

Time in the Teachings of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi

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I, Wojciech Tworek, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

ABSTRACT

This thesis concerns the teachings of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (known by the acronym of his title and name as Rashaz; 1745-1813), founder of the Habad movement, which remains to this day one of the largest and most influential schools of Hasidism. It focuses on his concept of time, which features in various contexts in both his mystical and his legal writings.

The thesis challenges the commonly held view that Rashaz's teachings form primarily a mystical doctrine concerned with supra-temporal transcendence. It begins with a description of his teachings as an integration of the philosophical definition of time into his kabbalistically informed worldview. Next, it analyses the historiosophical underpinnings of these teaching, claiming that messianic redemption played a key role in Rashaz's model of spirituality. His messianic awareness is further explored in a critical discussion of his view of the imminence of the messianic advent, the role of the messianic figure, and the various ways in which the redeemed world will be experienced in the future-to-come. By focusing next on the significance that Rashaz ascribed to setting regular times for normative Torah study, the thesis demonstrates his keen awareness of the crucial role of time in the service of the divine, an insight which enabled him to turn Habad into a movement that attracted not only the spiritual-intellectual elite but also many ordinary, non-scholarly Jews. Finally, the thesis explores the nexus of time and femininity in Rashaz's teachings, attempting to establish whether the significance he attached to the kabbalistic female aspect of God in the world to come entailed the prospect of any actual change in the position of women within his own community, either before or after the anticipated redemption.

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PREFACE

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For any errors or inadequacies that may remain in this work, the responsibility is entirely my own.

A note on the presentation of source materials

Published English translations (with some modifications, as necessary) have been used wherever possible. All other translations from the Hebrew sources are my own.

Biblical quotations follow the *The Authorized King James Version* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Quotations from the liturgy follow S. Singer, ed., *The Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1900)

Tanya translations follow the bilingual Kehot-Soncino edition (London: Soncino, 1973)

All the above translations have been modified by me, where necessary.

The transliteration of Hebrew aims to reflect contemporary Modern Hebrew pronunciation while generally following the Library of Congress' romanization system, with the following exceptions: there is no distinction between *alef* and *'ayin* (both represented by the same apostrophe and disregarded when *alef* appearing as an initial letter), *tet* and *tav*, *samekh* and *sin*, *het* and *he*. The consonants *vav* and *kuf* are represented by *v* and *k* respectively. Consonants marked with a *dagesh* are not doubled in transliteration.

Hebrew words in transliteration are generally italicized, with the exception of those in common English use (i.e. Kabbalah), where the common English spelling has been preserved.

Tanya is abbreviated throughout as T followed by number of section (1 – Sefer shel beinonim, 2 – Sha'ar ha-yihud vaha-emunah, 3 – Igeret ha-teshuvah, 4 – Igeret ha-kodesh, 5 – Kuntres ha-aharon), number of chapter and folio; *Torah or* as TO, *Likutei Torah* as LT, *Ma'amrei Admor ha-Zaken* as MAHZ, *Hilekhot Talmud Torah* as HTT, *Zohar* as Z.

Original Hebrew versions of all quotations appear in the Appendices.

INTRODUCTION

1. Habad's relationship with time.

The literature of contemporary Habad is infused with temporality: numerous references to the mythologised past of the movement on the one hand, and to the anticipated messianic future on the other. The last two Lubavitcher Rebbes are widely credited with inculcating in their followers the belief in the imminent arrival of the Messiah, and thus in the imminent end of teleological history.¹ Historical events, such as the Holocaust, the establishment of the State of Israel, the Six-Day War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union have been used by the proponents of Habad's messianic worldview to prove the validity of their concept of history, while at the same time being employed by academic scholars to pin-point significant landmarks in Habad's turn to acute messianism.² Messianic rituals centred around the figure of the now-absent Rebbe-Messiah, or the Brooklyn building that served as his headquarters, have been shaping a messianic consciousness that defies the apparent lack of any tangible evidence that the final redemption he promised has already materialised. These rituals have enabled the believers to rise above history, transcend time, and experience the world as being messianically redeemed.³ Moreover, the active dissemination throughout the world of Habad's messianic credo among Jews and non-Jews alike has spread this redemptive consciousness beyond the fluid boundaries of the Habad community itself.⁴

¹ For comprehensive discussions of messianism in the doctrine of 20th century Habad, see Dahan, *Dirah ba-tahtonim*; Elior, "The Lubavitch Messianic Resurgence"; Friedman and Heilman, *The Rebbe*; Kraus, *Ha-shevi'i*; Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*; Wolfson, *Open Secret*.

² On the impact of major 20th-century historical events on the Habad doctrine, see Elior, "The Lubavitch Messianic Resurgence"; Greenberg, "Menahem Mendel Schneerson"; Friedman and Heilman, *The Rebbe*, 253; Loewenthal, "Habad, the Rebbe"; idem, "Contemporary Habad," 385-390.

³ For Habad messianism as a state of consciousness, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 164-5.

⁴ This is particularly noteworthy in light of Joseph Dan's claim that while messianism was always an important component of Hasidism, the experience of messianic redemption was confined to the spatial boundaries of the hasidic court and perpetuated over time by the duration of each court's particular dynastic leadership; in other words, the redemption was at hand for the Hasidim only as long as a particular dynasty lasted (see Dan, "Kefel ha-panim," 306-09). Habad's messianist (*meshihist*) faction has managed to break both temporal and spatial constraints in two ways. On the one hand, it has

In striking contrast to all this, the beginnings of Habad are generally viewed by scholars as being devoid of messianic tension. Scholem's definition of Hasidism as a movement that neutralized the messianic message of the Lurianic kabbalah in response to the Sabbatean eruption of heretical messianism,⁵ steered scholars away from the historiosophical dimension of the early hasidic sources, on the assumption that if the hasidic masters were not oriented toward the messianic future but strove instead to enable their followers to cleave to God in the here-and-now, then the appropriate approach was to investigate Hasidism as an a-temporal doctrine. This approach seemed all the more applicable to the study of Habad, which has often been labelled the most intellectual or rational school of Hasidism, and is at times presented as an abstract "philosophy" even by its followers.⁶ As a result, scholars

immortalised the last Rebbe by propagating the belief that he did not die, and by introducing rituals perpetuating his virtual presence within the community; on the other hand, it has taken its message out to the non-Habad, non-hasidic, and even non-Jewish world. It is important to note, however, that some of the messianists practises (for example, the use of video recordings of the Rebbe's speeches, the dispatch of Habad emissaries to Jewish communities the world over, or the printing of hasidic materials throughout the world for the purely magical purpose of "purification of the air") are not considered controversial at all within the non-messianist Habad mainstream. See Dein, *What Really Happens*, 113-21; Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 52; Friedman and Heilman, *The Rebbe*; 24-7; Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 356 n. 67; Shandler, *Jews*, 230-74. This illustrates how difficult it is to draw a clear-cut distinction between different factions within contemporary Habad.

⁵ On the neutralization of messianism in Hasidism in the aftermath of Sabbatianism, see Scholem, *Major Trends*, 328-30; idem, *The Messianic Idea*, 176-202.

⁶ See for example Mindel, *Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Lyady*, ii, 'The Philosophy of Chabad'. Dr Nissan Mindel (1912-99) was a follower of Habad, and for many years served as the secretary, first of the sixth and then of the seventh Lubavitcher rebbe. He was also engaged in the communication of Habad teachings to a broad audience, which included translations of *Tanya* and of *Lubavitcher Rabbi's Memoirs*, and a book in two volumes on Shneur Zalman, which contains the biography of Shneur Zalman and an exposition of his teachings based on *Tanya*; the third volume, based on Mindel's manuscripts on *Torah or* and *Likutei Torah*, is scheduled for publication by Nissan Mindel Publications. On the alleged rationalism and philosophical inclination of Rashaz, see Stamler, "Sekhel," 1-3, 195-7.

have tended to focus on early Habad's preoccupation with the transcendent God, while neglecting altogether its view of history, be it Godly or profane.⁷

The present study attempts to fill this gap by investigating temporality and history within worldly existence in the teachings of Habad's founder, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (henceforth Rashaz, 1745-1812). It springs from the question, which first drew me to the topic, of the extent to which the temporal discourse – so central to contemporary Habad – might be found already in the teachings of the founder of the movement. To establish this, it was necessary to address critically the harmonistic Habad perspective on all the Habad-Lubavitch rebbes as transmitters of the same, unified and self-contained tradition referred to in Habad parlance as the “words of the living God” [*divrei Elokim hayim*]. This internal perspective is at odds with the prevailing academic approach, which discerns an ideological discontinuity between early Habad and its 20th-century incarnations.⁸ While the development of Habad's doctrine over time, all the way from Rashaz to Menahem Mendel Schneerson, lies beyond the scope of the present thesis, the ideas of the latter were the ones that first struck me as arising from the teachings of the former.

Another factor that influenced my approach to the subject was the paradigm shift that occurred within Hasidic scholarship when Scholem's notion of the neutralisation of the messianic idea in Hasidism was contested if not quite rejected.⁹

⁷ See for example Elior, “Mekomo shel adam,” 47-9, in which hasidic thought is explicitly defined as theocentric. Foxbrunner can be seen as an exception, as he devoted a short sub-chapter to the issue of the cosmic history, see Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 78–93.

⁸ See Elior, “The Lubavitch Resurgence,” 387. For a long time, there existed no scholarly work that provided an overall account of the Habad teaching from its inception to the present. This changed recently, with Eliot Wolfson's *Open Secret* and Dov Schwartz's *Mahashevet Habad* as the most notable examples.

⁹ Scholem first formulated his thesis on the ‘neutralised’ nature of Hasidic messianism in his 1941 *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (329-331), and he subsequently referred to it briefly in some of his other writings during the 1950s and 60s. For the early critique of this thesis, see Tishby's 1967 “Ha-ra'ayon ha-meshihi,” which was the trigger for Scholem's fully developed thesis, published in his 1971 “The Neutralisation of the Messianic Element”. For later revisions of Scholem's thesis, see Idel, *Hasidism*, 16-7; idem, *Messianic Mystics*, 212-13, 223, 237-8; idem, “Mystical Redemption,” 12-19 idem, “Multiple Forms,” 58-69.

This has opened up new perspectives on Hasidic messianism in general, and on Habad messianism in particular. In my graduate paper “The Messianic Concept in *Tanya*,” written in 2009 for the Hebrew Studies Department of the University of Warsaw, I attempted to look at *Tanya* from a “post-neutralisation” perspective, and discovered that messianism was conspicuously present in Rashaz’s teachings. This was still apparent to the Habad author Haim Yitshak Bunin, who in his 1936 elucidation of *Tanya*, devoted a special section to messianism and eschatology.¹⁰ But his book was generally ignored by scholars, and it is hardly ever mentioned in subsequent studies of Rashaz.¹¹ Only the attention paid in recent years to the messianic doctrine of the last Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menahem Mendel Schneerson, has led a number of scholars to the realisation that the acute messianism of post-Holocaust Habad was deeply rooted in teachings that can be traced back to Rashaz.¹² The present thesis aims to consider Rashaz’s messianic doctrine without resort to the axiom of the neutralisation of hasidic messianism, highlighting Rashaz’s keen interest in time, history and the end of days, which has not so far been addressed systematically in hasidic scholarship.

The paradigm shift mentioned above has also shifted the academic focus from the theoretical to the experiential dimension of Jewish mysticism. Following the publication of Idel’s *Hasidism – Between Ecstasy and Magic*, several scholars have begun to examine expressions of religious experience in the speculative teachings of the early hasidic masters.¹³ Yet the Habad experience, perhaps because of its “rational” or “philosophical” reputation, has remained by and large ignored. As Loewenthal points out, the scholarship on Habad has tended to focus on the acosmistic aspects of Rashaz’s teachings and sees the spiritual project of early Habad, above all else, as the quest to transcend worldliness and dissolve in

¹⁰ Bunin, *Mishneh Habad*, v, “Mishnat mashi’ah, ‘olam ha-ba u-tehiyat ha-metim.” On this book, see Scholem, *Ha-shalav ha-aharon*, 380-2; Nigier and Shatzky, *Leksikon*, v. i, 266; Reisen, *Leksikon*, v.i, 243-4.

¹¹ Foxbrunner (*Habad*, 85-8 and 91-2) is an exception, having devoted to this issue several pages of his book.

¹² See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, and Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*.

¹³ See for example Kaufmann, *Be-khol derakhekha da’ehu*; Margolin, *Mikdash adam*; Mark, *Mysticism and Madness*.

divinity.¹⁴ This approach has yielded important studies of Habad's mystical path to self-nullification and integration in the divine nothingness by means of contemplative prayer and study, yet it has overlooked the equally important, worldly dimension of the early Habad doctrine, which the present thesis addresses as its central concern.

Following Loewenthal,¹⁵ I see Rashaz's teachings as the means by which he communicated a particular religious experience to every one of his followers, and I believe that the richness of the ideas he adapted to his community's needs was what made Rashaz such a successful hasidic leader. His teachings convey a multi-dimensional worldview that cannot be reduced either to a complex of theological ideas or to a set of practical instructions on how to lead the ideal religious or spiritual life. In fact, his vast corpus of teachings imparts a sense of religious experience, which is governed by the daily, weekly and yearly cycles of the individual's mundane life, while at the same time connecting him to the multigenerational congregation of Israel which, although it is subject to history, aims at transcending it by integration in the supra-temporal divine. In focusing on the concept of time, I aim to explore this particular notion of religious life, and to demonstrate the mystical and the mundane, the intellectual and the experiential, the individual and the communal dimensions of Rashaz's teaching.

2. Literature review.

2.1 Primary sources.

Rashaz's corpus consists of over 30 volumes, the majority of which published posthumously. The largest category within this corpus comprises his homilies (*ma'amarim*). Delivered orally in Yiddish, they were translated into Hebrew even as there were being transcribed by his followers. The homilies circulated in manuscript form for many years, until the third Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menahem Mendel Schneersohn the "Tsemah Tsedek" (1789-1866), initiated the process of

¹⁴ See Loewenthal, "Women and the Dialectic," *15-16. For a critique of the acosmistic approach to Rashaz, see also Jacobson, "Bi-mevokhei ha-'ayin."

¹⁵ See Loewenthal, *Communicating*.

making them available in print. In 1837 in Kapust, and 1848 in Zhitomir, he published two volumes of Rashaz's homilies on the weekly Torah portions, *Torah or* and *Likutei Torah*. Teachings pertaining to prayer were included in Rashaz's prayer book, *Seder tefilot mi-kol ha-shanah*, first published in Kapust in 1816, and an additional collection of unpublished *ma'amarim* appeared in Jerusalem in 1926 as *Boneh Yerushalayim*. However, the more comprehensive publication of Rashaz's sermons began only in the second half of the twentieth century, when Habad's Kehot Publishing House brought out a series of volumes entitled *Ma'merei Admor ha-Zaken*. This process continues to some extent to the present day, as brochures of re-discovered copies of homilies are published occasionally in print and online.

Another important segment of Rashaz's corpus, generally overlooked by scholars interested in the philosophical or theological dimensions of the Habad tradition, are his halakhic works. Two of them were published in Rashaz's lifetime in Shklov: *Hilekhot talmud Torah* in 1794 (Compendium of the Laws of Torah Study), and *Seder birkhot ha-nehenin* in 1800 (Laws of Blessings for Enjoyment). His other legal writings were compiled posthumously into *Shulhan arukh Rabenu ha-Zaken*, published by his sons in Kopys and Shklov in 1814 and 1816.¹⁶

Rashaz's writings also include a large number of letters, addressed collectively to his hasidic communities or to certain individuals. Some of these letters contain mystical teachings while others issue instructions to remote Habad communities; some relate to Rashaz's involvement in fund raising for the hasidic settlement in the Land of Israel, and some testify to his controversies with other hasidic leaders and with *mitnagdim* or with non-hasidic Jews. In general, the letters provide invaluable insights not only into Rashaz's style of leadership but also into the model of spirituality he propagated. They were first collected and published by David Zvi Hillman in Jerusalem, in 1953, as *Igerot Ba'al ha-Tanya u-vene'i doro*. Later, Kehot published a new edition of Rashaz's letters in two volumes, entitled *Igerot kodesh* (together with the letters of Dov Ber Shneuri [1773-1827] and Menahem Mendel the Tsemah Tsedek).

¹⁶ On the publication of Rashaz's halakhic works, see Mondshine, *Sifrei ha-halakhah*.

Finally, there is the book *Tanya*, the publication of which in 1796 in Slavuta¹⁷ established one of the unique features of the Habad school of Hasidism: the *Tanya* is the first more or less systematic exposition of a hasidic model of spirituality. It is one of four of Rashaz's books to be published during his lifetime, and the only one of them that concentrates on his mystical teachings. As Rashaz explains in a letter that precedes the printed versions of the work, it was written to provide his followers with a manual of direct spiritual guidance so as to render regular personal contact with him unnecessary. Effectively, the book was to serve as a substitute for the experience of listening to Rashaz's homilies. Additionally, in 1981, *Likutei Amarim – Mahadura kama*, containing manuscript variations of the *Tanya*, was published by Kehot.

A brief review of Rashaz's works reveals that the vast majority of them were, in fact, written by his followers. In other words, what is known as Rashaz's body of writings was largely compiled from manuscripts prepared, copied and preserved by his followers. Rashaz's writings indicate that he was aware of the unrestricted dissemination of his teachings through his followers' manuscripts,¹⁸ and attempted to control this process by appointing editors responsible for checking and correcting them.¹⁹ But despite these efforts, in many cases it remains difficult to determine where Rashaz's words end and scribal or editorial interpolations begin.²⁰ There is

¹⁷ On the history of the publication of the *Tanya* see Mondshine, *Likutei amarim*.

¹⁸ See T1, Hakdamah, 4a-b, where Rashaz presents the dissemination of unsupervised manuscripts that misrepresent his teachings as one of the reasons for the publication of *Tanya*. See also "Takanot de-Lozni" ("The Liozna Ordinances") in Hillman *Igerot Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 58-9; Levin, *Igerot kodesh*, i, 104.

¹⁹ For Rashaz's instructions regarding the supervision of manuscript copies of his sermons, see "Takanot de-Lozni" (as in note 18 above), where his brother, Yehuda Leib of Yanovitch, referred to as transcriber of his sermons, is charged with responsibility for checking and correcting such transcripts as are held by Rashaz's other Hasidim. His transcripts were later used by Rashaz's grandson, the Tsemah Tsedek, as the basis for the publication of Rashaz's *Torah or*. He is also known as the editor of Rashaz's *Shulhan 'arukh*, and as the author in his own right of the collection of responsa *She'erit Yehuda*. See Heilman, *Bet rabi*, 55a-b; Loewenthal, *Communicating*, 67-8 and 256 n. 8.

²⁰ See Heilman, *Bet rabi*, 55a, where, even though he testifies that Yehuda Leib's transcripts are "very accurate, truly as they [the sermons] were said," he also recalls a Habad tradition, according to which

also some disagreement among Habad scholars about the attribution of some of the discourses. For example, *Shenei ha-me'orot* and *Be'urei ha-Zohar*, which are usually attributed to Rashaz's son, Dov Ber, appear in Foxbrunner's work as Rashaz's own works.²¹ Foxbrunner attempts to "connect *Tanya* and the discourses with the man and culture behind them," and this provides him with a more flexible approach to the sources: he takes the liberty of attributing to Rashaz writings of uncertain authorship if they conform to his idea of Rashaz's personality, and he criticises Hallamish, who "uses the published works as if they, and not Rashaz, were the source of his teachings."²²

2.2 *The secondary literature.*

Habad in general, and Rashaz in particular, are the subject of numerous academic, popular, and partisan studies. This short review focuses only on the most important publications devoted primarily to Rashaz.

The first attempt to provide a scholarly account of both the life and the teachings of Rashaz was undertaken by Mordechai Teitelbaum in his *Ha-rav mi-Ladi u-mifleget Habad*, published in Warsaw in two volumes in 1910 and 1913. Volume One deals with the biography of Rashaz and presents for the first time some Russian documents related to his incarceration in St. Petersburg, while volume Two presents

Yehuda Leib added some of his own ideas to Rashaz's writings against the latter's will. Rashaz's son, Dov Ber, was another important editor of his father's teachings. However, even the editors of the 20th century editions of Rashaz's sermons admit that in the case of Dov Ber's transcripts, it is often difficult to determine whether they transmit his own or his father's discourses. See "Sekirah kelalit al devar ha-Ma'amarim ha-Ketsarim" in MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 602. In addition, Foxbrunner (*Habad*, 52 and 243 n. 385) gives examples of variant versions of Rashaz's discourses, and points out that the Tsemah Tsedek was already often unable to draw the line between his grandfather's words and editorial additions.

²¹ See Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 243 n. 363, where he criticizes Hallamish who "for some unfathomable reason feels [that Dov Ber's *Be'urei ha-Zohar*] is more attributable to R. Dov Ber than M[AHZ] 5568, a transcription by the latter that he does use," and for not mentioning *Shenei ha-me'orot* at all in his dissertation.

²² Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 53.

an analysis of Rashaz's doctrine. Teitelbaum's book hovers on the borderline between Hasidism and Haskalah. On the one hand, he was personally involved with Habad Hasidim: his brother-in-law was a member of the Habad community in Łódź,²³ and the man responsible for the publication of his book [*ha-mevi le-vet ha-defus*] was Shemaryahu Shneersohn, a Habad Hasid and a direct descendant of Rashaz.²⁴ These Habad connections are noted by Hallamish, who characterises Teitelbaum's work as scholarly despite the author being a "sympathiser of the movement."²⁵ On the other hand, Teitelbaum's philosophical vocabulary, and the emphasis he places on Rashaz's philosophical and scientific skills, as well as the lengthy comparison he draws between Rashaz and Spinoza, have led Foxbrunner, for example, to claim that the book was written "from the blinkered perspective of a Graetzian Maskil."²⁶

Be that as it may, for sixty years, Teitelbaum's work remained the only comprehensive account of Rashaz's thought, until Moshe Hallamish's 1976 doctoral dissertation, entitled "Mishnato ha-'iyunit shel Rabi Shneur Zalman" (The Theoretical System of Rabbi Shneur Zalman). Hallamish's pioneering dissertation set a trend, which has since dominated Habad scholarship. He showed Rashaz's teachings to be a system of thought drawn from the kabbalistic and medieval philosophical sources, with theology, anthropology, and the doctrine of divine service as its main areas of interest. This was an impressive achievement, and yet the picture it drew was rather rigid and somewhat one-sided. Even the title of the dissertation reveals that he viewed Rashaz as a speculative thinker rather than the charismatic leader of a mystical movement with a broad following. In this respect, the dissertation clearly was an academic product of its time: there are close parallels in the conceptualisation of the subject matter and organisation of the material

²³ See Teitelbaum, *Ha-rav mi-Ladi*, 163; see also Rabinowicz, *Encyclopedia of Hasidism*, 485.

²⁴ He was a great-grandson of Rashaz's son Hayim Avraham. See Slonim, *Toledot mishpahat*, 97. He was also responsible for the distribution of Rashaz's portrait in the 19th century. See Balakirsky-Katz, *The Visual Culture*, 34, 39, 45; Heilman, *Bet rabi*, 53a-b; Mondshine, "Tsiyur temunato."

²⁵ Hallamish, "Mishnato ha-'iyunit," 32.

²⁶ Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 38. Curiously, just as Hallamish ignores the maskilic tendencies of the book, so Foxbrunner ignores its hasidic background. See also Roth, "Ha-korpus ha-sifrut ha-habadi," 16 n. 111.

between Hallamish's dissertation and his mentor, Isaiah Tishby's *The Wisdom of the Zohar*; effectively, Hallamish harmonises Rashaz's teachings and reduces them to a systematic, albeit highly sophisticated, exposition of theosophical insights, while largely disregarding their experiential and communal aspects.

