will be are undifferentiated [*shawin*].' And compare Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Seder Tefillot mi-Kol ha-Shanah*, Brooklyn 1986, 75d-76a. After considering and rejecting the response of Viṭal to the philosophical question why creation did not occur at a time prior to when it did transpire (*Eš Hayyim*, 1:1, 11b), Shneur Zalman offers the following explanation: 'The true response is known in the name of the Rav, the Maggid, blessed be his memory, that time itself comes and proceeds in the aspect of creation of something from nothing, and it is the aspect of a new creation [*nivra mehuddash*] like the rest of the created beings. And so it is in the aspect of the emanation of time, for there it is in the aspect of the emanated from nothing to something; that is, it proceeds and comes from above time where there is no aspect of time at all. The aspect of time consists of these three, past, present, and future, and above time there is no previous in the past and no posterior in the future but rather past and future

dissimulates in the form of the temporal order of the lower six sefirotic emanations and then subsequently in the six millennia that constitute the span of historical time of the terrestrial world.¹¹⁶ The world of emanation

are both one, and the previous is posterior and the posterior is previous because it is divested of the aspect of time in the past, present, and future. Therefore, there is no question at all why the emanation or creation were not in a time prior to this or later since before the concatenation of [the worlds of] emanation, creation, formation, and doing, it was still above the matter of time in the past or the future, and hence the posterior was prior and the prior posterior.’

¹¹⁶ Schneersohn, *Be-Sha'ah she-Hiqdimu* 5672, pp. 339-341. Compare Shlomo Zalman Schneersohn of Kapust, *Magen Avot*, pt. 6, Berdichev 1902, 34b: ‘On festivals we say ‘who sanctifies Israel and the festive seasons [meqaddesh yisra’el we-ha-zemannim]’, that is, drawing down the light of the infinite, which is above time, in the aspect of time.’ On the transtemporal status of *Ein Sof*, which is identified as the aspect of eternity, see Schneersohn, *Magen Avot al Sefer Bere’shit*, 30a-b, 33d. I am again struck by the affinity of the kabbalistic perspective, especially as it has been articulated in Ḥabad literature, and Schelling’s characterization of time as the movement of the eternal nature. Through this movement, which entails the ascent from the lowest to attain the highest and then the retreat in order to ascend again, the eternal nature discerns itself as eternity. On the one hand, the eternity of the Godhead, according to Schelling, is indivisible and beyond all time, and thus is ‘no more eternal in the succession of all times than in the moment.’ On the other hand, the Godhead ‘counts and gauges’ in the clockwork of time to the extent that time itself is the ‘constant repetition’ of eternity. Much like the kabbalistic *Ein Sof*, the Schellingian Godhead is beyond all time but its eternity is not reckoned as the blending of successive moments of time strung together linearly but rather as the circuitous movement by which the nonbeing of the everlasting being is displayed distinctively in every moment that comes to be and passes away. See Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *The Ages of the World (Fragment) from the Handwritten Remains, Third Version (c. 1815)*, translated, with an introduction, by Jason M. Wirth, Albany 2000, pp. 79-80; Michael G. Vater, “Schelling’s Neoplatonic System-Notion: ‘Ineinsbildung’ and Temporal Unfolding,” in *The Significance of Neoplatonism*, edited by R. Baine Harris, Albany 1976, pp. 275-299. For a preliminary comparison of Schelling’s *Naturphilosophie* and Ḥabad acosmic naturalism, see Elliot R. Wolfson, ‘Achronic Time, Messianic Expectation, and the Secret of the Leap in Ḥabad’, in *Ḥabad Hasidism: History, Thought, Image*, edited by Jonathan Meir and Gadi Sagiv, Jerusalem 2016, pp. 57-73 (English section). The specific issue of time and eternity is discussed on pp. 67-68. Many have written on the possible impact of kabbalah on Schelling. For a representative list of relevant studies, see Elliot R. Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and*

(*olam ha-ašilut*), the pleroma of the divine potencies, encapsulates a time that is above the time of this world, a time, designated *seder ha-zeman* based on the rabbinic nomenclature *seder zemanim*,¹¹⁷ that comprises all the division of the temporal particularities of our world (*she-hu ha-kolel kol ha-hithallequt peratei ha-zeman she-ba-olam shelanu*) according to the principle there is nothing disclosed in the particular (*perat*) that was not concealed in the general (*kelal*).¹¹⁸ The relationship between the temporal and the eternal is made clear in the following passage from Shneur Zalman:

Regarding that which is actually under time, it does not endure in the aspect of eternity, and with respect to that which is above time in the aspect of the infinite, the terminology of eternity [*nišḥiyut*] and everlastingness

Poetic Imagination, New York 2005, pp. 392-393 n. 2, and additional sources cited in Wolfson, 'Achronic Time', p. 59 n. 36, to which one might now add Paul Franks, 'Mythology, Essence, and Form: Schelling's Jewish Reception in the Nineteenth Century', *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 80 (2019), pp. 71-89. In my effort to compare the role of the leap in Ḥabad speculation to Schelling's notion of the *Sprung*, I neglected to mention this precise comparison already made in the nineteenth century by Joseph Sosnitz. See Eliyahu Stern, *Jewish Materialism: The Intellectual Revolution of the 1870s*, New Haven 2018, pp. 98-99. The comparison of Schelling and Ḥabad can also be found in Fabius Mieses, *Geschichte der neuern Philosophie*, Leipzig 1887, pp. 155-156 (including reference to the notion of the leap) and in Samuel Alexandrov, *Mikhtevei Meḥqar u-Viqqoret*, Vilna 1907, p. 77. Alexandrov goes so far as to say that the source for Schelling, 'the father of modern philosophy', is in the 'Ḥabad masters and the kabbalists, and even if we presume that the source for the foundations of the wisdom of the kabbalah is in the words of the ancient gnostics, nevertheless it appears that these images circulate in the human species without dependence on place and time.' I am grateful to Reuven Leigh of Cambridge for drawing my attention to these references.

¹¹⁷ On the kabbalistic interpretation of the rabbinic expression *seder zemanim*, see the texts (including other Ḥabad sources) cited and analyzed in Wolfson, *Alef*, pp. 62, 73, 77-79, 84-88, 94, 109, 111, 115.

¹¹⁸ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Ma'amerei Admor ha-Zaqen 5565*, vol. 1, pp. 320-321. See *ibid.*, p. 324; and the *hanaḥah* of Dov Baer Schneersohn on the root of the coming to be of time (*shoresh hithawwut ha-zeman*) in Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Ma'amerei Admor ha-Zaqen 5566*, revised edition, vol. 1, Brooklyn 2012, pp. 88-89. On the splintering of time into the general and the particular, compare the *hanaḥah* of Dov Baer Schneersohn in *Ma'amerei Admor ha-Zaqen 5566*, vol. 2, Brooklyn 2012, pp. 535-536. See also Schneersohn, *Derekh Mišwotekha*, 59a; Schneersohn, *Magen Avot al Sefer Bere'shit*, 40c.

[*olamiyyut*]¹¹⁹ is not appropriate there, for this terminology applies only to the aspect and category of time [*bi-vehinat we-geder zeman*] in which there is a considerable duration of time. The temporal duration [*hemshekh ha-zeman*] does not apply at all to what is not in the aspect or category of time, but it is rather [in the state of] he was, he is, and he will be all at once [*hayah howeh we-yihyeh ha-kol ehad*]. This aspect and the terminology of everlastingness and eternity pertain only to the aspect of his kingship [*malkhuto*], blessed be he, for it is in the aspect and category of time, he reigned, he reigns, and he will reign Even so, this is the illumination of the infinite, blessed be he, and it is as its name, without any end.¹²⁰

The Tetragrammaton signifies an equiprimordiality based on the continuity of discontinuity propelling the eternal unfolding of the timewave enfolding in the folds of infinitivity. In its most rudimentary sense, temporality consists of the achronal order that precedes the measurable *durée* of time, a time before the more prosaic sense of time, a time that is not dependent on the physical universe. The originary time—the time before time, the foretime—is the measure of the immeasurable ebb and flow of infinity that generates the polarities of light and dark, which translate into the sentient experience of the temporal forged by the bicameral rhythm of day and night, engendered respectively as feminine judgment and masculine mercy.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ In the printed text the word here is *olamot*, which would translate as *worlds*, but I suspect this is a typographical error and that the correct word, as it appears subsequently in this passage, is *olamiyyut*, which denotes the sense of existing everlastingly or imperishably.

¹²⁰ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Torah*, vol. 2, Derushim le-Shabbat Shuvah, 67c.

¹²¹ On time as the conjunction of masculine mercy and feminine judgment, see Wolfson, *Alef*, pp. 79, 91, 98; idem, 'Retroactive Not Yet', pp. 42-44. According to some kabbalists, the pulse of time seems to be related to the throbbing of the divine phallus, but according to other kabbalists, time is associated with the feminine *Shekhinah*—particularly the words *et*, *zeman*, and *zo't*—although in some passages, even this association is linked to the heteroerotic coupling of the female and the male, as in the expression *itto de-šaddiq*, the moment that belongs to the righteous one. See *Zohar* 3:58a; *Tiqqunei Zohar*, edited by Reuven Margalio, Jerusalem 1978, sec. 6, 21a (in that context, *itto de-šaddiq* is identified more specifically as the night of Sabbath, commonly held by kabbalists to be the time of the *hieros gamos*), sec. 21, 43a, and sec. 69, 101b; Joseph Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, edited by Joseph Ben-Shlomo, 2 vols., Jerusalem 1981, 1:134-135; Meir Ibn Gabbai, *Avodat ha-Qodesh*, Jerusalem 2004, 2:18, p. 135; *Hemdut ha-Yamim al Shabbat Qodesh*, Jerusalem 2003, p. 266; Horowitz, *Shenei Luhot ha-Berit ha-Shalem*, 1:64;

As Shneur Zalman of Liadi formulated the matter in another passage, ‘And thus the aspect of time comes to be from the aspect that is exceedingly above the aspect of time and boundary [*mi-beḥinat asher lema‘lah ma‘lah mi-beḥinat zeman u-gevul*], the aspect of encompassing all worlds [*sovev kol almin*]. And this is [the import of] ‘the Lord reigned, the Lord reigns, and the Lord will reign forever’ [*yhwh malakh yhwh melekh yhwh yimlokh le‘olam va‘ed*]¹²² because, *prima facie*, it is not appropriate to utter an aspect of time with respect to *YHWH*, which is the aspect of encompassing all worlds.’¹²³ The liturgical formula that affirms God’s dominion in past, present, and future is the textual foundation for the attribution of time to the quality of governance and therefore it is ascribed to *Malkhut*, the locus for boundary and division within the boundlessness and indivisibility of the divine economy. ‘And the aspect of *Malkhut* is verily the aspect of the power of the agent in the recipient [*beḥinat koaḥ ha-po‘el ba-nif‘al mammash*] and there the time actually comes to be from nothing to something as in the six thousand years that the

