

T E N

Walking as a Sacred Duty: Theological Transformation of Social Reality in Early Hasidism

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I

ONE of the central images in both the homiletic and folkloristic traditions in hasidic literature is that of the itinerant. The importance of this image for the social history of early hasidism has been well documented in several major studies with special reference to the role played by wandering preachers (*mokhshim* and *maggidim*) and exorcists (*ba'alei shem*) in the formation of pietistic circles in eighteenth-century Ukraine.¹ What has been less carefully studied, however, is the theological significance that this image assumed in subsequent hasidic thought.² Even a cursory glance at the sources from the second and third generations of the hasidic movement would indicate the extent to which this literature is characterized by an impressive preponderance of imagery having to do with walking, taking a journey,³ and the like—images, that is, derived from the

¹ See B. Dinur, *Bemifneh hadorot* (Jerusalem, 1955), 134–47; J. Weiss, 'Reshit tsemihatah shel haderekh hahasidit', *Zion*, 16 (1951), 46–105, repr. in A. Rubinstein (ed.), *Perakim betorat hahasidut vetoledoteihah* (Jerusalem, 1977), 122–81; id., *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford, 1985), 3–42. For a criticism of Weiss's views, see S. Ettinger, 'The Hasidic Movement: Reality and Ideals', in H. H. Ben-Sasson and S. Ettinger (eds.), *Jewish Society through the Ages* (New York, 1971), 251–66; orig. pub. in *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale: Journal of World History* 11: 1–2 (1968), 25–66, repr. in G. D. Hundert (ed.), *Essential Papers on Hasidism* (New York, 1991), 226–43. See also S. Ettinger, 'The Crystallization of the Hasidic Movement: The Maggid of Mezhibezh and his Disciples', in H. H. Ben-Sasson (ed.), *A History of the Jewish People* (London, 1976), 770. And cf. M. Piekarsz, *Biyemei tsemihatah hahasidut: Megamot ra'ayoniyot besifrei derush umasar* (Jerusalem, 1978), 22, 96–8, 136–7, 206–7. For a reformulation of Weiss's position, see S. Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism and Magic: A Sociological Analysis of Jewish Religious Movements* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1982), 149.

² Weiss touches upon this aspect of the phenomenon from the perspective of the shift from the itinerant leader to the settled zaddik who typically held court; see 'Reshit tsemihatah shel haderekh hahasidit', 103–5 and *Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, 17–22. Despite the usefulness of some of his remarks he is still more concerned with the implications of this shift for the social history of the hasidic movement rather than with the intrinsic theological significance of the itinerant image. The spiritualization of the physical journey is a much older motif in Jewish sources. Thus, see e.g. the passage of Saadya Gaon on the benefit of journeys, printed in *Commentary on Genesis*, ed. M. Zucker (New York, 1984), 431–5 (my thanks to Dr Zeev Gries for calling my attention to this reference). Cf. Bahya b. Asher, *Rabbenu Bahya: Be'ur al hatorah*, ed. C. Chavel (3 vols.; Jerusalem, 1981), on Gen. 13: 17.

³ It should be noted that in hasidic sources the words for travel or journey and walking are used interchangeably, a fact that reflects two of the basic meanings of the root *halakh*, to walk from one place to

itinerant lifestyle. It is the aim of this chapter to fill that scholarly gap by presenting some crucial aspects of the itinerant motif as it is developed in early hasidism.

At the outset let me note that two distinct typologies can be distinguished, although only the latter is rooted in teachings ascribed to the Besht. The first involves the use of the walking motif as a symbol for the spiritual progression through various grades, culminating ultimately in a state of *devekut*, cleaving or attachment to God. This usage is found in a wide range of authors including two of the most prominent followers of the Besht, Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye (d. 1782)⁴ and Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezhibezh

another or to travel by means of some vehicle. Hence, in my treatment of the motif of walking, *halikhah*, I also discuss passages dealing with travel, *nesi'ah*. See e.g. Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, *Ketonet pasim* [Lemberg, 1866] ed. G. Nigal (Jerusalem, 1985), 75, where *halakh* is used synonymously with *nasa*. See also p. 243. A notable exception to this is the famous chorus to a song of one of the hasidim of Menahem Mendel of Kotsk: 'To Kotsk one does not travel (*furt men nisht*). To Kotsk one may only walk (*geyt men*) . . . To Kotsk one must walk as does a pilgrim (*darfmen oyleh regel zeyn*).' Cf. Arthur Green, 'The Zaddiq as *Axis Mundi* in Later Judaism', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 45 (1977), 329–30. In this case walking as a sacred pilgrimage (*aliyat regel*) to see the *rebbe* in his court is distinguished from everyday mundane travel. The concern, then, is not with *halikhah* in the narrow sense of physical walking, but with the broader sense of travelling or journeying. Nevertheless, as will be seen in the course of this analysis, the essential component of movement by foot remains a critical part of the use of *halikhah* in the hasidic sources.

⁴ That the act of walking was used as a metaphor for the spiritual quest in Jacob Joseph's thought can be adduced from several contexts in his literary corpus. In particular, he contrasted *halikhah*, going, with *bi'ah*, arriving: the one who considers that he is on the way is really at the goal whereas the one who thinks he has arrived is not only still on the way but on the wrong way. In several places he attributes the distinction to the Baal Shem Tov based on an interpretation of Ps. 126: 6: one who constantly journeys for the sake of divine worship and does not consider that he has reached the end of his journey in the end will produce seed, whereas one who is convinced that he has reached that destination and considers that he has already come to where he has to be, begins with joy but in the end will prove to be infertile. Cf. Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, *Ben porat Yosef* [Korets, 1781] (Brooklyn, NY, 1976), 32d; id., *Toledot Ya'akov Yosef* [Korets, 1780] (Jerusalem, 1966), 194d. A similar interpretation of Ps. 126: 6, without however being attributed to the Besht, is to be found in Dov Ber of Mezhibezh, *Or torah* [Korets, 1804] (Brooklyn, NY, 1972), 72b–c. Cf. Meir Margulies, *Sod yakhin uvo'az* (Ostrog, 1794), 4a–b. See also the collection of sayings of the Maggid edited by Meshullam Phoebus Heller (on this attribution, cf. Weiss, *Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, 122–3 n. 57), *Likutim yekarim* [Lemberg, 1792], ed. Abraham Isaac Kahan (Jerusalem, 1974), 14, cited as well in *Sefer Ba'al Shem Tov*, ed. Simon Menahem Mendel of Govartchov (2 vols.; Lodz, 1938), ii. 34a. See also the interpretation of Baruch of Medzibezh, *Butsina dinehora hashalem* [Bilgoraj, n.d.] (Jerusalem, 1985), 74. It is significant that Jacob Joseph connects the Besht's teaching about *bi'ah* in the sense of reaching one's destination with the mishnaic ruling (cf. Kid. 1: 1) about *bi'ah* in the sense of one's conjugal obligation. Walking in the spiritual plane thus parallels sexual intercourse in the physical. Cf. *Ketonet pasim*, 192, and see discussion below in the last section of this paper. In other contexts Jacob Joseph distinguishes at least three senses of walking or to go on the way: (a) to cleave to God even when involved in corporeal matters (*avodah begashmiyut*), (b) to progress from grade to grade, and (c) to descend from the higher level of spiritual consciousness in order to help others. See *Ketonet pasim*, 141. Concerning the first meaning, see also *Ben porat Yosef*, 48c; *Toledot*, 6c "And Jacob lifted up his feet" (Gen. 29: 1), that is to say he lifted up his grade, which is to say himself, to cleave by means of his walking to God (*led-abeik bahalikhato bidevekut kono*.) Cf. the interpretation of this verse in Dov Ber of Mezhibezh, *Or torah*, 9d and in Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl, *Me'or einayim* (Brooklyn, NY, 1984), 23b. With respect to the second meaning Jacob Joseph distinguishes man from the angels: the former is in the category of *holekh*, one who goes from grade to grade, ever-changing like a wheel, while the latter are in the category of *omed*, standing in one permanent condition; cf. *Toledot*, 37a and see *Me'or einayim*, 34d–35a; *Butsina dinehora*, 73. Shneur Zalman of Lyady often distinguishes between the status of the angels as *omedim* and that of the Jewish souls when they descend to this world as *mehalkhim*. See Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Likutei amarim: Tanya* [Slavuta, 1796; Vilna, 1900] bilingual edn., trans. N. Mindel, N. Mangel, Z. Posner, and J. I. Schochet (London, 1973), 76a; id., *Torah or* [Kopys, 1836; Zhitomir, 1862] (Brooklyn, NY, 1984), 30a; id.,

(1704–72),⁵ as well as many of the latter's disciples.⁶ One can indeed distinguish between at least two models of cleaving to God in hasidic sources: (a) a vertical one, which entails the metaphor of ascent and descent, and (b) a horizontal one, which entails the metaphor of traversing from place to place. Hasidic writers used both models to delineate the individual's intimate relationship with God; it cannot be said, there-

Likutei torah [Zhitomir, 1848] (Brooklyn, 1984), on 'Vayikra', 45a, 'Bamidbar', 38b, 64c; id., *Ma'amrei Admor hazaken al parshiyot hatorah vehamo'adim* (2 vols.; Brooklyn, NY, 1982–3), ii, 729. (The characterization of the angels as beings who stand is made already in classical rabbinic sources and is often repeated in kabbalistic texts; cf. J. Ber. 1: 1; Ber. 10b; Hag. 15b; Zohar, 2: 241b, 3: 260a; Elliot R. Wolfson, *The Book of the Pomegranate: Moses de Leon's Sefer Ha-Rimmon* (Atlanta, 1988), 80 (Heb. section). Concerning the last meaning, see below, n. 46. See also *Toledot*, 194d; Nahman of Bratslav, *Likutei Moharan* [2 vols.; Ostrog, 1808, Magilev, 1811] (1 vol.; Bnei Brak, 1972), part 1, *torah* 20, ss. 7 ff.; *Shivhei ha-Ran* (Brooklyn, NY, 1972), 'Seder hanesi'ah shelo le'Erets Yisrael', s. 33, and cf. Y. Liebes, 'Hatikun hakelali shel R. Nahman miBraslav veyahaso lashabeta'ut', *Zion*, 45 (1980), 210.

⁵ Cf. Dov Ber of Mezhirech *Maggid devarav leYa'akov* [Korets, 1784], ed. R. Schatz-Uffenheimer (Jerusalem, 1976), 261: 'If your soul inquires how one can raise in his thought everything so that it will be mitigated in its source . . . If one wants to ascend when he stands on the lower level, he cannot reach and attain the higher level except as he traverses from level to level. If, however, he is standing on the higher [level] he can ascend from below in one moment.' See n. 9.

⁶ Cf. *Me'or einayim*, 17d, 23b, 29d. And see Asher Zevi of Ostrog (d. 1817), *Ma'ayan ha'ohkhamah* [Korets, 1817] (Jerusalem, 1971), 11b: 'A person must contemplate and know that it is impossible to raise the gradations when he is standing in one place. Rather [this can be accomplished] when he is going (holekh) from gradation to gradation.' Cf. Abraham Hayyim of Zloczew (1750–1816), *Orah lahayim*, repr. in *Sefarim kedoshim miglodei talmidei Ba'al Shem Tov* (35 + 3 vols., Brooklyn, NY, 1981–6), xxii, 47: 'When the zaddik worships God, blessed be He, he is called "the one who is walking" (holekh), for he goes from gradation to gradation. But Abraham was sitting and he did not walk. Even so [it is written] "the Lord appeared to him" for God, blessed be He, appeared to Abraham in order to arouse him . . . he was in the aspect of sitting but not that of walking.' See also Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Ma'amrei Admor haZaken* 5564 [1803–4] (Brooklyn, NY 1980), 111–12, who distinguishes, on the basis of Ps. 126: 6 (see above, n. 4), between two kinds of *halikhah*: the first is that which characterizes the one who, like Abraham, goes from one level of comprehension to a higher one by means of love, whereas the second, the level of Jacob or the attribute of mercy, comprises traversing in the way of crying (*halikhah shebaderekh bekhayah*). The second way is marked by the awareness of one's lowly state which only increases the more one ascends. For a different distinction between two types of walking (*hilukh*), see Shneur Zalman, *Torah or*, 112a. And see *Likutei torah* on 'Vayikra', 48a: 'the aspect of walking (*halikhah*) is the aspect of love, to be contained in unity (*ulehitkalel be'ehad*) . . . for the essence of the walking (*hahalikhah*) is [for the person] to contain his soul in the one, to cleave to Him.' The image of *hitkalelut* and its relation to the ideal of *devekut* in the thought of Shneur Zalman has been recently discussed by M. Idel, 'Universalization and Integration: Two Conceptions of Mystical Union in Jewish Mysticism', in M. Idel and B. McGinn (eds.), *Mystical Union and the Monotheistic Faith* (New York, 1989), 27–58. See also *Likutei torah* on 'Bamidbar', 20b: 'The angels are called those who stand (*omedim*) . . . And the matter is that "there is no standing but silence" [cf. *Sotah*, 39a], and the explanation of silence is the negation of the essence from everything (*bitul ha'atmut mikol vakhol*), i. e., the negation of the will (*bitul haratson*) . . . And the reason this aspect is called standing (*amidah*) is because when the person has love and cleaves to God, this aspect is called walking (*mehalekh*) . . . but before he can attain the level of walking (*hilukh*) and this love, he must first have the aspect of standing.' Shneur Zalman goes on to contrast this type of walking with God that leads to *devekut* with the walking of the evil inclination. On the concept of *bitul* in Habad philosophy, see R. Elior, *Torat ha'elohut bador hasheni shel hasidut Habad* (Jerusalem, 1982), 178–243, and the shorter English summary in id., 'HaBaD: The Contemplative Ascent to God', in A. Green (ed.), *Jewish Spirituality*, ii: *From the Sixteenth Century Revival to the Present* (New York, 1987), 81–98. On *halikhah* (or *hilukh*) as a metaphor for the process of love leading to a state of *devekut*, see also *Likutei torah* on 'Devarim', 19d; on 'Shir hashirim', 25d. And cf. *Ma'amrei Admor haZaken al parshiyot hatorah vehamo'adim*, ii, 729–30, where Shneur Zalman explains that the status of man in his descent to the world as 'one who walks', as opposed to his status before descent as 'one who stands', involves a 'spiritual walking from comprehension to comprehension' (*halikhah ruhanit mehasagah lehasagah*) rather than a 'physical walking' (*halikhah gash-*

fore, as it has been recently argued, that one took precedence over the other.⁷ Hence, the image of the itinerant was upheld as a model for the mystic path. It is true, however, that some hasidic writers viewed the itinerant lifestyle as a distraction and obstacle for the zaddik, drawing him away from a state of cleaving to God through contemplative prayer and Torah study.⁸ Yet there is an abundance of textual evidence which demonstrates conclusively that the early writers saw no conflict between walking and the spiritual state leading to *devekut*. On the contrary, the proper worship of God was said to be realized even as one physically walked about and was engaged in social commerce.⁹ As such, *halikhah*, walking, became a popular metaphor for following the spiritual path.