A similar attitude to Rashaz and Habad was adopted by other Israeli scholars. Tishby's influence is clearly recognisable in the work of another of his students, Yoram Jacobson, who researched Rashaz's doctrine of creation.²⁷ Rachel Elior's books *The Paradoxical Ascent to God* (about Rashaz's mystical doctrine) and *Torat ha-Elohut ba-dor ha-sheni shel Hasidut Habad* (about the theology of Rashaz's immediate successors), similarly follow the structure of Hallamish's thesis. They uncover in the early Habad teachings a dialectical theology based on the duality of the true reality of the divine Naught [*ayin*] and its antithesis, material Being [*yesh*], which is merely an illusion. Elior skilfully portrays early Habad as a community of acosmistic mystics, but she entirely overlooks the worldly dimension of the early Habad doctrine, and takes no account of the fact that it became highly attractive to many ordinary businessmen and householders, who – while being fully engaged in mundane activities, which would hardly make them “acosmistic” – considered themselves to be Rashaz's followers.²⁸

Two recent books dealing more broadly with the transmission of ideas across the seven generations of Habad leaders, Dov Schwartz's *Mahashevet Habad* and his student Avraham Gottlieb's *Sekhaltanut*, further explored the theoretical dimension of the Habad doctrine. Gottlieb's book surveys the attitudes of subsequent Habad leaders to Maimonides, and attempts to harmonise Habad's mysticism with Maimonides' rationalism. Dov Schwartz's book is the first academic overview of Habad thought from its inception to the death of the last Lubavitcher Rebbe, and even beyond, as it considers the messianic controversy surrounding Menahem Mendel Schneerson, and the influence of Habad on religious Zionism in Israel. Unlike other scholarly accounts of the movement, it emphasises the continuity of

²⁷ Jacobson, “Torat ha-beri'ah.”

²⁸ This point was already made by Loewenthal in his review of Elior's *Paradoxical Ascent* (“The Paradox of Habad,” 72). For a forthright critique of Elior's perspective on Habad as an acosmistic doctrine, see Jacobson, “Bi-mevokhei ha-‘ayin.”

Habad thought, and the centrality of Rashaz's concept of creation to all its subsequent developments. It also reviews those of Rashaz's *ma'amarim* that only recently became available to scholars and have not been considered in any previous studies of Habad. However, while the book provides a unique perspective on Habad thought from its beginning to the present, it chooses to limit its scope to "a number of subjects, which reflect the Habad approach and the theology it developed,"²⁹ but it does not touch on the practical and mundane aspects of the Habad path.

Even Elliot Wolfson's recent work on the last Lubavitcher Rebbe (*Open Secret*), which made numerous references to the teachings of Rashaz, is still confined to the conceptual framework of philosophy, albeit post-modern in essence. Nevertheless, it contains many refreshing insights into the messianic concept of Menahem Mendel Schneerson and its sources in the teachings of Rashaz. It also tackles several questions that have hardly been touched upon by previous scholarship, including the role of gentiles in Habad's messianic doctrine, or the redemption as a transformation of consciousness rather than of the world.

Another approach, which was to some extent developed in opposition to the philosophical perspective, emerged from a socio-historical outlook on Habad. This approach, represented first and foremost by Immanuel Etkes, focuses primarily on Rashaz's life and the nature of his role as leader. Etkes' recent book, *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, consolidates his many years of research on Habad. He reconstructs Rashaz's gradual ascent to leadership and highlights the unique features of his function in this role; he analyses Rashaz's conflicts with the *mitnagdim* as well as with his opponents within the hasidic movement, and he examines critically the accounts of his imprisonment by the tsarist authorities, his involvement in Napoleon's war in Russia, and the rivalry over the succession to the leadership of the Habad movement after his death. Only a small proportion of the book is devoted to Rashaz's doctrine, and it focuses predominantly on the *Tanya*.

The socio-historically-oriented scholarship on Habad relies, to a great extent, on Yehushua Mondshine, who has edited and published many Habad documents, letters, teachings, and bibliographical data. His *Migdal 'oz, Masa' Berditshov, Ha-*

²⁹ Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 12.

masa' ha-aharon, Ha-ma'asar ha-rishon, Likutei amarim-Tanya and *Sifrei ha-halakhah* are indispensable sources for Rashaz's life and the history of Habad in his day.

Three other scholars have attempted to avoid too rigid an adherence to either the strictly philosophical framework or the purely historiographical approach to Habad. Rather than reading an onto-theological system into Rashaz's teachings, Roman Foxbrunner in his *Habad: the Hasidism of R. Shneur Zalman of Lyady* presents them as expressions of Rashaz's religious worldview, claiming that Rashaz's goal was to inspire, not to form a speculative system of thought.³⁰ He argues that Rashaz's *ma'amarim*, delivered over the course of some twenty years, contain numerous dynamic and changing ideas adapted from earlier midrashic, halakhic, philosophical and mystical sources, and should not be seen as an internally coherent body of thought. Even though Foxbrunner does not force Rashaz's ideas into a systematic mould, nevertheless, like Hallamish, he falls into the trap of onto-theologising when he devotes parts of his work to the exposition of Rashaz's 'ontology' or his 'metaphysics'. Moreover, his attempt to provide the reader with access to Rashaz's personal worldview is partisan, as his notion of Rashaz's personality is based to a great extent on quasi-historical traditions published by the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe.

The second author who has endeavoured to go beyond the socio-historical/philosophical dichotomy is Naftali Loewenthal. In his book on the emergence of the Habad School, he proposes what he calls "the third perspective on Hasidism," considering the movement in general, and the Habad School in particular, as a struggle to communicate mystical ideas to a broader Jewish public by making them relevant to everyday life. In doing so, Loewenthal successfully shows the teachings of Rashaz and his successors to be a living tradition, experienced by its adherents both individually and communally, rather than a rigid system of interrelated abstract ideas.

The third example is Leah Ornet's *Ratso va-shov*, which explores the mutual relation of mysticism and ethics in Rashaz's teachings. Comparing them with a

³⁰ See Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 196.

narrowly selected set of Hindu and Christian sources, Ornet shows the close connection between ethical action and mystical ideals, whereby the former preconditions the latter, and the latter serve as a source of inspiration for the former.

Finally the recent doctoral dissertation of Yossef Stamler, titled “Sekhel, filosofyah ve-emunah be-haguto shel Rabi Shneur Zalman mi-Ladi,” focuses on a very specific aspect of Rashaz’s teachings, and on the way in which they have been interpreted since the time of Simon Dubnow. The dissertation convincingly deconstructs the common misconception that Rashaz is a “philosopher” or even a “rationalist,” and reinstates the idea of faith that is not rational in the centre of the Habad worship.

3. Overview of the dissertation.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first sets out the conceptual framework for analysing Rashaz’s idea of time. In it I explore the various contexts in which time features in Rashaz’s works, focusing first on the relation between God and time, and the place of time in the process of creation. I discuss the location of time within the *sefirotic* structure, and the discourse on divine names, contextualising Rashaz’s treatment of time within the worldview which he inherited from earlier strands of the Jewish mystical tradition. In what follows I demonstrate how Rashaz’s attempts to conceptualise time intertwine with his kabbalistic mind-set, this resulting in the notion of continuous cycles of creation and annihilation by way of *ratso va-shov* – the perpetual rhythm of descent and ascent by which the life-giving energy of the divine illuminates the creation and sustains it in existence.

The second chapter discusses the historiosophical underpinnings of Rashaz’s teachings. I present his idea that cosmic history is the product of the dynamic tension between creation, identified with exile, and the redemption, perceived as the *telos* of the creation. This leads to a detailed analysis of Rashaz’s interpretation of Israel’s historical exiles, which he transforms into spiritual states of enslavement as a punishment for sin, impurity and Gentile wisdom, all amounting to detachment from God. The main focus is placed on the Egyptian exile, which – echoing a common wordplay in Rashaz’s teachings, whereby the Hebrew name for Egypt, *Mitsrayim*, is

read as *metsarim* in the sense of constraints – is taken to represent the limitations of materiality and corporeality. I discuss the exile in Egypt as the paradigm of both, the enslavements experienced by the Jewish people throughout history, and the personal enslavement of each and every individual within the material world. As I argue, the hard labour performed by the Israelites during their enslavement in Egypt becomes an allegory for worship in the state of ontological exile, namely during life in the material world. This is followed by discussion of Rashaz’s presentation of the biblical exodus as the paradigm of redemption. I analyse his concept of worship within the material world by means of prayer, Torah study and the performance of the commandments as the only means of attaining the redemption by way of building God’s “dwelling place in the lower worlds” [*dirah ba-tahtonim*].

While the second chapter discusses cosmic history as the process that ultimately leads to the redemption, the third chapter focuses on Rashaz’s eschatology. In this chapter I highlight the distinction Rashaz makes between the messianic days and the time of the resurrection of the dead, exploring the place and role of the Gentile nations in the world-to-come in view of Rashaz’s conviction that the end of days will bring about the ultimate eradication of evil and impurity, which are clearly associated with the Gentile nations throughout his writings. I also explore the role of the Messiah in Rashaz’s teachings, especially against the background of the scope he allows for individual redemption within the unredeemed world, which takes place irrespectively of time and place, and is achievable by means of the daily ritual. I conclude the chapter with an examination of the future-to-come as the end of history, namely, as the era in which the dynamics of *ratso va-shov* – the continuous creation and annihilation of worlds by the descent and ascent of the life-giving divine energy – will be replaced by a state of permanent *shov*, the overflowing abundance of godliness. I present the two paradigms of this everlasting future that are discernable in Rashaz’s teachings: the future-to-come as the everlasting Sabbath, and as the eighth day that is “entirely long and good”, which is connected to the ritual of circumcision, and the abundance of God’s blessings related to this commandment.

In the fourth chapter I discuss the temporal experience in everyday life of Shneur Zalman’s followers. I concentrate on the rituals of prayer and Torah study (in particular on the praxis of studying Torah at set times) as a means of transcending

temporal limitations. Two aspects of these rituals are of particular interest. Firstly, both rituals are time-bound: the times of prayer are determined by Jewish law, and the times for Torah study are set by the student. Secondly, the significance of the ritual of setting times for Torah study in the doctrine of Rashaz tells us much about his target audience and his idea of Hasidism in general. I unpack the various ways in which he reinterpreted this seemingly minor halakhic precept in order to empower and enrich the religious experience of middle-class businessmen, who were hardly as spiritually and intellectually accomplished as the elite core of the Habad movement. This chapter bridges the gap between Rashaz's concepts of time and history on the one hand, and the everyday experience of his followers on the other hand. It shows how the emphasis he placed on the power of time-bound rituals to enhance the spiritual experience of each and every one of his Hasidim helped turn Habad into a broad-based movement without ever compromising its intellectual and spiritual ideals.

The last chapter deals with the nexus of time and gender. It investigates some hagiographical traditions about Rashaz's unique attitude toward women, in an attempt to show that there is hardly any convincing evidence to show that he shared the more inclusive attitude to women of the last two Lubavitcher Rebbes. I take as my starting point the fact that Rashaz locates the source of time within the *sefirotic* tree in the feminine constellation of *Nukba*. I then discuss the functionality of gender categories in Rashaz's thought inasmuch as these categories relate to the opposition of giver - recipient in the *sefirotic* structure. I analyse the *ma'amarim* in which gender imagery is employed to depict the present time of exile and the envisioned future time of redemption, including those that feature the elevation of the feminine aspect of the divine in the future-to-come. In relation to these, I attempt to determine whether there is any correlation between the elevation of the cosmic female and the status of flesh-and-blood women on earth. The correlation Rashaz establishes between women and time thus helps determine his attitude to feminine spirituality, for which I look closely at his attitude to the exemption of women from the time-bound commandments, and to the commandments generally considered feminine, such as the lighting of the Sabbath candles.

CHAPTER 1

1. Time of creation and creation of time.

1.1 Time as a created entity.

Rashaz expressed his reservations about philosophy on numerous occasions,¹ and yet the philosophical discourse has left a clear mark on his teaching. The conceptual framework of his temporal discourse was informed first and foremost by the Aristotelian concept of time as a “number” or a “measure of movement,”² which was embraced by the medieval Jewish philosophers.³ This Aristotelian underpinning is particularly conspicuous in the teachings in which Rashaz describes time as “an aspect of number and division [*behinat mispar ve-hithalkut*],”⁴ a definition of time as an aspect of multiplicity which in turn establishes the opposition between temporality and God who, “blessed be He, is above time [...], for He is the simple one [*ehad pashut*] with no division at all, heaven forefend, but rather everything is united [in Him].”⁵

In Rashaz’s teachings the polarity of God and time follows the dichotomy between the simple and the compound, as well as the philosophical assumption that the infinite and immeasurable is superior to the finite and measurable:

The [Hebrew] word *‘erekh* means “relation” in terms of numerical values, where the number one has a certain relation to the number one million, for it is one-millionth of it. But as regards that which transcends finitude and numeration [*beli gevul u-mispar kelal*], no number can have any relation to it. Even the numbers one billion or one trillion do not [relate to infinity in the

¹ See for example T1, 8:13b; HTT, 3:7, 848a. See also *Seder tefilot*, 133a, where Rashaz values the insight of Jewish women and youths into the unity of God more than that of the gentile philosophers. For a discussion of the status of philosophy in Rashaz’s teachings, see Stamler, “Sekhel,” 107-191.

² Aristotle, *Physics*, 4, 11, 219b2, 4, 12, 221b8; see also Rudavsky, *Time Matters*, 14.

³ Rudavsky, *Time Matters*, 46-7.

⁴ LT *Ba-midbar* 7d.

⁵ MAHZ *‘Inyanim*, 49 [Appendix 1].

way in which] the number one relates to the numbers one billion or one trillion; rather they truly count as nothing.⁶

The above passage from *Tanya* demonstrates the ontological gap between the infinite divine light [*Or Ein Sof*] and the contracted illumination that brings about the lower worlds. This gap results from a qualitative rather than a quantitative difference: the finite cannot be compared to the infinite, and regardless of its measurements, it is always considered “as nothing” when seen from the perspective of infinity. Even though in the passage above Rashaz does not speak explicitly of time, time is implicit in it, as in other places Rashaz does define time as an aspect of number. In fact, for Rashaz, as for some Jewish philosophers⁷ and kabbalists⁸ before him, time is finite and therefore belongs to the realm of creation, while God, precedes the creation, but only in the ontological rather than the temporal sense.⁹

By defining God as infinity [*Ein Sof*]¹⁰ Rashaz emphasizes the divine separateness from the created temporal reality:

⁶ T1, 48:67b [Appendix 2]. Referring to this passage from *Tanya*, Rashaz’s grandson, the third Habad leader, Menahem Mendel Schneersohn, the “Tsemah Tsedek” (*Derekh mitsvotekha*, 57a), formulates the general principle that “the infinite may not come into being out of the finite [*min ha-gevul lo yithaveh ha-bilti ba’al gevul*]”.

⁷ See for example Maimonides, *Moreh nevukhim*, 2:13, discussed in Davidson, *Moses Maimonides*, 366-67; Wolfson, *Crescas’ critique*, 663-64; Gersonides, *Milhamot ha-Shem*, 6, 1:11, 55a-57a.

⁸ See for example Vital, *Ets hayim*, Sha’ar 1, ‘anaf 1, 25, where the infinite and supra-temporal *Ein Sof* is juxtaposed with *Adam kadmon* and the created worlds, which have beginning and end and are therefore subject to time.

⁹ As explicitly expressed by the Tsemah Tsedek: “He, blessed be He, is not dependent on time at all. That being the case we say [about Him] ‘the Ancient One’ [*kadmon*], but not [in the sense of] temporal precedence [*kedimah zemanit*], heaven forefend, which would mean that He preceded the world in time [...]. Rather the precedence, which we ascribe to Him, means that He preceded everything, including the aspect of time [...]. He, blessed be He, was alone prior to the existence of world, and when He created the world, he created time, too.” Schneersohn, *Derekh mitsvotekha*, 57a [Appendix 3].

¹⁰ For the origins and history of the term *Ein Sof* see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 131. For the use of this term and the difference between *Ein Sof* and the light of *Ein Sof* in Rashaz’s teachings, see Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 28-9; Jacobson, “Torat ha-beri’ah,” 308-10.

He, may He be blessed, is verily in the nature of *Ein Sof*. He was, He is and He will be [*hayah, hoveh, ve-yihyeh*] verily with no change, as in the statement [in the daily morning service]: “Thou wast the same before the world was created; thou hast been the same since the world hath been created” etc.¹¹

Rashaz goes to great lengths to emphasize that God’s creative act does not limit or influence Him in any way. Since God endures while being indifferent to temporal change, even such a dramatic event as the creation of the world should not be perceived as an orientation point in the history of the divine. In a similar way Rashaz employs another expression from the daily morning service, which describes God as the “king who alone wast exalted from aforetime [...] extolled from days of old [*hamitnase mi-yemot ‘olam*]. In Rashaz’s explanation, God is exalted and extolled not ‘from’, namely ‘since’ but rather above and beyond *yemot ‘olam*, which he understands literally as the “days of the world”, namely worldly days symbolising temporality. Thus in Rashaz’s understanding the verse of the prayer reaffirms God’s supra-temporal status.

1.2 The timing of the creation of time.

The belief that time is a created entity enables Rashaz to resolve the rabbinic difficulty with the question why the world was not created earlier or later than it actually was. The Sages entertained the idea that since the creation was subject to time, it could have, at least theoretically, occurred at any other time. This presumption is attested, for example, in the Midrash: “Said Rabbi Tanhuma: the world was created at the proper time. The world was not ready to be created prior to that time.”¹² While Rabbi Tanhuma’s statement merely alludes to the possibility of an earlier or a later creation, the argument between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua whether the world was created in the month of Tishri or in the month of Nissan¹³ clearly entails the pre-existence not only of time but also of the Jewish

¹¹ TO 9a [Appendix 4]. See also T1, 20:25b-26a; MAHZ *Ketsarim* 25-26.

¹² *Bereshit rabah* 9:2 [Appendix 5]. See also Rudavsky, *Time Matters*, 6.

¹³ See *bRosh ha-shanah* 10b-11a.

calendar. This is also the opinion of the Tosafists, who reconcile the two opinions of the Sages by stating that “in the month of Tishri [God] thought about creating [the world], but it was not created until Nissan.”¹⁴ Rashaz, however, dismisses the whole problem of the proper time of the creation:

In the beginning of the book *'Ets hayim*¹⁵ [Hayim Vital] asks in the name of the kabbalists why the creation did not occur at an earlier time. He answers that due to the cause and effect order of concatenation, etc., the creation took a long time, etc. [...] However, this answer does not resolve this issue at all, for one may still ask the question why the cause and effect order of concatenation took place at that time and not either earlier or later, etc. The true answer is known in the name of the Maggid, of blessed memory: [it is so] because time itself comes [into being] and flows by way of creation *ex-nihilo* [*yesh me-ayin*] and is a newly created being like the rest of all created beings.¹⁶

Rashaz restates the Lurianic resolution of the dilemma of the Sages. According to *'Ets hayim*, the emanation of the *sefirot* in sequence must have taken place before the actual event of the creation. Thus the duration of the process of emanation determined the timing of the subsequent creation. However, Rashaz points out that the answer offered by *'Ets hayim* is unsatisfactory, for one could further ask why the process of emanation began at that particular point in time rather than earlier or later. In order to resolve this difficulty, he refers to the teachings of his mentor, Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezeritch (d. 1772),¹⁷ explaining that time itself is an entity created *ex-nihilo* [*yesh me-ayin*], and as such it could not have predated or in any way conditioned the creation. For that reason, the very problem that *'Ets hayim* strived to

¹⁴ *Tosafot* Rosh ha-shanah, 27a.

¹⁵ Vital, *'Ets hayim*, Sha'ar 1, 'anaf 1, 25.

¹⁶ *Seder tefilot* 75d-76a [Appendix 6].

¹⁷ This particular teaching is not attested in any of the Maggid's published works. In the Habad edition of his sermons it has been added in the supplement with “Teachings and sayings of the Rav Maggid of Mezeritch, collected from the books of our holy rabbis and leaders [*rabotenu nesi'enu*] and their disciples.” See Dov Ber of Mezeritch, *Magid devarav le-Ya'akov*, Torot u-fitgemei ha-Rav ha-Maggid, 14b-15a.

tackle appears to be merely the result of a misconception of the nature of time and the limits of the temporal discourse. To recap Rashaz's argument is that there was no time before the creation, and therefore the temporal categories of "earlier" and "later" simply do not apply.¹⁸

2. An eternal God in a temporal world.

Since Rashaz pays attention primarily to the creative aspects of the divine,¹⁹ he does not say much about the transcendent and supra-temporal God.²⁰ In his temporal discourse God mostly acts through and in time. Still, Rashaz struggles to find a way of describing God's presence within the creation without compromising His

¹⁸ See also TO 37a. In another sermon Rashaz combines Vital's and the Maggid's arguments. On the one hand, following the Maggidic concept, he underscores that "the world is in the nature of time, and the influx of worlds [*hashpa'at ha-'olamot*] is in the nature of time" (MAHZ *Parshiyot*, i, 126 [Appendix 7]). As such, temporality is a product of the creation. On the other hand, as Rashaz points out, the creation follows a cosmic stage of unity and concealment, after which division is introduced by the powers of Judgements [*Gevurot*], an observation which resembles Vital's argument on the duration of the emanation that preceded the creation. Rashaz's refutation of Vital's argument is elaborated upon by his son and successor, Dov Ber Shneuri. See his *Imrei binah*, Sha'ar kerit'at shema', 39d-40c. See also Gotlieb, *Sekhaltanut*, 63, where he discusses this issue in the writings of the third Habad leader, Menahem Mendel, the Tsemah Tsedek. This resolution of the question of the timing of the creation had already been formulated by Sa'adyah Ga'on: "If, again, that individual were to ask, 'Then why did He not create them [the beings] before this time? Our reply would be: 'There was no time in existence as yet that one could ask about, and furthermore it is of the very nature of Him that acts by free choice to do what He wants when He wants.'" *Emunot ve-de'ot*, Ma'amar 1, 22b, Appendix 8].

¹⁹ See Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 15, where he presents the creation as the main topic of Habad thought.

²⁰ However, Rashaz does delve occasionally into the issues related to the transcendent and infinite God. See Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 46-57. Rashaz's discussion on the time of the creation also belongs to this aspect of his thought, since '*Ets hayim*, to which he refers, presents this issue as being "close to the question of what is above and what is beneath, what was before, and what will be after [*mHagigah* 2:1] [...] and since the question is very profound, so much so that one comes close to danger when one looks deeply into it. We reply as the Sages had said in the above mentioned mishnah: 'whoever looks into these four things, it is better for him not to have come into the world.'" (Vital, '*Ets hayim*, Sha'ar 1, 'anaf 1, 25) [Appendix 9].

transcendence. Thus in one of his teachings he explains that even though one can grasp God through contemplating His acts in the world, this does not reach the essence of the divine being, while contemplating time and space is a possible way of achieving such cognition:

[As in the case of knowing a person by his deeds], so, as it were, in the case of comprehending the divinity [*elohut*], which we comprehend through the act and creation of the worlds and all that fills them. This is why He is called existent [*matsui*], for He brings space and time into existence [*mamtsi*],²¹ as there is not a thing in the world that is not subject to time, and which cannot be referred to as past, present, and future. Consequently, that which brings it to life [*mehayeh*] must of necessity possess this quality and power [of time] in order to be a life giver. There, however it is not divided at all, and therefore He is described as being above time. Yet at the same time He is called by the letters HVYH, which refer to “He is, He was, and He will be [*hoveh, hayah ve-yihyeh*],” to point out that He gives life to the past, the present and the future [*avar, hoveh ve-‘atid*] at every minute; that there is nothing but Him, and for Him the past, present and future are the same.²²

This is yet another example of the extent to which Rashaz’s discourse on time relies on philosophical concepts. Following Maimonides he explains that knowing God’s deeds in the world indirectly provides knowledge of God himself, even though such knowledge offers no insight into the essence of the divine being.²³ The Maimonidean idea of God as the existent who brings all beings into existence leads Rashaz to form

²¹ See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Sefer ha-mada’, Hilekhot yesodei ha-Torah, 1:1: “The basic principle of all basic principles and the pillar of all sciences is to realize that there is a First being [*matsui*] who brought every existing thing into being [*mamtsi kol ha-nimtsa*]. All existing things, whether celestial, terrestrial, or belonging to an intermediate class, exist only through His true existence” [Appendix 10].