Yiṣḥaq Isaac Katz, *Berit Kehunat Olam*, Jerusalem 1950 p. 325; Elijah ben Solomon, *Tiqqunei Zohar im Be‘ur ha-Gra*, Vilna 1867, 44a; Wolfson, *Alef*, pp. 88, 100, 104-106, 227 n. 245; idem, ‘Imago Templi and the Meeting of the Two Seas: Liturgical Time-Space and the Feminine Imaginary in Zoharic Kabbalah’, *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 51 (2007), pp. 121-135, esp. 127-132. Independently, and utilizing a different methodological apparatus, Ḥaviva Pedaya, ‘The Divinity as Place and Time and the Holy Place in Jewish Mysticism’, in *Sacred Space: Shrine, City, Land—Proceedings of the International Conference in Memory of Joshua Prawer*, edited by Benjamin Z. Kedar and R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, Jerusalem 1998, pp. 84-111, discusses the manner in which the divine is described in terms of the concepts of time and space in kabbalistic sources. Although her primary emphasis is on the spiritualization of the holy place, Pedaya does emphasize the concurrence of the spatial and the temporal such that we have the ‘ability to feel place as time, or to feel time as place’, and this is particularly relevant to the state of redemption (p. 101). For another approach to the issue of time, especially as it relates to the construction of the feminine imaginaire, see Biti Roi, *Love of the Shekhina: Mysticism and Poetics in Tiqqunei ha-Zohar*, Ramat Gan 2017, pp. 38-39, 201, 228-229, 320 (Hebrew).

¹²² The formulation is derived from the morning prayer *yehi khevod yhwh le‘olam*, which is based in part on the language of Psalms 104:31. See *Seder Avodat Yisra‘el*, edited by Seligman Baer, Berlin 1937, p. 68.

¹²³ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Ma‘amerei Admor ha-Zaqen: Al Inyanim*, vol. 2, revised edition, Brooklyn 2015, p. 496.

world will exist.¹²⁴ An obvious parallel is drawn between the triadic physiognomy of that governance—he reigned, he reigns, and he will reign forever—and the three tenses combined in the Tetragrammaton—he was, he is, and he will be.¹²⁵ The concomitance of these tenses signifies the perpetuity (*temidut*) that is above the temporal horizon.¹²⁶ Attunement to this point yields the paradoxical insight that invariability secures the unvarying variability: ‘In each and every hour, there is a different dissemination [*hamshakhah aheret*] from the supernal worlds to sustain the lower ones, and the dissemination of the vitality from the previous hour returns to its source [in the secret of running to and fro that is in *Sefer Yeşirah*¹²⁷] with all of the Torah and the good deeds of the lower beings. For in every hour there rules a permutation [*şeruf*] from the twelve permutations of the blessed name *YHWH* in the twelve hours of the day and the permutations of the name *Adonai* in night as is known.’¹²⁸ The end of the passage sheds light on the inherently linguistic nature of the temporal undulation regulated diurnally by the twelve permutations of the Tetragrammaton and nocturnally by the twelve permutations of the epithet of that name. As we may adduce from a passage in *Iggeret ha-Qodesh*, Shneur Zalman understood the illumination of the divine as the diffusion of the vitality [*hitpashsheřut ha-ħiyyut*] from the ineffable name, which comprises the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet and their different

¹²⁴ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Ma’amerei Admor ha-Zaqen 5565*, vol. 1, p. 320. See Schneersohn, *Be-Sha’ah she-Hiqdimu 5672*, p. 160. Compare Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Be’urei ha-Zohar*, revised edition, Brooklyn 2015, 87b-c: ‘It is known that the source for the coming into being of time [*hithawwut ha-zeman*], past, present, and future, is all in the aspect of *Malkhut* as in [the case of] he reigned, he reigns, he will reign [*malakh melekh yimlokħ*]. The name *YHWH* of *Ze’eir Anpin*, however, entails that he was, he is, and he will be as one, that is, past, present, and future are comprised as one.’ See also Schneersohn, *Derekh Miřwotekħa*, 59a; Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-Ma’amarim 5668*, Brooklyn 2018, p. 183; idem, *Sefer ha-Ma’amarim 5678*, Brooklyn 2014, p. 304; Schneersohn, *Magen Avot al Sefer Bere’shit*, 40c, 48a-b; and other passages cited and analyzed in Wolfson, *Alef*, pp. 108-112.

¹²⁵ Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Perush ha-Millot*, Brooklyn 1993, 59c, translated in Wolfson, *Alef*, p. 110. Compare Schneersohn, *Magen Avot al Sefer Bere’shit*, 48a.

¹²⁶ Schneersohn, *Be-Sha’ah she-Hiqdimu 5672*, p. 823.

¹²⁷ Hayman, *Sefer Yeşira*, § 5, p. 72. The expression *rařo wa-shov* is derived from the depiction of the celestial beasts bearing the chariot in Ezekiel 1:14.

¹²⁸ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqquřei Amarim: Tanya*, pt. 1, ch. 41, 58b. Compare Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqquřei Torah*, vol. 2, Derushim le-Ro’sħ ha-Shanah, 61a.

combinations: ‘And thus all the variations of the details [*shinnuyei ha-peraṭim*] in each and every world are in accordance with the variations of the permutation of the letters [*shinnuyei šerufei ha-otiyot*], and similarly, the variations of the times [*shinnuyei ha-zemannim*] in the past, present and future, and the variations of all the events in the changing of the times [*kol ha-qorot be-ḥillufei ha-zemannim*], everything is from the permutation of the letters, which are the dissemination of the vitality [*hamshakhat ha-ḥiyut*] from his attributes, may his name be blessed.’¹²⁹

The connection established between the vitality of light emanating from the infinite, which sustains the physical world, and the permutation of the letters contained in the name highlights that the true nature of materiality is to be understood as the hyperliteral body, that is, the body whose mass is the vestment woven by the letters of the Torah, which are comprised in the Tetragrammaton.¹³⁰ All that transpires temporally ensues from the disparate combinations of the letters that are constantly changing in their immutability and enduring immutably in their constant change. Even the concept of eternity is to be assessed from this perspective; it is not fitting to speak of that which is above the aspect and category of time as if it were eternal, since the latter term applies only to that which falls under the aspect and category of time, that is, the temporal duration that is forever without boundary and cessation (*hemshekh ha-zeman beli gevul we-hefseq le‘olam*).¹³¹ Paradoxically, when the light of infinity, which is above the

¹²⁹ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqūṭei Amarim: Tanya*, pt. 4, 110a. For a more extended discussion in *Sha‘ar ha-Yiḥud we-ha-Emunah* of the divine creativity as the dissemination of the light through the permutations of the Hebrew letters, see *ibid.*, pt. 2, ch. 11, 88a-89a. On the fluctuation of the moments of time in accord with the polarity of good and evil (*shinnuy ha-ittim bi-zemannim de-ṭov wa-ra*), see Schneersohn, *Torat Ḥayyim: Shemot*, 308c.

¹³⁰ Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 130-160.

¹³¹ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Ma‘amerei Admor ha-Zaqen 5568*, vol. 1, revised edition, Brooklyn 2012, p. 430. Underlying this assertion is the assumption—articulated concisely by Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa‘aduyyot 5713*, vol. 1, Brooklyn 1997, pp. 219-221—that time is not constituted by an aggregate of separate points (*mequbbaš mi-nequddot nequddot*) but rather by one expanse (*sheṭaḥ*) or duration (*meshekh*) that divides into multiple branches with one preceding the other. Schneerson explicates the halakhic ramifications of this philosophical discussion. See Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa‘aduyyot 5719*, vol. 3, Brooklyn 2003, pp. 114-115. Noteworthy here as well is Schneerson’s critique that Einstein’s theory of relativity considers only the aspect of time that is measurable (*zeman ha-meshu‘ar*) but not the essence of the flux of time (*ešem*

aspect of time divided into the three tenses, illumines that which falls under the governance of the temporal, then time itself becomes eternal. Giving voice to the full scope of the dialethic nature of the paradox,¹³² Shneur Zalman writes, ‘From this it is understood that in the eternity of time [*be-niṣḥiyyut ha-zeman*] there is the union and conjunction of that which is above time with time [*yihud we-ḥibbur mi-lema‘lah min ha-zeman im ha-zeman*], and even though they are two absolute opposites, the aspect of temporal eternity [*beḥinat ha-niṣḥiyyut she-ba-zeman*] is comprised of both together. With this we can understand that this is also the matter of the union of the blessed holy One and *Shekhinah*, which is the unity of *YHWH* and *Elohim* ... for it is known that the aspect of time of past, present, [and future] is in the aspect of the kingship of emanation [*malkhut de-aṣilut*], which is called *Shekhinah*, as it is said ‘the Lord reigned, [the Lord reigns], and [the Lord] will reign’, past, present, and future.’¹³³ Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, the RaShaB, reiterates the crucial,

hemshekh ha-zeman). For citation of the source and reference to other relevant texts, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, p. 397 n. 72.

¹³² In contrast to the dialectic, at least understood in a Hegelian sense, which entails a sublation of the difference between antinomies and their resolution in a higher synthesis, the neologism *dialetheia*, in defiance of the logical principle of noncontradiction and the law of the excluded middle, signifies that there are true contradictions and thus a statement can be both true and false at the same time and in the same relation, the contradictory nature of which is syllogistically diagrammed in the form of ‘ α and it is not the case that α .’ See Graham Priest, *Beyond the Limits of Thought*, Oxford 2002, p. 3; idem, *In Contradiction: A Study of the Transconsistent*, second edition, Oxford 2006, pp. 3–6. For an extended discussion of dialetheism and the problem of truth and falsity, see *ibid.*, pp. 53–72.