The second typology, which is traceable to the Besht himself, or so one may gather from the hasidic sources, is decidedly soteriological in its orientation.¹⁰ It emphasizes two acts whose redemptive nature, from the kabbalistic perspective, is beyond question,

mit). See also Dov Ber Shneuri of Lubavitch (the Mittler Rebbe), *Sha'ar ha'emunah*, vol. 1 of *Ner mitsvah vectorah or* [Kopys, 1820] (2 vols; Brooklyn, NY, 1974), i, 105b: 'the aspect of negation (*bitul*) and containment (*hitkalelut*) of the lower in the upper, for example, [to ascend] from [the world of] doing (*asiyah*) to [the world of] formation (*yetsirah*), and from [the world of] formation (*yetsirah*) to [the world of] creation (*beriah*) etc., [a process] which is called walking (*hilukh*), like one who goes by foot (*keholekh baregel*), for he progresses and ascends from below to above, from what is low to what is high'. Cf. Dov Ber Shneuri of Lubavitch, *Ma'amrei Admor ha'Emtsa'i* (10 vols.; Brooklyn, NY, 1985–9), on 'Vayikra', ii, 753. On two types of *hilukh* as the worship of God, *panim* and *ahor*, in Habad philosophy, see also Menahem Mendel (the Tsemah Tsedek), *Or hatorah: Bereshit-Devarim* (24 vols.; 1950–74), xiv, 640–1; xvi, 476–7. A glance at the frequent appearance of this term in Menahem Mendel's corpus demonstrates how central a motif it is in Habad thinking. See *Sefer halikutim: Tsemah Tsedek* (26 vols.; Brooklyn, NY, 1977–83), vol. xviii, s.v. 'halikhah', 158–77. A detailed study of this image in Habad would no doubt prove instructive. See also Margulies, *Sod yakhin uvo'az*, 3b, where the term *mehalkhim* is used in reference to those who perform the commandments for they go from level to level; and cf. 4a, where the term *holekh* is applied specifically to the zaddik.

⁷ See M. Verman, 'Aliyah and Yeridah: Journeys of the Besht and R. Nachman to Israel', in D. Blumenthal (ed.), *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times* (Atlanta, 1988), iii, 159–71. Though I have availed myself of Verman's terminology, I cannot agree with his conclusion: 'Moreover, although it is in the nature of a journey for space to be traversed horizontally, traveling from point A to point B, the Hasidim, in their commitment to *devekut*, were much more concerned with their vertical state of being, i.e. their relationship to God.' In fact, hasidic texts abound with images of the horizontal state that depict the relationship of man to God. See, in particular, Kalonymus Kalman of Cracow (d. 1823), *Ma'or vashemesh* [Breslau, 1842] (Brooklyn, NY, 1985), 46a: 'By means of this the zaddik should decide if the way before him is the right one: if in the way that he goes the zaddik does not cease from cleaving to God, then he knows that this way before him is the right one. However, if he sees that the cleaving [to God] has ceased for him, then he should stand still and go no more on that way.' See nn. 4 and 6.

⁸ See the exemplary passages from *Likutim yekarim; Zot zikaron* of Jacob Isaac Horowitz, the Seer of Lublin (1745–1815); and *Or hame'ir* of Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir, cited by Weiss, 'Reshit tsemihatah shel haderekh ha'asidit', 104–5; *Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, 20–1.

⁹ See e.g. the words of the Maggid in *Or torah*, 67a–b, on Ps. 16: 8: 'Sometimes a person moves about (*holekh*) and speaks with people, and as a result he cannot study; yet he must cleave to God, blessed be He, and unify the unifications. Similarly when a person travels in the way (*holekh baderekh*) and he cannot pray or study as is his wont, he must worship [God] in other manners, and he should not worry about this. For God wants the person to worship Him in all manners . . . Therefore the opportunity arose for him to travel in the way or to speak with people so that he would worship Him in an alternative manner.' Hasidic masters linked their ideal of communion (*devekut*) as a constant being-with-God even in a social context to the view of Nahmanides as expressed in his commentary to Deut. 11: 22; see G. Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York, 1971), 204–5. See below, nn. 27 and 44.

¹⁰ I am employing the word soteriological to encompass both individual and communal redemption, the latter of course being closely associated with messianism. Although some of the early hasidic masters do differentiate between individual redemption and that of the nation at large, in the terminology of Jacob Joseph, *ge'ulah peratit* and *ge'ulah kelalit* (see e.g. *Toledot*, 198a), I do not think that the two aspects are

namely the liberation of the sparks of light trapped in the demonic shells and the unification of the masculine and feminine aspects of the divine. These two themes were already prominently connected in Lurianic mythology, but hasidim combined the Lurianic ideas with still older kabbalistic themes and symbols. It should be noted further that hasidic ideas in this regard share some phenomenological similarities with Sabbatean circles, but I would argue that the similarities stem from the common literary sources of Lurianic kabbalah rather than any direct borrowing. In discussions on the possible messianic and Sabbatean elements in hasidism this crucial dimension has been hitherto ignored.

It is this latter typology that is the subject of my analysis. I shall limit my discussion to the treatment of this motif in three authors: Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl (1730–97), and Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow (c.1737–1800).

II

Viewing the act of walking or migration in a soteriological context is not an innovation of the Besht or any of his immediate disciples. Indeed, already in the writings of Moses Cordovero (1522–70) the peregrinations of the kabbalists were understood as a means to provide some form of temporary dwelling for the Shekhinah in her exilic state. Cordovero effectively inverted the Zoharic teaching—which, incidentally, provides the mystical backdrop for the narrative of the Zohar—that the Shekhinah accompanies the righteous in all their wanderings in exile.¹¹ Paradoxically, according to Cordovero, by means of the *gerushim*—the forced ‘banishments’ or ‘exile wanderings’ from place to place—the kabbalists were elevated above their own state of exile, for in return for lending support to the weakened Shekhinah they received mystical illumination in the form of innovative scriptural interpretations.¹²

ever to be viewed as absolutely separate as they are not separate in the Lurianic writings. That is to say, then, that individual redemption is part of the national (and cosmic) redemptive process. In light of this I cannot agree with Scholem’s statements in *The Messianic Idea*, 195–201, to the effect that hasidism removed the ‘acute Messianic tension’ from the Lurianic doctrine of uplifting the sparks, for while the ‘school of Lurianism made every Jew a protagonist in the great Messianic struggle [and] did not allegorize Messianism into a state of personal life . . . Hasidism in its most vigorous stages took precisely this step. The one and unique great act of final redemption . . . was thrown out, i.e., was removed from the sphere of man’s immediate responsibility and thrown back into God’s inscrutable councils.’ My reasons for disagreeing with Scholem, however, differ from the classical rebuttal of I. Tishby, ‘Hara’ayon hameshihi vehamegamot hameshihiyot bitsemiḥat haḥasidut’, *Zion*, 32 (1967), 1–45. It strikes me that there is an implicit messianic spirit in hasidic doctrine, and it was precisely this factor that instilled—and continues to instil—in the hearts and minds of the pious an intense religious fervour. The whole question of messianism in hasidism, I believe, should be re-examined from a phenomenological as opposed to a historical point of view, i.e. it should not be judged solely from the point of view of its rejection or assimilation of Sabbateanism. See below, n. 63. On the implicit messianic dimension of Beshtian hasidism, connected especially with the social need to communicate esoteric truths, see now N. Loewenthal, *Communicating the Infinite: The Emergence of the Habad School* (Chicago, 1990), 6–14.

¹¹ See e.g. Zohar 1: 49b (and cf. *Ketoret pasim*, 195), 68b–69a, 189a; 2: 163b. The Zoharic idea, of course, has its source in the older aggadic motif of the exile of the Shekhinah. Cf. I. Tishby, *Mishnat hazohar* (2 vols.; Jerusalem, 1971), i. 229–31, pub. in Eng. as *The Wisdom of the Zohar* (3 vols.; Oxford, 1989), ii. 382–7.

¹² See R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo: Lawyer and Mystic* (Philadelphia, 1977), 51–4; B. Sack, ‘Galut Yisrael vegalut haShekhinah be Or yakar leR. Moshe Cordovero’, *Mehkeret Yerushalayim bemahshevet Yisrael*, 4 (1982), 176–8.

Closer to home for the circle of the Besht is the idea expressed in the eighteenth century homiletic work *Sha’ar hamelekh* (1762, 1774) of Mordecai b. Samuel, regarding the itinerant preachers, the ‘feet of the Shekhinah’,¹³ whose journeys from town to town symbolized the exile of the Shekhinah.¹⁴ These preachers were forced by poverty to wander about in order to earn a living, but on a more profound level through their journeying they not only sought to turn the masses to repentance but also accompanied the Shekhinah in her homeless state. Hence, they were called the ‘camp of the Shekhinah’,¹⁵ for they join the Shekhinah as she wanders from her place. . . and they are the messengers of God (*sheluḥei derahmana*).¹⁶ The socio-economic status of the preachers is thus transformed in light of the theological belief concerning the exile of the Shekhinah.

It is within this latter framework that the hasidic idea of *halikkah* must be evaluated. The significance that the itinerant life assumed for the hasidim is evident not only from the legendary tales about the Besht—including his own journeys and the journeys of others coming to see him¹⁷—but also from comments on the nature of travel attributed directly to him by some of his disciples. I begin with the writings of Jacob Joseph, which are widely acknowledged to be the richest treasure trove of the Besht’s teachings.

Jacob Joseph reports that the Besht taught that by means of one’s journeying from

¹³ The image is talmudic in origin; cf. Ber. 43b; Hag. 16a; Kid. 31a. For an early mystical use of this expression, see P. Schäfer (ed.), *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen, 1981), ss. 441, 745–6, pp. 185, 270. Cf. *Toledot*, 130d, where Israel is identified as the ‘feet of the Shekhinah’ (*raglin dishekhinta*) for ‘just as feet lead a person according to his desire and will so [they] raise prayer to the place which She loves’. An earlier source for this usage is found in *Tikunei zohar*, ed. R. Margaliot (Jerusalem, 1948), *Tikun* 18: 35a.

¹⁴ Cf. M. Piekarz, ‘Hara’ayon hameshihi biyemei tsemiḥat haḥasidut’, in *Hara’ayon hameshihi be Yisrael: Yom iyun leregel melot shemonim shanah leGershom Scholem* (Jerusalem, 1982), 237–52. See Dinur, *Bemifneh hadorot*, 81 n. 733, who already noted the relationship of this text to hasidic sources with respect to the question of specific religious customs.

¹⁵ Cf. Pes. 68a; Zev. 116b; see also Yoma, 3b; Sanh. 91b.

¹⁶ *Sha’ar hamelekh* (Zolkiew, 1774), part 2, 3: 5, 95d. In the Talmud the priests are referred to as *sheluḥei derahmana*; see Yoma, 19a; Kid. 23b. Jacob Joseph refers to the zaddikim as the *sheluḥei dematronita*; see, e.g. *Toledot*, 32d, 38c (in the name of Besht), 137c; *Ben porat Yosef*, 55b. See also Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow, *Degel mahaneh Efrayim* [1808] (Brooklyn, NY, 1984), on ‘Beḥukotai’, 55a.

¹⁷ According to an account in the anthology *Keter shem tov*, compiled by R. Aaron of Opatow and published in Zolkiew, 1794–5 (concerning this book see G. Nigal, ‘Makor rishoni lesifrut hasipurim haḥasidit: Al sefer Keter shem tov umekorotav’, *Sinai*, 79 (1976), 132–46), the Maggid of Mezhibreth set out on a journey to visit the Besht in order to test his learning. Upon arriving at the Besht’s dwelling the Maggid expected to hear words of Torah. Instead, in their first meeting the Besht reportedly told him various anecdotes about travel. The editor adds at this point that in all of these tales there was contained ‘great and wondrous wisdom (*hokhmah rabah venifla’ah*) for the one who understands’. See *Keter shem tov* (Brooklyn, NY, 1972), part 2, 62b–63a, s. 424, also cited in *Sefer Ba’al Shem Tov*, i. 12, sec. 8. See A. Ya’ari, ‘Shetei mahadurot yesod shel Shivḥei haBesht’, *Kiryat sefer*, 39 (1964), 403–7. Concerning this tale, see also G. Nigal, *Hasiporet haḥasidit: Toledoteihah venos’eihah* (Jerusalem, 1981), 21–2. There is no exact parallel to this tale about the Maggid’s first meeting with the Besht in the Heb. edn. of *Shivḥei haBesht* but there is one in the Yid. version, ch. 23; see Nigal, *Hasiporet haḥasidit*, 91 n. 58a. On the other hand, as Nigal notes, p. 21, there is a parallel between this tale and another in *Keter shem tov*, 21b–22a, concerning a sage who doubted the Besht’s talmudic learning. To this later tale there is a parallel in *Shivḥei haBesht*, ed. B. Mintz (Jerusalem, 1969), 97.

place to place one uplifts the fallen sparks of one's soul-root¹⁸ and restores them to their proper source.¹⁹ He thus writes in his *Ketonet pasim*:

I have written elsewhere the explanation of the passage in *Hullin* (91b): 'The ground on which you [Jacob] are lying I will assign to you (Gen. 28: 13),' what is the significance of this comment? R. Isaac said: 'this teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, folded all of the land of Israel and placed it under him [i.e. Jacob].' I have heard in the name of my teacher [i.e. the Besht] that travelling from place to place is [for the sake of] purifying the sparks. Jacob, under whom [God] folded all the land of Israel, did not have to travel, but he was able to purify the sparks in his place by means of the study of Torah.²⁰

Reflecting on a parallel passage to the above citation in Jacob Joseph's *Ben porat Yosef*, Joseph Weiss wrote that

Besht's theory of the sparks belonging to one person and yet scattered should be understood as conditioned by his own situation, and indeed it precisely reflects the predicament of the peddler in magical amulets and charms who wanders through the Jewish settlements of Eastern Europe, but dreams in Lurianic terms of the possibility of earning a living in a way that would allow him to gather up the sparks of his soul in one place without having to move from village to village. However, this dream of an ideal sedentary existence could not sufficiently be fulfilled in his own lifetime.²¹

Weiss therefore sees in this teaching attributed to the Besht the beginnings of the shift from the itinerant *ba'al shem* to the settled *zaddik* who holds court and thus earns his

¹⁸ In the Lurianic scheme one can already speak of two kinds of sparks: the sparks of Shekhinah and those of the soul of primal Adam. It is, moreover, the task of man to seek out the sparks of his soul-root so that he may uplift them and restore them to their source. The hasidic teaching added a personal and unique dimension to this idea by stressing that there are sparks in the cosmos that belong exclusively to an individual. See Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, 186–92; Louis Jacobs, 'The Uplifting of the Sparks in Later Jewish Mysticism', in A. Green, *Jewish Spirituality*, ii: *From the Sixteenth Century Revival to the Present* (New York, 1987), 117.