²² MAHZ *Parshiyot*, i, 95 [Appendix 11].

²³ See Maimonides, *Moreh nevukhim*, 1:54, and the discussion in Davidson, *Moses Maimonides*, 338, of Maimonides’ interpretation of the denial of Moses’ request to see God’s face [Ex 33:20-23], whereby “Moses’ cryptic request at Sinai and the cryptic replies he received hence teach that the aim of human life is knowledge of God, that man cannot attain knowledge of the divine essence, yet that man can know God indirectly, through His ways and through what he created.”

the principle that in order to be able to create all beings as they are, the creator must already in some way possess their qualities. He proceeds to apply this principle to the existence of time: from the fact that time permeates all created beings, Rashaz infers that temporality should be somehow related to God too. Indeed, God is not subject to time, but He comprises time in a state preceding its division into three tenses: past, present and future, to which the Tetragrammaton alludes, interpreted as comprising the past, present and future forms of the Hebrew verb “to be.”²⁴ More detailed discussion of the relation of God’s names to time will follow below; at this point, however, it is important to stress the fact that God comprises the totality of time, which in turn enables Him to cause temporal reality to exist.

The passage quoted above underscores the complexity of the relation between God and time in Rashaz’s writing, which, as Dov Schwartz has noted, cannot be exhausted by the dichotomy of “supra-temporal” versus “infra-temporal.”²⁵ In fact, the God of Rashaz’s teachings is above time, is the source of time and acts through time. In order to elaborate on the philosophical idea of God as the existent who brings to existence time and temporal reality, Rashaz turns to kabbalistic terminology.

2.1 World, year, soul.

There are several *ma’amarim* in Rashaz’s teachings that explain the emergence of time from the creator into the created world. One of them refers to the triad of “world, year, soul” [‘*olam, shanah, nefesh*], drawn from *Sefer yetsirah*.²⁶ These three

²⁴ Stern (*Time and Process*, 33 n. 21) names the piyut *Ha-ohetz be-yad midat ha-mishpat* as the first occurrence of this idea.

²⁵ As opposed to the doctrine of the Maggid of Mezeritch. See Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 37 n. 33.

²⁶ *Sefer yetsirah*, 3:3-8, 4:4-12, 6:1-2. On the triad of ‘*olam, shanah, nefesh* in *Sefer yetsirah*, see Stern, *Time and Process*, 35-37, where he dismisses the later interpretations of these terms as abstract notions of space, time and person, showing instead that they originally referred to the 12 signs of the Zodiac, 7 planets and human organs. The importance of these notions in their later, abstract sense in Habad tradition is evidenced by the Tsemah Tsedek’s statement (*Or ha-Torah*, Shemot, iii, 823) that they constitute the very basis of *Sefer yetsirah*.

notions, borrowed from ancient mystical tradition, are interpreted by Rashaz as space, time and the divine life force, which are described as properties that are present “in all created beings.”²⁷ Moreover, the fact that they are initially contained within God creates a link between the transcendent God, the source of all beings, and the created beings – a link which in hasidic sources is referred to as “the secret of smoke” [*sod ‘ashan*].²⁸

Surely, the Light of Infinity [*Or Ein Sof*], blessed be he, is drawn down into everything, as Scripture says: “And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke” [*ve-har Sinai ‘ashan kulo*; Ex 19:18]. [The word *‘ashan* is to be interpreted as an acronym of the Hebrew for] world, year, soul. World is a reference to space [*makom*], into which the Infinity [*Ein Sof*] is drawn, as Scripture says: “Behold, there is a place by me” [*hineh makom iti*; Ex 33:21]. Likewise with regard to year, which is a reference to time: “He reigned, he reigns, and he will reign”²⁹ – past, future and present, all are in the nature of Infinity, etc. In the soul, too, there is an illumination of the Infinite.³⁰

‘Olam, shanah, nefesh, or in other words space, time and the divine life force, represent three different aspects of the divine illumination in the world. Even though all these terms belong to the created reality, Rashaz cites Scripture to show that their source lies within the Godhead. He also links these notions with the Sinaitic revelation by deciphering the Hebrew word for smoke – *‘ashan*, with which, according to Scripture, Mount Sinai was covered at the time – as an acronym of *‘olam, shanah, nefesh*. The Sinaitic revelation serves therefore as a paradigm for the incorporation and ultimate annihilation [*bitul*] of these three worldly categories within God,³¹ seemingly because, at Mount Sinai, the borders between transcendence

²⁷ MAHZ *Parshiyot*, ii, 865.

²⁸ On the “secret of smoke” in the teachings of Ya’akov Yosef of Polnoye and Maggid of Mezeritch, see Margolin, *Mikdash adam*, 325 n. 143, and 404. The interpretation of the Hebrew word for smoke [*‘ashan*] as an acronym for *‘olam, shanah, nefesh*, comes from the Ra’avad’s commentary on *Sefer yetsirah*. See *Sefer yetsirah*, 2b.

²⁹ For the history of this expression, traced back to the 7th century liturgy attributed to Eleazar ha-Kalir, see Stern, *Time and Process*, 33 n. 21.

³⁰ LT *Shir ha-shirim* 7b [Appendix 12].

³¹ See TO 116d.

and immanence, or the supra- and infra-temporal realities, were dissolved. In sum, time, space and the divine life force are perceived as transcendental notions that permeate all finite created beings while their source is incorporated in the divine infinity.

2.2 *The eternal Torah.*

The Sinaitic revelation, mentioned above as the moment of the disintegration of boundaries between the transcendent and the immanent, points also to the role of the Torah as a bond that ties the eternal God to the temporal world. Already the Sages maintained the eternity of the Torah, which existentially preceded the creation³² and served as a blueprint for the creation of the world.³³ Rashaz, too, makes use of the idea of the eternal Torah. In his teachings it is an epitome of God's will [*ratson*] and wisdom located within the sefirotic structure in *Keter* and *Hokhmah*,³⁴ which penetrate the spatio-temporal reality. In a sermon elaborating on the words of the *Shema*' prayer, Rashaz says:

[After the *Shema*' and *ve-ahavta*, God] said [Dt 6:6]: "and these words which I command thee this day." That is to say, the Torah, which is His wisdom, [...] descends from a high to a low place [...]. The low place is time and space, which are a contrary thing [to God]. [...] And this is His true will, for even though He Himself is above time and space [...], nevertheless His wisdom, blessed be He, is within time and space, that is to say, the entire Torah is [subject to time and space] like the [commandments of wearing the] fringed garment [*tsitsit*], [laying] the phylacteries [*tefilin*], reciting the *Shema*' and [observing] the Sabbath and festivals at set times. Therefore the

³² *Bereshit rabah* 8:2; *bPesahim* 54a.

³³ *Bereshit rabah* 1:1.

³⁴ On the identity of *Keter* and the divine will, see for example LT *Shelah* 38c, *Balak* 68a, *Shir ha-shirim* 26d; *Seder tefilot* 161c. See also Hallamish, *Introduction*, 129. In Rashaz's theosophy, *Keter* is not included in the count of the ten *sefirot* but plays the role of an intermediary between the sefirotic world and its transcendent source above (see Hallamish, "Mishnato ha-'iyunit," 70-4; Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 64-5 n. 142).

Torah is the source of the life force of all the worlds, for His wisdom, blessed be He, required that His will should be within time and space. This is how all the worlds were revealed at the point at which [the divine will] entered time and space.³⁵

The biblical verse with which Rashaz opens his exegesis bears several meanings. Firstly, “words” are taken to be a reference to the Torah, whose descent from its transcendent divine source to the people of Israel in the lower world is an effect of the arbitrary divine will, expressed by the word “command.” Secondly, “this day” [*ha-yom*] introduces a temporal perspective: the fact that God, supposedly unbounded by time, is associated in the verse with such a short period of time as a day, underscores the role of the Torah as the intermediary between supra- and infra-temporal realities. In addition, the idea of the Torah as the link between God and the world is reinforced elsewhere in Rashaz’s sermons, where the notion that the Torah “binds two opposites: the aspect of [God] surrounding all worlds [*sovev kol ‘almin*], which is above time and space, with the aspect of time and space,”³⁶ is supported by an invented etymology, whereby the Hebrew word for ‘command’ in “I command thee” [*anokhi metsavekha*] derives from the root *tsade-vav-tav* (to join) rather than *tsade-vav-he* (to command).³⁷

The expression “this day” in the Deuteronomy verse can be approached from yet another perspective. It may also point to the eternity of the Torah. As Rashaz says: “It has already been three thousand years since the Torah was given, but to you

³⁵ MAHZ *‘Inyanim*, 93 [Appendix 13].

³⁶ MAHZ *‘Inyanim*, 265 [Appendix 14]. On the two modes of the divine lights, Surrounding [*sovev kol ‘almin*] and Filling all Worlds [*memale kol ‘almin*], see Elior, “HaBaD”, 171-72; Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 65-66, Hallamish, “Mishnato ha-‘iyunit,” 50-55, Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 62-3 and 68-75

³⁷ See MAHZ *‘Inyanim*, 265. Rashaz derives the word “commandment” [*mitsvah*] from the word “company” [*tsavta*], namely, he understands it as something that joins things together. See for example TO 6b, 18b, 82a; LT *Be-hukotai* 45c, 47b, *Hukat* 57c-d, 58c, *Pinhas* 76a, 77a-b, *Mas‘ei* 92c, *Va-ethanan* 8c, *Nitsavim* 85d, *Shemini ‘atseret* 83c. Wordplays based on invented etymologies can be found throughout the traditional Jewish sources. See Greenstein, “Wordplay, Hebrew”; Heinemann, *Darkhei ha-agadah*, 110-12, 117; Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 44-50.

it should be as if it was given today [*ha-yom*].”³⁸ In other words, despite the fact that the Torah was given at a certain moment of history, it has lasted unaffected by the passage of time, providing access to the Sinaitic experience to every Jewish person through the ritual of Torah reading.

The presence of the eternal Torah in the temporal world results from the divine will to bring God’s wisdom into the lowest domain of reality. This reality, in Rashaz’s teachings, is the spatio-temporal world, described as a “contrary thing” to God, on account of its separateness and ultimate distance from the divine unity. The presence of the divine wisdom in the spatio-temporal world is established through rituals and ritual objects prescribed by the Torah. Indeed, objects such as the *tefilin*, the ritual fringes or the parchments of *mezuzot* are subject to spatiality, while the Sabbath and festivals are subject to temporality, yet since they are commanded by the Torah, they also belong in the eternal divine wisdom and will.

The significance of Torah, commandments and ritual objects, will be of great importance in the discussion of the divine service of the individual in the next chapters of the present thesis. Here it is important to stress the role of the Torah as the intermediary between eternity and temporality, a relationship which Rashaz expresses in even stronger terms when he pronounces the Torah the very reason for the existence of the world. As he explains, it was God’s will that His wisdom (the Torah) should extend down to the spatio-temporal reality, and to make His will come true, he created and sustained time and space. Consequently, the Torah is what causes the life force to be drawn into the worlds.

Furthermore, if the Torah is the cause of the existence of the world, it must have preceded the creation. Rashaz explains the eternity and pre-existence of the Torah, not in the simplistic terms of the Midrash, which speaks of two thousand years that separated the Torah from the world,³⁹ but rather by transposing the idea of the Midrash to the sefirotic scheme: the Torah, being God’s will and wisdom, originates in *Keter*, that is in an entity that transcends the sefirotic tree, and in

³⁸ MAHZ 5570, 10 [Appendix 15].

³⁹ *Bereshit rabah* 8:2.

Hokhmah, that is in the highest of all the *sefirot*.⁴⁰ Hence, the Torah precedes the lower worlds in the ontological rather than the temporal order.

2.3 Time and the divine names.

Another interpretative strategy, which Rashaz adopts to tackle the problem of the supra-temporal God's involvement in temporality, relates to the dynamics of the divine names that represent different aspects of God's relationship, whether separateness from or involvement in temporal reality, and in more general terms, aspects of God's transcendence and immanence.

The juxtaposition of the Tetragrammaton and the names *Elohim* and *Adonai* plays a prominent role in Rashaz's model of the creation, of which the discourse on time constitutes only a part. Used as a hermeneutical model for the contraction of the divine light in the process of creation, it makes its way to the second part of the book of *Tanya*: *Sha'ar ha-yihud vеха-emunah*,⁴¹ as well as to some of Rashaz's *ma'amarim*:

Now, Scripture says that “the Lord [*YHVH*] God [*Elohim*] is a sun and a shield” [Ps 84:11]. Just as the sun has its covering that can bear its radiance [...], so, by way of allegory, [the name] *Elohim* is the covering for the name *HVYH*, which conceals [the name] *HVYH*. This is [the meaning of the verse] “*HVYH* is *Elokim*” [Dt 4:39], for the coming into being of the worlds is due to [the name] *Elohim*, that is, on account of the contraction [*tsimtsum*] [...], and since the radiance [*ziv*] is unlimited, two contractions, general and particular, were necessary in order to create separate beings. *Elohim* stands for the general contraction and the aspect of time: “*YHVH* reigned, *YHVH* reigns, [and *YHVH* will reign],”⁴² whereas *Adonai* stands for the particular

⁴⁰ See note 34 above.

⁴¹ T2, 4:78b-79a.

⁴² See note 29 above.

contraction, for [...] the aspect of Lord [*adon*] refers to the Blessed One only with respect to separate beings, and therefore this contraction is particular.⁴³

The Tetragrammaton and *Elohim* are compared to the sun and the shield that covers it, protecting the world below and preventing it from being burned by the intensity of the sun's light. The purpose of this allegory is to describe the contraction [*tsimtsum*] of the divine in the process of creation, whereby the names *Elohim* and *Adonai* restrain the unbound divine light originating in the Tetragrammaton, so as to enable the creation of individual beings.⁴⁴ The divine light mediated through these lower divine names provides the created beings with life while at the same time allowing them to preserve their individual existence. They are not at risk of dissolving in the divine light because it reaches them in diminished form rather than in full force.

Rashaz identifies the Tetragrammaton with God's supra-temporal dimension, pointing to the past, present and future forms of the verb "to be" comprised in it.⁴⁵ This step allows him to employ the concept of the divine contraction in the discourse on God and temporality. On the whole, there are two dimensions of the contraction – general and particular. On the one hand, the particular contraction gives rise to the existence of individual beings, presumably because it adjusts the radiance of the divine light to each and every one of them. The particular contraction is also associated with the name *Adonai* (the Lord — a euphemism traditionally used in liturgy as a substitute for the four-letter divine name), as the idea of lordship reflects both God's supremacy and the gap separating Him from the particular beings.⁴⁶ On the other hand, the general contraction, linked to the name *Elohim*, diminishes the divine light in order to create the temporal framework in which these beings would

⁴³ MAHZ *'Inyanim*, 265 [Appendix 16].

⁴⁴ Rashaz explains the role of the Tetragrammaton in the process of creation *ex-nihilo* [*yesh me-ayin*] by referring to its etymology, where YHVH is understood as the imperfect form of the verb "to cause to exist." See for example T2, 4:79a: "The meaning of the name *HVYH* is 'that which brings everything into existence [*mehaveh et ha-kol*] *ex-nihilo*. The letter *yud* [modifies the verb] indicating that the action is present and continuous" [Appendix 17].

⁴⁵ See note 24 above.

⁴⁶ This idea will be further discussed below in relation to the *sefirah* of *Malkhut*.

exist, and this in turn corresponds to the interpretation of the name *Elohim* as nature.⁴⁷

As in the earlier example of *'olam, shanah, nefesh*, so here, the discourse on divine names shows time to be a created entity that conditions all individual worldly beings. Temporality is created from the concealment of God's four-letter name by the name *Elohim* - an idea that draws on the common occurrence of these two names together in the Bible. The creation of individual beings comes as a result of the contraction of the Tetragrammaton's life force into the name *Adonai*, an idea which is based on the ritual replacement of the ineffable four-letter name of God with its liturgical euphemism.

It is worth noting that the distinction between the roles of the two contractions of the Tetragrammaton, by *Elohim* on the one hand, and by *Adonai* on the other hand, is not maintained rigidly in Rashaz's texts. In another *ma'amar*, Rashaz infers the occurrence of time and space from the integration of the Tetragrammaton within *Adonai* rather than within *Elohim*.⁴⁸ Two possible ways of integrating the Tetragrammaton with *Adonai* reflect the two-fold relation between God and spatio-temporal reality. The integration of *Adonai* within *YHVH* reflects the nullity of the creation in the face of the divine wholeness, whereas the integration of *YHVH* within *Adonai* shows that the divinity permeates the spatio-temporal reality:

Time and space, too, are from Him, blessed be He, and they are not a thing that is separate from Him [...]. Only from the point of view of the recipients it is an individual thing and a real opposite [to God], whereas in truth, [even His mode of] surrounding all worlds [*sovev kol 'almin*] fills the dimensions of time and space.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ The Hebrew word for nature, *ha-teva'*, and the name *Elohim* have the same numerical value of 286. See for example T2, 6:80a-b. Nigal (*Ledat ha-hasidut*, 24 n. 8.) points to Yosef Gikatilla's *Ginat egoz* as a source of this gematria. On the two contractions in Rashaz's teachings, see Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 86-114.

⁴⁸ MAHZ *'Inyanim*, 92.

⁴⁹ Ibid. [Appendix 18].

Rashaz employs zoharic terminology to describe these two aspects of the relation between God and creation, naming them upper and lower unity [*yihuda 'ila'ah* and *yihuda tata'a*]. The “upper unity” represents the unity of the divine as the only true being, as opposed to all the apparent beings of the world, whereas the “lower unity” means that the world, perceived by human as a separate entity, is also permeated with the divine reality.⁵⁰ Although from the perspective of the created beings, time and space are non-divine entities, in fact they both are permeated by *sovev kol 'almin*, the transcendent aspect of God.

In sum, the dynamics of the divine names enable Rashaz to depict the transition from a supra-temporal God to an infra-temporal reality. It presents time as a side effect of the contraction of the ineffable four-letter divine name into its euphemistic substitutes. From this perspective, time becomes an expression of God’s lordship in the world, and a framework wherein individual beings can exist by God’s will.

2.4 Malkhut as the source of time.

The two-fold unity of God and the world finds its expression in the first two verses of the *Shema*‘ prayer. The first verse, “Hear o Israel, *YHVH* is our God [*Elohenu*], *YHVH* is one”, corresponds to the upper unity, while the second verse, “Blessed be His name, whose glorious kingdom is forever and ever”, corresponds to the lower unity.⁵¹ The words of the prayer not only explain the two unifications and the relation between the two divine names mentioned in it; they also make it possible to locate the source of time and space within *Malkhut* – the lowest level within the *sefirotic* structure.

Rashaz discerns in the *Shema*‘ prayer several parallels between the upper unity and the lower. Firstly, the divine transcendence expressed by the word “one” [*ehad*] in the first verse of the *Shema*‘, is paralleled by the expression, in the second verse, of God’s presence in the world, which will last forever “and ever” [*va-‘ed*].

⁵⁰ On upper and lower unities, see Elijor, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 27-29.

⁵¹ See T2, 7:81b, based on Zii, 134a.

The interchangeability of *ehad* and *va-ed* serves to demonstrate that the divine transcendence and the divine immanence are but two modes of expression of the Divine unity.⁵² Secondly, as the Tetragrammaton in the first verse of the *Shema* expresses the upper unity, so the “kingdom” (*Malkhut*) in the second verse points to the lower unity of God within the world.

The word *Malkhut* describes the character of God’s relation with his creation. In Rashaz’s teachings, God is compared to a king who must have subjects on whom to exercise his power. It is not enough for the king to rule over his family or his court; in order to display his supremacy to the full, he needs to be able to subdue people who are not close to him. In Rashaz’s allegory of the king, the word ‘people’ [*am*] is explained as meaning ‘those which is dimmed’ [*omemot*], namely, something that is most estranged and remote from its source – the king’s glory. It refers to individual beings in the world, whose existence ultimately stands in contrast to the unity of God. As the allegory intends to show, God creates these beings in order to demonstrate that they constitute a part of his dominion, while at the same time proving that it is impossible for any existence not to result from His will.⁵³ As in the *ma’amar* quoted above, in which Rashaz referred to the spatio-temporal reality as the most disparaged place into which the Torah descends, here, too, he describes the spatio-temporal world as the entity that is opposed to the divine being. By adding *Malkhut* to the picture, he underscores the absolute transcendence of God on the one hand, while on the other hand, presenting *Malkhut* as the divine agent that acts through His immanence:

All these dimensions [of space and time] have no relation to the holy supernal attributes. Only concerning the attribute of His *Malkhut* [...] is it possible to say that He [...] is King above without end and below without

⁵² See T2, 7:81b, MAHZ *Ketuvim*, ii, 20. The idea of the interchangeability of these two words comes from Zii, 135a and is based on the fact that the *alef* of *ehad* and the *vav* of *va-’ed* are interchangeable by dint of belonging to the same group of vowel-letters (*matres lectionis*), while the *het* of *ehad* and the *ayin* of *va-’ed* are similarly interchangeable by dint of belonging to the same group of guttural letters. See on this Wineberg, *Lessons in Tanya*, iii, 908-9.

⁵³ See T2, 7:81b; MAHZ *’Inyanim*, 92; Elior, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 202. The allegory of God as sovereign of his people will be further discussed in chapter 2, section 1.1.

limit, and likewise in all four directions. The same is true concerning the dimension of time: “God [YHVH] reigns, God has reigned, God will reign.” Thus, the life-force of space, and likewise of time, and their coming into being from nothingness, and their existence as long as they shall exist, are from the attribute of His *Malkhut* [...] and from the Name of *Adnut*, blessed be He.⁵⁴

The interpretation of God’s relation to the world in terms of kingship or dominion has further consequence: it transposes the contraction of the name *YHVH* into *Adonai* or *Elohim*, which takes place in the process of the creation, as discussed earlier in the chapter, to a process that takes place in the sefirotic realm. The transposition, which plays on the proximity of meanings between *adnut* (lordship) and *malkhut* (kingship),⁵⁵ allows for the definition of the *sefirah Malkhut* as the intermediary between transcendence and immanence,⁵⁶ where time and space are created out of nothing. Elsewhere, Rashaz provides a biblical source for this, which in his interpretation refers to the origin of both the dimensions of time and space within *Malkhut*:

‘Thy kingdom [*malkhutekha*] is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations’ [Ps 145:13]: ‘everlasting’ [*kol ‘olamim*, literally ‘all worlds’] [refers to] space; ‘all generations’ [*kol dor va-dor*] to time.⁵⁷

As noted by Wolfson, a parallel is drawn here between the upper and lower unities within the conceptual framework of the Habad temporal discourse.⁵⁸ The four-letter

⁵⁴ T2, 7:82a [Appendix 19].

⁵⁵ See T2, 7:81b.

⁵⁶ On *Malkhut* as a liminal *sefirah* in Rashaz’s teachings, see for example T2, 7:81a-b; TO 37a. For a discussion of this concept in Rashaz’s doctrine of creation, see Jacobson, “Torat ha-beri’ah,” 340-43; Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 67. The concept itself is derived from older sources. See the discussions of *Malkhut* / *Shekhinah* in Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape*, 157-82; Hallamish, *Introduction*, 138; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 373-376. On the role of *Malkhut* as an intermediary, see Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 55-6, n. 107.