¹³³ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Ma’amarei Admor ha-Zaqen 5568*, vol. 1, p. 430. Dov Schwartz, *Habad’s Thought From Beginning to End*, Ramat Gan 2010, p. 37 (Hebrew), duly notes that, according to Shneur Zalman, the light of *Ein Sof* is both above time and that which makes the existence of time possible. In n. 33, ad locum, Schwartz suggests that the assumption that time proceeds from the infinite stands in contrast to the dichotomous perspective attributed to the Maggid of Mezhiroch, which distinguishes sharply between that which is above temporality and the temporal. The passage that Schwartz cites as proof-text is from Meshullam Feibush Heller of Zbarazh, *Liqqutei Yeqarim*, sec. 290, 108b. Explicating the aggadic tradition that Elijah lives eternally, the Maggid contrasts the temporal life and the eternal state that is above temporality (*lema‘lah mi-zemanniyyut*). The latter is compared to the one moment (*rega ehad*) that one experiences in a dream, a jouissance (*ta’anug*) beyond the temporal strictures that cannot be endured in this world. The

passage appears as well in the compilations of the Maggid's teachings *Or Torah*, sec. 391, p. 415, *Or ha-Emet*, 6b, and *Liqqutei Amarim*, Jerusalem 2009, p. 107. The text is cited and interpreted by Idel, 'Higher than Time', pp. 203-204. The term *ta'anug* denotes the erotic rhapsody and noetic bliss that result from the expansion of consciousness (*harhavat ha-da'at*), which the Maggid often aligned symbolically with the divine and human phylacteries. See Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 45, p. 68; *Liqqutei Amarim*, p. 1. Regarding the concept of *ta'anug*, see Idel, *Hasidism*, pp. 133-140, 234-235; idem, *Kabbalah and Eros*, New Haven 2005, pp. 228-229; idem, 'Ta'anug.: Erotic Delights From Kabbalah to Hasidism', in *Hidden Intercourse: Eros and Sexuality in the History of Western Esotericism*, edited by Wouter J. Hanegraff and Jeffrey J. Kripal, Leiden 2008, pp. 131-145; Ron Margolin, *The Human Temple: Religious Interiorization and the Structuring of Inner Life in Early Hasidism*, Jerusalem 2005, pp. 218-220 (Hebrew). See Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Or Torah*, sec. 245, pp. 298-299: 'Speech and action are in time but thought is not in time. Even though it is also in time, since the supernal world corresponds to the lower world, it is not in time. For example, an intelligent person can understand a matter in one moment [*rega ehad*], but when he wants to speak he needs several hours. This is [the import of the statement] 'More beautiful is one hour of the even-tempered spirit of the world to come than all the life of this world' (Mishnah, Avot 4:17). Ostensibly, this is an exaggeration, but in truth what can be in the world to come in one hour would need several thousands of years in this world, just as a person sees in a dream in one moment what would take a year or more if he wanted to accomplish.' The dualistic approach is enunciated clearly in the conclusion of the passage about Elijah in Meshullam Feibush Heller of Zbarazh, *Liqqutei Yeqarim*, sec. 290, 108b: 'For time is a created entity and it cannot receive that which is above time.' I concur with Schwartz that Ḥabad thought is in opposition to this perspective insofar as it is predicated on the incongruity of time emanating from that which is above time, the enigma of the infinite light incarnate in the mantle of the finite. See, however, Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 56, p. 83 (found as well in *Or ha-Emet*, 9b-10a). Responding to the question concerning the veracity of the pronouncement that God and the Torah are one (*Zohar* 2:60a) if we posit that God is infinite and the Torah is finite, the Maggid notes that the Torah is the divine wisdom, which comes from the infinite and therefore embodies its force according to the principle 'the power of the agent is in the recipient' (*koah ha-po'el ba-nif'al*). This philosophical locution is used frequently by the Maggid to impart the mystery of the incarnation of the immaterial light in the material. See Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 97, p. 150 (compare *Liqqutei Amarim*, pp. 166-167, which is copied verbatim in the beginning of Menahem Naḥum of Chernobyl, *Me'or Einayim*, p. 1); sec.122, p. 200: 'It is known that the agent and the recipient are an incomposite unity and

albeit somewhat counterintuitive, insight, ‘The matter of eternity is not pertinent at all to that which is entirely above time, since it is not at all in the category of time; only with respect to the matter of time is it possible to speak of the matter of eternity, for time is the aspect of boundary and it is possible to say of it that it is without bound, and this is the time that never ceases.’¹³⁴ Since the quality of the eternal does not apply to that which is

they are not separate, but if not for the agent in the recipient, it would be null and void [*efes we-ofes*].’ See *ibid.*, sec. 154, p. 254; and *Or Torah*, sec. 315, p. 363 (*Liqqutei Yeqarim*, sec. 250, 76b): ‘Of necessity there will be in the agent what is in the recipient, for the power of the agent is in the recipient.’ This language is much closer to the view promulgated by Shneur Zalman and other masters of the Ḥabad-Lubavitch dynasty. On occasion, they employ the expression *koah ha-po‘el ba-nif‘al* to convey the sense of the immaterial assuming the form of the material. See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 216, 398-399 nn. 150-151, and reference cited above, n. 124. See also the passage from Shneur Zalman’s *Seder Tefillot mi-Kol ha-Shanah* cited above, n. 115. The paradoxical intent of this teaching mandates that the disclosure of the concealment must be a concealment of the disclosure. See the articulation of this viewpoint in *Dibrot ha-Maggid*, p. 314: ‘Thus, there is nothing in this world that does have the potency from the creator and a portion of the divinity, but it very much assumes the garbing by way of cause and effect, and in the first garment there is also no essence of the creator, since it is an effect, and the cause cannot be garbed entirely in the effect, rather what is found there is what he constricted of himself, and there is the *yod* ... and afterwards it is garbed and comes forth in the other letters of *YHWH*. Then it is called *name*, for the creator himself has no name at all, but only in this garment is he called by this name.’ On the time appropriate to the dream, see above n. 27, and see the analysis of the oneiric phenomenon in the *Maggid* and *Pinḥas* of Korzec in Wolfson, *A Dream*, pp. 266-269, and see especially the comparison of prayer to the dream based on their supratemporal status in the text of *Pinḥas* of Korzec, *Imrei Pinḥas ha-Shalem*, edited by Yeḥezqel Shraga Frankel, Benei Beraq 1988, pp. 47-48: ‘And so in prayer, when one prays with intention, one restores the letters face to face, for one reaches above time [*lema‘lah min ha-zeman*] like a dream in which one dreams something that happens for a quarter of an hour that in truth is in an instant [*ba-rega*], for in the dream one is above time. So, too, [with respect to] the Torah and prayer, everything can be in one instant.’ I have retranslated this passage previously cited in Wolfson, *A Dream*, pp. 468-469 n. 212.

¹³⁴ Schneersohn, *Be-Sha‘ah she-Hiqdimu* 5672, p. 1345. See my previous discussion in Wolfson, ‘*Nequddat ha-Reshimu*’, pp. 95-97. And compare Schneersohn, *Magen Avot al Sefer Bere’shit*, 48b: ‘With regard to this aspect it is written ‘You and your years never end’ (Psalms 102:28), and this applies to

entirely above time but only to that which falls under the category of time in the aspect of past, present, and future, eternity can also be demarcated as the ceaseless duration of time (*hamshakhat zeman beli hefseq*); when the illumination of the light of the infinite, which is above the category of time—in the aspect of he was, he is, and he will be commingled indifferently as one—shines on the event in time, the latter, even though it is created, adopts the attribute of being above time. Hence, in the eternity of time, there is the union of two opposites, signified by the names *YHWH* and *Elohim*, the masculine and feminine potencies of the divine.¹³⁵ There is no eternity set over and against time, only the moment of temporal eternity calculated at the fringe of the supratemporal in the manner that the halo of silence envelops the periphery of the verbal or the haze of invisibility permeates the showground of the visible. Time is overcome, therefore, not in the obliteration of time but in the enowning of the ubiquity of time expended kenotically as that which lingers in the lapsing of lingering and lapses in the lingering of lapsing.

From the Ḥabad teaching, we may postulate that eternity is the cyclic elongation in time of the infinite that is entirely above time. Commenting on the eternalization of the temporal, Dov Baer Schneersohn writes, when the essence of the light of the infinite, which is entirely above time (*lema'lah mi-behinat zeman legamrei*), is joined with *Malkhut*, which is the aspect of the boundedness of time (*ha-zeman bi-gevul*), then time, too, becomes eternal in the eternity of his essence (*az ha-zeman niṣḥi be-*

the aspect of 'you are the last', the kingship of the supernal crown [*malkhut keter elyon*]; that is, eternity can also be in the time that extends and comes to be from the aspect of *Malkhut* because it never ceases ... This is only in the aspect of the lower union [*yihud tata'ah*], for time is actually time [*she-ha-zeman hu zeman mammash*] but it continues without pause. However, there is also the aspect of the supernal unity [*yihud ila'ah*]; that is, the aspect that is above time extends into time, and that is the emanation from the aspect 'I am first' in [the aspect of] 'I am last' (Isaiah 45:6), for the duration of time [*hemshekh zeman*] is not at all appropriate there, and past, present, and future are not appropriate there since everything is integrated [*ha-kol be-hitkallelut*]. ... And this is the disclosure and emanation of what is above time verily in physical time.'

¹³⁵ Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-Ma'amarim 5668*, pp. 182-183. Compare the variant of this tradition in Schneersohn, *Or ha-Torah: Devarim*, p. 2492, where time is said to come forth from the twelve permutations of *YHWH* and the twelve permutations of *Adonai*.

niṣḥiyyut de-ašmuto).¹³⁶ This point is affirmed often in Ḥabad sources, including in the following passage from Shlomo Zalman Schneersohn of Kapust: ‘The transitory life [*ḥayyei sha’ah*] is the duration in the aspect of the source of time [*ha-hamshakhah bi-vehinat meqor ha-zeman*], but the eternal life [*ḥayyei olam*] is the durations of the light of the infinite [*hamshakhot or ein sof*], which is entirely above time. Therefore, it is called *ḥayyei olam*, denoting eternity [*niṣḥiyyut*].’¹³⁷ In a second passage, the matter is rendered in slightly more technical terminology:

The Torah is called the eternal life and prayer the transitory life. For the explanation of the transitory [*sha’ah*] is the source of time, that is, the aspect of *Malkhut*—he reigned, he reigns, and he will reign [*malakh melekh we-yimlokh*]—is the aspect of the final *he* of the name *YHWH*. The transitory life is the aspect of *YHW* of the name *YHWH*, for this is the matter of the contraction, the expansion, and the extension [*šimsūm we-hitpashsheṭut we-hamshakhah*] so that the aspect of the final *he*, the source of time, will be dispersed. After the contraction of the *yod* of the name *YHWH*, from the three letters *YHW*, it was not possible for there to be in the final *he*, the source of [the worlds of] creation, formation, and doing, and how much more so in [the worlds of] creation, formation, and doing themselves, the disclosure of the light of the infinite, blessed be he, as it is in the infinite, which is entirely above time. Therefore, all three letters *YWH* are called only the transitory life. However, the eternal life, the language of eternity, that is, when the disclosure of the light of the infinite, which is above time, extends into *Malkhut* and in [the worlds of] creation, formation, and doing, by means of the dissemination from the very essence of the light of the infinite [*ha-hamshakhah me-ašmut or ein sof mammash*], which is above the contraction of the *yod*, that is, verily from the aspect of *anokhi*, which is above the name *YHWH*. Hence, the Torah and the commandments, which are verily the

¹³⁶ Dovber Schneersohn, *Imrei Binah*, revised edition, Brooklyn 2008, 66d. For other Ḥabad sources that affirm the eternalization of time as a result of the coupling of that which is above time and that which is in the aspect of time, see Wolfson, ‘*Nequddat ha-Reshimu*’, p. 97 n. 89, and another passage from *Imrei Binah* cited and analyzed in Wolfson, *Alef*, pp. 108-109. See also Wolfson, ‘Achronic Time’, pp. 51-52; idem, ‘Eternal Duration and Temporal Compresence: The Influence of Ḥabad 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*, edited by Michael Zank and Ingrid Anderson, with editorial assistance of Sarah Leventer, Leiden 2015, pp. 229-232.