¹⁹ Cf. Menahem Mendel of Peremyshlany, *Darkhei yesharim* [Zhitomir, 1805], in *Torat ha'hasidim ha-rishonim* (Bnei Brak, 1981), 274. "The steps of a man are made firm by the Lord" (Ps. 37: 23): Each and every step that a person takes is through [divine] providence so that he will gather the sparks of his soul from there where they are scattered; the sparks wait and anticipate his coming so that they will be joined with him [as they are] the sparks of his soul." See also Aaron Roth, *Shulhan hatahor* [Satu-Mare (Satmar), 1933] (Jerusalem, 1989), 127b: 'Our teacher, the Besht, may his merit protect us, revealed that sometimes a person must travel a long distance and he thinks that he travels for business, but the intended purpose [of the journey] is that there is [in that place] a spark which he must elevate . . . and every holy spark must necessarily be uplifted by that very person, for it is a portion of his soul, and it cannot be uplifted by anyone else.' Cf. Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, 191. This theoretical position underlies a theme repeated constantly in hasidic tales concerning a master who is propelled by an uncontrollable force to journey to distant places in order to perform a seemingly menial task that, in fact, has the power to liberate sparks of his soul-root. See Jacobs, 'The Uplifting of the Sparks', 117.

²⁰ *Ketonet pasim*, 75. For an entirely different explanation of Jacob's journey from Be'er Sheva to Haran, which represents the departure from a state of *devekut*, see *Toledot*, 6a. See also *Me'or einayim*, 18d, 20b. In contrast to the interpretation of the Besht, the *rebbe* from Chernobyl interprets the talmudic dictum that God folded all of Israel under Jacob not to mean that Jacob could perform his duties without travelling but rather that wherever Jacob went the aspect of holiness emanating from the Land of Israel went with him. For other interpretations of this verse that emphasize a departure, see also Jacob Isaac of Lublin, *Zikaron zot* [Warsaw, 1869] (Munkacz, 1942), 19; id., *Divrei emet* [Zolkiew, 1830–1] (Munkacz, 1942), 28, 30; Hayyim b. Leibush Halberstam of Zanz, *Divrei Hayim* [Munkacz, 1877] (Jerusalem, 1988), part 1, 9a.

²¹ Weiss, *Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, 20.

living in a way that allows him to gather the sparks in one place. In fact, however, it can be shown from a careful analysis of all the relevant texts in Jacob Joseph's corpus that this was not the intent of the Besht's teaching, or at least the teaching he reports in the name of the Besht. Rather, the contrast is between one who is compelled to go out to earn a living and one who is worthy to study Torah in a more or less stable position.²² Hence, in the passage from *Ketonet pasim* cited above, Jacob's study of Torah in one fixed place is contrasted with the individual who must move from place to place, although both have the same goal in mind, namely, purification of the fallen sparks. Support for my interpretation may be gathered from Jacob Joseph's own complicated exegesis of Song of Songs 6: 1–3 in the continuation of this passage:

'Whither has your beloved gone, O fairest of women' (Song 6: 1)—this refers to the sage who is called beloved . . . 'Whither has your beloved gone', to seek a livelihood for his household. Could the Holy One, blessed be He, not have provided for them in their place? . . . But [as the next verse says] 'My beloved has gone down to his garden' (ibid. 2), i.e., the place wherein my sparks were sown. The meaning of the word 'his garden' is that in that place the holy sparks have fallen . . . Therefore he has 'to browse in many gardens' i.e., in every place where he is, and 'to pick lilies,' my sparks. This is not the case for [the one thus described] 'I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine; he browses among the lilies' (ibid. 3), i.e., one who claves (*medabek*) to the Torah which is called 'my beloved' (*dodi*) and then the Torah is [in a state of] 'my beloved is mine.' For I am one who 'browses among the lilies' as is proper in his place, and I do not have to travel hither and thither.²³

Jacob Joseph thus distinguishes clearly between two classes of men. On the one hand we have the sage who must travel from place to place to earn a living. To the question of why God cannot provide sustenance for the sage (a position indeed taken by several *hasidim*)²⁴ he answers that there is a deeper, mystical meaning to the journeying of the sage: to purify the fallen sparks of his soul-root and restore them to their source. There is, however, a higher level: that of Jacob—he who studies Torah in his fixed place and thereby purifies the fallen sparks. The interesting shift in pronouns from the third to first person may indicate that Jacob Joseph identified with the biblical Jacob in this regard.

In a subsequent passage in the same work, Jacob Joseph returns to the teaching of the Besht and further elaborates on his own distinction between two models of spiritual restoration (*tikun*):

The matter of a person's travelling from this place to that place for the sake of a livelihood or the like is due to the fact that in the place [to which he goes] are found his sparks and he must release them from there and purify them. Thus we can understand why [Jacob] did not have to

²² It should be noted that, even in those contexts where Jacob Joseph speaks in general terms about man's *halikhah*, upon examination it becomes clear that he is really speaking about the elite segment of the population, the 'men of form' or 'spirit', the *zaddikim*, and not the masses, the 'men of matter' or 'body'. This phenomenon in the writings of Jacob Joseph, with special reference to the idea of *devekut*, has already been noted by A. Rapoport-Albert, 'God and the Zaddik as the Two Focal Points of Hasidic Worship', *History of Religions*, 18: 4 (1979), 306–9, repr. in G. D. Hundert (ed.), *Essential Papers on Hasidism* (New York, 1991), 299–329. On the doctrine of matter and form in Jacob Joseph, see Weiss, 'Reshit tsemihatah shel haderekh ha'hasidit', 51 n. 13; S. Dresner, *The Zaddik* (New York, 1960), 136–7.

²³ *Ketonet pasim*, 75–6.

²⁴ See Dinur, *Bemifneh hadorot*, 106 n. 613; Ettinger, 'The Hasidic Movement', 255.

travel from place to place in order to purify his sparks for all the land of Israel was contained under him and he purified his sparks in his place . . . just as there is an aspect of restoration (*tikun*) by means of action (*hama'aseh*) for the masses so there is such an aspect [of *tikun*] in the diligent study of Torah (*be'eseh hatorah*) of the sage . . . Jacob is himself the aspect of Torah . . . and therefore Jacob was able to purify [the sparks] in his place just as another person accomplishes this by going out to action (*lelekh bema'aseh*).²⁵

There are thus two levels of *tikun*, both understood in terms of the traditional Lurianic conception of uplifting the sparks. There is the level achieved by one who is involved with worldly pursuits, the man of action for whom even mundane journeys have a spiritual value. Such a man must travel from place to place in order to earn a living, but in truth his journeys have a profound mystical significance for the place to where he journeys contains sparks of his soul-root that must be redeemed.²⁶ On the other hand there is the level achieved by one who is deeply engaged in the study of Torah, who performs the *tikun* by staying in one fixed place. While Jacob is a paradigmatic example of the latter, Abraham is prototypical of the former as he is commanded, 'Rise up and walk about the land' (Gen. 13: 17), that is, 'he had to walk about the land from place to place in order to purify the sparks'. Although Jacob Joseph begins by saying that only Jacob was on the level of purifying the sparks by staying in one place, in a subsequent passage he notes that Moses, who is identified with the 'good' and the Torah, 'was able to purify [the sparks] in his place by means of diligent study of Torah (*eseh hatorah*), and he took the good from the bad, but he did not have to be driven from place to place'.²⁷ Moses, therefore, is on the same level as Jacob, a theme that can be traced back to classical kabbalistic sources, most importantly the Zohar.²⁸

In still another passage from his *Ben porat Yosef*, to which I alluded above, Jacob Joseph mentions the Besht's teaching and equates the status of Jacob with that of Noah:

I have heard in the name of my teacher an explanation of [the passage in] the tractate Hullin: [God] folded all of the land of Israel under Jacob . . . he did not have to travel from place to place to purify his sparks for he could purify them in his place . . . And according to this verse, 'But Noah found favour with the Lord' (Gen. 6: 8) can be understood . . . Noah was in his place and purified his sparks according to the mystery of 'he was a righteous man, blameless in his age' (Gen. 6: 9), i.e. to purify the sparks of the generation. For 'Noah walked with God' (*ibid.*), i.e. he meditated on Torah and the worship of God all day, and by means of this he purified [the sparks] in his place.²⁹

Here again we find Jacob Joseph elaborating on the Besht's teaching by drawing a comparison between Jacob and Noah. Just as Jacob was able to liberate the sparks while

²⁵ *Ketonet pasim*, 242-3.

²⁶ Cf. Levi Isaac of Berdichev, *Kedushat Levi* [Slavuta, 1798] (Brooklyn, NY, 1978), 5a, and the passage from Uri Feivel of Dubnekow, *Or ha'pohkmah*, cited in *Sefer Ba'al Shem Tov*, 1: 110b.

²⁷ *Ketonet pasim*, 244. Elsewhere in Jacob Joseph's writings Moses is depicted as the zaddik who was able to achieve *devekut* even when he was amongst others and involved in physical matters. See *Ketonet pasim*, 53-4, 246, 276; Jacob Joseph, *Tsafenat pa'neah* [Korets, 1782] (New York, 1954), 95b. Jacob Joseph also attributes this interpretation of Moses' status to Menahem b. Aaron ibn Zerah's *Tseidah laderekh* (Ferrara, 1554). See below, n. 44.

²⁸ See e.g. Zohar 1: 21b.

²⁹ *Ben porat Yosef*, 18b, 20a. The passage is partially translated and discussed by Weiss, *Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, 19-20. See also G. Nigal, *Torat ba'al haToledot* (Jerusalem, 1974), 16-17.

staying in one place, so too was Noah, who was described in Scripture by the expression 'Noah walked with God.' The essence of walking, from the pietistic perspective, is therefore to purify the holy sparks and release them from their carnal bondage. Noah, paradoxically, accomplished this by staying in one place.³⁰

The above passage in which Jacob Joseph extols the virtue of Noah as one who could gather all the divine sparks by standing still contrasts sharply with another interpretation he offers of the verse 'Noah walked with God.' A comparison of the two interpretations highlights a basic tension in Jacob Joseph's writings, most recently discussed by Ya'akov Hisdai, between the clashing ideals of separatism or spiritual élitism and communal responsibility.³¹ The text from *Ben porat Yosef* is based on a passage in the *Shenei luhot haberit* of Isaiah Horowitz (1565-1630)³² which, in turn, is based on a passage in the *Sefer haredim* of Eleazar Azikri (1533-1600).³³ Jacob Joseph writes:

Noah secluded himself (*mitboded*) with God and did not admonish the people of his generation. Therefore [it is written] 'he was a righteous man, blameless in his age' (Gen. 6: 9). That

³⁰ Interesting in this regard is Jacob Joseph's interpretation of another passage in tractate Hull. (110b). 'Whoever lives inside the land of Israel is like one who has a God but whoever lives outside of Israel is like one who has no God': 'I have heard from my teacher that a person is entirely in the place where his mind is concentrated (cf. *Toledot*, 20a). If he lives outside the Land of Israel and constantly thinks about and desires the Land of Israel he is like one who has no God etc. But in truth he has one because his mind is constantly on Israel unlike the one who is in Israel who sets up his livelihood in the Diaspora. Such a person's mind is constantly on the Diaspora to bring sustenance for his household. He is like one who has [a God] but in truth he has none because his mind is outside the Land of Israel' (*Ben porat Yosef*, 77b). See Dinur, *Bemifneh hadorot*, 194, who discussed the passage from Jacob Joseph in connection with a passage from *Shivhei haBesht*, 68, concerning Jacob Joseph's desire to go up to Palestine. The Besht reportedly told him: 'Do not go . . . this should be as a sign in your hand: whenever the desire to travel to the holy land falls upon you, know the truth that there are judgements [hanging] upon the city . . . Satan interferes with you so that you will not pray on behalf of the city. Therefore when the desire for Palestine falls upon you, pray on behalf of the city [where you are].'

³¹ Y. Hisdai, 'The Emergence of Hasidim and Mitnaggedim in the Light of the Homiletical Literature' (Heb.) (Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 1984), 147-62. As Hisdai notes, this tension can be traced to the teachings of the pre-Beshtian zaddikim and hasidim. Hisdai has further argued, on the basis of a key passage in the *Toledot*, 124a, that Jacob Joseph's dismissal from his post as rabbi in Shargorod was connected with this very problem, i.e. the community decided that Jacob Joseph had neglected his social responsibilities by adopting the ascetic practices of the hasidim and by separating himself with respect to matters concerning prayer and the ritual slaughter of animals. Hisdai is of the opinion that for Jacob Joseph the ultimate perfection indeed consists of worshipping God and not serving human society. For a discussion of the two typologies of *devekut* in hasidic sources, contemplation that is beyond this world and contemplation within this world, see Weiss, 'Reshit tsemihatah shel haderekh haHasidit', 60-9.

³² Isaiah b. Abraham Halevi Horowitz, *Shenei luhot haberit* [Amsterdam, 1648] (2 vols.; Warsaw, 1862), 'Sha'ar ha'otiyot', i. 52b. On the influence of the Shelah on both the ethical-homiletic and hasidic literature, see Piekarz, *Biyemei tsemihat haHasidut*, 209-18. The contrast between Abraham's righteousness and that of Noah has a long tradition in Jewish sources; see in particular the comment of Rashi on Gen. 6: 9, 'Noah walked with God.' See also Moses Alshekh, *Torat Moshe* (Amsterdam, 1777), 15c. And cf. Ephraim Solomon b. Aaron of Leczyca (Luntshits), *Olelot Efrayim* [Lublin, 1590] (Jerusalem, 1989), s. 118, 157-9, who distinguishes, on the basis of biblical terminology, three types of *halikhah* in relation to God: (a) walking behind God, which characterizes the people of Israel after they received the Torah at Sinai, being compared to a servant of a king who is completely trustworthy because he has been tested and signed a contract; (b) walking in front of God, which characterizes Abraham, who was like the servant that was tested but had not yet signed a contract; and (c) walking with, i.e. alongside, God, which characterizes Noah, one of 'little faith', who is comparable to the servant who cannot at all be trusted because he has neither been tested nor signed a contract.