⁵⁷ LT *Aharei* 27b [Appendix 20]. See also TO 37a-b; LT *Be-ha ‘alotekha* 30a; MAHZ *Ketuvim*, i, 21.

⁵⁸ Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, 108-09.

name of God, which “indicates that He transcends time, that He was, He is, and He will be — all at the same instant,”⁵⁹ is paralleled by *Malkhut*, which comprises three tenses: past, present and future.⁶⁰ The parallel comes to show that even though time comes into being only in *Malkhut*, its root reaches much higher. It also shows the connection between the supra-temporal God and the temporal world:

Although He, blessed be He, transcends space and time, He is nevertheless also found below, within space and time, that is, He unites with His attribute of *Malkhut*, from which space and time are derived and come into existence, and this is the lower unity.⁶¹

On the symbolic level, the God-world relation is expressed by the verse: “God [*YHVH*] reigns, God has reigned, God will reign,”⁶² in which the Tetragrammaton is followed by the verb “to reign.” Thus verb, denoting God’s involvement in the world, is conjugated in three tenses: present, past and future, yet it remains unaffected by the changing temporal modes. In order to preserve the concept of divine immutability despite constant changes in the world governed by the divine, Rashaz employs the idea of the disclosure [*gilui*] of God in the world:

Malkhut of the world of Emanation [...] is the root and the source of the coming into being of time [...]. As is known, the coming into being of the past, present and future in the worlds of Creation, Formation and Making comes from the aspect of “He reigned, He reigns and He will reign,”⁶³ etc., which is the aspect of world, year, etc.,⁶⁴ as is written elsewhere. And the source of time is only in *Malkhut*, which is the disclosure of the [world of] Emanation, the World of Disclosure [...]. This, however, is not the case above, where the aspect of World of Concealment does not fall into the category of the source of time, for it belongs in the mode of Surrounding all

⁵⁹ T2, 7:82a.

⁶⁰ Based on the interpretation of the verse “He reigned, he reigns, and he will reign” [*malakh, molekh, yimlokh*] as corresponding to the past, present and future tenses. See note 29 above.

⁶¹ T2, 7:82a [Appendix 21].

⁶² See note 29 above.

⁶³ See note 29 above.

⁶⁴ See note 26 above.

Worlds [*sovev kol 'almin*], which is the aspect of concealment of the essence [*he'elem ha-'atsmiyut*].⁶⁵

According to this passage, *Malkhut* of the world of Emanation brings the divine essence [*'atsmiyut*] out of the state of concealment [*he'elem*], so that it is disclosed in the world [*'olam*], namely within the categories of time and space.⁶⁶ The process of disclosure itself is in turn related to the concept of “world, year, soul,” where “world” stands for the lower worlds in which the divinity is revealed, “year” stands for *Malkhut*, which is the source of time, and “soul” represents the divine life force flowing down from *Ze'ir anpin* to *Malkhut*.⁶⁷

Malkhut, therefore, is a liminal entity that borders the temporal and supra-temporal realities. On the one hand, it separates the three lower worlds from the world of Emanation, often described by Rashaz as one with the Divine.⁶⁸ It also separates God's transcendent mode of surrounding all worlds [*sovev kol 'almin*] from His immanent mode of filling all worlds [*memale kol 'almin*], as well as the World of Concealment from the World of Disclosure, and what is above time from what is within the temporal realm. On the other hand, *Malkhut* is an intermediary entity that reveals the infinite God within the finite world in categories of time and space. When it ascends to the world of Emanation, it is united with the supra-temporality symbolized by the Tetragrammaton, where “He was, He is and He will be – all at the same instant.” Yet when *Malkhut* of the World of Emanation descends to become *'Atik*⁶⁹ of the World of Creation, it becomes the source of time in the lower worlds.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ MAHZ 5564, 199 [Appendix 22].

⁶⁶ See also Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, 111.

⁶⁷ See MAHZ 5571, 168. See also MAHZ 5564, 199; LT *Ha'azinu* 74d.

⁶⁸ See for example T1, 39:52b, 40:55a, 42:59a, 51:72b, T2, 5:80a, T4, 6:110a; TO 64d. See also Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 50.

⁶⁹ The notion of *'Atik* (‘the ancient one’) or *'Atik yomin* (‘the ancient of days’) denotes a higher aspect of *Keter*, as opposed to *Arikh anpin*, which denotes its lower aspect. See Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 71-72. Both these terms come from the *Idrot* of the *Zohar*, where they are used interchangeably as names of the first *partzuf* (see for example Giller, *Reading the Zohar*, 105; Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 272); a clear distinction between *'Atik* and *Arikh* in Rashaz's teachings is influenced by the

It is clear, then, that the relation between *Malkhut* and the Tetragrammaton cannot be exhausted by the dichotomy of supra- versus infra-temporality, or eternal versus temporal. Rather, Rashaz proposes a more sophisticated model of the transition from the ultimate unity of God to the multiplicity of the temporal world. The realm that lies beneath *Malkhut* of Emanation is clearly temporal. What is above it, however, is not deemed to be eternal:

The notion of eternity [...] refers only to that which falls within the category and limitation of time, [even though] it endures for a very long time. But the duration of time does not have any relevance to that which is not within the category and limitation of time; rather, [it refers to] “He was, He is, and He will be” — all at once. This category and this notion refers only to [...] His Kingship [*Malkhuto*], blessed be He, which is within the category and limitation of time: “He reigned, He reigns, He will reign.”⁷¹

Eternity is itself a mode of temporality, regardless of the duration of time it denotes; hence the notion of eternity cannot apply to the transcendent aspect of the divine, which is above any temporal characterisation. The idea of the divine that is above eternity is alluded to by the Tetragrammaton when it is used as the symbol of the one instant which comprises the aspects of “was”, “is”, and “will be,” Namely the past, present and future. As will be shown below, this aspect of the Godhead relates to the sequence of events taking place within the theosophical structure rather than to the

Lurianic Kabbalah, see Giller, *Reading the Zohar*, 109-110; Vital, *'Ets hayim*, Hekhal ha-ketarim, Sha'ar 12, ch. 1, 167; Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 53-54 n. 99. For sources on *Keter*, which is excluded from the count of the ten *sefirot* but plays the role of intermediary between the sefirotic world and its transcendent source, see note 34 above. By describing *Malkhut* of the World of Emanation as *'Atik* of the World of Creation, Rashaz presents *Malkhut* of the upper world as the source of the worlds that lie beneath it. In this way he highlights the continuity between the upper and the lower worlds, while at the same time keeping them apart. See Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 53-54 n. 99, 55 n. 107.

⁷⁰ LT *Shir ha-shirim* 8b.

⁷¹ LT *Shabat shuvah*, 67c [Appendix 23].

passage of time within the world; it is identified as the “order of time” [*sefer ha-zemanim*],⁷² and as such it precedes ontically the existence of time in the world.⁷³

2.5 *The order of time, or time which is above time.*

Since *Ein Sof* is utterly beyond temporal characterisation, there must be an entity that mediates it to the temporal reality of the lower worlds as they come into being. It should be noted, however, that the coming into being of the four worlds – Emanation, Creation, Formation, and Making, takes place in two stages. The first stage is the emergence of the World of Emanation, in which all ten *sefirot* remain in a state of unity with God.⁷⁴ The second stage comprises the three worlds that lie beneath it, which are in a state of separation and multiplicity. These two stages require two different intermediaries to connect them to their supernal source. As was shown above, *Malkhut* of the World of Emanation mediates between the domain that lies above time and the three lower worlds that are subject to temporality, a role which renders her the effective source of time. An analogous role is ascribed to the more elevated entity of ‘Primordial Man’ (*Adam kadmon*), which mediates the

⁷² On the relation between the Tetragrammaton and the order of time, see for example *Seder tefilot* 76b; MAHZ *Nevi'im*, 116.

⁷³ A similar Habad model of time’s coming-into-being has been presented by Wolfson, who based his analysis on the writings of Rashaz’s son and successor, Dov Ber. In his book on time in Kabbalah (*Alef, Mem, Tau*, 109), Wolfson distinguished between three levels: *Malkhut* as the origin of time, *YHVH* as the “compresence of the three temporal modalities – what was, what is, and what will be,” and the light of *Ein Sof* “that is utterly beyond time.” However, the fragment of Rashaz’s teachings quoted above presents a slightly different picture: *Ein Sof* is entirely above any temporal or quasi-temporal characterisation; the Tetragrammaton transcends temporality, yet it comprises *modi* of priority and posteriority; eternal *Malkhut* is the source of time, as it comprises all three tenses; and finally, the lower worlds are subject to temporality. The discrepancies between this model and Wolfson’s have their source in Dov Ber’s text, wherein he transposes the source of time into the Tetragrammaton, and states that contrary to his father’s words, it “comprises past, present and future as one, but [...] does not belong to that which is entirely above time.” See Dov Ber Shneuri, *Imrei binah*, Sha’ar kerit’at shema’, 40c.

⁷⁴ See note 68 above.

transcendent God to the World of Emanation, which itself precedes the creation of time but is subject to the “order of time” [*sefer ha-zeman*]:

[*Adam kadmon*] is called “primordial thought” [*mahashavah kedumah*], for through it He [i.e. God] “looks and sees to the end of all generations”⁷⁵ in one glance, and therefore he [*Adam kadmon*] is called “one thought,” for it is but one thought only.⁷⁶

In the spirit of the Lurianic Kabbalah,⁷⁷ Rashaz presents *Adam kadmon* as an entity that emanates from *Ein Sof* prior to the emergence of the hierarchy of the four worlds. However, he strips *Adam kadmon* of his mythical connotations and presents him instead as a simple and instantaneous divine thought that comprises the totality of the creation with all its future developments in all their details. Since the emergence of time constitutes a part of the creation, *Adam kadmon* comprises the idea of time, too. At first it develops into the ‘order of time’, but with the creation of separate beings, this turns into time proper as it is experienced in the lower worlds.

These gradations of temporality show that Habad thinkers in general, and Rashaz in particular, have struggled to fill the ontological gap between the creation and a God who is beyond any positive characterisation. Their discourse on time, which constitutes a part of this intellectual endeavour, drew on a wide range of midrashic, kabbalistic, and philosophical traditions. The complexity of the different worldviews stemming from all these earlier sources led to the proliferation in Habad thought of a variety of intertwining entities, whose role is to mediate between the supra- and the infra-temporal realities. Moreover, the vast ontological gap between unity and multiplicity provoked Habad thinkers to further mediate the distance between God and temporal reality by adding to their temporal discourse the intermediary entity of “the order of time” [*sefer ha-zeman* or *sefer ha-zemanim*]. Admittedly, this notion remained marginal for Rashaz, possibly on account of its highly theoretical character. However, it was discussed extensively by his grandson

⁷⁵ Musaf for Rosh ha-shanah.

⁷⁶ See MAHZ 5565, i, 323 [Appendix 24].

⁷⁷ On the notion of *Adam kadmon* in the Lurianic Kabbalah, see: Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 137; Fine, *Physician*, 133-34.

and third leader of the Lubavitch branch of Habad, Menahem Mendel Schneersohn (the Tsemah Tsedek), who among his halakhic and mystical teachings, produced also a strictly philosophical book, *Sefer ha-hakirah*, which contained an exposition of time in Jewish philosophy from the Habad perspective.⁷⁸

The concept of the order of the time, or a quasi-temporal order of events that precedes the coming into being of time, appears already in the literature of the Sages:

Said rabbi Yehudah bar Simon: “Scripture does not say: ‘there shall be evening,’ but rather ‘and there was evening’ [Gn 1:5], for there was a prior order of time [*sefer ha-zemanim*]. Rabbi Abbahu said: “this comes to teach that He was creating worlds and destroying them, until he created these [worlds].⁷⁹

The two Amoras in the Midrash question the significance of the *vav* consecutive in the Hebrew account of the creation, where the presence of this *vav* changes the meaning of the verse from the anticipated “there shall be evening” [*yehi ‘erev*] into “and there was evening” [*va-yehi ‘erev*]. The former would have meant that evening and morning were to follow the creation of light, whereas the latter suggests that they had already passed before light was created. Rabbi Yehudah resolves the difficulty by saying that even though time had not yet come into being, there must have already existed a certain “order of time,” whereas according to Abbahu, the creation of the world as we know it was preceded by any number of abortive creations.

Both these resolutions reverberate in Habad teachings. However, the sequence of created and destroyed worlds that preceded the creation of our world is substituted, under the influence of Kabbalah, by the sequence of emanated upper worlds that preceded the creation of the world we inhabit:

⁷⁸ On *Sefer ha-hakirah*, first published in 1912 in Poltava, see: Loewenthal, "'Reason' and 'Beyond Reason,'" 123-126; idem, "The image of Maimonides," 290-92; Stamler, "Sekhel," 203-10.

⁷⁹ *Bereshit rabah*, 3:7 [Appendix 25].

And behold: in truth, “I am the Lord, I change not” [Mal 3:6], for there is no change in Him, blessed be He [...] for “He, with His name alone existed”⁸⁰ for several thousands and myriads of years before the creation of the world (and similarly, before the coming into being of time, for time, too, is created. But there was an order of time before the creation of this world, that is, from the time of the emanation and coming into being of spiritual worlds, as is written in *‘Ets hayim*, Sha‘ar ‘igulim ve-yosher [Sha‘ar 1, ‘anaf 1, 25]. But prior to this, even the order of time was not applicable, for He, blessed be He, is completely above time).⁸¹

The main message communicated in this passage is the immutability of God in the face of creation, which is a recurrent idea in Rashaz’s teaching. Much more interesting is the difficulty that Rashaz faces when explicating this idea, as it involves the use of temporal notions, for example, in the description of God who remained unchanged during the thousands of years preceding the creation of the world. This stands in obvious contradiction to Rashaz’s belief that time itself is a created entity, and forces him to provide an additional explanation: the gap between God and the creation is measured by the order of time rather than by time proper.

In order to explicate the midrashic idea of the order of time, Rashaz utilizes the very same passage from Vital’s *‘Ets hayim* that he refuted elsewhere as an insufficient explanation of the timing of the creation.⁸² In this passage Vital argues that the creation was preceded by a sequence of emanations, and that the duration of this sequence determined the exact timing of the creation of the worlds. Rashaz does not accept Vital’s argument with regard to time and the creation, but he is willing to use the idea that lies behind it: in Rashaz’s *ma’amar* the notion of the order of time explains the sequence of the coming into being of the *sefirot* of the World of Emanation.

This idea, hinted at in Rashaz’s teaching, as illustrated above, is further elaborated by the Tsemah Tsedek, whose attitude to philosophical discussion was

⁸⁰ *Pirkei de-Rabi Eli‘ezer*, ch. 3, 2b.

⁸¹ LT *Balak* 70c [Appendix 26].

⁸² See Vital, *‘Ets hayim*, Sha‘ar 1, ‘anaf 1, 25, and see *Seder tefilot* 75d-76a. See also note 16 above.

much more welcoming than his grandfather's. In the following passage he attempts to explain what Hasdai Crescas may have had in mind when he claimed that time had somehow existed before the creation of the world:

It would seem from the words of the author of the '*Akedah*'⁸³ that Rabbi Hasdai came to the conclusion that [the categories of] prior and posterior apply [to God]. But he may have argued that they apply to the essence of the Creator only from the moment of the emanation of the ten *sefirot*, for only then do [the categories of] prior and posterior apply. This is what is called the order of time [*sefer zemanim*], that is to say, priority and posteriority, for the attribute of *Hesed* was emanated first, and only then the attribute of *Gevurah* and *Din*, and after that the attribute of *Rahamim*, etc.⁸⁴

The Tsemah Tsedek revises Hasdai Crescas' critique of Aristotle and Maimonides, mediated to him by Yitshak Arama's 15th century work '*Akedat Yitshak*. Contrary to Aristotle, Crescas maintained that time was not related to the existence of motion. Instead, he proposed the idea of time as duration.⁸⁵ Among the consequences of this change were the attribution of time to eternal and immobile entities, such as God and the Intelligences on the one hand, and the conceptualisation of time as pre-existent on the other hand. Hence, says Crescas, the midrashic statement whereby the order of time preceded the creation "may be taken in the literal sense."⁸⁶ The author of the '*Akedat Yitshak* disagrees with him, claiming that time could not have existed before the Creation, and that the midrashic statement must refer to something else. According to Arama, the Midrash is attempting to resolve a much more specific issue than the one Crescas is dealing with, namely, the existence of time before the creation of the celestial spheres. Thus the question that occupies the Sages is not whether time is bound to motion by definition and in general, but rather it is whether time is bound specifically to the motion of the celestial spheres. According to the

⁸³ Yitshak Arama, '*Akedat Yitshak*, Be-reshit, 40a-b.

⁸⁴ Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-hakirah*, 114a [Appendix 27].

⁸⁵ See Wolfson, *Crescas' critique of Aristotle*, 93-98, 290-91, 657-58; Harvey, *Physics and Metaphysics*, 4-8.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 290-291. This contradicts Maimonides in *Moreh nevukhim*, ii, 30. See also Wolfson, *Crescas' critique*, 663.

biblical account of the creation [Gn 1:14-19], stars and planets were created on the fourth day; nonetheless, temporal characteristics such as the division between day and night feature in the creation from its very beginning. The order of time, according to Arama, refers to the first three days of creation, when the duration of time had already been established, yet there was no motion of the celestial spheres by which time is measured. Thus Crescas was wrong when he maintained the existence of the duration of time prior to the creation.⁸⁷

The Tsemah Tsedek refutes both Arama's positioning of the order of time in the first three days of creation, and the idea that time existed prior to the creation, which Arama attributes to Crescas. Rather than agreeing with either of these views, he reinterprets Crescas in line with his Habad predecessors,⁸⁸ arguing that to refer to God in temporal terms, as in Crescas' interpretation of the order of time, would imply that there was priority and posteriority in the divine before the creation. This cannot possibly apply to the essence of God, which according to Rashaz lies above and beyond any temporal characterisation,⁸⁹ but only to the world of Emanation, which is in a state of absolute unity with God,⁹⁰ and is thus above time, since time exists only from the *sefirah* of *Malkut* of the world of Emanation downwards.

Nevertheless, despite the unity of the world of Emanation with the divine, the ten *sefirot* that constitute it had emanated from God in a definite order of concatenation. The Tsemah Tsedek, following Rashaz, identifies the order in which these ten *sefirot* emanated with the 'order of times' mentioned in the Midrash. In this way he transposes the account of the creation into the theosophical discourse. The order of time, which Crescas ascribes to the divine prior to the creation, the Tsemah Tsedek ascribes to the *sefirot* above the worlds of Creation, Formation and Making; time, which Yitshak Arama attaches to the subcelestial realm, the Tsemah Tsedek

⁸⁷ Arama, *'Akedat Yitshak*, Be-reshit, 40a-b.

⁸⁸ On the incompatibility between temporal categories and reality prior to creation according to Rashaz and Dov Ber, see note 18 above.

⁸⁹ On Rashaz's view on the supra-temporal character of God see section 1.1 of this chapter above. On the view of Rashaz and his immediate followers on the unknowability of any aspect of the essence of the divine and its manifestations, see Elijor, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 73-77.

⁹⁰ See note 68 above.

ascribes to the *sefirot* and to the worlds below *Malkhut* of the World of Emanation. The order of time is indeed something that exists prior to the created worlds, but it is still contained within the boundaries of the World of Emanation. It exists, as Rashaz puts it: “from the time of the emanation and coming into being of spiritual worlds,”⁹¹ “spiritual worlds” meaning either the World of Emanation or the worlds created and destroyed by God before the creation of this world.⁹² Lastly, the order of time is seen not only as something that precedes time but also as the paradigm of time and the source of its existence.⁹³ It is not surprising, therefore, that Rashaz identifies the order of time with the Tetragrammaton – “He was, He is, and He will be,” from which the temporal modes of past, present and future develop in the lower worlds.⁹⁴

3. The flow and division of time.

3.1 Continuous creation.

The transposition of the order of time to the theosophic structure utterly changes the sense of the concept as explained by the Sages. Rashaz does not see the emergence of time out of the infinite divine into the order of time and then into time proper as a chain of events in cosmic history but rather as an order of ontological relations between time and its source. This does not mean that he is not interested in cosmic history at all, which indeed he discusses in his teachings, as will be shown in some detail below. But, it is important to emphasize that for Rashaz, the order of time did not cease with the creation of the world or with the establishment of the luminaries in the firmament. Rather, the order of time continues to exist in the upper realms and to influence the passage of time in the lower worlds. This aspect of Rashaz’s discourse on time is related to his view of the creation as a continuous rather than a

⁹¹ LT *Balak* 70c.

⁹² See Schneersohn, *Derekh mitsvotekha*, 57b.

⁹³ This idea is attested in various kabbalistic sources. See for example Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, 73, on the order of time as the root of time in Cordovero’s *Pardes rimonim*; see also Idel, “Time and History,” 162.

⁹⁴ *Seder tefilot*, 76b. This *ma’amar* is further developed by Dov Ber Shneuri in *Imrei binah*, Sha’ar Keri’at Shema’, 42c-d.

one-off event.⁹⁵ Not only does the model of continuous creation present time as being constantly renewed rather than enduring unchanged from the moment of creation, but it also yields a tentative definition of what time means for Rashaz.

According to Rashaz, the idea of a continuous creation can be apprehended through contemplation of the works of the creator:

The knowledgeable person should contemplate the fact that truly “They are new every morning” [Lam 3:23] etc., and that “He renews the creation every day continually”⁹⁶ *ex-nihilo* [*me-ayin le-yesh*], and [he should also contemplate] the falling of darkness at night, and its departure when the light of day dawns. Similarly, the individual should discern in himself that when he sleeps at night his life force [*hiyut*] departs from him, while when he wakes up he becomes a new creation. From this he should understand that the same applies to all the created beings of the world, and that their life force [comes and goes by way of] *ratso va-shov*.⁹⁷

A similar interpretation of the same statement from the prayer book, to the effect that God renews His creation daily, appears in the letters of Rashaz’s teacher, Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk (d. 1788). He, however, modifies the meaning of the verse to suggest that since the world’s existence is entirely dependent on God’s will, it is only “as if” [*ke-ilu*] He creates and destroys it at every moment.⁹⁸ In contrast to his teacher, Rashaz understands the statement quite literally: the divine life force descends and ascends again on a regular basis, annihilating the created beings and bringing them back to life at each and every moment anew. To describe the rhythm of the world’s perpetual alternation between materialisation and annihilation, Rashaz employs the term *ratso va-shov*.⁹⁹ This biblical expression, meaning literally “run

⁹⁵ On the continuous creation in Rashaz, see Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 35-6.

⁹⁶ From the liturgy of the Morning service.

⁹⁷ LT *Yom ha-kipurim*, 68c [Appendix 28].

⁹⁸ Hillman, *Igerot Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 23. See also *ibid.*, 228-9, for Rashaz’s Yiddish letter taking a similar stance.

⁹⁹ On *ratso* and *shov*, derived from Ez 1:14: “And the living creatures ran and returned”, see Elior, “HaBaD,” 178-181; eadem, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 30 and 127-134; Idel *Hasidism*, 123; Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 58 n. 109; Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 145.

and return,” recurs throughout Rashaz’s teachings in reference either to the nature of divine service or, in theosophical terms, to the dynamics of the relations among various entities within the divine sphere. The rhythm of *ratso va-shov* is comparable to that of a heartbeat, which continuously disperses and contracts the life force within a body.¹⁰⁰ From a broader perspective, Rashaz likens it also to the alternation of sleep and wakefulness: when a person is asleep, his life force departs from him, but when he wakes up and the life force returns, it is as if he was being created anew.¹⁰¹ By contemplating the alternation of such contrasting phenomena as sleep and wakefulness, day and night, and so on, one can grasp the idea of the continuous creation.