¹³⁷ Schneersohn, *Magen Avot al Sefer Bere’shit*, 30c. See *ibid.*, 33d.

extension and the revelation from the aspect of *anokhi*, are called the eternal life.¹³⁸

The path of Ḥabad thought—forged by an orientation well established in older kabbalistic teaching—champions a geometric confabulation of time that is circular in its linearity and linear in its circularity. In Lurianic terms, time can, indeed must, be viewed from the two vantagepoints that apply to the *sefirot*, the circle (*iggul*) and the straight line (*yosher*);¹³⁹ the division into the aspect of beginning and end (*hithallequt beḥinat ro'sh we-sof*) applies only to the latter.¹⁴⁰ The inclination to bifurcate these two perspectives is augmented by our predilection to experience time as either a line or a circle, but the enlightened consciousness appreciates that time is a paradoxical combination of both; our temporal discernment revolves concurrently around the axes of the line that rotates and the circle that distends. Ḥabad masters well grasped that the two models in Lurianic kabbalah are to be treated synchronously and not sequentially; that is, the texture of time is circular and linear at one and the same time. The architectonic of time, we might say, is in the form of a cylinder shaped by straight parallel sides and a circular or oval cross-section. When apperceived from this angle, what is brought forth in each moment is a renewal of what has been, albeit always from a different vantage point.¹⁴¹ The hermeneutic implied here is based on the assumption that the one true being is comprehended through the multifaceted compossibility of becoming. *Ein Sof* can be envisioned, therefore, as the infinite fractal curve of differentiable points of nondifferentiability. Wholeness implies not an

¹³⁸ Shlomo Zalman Schneersohn of Kapust, *Magen Avot al Sefer Devarim*, Berditchev 1902, 1b.

¹³⁹ Many scholars have discussed this Lurianic theme and its impact on subsequent thinkers. For a comprehensive analysis, see Mordecai Pachter, 'Circles and Straightness—A History of an Idea', *Da'at* 18 (1987), pp. 59-90 (Hebrew).

¹⁴⁰ See Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Ma'amerei Admor ha-Zaqen 5562*, vol. 2, Brooklyn 2012, pp. 477-479, and discussion of this text in Yosef Yiṣḥaq Schneersohn, *Iggerot Qodesh*, vol. 15, Brooklyn 2010, pp. 141-143. This insight seems to be implied in the distinction made by Schneersohn, *Magen Avot al Sefer Bere'shit*, 48b, between two types of vitality in the nature of time, the first is purely in the aspect of encircling (*maqqif*) and encompassing (*sovev*), and the second is the actual dividing of the aspect of time (*she-mithalleq bi-veḥinat zeman mammash*) into years, months, days, and hours. It is reasonable to correlate the former with circularity and the latter with linearity.

¹⁴¹ Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 23, 171-172.

immutable substance but an elaborate web of interrelated processes in which every part can be read as a metonymy for the continually evolving interweave of the cumulative that is resistant to inclusion in a system that would undercut the reciprocal totalization of the fragment and the fragmentation of the totality. In Peircean terms, the plural singularity, which is constitutive of the singular plurality of infinity, is precisely the potentiality of the abnumeral multitudes that are indeterminately determinable in their determinate indeterminability.¹⁴² The singleness of the one is ascertained, accordingly, not by the dissolution of difference in the sameness of the immeasurable expanse of indifference but by the unlimited differentiation of that indifference in the spectacle of inestimable forms that appear and disappear in the shadowplay of the world of multiplicity.

As I have argued elsewhere, we can elicit from Ḥabad sources an ideal of universal singularity as opposed to singular universality; that is, the universal that is constructed continuously in light of the singular rather than being concretized comprehensively in the singular.¹⁴³ This is not to deny that the infinite essence, or even the light of that essence compressed within the infinitesimal point of *Ḥokhmah*, is branded as the aspect of absolute oneness and integration (*beḥinat takhlit ha-aḥdut we-hitkallelut*).¹⁴⁴ The worlds that are hidden in the light of *Ein Sof* emerge in

¹⁴² Charles S. Peirce, 'The Logic of Continuity', in *Philosophy of Mathematics: Selected Writings*, edited by Matthew E. Moore, Bloomington 2010, pp. 185-186.

¹⁴³ I am here summarizing my argument in Elliot R. Wolfson, 'Mysticism and the Quest for Universal Singularity—Post-subjective Subjectivity and the Contemplative Ideal in Ḥabad', in *Jewish Spirituality and Social Transformation: Hasidism and Society*, edited by Philip Wexler, New York 2019, pp. 37-58. The analysis in that study is an expansion of the remarks in Wolfson, 'Revealing and Re/veiling', pp. 48-53.

¹⁴⁴ Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, *Ma'amar Heḥalšu 5659*, Brooklyn 1999, sec. 5, p. 8. The text is printed as well in Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-Ma'amarim 5659*, Brooklyn 2011, p. 228. For an analysis of the social and mystical repercussions of this work, see Eli Rubin, 'Purging Divisiveness, Embracing Difference: Rabbi Shalom DovBer Schneersohn's Manifesto Against Self-Righteousness in Interpersonal Discourse', chabad.org/380039, posted on September 27, 2017. On the term *hitkallelut* and the contemplative ideal of *devequt*, see Moshe Idel, 'Universalization and Integration: Two Conceptions of Mystical Union in Jewish Mysticism', in *Mystical Union and Monotheistic Faith: An Ecumenical Dialogue*, edited by Moshe Idel and Bernard McGinn, New York 1989, pp. 27-57, and especially the discussion of Shneur Zalman of Liadi on pp. 41-45.

the world of separation (*alma di-peruda*) as the diversified anatomization (*hithallequt*) of created beings.¹⁴⁵ The indescribable essence of *Ein Sof* is described, therefore, as the ‘aspect of the general that comprises the plurivocality’ (*beḥinat ha-kelal she-kolel ha-ribbuy*).¹⁴⁶ It is plausible to theorize from this language that the particular (*perat*) is contained in the general (*kelal*) and that the chain of being evolves from the latter to the former, as is attested, for instance, in the explanation of the zoharic reworking of the aggadic tradition that God looked into the Torah and created the world¹⁴⁷ offered by Şemah Şedeq:

By means of the general there extends afterwards the particular, and it is not that the Torah created the world; that is, it is not thought itself that creates, God forbid, but rather *Ein Sof* creates the particulars by means of the universal thought [*ha-maḥashavah ha-kelalit*]. In the Torah it is written ‘and there was light’ (Genesis 1:3), that is, the existence of the light that was contained in the universal thought ... he looked into it and he extended it to come to disclosure in the creation of the individuated light [*or perat*]. ... Thus, it is understood from this that the order of the concatenation of the worlds is in the aspect of the general and the particular [*she-seder ha-hishtalshelut ha-olamot hu bi-veḥinat kelal u-ferat*] so that there could be the generation of the discrete existents [*peratei ha-nimṣa'im*] from the *Ein Sof*, blessed be he, for he is also above the general.¹⁴⁸

The transcendence of the infinite essence necessitates that it is beyond the binary of the general and the particular,¹⁴⁹ just as it is beyond the polarity of encompassing all worlds and filling all worlds,¹⁵⁰ and beyond the dimorphic dyad of the masculine donor and the feminine recipient.¹⁵¹ The delimitation (*hithallequt*) of all the variegated singularities, manifest in the serial passage of time, are comprised within the totality of the universal thought. The cosmological order reflects the hermeneutical principle alluded to above, there is nothing in the particular that is not in the general, whence we can further extrapolate that the particular does not express novelty (*hithaddeshut*) vis-à-vis the general unless we understand novelty as the disintegration of the particularity (*hithallequt peratiyyut*) in the

¹⁴⁵ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Torah*, vol. 1, Balaq, 67c.

¹⁴⁶ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Seder Tefillot mi-Kol ha-Shanah*, 202d.

¹⁴⁷ *Zohar* 2:161a.

¹⁴⁸ Schneersohn, *Derekh Miṣwotekha*, 58b.

¹⁴⁹ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Ma'amerei Admor ha-Zaqen 5565*, vol. 1, p. 325.

¹⁵⁰ See above, n. 104.

¹⁵¹ Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Torat Ḥayyim: Bere'shit*, Brooklyn 1993, 8c.

integration (*hitkallelut*) of the general.¹⁵² It would stand to reason that just as epistemologically the particular is the disclosure of what was hidden in the general, so ontologically all that comes to light in the myriad of beings was concealed in the unity of the primordial and universal divine thought.¹⁵³ The integration of the particular in the general can be interpreted, however, as alleging that the assimilability of the latter is fabricated discriminately by the unassimilability of the former rather than the unassimilability of the former being contained indiscriminately in the assimilability of the latter. The imparticipability of the *kelal* consists of the illimitable participability of the *peraṭ*; of the general we could say that it is infinitely particular, that is, the relational manifold unfolding from the transcendent immanence of the absolute differentiation enfolded in the immanent transcendence of the absolute nondifferentiation. There is thus no outside the inside that is not inside the outside nor an inside the outside that is not outside the inside. Confirmation of this interpretation can be obtained from another passage where Şemaḥ Şedeq argues that in the same manner that various permutations of the letters of speech (*şerufei otiiyyot ha-dibbur*) give voice to the multitude of ideas integrated silently in the unity of the intellect, the derivation of the limitless division (*hiḥallequt ein qeş*) of the infinite light in the miscellaneous forms of finite existence is commensurate to the incomposite oneness (*aḥdut pashuṭ*) of *Ein Sof*.¹⁵⁴ From this we may presume further that the inexorability of the general is calibrated always on the basis of the contingency of the particular. The ideal of totality, therefore, is to be sought in the disjointedness of the essence of infinity that proliferates—like the nature of consciousness (*moḥin*)—into a plethora of particulars (*ribbuy peraṭim*).¹⁵⁵ The unicity of the polyvalent one is constellated by the indivisible divisibility of the divisible indivisibility.

In the Ḥabad lexicon, the supernal unity (*yihud ila'ah*) concealingly manifests itself in the lower unity (*yihud tata'ah*).¹⁵⁶ Typically, the former denotes the integration (*hitkallelut*) of everything in the light of infinity and the latter the diffusion (*hitpashshetut*) of that light in the profusion of differentiated beings. The deeper intent of the Ḥabad teaching, however,

¹⁵² Schneersohn, *Derekh Mişwotekha*, 58b.