³³ *Sefer haredim* [Venice, 1601] (Jerusalem, 1980), ch. 66, 262; trans. in Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo*, 60.

is, the people of his age considered him righteous for he walked with God; had he admonished his generation, however, he would not have been considered righteous.³⁴

One cannot fail to note the irony in Jacob Joseph's statement that, in the eyes of the community, one who isolates himself and devotes all his energies to perfecting his own spiritual state is considered righteous, whereas one who shows an interest in reproving others and leading them to repentance is not. In fact, the latter, and not the former, is the true zaddik.³⁵ This, of course, reflects the typology developed in many of the hasidic texts, based in turn on earlier homiletic and ethical literature, which distinguishes two kinds of zaddikim: one who is only concerned for himself, and one who is concerned for himself and others.³⁶ That Noah's walking with God involved the former state, according to Jacob Joseph, is evident from various other comments he makes in connection to this verse. 'This is the meaning of "Noah walked with God", in every place where he went he would go "with God" for he constantly clove his thought to God.'³⁷ Walking with God thus entailed *devekut*, cleaving to God, attained by means of *hitbodedut*, a term which connotes both a state of mental concentration and social isolation.³⁸ Indeed, in one sermon Jacob Joseph interprets Noah's being locked in the ark not as a reward for his righteous behaviour but rather as a punishment for secluding himself in the worship of God in houses of study and prayer while ignoring the plight of his generation.³⁹

The righteousness of Noah is elsewhere contrasted with that of Abraham.⁴⁰ While the former was content with perfecting his own lot—thus he is described as walking 'with God'—the latter sought to go out to perfect the status of others—thus he walked 'before God'. For Jacob Joseph, therefore, the communion with God achieved through *hitbodedut* serves only as a preliminary stage, preparing the zaddik for his ultimate task. Indeed, on occasion Jacob Joseph attributes this perfection to Noah: 'It says that [Noah was] "a righteous man, he was blameless in his age", i.e. also when he went out into the city amongst the people of his age he was a righteous man, to fulfil [the verse] "I am ever mindful of the Lord's presence" (Ps. 16: 8) . . . And this caused that at first he "walked with God", i.e. he secluded himself (*shehitboded*) so that he would bind himself and cleave to God, blessed be He, before he went out into the city.'⁴¹ The ideal,

³⁴ *Ben porat Yosef*, 22a.

³⁵ Cf. Dresner, *The Zaddik*, 151–172.

³⁶ See A. Green, 'Typologies of Leadership and the Hasidic Zaddiq', in *Jewish Spirituality*, ii. 135–6. For the earlier sources of these types, see Piekartz, *Biyemei tsemihat haahasidut*, 107. On the two types of zaddik in the writings of Elimelekh of Lyzhansk, see R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, 'Lemahuto shel hatsadik bahasidut', *Molad*, 18: 144–5 (1960), 370–1. For a similar doctrine in the teaching of the Maggid of Kozienice, see Sara Steinfeld, 'The Hassidic Teachings of Rabbi Israel, the Maggid of Koznitz' (thesis, Jewish Theological Seminary, 1981), 99–141. It is essential to note that the social function of the zaddik to pursue the wicked at all costs in order to bring them back to divine worship is emphasized already in Zohar 2: 128b. This text serves as an important basis for Jacob Joseph; see *Toledot*, 61d, 139c; *Ben porat Yosef*, 33a, 33d. See also Nigal, *Torot ba'al haToledot*, 14 n. 18.

³⁷ *Ben porat Yosef*, 22a; cf. *Tsafenat pa'neah*, 95b.

³⁸ For a study on the concept of *hitbodedut* in the history of kabbalah, particularly as it took shape in the school of Abraham Abulafia, see M. Idel, 'Hahitbodedut kerikuz bakabalah ha'ekstatit vegilguleihah', *Da'at*, 14 (1985), 35–82; and id., *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah* (Albany, NY, 1988), 103–69.

³⁹ *Toledot*, 14b. On Jacob Joseph's use of Noah as a symbol for the secluded leader, see Dresner, *The Zaddik*, 104–7.

⁴⁰ See Dresner, *The Zaddik*, 151–4, and references given there on 283–4 nn. 15–25.

⁴¹ *Ben porat Yosef*, 22b.

then, is that of the zaddik who first achieves communion with God in isolation and then goes out to help others in their spiritual quest.⁴² Whether or not Noah achieved this state (and there is some confusion in Jacob Joseph on this matter), from other contexts it is clear that Jacob Joseph thought that Noah fell short of the ideal of the zaddik, linked by hasidic writers to the Besht himself,⁴³ whose cleaving to God was not disrupted by social discourse. One of the basic hasidic principles—attributed to the Besht, but formulated succinctly by Jacob Joseph—is that there are two types of *devekut*: one that is realized in a state of isolation from others (*hitbodedut*), mostly through the devotional acts of study and prayer; and one that is realized in a state of community, even through physical acts such as eating, drinking, and the like. While Noah represented the former type, Moses is the model of the second.⁴⁴ Following the teaching attributed to both the Besht and R. Nahman of Kosov,⁴⁵ Jacob Joseph thus maintained that the true zaddik is not only one who enters the social arena after a state of *devekut*, but one who can maintain that state of religious intensity and devotion in that context. The act of communion with God that is realized within the framework of social relations is referred to on occasion as *halikhah*:

By means of this one can understand [the statement], 'R. Yose ben Qisma said, "one day I was going in the way",'⁴⁶ i.e. I was once in the capacity of one who goes, which is the opposite of *bi'ah*, i.e. one occupied with corporeal matters. In any event, my thought cleaved to God . . . *Halikhah* applies to one who goes from grade to grade, the opposite of angels who are called standing on one level, and the goal of the upper level is to cleave one's thought to God. He was going in this grade [of *devekut*] even when he went in the way amidst the level of the masses.⁴⁷

From still other passages in Jacob Joseph's writings it is clear that the purpose of the zaddik's journey is not to improve his own situation by gathering the sparks of his soul-root, but rather to elevate others to a higher level of spiritual fulfilment. *Halikhah* thus means descending from one's grade in order to rebuke and instruct others, to lead them to repent:

With this one can understand [the words of] R. Yose ben Qisma: 'one time I was going in the way', for *halikhah* means when one descends from his grade, the opposite of *bi'ah*. This is the

⁴² See *Ketonet passim*, 10, and references given there in n. 101. Cf. Dresner, *The Zaddik*, 271 n. 25.

⁴³ Cf. A. Rubinstein, 'Al rabo shel haBesht ve'al haketavim shemehem lamad haBesht', *Tarbiz*, 48 (1978–9), 151.

⁴⁴ *Tsafenat pa'neah*, 95b. Cf. *ibid.* 24c, and *Ketonet pasim* 53, 206, 249. Mention should be made of the statement in *Shivhei haBesht*, 98, to the effect that the Besht could not talk to people on account of his *devekut*. It was the Besht's celestial teacher, Ahijah the Shilonite (see below, n. 79), who taught him the proper wisdom, consisting in part in the recitation of verses from psalms, by which he could communicate with people and still remain in a state of pietistic devotion. Cf. Rubinstein, 'Al rabo shel haBesht', 150–2. The distinction in Jacob Joseph's writings between two types of *devekut* is based in several cases on Nahmanides' commentary to Deut. 11: 22; see above, n. 9. He also mentions in this context Menahem b. Zerah's *Tseidah laderekh*; see above, n. 27. In other places, e.g. *Tsafenat pa'neah*, 29a, Jacob Joseph distinguishes in another way between two types of *devekut*, that of the *talmid hakham* who cleaves directly to God and that of the masses who cleave to God by means of cleaving to the *talmid hakham*. In *Tsafenat pa'neah*, 95a–b, he brings together the two distinctions.

⁴⁵ Cf. Weiss, 'Reshit tsemihat shel haderekh haahasidit', 60–1.

⁴⁶ Avot 6: 9.

⁴⁷ *Ketonet pasim*, 194. On the contrast between *halikhah* and *bi'ah* in Jacob Joseph, see above, n. 4.

meaning of 'I was going in the way,' he knew the aspect of his grade from which he descended which is called 'going in the way' (*mehalekh baderekh*).⁴⁸

It seems that R. Yose said, 'I went in the way,' in order to instruct sinners in the way, to rebuke them . . . This is the description 'walking' (*mehalekh*), i.e. to descend from his level. I conducted myself in this way, I would give rebuke to others; this is the meaning of walking in the way (*mehalekh baderekh*).⁴⁹

In this case too the task of *halikhah* is to uplift the sparks, for Jacob Joseph, following the teaching attributed to the Besht,⁵⁰ includes under the rubric of *ha'ala'at hanitsot* the imperative to attend to the religious and moral welfare of the community. It is in this sense, furthermore, that one can speak of a 'social transformation' of the Lurianic idea in early hasidism, a phenomenon well attested in the scholarly literature.⁵¹ Indeed, according to one passage, the zaddik who ascends upward must return and descend 'to raise the level of the masses who are his sparks(!) and his branches that they all should be rectified'.⁵² *Halikhah* is therefore equated with *yeridah*, for both are understood in terms of the need for the zaddik to redeem the fallen sparks.⁵³

This is the meaning of 'Go forth (*lekh lekha*) from your native land and from your father's house' (Gen. 12: 1)—after you set yourself at a distance from matter [the masses] to make yourself into form [the élite] . . . then you are far from evil and strange thoughts called 'your father's house' . . . And after you are removed from the corporeality of matter . . . then you attain the level that is known, called 'the seeing of the supernal land,' i.e. cleaving to God, blessed be He. This [cleaving] is called ascent (*aliyah*), for one goes from one grade to the upper grade until one returns to the earth in his death, which is called descent from the level of man to the level of inanimate object.⁵⁴ It is all for the sake of purifying the holy sparks from the depth of the shells which are below.⁵⁵

That purification of the sparks spoken of here refers to the elevation of the masses can be seen from the following passage:

This is the import of the verse, 'who will give purity from impurity' (Job 14: 4), for the zaddik is called pure, but on occasion some impurity is found in him so that he may join the impure to

⁴⁸ *Ketonet pasim*, 213.

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid.* 60a; see Weiss, 'Reshit tsemihatah shel haderekh haḥasidit', 64 n. 61. The same idea is attributed by Jacob Joseph to Menahem Mendel of Bar. See I. Tishby and J. Dan, 'Torat haḥasidut vesifrutah', in A. Rubinstein, *Perakim betorat haḥasidut veteledoteihah* (Jerusalem, 1977), 250–312.

⁵¹ Cf. Weiss, 'Reshit tsemihatah shel haderekh haḥasidit', 69 ff.; Piekarz, *Biyemei tsemihat haḥasidut*, 86, 206, 253, 258–9, 302.

⁵² *Toledot*, 18c–d. Mention should be made of the fact that, according to Shneur Zalman of Lyady, foreign thoughts lifted up by the zaddik are in truth the evil thoughts of others; see *Tanya*, 35a.

⁵³ Cf. *Ben porat Yosef*, 54d, where there is an attempt to synthesize the two meanings. Cf. Isaac Judah Jehiel Safran of Komarno, *Netiv misvotekha* [Lemberg, 1858] (Jerusalem, 1983), 18. The correlation of *yeridah* and *halikhah* from a different perspective is assumed in the thought of Shneur Zalman of Lyady as well inasmuch as he claims that the Jewish soul is transformed from the status of standing to that of walking in its descent from the heavenly realms to this world; see references given above, n. 6. On the double meaning of *yeridah* as a descent from a state of *devekut* and as the acceptance of social obligation, see Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, 219–22.

⁵⁴ On death as a symbol for the departure of a zaddik from a state of *devekut*, see e.g. *Toledot*, 6a, 34a. Elsewhere Jacob Joseph calls the wicked 'dead'; see *Toledot*, 11b, 197b, and Weiss, 'Reshit tsemihatah shel haderekh haḥasidit', 63 n. 57.

⁵⁵ *Toledot*, 137b. Cf. 6b, 99a, 136a.

elevate them to [a state of] purity . . . According to this we can explain the words, 'Go forth (*lekh lekha*)' (Gen. 12: 1) . . . The meaning of 'go' (*lekh*) is to be explained by the expression 'Go (*lekhi*) and diminish yourself.'⁵⁶ The word 'yourself' (*lekha*) means for your good and your enjoyment, for by means of this [going] 'I will make you a great nation', for you will join them to release them.⁵⁷

There is thus a perfect parallel in Jacob Joseph's writings between walking (*halikhah*) and descent (*yeridah*), on the one hand, and uplifting the sparks of one's soul and elevating the masses, on the other. "Jacob lifted up his feet" (Gen. 49: 1) . . . he departed from the physical to the spiritual . . .⁵⁸ In another place I have written. "Go and diminish yourself so there will be rule by day and night", i.e. so that you may join the masses in order to raise them up . . . Accordingly, one can understand Jacob's going down to Egypt, i.e. to the physical in order to purify the sparks, to join the masses.⁵⁹

It seems to me that one can therefore distinguish between two approaches in the writings of Jacob Joseph. One—which he attributes to the Besht—employs the Lurianic term to describe both one who studies Torah in a fixed place and one who journeys about, presumably on any type of business trip; the other applies this same terminology to characterize the religious leader who must descend in order to admonish the masses. From the relevant sources I think it can be said, moreover, that it was Jacob Joseph who translated the Beshtian teaching concerning *halikhah* from the individualistic mode to one of great social and ethical consequence. What is essential to both, however, is the soteriological aspect expressed in Lurianic terminology. Although several scholars, most notably, Ben Zion Dinur and Isaiah Tishby,⁶⁰ have duly noted the messianic dimensions in Jacob Joseph, there has been no appreciation of the unique redemptive aspect of *halikhah* as it relates to the task of the zaddik who descends to the level of the masses. That Jacob Joseph in general understood the lifting up of the sparks in its original Lurianic sense as part of an eschatological *tikun* on a cosmic level, and not simply in a 'strictly personal sphere',⁶¹ is beyond question.⁶² That the messianic implication applies specifically to the case I am examining is also abundantly clear from the fact that discussions about the Besht's teaching are accompanied by a citation of a critical text from *Peri ets hayim* that deals with the messianic task of redeeming the sparks.⁶³

There is, in particular, one telling passage in the *Toledot Ya'akov Yosef* which, in my view, must be examined in the context of the theme that I am discussing: 'It is

⁵⁶ According to the legend of the diminished moon in Hul. 60b.

⁵⁷ *Toledot*, 34a. Cf. 16b, 54a.

⁵⁸ Cf. the Maggid's interpretation of this verse in *Or torah*, 14d: "Jacob lifted up his feet and came to the land of the Easterners" (Gen. 29: 1). That is . . . he went out from his earthliness (*shehalakh me'artsiyut shelo*), i.e. his corporeality (*hagashmiyut shelo*), to the worship of God, blessed be He, a portion of divinity (*helek elohut*).'⁵⁹ *Ben porat Yosef*, 80a–b.