According to Rashaz, continuous creation is also an expression of faith in God’s providence. While gentiles¹⁰² and heretics¹⁰³ do believe that God created the world, they maintain that His involvement with it ceased at the moment of the creation. The Jews, on the other hand, believe that God, as Rashaz puts it elsewhere, “brings life to everything, creates it out of nothing, and renews it, by his goodness, on every day and at every moment.”¹⁰⁴ In other words, the deistic view of divine providence attributed to gentiles and heretics is contrasted with Rashaz’s version of occasionalism,¹⁰⁵ whereby God is involved in every occurrence within reality by virtue of constantly recreating the world.

Notably, Rashaz attributes the contrast between these two beliefs, not to a divergence of theological approaches but rather to the difference between the gentile and the Jewish soul in terms of their respective relations to temporality. The gentile soul originates in the domain that lies beneath time, and therefore it is incapable of

¹⁰⁰ See for example TO 2c-d; MAHZ 5565, i, 126; 5566, i, 61; 5568, 543. See also Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 58.

¹⁰¹ See also LT *Be-ha'alotekha* 33a. This is related to the traditional belief that a person surrenders his or her soul to God at dusk and receives a new soul the next morning, when “he is made as a new creation” (*Shulhan 'arukh Rabenu ha-Zaken*, Orah hayim, 1:4).

¹⁰² *Seder tefilot*, 303a-b. See also Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 108, and the sources listed there.

¹⁰³ T2, 2:77a-b. See also Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-hakirah*, 3b.

¹⁰⁴ LT *Ba-midbar* 1a [Appendix 29].

¹⁰⁵ On the occasionalist features of Rashaz’s teachings and their sources in the teachings of Maggid of Mezeritch, see Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 58, and 35 n. 27.

perceiving those of God's acts that transcend time; all that it is able to see is the natural order of things. By contrast, the Jewish soul stems from the transcendent domain of "supernal thought," which lies above time. Accordingly, its perception transcends nature and allows it to recognize God's acts that come into the world from above it.¹⁰⁶

3.2 *Time as ratso va-shov.*

Time, together with all created being, is integrated in the rhythm of the constant ascent and descent of the divine life force in *ratso va-shov*.¹⁰⁷ The notion of creation as an act of continuous annihilation and revival of the world informs Rashaz's concept of time. The philosophers who influenced him defined time as a derivative of motion or duration. Rashaz transposes the physical concept of motion to the metaphysical concept the divine influx, and even though he does not produce a rigorous definition of time in these terms, he clearly conceptualises time as deriving from the *ratso va-shov* of the divine influx, and as a measure of the intervals that punctuate the cycles of the worlds' annihilation and revival.¹⁰⁸

Rashaz provides alternative explanations of the genesis of *ratso va-shov*, which gives rise to time. In some of his teachings, *ratso va-shov* appears to be an effect of certain permutations of divine names, following the concept that the twelve hours of the day correspond to the twelve permutations of the Tetragrammaton, whereas the twelve hours of night correspond to the twelve permutations of the name *Adonai*.¹⁰⁹ Each and every permutation draws down a particular variety of the divine life force. Thus, when one permutation is substituted with another, the life force related to the former permutation departs, and the life force of the latter descends to the world, creating the passage of time. To illustrate this process, Rashaz presents the

¹⁰⁶ See *Seder tefilot*, 303b.

¹⁰⁷ The relation between *ratso va-shov* and time in Rashaz has been noted by Foxbrunner. See his *Habad*, 71, and 249 n. 71 for the list of sources.

¹⁰⁸ See for example LT *Hukat* 65a.

¹⁰⁹ See for example T1, 41:58b, T4, 6:110a; LT *Rosh ha-shanah*, 61a; MAHZ 5567, 347; *'Inyanim*, 127; *Ketsarim*, 329.

invented etymology of the Hebrew word for hour [*sha'ah*] as semantically connected to the homonymous verb that means “to turn toward something,” for in the passage time “the divine life force turns downwards from up above, by way of *ratso va-shov*.”¹¹⁰

Elsewhere in his teachings, Rashaz refers, on the one hand to the pre-temporal order of the emanation of the *sefirot*, and on the other hand, to the dynamics of their emergence, as the source of the *ratso va-shov* of time. The former corresponds to the idea of the order of time as described above: the sequence of the emanation of the *sefirot* precedes time and serves as its paradigm, while the latter points to the opposing forces of *Hesed* and *Gevurah* that emerge in the process of the emanation. The dialectical relation of unity and opposition between the emerging *sefirot* constitutes a form of *ratso va-shov* and, becomes the ground from which time will emerge:

For they [the *sefirot*] are in the nature of *ratso va-shov*, which is the order of time, from which branches out the cause of time as the duration that effects from [the motion of] *ratso va-shov*, which is comparable to a heartbeat. Since the motion of *ratso va-shov* comprises both an affirmation and a negation of this affirmation, it causes there to be a passage of brief duration¹¹¹ of the *shov* and the *ratso* which follows it. This is [the cycle of] disclosure and absence of the influx etc. which may be compared to a clock, [where] the movement from side to side (of what we call a pendulum), which is comparable to a heartbeat, causes a momentary passage of time.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ LT *Rosh ha-shanah* 61a.

¹¹¹ *Zeman mah* in the Hebrew text. The editors of Rashaz's *ma'amarim* inserted inverted commas between the letters *mem* and *he* of the word *mah*, possibly alluding to a link between the atomic unit of time and the divine name 45 (the numerical value of the word *mah* is 45), which in turns is associated with *Ze'ir anpin*, the supra-temporal source of time. The author, however, does not elaborate on it in the text that follows, and it is possible that the inverted commas were added either by the transcriber of the oral *ma'amar*, or by the editors of the printed edition, and were not a part of the original oral communicated from Rashaz.

¹¹² MAHZ, 5566, i, 61 [Appendix 30]. See also MAHZ 5568, i, 542-43 and 5563, ii, 753 where the *ratso va-shov* of a time unit is compared to the cycle of exhalation and inhalation of a breath: “The

The opposite phases of *ratso va-shov* are affirmation and negation, or the disclosure and withdrawal of the divine influx. In the phase of *shov* the divine influx reveals itself in order to substantiate the worlds, while in the phase of *ratso* it returns to its supernal source. The duration of the cycle of disclosure of the divine influx in *shov* and its withdrawal to the supernal source constitutes a unit of time – a moment [*rega*], while time's *ratso va-shov* is compared on the one hand to the heartbeat, in order to underscore the aspect of creation and annihilation inscribed in the rhythm of time, and on the other hand to the motion of a pendulum, so as to emphasize the connection between the bi-polar dynamics of *ratso va-shov* and the progress of time. In short, time is measured by the intervals in the flow of the divine life force into the world. By means of this intermittent influx of life force the world is annihilated and created anew, thus giving the impression of time's progress.

The analogy of the pendulum that indicates the flow of time is further used by Rashaz to illustrate the relativity of time. He notes that the lower end of the pendulum has to cover a greater distance with each of its movements than any other point along its arm. For this reason, units of time can have different values, depending on the position along the pendulum arm in which they are being measured: the higher the position on the arm the smaller the value. So it is with the *ratso va-shov* motion of the divine influx in relation to time: the further the influx descends down the hierarchy of worlds, the longer the distance it has to cover, and consequently the higher the value of the time unit.¹¹³ Thus, according to Rashaz, when the Psalmist addresses God with the words: “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past” [Ps 90:4], he tells us literally that the duration of

meaning of the division of an hour into the number of exactly 1080 moments [See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilekhot kidush ha-hodesh, 6:2], comes from the measure of 1080 breaths in every hour, and each and every breath consists of [two] aspects of *ratso* and *shov* [...] and it is called a heartbeat, for the heart beats in [the rhythm of] *ratso va-shov*, because it beats in double beats: the first one is the withdrawal of the life-force, and the second one is the drawing down of it [...]. And similarly, this is the case of the material breath in man's nostrils, as it is written: “All in whose nostrils was the breath of life,” etc. [Gn 7:22], as in the example of a sleeping man's breath, as it is known, that the measure of the duration of a breath that consists of the above mentioned *ratso va-shov* is one moment out of 1080 moments of an hour.” MAHZ 5568, i, 543 [Appendix 31].

¹¹³ See also Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 37 n. 33; Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 71.

a day in the upper worlds equals the duration of a thousand years in our world below. The day here refers to the six *sefirot* of the World of Emanation (*Hesed, Gevurah, Tif'eret, Netsah, Hod, and Yesod*; the *sefirah* of Malkhut corresponds to Sabbath), which are traditionally called “supernal days”,¹¹⁴ each one of them itself comprising six thousand years of the world’s history (whereas *Malkhut* corresponds to the seventh messianic millennium).¹¹⁵

To conclude, Rashaz defines time by using the concept of *ratso va-shov*. Time results from the divine life force’s continuous cycle of descent and ascent. With every ascent the life force nullifies the existence of the world, and with every descent it creates it anew, thus giving the impression that time itself flows. The moment of the life force’s presence constitutes the time unit. In this way Rashaz transposes the philosophers’ definition of time as the measurement of the movement of heavenly spheres to the theosophic structure, seeing in time the measurement of the movement of the divine life force, which in turn results from the movements of the *sefirot*.

3.3 *The division of time.*

The image of the pendulum is just an application of a common paradigm in Rashaz’s teachings, according to which a higher entity in the hierarchy of worlds always comprises a lower one, by way of the general comprising the particular. The time-transcending God encapsulates all temporal aspects and historical developments in His one simple thought, which comprises everything “at a glance [*bi-sekirah ahat*], with no duration of time, either prior or posterior,”¹¹⁶ as in the prayer describing God

¹¹⁴ For the correspondence between the days of the week and the attributes, see for example LT *Pekudei* 5b; *Seder tefilot* 26d-27a, MAHZ, 5566, i, 60. For the sources of this concept in Kabbalah, see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 100; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 283 (where he discusses the zoharic tradition, according to which *Yesod*, rather than *Malkhut*, corresponds to the Sabbath). See also Cordovero, *Pardes*, 333-34.

¹¹⁵ See for example MAHZ, 5566, i, 61; TO 7d.

¹¹⁶ MAHZ 5566, 60 [Appendix 32].

as one who “looks and sees to the end of all generations.”¹¹⁷ In the course of the creation and the development of the hierarchy of worlds, time is formed, compartmentalized, concretised and extended, as it grows from an instant through six supernal days to the six thousand years in our world. At the same time, one should keep it in mind that the creation and division of time is a continuous process, which should be seen as a part of the continuous creation of the world. Hence, time is re-created constantly in the lower worlds by the supra-temporal divine, or as Rashaz puts it, the renewal of time [*hithadshut ha-zeman*] comes from above time, when the divine life force returns to its source in *shov*.¹¹⁸ As will be shown directly below, Rashaz employs several hermeneutical models to explain this process.

The first model explains the division of time in terms of the potentiality that pre-existed in the instantaneous divine thought. This is said to be comparable to the rabbinic exegetical method of following a general statement with a particular claim [*kelal u-ferat*],¹¹⁹ which in turn becomes the general statement on which the next particular claim is based, the whole process culminating in a final stage of interpretation, which in the case of the evolution of time model, corresponds to the World of Making [*‘olam ha-‘asiyah*]. Just as the Gemara is a comprehensive exposition of the Mishnah, which does not generate any new laws but merely presents the mishnaic laws in greater detail, so time in the lower worlds is only an actualisation of the potential concealed within God’s supra-temporal instantaneous thought.¹²⁰

The hermeneutical model of the division of time is not limited to the metaphor of the source-commentary relation. The “interweaving of temporality and textuality,” as Wolfson calls it,¹²¹ is an offshoot of Rashaz’s doctrine of creation, in

¹¹⁷ Musaf for Rosh ha-shanah.

¹¹⁸ See for example MAHZ *Nevi'im*, 9; *Parshiyot*, i, 409.

¹¹⁹ See Barayta de-rabi Yishma’el in *Sifra*, 1a-b.

¹²⁰ See MAHZ, 5565, 320-1.

¹²¹ Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, 83.

which the divine speech plays a prominent role.¹²² It is also a result of associating *Malkhut*, on the one hand with the divine speech, and on the other hand with time:

[This is] the root of the matter of “time to love” [Eccl 3:8], etc. As is explained in the *Zohar*, the Yanuka interpreted it to mean that it refers to love within *Malkhut*, which is called time [*‘et*, which is spelled with the letter ‘*ayin*],¹²³ but it is also called *et*, [spelled] with an *alef*, for [all] “*alefs* [interchange with] ‘*ayins*,”¹²⁴ etc. So the issue of time begins in *Malkhut*, and these are the letters *alef* [and] *tav* which are set in the mouth, as is written in *Sefer yetsirah* [2:3], and this is sufficient for him who understands.¹²⁵

This passage illustrates the relationship of *Malkhut* with time and speech. Basing himself on the zoharic source, Rashaz ascribes Kohelet’s “time to love” to *Malkhut*, since, following the *Zohar*, he identifies *Malkhut-Shekhinah* with time.¹²⁶ He then draws on a talmudic tradition ascribed to the school of Rabbi Eliezer, which tended to pronounce the Hebrew guttural ‘*ayin* as *alef*, and vice versa. The reference to this tradition provides Rashaz with the ambiguity he seeks: the time of *Malkhut* [*‘et*] can be read as the particle *et*, which contains the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet and therefore points to all the letters of the alphabet by means of which God created the world.¹²⁷

¹²² On the role of the divine speech in Rashaz’s doctrine of creation, and its sources in the teachings of the Besht, see Idel, “Le-‘olam ha-Shem,” 239-243. See also Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 105. On the role of speech in the manifestation of the divine in Kabbalah, see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 99.

¹²³ See Zii, 155b.

¹²⁴ See *bBerakhot* 32a.

¹²⁵ MAHZ, 5564, 205 [Appendix 33].

¹²⁶ See Zi, 116b, 194a; Ziii, 58a-b.

¹²⁷ On *Shekhinah* as *et*, see Zi, 1:15b, 247a; Zii, 81b, 90a, 135b; Ziii, 190b. See also T2, 2:77a-b, where Rashaz, following Zi, 1:15, interprets the verse: “Thou preservest them all” [*atah mehayeh et kulam*; Neh 9:6] as referring to the totality of the Hebrew alphabet (*alef* and *tav* of the word *atah*) and the five organs of verbal articulation (the letter *he* of the word *atah*, whose numerical value is five). The notion of *Malkhut* as the source of speech is further emphasized by reference to *Sefer yetsirah*, (2:3), where the twenty two letters of the alphabet are said to be situated within the mouth in the five organs of verbal articulation. This, in turns, corroborates the description of *Malkhut* as a mouth in *Tikunei zohar*, Hakdamah, 17a, which is also adopted by Rashaz, e.g. in T4, 26:144a.

Rashaz compares the forming of time to the process of articulation. Every act of speech originates in a thought, which in turns is rooted in the will. The thought is associated with limitlessness, as any single thought can comprise an unlimited number of topics. However, in the process of its articulation, the thought is channelled into an act of speech, which takes place at a particular time and place and can comprise only a single topic.¹²⁸ Analogously, all aspects of time, and the future developments of history, are comprised in the instantaneous divine thought, which is like an “illumination and a lightning in the world.”¹²⁹ Yet when it comes to realisation in the world, this thought divides into past, present and future, and into the six supernal days, which it turn divide into six thousand years,¹³⁰ each dividing into 365 days, the days into hours, and so on. Effectively, God renews the act of creation by releasing each day into the world only “a number of combinations of letters” out of His unique divine thought.¹³¹

The sequential stages of this hermeneutical model correspond to the levels of the *sefirotic* structure: the divine thought corresponds to the three upper attributes, the supernal days are the six attributes constituting *Ze‘ir anpin*, and speech is located within the *sefirah* of *Malkhut*. As Rashaz mentions briefly elsewhere,¹³² the source of time is in the conjunction of *Hokhmah* and *Binah* and is expressed in *Malkhut*. In other words, in the process of verbalizing a thought, intuitive wisdom (*Hokhmah*) is instantaneously conceptualised in *Binah*,¹³³ but it takes time for it to be verbalised at the stage of *Malkhut*. Analogously, the renewal of the divine life force, which results from the union of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, or from non-being and being, is immediate, but when mediated by *Malkhut*, it is noticeable only as the change between day and night. In sum, the flow and division of time in the lower worlds is a reverberation of the dynamics of the *sefirot* in the upper worlds, which Rashaz explains in terms of the verbalisation of the divine thought.

¹²⁸ See MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 43-44.

¹²⁹ MAHZ 5563, ii, 747.

¹³⁰ Since every supernal day contains one thousand earthly years. See note 114 above.

¹³¹ MAHZ 5563, ii, 748. See also MAHZ 5567, 211; TO 7d.

¹³² MAHZ *Ketuvim*, i, 30-31.

¹³³ On *Hokhmah* and *Binah* as intuitive thought and its conceptualisation, see T1, 3:7b.

In his attempts to describe the flow and division of time, Rashaz resorts also to the images of light and the divine life force. By doing so, he roots his teachings deeply in the kabbalistic tradition: time in the Kabbalah is so closely related to the metaphysics of light that this has led Wolfson to conclude that: “The kabbalistic conception of time is based on the intermingling of temporality and luminosity; the motion of the infinite light refracted through the prism of the emanations produces the sensibility of duration.”¹³⁴ In Rashaz’s teachings, however, the image of light is rarely associated with time, even though oftentimes the term “light” seems to be used interchangeably with the “divine life force” [*hiyut*], as when Rashaz explains that the light and divine life force are renewed every day in the act of continuous creation,¹³⁵ or when he describes *Rosh ha-shanah* and *rosh hodesh* as days which contain the totality of the divine light and life force, particularized in the rest of the days of the year and the month, respectively.¹³⁶ Otherwise, it is usually the flow and division of the divine life force that determines the flow and division of time in Rashaz’s teachings. The flow of the divine life force and its division in the worlds into a number of particular levels determines the division of time.

The introduction of the divine life force into the model of the development of worldly temporal dimensions calls to mind the triad of *’olam, shanah, nefesh*, in which world (or: space), time and the divine life force are interconnected. According to this paradigm, the divine life force (or the divine light) descends and unveils itself in the lower worlds on multiple levels, determined by their degree of the materiality. The higher a world is in the hierarchy, the more spiritual it is, and the life force and light are unveiled in it with greater intensity. In this paradigm, the evolution of time is the outcome of the growing distance that the divine life force has to cross in order to reach the lower worlds, which it does by way of the continuous pulse of *ratso va-*

¹³⁴ Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, 229 n. 266.

¹³⁵ See for example MAHZ 5567, 340; LT *Hukat* 64d.

¹³⁶ See for example MAHZ 5569, 286; *Seder tefilot*, 234a. See also T4, 14:120a-b, where Rashaz writes that every *Rosh ha-shanah* the divine life force comes into the world afresh, drawn from a higher level than in the preceding year.

shov.¹³⁷ Thus, by connecting the flow of time to the flow of the divine influx into the world, Rashaz conceptualises time in spatial terms.¹³⁸

4. Conclusions.

Study of the sources presented in this chapter shows that Rashaz's concept of time derives from various philosophical, midrashic, and kabbalistic sources. Time is created and finite, and its finitude places it in opposition to its infinite creator. Consequently, no temporal features can be ascribed to God or to anything that preceded the creation. Indeed, Rashaz and his Habad successors resort to the notion of the 'order of time,' which – according to the Sages – had measured the course of cosmic events before our world was created, but which Rashaz understands as the proto-temporal order of concatenation of the ten *sefirot* in the World of Emanation, which itself remains above time.

Rashaz pays much attention to the process of the transition from an infinite and supra-temporal God to a finite and temporal reality. He proposes several explanations for this process, based on kabbalistic concepts such as the triad of "world, year, soul," the dynamics of the divine names, or the mystical concepts of Torah and commandments that bind the temporal to the supra-temporal. He locates the source of time in *Malkhut* of the World of Emanation, namely, the final *sefirah* of the world that is united with God.

¹³⁷ LT *Hukat* 64d-65a.

¹³⁸ The connection between time and space is evident in the sources quoted in this chapter, for example the discussion of the triad "world, year, soul," where two of the three characteristics present in every creation are time and space, or the description of *Malkhut* as a source of both time and space. The affinity between these two notions may also be surmised from the fact that Rashaz often resorts to the language of temporal units when he illustrates the spatial limits of the lower worlds, which, he claims, measure "from the earth to the firmament the distance of five hundred years." See for example T1, 43:61b, 48:67a; T2, 7:84a, 10:88a; TO 64a-c; LT *Nitsavim* 47b, based on *bHagigah* 13a. See also Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, 56, where he quotes the Maharal of Prague's statement that "time and place are one matter."

For Rashaz, time is the *ratso va-shov* pulse of the divine life force engaged in the process of continuous creation. This concept derives from two main ideas: Rashaz's occasionalist view of reality as being continuously nullified and re-created by the flow of the divine life force on the one hand, and the philosophical idea of time as the measure of movement, on the other hand. He merges these two concepts by presenting time as a measure of the divine influx's movement between expansion and contraction. The idea that time is nullified with every ascent of the divine force and substantiated again with each of its descents yields the concept of the division of time in the hierarchy of the worlds.

CHAPTER 2

1. The historical dimension of Rashaz's teachings.

The first chapter set the conceptual framework of time in Rashaz's teachings, and discussed its place of origin in the sefirotic structure. The second chapter aims to depict the historiosophical framework underlying his thinking. Unlike the scholarship that has focused mostly on the synchronic aspect of Rashaz's teachings, presenting them primarily as a set of concepts or beliefs that are relevant to the here and now of the religious person, my aim in the present chapter is to present the diachronic dimension of Rashaz's teachings.

Rashaz was not a historian, and one will not find in his teachings many direct references to current affairs or to past events. This, however, does not mean to suggest that he was detached from the reality of his time and place; on the contrary, he was a fully engaged leader to his local hasidic community, which had been entrusted to his care by his mentor, Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk.¹ Thus in many of his letters, he responds to contemporary events, such as the controversy between the Hasidim and their opponents, the Mitnagdim,² or the internal conflicts within his own community, e.g. over access to *arenda* leases.³ Moreover, Rashaz and his followers sided with the Russians in the war against Napoleon, and even became involved in espionage on their behalf.⁴ His *ma'amarim*, however, generally lack direct reference to these events, and when they do occasionally mention, for example, the gentile nations among which the Hasidim live, they clothe these

¹ See Etkes, *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 30-35; Loewenthal, *Communicating*, 39-43.

² See for example Hillman, *Igerot Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 105-109, 111, 231.

³ See *ibid.*, 74.

⁴ On the espionage conducted by Habad Hasidim during Napoleon's Russian campaign, see Etkes, *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 390-391 and 395. For the famous letter, in which Rashaz allegedly states that Napoleon's victory would enhance the Jews' wealth and social position but estrange them from God, concluding that they should support the Russians, see Heilman, *Bet rabi*, 47a-b; Rodkinson, *Toledot 'amudei Habad*, 83; Hillman, *Igerot Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 238; Levin, *Igerot kodesh*, i, 150-1; For discussion of this letter, see Loewenthal, *Communicating*, 209-10; Teitelbaum, *Ha-rav mi-Ladi*, 156. However, Etkes (*Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 391-92 and 412-13) argues that Rashaz was not the author of the letter.

references with the biblical names of Esau or Ismael. Thus the nations are removed from the immediate socio-political reality of Rashaz and his followers into the sphere of mythical history, in which Israel conduct their perpetual struggle against their perennial enemies, go into the Egyptian, Babylonian and Roman exiles, and gradually advance toward the Promised Land. In Rashaz's teachings, as in rabbinic literature in general, profane history becomes part of the larger divine history that begins with the creation and heads towards the redemption.⁵

1.1 Redemption as the purpose of creation.

The concept of creation, which occupies a predominant position in Rashaz's discourses,⁶ has been widely discussed in scholarship.⁷ I shall therefore concentrate solely on the implications of Rashaz's concept of creation for his view of history. According to Rashaz, the creation has its purpose in the revelation of God's kingship:

It is known to all that the purpose of the creation of the world is for the sake of the revelation of His kingdom, may He be blessed, for “There is no king without a nation.”⁸ The word ‘*am* (nation) is related etymologically to the world ‘*omemot* (concealed, dimmed),⁹ for they are separate entities, distinct and distant from the level of the king. For, even if the king had very many sons, the name kingdom would not apply to them, not even to the nobles alone. Only “In the multitude of people is the king’s honour” [Prv 14:28].¹⁰

In Rashaz's allegory, as mentioned above,¹¹ God is a king who needs to express his power. He cannot accomplish this by subduing to his will only family members or courtiers, as they already constitute a part of his domain. He must therefore exercise

⁵ On the attitude of rabbinic literature to history, see Yerushalmi, *Zakhor*, 21-4.