¹⁵³ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Ma'amerei Admor ha-Zaqen 5565*, vol. 1, p. 325.

¹⁵⁴ Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, *Or ha-Torah: Bemidbar*, Brooklyn 1997, pp. 482-483.

¹⁵⁵ Schneersohn, *Ma'amar Heḥalšu 5659*, sec. 5, p. 8; *Sefer ha-Ma'amarim 5659*, p. 229.

¹⁵⁶ Naftali Lowenthal, *Communicating the Infinite: The Emergence of the Habad School*, Chicago 1990, pp. 50, 137, 147, 153, 168, 175, 184 n. 144, 275 n. 39.

problematizes positing integration and diffusion as binary opposites. On the contrary, the diffusion is itself an expression of the integration; the one is compiled by the many, not in the sense of an aggregate but in the manner of the plural constantly unsettling the unity by expanding the boundaries of the boundless. Crystalizing this sensibility, RaShaB distinguished two types of division (*hithallequt*) corresponding to the rabbinic distinction between an argument for the sake of heaven and an argument that is not for the sake of heaven.¹⁵⁷ The first type of division is the cause of integration (*sibbat ha-hitkallelut*) as we find in the *sefirot*, the plenitude of attributes individuated through the contraction of the simple oneness of the light of infinity; the second type of division is the cause of separation (*sibbat ha-perud*) to the point that there is no connectivity or incorporation between the parts as we find in the sefirotic gradations in the world of chaos, whose source is characterized not by a centripetal unity but by the discordant amplification of light (*ribbuy or*).¹⁵⁸ In the RaShaB's own words, 'when two things are partitioned, the division between them is the cause of separation, but when one thing is divided into an array of particulars, this division is actually the cause of cohesion.'¹⁵⁹ The former type of division results in the dispersal of the one into the many, whereas the latter type occasions the assimilation of the many into the one.¹⁶⁰

The eternity of time is anchored in the aporetic notion of the one that is not one, that is, the one that is one by virtue of being more and therefore less than one, the one whose consolidation and identity is realized in the promulgation of the world of multivocality and otherness. Moreover, given the longstanding identification of the ineffable name and the mystical essence of the Torah, we are justified in assuming that the Ḥabad masters, in consonance with Maharal, viewed the Torah as the confluence of the hypertemporal and the temporal. This conjunction is the mystery of the union of the divine names, *YHWH* and *Elohim*, the former correlated with

¹⁵⁷ Mishnah, Avot 5:17.

¹⁵⁸ Schneersohn, *Be-Sha'ah she-Hiqdimu* 5672, p. 40. See *ibid.*, p. 938.

¹⁵⁹ Schneersohn, *Ma'amar Heḥalšu* 5659, sec. 5, p. 8; *Sefer ha-Ma'amarim* 5659, p. 229.

¹⁶⁰ My perspective is sympatico with Rubin, 'Purging Divisiveness', who renders RaShaB's distinction between two kinds of *hithallequt* as 'divisive fragmentation' versus 'interinclusive fragmentation.' The thrust of Rubin's argument is encapsulated in the comment, 'Divisive fragmentation assumes that differences are fundamental and it therefore reinforces those differences to the point of antithesis and rupture. Interinclusive fragmentation, on the other hand, assumes a fundamental oneness even as it critically identifies and differentiates all the multifarious elements of the whole.'

that which is above time and the latter with the aspect of time. The pairing of the two provokes an illumination of that which surpasses time in that which is circumscribed within time until the latter becomes eternal, yielding the paradox that ‘time itself will be above time [*she-ha-zeman ašmo yihyeh lema‘lah me-ha-zeman*]. ... The truth of the matter of the unity is that time itself is without limit, that is, that time itself is without time [*she-zeman ašmo hu beli zeman*] ... this is the eternity of time, that is, time itself is in the aspect of the eternal and in the aspect of limitlessness.’¹⁶¹

As was his wont, Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, the seventh rebbe in the Ḥabad-Lubavitch lineage, stated this paradoxical tenet straightforwardly by emphasizing that we can say of the Torah that ‘its actual fulfillment below is in a particular time, but its matter is eternal.’¹⁶² In a discourse delivered on the second day of Pentecost 1952, Schneerson remarked that even though the fiftieth day, the day the Torah was given, is essentially ‘above the boundary of time and above the worlds’ (*lema‘lah me-hagbalat ha-zeman u-lema‘lah me-olamot*), it ‘disseminates and is revealed in time [*nimshakh u-mitgalleh bi-zeman*]. ... As it extends below in time, so is the matter that is above time, that is, as it is above time so it is found in time.’¹⁶³ The allegedly illogical affirmation of being above time but also found in time—transcendent to nature as that which is immanent in nature, indeed within nature as that which is outside nature and outside

¹⁶¹ Schneersohn, *Be-Sha‘ah she-Hiqdimu 5672*, pp. 1345-1346. See *ibid.*, p. 922, where RaShaB speaks of place and time within the essence of the light of infinity being without place or time (*de-ha-maqom we-ha-zeman hu beli maqom u-zeman*). See *ibid.*, p. 921, where the nature of place and time in the realm that precedes division is said to be of a spiritual nature (*maqom u-zeman ruḥani*). Compare Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa‘aduyyot 5718*, vol. 1, Brooklyn 2002, pp. 6-7: ‘YHWH is from the language of he was, he is, and he will be as one, for he is above time, that is, time itself is in the aspect of being without time [*she-ha-zeman ašmo hu bi-veḥinat beli zeman*], and this is [the meaning of] he was, he is, and he will be as one. Similarly with respect to the matter of place, for the place itself is in the aspect of what is above place [*she-ha-maqom ašmo hu bi-veḥinat she-lema‘lah me-ha-maqom*], and even higher is the aspect of YHWH as there is in him no points [of differentiation], since it is the essential being [*hawayah she-be-ašmut*].’

¹⁶² Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa‘aduyyot 5710*, second edition, Brooklyn 2002, p. 30.

¹⁶³ Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa‘aduyyot 5712*, vol. 2, Brooklyn 1997, p. 242.

nature as that which is within nature¹⁶⁴—is bolstered by the additional assumption widely attested in Ḥabad sources that the light of the infinite is garbed in the supernal wisdom (*hokhmah elyonah*), which is the eternal Torah.¹⁶⁵ To cite one representative text from Shneur Zalman of Liadi explicating the incarnation of infinity in the divine thought that is without boundary or limit: ‘However, in the inwardness that is in the depth, which is the inwardness of the Torah, it is united entirely in the light of the infinite, blessed be he [*meyuḥedet legamrei be-or ein sof barukh hu*], which is garbed in it in the absolute unity [*ha-melubbash bah be-takhlit ha-yihud*], and in relation to the infinite, blessed be he, all the worlds are verily as nothing [*kol ha-olamot ke-lo mammash*], actual nothing and naught [*we-ayin wa-efes mammash*].’¹⁶⁶ Theurgically, when an individual studies any aspect of the Torah—whether the written or the oral—the light of the infinite is drawn into this world.¹⁶⁷

The rabbinic axiom that Torah study grants to every Jew the opportunity to reexperience the Sinaitic revelation anew at each moment rests on the assumption that the Torah—the primordial parable (*meshal ha-qadmoni*), a mythopoeic trope that communicates the belief that the infinite light is incarnate in the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet¹⁶⁸—bears the essential concealment of the infinite (*he’lem ha-ʾsmi de-ein sof*)¹⁶⁹ and hence it is both in the aspect of time and not in the

¹⁶⁴ I have discussed this fundamental paradox of transcendence and immanence in Ḥabad cosmology in several studies. See, for instance, Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 87-103.

¹⁶⁵ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Amarim: Tanya*, pt. 5, 160a. This facet of Ḥabad thought is an elaboration of the Maggid’s emphasis on the divine constricting himself and dwelling within wisdom. See, for instance, Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devarav le-Ya’aqov*, sec. 60, pp. 91-92, and sec. 94, p. 163, interpreting the verse ‘The Lord founded the earth by wisdom’, *yhwh be-hokhmah yasad areš* (Proverbs 3:19): ‘The blessed holy One is garbed in wisdom and by means of this he dwelt in earthliness [*shoreh be-aršiyut*].’ Compare *ibid.*, sec. 154, p. 254.

¹⁶⁶ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Amarim: Tanya*, pt. 5, 160b. On the distinction between *efes* as the nothing of being-not and *ayin* as the nothing of not being, which corresponds to the two aspects of denegation, *biṭṭul ha-yesh*, the nullification of disparate beings, and *biṭṭul ha-ayin*, the nullification of nullification, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 111-112.

¹⁶⁷ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Amarim: Tanya*, pt. 5, 159a.

¹⁶⁸ See above, n. 98.

¹⁶⁹ Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, *Yom Tov shel Rosh Hashanah 5666*, revised edition, Brooklyn 2010, p. 121.

aspect of time (*bi-veḥinat zeman we-lo bi-veḥinat zeman*), that is, in the aspect of time insofar as it garbed below in the form of the ritual laws to be fulfilled in the appropriate space, but not in the aspect of time insofar as it is the primeval wisdom (*hokhmah qedumah*) of Adam Qadmon that emanates from and embodies the light of infinity that exceeds all spatial delineation.¹⁷⁰ Echoing the perspective of Maharal, the commandments are the spatiotemporal embodiments of the light that is above space and time. ‘It is known’, writes Dov Baer, ‘that the days [*ha-yamim*] are the aspect of time that proceeds from the aspect that is above time; that is, the created beings could not comprehend the supernal splendor that is above time without its descending below to be garbed in the aspect of the vessel and the garment verily in place and time [*lehittlabesh bi-veḥinat keli u-levush ba-maqom u-zeman mammash*], and these are the Torah and the commandments, which are the garments and the vessels of the supernal splendor.’¹⁷¹ Because the Torah exemplifies the paradox of being above time but within time—indeed, it is above time as that which is within time and within time as that which is above time—it has the potential to be rejuvenated interminably as that which already was in the capacity of that which is always yet to come. The Torah, accordingly, is the intermediary between transcendence and immanence, and thus, *dialetheically*—as opposed to dialectically¹⁷²—we can say that ‘it is time and not time’ (*hu zeman we-lo zeman*).¹⁷³

Timefully Retrieving Instant beyond Time: Ascesis and Corporeal Worship

Although the roots for this understanding can be uncovered in Maharal, there is one very significant element that distinguishes him and the Ḥabad masters. The interdependence that Maharal established between time and suffering does not seem to have had a conspicuous resonance in the Ḥasidic adaptation of his ideas. One notable exception is the following comment of Levi Yiṣḥaq of Berditchev, ‘affliction is in time because

¹⁷⁰ Schneersohn, *Be-Sha’ah she-Hiqdimu* 5672, pp. 343-344. On the description of the primordial thought (*maḥashavah ha-qedumah*) or the universal thought (*maḥashavah ha-kelalit*), also called the universal light (*or kelali*), of Adam Qadmon as the intermediary that connects the essence of the light of the infinite, which completely transcends time, and the emanated beings, which are the aspect of the temporal order, see Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Ma’amerei Admor ha-Zaqen* 5565, vol. 1, pp. 323, 325-327.