⁶⁰ Dinur, *Bemifneh hadorot*, 181–8. Tishby, 'Hara'ayon hameshihi', 33.

⁶¹ Cf. Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, 191. See following note.

⁶² See *Toledot*, 135b, 144c, and elsewhere. In light of these passages I cannot agree with Scholem's assessment of the lack of an 'acute Messianism' in the writings of Jacob Joseph (see *The Messianic Idea*, 184). Moreover I find Scholem's general characterization lacking; see p. 185: 'Hasidism, without changing the outward façade of Lurianic teaching and terminology, introduced such subtle but effective changes as would eliminate the Messianic meaning of the central doctrine of *tikun* or at least defer it to a remote stage where it became again a matter of utopianism without immediate impact.' See above, n. 10.

⁶³ Hayyim Vital, *Peri ets hayim* [Korets, 1782] (Jerusalem, 1980). 'Sha'ar keriat shema', ch. 3, 164–5.

written in the writings of the Ari⁶⁴ with respect to the purification of the sparks until the [time of the] "footprints of the messiah" (*ikvot meshiha*), for in each generation one limb from the configuration (*partisuf*) of the whole world is purified, until the end, the time of the messiah, when the limb of the feet [will be purified], for it is the heels of the messiah (*ikvot meshiha*), when "the feet will reach the feet" (*dematu raglin beraglin*).⁶⁵ Jacob Joseph further contends that his is the time of the 'footprints of the messiah', for in his generation these souls of the feet are to be redeemed.⁶⁶ Without entering into a long discussion on the Lurianic theme briefly alluded to in Jacob Joseph's citation, suffice it to say that the Lurianic kabbalists understood the 'footsteps of the messiah' in one of two ways: in some texts this period was described as the time when the sparks of the souls entrapped in the feet of *adam beliya'al* (the demonic being) in the world of Asiyah were to be redeemed, when, paraphrasing the Zoharic passage, 'the feet will reach the feet'.⁶⁷ Alternatively, *ikvot meshiha* was explained as a time when the sparks in the shells lodged in the feet of Adam Kadmon situated in the world of Asiyah would be redeemed.⁶⁸ The version of this motif offered by Jacob Joseph inclines more towards the latter model.⁶⁹

It is pertinent to recall that, in a relatively early hasidic commentary on Ps. 107 (ascribed erroneously by some later authorities to the Besht himself), the language of Lurianic kabbalah is utilized but approximating the first model that I delineated: 'This is the secret of the exile of Shekhinah [when She descends to the demonic shells] all six days of the week, and this is the secret of the "footsteps of messiah" (*ikvot meshiha*), for when She finishes gathering those souls that are in the heels of that impure one [i.e. *adam beliya'al* who is the "end of the impure body" (*sof haguf hatame*) then messiah

⁶⁴ I have yet to locate an exact source in the Lurianic corpus, but the critical passage characterizing the messianic period as a time of purification of the feet is found in several places. See e.g. Hayyim Vital, *Sha'ar haGilgulim* (Jerusalem, 1912), s. 15, 16b. See also reference given in the preceding note. In fact, it is probable that the text cited by Jacob Joseph is not an exact source at all, but is rather a paraphrase of some Lurianic passage, blended together with Jacob Joseph's own ideas. On this phenomenon in Jacob Joseph's writings, see Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, 188. On the Zoharic expression *dematu raglin beraglin* according to the messianic interpretation proffered by Lurianic kabbalists, see also Hayim Hakohen of Aleppo, *Tur bareket* (Amsterdam, 1654), 3d, and Isaac Judah Jehiel Safrin of Komarno, *Zohar hai* (Przemysl, 1878), 274b.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 123d. Cf. 189d, where the feet are used as a metaphor for the exile of the soul (*galut neshamah*).
⁶⁶ See Zohar 2: 258a. The same Zoharic text is cited by Vital (see references in n. 65) as well as Nathan of Gaza (see below, n. 78).

⁶⁷ See I. Tishby, *Torat hara vehakelipah bekabalat haAri* (Jerusalem, 1942), 134-5.

⁶⁸ Cf. *Ben porai Yosef*, 33d: 'Bathe your feet, to remove the pollution from the two pillars of truth [i.e. Netsah and Hod, see below, n. 122], for this is faith. And this is the secret of washing the feet on Sabbath eve to remove the shell and the pollution from the feet of Adam of [the world of] Asiyah, as it is explained in the writings of the Ari.' Cf. *Peri ets hayim*, 'Sha'ar hashabbat', ch. 3, 384. See also *Ketonet pasim*, 319, where the zaddik is said to descend from the head, the 'aspect of king', to the feet, 'the place of dominion of the shells'. And cf. *Toledot*, 189b, where the exile of the soul is described as extending to the feet. See also Nathan Sternhartz of Nemirov, *Likutei Halakhot* [8 vols.; Zolkiew (Zhalkva), 1846?-Lemberg, 1861] (Jerusalem, 1970), *Orah hayim*, iii, 'Hilkhot hanukah', 2: 6, 243d, where the rabbinic ruling that Hanukah candles are lit until there is no one walking about in the market place, *ad shetikhleh regel min hashuk* ('Masekhet soferim', 20: 2; Shab. 21b), is interpreted as follows: 'That is, to elevate all the lower levels, which are the feet of holiness (*raglei hakedushah*) clothed and bound to the outer places [i.e., demonic forces] which are the aspect of the market place (*shuk*) . . . The lighting of the candle of Hanukah is to elevate the holiness from the [demonic] other side.'

will come.⁷⁰ The centrality of this belief in hasidic circles is well attested from various sources. While Tishby did not discuss the passage from the hasidic commentary of Ps. 107 cited above, or that of the *Toledot*, he did note that Aaron b. Mosel Halevi of Starosielce reported that his teacher, Shneur Zalman of Lyady, received from his teacher, Dov Ber of Mezhirech, who received from his teacher, the Besht, that they were living in the time of *ikvot meshiha*.⁷¹ Indeed, Shneur Zalman says on several occasions that his generation was that of the 'footsteps of the messiah'.⁷²

In this connection mention should also be made of the version of the narrative concerning the Besht's attempted journey to the Holy Land reported by Isaac Judah Jehiel Safrin of Komarno.⁷³ According to this version, the Besht, who is described as the soul (*nefesh*) of David in [the world] of Atsilut desired to join together with Hayyim ibn Attar, whose soul (*neshamah*) is described as deriving from the spirit (*ruah*) of David in [the world of] Atsilut, so that 'the true redemption (*hage'ulah ha'amיתי*) would occur'.⁷⁴ The Besht reportedly asked R. Hayyim, through Gershon of Kutow, his brother-in-law, if the time were propitious for him to travel to Jerusalem to see him face to face. R. Hayyim responded that the Besht should write and tell him whether or not, when he beheld the 'image of his form' (*tselem demut tavnito*) in the upper worlds, he saw 'all his limbs and his image'. I assume that this refers to the divine image and form of the messiah in the celestial realm.⁷⁵ The Besht responded that he did not see the heels of this form. R. Hayyim then replied that he should not bother going to the Land of Israel for his efforts would prove to be futile, but the Besht did not receive this response and decided to undertake the journey. After spending some time in Istanbul,⁷⁶ where he performed 'great and wondrous' things, he was forced to flee. He suffered much sorrow

⁷⁰ Published by R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, 'Perusho shel haBesht lemezmor 107', *Tarbiz*, 42 (1972-3), 168; pub. as 'The Ba'al Shem Tov's Commentary to Psalm 107: Myth and Ritual of the Descent to She'ol', in R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Hasidism as Mysticism: Quietistic Elements in Eighteenth Century Hasidic Thought* (Princeton, 1993), 342-82. Schatz-Uffenheimer accepted the attribution of the text to the Besht as authentic. See, however, Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, 189, who suggests that the commentary was written by Menahem Mendel of Bar in 1760, a view discussed and rejected by Schatz-Uffenheimer, 'Perusho shel haBesht', 161-2.

⁷¹ Tishby, 'Hara'ayon hameshihi', 39.
⁷² For references, see *ibid.* 38, nn. 169-70. See also Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Ma'amrei Admor haZaken*: 5565 [1804-5], vols. i and ii (Brooklyn, NY, 1980-1), i. 410; and *id.*, *Ma'amrei Admor haZaken*: 5566 [1805-6] (Brooklyn, NY, 1979), 278. See also Dov Ber Shneur, *Ner misviah vetorah or*, part 1, 101b, 104a. And cf. Menahem Mendel (the Tsemaḥ Tsedek), *Or hatorah*, xiv. 1: 650, where the *ikvot meshiha* is characterized as a time of *halikhaḥ* by the *ba'al teshuvah* who purifies the sparks in the feet primarily by means of charity. See p. 208, and *Or hatorah* (Brooklyn, NY, 1985), xxv. 986.

⁷³ *Netiv misvatekha*, 7-8. This version of the legend concerning the Besht's attempted journey to Palestine was discussed by B. Drobitscher, 'Shalosh nusha'ot linesi'at zekeni haBesht le'Erets Yisrael', *Yeda am*, 6 (1960), 44.

⁷⁴ According to another version of the legend, discussed by Drobitscher, 'Shalosh nusha'ot' 41, the meeting of the Besht and Hayyim ibn Attar was to result in the redemption due to the fact that the soul of the Besht was from the messiah of David and the soul of ibn Attar from the messiah of Ephraim.

⁷⁵ The Besht's confronting the soul of the messiah in his celestial abode in a direct visual experience is a motif known from other hasidic sources, including the Besht's own letter to Gershon of Kutow, first published by Jacob Joseph at the end of *Ben porai Yosef*, 128a. For the various versions of this letter, see Y. Mondshine, *Shivhei haBesht: Ketav yad* (Jerusalem, 1982), 234. See also *Shivhei haBesht*, ed. Mintz, 64.

⁷⁶ The Yid. version of *Shivhei haBesht* likewise relates that the Besht stayed in Istanbul on his way to the Land of Israel. See Ya'ari, 'Shetei mahadurot yesod', 559-61. One tale in the Heb. version of *Shivhei*

and pain on the continuation of his journey including shipwreck and the near-drowning of his daughter Ediel in the sea, until at last his celestial teacher Ahijah, the prophet of Shiloh,⁷⁷ came to save him, bringing him back to Istanbul from where he returned to his home. The critical point for my purposes is the connection made between the act of journeying to the Land of Israel and the 'heels' of the divine image. Clearly, the implication here is that the Besht's not beholding the heels of the divine figure was a sign that he was not yet ready to undertake this journey; the detail of the heels, I suggest, should be interpreted in light of the standard Lurianic symbolism of the *ikvot meshiḥa*. Had the Besht seen the full figure—including, most importantly, the heels—then he would have been ready to undertake the journey, for this would have been a sign that the time of the final rectification was at hand.

Although this relatively late embellishment of the tale reveals a marked tendency to 'neutralize' the messianic impulse, inasmuch as it understands the Besht's failed journey in terms of the traditional notion of 'pressing for the end'—hastening messianic redemption before its time—it nevertheless demonstrates how crucial the Lurianic notion of *ikvot meshiḥa* was in early hasidic circles. There can be no question, moreover, that some of the early hasidim maintained the belief that they were living close to the messianic era, the *ikvot meshiḥa*, in which time the final *tikun* was to be realized before the advent of the messiah. Mention should also be made of the fact that the same Lurianic ideas served as an important source for the development of the Sabbatean theology of Nathan of Gaza concerning the task of the messiah to redeem the sparks lodged in the feet, for this very place was the root of his soul.⁷⁸ One should not, of course, rule out a priori a Sabbatean connection in the case of the hasidic authors, but it does seem to me more likely that we are dealing with two distinct interpretative traditions coming out of one source. In any event, what is critical from my vantage point is Jacob Joseph's particular usage of this Lurianic tradition. This may be gathered from other contexts where the masses of people are identified as the 'feet' of the configuration of the world; the zaddikim by contrast are the 'eyes of the congregation' or the head of the cosmic figure.⁷⁹ By means of this symbolism one can understand Jacob Joseph's interpretation of the Lurianic concept of the *ikvot meshiḥa* referring to the laity who need to be redeemed at this historical juncture. Thus he states explicitly in one place: 'This is the [meaning of the] verse, "holding on to the heel of Esau" (Gen. 25: 26), which refers to the masses of people who are called heel

haBesht mentions the Besht's being in Istanbul, without however any connection to his journey to Israel. See *Shivḥei haBesht*, 151. According to Ya'ari, this is one of several examples which show that the editors of the Hebrew version of *Shivḥei haBesht* wanted to obscure the details connected to the Besht's aborted effort to reach Palestine. There is no parallel to this tale in the edn. published by Mondshine (see previous note).

⁷⁷ On this figure as the Besht's teacher, see *Toledot*, 156a. See also the allusion to the Besht's teacher in his letter to Gershon of Kutow, published in *Ben porat Yosef*, 128a. There are several allusions to Ahijah the Shilonite as well in the standard version of *Shivḥei haBesht*, ed. Mintz, 64, 90, 98, 102. Concerning this tradition, see Rubinstein, 'Al rabo shel haBesht'. See also L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (7 vols.; Philadelphia, 1968), vi. 305 n. 5; G. Nigal, 'Moro verabo shel R. Yisrael Ba'al Shem Tov', *Sinai*, 71 (1972), 150–9; A. Chitrik, 'Al pegishat haBesht im Ahijah Hashiloni', *Sinai*, 73 (1973), 189–90.

⁷⁸ See G. Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah*, trans. R. J. Z. Werblowsky (Princeton, 1973), 303, and references given in n. 279 ad loc.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Toledot*, 22d, 130c.