⁶ On the centrality of creation in Rashaz's teachings, see Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 15.

⁷ See Jacobson, “Torat Ha-beri’ah,” 308-68; Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 23-137; Hallamish, “Mishnato ha-‘iyunit,” 112-135.

⁸ See Bahya bar Asher, *Midrash Rabenu Bahya*, Be-reshit 38:30, Ba-midbar 22:1.

⁹ See Rashi to Jgs 5:14.

¹⁰ T2, 7:81b [Appendix 1].

¹¹ See chapter one, section 2.4.

his power over the common folk, that is to say, over people who, owing to their multiplicity and low status, appear to be diametrically opposed to his own unique and exalted status. Rashaz uses wordplay to convey this message: following Rashi, he employs an invented etymology to link the word *'am* (nation or folk) to the word *'omemot* (those which are dimmed).¹² Hence in his allegory, the common folk are as 'dimmed', namely remote and separate from God, as the dimmed coals are remote and separate from the source of fire. God creates a multiplicity of ostensibly separate beings in order to demonstrate that they, too, belong to his dominion. This also underscores the notion that no existence is possible that is not a product of the divine will, as even those entities whose very existence would seem to contradict God's unity are nevertheless a part of His creation. In addition, the use of the allegory of a king ruling over his people points to the attribute of *Malkhut* in the sefirotic tree – the attribute responsible for God's presence in the worlds and thus the source of both time and space, as described in chapter 1.¹³

In this model of the creation, the divine contraction [*tsimtsum*] and the breaking of the vessels [*shevirat ha-kelim*] arise as an integral part of the creative process; they precondition the emergence of all non-divine entities and enable God to become "king with [His] people."¹⁴ The notions of the contraction and the breaking of the vessels are thus stripped off the negative connotations that mark them in their original Lurianic context,¹⁵ where the shattering of the containers designed to hold the infinite divine light causes a violent rupture in the creative process, as a result of which the demonic forces assume an ontological status of their

¹² Rashi sees in the verse: "After thee, Benjamin, among thy people [*'amamekha*]" [Jgs 5:14] the prophecy of Barak and Deborah foretelling the rise of King Saul from the tribe of Benjamin, who will "stone and slacken [*ya'amim*] him [Amalek] like dying [*'omemot*] embers."

¹³ On God as king reigning over people in Rashaz's concept of creation, see Jacobson, "Torat ha-beri'ah," 340-5.

¹⁴ See also *Seder tefilot* 47b, according to which the multitude of contractions results in a multitude of generations in time and space, which in turn constitute the nation for God the king to reign over. The multitude of contractions increases God's glory, as: "In the multitude of people is the king's honour" [Prv 14:28].

¹⁵ See Hallamish, "Mishnato ha-'iyunit," 105–109, where Rashaz's and Luria's models of creation are compared. See also Schatz Uffenheimer, *Hasidism as Mysticism*, 270–71.

own.¹⁶ Yet for Rashaz, the breaking of the vessels stands primarily for the transition point between the divine unity and worldly multiplicity:

The Emanator, blessed be He, in His essence is alone and unique [*yahid u-meyuhad*], in a state of ultimate unity, as is known. It is for this reason that the coming into being of the created entities must have taken place by means of the breaking of the vessels. For [the created entities] are marked by great multiplicity and separation, and they fall into the category of being that exists in its own right [*yesh ve-davar bifnei 'atmo*], which entirely contradicts the truth of His unity, blessed be He, whereby there is nothing but Him. Thus the multiplicity of the created entities must have come about because the vessels had split into a multiplicity of small parts, and by dint of this splitting, every created entity became a thing in its own right.¹⁷

For Rashaz, the Lurianic concept of the breaking of the vessels preconditions the creation of non-divine beings whose existence contradicts the unity and uniqueness of God. The numerous vessel shards in the divine world above correspond to the numerous individual entities in the created worlds below. The use of purely theoretical, philosophical notions in this passage is striking, as they stand in contrast to the original dynamic, mythical concept of the imperfect vessels shattered by the overflowing unlimited divine light.¹⁸ By setting the breaking of the vessels within the dynamics of unity-multiplicity, Rashaz effectively demythologizes the Lurianic concept and strips it off its negative connotations. Rather than being the dramatic and unforeseen result of a flaw in the divine plan of creation, the breaking of the vessels constitutes an integral and deliberate stage of this plan, necessary for the coming into

¹⁶ See Fine, *Physician*, 134–38; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 138-9; *Major Trends*, 266–68.

¹⁷ TO 27c [Appendix 2]. See also Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 335 n. 95, where he describes the breaking of the vessels in Rashaz's teachings as “The metaphoric trope to mark the transition from the aspect of boundlessness [*bilti ba'al gevul*] to the aspect of boundary [*gevul*],” and points to the elucidation of this approach in the book of Rashaz's student, Aharon of Starosielce, *Sha'arei ha-yihud ve-ha-emunah*, iii, 20b-21a. On the breaking of the vessel in Rashaz's teachings, see Hallamish, “Mishnato ha-'iyunit,” 105-11.

¹⁸ The tendency to reinterpret the breaking of the vessels in non-catastrophic terms is already present in some of the texts emanating from the Lurianic school. See Scholem, *Major Trends*, 268; idem, *Kabbalah*, 139-40.

being of separate entities, which in turn are God's way of expressing His own fullness. Thus even though the spatio-temporal reality does contradict the divine unity, it is neither evil or erroneous, nor destined ultimately to be cast away; rather it will be rediscovered as being a part of God's domain.

It was God's will to create a world that is ostensibly separated from His unity, in order to claim His power over it. In the passage from which the above excerpt was quoted, Rashaz refers to this dynamic relationship between God and world by the name of God's kingship over the world, exercised through the lower *sefirah* of *Malkhut*. Elsewhere, however, he is much more explicit in using redemptive and messianic terms in relation to the purpose of creation. Thus he defines God's kingship as His "dwelling place in the lower worlds":

The reason and sense of the contraction mentioned above is that it occurs because it was the will of the Emanator to derive delight [*ta'anug*] from the experience of kingship over separate entities [*nifradim*], so as to have a dwelling place in the lower worlds [*dirah ba-tahtonim*]. It is because of the delight He derives from it in His essence that He undergoes the contraction, [namely,] He contracts Himself in order to be king over a nation, as mentioned above.¹⁹

The idea of God's dwelling place in the lower world appears first in *Midrash Tanhuma*,²⁰ where, following the creation of the universe, God desires to establish for Himself a dwelling place in the lower worlds. For this reason He creates man and commands him to cultivate the Garden of Eden. In Rashaz's teachings, however, God's dwelling place has radically changed its meaning. Although it remains closely connected to the task that God had assigned to man (for Rashaz, this becomes the task of delighting God), nevertheless it differs from the original midrashic concept in two important respects. Firstly, in Rashaz's text God's desire to enjoy his dwelling place in the lower worlds clearly precedes and serves as the reason for the creation in general, not only for the creation of man. In fact, it was this desire, arising from God's wish to fully express His own unity by ruling over the separate entities whose

¹⁹ *Seder tefilot*, 237a [Appendix 3].

²⁰ *Midrash Tanhuma*, Naso, 16.

existence would seem to contradict it, that necessitated the contraction of His fullness and the creation of separate entities. Secondly, while the Midrash locates God's desired dwelling place in the past – first in the Garden of Eden and later on Mount Sinai at the giving of the Torah, Rashaz defines it in eschatological terms as the ultimate goal of the creative process.²¹

An explicit expression of Rashaz's concept of history as the teleological process spanned between the creation and the redemption appears in the book of *Tanya*, in the chapter explaining the meaning of the notion of God's dwelling place in the lower worlds. Rashaz states that the physical world will be transformed into God's dwelling place in the messianic future:

It is well known that the messianic era, and especially the time of the resurrection of the dead, is the fulfilment and culmination [*takhlit u-shelemut*] of the creation of the world, for which purpose it was originally created.²²

God's dwelling place in the lower worlds is therefore the purpose and fulfilment of a process that began with the creation. Even though Rashaz admits in the same chapter that God revealed Himself to the Israelites already on Mount Sinai, their experience at that time was only “something” of the future revelation, when God will establish His dwelling place in the lower worlds.²³ This would take place in the future-to-come, described somewhat imprecisely as the days of the Messiah and the

²¹ See, for example, *Seder tefilot*, 109b-d, where Rashaz states explicitly that God's dwelling place in the lower worlds is the reason for the contraction [*tsimstum*], as according to the maxim that “last in production, first in thought” [*sof ma'aseh be-mahashavah tehilah*], the actual redemption in the end of days was part of the initial divine plan of creation (on the source of the maxim, see Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 506 n. 207). To this interpretation of this maxim Rashaz adds yet another interpretative layer: the establishment of God's dwelling place depends specifically on the deeds of Jews, as the Jews also “originated in the beginning of thought” [*alu be-mahashavah tehilah*], and “the last in production, that is, the dwelling place in the lower worlds, is achieved through purification by means of the fulfilment of the Torah and its commandments [*sof ma'aseh lihyot dirah ba-tahtonim 'al yedei ha-berurim be-kiyum ha-Torah vecha-mitsvot*].

²² T1, 36:46a [Appendix 4].

²³ See *ibid.*

resurrection of the dead.²⁴ The messianic days and the resurrection are not just an outcome of the internal dynamics of Jewish history; rather they are the ultimate goal of cosmic history, for which the universe was created in the first instance.

2. Exile and redemption.

2.1 The exile qua creation.

The view that the redemption is no longer historically determined but inheres in the first act of creation has implications for the idea of exile. Traditionally associated with the times when the Jewish people were forced out of the Land of Israel, exile gains a much broader, metaphysical scope, which parallels the metaphysical aspect of the redemption. As the redemption concludes the act of creation by revealing the presence of godliness throughout the creation, so the exile reveals the withdrawal of godliness from it. The exile is, therefore, first and foremost the exile of God, an idea that occurs already in the classical rabbinic sources, where God's presence is said to have been exiled to Edom and Babylonia together with Israel.²⁵ In Rashaz's teachings, however, the divine presence was exiled into the world in the process of creation, and it accompanies Israel only inasmuch as Israel are the major force driving the process of redemption.²⁶ Rashaz writes:

However, that which does not surrender itself to God but is a separate thing in its own right does not receive its vitality from the holiness of God, [that is,] from the inner essence and substance of holiness itself, but rather from its hind-side, as it were, [from which] it descends, level by level, with the emanation of the worlds through myriads of gradations, by way of cause and

²⁴ The distinction between these two in Rashaz's teachings will be discussed in section 1 of the next chapter.

²⁵ See *bMegilah* 29a: "R. Shimon ben Yohai says: come and see how beloved the children of Israel are before the Holy One, blessed is He! For wherever they were exiled, the *Shekhinah* was with them. When they were exiled to Egypt, the *Shekhinah* was with them [...]. When they were exiled to Babylonia, the *Shekhinah* was with them" [Appendix 5]; for the use of this expression in Rashaz's lore, see, for example, T1, 17:23a, T4, 4:105b, 21:133b, 25:140a; TO 5a, 11a, 38a, 51a, 100b 119a; LT *Matot*, 83d, *Mas'ei* 88b, *Tetse* 35d, *Shabat shuvah* 67c, *Shir ha-shirim* 35b.

²⁶ See note 21 above.

effect and innumerable contractions, until the [creative] Light and [its] vitality are so dimmed through repeated diminutions that they can be compressed and manifested as a state of exile, as it were, within that separate thing, giving it vitality and existence *ex-nihilo*, so that it does not revert to nothingness and ceases to exist, as before it was created.²⁷

In this excerpt from *Tanya* Rashaz refers to the creation of separate entities in terms of the coming into being of those things that he had earlier described as the most remote from the divine unity, things whose purpose was to enable the divine kingship to be displayed at the end of days. Here, however, he chooses to emphasize the existential bond that connects them with the divine even in their pre-redemptive state: they are created and sustained by the divine vitality, which has been diminished through numerous contractions in the course of emanating from the pleroma right down to the lower worlds they inhabit. The descent and limitation of the divine vitality to the point where it gives life to apparently separate beings is, in fact, the exile of the Divine presence, the *Shekhinah*. The exile of the *Shekhinah* is, therefore, identical with the creation of separate beings *ex-nihilo* [*yesh me-ayin*], a creation which brings into existence ostensibly non-divine entities constituting part of the domain of the husks [*kelipot*] – the shattered pieces of the vessels that could not bear the intensity of the divine light, which Lurianic Kabbalah associates with impurity, sin and evil.²⁸ Moreover, creation *qua* exile is a manifestation of the

²⁷ T1, 6:10b [Appendix 6].

²⁸ Rashaz overtly calls this world “the world of husks and the other side” [*‘olam ha-kelipot ve-sitra ahara*], making a pun on the “hind-side” of the life energy that sustains it [*ahorayim*] and the “other (evil) side” to which it belongs [*sitra ahara*]. See T1, 6:10b-11a. Even the worldly entities that are not outwardly impure belong to the *sitra ahara* and the *kelipot*. Nonetheless, Rashaz divides the husks into two categories. The higher one, *nogah*, consists of a mixture of good and evil, and all the entities that may or may not be purified by means of divine service belong there. This includes the animal soul and the body. The lower category consists of three impure husks: *ruah se’arah*, *‘anan gadol*, and *esh mitlakahat* (the names are borrowed from Ezekiel’s vision [Ez 1:4]), and it is a domain of complete impurity, associated with gentile bodies and souls, with unclean food, and with the forbidden parts and mixtures of clean food. These three husks will be purified at the end of days.

inherent materiality and corporeality of the separate entities, and this, too, associates them with the realm of evil.²⁹

The concept of exile as a confinement of the life-force in non-divine, material beings has its parallel in the concept of what a person is. As a blend of divine and non-divine elements, spirituality and corporeality, a human being embodies the exile:

For the faculty of Wisdom [*Hokhmah*] that is in the divine soul, together with the spark of Godliness [that comes] from the light of the blessed *Ein Sof* in which it is clothed, are in [a state of] exile within their body, [namely], within the animal soul that comes from the husk [*kelipah*] within the left-hand-side of the heart, which reigns and holds sway over their body by way of the esoteric doctrine of the exile of the *Shekhinah*, as mentioned earlier.³⁰

Man reflects the processes of creation, as within him, good and evil, the holy spark and the profane husk, spirituality and materiality are juxtaposed. The divine soul, which is “the portion of God from above” [*helek eloha mi-ma’lah*, Jb 31:2]³¹ is exiled into the realm of the husks, the animal soul. Moreover, the body itself is explicitly called “the exile of the soul”.³² In the exile, that is, during the time when the divine life-force resides within both divine and non-divine entities, every person has the opportunity to draw this life-force down from the “palaces of holiness” and to direct it either to the “three garments of the soul” (though, speech and deed [*mahashavah, dibur, ma’aseh*])³³ or, conversely, to the “palaces of *sitra ahara*.”³⁴ It

²⁹ See, for example, TO 100b, where the exiled *Shekhinah* is presented allegorically as the bride waiting for her groom in the tanners’ market; the tanner’s market, a despicable place exuding an unpleasant odour, represents the world of nature [*levush ha-teva*].

³⁰ T1, 19:24b-25a [Appendix 7].

³¹ See, for example, T1, 2:6a, 35:44a, 41:65b; T4, 15:123a; TO 24a, 84b; LT *Va-yikra* 2d, 6a, 39d, *Va-yikra hosafot* 51c, *Ba-midbar* 1b, *Hukat* 61d, *Mas’ei* 91, 28c, 34a, c, *Ekev* 13d, *Tetse* 37d, *Rosh ha-shanah* 62c, *Ha’azinu* 74c, 77c, *Shir ha-shirim* 2b, 5c.

³² See also e.g. TO 64d; LT *Shabat shuvah* 67c, *Matot* 83d.

³³ See, for example, T1, 1-13:5a-19b; MAHZ *Parshiyot*, i, 140-41. For the three garments of the soul in Habad thought, see Hallamish, “Mishnato ha-‘iyunit,” 227-232.

³⁴ See T3, 6:96a. In some places Rashaz refers to the agents of the evil side as the “Ten crowns of impurity” [*ketarim di-mesa’avuta*], which parallel, on the evil side, the ten *sefirot* of holiness

is similarly up to the individual whether the divine vitality would continue to flow down into the pure or to the impure side of the universe. On the personal level, the act of directing the divine life-energy to the realm of the *kelipah* (through deeds that are not directed solely to God) parallels the concealment of the divine energy within separate beings in the process of creation. Similarly, all the thoughts, words and deeds that are not directed to the good but empower the evil side of the creation drive the *Shekhinah* into exile.³⁵ Consequently, the thoughts, words and deeds that draw down the divine energy to the good side advance the end of the exile. This idea will be further discussed below.

In addition, the confinement of the divine life-force in the lower worlds is related to the existence of the gentile nations and their power over Israel. The vitality of the Land of Israel is drawn directly from *Malkhut* of the Word of Making, while the vitality of the other seventy nations descends through the mediation of the seventy patron-angels [*sarim*] appointed over them. Even though the patron-angels receive a life-force that is already diminished, the idol-worshipping nations still mistakenly consider them divine, as from their perspective, these angels are the source rather than mere channels of vitality. Thus the concept of the diaspora underscores the mutual dependence of Jewish history and the history of the universe: on the one hand, the creation of the patron-angels and the seventy nations they rule made idolatry possible, and thus the exile of *Shekhinah* to the nations is embedded in the process of creation (or the sin of the Tree of Knowledge) rather than being directly related to the historical tribulations of the Jewish people. On the other hand, however, the state of exile intensifies when the Jews live in the diaspora under gentile rule, as at that time, the innermost aspect of the divinity that resides among Israel is exiled with them.³⁶ The diaspora is, therefore, primarily a displacement of the divine life-force, while the physical displacement of the people is secondary. By sinning, the Jews channel the life-force to the gentile nations, and thus they intensify the divine state of exile. The confusion caused by the displacement of the divine life-

according to the oft-quoted statement that “God set the one over against the other one” [Ecc 7:14]. See for example T1, 6:10a.

³⁵ See for example T3, 6:96b.

³⁶ T4, 25:139b-140a.

force in turn leads to the intermingling of good and evil in the world, which is also the reason why the wicked may prosper and the righteous suffer.³⁷

2.2 *Four historical exiles.*

The conceptualisation of exile as the presence of the divine vitality within ostensibly non-divine beings is exemplified in the historical exiles undergone by the Jewish people. Indeed, Rashaz often refers to the historical exile in Egypt, or to the four exiles enumerated in the Midrash, the Babylonian, the Median-Persian, the Greek and the Roman,³⁸ but each of these major historical exiles is de-historicised, as is the idea of exile in general.

Rashaz is not concerned to distinguish between the various historical exiles. He often refers to several of them simultaneously, or speaks about them in general terms without specifying which particular one he has in mind. The only exception is the Egyptian exile, which provides a paradigm for all the following exiles, just as the exodus from Egypt [*yetsi'at Mitsrayim*] serves as a prefiguration of the future redemption. Only seldom do the remaining exiles display any distinguishing traits, and references to particular historical exiles appear only in order to shed light on the current state of Israel's spiritual enslavement.

Babylonia is psychologised in one of Rashaz's epistles as the state in which the individual is unable to serve God from the depth of his heart [*me-'umka de-liba*], namely, from his heart's innermost point, where the radiance of the divine Wisdom [*Hokhmah*] transcends the categories of reason and understanding [*le-ma'lah ma'lah mi-behinat ha-da'at veva-tevunah*]. While he is in that state, the innermost point of his heart is completely covered by the 'foreskin' of "exile" – the mundane affairs and worldly desires in which he is engrossed, and he cannot access it even when he

³⁷ See also T3, 6:96b.

³⁸ See *Bereshit rabah* 16:4; *Vayikra rabah* 13:5. Rashaz occasionally changes the list of the four kingdoms that enslaved Israel by substituting Media with Egypt. See for example MAHZ 5566, i, 232.

engages in divine service. Rashaz refers to this immersion in worldly affairs as the Babylonian exile.³⁹

Although Rashaz does not elaborate on this theme, one can assume that he was inspired by the Hebrew word play on the name “Babylonia” [*Bavel*], which reads backwards as “heart” [*levav*]. In the epistle, which reiterates the idea of symmetry within the created world (“God set the one over against the other one” [Eccl 7:14]), Babylonia, representing mundane affairs and desires, is the unholy counterpart of the holy innermost point of the heart. The word play mirrors the relation between these two entities: *levav* read backwards is the ultimate opposite of *Bavel*.⁴⁰ Another plausible source for the idea is the rabbinic depiction of Babylonia as the lowest of all lands.⁴¹ Service from the depths of the heart fulfils the words of the Psalmist: “Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, o Lord” [Ps 130:1].⁴² Since service from the innermost point of the heart originates in the highest point of the sefirotic hierarchy, namely *Hokhmah*, its opposite must be located in the lowest of all worldly realms: Babylonia.⁴³

When it is not psychologised, the Babylonian exile is mentioned in the context of the theosophical counterpart of the sefirotic structure – the world of *kelipah* or Adam Beliya’al.⁴⁴ In such cases, it is set alongside other exiles within a chain of exegeses effecting a theosophic transformation of a Midrash on the weekly

³⁹ T4, 4:105b. Elsewhere, however, Rashaz ascribes similar features to the exile of Edom. See for example TO 24a.

⁴⁰ Similar motifs can be found throughout the exegetic and the kabbalistic tradition. See for example David Kimhi (Radak) on Isaiah 43:19: “If thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy souls’ [Deut 30:10]: those returning to Babylonia [*Bavel*] did not turn unto the Lord with all their hearts [*be-khol levavam*]” [Appendix 8]; see also Luzzatto, *Adir ba-marom ha-shalem*, 379, where *Bavel* becomes *levav* by dint of Moses’ emendation.

⁴¹ See MAHZ *Razal*, 204; based on Rashi to *bTa’anit* 10a; see also *bShabat* 113b and *bZevahim* 113b.

⁴² See T4, 4:105a. See also Zii, 63b.

⁴³ See Zii, 63b, where prayer “out of the depths” refers to the prayer that draws from the “depth of all”: the *sefirah* of *Hokhmah*.

⁴⁴ See TO 41c; LT *Be-ha’alotekha* 35d; MAHZ 5568, ii, 655, 694. On the exiles as bodyparts of Adam Beliya’al, see MAHZ 5568, ii, 655. On the figure of Adam Beliya’al see Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape*, 232.