¹⁷¹ Schneersohn, *Torat Ḥayyim: Shemot*, 280d.

¹⁷² See above, n. 132.

¹⁷³ Schneersohn, *Be-Sha’ah she-Hiqdimu* 5672, p. 343.

above time there is no affliction, no sorrow, and no sighing at all.¹⁷⁴ In Ḥabad writings, by contrast, there is no negative representation of time along these lines; on the contrary, time is valorized consistently in positive terms as the means by which the illumination of the infinite proceeds into the finite world without disruption or impediment. Through the disclosure of the luminosity of *Ein Sof*—particularly in the aspect of *Malkhut*, the divine governance that comprises the copresence of past, present, and future—time becomes eternal, and darkness is transposed into light.¹⁷⁵

One might thus counter that, in contrast to Maharal, Ḥabad thought does not envisage the Torah as the means to escape from the physical world. Quite to the contrary, the commandments are deemed the bodily means to transfigure the body, even to the point that the contrast between spiritual and material is no longer efficacious as is attested in the pietistic ideal of worship through corporeality (*avodah be-gashmiyyut*). It would appear that this ideal mollifies the austere tenor of Maharal's avowal that the Jew must destroy the body through extreme abstinence. Careful scrutiny of the aforementioned expression, however, or its equivalents in Ḥabad teaching, not to mention other Ḥasidic texts, suggests that there is a closer connection to Maharal insofar as there is no demonstrative endorsement or unreserved exaltation of the material flesh. Indeed, as Scholem noted in his debate with Buber, the Ḥasidic ideal of corporeal worship actually involves the *stripping off of corporeality* and a tearing open of another dimension in the here and now.¹⁷⁶ I would tweak Scholem's language by noting that the stripping off entails an alchemical transformation of the base materiality into a more reified sense of embodiment, a process that is effectuated through compliance to the ritual obligations. The transformation that results is a recalibration of the concrete rather than its disappearance. The shedding, in other words, is itself an embellishing, the unmasking another form of masking.

The influence of Maharal is particularly clear in the instruction of Dov Baer, the Maggid of Mezhirech, 'Every man must not be in the aspect of the feminine in relation to anything [*kol adam ṣarikh she-lo yehe beḥinat nuqba le-shum davar*], that is, he should not be inflamed [*lahu!*] by desires and receive pleasure from them, for then he is in the aspect of the feminine with regard to desire, but rather he should be in the aspect of the feminine

¹⁷⁴ Levi Yiṣḥaq of Berdichev, *Qedushat Levi*, pp. 253-254.

¹⁷⁵ Schneersohn, *Be-Sha'ah she-Hiqdimu* 5672, p. 1345.

¹⁷⁶ Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, New York 1971, p. 243. See Schatz Uffenheimer, *Hasidism as Mysticism*, pp. 29-30, 52-57, 108-110, 268, 296-297.

with regard to the worship of God, blessed be he. ... The one who is conjoined¹⁷⁷ to wisdom, however, surely is not conjoined to any desire, for desire is only in one who is conjoined to time. ... But the one who is conjoined to wisdom, which is above time ... is in one occurrence without separation [*be-fa'am ahat bilti nifrad*].¹⁷⁸ Sensuous desire is tethered to time since the craving satiated in one moment invariably gives way to another craving that must be satiated in the next moment; the relentless pursuit of gratification resembles the continuous ebb and flow of chronological succession. Fulfillment of our physical cravings—always in and of the moment—is never anything but temporary, and hence timebound.¹⁷⁹ By contrast, the one who obliterates the lure of desire is

¹⁷⁷ I have here followed the reading *davuq* as opposed to the variant *bekhor*, that is, the firstborn. See the apparatus of Schatz Uffenheimer in Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 69, p. 116 n. 2.

¹⁷⁸ Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 69, pp. 115-116. The passage is found as well in Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Or Torah*, sec. 53, p. 72. On the metaphorical depiction of desire as female, see *Or Torah*, sec. 157, p. 208, and *Liqqutei Amarim*, p. 165. Underpinning the gender symbolism is the longstanding correspondence in kabbalistic literature between the feminine and the capacity to receive, which is contrasted with the bestowing potency of the masculine. See Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 161, p. 259.

¹⁷⁹ Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 128, p. 221: 'When we attach ourselves to the action of the lower beings and to the temporal pleasures, then we are as nothing before him, blessed be he, but when we despise all the temporal pleasures in contradistinction to the love of God, blessed be he, then we are awaiting him and, as it were, we cause delight to God, blessed be he. And this is [the meaning of] 'Draw me after you, let us run!' (Song of Songs 1:4), that is, as it was in the primordial thought.' On the nexus between time, desire, and the imagination, see Elliot R. Wolfson, 'The Cut That Binds: Time, Memory, and the Ascetic Impulse', in *God's Voice From the Void: Old and New Studies in Bratslav Hasidism*, edited by Shaul Magid, Albany 2002, pp. 103-154, esp. 119, 123-128. An interesting exception to the rigid connection between change and the corporeal is the tradition about the nature of *ta'anug* that Levi Yişhaq of Berdichev reports in the name of his teacher in *Dibrot ha-Maggid*, p. 45: "Once I heard from my master, my teacher and rabbi, that delight is when a thing changes, for example, on Purim when there is joy in the change of garment from a woman to a man and from a man to a woman. He also said that in the ascent of the worlds, the world of doing comes to the world of formation, and formation to creation, and hence the interiority of formation is garbed in the garments of the letters of doing, and

conjoined to divine wisdom, which like the primordial Torah, is the incomposite unity (*aḥdut pashut*) above the divisiveness of time. The righteous, who constrict themselves in the act of humility and are thereby divested of corporeality (*mufshatim mi-gashmiyyut*), are uniquely capable of discerning the incarnational mystery of God constricting himself and dwelling in this world by means of the Torah and the commandments.¹⁸⁰

creation in the letters of formation. There is thus a change of garments, and this is joy.’

¹⁸⁰ Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 134, pp. 234-235. In that passage, the Maggid affirms the paradox that the immutable Torah is garbed in the mutable forms of the different worlds in the cosmological hierarchy. A parallel is found in Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Or Torah*, sec. 80, pp. 112-113, and *Or ha-Emet*, 69a-b. On the incarnational implications of *šimšum*, compare Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 189, pp. 289-290. And see *ibid.*, sec. 191, pp. 296-297: ‘It says that Jacob ‘is so small’ [*ki qaṭon*] (Amos 7:2), that is, the essence of his beauty with which he is gloried in Israel is that he embraced the attribute of humility and he diminished himself [*u-maqtin et ašmo*] ... and since he diminished himself and did not consider himself to be anything, then the blessed holy One also constricted his presence [*mešamšem shekhinato*] and dwelt upon him.’ See the slightly different version in *Dibrot ha-Maggid*, pp. 226-227. For the depiction of God constricting himself (*šimšem ašmo*) in the Torah, see *Or ha-Emet*, 54b. See Ariel Mayse, ‘Beyond the Letters: The Question of Language in the Teachings of Rabbi Dov Baer of Mezritch’, PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2015, pp. 302-303. On the fulfilment of the commandments as a form of spiritual activism in the Maggid’s teaching, see Margolin, *Human Temple*, pp. 352-357, and compare Mayse, ‘Beyond the Letters’, pp. 421-445. Adam Afterman, ‘Time, Eternity and Mystical Experience in Kabbalah’, in *Time and Eternity in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 162-175, argues that *devequt* in the prophetic kabbalah of Abraham Abulafia—as we find in the example of eating the three meals on Sabbath as a way to inculcate the indwelling of the holy spirit—similarly entailed an experience of union with God that ensues above and beyond time in contrast to the model of union that entails cleaving to time construed hypostatically or theosophically. Afterman’s interpretation of Abulafia is in line with Idel, ‘Higher than Time’, pp. 185-197, an analysis that, lamentably but predictably, seems to be driven in no small measure as an effort to attack my contention—at times in a tone that smacks of an *ad hominem animus*—that the experience of ecstasy in Abulafia’s kabbalah resists the dichotomization of time and eternity. According to my reading, the consonance of time experienced psychically in the moment of conjunction—the blink of an eye—is a *mysterium coniunctionis* of the temporal and the eternal. See Wolfson, ‘Kenotic Overflow’, pp. 146-163.

Looked at from another perspective, abnegation of self—literally, to consider oneself as nothing (*laḥashov et ašmo ke-ayin*)¹⁸¹—is the means to achieve a state of conjunction to the world of thought (*olam ha-maḥashavah*), also identified as the world of delight (*olam ha-ta'anug*), the absolute unity (*aḥdut gamur*) that is above temporality (*lema'lah mi-zemanniyyut*) and above the corporality of this world predicated on the division (*hiṭhallequt*) between good and evil characteristic of the seven days of the edifice, that is, the seven lower *sefirot*, which are the paradigms for the seven days of creation.¹⁸² 'One must grasp oneself as nothing

¹⁸¹ On the *via passiva* in the Maggid's mystical pietism, see Joseph Weiss, *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, edited by David Goldstein, Oxford 1985, pp. 69-94. See also the chapter on annihilation and extinction of the will in Schatz Uffenheimer, *Hasidism as Mysticism*, pp. 67-79, and the chapter on contemplative prayer, pp. 168-188. And compare Scholem, *Messianic Idea*, pp. 214-218, 225-227; idem, *Latest Phase*, pp. 237-258; Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, pp. 65-66; Daniel C. Matt, 'Ayin: The Concept of Nothingness in Jewish Mysticism', in *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy*, edited by Robert K. C. Forman, New York 1990, pp. 139-145; Elior, *Paradoxical Ascent*, pp. 173-178; Margolin, *Human Temple*, pp. 329-332, 357-361; Netanel Lederberg, *Gateway to Infinity: Rabbi Dov Baer, the Maggid Meisharim of Mezhirich*, Jerusalem 2011, pp. 251-281 (Hebrew); Menachem Lorberbaum, 'Attain the Attribute of 'Ayyin: The Mystical Religiosity of Maggid Devarav Le-Ya'aqov', *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 31 (2014): 169-235 (Hebrew); Adam Afterman, 'And They Shall Be One Flesh': *On the Language of Mystical Union in Judaism*, Leiden 2016, pp. 233-235.