(*akev*) according to the secret of the footsteps of the Messiah (*ikvot meshiḥa*).⁸⁰ It follows, therefore, that the *tikun* of the feet in the period right before the advent of the messiah consists of the perfection of the masses by the élite, the hasidic leadership. This is made clear in a comment near the end of the introduction to the *Toledot* "Jacob lifted his feet" (Gen. 49: 1). He lifted up the lower level called "his feet", to the higher level . . . he lifted up the men of matter called "his feet" to the upper form."⁸¹ In another passage he puts the matter as follows:

There is a spiritual characteristic [literally, aspect, *behinah*] of he who after his ascent returns and descends in order to raise the level of the lower ones, in the mystery of 'I have bathed my feet, was I to soil them again?' (S. of S. 5: 3). And this is the secret of 'running and returning' (Ezek. 1: 14), and it is called [the state of] smallness (*katnut*) and [the state of] greatness (*gadlut*). In each descent there must be a warning regarding how to return and to ascend, so one does not, God forbid, remain [in the lower state] as I have heard from my teacher that there are some who have remained.⁸²

III

It must be acknowledged, however, that Jacob Joseph does not connect the Lurianic tradition concerning the *tikun* of the feet in the *ikvot meshiḥa* with the Beshtian teaching concerning the *berur nisotsot* by means of one's journeying. Interestingly enough, however, in a comment of a disciple of the Maggid of Mezhirech, Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl (1730–97), who, according to tradition, also had personal contact with the Besht, the two motifs are indeed brought together:

The sages, blessed be their memory, said: 'Receiving guests is greater than receiving the face of the Shekhinah'.⁸³ This is the explanation of, 'The guest by his feet does not come' (Isa. 41: 3)⁸⁴ . . . for the guest does not come for his own sake but he is the messenger of God (*sheluhā*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 30a.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* 6c. Cf. *Ben porat Yosef*, 54d. And see the similar interpretation of Jacob Isaac of Lublin, *Divrei emet*, 33: "Jacob lifted up his feet" (Gen. 29: 1). The essence of Jacob's activity was for the sake of the children of Israel. And it says in the Zohar that he left all the blessings and removed them until the end of the exile (*sof haglut*), as is known. The [period of the] footsteps of Messiah (*ikvot meshiḥa*) is called the end of exile. And this is [the meaning of] "Jacob lifted up his feet etc."

⁸² *Toledot*, 17b (cf. Isaac Judah Jehiel Safran of Komarno, *Hamishah ḥumshei torah*, i: *Heikhal haberah*, on Gen. (Lemberg, 1869), 181). Cf. Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, 198, who takes the statement concerning those who have descended without returning as an apparent reference to Sabbateans. See also *Toledot*, 18d. For a similar concern in the hasidic commentary on Ps. 107 attributed to the Besht, cf. Schatz-Uffenheimer, 'Perusho shel haBesht', 179. It must be pointed out that within the Lurianic corpus there is expressed concern as well with those who ritually re-enact a descent to the demonic shells during the prayer of *nefilat apayim*, i.e. there are some souls who cannot ascend from this descent and they thus remain trapped in the demonic realm. Cf. Hayyim Vital, *Sha'ar hakavanot* (Jerusalem, 1963), 47b; *Peri ets ḥayim*, 'Sha'ar nefilat apayim', ch. 2, 295. It is not, however, clear that the reference to the Besht's warning in the *Toledot* about those who do not ascend is addressing the same phenomenon.

⁸³ Shab. 127a. Cf. *Toledot*, 201b, where Jacob Joseph briefly alludes to an interpretation of this talmudic passage which he heard from the Besht.

⁸⁴ I have rendered the text in accordance with the meaning as assumed by Menahem Nahum. The literal rendering according to the new JPS translation is: 'No shackle (*orah*, derived from Old Aramaic root *orh*) is placed on his feet.'

derahmana)⁸⁵ to raise the sparks that belong to his soul, and he is obligated to raise them. This is [the meaning of] 'the son of David [i.e. the messiah] will not come until there are no more souls in the body.' The Ari, blessed be his memory, explained that there is a body of *adam beliya'al* etc. and each Jew must raise the souls from *adam beliya'al*. Therefore a person must go to the place where the sparks are so that he may raise them. This is what the Besht, blessed be his memory, said [with respect to the verse] 'The steps of a man are decided by the Lord, when He delights in his way' (Ps. 37: 23).⁸⁶ The verse is redundant, 'the steps of man' and 'his way.' The sages, blessed be their memory, said: 'The steps of a man are decided by the Lord,' for God leads a man to a certain place by means of that desirable thing which is in that place. Yet, 'He delights in his way' for God wants to repair (*letaken*) the person there by raising the holy sparks that are there. Then there is unity between the two names, YHVH and Adonai.⁸⁷

Here we see quite unambiguously that the Besht's teaching regarding the mystical intent of journeying was understood in the context of the Lurianic idea of raising the sparks entrapped in the demonic realm, a theme that is repeated on several occasions in the *Me'or einayim*. The Besht, as understood by both Jacob Joseph and Menahem Nahum, was not speaking merely about individual salvation. Rather, the concern was with cosmic rectification that begins on the individual level.⁸⁸ Menahem Nahum adds one new element, the well-known kabbalistic tradition of two divine names symbolizing the masculine and feminine aspects of the sefirotic realm. Elevation of the sparks accomplished by means of one's going to the proper place results in the unity of these two names, the sign of the ultimate redemption.⁸⁹ In this regard too, the *rebbe* of Chernobyl was closely following Lurianic kabbalah, according to which the liberation of the sparks from the shells was intended to assist in the face-to-face reunification of

⁸⁵ See above, n. 16.

⁸⁶ Cf. Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir, *Or hame'ir* [Korets, 1798] (Lemberg, 1871), 96a-c, who cites a similar interpretation of Ps. 37: 23 in the name of the Besht. The passage is partially translated and discussed in Weiss, *Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, 21-2. See also Moses Shoham b. Dan of Dolina, *Divrei Moshe* (Zolkiew, 1865), 14c.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Toledot*, 198a; and see Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, 195-6.

⁸⁸ A similar connection between liberating the sparks and unifying the two names is found in a passage attributed to Jacob Joseph in Gedaliah of Linitz (Lunietz), *Teshu'ot hen* [Berdichev, 1816] (Brooklyn, NY, 1982), 21b. It is also to be found in Elimelekh of Lyzhansk, *No'am Elimelekh* [Lemberg, 1788] ed. G. Nigal (2 vols.; Jerusalem, 1978), ii, 617, with specific reference to food (the numerical value of *ma'akhal*, food, equalling 91, the same numerical value as the two divine names). Cf. Jacobs, 'The Uplifting of the Sparks', 120-1; id., 'Eating as an Act of Worship in Hasidic Thought', in S. Stein and P. Loewe (eds.), *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History Presented to Alexander Altmann on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (University of Alabama Press, 1979), 165-6 n. 23. See, however, *Igeret hakodesh* of Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Likutei amarim: Tanya*, 145a, where the two tasks are held in distinction, for the acts of unification are said to follow the completion of the purification of the sparks. The centrality of the male-female unification in the hasidic notion of messianic redemption can be seen in the following comment recorded by Jacob Joseph in *Toledot*, 38d: 'I have heard in the name of my teacher [the Besht] what was said to him from heaven concerning the reason for the delay in the coming of the Messiah, for [the Jews] do not prolong the "great love" (Ahavah Rabah) [i.e. the prayer recited before the Shema], the secret of the kisses prior to the unification (*zivug*) which are intended to arouse her desire [i.e. the desire of Shekhinah] so that she will produce seed first and give birth to a male which is [the attribute of] mercy.' Presumably, with the proper unification the messiah's coming would no longer be delayed. The mystical understanding of messianic redemption in terms of *hieros gamos* is a theme that can be traced to earlier kabbalistic sources, most significantly the Zohar. See esp. Y. Liebes, 'Hamashiah shel haZohar', in *Hara'ayon hameshihi beYisrael: Yom iyun leregel melot shemonim shanah le Gershom Scholem* (Jerusalem, 1982), 198-203.

Ze'ir Anpin and Nukba, the lower two *partsufim*, although he used the more traditional Zoharic terminology of the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Shekhinah.

In the case of the Besht's grandson, Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow (1748-1800), one likewise finds the two soteriological explanations of walking or taking a journey as lifting the sparks or unifying the masculine and feminine aspects of God. In the first instance, Moses Hayyim cites an interpretation of Ps. 37: 23 in the name of his teachers similar to the one cited in the name of the Besht by Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl. Like the latter, Moses Hayyim emphasizes that a person thinks he goes to a particular place to attain something he desires, but in truth that person is led to that place by God so that he may raise 'the holy sparks that have fallen and are sunk within the depths of the shells'. In particular, Moses Hayyim applies the Besht's teaching to the zaddik 'who is like the wise Master, blessed by He, who sends the will (*ratson*) to a zaddik to go in this way, and by means of his holy thoughts and his holy worship he raises the holy sparks to their source and origin'.⁹⁰

The redemptive aspect of the journey is affirmed in another comment in *Degel mahaneh Efrayim*, but in that context the aim that is portrayed is not to redeem the sparks entrapped in the demonic realm but to unify the masculine and feminine aspects of God. Moses Hayyim reports that he has heard in the name of the Besht that the forty-two journeys of the Israelites in the desert 'are to [be found] in every person from the day of his birth until he returns to his world [at death]'. Each individual's birth is connected to the exodus from Egypt, and the subsequent stages of life are journeys that lead from place to place until one comes to the 'supernal world of life', that is, the Shekhinah.⁹¹ Moses wrote down the journeyings of Israel so that 'a person may know the way in which he should go'. Moses knew the purpose of these excursions—'to effect the unifications [of the divine names] in each and every place according to its spiritual character' (*leyahed yihudim bekhoh makom umakom lefi behinoto*)—whereas the rest of Israel did not know the inner purpose of their journeys. 'Moses knew the content of the inner intent of God in each and every journey, and all the unifications that were done in each and every place (*vekhoh hayihudim shena'asu bekhoh makom umakom*). And this is the meaning of *al pi* [i.e. in the verse "Moses recorded the starting points of their various marches as directed by the Lord," *al pi YHVH* (Num. 33: 2)], the numerical value of [the word] *pi* is ninety-one [i.e.] including the word itself (*im hakolet*),⁹² and this [represents] the unity of YHVH and Adonai [i.e. 26 + 65].⁹³ The purpose of the journey is thus to unify the two names which, as we have seen, symbolize the masculine and feminine potencies of the divine. By means of the movement of one's feet, therefore, sexual unification on high is enhanced.

That walking serves as a metaphor for sexual activity, which itself represents the supreme mode of *tikun* on the spiritual plane—an idea well rooted in the kabbalistic sources—can be seen clearly from a tradition recorded in Jacob Joseph as well, explaining why the ritualistic aspect of Torah is called *halakhah*. According to Jacob Joseph, this is to be explained in one of two ways: the word *halakhah* is related, on the one

⁹⁰ *Degel mahaneh Efrayim*, 66a.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 65b-c.

⁹² That is, the consonants of the word *pi* equal ninety; to get the sum ninety-one the word itself, which counts as one, must be added.

⁹³ *Degel mahaneh Efrayim*, 65d.

hand, to *halikhah*, walking or going,⁹⁴ and on the other, to *hakalah*, the bride.⁹⁵ These two explanations correspond in turn to two modes of study. The prior stage of *halikhah* means that one 'progresses and ascends from grade to grade', that is, from the level of study for an ulterior motive to study for its own sake, *torah lishmah*.⁹⁶ When one attains this latter level, then one studies—literally—for the sake of the name, *lishmah*,⁹⁷ that is, for the sake of the Shekhinah; this is alluded to as well in the fact that the expression *hakalah*, the bride, comprises the same Hebrew letters as the word *halakhah*. More specifically, Jacob Joseph employs an older Zoharic idea to the effect that the particular halakhic rulings regarding what is permissible and forbidden are akin to embellishments of the bride (*kishuta dekhlah*).⁹⁸ *Halikhah* is thus the adornment of the *kalah* through the means of *halakhah*. By contrast, study of Torah for its own sake, without any immediate practical implications, results in the unification of the individual with the 'denuded' Torah. In Jacob Joseph's own words:

⁹⁴ On the possible etymology of *halakhah* from the root *hkh*, see A. Even-Shoshan, *Hamilon hehadash* (3 vols.; Jerusalem, 1969), i, 271, s.v. 'halakhah'. The rabbis exploited this etymological connection; see references below, n. 99. The connection between *halikhah* and *halakhah* is also implicit in Shneur Zalman's assertion that by means of the fulfilment of the commandments the soul of the Jew attains the level of *halikhah* in this world; see *Likutei torah*, on 'Bamidbar', 38d. See also 64c-d, and see above, n. 4. And cf. Shneur Zalman, *Ma'amrei Admor haZaken al parshiyot hatorah vehamo'adim*, ii, 603, where the aspect of Torah is described as a process of *hilukh* from above to below and, conversely, the aspect of *mitsvot* (i.e. *halakhah*) is described as the process of *hilukh* from below to above. Cf. Menahem Mendel (the Tsemah Tsedek), *Or hatorah*, xvi, 638, 650-1.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Toledot*, 169a; *Ketonet pasim*, 8. As Nigal points out (*Ketonet pasim*, n. 76), a possible source for Jacob Joseph's identification of *halakhah* as *hakalah* may have been the *Peri etsy hayim*; see 'Sha'ar hanhagat halimud', 353. On this correspondence in the writings of Vital, cf. L. Fine, 'The Study of Torah as a Rite of Theurgical Contemplation in Lurianic Kabbalah', in D. Blumenthal (ed.), *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times* (Atlanta, 1988), iii, 38. Cf. the wording of the following kabbalistic prayer to be uttered before learning *halakhah* found in Nathan Nata Hannover, *Sha'arei Tzion* [Prague, 1662] (Jerusalem, 1980), 601: 'Behold I am learning *halakhah* which is the letters *hé kalah*, in order to adorn (*lekashei*) the name Adonai [i.e. the Shekhinah] which is the supernal *hé-kalah*, with twenty-four adornments of the bride (*kishutei kalah*) to join her with her husband [i.e. Tiferet]. The connection between Shekhinah and *halakhah* was made, however, at a much earlier period. See e.g. Zohar 3: 20a (*Ra'aya mehemna*). According to one tradition, Shekhinah is called *halakhah* before She receives the divine influx from the masculine potency, whereas She is called *kalah* after she has received it. See *Tikunei zohar*, 21, 58a; Joseph of Hamadan, *Sefer tashak*, critical text edn. with introd. by J. Zwelling (Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1975), 11-12; and cf. JTSA MS Mic. 1804, fo. 61a. See also Moses Cordovero, *Pardes rimonim* [Cracow, 1592] (Jerusalem, 1962), gate 23, s.v. 'halakhah', 14a. 'This [word] refers to Shekhinah . . . And this is [the meaning of the expression] *halakhah leMosheh miSinai*, for it is the bride of Moses (*kalat mosheh*).'

⁹⁶ For a discussion of the hasidic meaning of the traditional expression 'Torah for its own sake' see Weiss, *Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, 56-68; Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, 212-13.

⁹⁷ In this context Jacob Joseph employs the older kabbalistic interpretation of *torah lishmah*, i.e. the theurgical meaning of Torah study as a means to enhance the Shekhinah rather than the novel hasidic doctrine 'Torah for the sake of the letter.' See also *Ben porat Yosef*, 33a, where *torah lishmah* is similarly explained as Torah for the sake of the letter *hé*, *leshem hé*, i.e. for the sake of the Shekhinah. An attempt to synthesize the older kabbalistic notion of *torah lishmah* as *leshem hé* and the hasidic idea of *leshem ha'otiyot* can be found in Isaac Judah Jehiel Safran's *Heikhal haberahah*, 5: 206.