Torah portion *Terumah* [Ex 25:17-27:19]. The Midrash, musing on the fate of the oppressors of Israel in the messianic days, connects two biblical motifs: the statue of the book of Daniel [Dn 2:31-33], whose “head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay”, and the offerings of gold, silver and brass collected from the Israelites for the construction of the Tabernacle [Ex 25:2]. For the Midrash, the three precious metals mentioned in both Daniel and Exodus refer, respectably, to Babylonia, Media and Greece, indicating that at the end of days, the Messiah will incorporate these three gentile nations in his redemptive project. But from the fact that the Exodus verse does not mention iron [*barzel*], the Midrash concludes that out of all the gentile nations that enslaved Israel, only Edom, associated with iron, will be rejected.⁴⁵ Rashaz borrows this idea and sets it within the sefirotic scheme. Babylonia, as the “head of gold” [*resha di-dehava*, Dn 2:38], is located at the top of the world of husks as its *Keter*; Media and Persia, as the silver arms, stand for the *sefirot* of *Hesed* and *Gevurah*;⁴⁶ only Greece acquires a new role: despite the fact that brass in the Book of Daniel is associated with the abdomen and thighs, Rashaz identifies it as *Hokhmah* of the world of husks, clearly taking Greece to be a symbol of non-Jewish wisdom and philosophy.⁴⁷ Babylonia in this context exemplifies the idea that only from the lowest levels can the greatest heights be reached. Thus, the construction of the golden menorah in the Tabernacle was made possible by the experience of exile in Babylonia.⁴⁸

The Babylonian exile, therefore, has its *telos*: in the *ma'amar* discussed directly above it is the golden menorah of the Tabernacle; in another context Rashaz identifies it with the purification of the seven evil *sefirot* represented by the seven

⁴⁵ *Shemot rabah*, 35:5.

⁴⁶ However, in MAHZ *Ethalekh*, 63-4 Rashaz changes the order of the exiles and presents Egypt as the *Keter* of the world of husks, the Egyptian wisdom as *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, Babylonia and Media as *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, while Greece is the “middle line” of the world of husks, namely its *Da'at*, *Tif'eret* and *Yesod*.

⁴⁷ See for example TO 41a.

⁴⁸ LT *Be-ha'alotekha* 35d.

Canaanite nations.⁴⁹ Here, however, what distinguishes the Babylonian exile from all other exiles is not the role it plays in the process of purification. Rather, Rashaz singles it out to explain why it lasted for no more than seventy years (the seven attributes of the world of husks multiplied by ten [as each is itself composed of ten attributes] yielding a total of seventy),⁵⁰ while the exile occasioned by Edom (Rome), stretching to his own lifetime, had already lasted for seventeen centuries, even though the sins for which it was the punishment were not as grave as the sins that led to the Babylonian exile.⁵¹

Persia and Media feature in Rashaz's teachings not only as the impure forces that mirror the divine agencies of creation. Sometimes, conversely, they stand for the powers of the *Shekhinah* itself, Media as the external and Persia as the internal lights of the divinity [*orot makifim* and *orot penimiyim*]. These two types of light, which descended into the lower worlds together with the *Shekhinah* when she accompanied Israel on their exile, became embodied, respectively, in the Torah and in the commandments. Rashaz supports this idea with an invented etymology of the names Persia and Media, whereby Persia [*Paras*] derives from the Hebrew word *perusah* meaning a slice of bread; just as the bread nourishes the body, so the Torah nourishes the soul, and just as the bread must be sliced and divided into small pieces to be fit for consumption, so the Torah, as it descends to the lower worlds together with the internal lights, must be divided and distributed through numerous levels to provide

⁴⁹ See LT *Matot* 85d-86a. Rashaz uses here the term attributes [*midot*] in order to link the wickedness of the Canaanite nations and the sins of Israel with the construction of the lower and impure world. In the kabbalistic symbolism utilised by Rashaz, the three upper *sefirot* are referred to as the brains [*mohin*], and the seven lower *sefirot* as emotional attributes [*midot*] (see for example T1, 3:7a-b). In kabbalistic literature the terms *sefirot* and *midot* are often used interchangeably. See Hallamish, Introduction, 125; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 100. See also *Seder tefilot*, 189b, where the purification of the seven lower *sefirot* of the world of husks is not associated explicitly with the Babylonian exile. Rather, the seven evil *sefirot* derive from the death of the seven primordial kings and the breaking of the vessels. See, for example, MAHZ 5565, ii, 774. On the death of the kings in Kabbalah, see Wolfson, "Min u-minut," 254 n. 109, and the literature listed there.

⁵⁰ LT *Matot* 85d-86a; see also Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 90.

⁵¹ According to the Sages, the first Temple was destroyed as retribution for the cardinal sins of idolatry, incest and bloodshed, whereas the second Temple was destroyed for the lesser sin of baseless hatred [*bYoma* 9b].

them with spiritual nourishment. In turn, Rashaz derives the name Media [*Madai*] from the word *madim* [Sm 1, 17:38] meaning apparel, which he takes to be an allusion to the external lights surrounding the soul; just as garments envelop the body, so the commandments envelop the soul and are therefore referred to as its garments.⁵²

The Greek exile features in Rashaz's teachings even less frequently than the exiles of Persia and Media. He mentions it occasionally as the *Hokhmah* (Wisdom) of the world of husks, due to the association of Greece with “external wisdom,” namely philosophy. The Greek wisdom of the husks stands against the wisdom of God, for according to Rashaz, the Greek philosophers at the time of the Hasmoneans negated prophecy. The fact that there was very little oil in the Temple after the Maccabeans had it cleared of the hellenizers symbolizes the Greeks’ attempt to uproot the Torah,⁵³ as oil stands for the Torah.⁵⁴ This is slightly modified in another *ma’amar*, where the Greeks’ opposition to the Torah locates them in the “middle line” [*ha-kav ha-emtsa’i*] of *da’at*, *tif’eret* and *yesod* within the hierarchy of the evil *sefirot*, in juxtaposition to the Torah, which forms the middle line within the Godhead’s scheme of emanation.⁵⁵

Lastly, the exile of Edom, traditionally associated with the conquest of the Land of Israel by the Romans, or with the current Diaspora, which began with the destruction of the Second Temple by Titus’ army, is similarly reinterpreted in spiritual terms. It no longer signifies political subjugation by a foreign nation or an idolatrous religious cult but rather an aberrant mode of divine service. In *Tanya*, Rashaz describes the exile of the *Shekhinah* to Edom as the fall of the divine presence into the grasp of external (evil) forces [*hitsonim*]:

As our rabbis, of blessed memory, state: “When they [the Israelites] were exiled into Edom, the *Shekhinah* went with them.”⁵⁶ That is to say, when a

⁵² See TO 118b; MAHZ 5568, i, 96; T1, 4:8a – 5:10a.

⁵³ The hellenizers did not want to spill the blood of Israel, but to make them forget God's Torah [*lo bikeshu lishloah yadam ela lehashkiham et Toratekha*], as it is phrased in the prayer ‘*Al ha-nisim*.

⁵⁴ TO 41a. See also TO 30a, 34a, 41a; MAHZ 5568, ii, 655.

⁵⁵ MAHZ *Ethalekh*, 64.

⁵⁶ *b*Megilah 29a.

person practices the acts of “Edom” [*’oseh ma’aseh Edom*], he degrades and brings down thither the Divine spark, which vitalizes his *nefesh*, *ruah* and *neshamah*.⁵⁷

Rashaz identifies the exile in Edom with sin [*ma’aseh Edom*], and points out that every sinful act draws down the divine presence to the external forces [*hitsonim*], supplying them with the vitality that increases their strength. The term “external forces” is only one of several other names for the demonic side, but in this context, Rashaz uses it to emphasize a particular method by which sin reinforces the powers of evil: it raises an “iron barrier” [*mehitsah shel barzel*] between the sinner and God.⁵⁸ Underlying this claim is yet another word play, this time on the words *mehitsah* – the barrier that separates the individual from God, and *hitsoniyut* – externality, with which one is connected when separated from God, both of which Rashaz derives from the same root, while taking the metal ‘iron’ again to be an allusion to Edom.⁵⁹ Thus the iron barrier is created specifically by the “deed of Edom” and leads to the exile of Edom. The sins associated with Edom are defined as the essence of this exile, not as a theological rationalisation of the historical encounter with Edom but rather simply as a signification of the spiritual state called exile.

To recap, references to various historical exiles of the Jewish people do appear throughout Rashaz's teachings, yet they rarely provide any information that could distinguish them from one another. Despite occasional references to specific historical circumstances or personalities, Rashaz subordinates the historical perspective to the metaphysical one, thereby making it almost impossible to distinguish any historical exile from the continuous state of the Jews’ spiritual exile within the created world. Rashaz tends to recall particular exiles only insofar as their names may allude to some aspect or another of the condition of spiritual exile (sin, engrossment in mundane affairs, etc.). This dual understanding of exile, on the one

⁵⁷ T1, 17:23a [Appendix 9].

⁵⁸ See T1, 17:23a. See also T1, 26:32b, T4, 18:126b. Moreover, in TO 83a, the iron barrier that separates Israel from “their father in heaven” rises after the destruction of the Temple, and thus it is explicitly linked to the exile.

⁵⁹ See *Midrash Tanhuma*, Terumah 7.

hand as a succession of historical events that took place at particular times in the past, and on the other hand as a condition of existence that has lasted since the beginning of time itself, will have important implications for Rashaz's idea of the redemption. It allows him to develop a range of interconnected redemptive notions: collective redemption from a particular exile in history, cosmic redemption at the end of days, and personal redemption in the here and now.

2.3 Egypt – the paradigm of exile.

The exile in Egypt occupies a special place in Rashaz's teachings. It encapsulates the historical, the communal and the personal perspectives by being the first exile in the history of the Jewish people, which is celebrated and re-enacted every year at Passover throughout the Jewish world, with every individual commanded to see him/herself every day as one of the Israelites who were led by God out of Egypt.⁶⁰ The story of this exile is therefore important primarily as a rich narrative of redemption, with the hasty flight from Egypt on the night of Exodus, the splitting of the Red Sea, the giving of the Torah at Sinai, and the conquest of the Land of Israel as its main landmarks. Rashaz consciously exploits these themes, which are intertwined in his concept of exile as a metaphysical rather than a political condition. As a result, the Egyptian exile not only reflects the exile of the *Shekhinah* in the process of creation but at the same time forms the paradigm of the future redemption.⁶¹

When Rashaz describes the Egyptian exile (as he does when dealing with all the other exiles), he often focuses on the Hebrew name for Egypt as a key to understanding its essential features:

⁶⁰ “In every generation a person is obliged to look at himself as though he departed from Egypt” [*b*Pesahim 116b. Appendix 10].

⁶¹ As Rashaz states explicitly: “Every exile is in the nature of the Egyptian exile”(TO 51a [Appendix 11]).

Now, the Sages said: “When they were exiled to Egypt, the *Shekhinah* was with them,”⁶² for Scripture says: “I will go down with thee into Egypt” [Gn 46:4], that is, *Malkhut* [of the world] of Emanation actually clothes itself in [the worlds of] Creation, Formation and Making. Thus the *Shekhinah*’s exile to Egypt [*Mitsrayim*] means that the *Shekhinah*, which is *Malkhut* [of the world] of Emanation, is in exile within limits [*metsarim*] and borders [*gevulim*].⁶³

In this passage, Rashaz inscribes the Egyptian exile in the theosophical structure of the *sefirot*. Despite the presence of a biblical reference to the historical Egyptian exile, the actual enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt seems to be less significant here, with the main interest focused on the dynamics of the *sefirot* within the four kabbalistic worlds. The transition from history to theosophy is facilitated by a pun on the Hebrew name of Egypt, *Mitsrayim*, which – if vocalised differently – can be read as *metsarim*, meaning limits. This reading transforms Egypt from a political entity into the metaphysical category of limitation and boundaries, which mark the lower worlds of Creation, Formation and Making and distinguish them from the supernal world of Emanation. The exile of the *Shekhinah* into Egypt is therefore explicated as the descent of the *sefirah Malkhut* from the World of Emanation, characterised by its complete unity with the divine,⁶⁴ into the worlds that are characterised by plurality, division and limitation. In other words, the Egyptian exile represents the transference of the divinity from infinitude to finitude. In the instance of the world of Making, the lowest of the four worlds, the divine immanence is captured within the “real limitation” [*gevul mamash*] of time and space, as this world is limited in time by the six thousand years of history, and in space by the distance of five hundred years’ walk from earth to the firmament;⁶⁵ for this reason, the world of Making is explicitly

⁶² bMegilah 29a.

⁶³ TO 64d [Appendix 12].

⁶⁴ See for example T1, 39:52b, 40:55a, 42:59a, 51:72b, T2, 5:80a, T4, 6:110a; TO 64d. See also Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 50.

⁶⁵ See for example TO 64a-c. Elsewhere Rashaz attributes the creation of limits and borders in the lower worlds to the influx from the vessels [*kelim*] of the attributes of the World of Emanation. See TO 102a.

called by the name of Egypt [*ha-‘olam ha-zeh bikhlal nikra Mitsrayim*].⁶⁶ Thus the description of the exile in Egypt, and in particular the re-interpretation of its Hebrew name, turn it into the eponymy of exile in general, understood as God’s creation and continued maintenance of the non-divine reality. Moreover, the submission of the Israelites to Pharaoh’s authority features throughout Rashaz’s teachings as the drawing down of the divine influx into the “hind-parts” [*ahorayim*] of the sefirotic structure, thus enhancing the power of the evil forces. Here, too, the Egyptian exile is interpreted on the basis of word play: the name *far’oh* (Pharaoh) read backwards yields *‘oref* (the back of the neck), namely, the rear part of the body.⁶⁷

This idea is further reinforced by other readings of the name *Mitsrayim*, e.g. as *makom tsar* – a narrow space,⁶⁸ or *metsar yam* – a sea strait, to wit the “sea of wisdom” [*yam shel hokhmah*],⁶⁹ where the exile in Egypt stands specifically for the contraction of the *sefirah Hokhmah* into *Binah*. When projected onto the anthropomorphic scheme of the sefirotic hierarchy, *Mitsrayim* is identified with the throat [*garon*] – a narrow channel that connects the brain (namely the intellectual *sefirot* of *Hokhmah*, *Binah* and *Da’at*) with the heart (the emotional attributes associated with the *sefirot* of *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tif’eret*, *Netsah*, *Hod* and *Yesod*).⁷⁰ The association of Egypt with the throat yields several other interpretations. For example, Egypt is associated with Joseph’s service and subsequent imprisonment at Pharaoh’s court. In this case, the function of Egypt as the throat is embodied in the chiefs of the butlers, bakers and butchers [*sar ha-mashkim, sar ha-ofim ve-sar ha-tabahim*] of Gn 40⁷¹ and related to the pleasures of this world that stand in the way of the disclosure in the heart of the divine light residing in the brain.⁷² Following “the way of the kabbalists [*yod’ei hen*],” Rashaz also reads the Hebrew word *garon*

⁶⁶ LT *Shelah* 47c. See also LT *Shir ha-shirim* 14d.

⁶⁷ TO 103c-104c; see also TO 64d; MAHZ 5562, 148; 5565, 394, 444; 5566, 242.

⁶⁸ See for example TO 49d, 58b, 71d.

⁶⁹ TO 51a; see also TO 105a; *Seder tefilot* 8d.

⁷⁰ See TO 51a, 58c-d; LT *Ba-midbar* 11d. See also Ornet, *Ratso va-shov*, 127-8, where she discusses the role of the throat as a transitive point between intellect and emotions within the context of worship through love of God.

⁷¹ These are the three protagonists of the story of Joseph’s imprisonment [Gn 39:1-41:12].

⁷² TO 22c.

(throat) interchangeably with *haron* (anger), linking it to the story of Jacob, who set out for Haran from Be'er Sheva.⁷³ Haran, where Jacob spent twenty years working for Laban, is in turn associated with the separated beings that inhabit the lower worlds, while the verse "And Jacob went out from Beer Sheva and went toward Haran" [Gn 28:10] is interpreted figuratively as an illustration of the flow of the divine energy downwards, towards these separated beings. The established connection between Haran and the throat enables Rashaz to apply to it his own idea of creation by means of the divine speech:⁷⁴ the throat produces voice, which is identified with the life-giving energy of the divine; it continues to produce voice until it grows dry [*nihar geroni*], i.e., until the point at which the voice ceases to be audible, and it seems as if the words it had uttered exist in their own right.⁷⁵ From a broad perspective, this interruption of voice is reflected in the state of exile, and from the personal perspective, it is reflected in divine service that is not entirely selfless [*bi-vehinat nifrad ve-lo bi-vehinat bitul*].⁷⁶

Thus the exile can be perceived on two levels, sometimes referred to as Upper and Lower Egypt [*Mitsrayim shel ma'lah* and *Mitsrayim shel matah*]:⁷⁷ the theosophic level, on which the exile stands for the concealment of the divine vitality behind the veil of materiality, parallels the personal exile, understood as the inability to serve God whole-heartedly, on account of one's corporeality or immersion in mundane affairs. The limits and boundaries encoded in the Hebrew name of Egypt refer also to the "prison of the body" [*ma'asar ha-guf*] and of the animal soul, in which the divine soul is confined.⁷⁸

⁷³ Ibid. Rashaz associates the name Haran with the verse from the Psalms: "My throat is dried" [Ps 69:3], as Haran is the anagram of *nihar* (is dried). See for example TO 21c-d; Vital, *Ets hayim*, Sha'ar 28, ch. 5, 68.

⁷⁴ On the role of divine speech in Rashaz's doctrine of creation and its sources in the teachings of the Besht, see Idel, "Le-'olam ha-Shem," 239-243. See also Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 105. On the role of speech in the manifestation of the divine in Kabbalah, see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 99.

⁷⁵ See TO 57.

⁷⁶ TO 22b-c.

⁷⁷ See for example LT *Ba-midbar* 10c.

⁷⁸ See T1, 47:66b; TO 35b, 67a; LT *Ba-midbar* 2b-c, 10c. On the body as the confinement of the soul, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 140.

To recap, the exile in Egypt occupies a conspicuous place in Rashaz's teachings. It is the first exile in the historiography of the Jewish people, it features prominently in the Bible, it is associated with the festival of Passover, and it is recalled in daily prayers. Moreover, its Hebrew name of Egypt points to the nature of exile in general, namely, to the entrapment of the divine vitality within the limitations of plurality, materiality, and corporeality. Egypt encompasses both the macro- and the microcosm, as it refers both to the dynamics within the sefirotic worlds and to the construction and conduct of the individual. Many of the Egyptian exile's features overlap with those of other historical exiles, as Egypt is not only the paradigm of exile, on which all subsequent exiles are modelled, but it is also a continuous state, in which the world in general, and every individual in particular, exist as long as they remain subject to the limits of time and space.

2.4 The Exodus.

The Exodus mirrors some of the characteristic traits of the exile. Just as the exile traps the divine vitality within the spatio-temporal framework, so the Exodus frees it from the boundaries of time and space. Thus to come out of Egypt means to cross the boundaries and limits (exemplified by temporality and spatiality) that conceal the true character of the creation by giving the impression that it is a separate entity rather than an inherent part of the divine. In the Exodus, one transcends these boundaries and limits, clinging instead to the supra-temporal and infinite God. This, in turn, is reflected in the change from one form of the divine name to another: exile is associated with the name *Elohim*,⁷⁹ whereas the Exodus is associated with the Tetragrammaton (which stands for God's supra-temporality, as it comprises all three tenses: "He was, He is, He will be [*hayah, hoveh, yihyeh*]).⁸⁰

⁷⁹ On *Elohim* as the symbol of God's concealment within nature, see chapter one, note 47.

⁸⁰ See LT *Emor* 35c. Rashaz refers here to Pharaoh's words: "I know not the Lord [YHVH]" [Ex 5:2] as a proof that the Four Letter Name of God was not known in the Egyptian exile but was revealed only later. Elsewhere (TO 56d), Rashaz quotes Ex 6:4, where God explains that He revealed Himself to the Patriarchs by the name of *Elohim*, and only to Moses at the Exodus by the name YHVH. This distinction between *Elohim* and YHVH as referring respectively to the natural and the supra-natural

The overcoming of the spatio-temporal dimensions of the created world in the redemption from exile does not, however, mean that these limiting dimensions are to be annihilated and the creation overturned. If the exile was earlier likened to the narrow strait of the throat, in which the divine words of creation are obstructed and cease to be audible, then the exodus is the time when the divine voice is heard loud and clear as it is being revealed throughout the lower levels of creation:

The coming out of Egypt refers to the brain as it emerges out of the strait [*metsar*] of the throat, to expand in the body. From there it [the brain] is drawn down as *Malkhut*, which is “a good land and large” [*erets tovah urehavah*, Ex 3:8], [namely,] a wide space [*makom rahav*], unlike the throat, which is in the nature of straits [*metsarim*] - a narrow space, as mentioned above.⁸¹

The use of figurative language further reinforces the connection between this theosophic process and the Egyptian exile. The intellectual attributes [*mohin*] emerge out of the narrow strait of Egypt and expand onto the six emotional attributes. Consequently, the forces of all the intellectual and emotional attributes gather together in the last *sefirah*, *Malkhut*. As the *sefirah* that contains all the other attributes and transmits them downwards to the lower worlds, *Malkhut* enables the disclosure of the divinity in its fullness; hence it is compared to the Promised Land.⁸² Elsewhere, following the association of the throat with the divine voice of creation, Rashaz describes the Exodus as the process of connecting the divine brain [*mohin*] with the emotional attributes by means of the voice, specifically the articulation of voice during the recitation of the Torah, which reveals God’s intellectual aspect while allowing it also to be experienced emotionally. As Rashaz puts it, “The voice, which is in the throat, is the connection that enables the attributes of the brain within

resonates with the commentary of Nachmanides to Ex. 6:4, where he interprets the verse as related to the miracles that God performed for the Patriarchs, which were confined within the natural framework, in contrast to the miracles He performed for the Israelites on their way out of Egypt, which changed the course of nature.

⁸¹ TO 58b [Appendix 13].

⁸² *Malkhut* here corresponds to the Upper Land [*erets ‘elyonah*], which in the theosophic structure parallels the Land of Israel [*erets tahtonah*].

the head to be revealed within the heart.”⁸³ Sometimes Rashaz describes the Exodus as the revelation in the heart of the hidden love concealed within the brain.⁸⁴ The focus on the attribute of love and its full disclosure “in all thy heart” [*be-khol levavekha*] points to the role of prayer in the experience of personal redemption, while the focus on the voice points to the role of Torah study. Both these issues will be discussed in the next chapter.

It is important to emphasize that in the course of the Exodus, the lower realms are not obliterated or replaced by the upper realms. The Tetragrammaton does not replace the name Elohim but rather, as a result of the Exodus, it no longer conceals it. The dynamic represented here by the two divine names is translated elsewhere into the conceptual framework of Rashaz's metaphysics of light: the radiance of the light that fills all the worlds [*memale kol 'almin*] constitutes the metaphysical state of the Egyptian Exile, as this aspect of the divine light radiates with different degrees of intensity on many different levels of reality, and as such, it is subject to limitation and boundaries. In the Exodus, the infinite light that surrounds all the words [*sovev kol 'almin*] reveals itself within the domain of *memale kol 'almin*.⁸⁵ As in the messianic redemption, envisioned as God's “dwelling place in the lower worlds,” so in its prefiguration – the deliverance from the Egyptian slavery, God's transcendence reveals itself in the lower worlds and becomes one with them, yet it does not obliterate their low-worldly nature as such.

2.4.1. Egyptian bondage as preparation for redemption.

The exile in Egypt is important mainly because it appears to be a necessary stage on the Israelites' path to the Giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Rashaz expresses this idea in terms of *ratso va-shov*, with the enslavement in Egypt corresponding to the *ratso* mode and the Giving of the Torah to the *shov* mode. The former represents the state in which the divine vitality has departed from Israel and God remains hidden

⁸³ TO 57d [Appendix 14].

⁸⁴ See LT *Shir ha-shirim* 45c. It mirrors the idea presented above, whereby the throat prevents the revelation of the light originating in the brain within the heart. See note 70 above.