¹⁸² Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devarav le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 110, p. 186. For citation and analysis of this passage, see Idel, 'Higher than Time', pp. 199-201. I concur with Idel that the ascent to the supratemporal realm assumes a unitive experience (p. 200), but I have put more emphasis on the ascetic dimension and the renunciation of the corporeal. The identification of wisdom or thought as the *olam ha-ta'anug* to be attained by impeding sensual pleasure appears often in the teachings attributed to the Maggid. See *Maggid Devarav le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 85, p. 148, sec. 88, p. 155, sec. 125, p. 212, sec. 161, pp. 258, 261, sec. 169, p. 266; *Or Torah*, sec. 84, p. 119, sec. 203, p. 268, sec. 382, pp. 408-409; *Dibrot ha-Maggid*, p. 43. Compare *Or Torah*, sec. 281, p. 341, where the mandate is to pray with all one's might to the point that one is removed from corporeality (*she-yufshaṭ me-ha-gashmiyyut*) and forgets oneself (*we-yushkaḥ me-ašmo*). All this happens, we are told, in one moment (*be-rega aḥat*) that is above temporality (*lema'lah me-ha-zemanniyyut*) like the appearance of lightning. See *ibid.*, sec. 429, pp. 446-447, where the passage is partially repeated. See also *Or ha-Emet*, 2b-3a, and with slight variants in

[*le'eḥoz et ašmo le-ayin*], for when he thinks of himself as something, then the blessed holy One is not arrayed in him, since the blessed One is infinite and no vessel can bear it. When he thinks that he is nothing, however, and he forgets himself, and he does not ask anything for himself but only for the *Shekhinah*, for when he asks about himself he is conjoined to corporeality and to temporality, but when he forgets himself and he is not conjoined at all to the desires of this world, then he can reach above the temporality, that is, the world of thought, where everything is identical [*shaweh*], life and death, sea and dry land.¹⁸³ The Jew, in particular, is afforded the opportunity to know the spiritual essence of what is in time because his nature is rooted in what is above time. Hence, since God and the Torah are one, by heeding the commandments and attaching oneself to the letters of the Torah, one is bound to the divine.¹⁸⁴

Liqqutei Amarim, p. 88. Compare *Or Torah*, sec. 278, p. 338, where the incomposite will (*raṣon ha-pashut*), which is identified as the void (*efes*), is said to be without time (*we-sham ein zeman*). The Maggid's teaching that one has the capacity through Torah to attain a level of being that is above quotidian temporality is reiterated often by his disciples. See, for instance, Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir, *Or ha-Me'ir*, 1:34, 234-235, 304.

¹⁸³ Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Or Torah*, sec. 387, pp. 412-413. Only by removing oneself from corporeality does one ascend through the various worlds until one attains union (*aḥdut*) with the divine, and only when one is annihilated from existence (*yevuṭal mi-meši'ut*) is one called a human (*adam*) in the truest sense. See Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 24, pp. 38-39. The model for the spiritual ideal is Moses. See *ibid.*, sec. 177, pp. 275-276: 'For Moses was bound and conjoined to the nothing [*qashur we-davuq la-ayin*], and thus he was able to combine one [letter] to another and construct the tabernacle One cannot bind oneself to the lower pleasures and therefore Moses separated from his wife.' On the rabbinic tradition of Moses separating from his wife (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 87a; Yevamot 42a) and its equivocal interpretation in different zoharic passages, see Wolfson, *Language*, pp. 313, 321, 568 n. 138, 571 n. 198.

¹⁸⁴ Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devaraw le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 86, p. 149. See *Dibrot ha-Maggid*, p. 417, where the Lurianic metaphor of the broken vessels is used to designate the descent of the letters into corporeality, while repentance (*teshuvah*) consists of restoring the letters to their source in divine thought. And see *ibid.*, p. 418, where the pietistic ideal for the sage involves the disposal of one's corporeality even as one is involved in mundane matters, an idea that can be traced to Naḥmanides, whose interpretation of *devequt* had a notable influence on the spiritual ethos cultivated by Ḥasidism. See Scholem, *Messianic Idea*, pp. 204-205. For a reassessment of the Maggid's appropriation of the zoharic identity of God, the Tetragrammaton, and Torah, see Mayse,

From the link that is established between unitive experience, eradication of self, and attainment of hypertemporal ecstasy, which like a dream is experienced in the one instant (*rega ehad*) that can traverse immense temporal distances,¹⁸⁵ we can surmise that the task is to curb rather than to celebrate carnality. Consider Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye's statement, 'The purpose of the creation of the human being through matter and form is that the material may be purified so that from matter form is made [*na'aseh min homer surah*].'¹⁸⁶ There is no ambiguity in these words: the ideal consists of matter being transposed into form, turning one thing into its opposite.¹⁸⁷ The mandate to convert matter into form partakes of the mystery of the pure issuing from the impure, an idea linked exegetically to Job 14:4,¹⁸⁸ the paradox of the light emanating from the darkness.¹⁸⁹ To be sure, there are other contexts in Jacob Joseph's writings wherein the more starkly negative assessment of the physical is attenuated. Thus, for instance, he distinguishes between two types of worship, one that is in accordance with nature, correlated with the word *shamor*, which signifies the negative commandments, and one that is above nature, correlated with the word *zakhor*, which signifies the positive commandments.¹⁹⁰

Also relevant is the interpretation of the verse 'and the beasts ran to and fro' (Ezekiel 1:14) that Jacob Joseph reports having heard from the Besht.¹⁹¹ The inclination of the soul is to return to its source, which would

'Beyond the Letters', pp. 306-317. Margolin, *Human Temple*, pp. 170-215, exhaustively reexamined the Maggid's attitude to the phenomenal world.

¹⁸⁵ Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devarav le-Ya'aqov*, sec. 135, p. 236. Compare *ibid.*, sec 170, p. 268, where the Maggid asserts that all the acts of goodness that are cloaked in time are made above in one instant. In the divine nothing (*ayin*) that is above time, one discovers the secret of the entirety of time (*kol et*).

¹⁸⁶ Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, *Toledot Ya'aqov Yosef*, 17b.

¹⁸⁷ The characterization of matter and form as opposites is reiterated frequently by Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye; see, for example, *Toledot Ya'aqov Yosef*, 40c, and sources to secondary literature cited in Elliot R. Wolfson, 'Walking as a Sacred Duty: Theological Transformation of Social Reality in Early Hasidism', in *Hasidism Reappraised*, edited by Ada Rapoport-Albert, Oxford 1996, p. 187 n. 22.

¹⁸⁸ Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, *Toledot Ya'aqov Yosef*, 145c.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 166c.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 24c-d.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 83c. In other passages from his compositions, Jacob Joseph elicits from the verse from Ezekiel the depiction of the states of magnification and

give rise to its nullification from existence (*titbaṭṭel mi-meši'ut*), and hence it was necessary that the soul be encased in a body so that there will be periods when the soul does not desire to depart from the world and, as a consequence, the rectification and sustaining of the body (*tiqqun we-qiyum ha-guf*) together with the soul can be attained,¹⁹² an idea that probably reflects the Maimonidean distinction between two types of perfection, *tiqqun ha-nefesh* and *tiqqun ha-guf*.¹⁹³ Jacob Joseph applies these two perfections respectively to the states of magnification (*gadlut*) and diminution (*qatnut*) in the sefirotic world. Elsewhere the gratification of physical needs is described as fulfilling the 'higher purpose' (*šorekh gavoha*) of purifying the sparks.¹⁹⁴ The higher purpose is not only the theurgical benefit to the divine, according to the meaning imparted by this locution in older kabbalistic sources, but also the transformation of the corporeal. The following explanation cited by Jacob Joseph in the name of the Besht accentuates the point: 'The reason for material pleasure [*ta'am le-oneg ha-ḥomer*] on Sabbath—this is a commandment because by means of it form can be more elated in its conjunction with God, blessed be he [*bi-devequt ha-shem yitbarakh*].'¹⁹⁵ Sabbath is exemplary of the more

diminution that mark the volatility of human existence and the need to descend before one can ascend, whether to attain a higher level of spiritual mindfulness or to elevate to the divine source the sparks of the *Shekhinah* or the sparks of one's soul that have fallen into the demonic domain. See Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, *Toledot Ya'aqov Yosef*, 15b, 17b, 42d, 48b, 83c, 146c, 154b, 166c, 200c; Wolfson, 'Walking', p. 197 and references cited in n. 82.

¹⁹² See Moses Ḥayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow, *Degel Maḥaneh Efrayim*, p. 32. On the tradition reported in the name of the Besht concerning the need for the body to prevent the annihilation of the soul's existence, see Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, *Ben Porat Yosef*, Korzec 1781, 34a, and idem, *Šofnat Pa'neah*, critical edition with introduction and notes by Gedalyah Nigal, Jerusalem 1989, p. 319. Compare Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, *Ben Porat Yosef*, 42a; *Keter Shem Tov*, sec. 367, p. 229; and the elucidation of the Beshtian tradition in Isaac Judah Yeḥiel Safrin of Komarno, *Netiv Mišwotekha*, Jerusalem 1983, *Netiv Emunah*, 3:15, p. 29. For a similar idea, see Moses Ḥayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow, *Degel Maḥaneh Efrayim*, p. 583.

¹⁹³ Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, translated with an introduction and notes by Shlomo Pines, with an introductory essay by Leo Strauss, Chicago 1963, 3.27, pp. 510-512.

¹⁹⁴ Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, *Toledot Ya'aqov Yosef*, 48c.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 43d. For discussion of Sabbath as an experience of plenitude in Ḥasidism, see Moshe Idel, 'Sabbath: On Concepts of Time in Jewish

general presupposition that ritual engagement with the body is for the purpose of elevating the form and abandoning the body. As Levi Yiṣḥaq of Berditchev remarked, all of the commandments are for the sake of the purification of matter (*le-hizdakkekhet ha-ḥomer*) so that one can attain the virtue of fear and be conjoined to the attribute of divine nothingness.¹⁹⁶ This is the import of the dictum attributed to Aqavya ben Mahalalel, ‘Know whence you came and wither you are going’, *da me-ayin ba’ta u-le’an attah holekh*,¹⁹⁷ “‘Know whence you came’”, the explanation is that a person should constantly contemplate the concealed nothing [*ayin ha-ne’lam*], how it sustains and brings into being all of the worlds in every moment verily from nothing to something [*me-ayin le-yesh*] and without its vitality everything would be naught. This is also [the import of] ‘wither you are going’, that is, all of the fulfilment of the commandments is so that one will come close to the attribute of the nothing, which is not the case, God forbid, if one does not comply with the will of God and attaches oneself to corporeality.’¹⁹⁸ The ultimate purpose of ritual practice is to facilitate the mystical state of absorption within the divine nothing, a teleology that culminates in the surpassing of teleology insofar as the goal to be accomplished is the abnegation of all goals.