⁹⁸ See *Zohar hadash*, ed. R. Margaliot (Jerusalem, 1978), 64a. And cf. Tishby, *Mishnat hazohar*, ii, 375. The source for the Zoharic view may have been *Sefer habahir*, ed. R. Margaliot (Jerusalem, 1978), s. 196, where in the context of discussing the theurgical significance of Torah study as a means to unite the upper Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, the former is described parabolically as the bride who is adorned and crowned. Cf. Isaac of Acre, *Sefer me'irat einayim lerabi Yitshak demin Ako*, ed. A. Goldreich (Jerusalem, 1981), 61-2. See also *Tikunei zohar*, 21, 46a, where halakhic decisions (*pesakot*) are described as the 'garments of the Matrona' (*levushin dematronita*). Cf. *Toledot*, 140d, 190a.

This is the meaning [of the rabbinic dictum] 'Do not read *halikhah* but rather *halakhah*'⁹⁹ for it is the bride (*hakalah*). The bride [Shekhinah] should not remain embellished, but rather he [the earthly zaddik] should go from this grade [i.e. studying for the sake of another end] to the higher grade, which is the unification without garment or adornment, but only the cleaving of his inner essence to the inner essence of the Torah.¹⁰⁰

Alternatively expressed, the primary mode of study consists of adorning the bride with jewels and garments by means of a detailed analysis of the rules and regulations of normative Jewish practice. Beyond this stage, however, is that in which the adornments are removed, when the Torah stands, as it were, 'naked without garment'.¹⁰¹ In such a state the individual cleaves to and is united with the letters of the Torah.¹⁰² In any event, from this intriguing web of word-plays, one sees that for Jacob Joseph the word *halikhah* is related to *halakhah* which, understood in kabbalistic terms, refers to the arousal of the union of the masculine and feminine aspects of God. As Jacob Joseph puts it in another context:

By this you can understand the talmudic statement, '[Since the Temple was destroyed] the Holy One, blessed be He, has only four cubits of *halakhah* in His world.'¹⁰³ That is, there is no unity (*yihud*) between the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Shekhinah, who is called 'His world', except by means of the four cubits of *halakhah*, in which the persons of knowledge [i.e. the spiritual élite] are engaged. And there is an advantage for the one so engaged, for light and pleasure proceed from the darkness of the people of the world [i.e. the masses], and there is unity between the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Shekhinah.¹⁰⁴

In still other contexts in Jacob Joseph's corpus, it can be shown that walking serves as a metaphor for sexual activity. Thus, commenting on the talmudic interpretation that God came to visit Abraham on the third day after his circumcision,¹⁰⁵ Jacob Joseph distinguishes between three aspects of circumcision. The first aspect is that of sitting (*yoshev*), that is, 'the one who does evil',¹⁰⁶ the second that of standing (*omed*),¹⁰⁷

⁹⁹ Cf. Meg. 28a; Nidd. 73a.

¹⁰⁰ *Toledot*, 131b.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Job 24: 7, 10.

¹⁰² *Toledot*, 132b. Underlying this notion is a decidedly feminine conception of the Torah, a theme that is well rooted in older aggadic and kabbalistic sources. See E. R. Wolfson, 'Female Imaging of the Torah: From Literary Metaphor to Religious Symbol', in J. Neusner, E. Frerichs, and N. Sarna (eds.), *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism: Intellect in Quest of Understanding: Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox* (4 vols.; Atlanta, 1989), ii, 271-307, esp. 302-3.

¹⁰³ Ber. 8a.

¹⁰⁴ *Tsafenet pa'neah*, 34c.

¹⁰⁵ BM, 86b.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Shneur Zalman, *Torah or*, 27a, where the word *vayeshev*, to sit, is interpreted as a 'lowering and descent from the place of one's standing'.

¹⁰⁷ Elsewhere Jacob Joseph identifies the angel as one who stands (*omed*) in contrast to man who traverses various levels; see above, n. 4. In still other places he characterizes the zaddik as the one who stands; cf. *Ben porat Yosef*, 31a: 'There is a difference between sitting (*yeshivah*) in the world-of-the-feminine (*bealma denukba*) and standing (*amidah*) in the masculine (*bidekhura*). And the righteous one (zaddik), in contrast to the wicked, is called the one who is standing (*omed*).' And cf. *Toledot*, 28a-b: 'Jacob, who is called Tiferet, is the masculine world that is [in the position of] standing, and he wanted to join the feminine world [Shekhinah] which is [in the position of] sitting, by means of Yesod which is called peace and tranquillity.' See also the citation from Abraham Hayyim of Zloczow above, n. 10. Jacob Joseph is here drawing upon an older kabbalistic motif expressed in the Zohar. The world-of-the-feminine is a standard Zoharic symbol for the tenth gradation, Shekhinah, whereas the world-of-the-masculine, or the shorthand masculine, symbolizes the ninth gradation, Yesod, or Binah, the third emanation or the totality of the upper *sefirot*. For references, see G. Scholem, 'Hitpatehut torat ha'olamot bekabalat harishonim', *Tarbiz*, 3 (1932), 66-7. Moreover, already in the Zohar these two divine emanations are correlated with the activities of sitting and standing: sitting with the feminine and standing with the masculine.

that is 'the one who does not do evil but needs instruction (*musar*)' about doing good; and the third that of walking (*holekh*), that is, 'the one who goes from gradation to gradation'.¹⁰⁸ Jacob Joseph goes on to identify these three aspects with the three men who came to Abraham (see Gen. 18: 2), who in turn symbolize the three lines in the divine realm: the left, right, and middle. The aspect of sitting, *yeshivah*, corresponds to the left, that of standing, *amidah*, to the right, and walking, *halikhah*, to the middle. Although it is not stated explicitly in this context, according to the standard kabbalistic symbolism adopted by the hasidim, the gradation of the zaddik is in the middle. For Jacob Joseph, therefore, the act of walking is applicable to the divine gradation Yesod which corresponds to the zaddik below. That walking most appropriately characterizes the zaddik, who is the mundane correlate of the supernal grade that is in the position of the *membrum virile*, signifies that walking is, in fact, to be understood as a euphemism for the sexual act.¹⁰⁹ That is to say, just as the divine zaddik serves as a conduit connecting the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Shekhinah, so by means of walking the earthly zaddik unites with the feminine Presence.

Underlying the above conception is the identification of the feet as a phallic symbol.¹¹⁰ While this euphemistic use is of hoary antiquity, attested in the Bible¹¹¹ and

¹⁰⁸ *Ben porat Yosef*, 34a. See above, nn. 7–10. The source for the expression, 'to go from gradation to gradation' may have been the interpretation of Gen. 12: 9 in Zohar 1: 80a.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Toledot*, 67a, where the mystical significance of walking around the pulpit (*lehakif behilukh et hateivah*) with the *lulav* is to 'draw down two aspects in Ze'ir Anpin to Malkhut', i.e. to create an overflow from the masculine to the feminine. To be sure, this is based on earlier kabbalistic explanations of this ritual, especially in the Lurianic corpus. Cf. Hayyim Vital, *Sha'ar hakavanot*, 104d, 105c; *Peri ets hayim*, 'Sha'ar lulav', ch. 3, 630; *Tur bareket*, s. 660, 403a; *Hemdut yamim* [3 vols.; Smyrna, 1791–2] (4 vols.; Jerusalem, 1970), iv. 82d–83a. The implication of the hasidic understanding of walking is made explicit by Shneur Zalman, *Likutei torah*, 'Bamidbar', 24b: 'Walking (*halikhah*) denotes the unification (*kinui el hazivug*), for one walks by way of the Yesod of Nukba in the foot that is blessed (*regel mevorekhet*) which is Yesod.' On the foot as a phallic symbol, see following note. And cf. Menahem Mendel, *Or hatorah*, xiv. 651, where the aspect of *amidah* is applied to a state of limitation (i.e. the feminine attribute of *din*) in which the 'soul is confined in a vessel', whereas the aspect of *hilukh* is applied to a state of expansion (i.e. the masculine attribute of *hesed*) wherein the 'light emanates and is revealed without concealment'. See *Or hatorah*, xiv. 680.

¹¹⁰ I have treated some of the relevant sources for this symbolic usage in Jewish mystical texts in my study 'Images of God's Feet: Some Observations on the Divine Body in Judaism', in Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (ed.), *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective* (Albany, NY, 1992), 143–82. For a discussion of this theme in non-Jewish sources, cf. Siegman Schultze-Gallera, *Fuss- und Schusymbolik und -Erotik* (Leipzig, 1909). A particularly interesting example from hasidic literature is found in *Ma'or vashemesh*, 46d. '[Joseph] said to them, "You are spies, you have come to see the land in its nakedness" (Gen. 42: 9) . . . This alludes to the essence of the rectification of the covenant (*ikar tikun haberit*) [i.e. sins connected to the phallus], and especially in these generations, for no man can escape it. The rectification of the matter is through one's joining oneself to the zaddik, for the zaddik is called All (*kol*) . . . And this is [the import of] what Joseph said to them, "You are spies." [The term] spies (*meraglim*) is from the word feet (*raglayim*), for this refers to the rectification of the covenant (*tikun haberit*). "You have come to see the land in its nakedness" . . . you want to rectify the nakedness of the land, i.e. the sin of the feet.' See also the commentary on Ps. 107 attributed to the Besht, ed. Schatz-Uffenheimer, 165, where the zaddik is described as causing the sparks trapped in the demonic shells to walk (*lehilikh*) on Friday evening for they did not have the power to walk by themselves during the week. In this case walking obviously has soteriological significance that is connected to the unification of masculine and feminine. That the zaddik is empowered to cause these sparks to walk is related to his position corresponding to the divine phallus. Thus see on the same page the explanation of the term *vayadrikhem*, 'he led them' (Ps. 107: 6): 'this corresponds to Yesod for it guides (*molikh*) the seminal drop to Malkhut.'

¹¹¹ Cf. Judg. 3: 24; 1 Sam. 24: 3; Ruth 3: 4, 7–8, 14.

the Talmud,¹¹² the specific understanding of walking as a sexual act of union is to be found in the sixteenth-century kabbalists Moses Cordovero and Abraham Galante.¹¹³ It is not unlikely that from these sources this motif passed into the hands of the hasidic writers. It is of interest to note here that it is precisely this dynamic that underlies one of the better known, but not fully understood, hasidic legends concerning Enoch the cobbler. Gershom Scholem has shown that the literary origin of this legend is to be found in the *Me'irat einayim* of the thirteenth–fourteenth-century kabbalist Isaac of Acre, who himself attributes the legend to R. Judah Hadarshan Ashkenazi.¹¹⁴ According to the text of R. Isaac, Enoch was a cobbler and 'with each and every stitch that he made with his awl in the leather he would bless God with a complete heart and with perfect intention, and thereby cause the blessing to flow upon the emanated Metatron'.¹¹⁵ The precise point of the legend is to explain the ancient mystical tradition concerning the ascension of Enoch and his transformation into the angelic Metatron; however, as may be gathered from the full context of R. Isaac's text, the transformation is here understood as Enoch's becoming one with the Shekhinah, also referred to as the upper Metatron. Scholem rightly sees in this story an example of the 'sacral transformation of the purely profane', for even the mundane act of cobbling has cosmic ramifications. The theurgical element of this legend, with its implicit sexual nuance, proved to be highly influential in subsequent kabbalistic literature. An especially telling reworking of this legend can be found in the following text of Cordovero:

By means of his activity man becomes a chariot for one of the *sefirot*. And thus it is with respect to Enoch–Metatron. They said that he merited this gradation for he was a cobbler, and in each and every stitch that he made with his awl he would bless for the sake of divine need (*letsorekh gavoha*) . . . for he unified Malkhut, who is called shoe (*na'af*), with Tiferet, by means of all his channels. And to this the stitchings allude. Thus it was appropriate for [Enoch] to be a chariot for Malkhut.¹¹⁶

Although Cordovero's version is clearly based on that of Isaac of Acre, and the theurgical dimension of the latter is preserved in the former, Cordovero has significantly elaborated upon the sexual implications of the whole legend. That is to say, by means of the

¹¹² Cf. Ber. 23a. The thematic connection between the phallus and the feet can be traced to *Sefer yet-sirah*, 6: 4 where the covenant of circumcision is said to be set between the ten toes of the feet. For a particularly interesting development of this motif in hasidic thought, see the words of Phinehas of Korets cited in *Likutei R. Hai Ga'on im perush Ner Yisrael* [Lemberg, 1800] (Warsaw, 1840), 506–51a.

¹¹³ B. Sack, 'Al perushav shel R. Avraham Galante: Kamah he'arot al zikatam lekhitvei robotav', *Mis-gav Yerushalayim Studies in Jewish Literature* (Jerusalem, 1987), 78. See also the euphemistic use of the word *metayelin* (literally, they walked about) for sexual activity in Isaiah Horowitz, *Shenei luhot haberit*, Torah shebikhtav, on 'Vayeshev', ii. 30a. For discussion of this passage see now M. Idel, *Golem: Jewish Magical and Mystical Traditions on the Artificial Anthropoid* (Albany, NY, 1990), 236. A sexual connotation for the word *tiyul* is evident already in *Sefer habahir*, s. 62 (see also s. 92, where the word *halakh* assumes sexual meaning); and cf. Zohar 1: 60b.

¹¹⁴ Cf. G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism* (London, 1965), 132; id., *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1954), 365 n. 101. Concerning this legend, see also Martin Buber, *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism* (New York, 1960), 126.

¹¹⁵ Isaac of Acre, *Sefer me'irat einayim*, 47.

¹¹⁶ Moses Cordovero, *Pardes rimonim*, gate 22, ch. 4, 108b. Cf. gate 16, ch. 4, 79a. For additional sources in later kabbalistic literature where this motif occurs, see R. Margaliot, *Malakhei elyon* (Jerusalem, 1945), 76 n. 10.

stitching the cobbler works upon the Shekhinah, symbolized by the shoe,¹¹⁷ and thereby unifies the feminine and masculine potencies of God, Shekhinah (or Malkhut) and Tiferet. The cobbler therefore stands in the position of the zaddik or Yesod, the conduit that connects the masculine and feminine.¹¹⁸ As such, Enoch properly merited to be unified with the Shekhinah, for through his activity he united the Shekhinah with the masculine aspect of the divine.

In hasidic circles the sexual import of the legend was highlighted as well. To substantiate this claim one would do well to recall the interpretation that this legend receives in a host of passages in Jacob Joseph's writings. As a representative example I cite one such passage:

I heard from my teacher [the Besht] an explanation of the verse, 'Whatever it is in your power to do, do with all your might' (Eccles. 9: 10). Enoch-Metatron unified with every stitch the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Shekhinah . . . and he thus bound together the physical action of the lower world by means of thought, which is 'your power', to the upper spiritual world. With this he fulfilled [the verse] 'in all your ways', i.e. of a physical nature, 'know Him', i.e. unify the *hé* [corresponding to the Shekhinah] to the *vav* [the Holy One, blessed be He].¹¹⁹

Through his stitching, therefore, the legendary Enoch-Metatron was able to unite the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Shekhinah, heaven and earth, the physical and spiritual, action and thought.¹²⁰ Just as the *sefirah* of Yesod above serves to unite the *vav* and *hé* of the Tetragrammaton, the feminine and masculine, so Enoch below. Each stitch that the cobbler makes assists in this unification. That Enoch is indeed in the position of Yesod is brought out even more clearly in the following passage in *Keter shem tov* which, so far as I can tell, blends together various passages in Jacob Joseph's writings:

'Whatever it is in your power to do, do with all your might' (Eccles. 9: 10). This means to unite the action with the power of thought. And this is the meaning of the words 'do with all your might' which refers to the gradation of Enoch-Metatron, for he united the Holy One, blessed be He, with each stitch. And this was the level of Moses or master, may peace be upon

¹¹⁷ To be sure, this symbolism is expressed in earlier kabbalistic sources. See, e.g. *Zohar hadash*, 72d; *Tikunei zohar*, 21, 60b. See also the tradition included in Eleazar of Worms, *Sefer ha'ohkumah*, MS Oxford 1812, 63a, where the glory revealed to Moses, the luminous speculum (*ispaklariyah metsuhtsahai*), is identified as both God's crown and His shoe (*pazmekei*). In other contexts the shoe is associated with the masculine principle, Yesod, see *Zohar* 3: 148a, 180a; *Zohar hadash* 88b (*Midrash hane'elam*); Wolfson (ed.), *The Book of the Pomegranate*, 253 (Heb. section); Moses de Leon, *Shushan edut*, ed. G. Scholem, *Kovets al yad*, NS 8 (1975), 359 n. 237; id., *Sefer hamishkal*, ed. J. Wijnhoven (Ph.D. thesis, Brandeis University, 1964), 145-6; Horowitz, *Shenei luhot haberit*, Torah shebikhtav, on 'Vayeshev', ii: 28d-29 a. On the specific connection between feet and the Shekhinah see Nahmanides on Exod. 28: 2 (ed. Chavel, i: 471-2); *Zohar* 1: 112b; Joseph of Hamadan, *Sefer Tashak*, ed. Zwelling, 11-12; Cordovero, *Pardes rimonim*, 23, s.v. 'raglayim': 'Malkhut is called feet in the mystery of the lowest aspect [of the divine realm] that is clothed with the shell. This is the esoteric meaning of the verse, "I have bathed my feet, was I to soil them again?" (S. of S. 5: 3). This refers to the dissemination of the sparks that are clothed in the shells.' In this context it should also be noted that hasidic writers identified the feet with the divine attribute of Faith. See e.g. *Toledot*, 44a; Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk, *Peri ha'arets*, repr. in *Sefarim kedoshim mitalmidei Ba'al Shem Tov* (35 + 3 vols.; Brooklyn, NY, 1981-6), xviii (1984), 25a.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Hayyim Vital, *Sha'ar ma'amrei Rashbi* (Jerusalem, 1898), 3d.

¹¹⁹ *Tsafenat pa'neah*, 118c. Cf. *Toledot*, 163c, 17b, 29b, 167b, and elsewhere; *Ketonet pasim*, 54.

¹²⁰ Ibid. Cf. Safrin, 'Heikhal haberakhah', i: 181.

him, 'But you remain standing here with me etc.' (Deut. 5: 28). 'Jacob lifted up his feet' (Gen. 29: 1). That is, by means of faith he lifted the feet of Malkhut 'whose feet go down to death' (Prov. 5: 5) and binds her with the pillars of truth (*sambhei keshot*) of Ze'eir Anpin.¹²¹

According to this passage, then, the level of Enoch-Metatron is the same as that of Moses and Jacob. That is to say, the act of stitching is further understood from the acts of standing upright (attributed to Moses) and lifting up one's feet to resume a journey (attributed to Jacob). Moreover, all three activities point to the *tikun* of the Shekhinah or the unification of the feminine and masculine potencies within the divine. This is expressed at the end of the passage in the technical language of the kabbalah: Jacob bound the feminine Malkhut to the pillars of truth, that is Netsah and Hod¹²² of the masculine Ze'eir Anpin, the central *sefirah* of Tiferet. The acts of standing on one's feet and lifting one's feet have the same symbolic valence as Enoch's cobbling. All of these actions characterize the zaddik, and their common denominator is clearly the use of one's feet. It seems fairly obvious, moreover, that all such activity with one's feet is to be taken as a euphemism for sexual action (a usage well attested in earlier kabbalistic literature), for the zaddik not only enhances the unification of male and female aspects within God, but he is himself united with the feminine Shekhinah.¹²³ The *tikun* performed by Moses, who stood up erectly; by Jacob, who commenced his walking; and by Enoch, who stitched together shoes is the unification of the feminine and masculine within the divine, the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Shekhinah.

It is of interest to note, finally, that the use of feet as a euphemism for sexual activity underlies the hasidic teaching concerning dance. Thus, in one place Jacob Joseph reports the following teaching that he heard from the Besht: 'dance (*harikud*) is for the sake of elevating the sparks and raising the lower gradation to the higher one.¹²⁴ From the fuller context, an explication of the talmudic dictum 'how does one dance [that is, what must one say] before the bride',¹²⁵ it can be shown that the purpose of dance as construed in the Beshtian teaching is to elevate the Shekhinah from Her exilic state so that She will become a 'bride' wedded to Her masculine consort. This sexually nuanced conception of dancing underlies a passage in *Shivhei haBesht* concerning the poor man, the Besht's daughter Edel, and the birth of Baruch of Tulchin:

Once on Simhat Torah the members of the holy group, the disciples of the Besht, were dancing joyfully in a circle and the Shekhinah was in flames about them.¹²⁶ During the dance the shoe of one of the lesser members of the group was torn. He was a poor man and it angered

¹²¹ *Keter shem tov*, 4b. Cf. *Ben porat Yosef*, 56a, 80a, 116a-b; *Toledot*, 47a; *Ketonet pasim*, 319.

¹²² Cf. *Toledot*, 170 a; *Ben porat Yosef*, 17a, 33d, 56a, 116a-b.

¹²³ See, e.g. *Toledot*, 16d, 32c, 66c, 138b; *Ben porat Yosef*, 33a; *Tsafenat pa'neah*, 92c.

¹²⁴ *Tsafenat pa'neah*, 46a, cited as well in *Keter shem tov*, 23. See below, n. 128. On dancing as expression of ecstatic joy, see Dov Ber Shneur, 'Sha'ar ha'emunah', 106a.

¹²⁵ *Ketubot* 16b.

¹²⁶ For an alternative expression of the same theme in another passage, see *Shivhei haBesht*, 75 (ed. Mondshine, 94). See also reference in n. 128 to the development of this motif in Nahman of Bratslav. On a state of illumination created by dancing on Simhat Torah, see the letter of R. Hayyim ibn Attar cited in A. Ya'ari, *Igrot Erets Yisrael* (Jerusalem, 1950), 269. On the hasidic motif of dancing with the Shekhinah on Simhat Torah, see also Sholom Aleichem, *Hayei adam*, trans. J. Berkovitz (New York, 1920), ii: 89; pub. in Eng. in *From the Fair: The Autobiography of Sholom Aleichem*, trans. and ed. C. Leviant (New York, 1985), 131-2.

him that he was prevented from dancing with his friends and from rejoicing in the festivity of the *mitsvah*. The Besht's daughter, the pious Edel . . . said to the disciple: 'If you promise me that I will give birth to a baby boy this year, I will give you good shoes immediately.' She could say this because she had shoes in the store. He promised her that she certainly would have a baby boy. And so it was that the rabbi, our rabbi and teacher, Barukh of the holy community of Tulchin, was born to her.¹²⁷

In this passage it is clear that the act of dancing expresses an intimate relationship between the individual hasid and the Shekhinah.¹²⁸ That this activity, moreover, symbolizes the act of union between the hasid and the Shekhinah may be gathered from the otherwise mundane account of the poor man's ceasing to dance on account of his torn shoe. Admittedly, this is an innocuous detail that, *prima facie*, would hardly excite one's interest. Yet it is precisely such a detail that contains, from the hasidic point of view, deep metaphysical and spiritual significance. The wearing of the shoe in this case, as in the other instances that I have mentioned above, is the symbolic enactment of the unification of the masculine individual and the feminine aspect of God. When the shoe is torn, the unification is severed, and the individual can no longer dance. The Besht's

¹²⁷ Dov Ber b. Shmuel, *Shivhei haBesht*, 144. I have utilized the English translation of D. Ben-Amos and J. Mintz, *In Praise Of the Baal Shem Tov* (New York, 1984), 223–4. There is no parallel to this tale in the manuscript version of *Shivhei haBesht* published by Mondshine.

¹²⁸ For the sexual implication of the traditional circular dance on Simhat Torah, see *Ma'or vashemesh*, on 'Beshalah', 119a. The hasidic idea is based, of course, on earlier kabbalistic writings, especially those betraying a Lurianic influence, which likewise explain the *hakafot* on Simhat Torah in a decidedly sexual manner, i.e. the circular dancing around the pulpit—which symbolizes the Presence—creates an influx from the masculine to the feminine. See e.g. *Sha'ar hakavanot*, 104a; *Tur bareket*, 41a–b; see also Issachar Berish, *Sefer malbush leshabat veyom tov* (Bilgoraj, 1937), 64d. The use of feet as an euphemism for sexual activity, in my opinion, also underlies R. Nahman of Bratslav's teaching concerning the centrality of dance in religious worship. See, in particular, *Likutei Moharan*, part 1, *torah* 10, s. 6 'This is the aspect of dancing and clapping of the hands, for dancing and clapping of the hands are derived from the aspect of the spirit in the heart . . . This is the aspect of "his heart lifted his feet", i.e., by means of the spirit in the heart the dancing is derived. That is, by means of zaddik (!), who is the aspect of the spirit, the pride is annulled, as is written, "Let not the foot of the arrogant tread on me" (Ps. 36: 12). And the worship of idols was nullified, as it is written, "bathe your feet" (Gen. 18: 4), this refers to idol worship. When the feet are raised by means of the dancing—the aspect of his heart lifted his feet—the pride, i.e. idol worship, is nullified and the judgments are mitigated . . . And then the feet are in the aspect of "the feet of his pious" (1 Sam. 2: 9) . . . Then is established [the verse] "My feet are on level ground" (Ps. 26: 12), which is the aspect of faith. For heresy is the aspect of feet that have strayed, as Asaf says, "My feet had almost strayed" (ibid. 73: 2) . . . "My feet are on level ground" instructs about faith, and then is established, "His hands were steady" (Exod. 17: 12).' The messianic implication of dancing in Nahman's teaching may be alluded to in the characterization of the seventh beggar in the tale 'The Seven Beggars' as one without feet. This beggar, unlike the previous six, never arrives at the wedding to demonstrate that his seeming imperfection is in reality a perfection. One may conjecture, however, that the seventh beggar represents the ultimate rectification (*tikun*) and hence the coming of the messiah. The messianic character of this tale was perceived by the traditional editors of the *Sipurai ma'asiyot* who added the following postscript: 'The end of the story, i.e. what occurred on the seventh day concerning the beggar without feet, as well as the end of the first part of the story concerning the king, we have not merited to hear . . . We will not hear it until the messiah comes.' On the messianic implication of this tale, especially its end, see J. Dan, *Hasipur hahasidi* (Jerusalem 1975), 169; Y. Liebes, 'Hatikun hakelali', 207 n. 22, and 237. The possible connection of Nahman's teaching about feet from *Likutei Moharan* that I cited above and the tale about the seventh beggar without feet has been noted by Martin Mantel, 'Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav's Tales: A Critical Translation from the Yiddish with Annotations and Commentary', (Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University, 1975), ii. 238–9 n. 25. See, however, p. 239 n. 26, where Mantel rejects the soteriological reading of 'The Seven Beggars'.

daughter Edel is willing to rectify the situation by supplying the man with new shoes—which, as we are told, she readily has in her possession—but only in exchange for a blessing that she will give birth to a male child. The blessing is thus a perfect reflection of the act that Edel performed for the man—that is, just as she supplied him with new shoes, to enable him to continue dancing and thereby to unite the masculine and feminine, so would she be blessed with a child, the ultimate fruit of sexual unification.

From the various texts that I have examined it has thus become clear that in early hasidism the physical act of travel or walking was understood not only in a restorative sense (as the Besht taught) but in a generative sense as well. That is, the double task of the zaddik in his moving about from place to place is to redeem the fallen sparks and to assist in the unification of the male and female aspects of God. The two acts are not really distinct, for unification is brought about through liberation of the sparks. In addition, the soteriological implications of both these actions for the early hasidic authors must be acknowledged. In his capacity as one who walks or journeys, man assists in the redemption on both an individual and cosmic level.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ A convergence of the themes that I have analysed in this paper, the messianic and sexual implications of walking, is evident in a striking manner in the following passage from Israel Dov Ber of Weledniki, *She'erit Yisrael* (Zhitomir, 1868), sermon 9, 13c: 'Jacob is the aspect of the light of Messiah . . . for with Jacob the spirit of Messiah began to shine . . . By means of the aspect of Jacob the blemish of the All [the *sefirah* of Yesod which corresponds to the phallus] was rectified . . . This is [alluded to in the name] Jacob [Ya'akov]: *yod akev*, the perfection of the aspect of the heels [*akevim*] i.e. the aspect of the "feet which go down to death" (Prov. 5: 5). And this is [the meaning of] "Jacob lifted up his feet" (Gen. 29: 1), i.e. the aspect of the blemish of *yesod* . . . and it thus became easy [*kal*] to walk, i.e. the aspect of 130 [*130=kl*, the same consonants of the word *kal*] in which Adam separated [from Eve] and gave birth to [evil spirits and demons in the world] (cf. Er. 18b; Zohar 1: 19b, 55a; 2 231b; 3: 76b). By means of the aspect of Jacob there was an uplifting of these 130 years.' According to this text, Jacob is identified as a messianic figure who specifically rectifies the blemish of Yesod which corresponds to the phallus, i.e. sexual sin. Furthermore, the whole process is related to the feet or the heels. Hence, it is clear that feet symbolize the phallus and the aspect of walking is the perfection of the sexual offence brought about through the feet.

HASIDISM
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