The nonteleological telos—the telos beyond teleology—is conveyed by Moses Ḥayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow in language reminiscent of Maharal: ‘When a person attaches himself to the aspect of corporeality and materiality [*gufaniyyut we-gashmiyyut*], he separates himself from the light of his intellect When a person is conjoined with all his faculties to the aspect of the light of his intellect, all of his corporealities [*ha-gufaniyyim*] become intelligibles [*sikhliyyim*].’¹⁹⁹ The model for the transfiguration implied by the annihilation of self is elicited from the verse ‘And Moses ascended to God’, *u-moshe alah el ha-elohim* (Exodus 19:3): ‘all of the ascents of Moses were only so that he would become the aspect of divinity [*elohim*], that is, by means of the purification of his matter, he became entirely form, which is the vitality of the divine light. According to this way, we can also speak of the verse ‘This is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, blessed’ [*we-zo’t ha-berakhah asher berakh mosheh ish ha-elohim*] (Deuteronomy 33:1), that is, this is the blessing with which Moses blessed Israel, that they make from the man [*ish*], which is indicative of the

Mysticism’, in *Sabbath: Idea, History, Reality*, edited by Gerald J. Blidstein, Beer Sheva 2004, pp. 84-88.

¹⁹⁶ Levi Yiṣḥaq of Berditchev, *Qedushat Levi*, p. 577.

¹⁹⁷ Mishnah, Avot 3:1.

¹⁹⁸ Levi Yiṣḥaq of Berditchev, *Qedushat Levi*, p. 578.

¹⁹⁹ Moses Ḥayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow, *Degel Maḥaneh Efrayim*, p. 426.

matter created from nothing to something [*me-ayin le-yesh*], the aspect of divinity [*elohim*], which is form and the divine light; that is, that they will be assimilated into the highest gradation, to purify their matter so that it is entirely light, the aspect of divinity.’²⁰⁰ Transmitting an explication in the name of the Besht of the correlation between wisdom and the graveyards of desire (*qivrot ha-ta’awah*)²⁰¹ established in *Berit Menuḥah*,²⁰² wisdom is so-called ‘because when a person cleaves to wisdom, all the desires are abrogated from him ... that is, by means of wisdom he buries and annuls the power of desire from himself.’²⁰³ Drawing out the implication of his grandfather’s teaching, Moses Ḥayyim Ephraim proclaims that by cleaving one’s intellect to the wisdom of the Torah, the physical limbs themselves become spiritual and matter is thereby transposed into form.²⁰⁴ Insofar as the physical and the spiritual are equated in the infinite, by attending to the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

²⁰¹ Numbers 11:34.

²⁰² Oded Porat, *Sefer Berit ha-Menuḥah (Book of Covenant of Serenity): Critical Edition and Prefaces*, Jerusalem 2016, pp. 168-169 (Hebrew). In that context, the import of the nexus between the scriptural idiom *qivrot ha-ta’awah* and wisdom is that out of the abundance of the radiance of wisdom and the desire to know the essence (*ha-iqqar*), one is devoured in the holiness of the great and hidden light (*ha-or ha-gadol ha-ne’lam*).

²⁰³ Moses Ḥayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow, *Degel Maḥaneh Efrayim*, p. 6. Compare *ibid.*, p. 439, where the explanation of the passage from *Berit Menuḥah* in the name of the Besht is repeated, ‘for wisdom is called the graveyards of desire, that is, whoever attaches himself to wisdom, as a consequence all the corporeal desires are nullified from him.’ See, however, p. 512, where the language of the tradition transmitted in the name of the Besht is somewhat modified: ‘Wisdom is called the ‘graveyards of desire’ because when a person comes to wisdom, then all the strange physical desires [*ha-ta’awwot ha-gashmiyyot ha-zarot*] are eradicated from him with the exception of what is necessary for the sake of the existence of the person in this world [*raq le-šorekh qiyyum ha-adam ba-olam ha-zeh*]. He said this is the name of the book *Berit Menuḥah*, that is, the one who possesses wisdom has compassion with his creator and he is victorious over the materiality.’ In this version of recounting his grandfather’s teaching, the attainment of wisdom results in the eradication of the outlandish or eccentric physical desires, and apparently not the physical desires that are necessary for human sustenance in the world. Still, even in this ameliorated account, reference is made to the seemingly unqualified victory over the material.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

needs of the former one is attending to the needs of the latter,²⁰⁵ but if one is focused exclusively on the pleasures of this world, then they become a curtain that separates the light of God that is in one's brain from being revealed in the heart, an obstruction that perpetuates the exilic agony and prevents the birth of the messianic redemption.²⁰⁶

Expressed in a different terminological register, what is intended by corporeal worship is the directive to transform through ritual observance the corruptible body into the body that is made up of the Hebrew letters contained within the Tetragrammaton, the hidden reality of all that is manifest. The body that is glorified, therefore, is not the coarse body controlled by the need to gratify sensual appetites but the somatic body that has been purified of these cravings and transmogrified into a semiotic body, the imaginal body composed of the letters of the Torah, the mystical essence of the Tetragrammaton.²⁰⁷ The precept at work here is illustrated by Shneur Zalman's explanation of the mystical import of eating foods that are halakhically permissible: 'Whoever worships the Lord through the power of this eating learns and prays to the Lord, and hence the letters of the Torah and the prayer ascend to the Lord from the force of what is purified from this food'.²⁰⁸ The homology between eating, on the one

²⁰⁵ Aaron Halevi Horowitz of Staroselye, *Sha'ar ha-Tefillah*, Jerusalem 1972, 144b.

²⁰⁶ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Torah Or*, Brooklyn 2001, 57c-d.

²⁰⁷ Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 138-147; idem, 'Immanuel Frommann's Commentary on Luke and the Christianizing of Kabbalah: Some Sabbatian and Ḥasidic Affinities', in *Holy Dissent: Jewish and Christian Mystics in Eastern Europe*, edited by Glenn Dynner, Detroit 2011, pp. 193-195, and references to primary sources cited on p. 219 n. 159. For a different approach to the subject, see the exhaustive study with documentation of previous scholarship by Tsippi Kaufman, *In All Your Ways Know Him: The Concept of God and Avodah be-Gashmiyut in the Early Stages of Hasidism*, Ramat Gan 2009, pp. 226-397, 403-404, 459-460 (Hebrew).

²⁰⁸ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Amarim: Tanya*, pt. 4, 26, 143b. For discussion of this motif, see Louis Jacobs, 'Eating as an Act of Worship in Hasidic Thought', in *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History Presented to Alexander Altmann on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, edited by Siegfried Stein and Raphael Loewe, University, AL 1979, pp. 157-166. On pp. 163-164, Jacobs cited a passage from Shneur Zalman of Liadi's commentary on the prayers (*Seder Tefillot mi-kol ha-Shanah*, 202c-203d) related to the matter of food and the struggle between the holy and unholy. The role of eating in Shneur Zalman is discussed briefly in Roman A. Foxbrunner, *Ḥabad: The Hasidism of R. Shneur Zalman of Lyady*, Northvale 1993, pp. 96-97. For an informative study of eating in earlier kabbalistic sources, which

hand, and the ritual acts of study and prayer, on the other hand, rests on the premise that by eating one transforms the unrefined materiality (*homriyyut*) of the food into its more ethereal state of corporality (*gashmiyyut*), that is, the bodiliness (*gufaniyyut*) configured by the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.²⁰⁹ The act of consumption is a template for the commandments more generally: although the commandments involve material objects, which have a boundary and measure, the light of the infinite is garbed in them, and hence they serve as the means by which one transmutes the purely physical into the spiritual.²¹⁰ The body that is affirmed in Ḥabad philosophy is the body that has been transfigured by its incorporation into the name that is the Torah, the primordial parable in which the light of the infinite is garbed.²¹¹ In the expanded mindfulness that ensues from this metamorphosis, one grasps, as RaShaB expressed it, that ‘the coming to be of time [*hithawwut ha-zeman*] is from the perspective of the descent of the vitality that is sustaining [*mi-šad yeridat ha-ḥiyyut lehaḥayot*], which is the aspect of withdrawal and propagation [*histallequt we-hitpashsheḥut*], and in the aspect of running and returning [*rašo wa-shov*]. ... Therefore, time is also called world [*olam*], for the cause of the coming to be of time is from the perspective of the concealment [*mi-šad ha-he‘lem*], which is the descent of the vitality that comes in the aspect of the garbing in concealment [*hitlabbeshut be-he‘lem*].’²¹²

served as the background for the Ḥasidic texts, see Joel Hecker, *Mystical Bodies, Mystical Meals: Eating and Embodiment in Medieval Kabbalah*, Detroit 2005, and the more recent survey in Moshe Hallamish, *The Daily Life Routine of the Kabbalist*, Tel-Aviv 2019, pp. 341-365 (Hebrew).

²⁰⁹ Compare the elaboration of the theme of transforming physical food into spiritual sustenance (*mazon ruḥani*) in Menaḥem Naḥum of Chernobyl, *Me’or Einayim*, pp. 473-478, and the interpretation of part of this passage in Joel Hecker, ‘Eating as a Spiritual Ecosystem’, in *Jewish Mysticism and the Spiritual Life: Classical Texts, Contemporary Reflections*, edited by Lawrence Fine, Eitan Fishbane, and Or N. Rose, Woodstock, VT 2011, pp. 78-85. See above, n. 81.

²¹⁰ Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Liqqutei Amarim: Tanya*, pt. 4, 10, 114b, and see other passages cited and analyzed in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, pp. 140-141.

²¹¹ Wolfson, *Open Secret*, p. 159. On the symbolic intent of the image of the Torah as the primordial parable, see above, n. 98.

²¹² Shalom Dovber Schneerson, *Sefer ha-Ma’amarim 5680*, Brooklyn 2018, p. 59. On the limited versus the limitless nature of time connected to the matter of *rašo wa-shov*, see Menaḥem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa’aduyot 5720*, vol. 1, Brooklyn 2004, pp. 296-298.

By reclaiming the material immaterially, one unearths that the world is naught but the concealment of the divine concealment, and hence through the veil one sees the veil and discerns thereby that God is present in the very world from which God is absent. The disclosure of the will of the infinite withholds its presencing, not as a presence that refuses to come to presence at present and is thus presently absent, but as the presence that can only be present as nonpresent and is thus always absently present, the pure futurity of the now that is perpetually not now. In its most essential inessentiality, time embodies the paradox of the incessant bestowal of what is continually withdrawn, the givenness of the nongiven that creates the space of retraction—the opening of the openness—wherein time expands indefinitely in the oscillation between the incursion of its recoil and the recoil of its incursion. Phenomenologically, the superfluity of time protracts our experience of time's depletion even as the depletion of time curtails our experience of time's superfluity. To suffer time in its tragic exuberance is, paraphrasing Leonard Cohen, to fathom that what happens next is always something in between, looking like freedom but feeling like death.²¹³

²¹³ Leonard Cohen, *Stranger Music: Selected Poems and Songs*, New York 1994, p. 379.