⁸⁵ See LT *Shir ha-shirim* 28d.

from the worlds below, while the latter is when the actions of those who inhabit the lower worlds [*ma'aseh ha-tahtonim*] draw down the light of *Ein Sof*, revealing it throughout their earthly domain. Moreover, in the *ratso* mode, the life-giving energy of the divine withdraws to a level from which it radiates down indiscriminately to both Israel and the gentile nations, thus enabling the nations to prevail over Israel. In the *shov* mode, on the other hand, God bestows His *Shekhinah* upon Israel alone.⁸⁶

All the exilic tribulations that result from the concealment of God's face [*hester panim*] are but a preparation for the divine revelation on Mount Sinai.⁸⁷ As a necessary step preceding the redemption, Rashaz compares the Egyptian exile to the act of sowing, while likening the liberation from this exile at the Exodus to the act of reaping.⁸⁸ In this metaphor, Israel is the seed deposited in the soil, where it grows while drawing on the divine life-giving energy, which has been concealed within the 'husks' since the primordial breaking of the vessels.⁸⁹ Just as the seed must first decay in the soil and disintegrate in order to sprout, so Israel must go into exile, be enslaved, have its heart broken [*lev nishbar*] and be reduced to naught [*behinat ayin*] before it can develop into a "great nation" [*goy gadol*, Dt 4:7].⁹⁰

Thus the Exodus is conceived as a task placed upon the Israelites' shoulders and dependent on their actions. As pointed out above, Rashaz describes the exile in Egypt as the descent of *Malkhut* of the supernal World of Emanation into the lower worlds of Creation, Formation and Making. Correspondingly, he describes the Exodus as the emergence of this *Malkhut* out of its exile in the three lower worlds, to be reintegrated in the unity of the World of Emanation. However, the purpose of this is the descent and revelation of the divinity from the realm of unity and infinitude into the realm of limitation and plurality, and this depends on the "arousal from below" [*ita'aruta dile-tata*], namely, the theurgic action of Israel, which is followed by the "arousal from above" [*ita'aruta dile-'ila*] – the influx of the divinity into the

⁸⁶ TO 56d; see also MAHZ *Parshiyot*, i, 235.

⁸⁷ See for example MAHZ 5565, i, 495.

⁸⁸ Or, alternatively, to pregnancy and birth. See for example TO 58d.

⁸⁹ TO 61a.

⁹⁰ LT *Pekudei* 4d. On the broken heart [*lev nishbar* or *tsebrokhenkeyt*] in Habad, see Loewenthal, *Communicating*, 195-8.

world.⁹¹ Thus the actions of Israel below prepare them and the world for the divine revelation. Rashaz takes their response to the giving of the Torah with “we will do” before “we will hear” [*na’aseh* before *nishma*’, see Ex 24:7] to be an indication of their perfect humility and the obliteration of their will before the will of God:

Now, the Israelites merited the Giving of the Torah by dint of the sorrows of the Egyptian exile “in mortar, and in brick” [Ex 1:14] [...]. And their saying “we will do” before “we will hear signified their self-nullification, [namely, the state in which] the individual utterly nullifies his will, as if he had no will of his own rather, he wills whatever is willed by the Upper Will, blessed be He. And this is what “service” [*avodah*] means [in the verse] “and ye shall serve Him” [Dt 13:4], [namely,] that the servant [*eved*] has no opinion [*de’ah*] of his own but rather he does whatever his master tells him to do. And by dint of saying “we will do” first, which signified this nullification, “we will hear” will become possible, namely, [the Israelites] will [be able] to receive the revelation and the light of *Ein Sof*, blessed be He.⁹²

The idea that the Sinaitic revelation was due to the Israelites’ complete trust in God, as expressed by their acceptance of the yoke of Torah before inquiring about its nature, appears already in the Talmud.⁹³ But Rashaz contributes to the Sages’ interpretation the idea that this acceptance of Torah was a gesture of complete submission, by which the Israelites eradicated their own will, making space for God’s will to descend upon them. Moreover, the Torah as God’s will [*ratson*], and the light of *Ein Sof* seem to be identical – a concept which Rashaz derives from the kabbalistic underpinnings of his doctrine.⁹⁴

Rashaz does not seem to limit the gesture of promising *na’aseh* before *nishma*’ to the actual act of receiving the Torah at Sinai. In the passage quoted

⁹¹ TO 64d. On the notions of “arousal from below” and “arousal from above” in Kabbalah and in Hasidism, see Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 84.

⁹² TO 98d [Appendix 15].

⁹³ See *bShabat* 88a.

⁹⁴ See Hallamish, “Mishnato ha-‘iyunit,” 76-77, where he points to *Kanfei yonah* by Menahem Azaria da Fano as a kabbalistic source that fully identifies the light of *Ein Sof* with the divine will; for an example of this identification in Rashaz, see T1, 41:56b.

above, *na'aseh* directly follows the sorrows of slavery that the Israelites endured in Egypt, which paved their way to the Sinaitic revelation. This “doing” refers, therefore, to the experience of hard labour in exile, and the humility that preceded the revelation begins with the humiliation of servitude in Egypt. Just as the Israelites were employed by the Egyptians as a slave workforce, so they were redeemed to fulfil God’s will by becoming His servants. Notably, the Hebrew noun signifying divine service [*avodah*] is the same as the one that appears in Ex 1:14 in reference to “bondage” and servitude to the Egyptians during the exile.

Humility, that is, the eradication of the self, which makes place for the divine to dwell in the world, is only one redemptive aspect of the exile; the other is related to enslavement and the hard labour to which the Israelites were subjected in Egypt. In reply to the question why Israel received the Torah only after the enslavement in Egypt and not at the time of the Patriarchs, who were surely worthy of receiving it, Rashaz says:

In truth, there are both an inner and an outer aspect [of Torah observance], and [Abraham's] observance was by way of the inner aspect [*bi-penimiyut*]. [The verse] “Now the Lord had said” [unto Abraham; Gn 12:1] refers to the revelation and the drawing down of the Light of *Ein Sof* into all the worlds from above to below by way of the inner aspect. However, the revelation by way of the outer aspect [*be-hitsoniyut*], giving rise to a true disclosure of the divinity, as mentioned above, [even] within such a material thing as the parchment [of the *mezuzah*], cannot be achieved by means of concatenation [*hishtalshelut*] but rather by way of “they made their lives bitter” [*vayemareru hayehem*] etc., with all manner of “hard bondage” [*avodah kashah*, Ex 1:14]. This gives rise to a revelation from above the [order of] concatenation, and it is this revelation that enables [the light of *Ein Sof*] to be revealed below the [order of] concatenation, for there [i.e. beyond the order of concatenation], above and below are the same, and *Hokhmah* is considered [the same] as ‘Making’ [*asiyah*], [as Scripture says:] “In wisdom hast thou made them all” [Ps 104:24].⁹⁵

⁹⁵ TO 11d [Appendix 16].

Rashaz reiterates the traditional belief that Abraham, who lived centuries before the Torah was given to Moses at Sinai, had nevertheless fulfilled it, albeit spiritually, in all its details.⁹⁶ This means that the manner of his observance was different from that of all the generation that came after the Exodus, as he fulfilled only the inner aspect [*penimiyut*] of the commandments. The terms Rashaz uses to distinguish between the inner and the outer aspects of observance carry certain axiological connotations: *penimiyut* is associated with the essential and the spiritual whereas *hitsoniyut* is linked to the accidental and material. Rashaz's use of these terms parallels the midrashic image of Abraham, who performed the commandments spiritually but not materially, i.e., without resort to any actual ritual objects such as the *mezuzah*, the *tefilin* or the Torah scroll. Moreover, "outer" or "external" may refer to the "other" in the sense of the non-Jewish or plainly evil, as, for example, in the expression "external wisdom", which stands for pagan philosophy, or "external forces", denoting the forces of evil. Thus, by characterising Abraham as observing the internal aspect of Torah, Rashaz underscores his extraordinary spiritual stature while at the same time suggesting that his observance was incomplete, as it lacked the all-important external aspect of Torah observance. This external aspect has twofold connotations: on the one hand, it appears to be less refined than the internal since it is closely related to the evil side of reality, but on the other hand, it is a vital part of divine service, even though – owing to its proximity to the evil side – it requires special effort, such as was beyond the reach of the Patriarchs. It is the effort entailed in the enslavement in Egypt that is a precondition for worship [*'avodah*] by way of *hitsoniyut*.

While the revelation of the divinity in the mode of *penimiyut* reached Abraham through the concatenation of a whole hierarchy of divine worlds,⁹⁷ revelation in the mode of *hitsoniyut* can take place only within the confines of materiality, namely, in the realm that lies below the hierarchy of the divine worlds.

⁹⁶ On the traditional claim that the Patriarchs kept the Torah, see Urbach, *The Sages*, 335-336.

⁹⁷ According to Rashaz, this is hinted at in the opening words of the weekly Torah portion *Lekh lekha*: "Now the Lord had said to Abram, get thee out of thy country" [Gen 12:1]. Rashaz decodes the name Abram as meaning "the exalted father" [*av ram*] and associates it with the divine name of 45. God's command to leave the country therefore refers to the beginning of the descent of the name 45 into the lower worlds and the beginning of the process of their emendation [*tikun*]; see TO 10a-b.

Consequently, the divine will reveals itself in the mode of *hitsoniyut* only within the material, exilic world, by means of ritual, and as a result of the physical labour performed by the Israelites during their period of enslavement in Egypt. Paradoxically (and following the ambivalence of the concept of worship by way of *hitsoniyut*), the revelation in the realm below the order of concatenation is of a higher level than the revelation within it, as it draws down the sublime aspect of the divinity that is located above the order of concatenation. Both these aspects are beyond (either above or below) the sefirotic order, and as such they lack any system of reference that could relate them to any hierarchy. Effectively, *sub specie aeternitatis* they are equal: for God, the lofty Wisdom and the lowly, physical ‘Making’ [‘*asiyah*’] are the same, for He made everything in (or by means of) His Wisdom.⁹⁸

To recap, Rashaz re-evaluates the exile in Egypt, turning it into much more than a precondition for the revelation of God at Sinai. On account of the humility and the immersion in materiality that marked the experience of the Egyptian exiles, they merited a revelation of the divinity that originated above the order of concatenation and pierced through the external, material aspect of reality. According to Rashaz: “The Jews merited [the Giving of the Torah] thanks to of their enslavement in Egypt ‘in mortar, and in brick’ [Ex 1:14], for by dint of this the *sitra ahara* was subjugated.”⁹⁹ In other words, the Israelites were redeemed from Egypt for the sake of their mundane activity. By employing the ambiguity of the Hebrew word *homer* (meaning either mortar or matter), Rashaz suggests that the Israelites merited the redemption by virtue of their work (which could mean either labour or worship, as both are designated by the word ‘*avodah*, derived from the same root as “slavery” [*shi’abud*]) within materiality.

⁹⁸ Elsewhere (LT *Ba-midbar* 18c), Rashaz refers to the 28 times (‘*itim*’) enumerated in Ecc 3:2-8, in order to express the similar idea that the external will be incorporated in the internal at the time of the redemption. According to this interpretation, the verse: “A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing” [Ecc 3:5] refer, respectively, to the time of the Giving of the Torah and the time of exile. At the Giving of the Torah, God conversed with Israel “face to face” [*panim el panim*], which means that the world was united with God to the extent that “even the hind-parts [*ahorayim*] were included in the aspect of face [*panim*].”

⁹⁹ TO 65b [Appendix 17].

Having crossed the Red Sea and left Egypt, the Israelites, now liberated from slavery, were about to embark on a forty-year journey in the wilderness, divided further into forty-two stages [see Nm 33]. In Rashaz's teachings, this journey, too, constitutes a part of the redemptive process, as well as being a paradigm of the future redemption.¹⁰⁰ The wilderness symbolises the domain of evil husks¹⁰¹ and is associated with the gentile nations,¹⁰² namely, the lowly and "external" aspect of the creation, sustained by the excess of life-giving energy that flows to them indirectly via Israel.¹⁰³ Accordingly, the purpose of Israel's forty-two-stage journey in the wilderness is to cut off the external forces from the flow of divine energy. As long as the husks can draw on this life-giving energy, the Israelites are not entirely free but rather trapped within the limits and boundaries of the material world. The forty-two stops on their journey in the wilderness are the stages through which they set themselves free.

Just as the source of entrapment within boundaries lies in the creation of the world, so the ability to free oneself is rooted in the creation of man. The Jew was created as God's subject, a concept supported by the principle that "There is no king without a nation."¹⁰⁴ His task is to transform the material world into God's dominion. For this reason he was created as a dual entity: in God's image and after

¹⁰⁰ See LT *Mas'ei* 88c-89a.

¹⁰¹ Because the Bible describes it as the place of "fiery serpents and scorpions" [Dt 8:15].

¹⁰² Based on Ezekiel's reference to the wilderness as the "wilderness of the people" [Ez 20:35].

¹⁰³ Rashaz compares the Congregation of Israel [*keneset Yisra'el*] (*Malkhut*) to a sheep [*rahel*], and reads the verse "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb" [Is 53:7] as a hint at the husks that draw the life-giving energy from the hair [*se'ar*] of *Malkhut*, namely, from its external part, which has no connection to its essence (as the cutting of hair does not cause pain). The silence of the sheep at the shearing symbolizes the absence of the creative divine speech [*dibur*] in the realm of husks, the wilderness [*midbar*] (see LT *Mas'ei* 88c). The link between the wilderness and the [divine] speech, based on the fact that these two Hebrew words are derived from the same root (*dalet, bet, resh*), appears throughout Rashaz's teachings, e.g. in TO 23b, where the generation of the desert [*dor ha-midbar*] is blamed for not willing to perform the commandments by means of both speech and deed [*dibur u-ma'aseh*] but only by means of thought, that is, exclusively by way of spirituality [*ruhaniyut*]. Interestingly, a similar attitude is described (see LT *Shelah* 38b) as the sin of the spies [Nm 13:1-14:9].

¹⁰⁴ See note 8 above.

His likeness [see Gn 1:26]. These two aspects correspond to the Upper and Lower Unifications he embodies [*yihuda ila'ah* and *yihuda tata'ah*],¹⁰⁵ and further to the two kinds of divine light that he draws down: *sovev* and *memale*.¹⁰⁶ By drawing down these lights and performing these unifications in the wilderness, the Israelites reveal that the forces within the world are indeed fully united with God as His attributes, and thus they “transform the darkness into light” [*le-hapekha me-hashukha li-nehora*]. This, in turn, explains the number of their forty-two journeys, which represent the seven attributes of *Ze'ir Anpin* multiplied by six, for each one of these attributes itself consists of six others. The transformation of the attributes in the wilderness [*midbar*] concludes symbolically with the transformation of *Malkhut* from mute entity to God's creative speech [*davar*].¹⁰⁷ In short, the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness can be perceived as a transitive period in Israel's redemptive history. Over the course of their wanderings, the Israelites transform the realm of husks into a realm of divinity, by re-uniting the seven lower attributes with the Godhead. The forty-two stages of their journey represent the seven lower attributes (each composed of six other attributes), and the final stop on their journey before entering the Promised Land (Jericho by the Jordan [Nm 33:48-49]) marks the final stage of the process of transforming these attributes. Thus the crossing of the Jordan and the ascension to the Land is theosophically paralleled by the rectification and ascension of the last of the *sefirot*, *Malkhut*.

To sum up, the exile in Egypt, which serves as a paradigm of exile in general, is a metaphysical precondition of the divine revelation on Mt. Sinai. This exile, manifested by engrossment in materiality and nature, creates the illusion that man

¹⁰⁵ On the Upper and Lower Unities, see chapter 1 n. 50.

¹⁰⁶ On the lights of *sovev* and *memale*, see chapter 1, n. 36.

¹⁰⁷ See also LT *Re'eh* 32b-c, where Rashaz plays on the proximity of the terms wilderness [*midbar*] and speech [*davar*]. The wilderness, that is fallow land, stands for thoughts, speech and deeds that are not directed at God and do not function as worship. *Midbar* is also the place into which the sparks of holiness have fallen. In this allegory, the dispersion of the sparks of holiness is compared to the loss of precious objects, and they can be recovered from the wilderness [*midbar*], that is, from the “words [*diburim*] of the letters that make up prayer” and through the study of Torah. One should therefore look deeply into one's thoughts and words, searching for any wrongdoing, in order to trigger the flow of God's mercy and thus elevate the sparks.

and his world are independent of God. But this state of degradation and ostensible separation from God is merely a necessary step towards a further revelation of godliness. The descent of the Israelites to Egypt and the humiliation they experienced while engaged in slave labour prepare them for the ascent to Sinai and entry into the Promised Land. The purpose of the enslavement is to break their ego and prepare them to receive the divine will as their own, as well as to purify the world around them and the divine attributes active within it so as to enable them to re-unify with the divinity. The Egyptian exile is thus perceived not as national tragedy but rather as a necessary condition, which must be fulfilled, to facilitate a fuller and more encompassing revelation of God than ever before.

3. Messianic efforts in Rashaz's teachings.

Far from being a narrative of things past, in Rashaz's teachings, the biblical account of the Exodus serves as a point of departure for speculation on the nature of the present exile and the future redemption. The Egyptian exile, the miraculous deliverance from it, and the experience of communion with God at the Giving of the Torah are all analogous to the current exile and the anticipated final redemption. Moreover, as the Exodus is re-enacted and re-experienced both communally – each Passover and individually – every day,¹⁰⁸ it determines the ritual patterns of everyday life for every Jew. The latter aspect and its implications for the possibility of achieving personal redemption in an unredeemed world will be discussed in the next chapter. In the following section I propose to discuss the messianic idea as a re-enactment of the Exodus in our time, and the role ascribed to the Jewish community in this process.

3.1 Between the Exodus and the final redemption.

According to Rashaz, the Exodus is a prefiguration of the final redemption, and this is, hinted at in the biblical text:

¹⁰⁸ See note 60 above.

Now, Scripture says: “We came indeed down” [*yarod yaradnu*, Gn 43:20], etc., [namely,] one descent followed the other. And about the Exodus and the redemption it says: “And I will also surely bring thee up” [*‘a’alekha gam ‘aloh*, Gn 46:4], etc., [and] “Let us go up at once,” [*‘aloh na’aleh*, Num 13:30] etc. In other words, [these verses refer to] two ascents, one following the other. In truth, during the Exodus, [the Israelites] ascended only once, as Scripture says: “I will bring you up [*‘a’aleh etkhem*] out of the affliction of Egypt” etc., “unto a land flowing with milk and honey” [Ex 3:17]. But the second ascent alludes to the future redemption, may it come speedily in our days, amen.¹⁰⁹

In this interpretation of the biblical text, even ostensibly stylistic features carry deep meaning. The duplication of a verb for rhetorical effect, which occurs commonly throughout the biblical corpus, is generally interpreted as an emphatic device. Rashaz, however, employs the traditional exegetical method that ascribes to every every such rhetorical repetition an additional meaning. He therefore reads *yarod yaradnu* literally as referring to two descends into exile, and *‘a’alekha gam ‘aloh* or *‘aloh na’aleh* as two ascents to the state of redemption. But since the biblical account of the Exodus mentions only one ascent from Egypt to the Land of Israel, the allusion to the second ascent must point to a redemption that is yet to take place, while the fact that it did not happen at the time of the historical Exodus suggests that exile is to some extent an enduring state.

Both the character and the purpose of the Egyptian exile reveal something about the future redemption. Firstly, the exile in Egypt was a preparation for the future revelation of the Torah on Mount Sinai; secondly, the hard labour and the bitterness of this exile were meant to bring about the revelation of the Torah in the external aspect of reality. The analogy, therefore, goes as follows: the future redemption will surpass the Sinaitic revelation inasmuch as it will bring about the revelation of the innermost aspect of the Torah (including its most abstruse element, the reasons for the commandments [*ta’amei ha-mitsvot*]). Moreover, not only will

¹⁰⁹ TO 49a [Appendix 18].

this future revelation be heard, it will also be perceived visually.¹¹⁰ In addition, while hard labour during the Egyptian exile paved the way to the Exodus, “enslavement for the sake of one’s livelihood” [*shi’abud parnasah*] (namely, the compulsion to engage in mundane occupations in order to earn a living rather than being totally dedicated to divine service) is a means to the much loftier end of the final redemption.¹¹¹ This is the reason why the Egyptian exile lasted for only 210 years, whereas the current exile, by the time of Rashaz, had already endured for over 1700 year.¹¹²

3.2. Purification of sparks in the time of exile.

Rashaz often inscribes the preparative aspect of the current exile onto the Lurianic idea of the purification of sparks [*berur nitsotsot*].¹¹³ The intermingling of the divine sparks with the husks has resulted from the breaking of the vessels or from the sin of the Tree of Knowledge,¹¹⁴ two events that are associated with the process of creation in general, not with any particular episode in Jewish or universal history. Indeed, the concept of the purification of sparks is employed here with the purpose of detaching

¹¹⁰ See TO 54a. The distinction between the audible revelation on Sinai and the visual revelation at the end of days is based, on the one hand, on the emphasis on hearing in *na’aseh ve-nishma*, and on seeing in Isaiah’s prophecy: “They shall see eye to eye” [Is 52:8], on the other hand. I will discuss it in detail in the next chapter.

¹¹¹ TO 54a; see also TO 15a. The definition of the current state of exile as enslavement for the sake of making a living is related to Rashaz’s notion of the work performed during the exile as a means of purifying or transforming materiality. It is also related to his idea that worship is a means of reunifying with God by stepping out of materiality as well as by drawing God down into the material world. This will be discussed in next chapters.

¹¹² TO 49a.

¹¹³ On the purification of sparks in Kabbalah and Hasidism, see Jacobs, “The Uplifting of Sparks,” 106-26.

¹¹⁴ See, for example, MAHZ 5566, i, 232, where the sin of the Tree of Knowledge and the biblical description of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden are used as a metaphor of the exile of *Shekhinah* and the dispersion of holy sparks. The four rivers flowing out of Eden are identified with the four exiles (see *Bereshit rabah* 16:4; *Vayikra rabah* 13:5), which represent the four ways by which the sparks and the souls of Israel fell under the power of husks and the seventy gentile nations.

the concepts of exile, redemption, and messianism from any particular political or historical circumstances.

Rashaz perceives the creation as an act by which the divine undergoes exile. As he puts it in one of his homilies, the consequence of the creation is “the fallen sukkah of David” [Am 9:11]: the divine presence falls into the lower worlds in order to enliven them. This process results in the confinement of the active, overflowing and limitless life giving force, *Hesed* of *Malkhut*, within the boundaries of the material world, which effectively renders it a limited entity. The time of exile serves to purify the divine sparks which had fallen into the husks, and thus to elevate “the fallen sukkah of David”, restoring it to its original place.¹¹⁵

The task of purification is multifaceted. It can be seen from the theosophical perspective as a process that takes place within the sefirotic structure, in which *Ze'ir anpin*, the transcendent, supra-temporal aspect of the Godhead, purifies the fallen *Malkhut*. The “six extremities” [*shesh ketsavot*] of *Ze'ir anpin* (the six *sefirot* constituting it) correspond to the six thousand years for which the world is traditionally said to last until the arrival of the redemption, and to the six days of the week in which the purification of sparks takes place.¹¹⁶

The reason why the state of exile has endured for so many years is the great number of fallen sparks awaiting purification. The initial two hundred and eighty eight¹¹⁷ were split from their source in the process of the evolution of the worlds of Creation, Formation and Action. In reality, however, the number of sparks trapped in the lower worlds significantly exceeds this initial number, and accordingly, more time is required to purify them. When the process of purification is completed, the Messiah will come.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ *Seder tefilot*, 53d-54a.

¹¹⁶ See *ibid.* On the traditional belief that the world will last for six thousand years, see *b'Avodah zarah* 9a.

¹¹⁷ On the 288 sparks in Kabbalah, see Jacobs, “The Uplifting of Sparks,” 106-7; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 268.

¹¹⁸ TO 27d. On the Lurianic notion of the Messiah, who appears only in order to bring the process of *tikun* to conclusion, see Scholem, *The Messianic Idea*, pp. 47-48.

The purification of sparks can also be seen from an axiological perspective, whereby it is a means of separating good from evil. To recognize the exile as part of the tension between the good and the evil elements of reality is to underscore the ahistorical character of the exile, as good and evil have existed since the creation of the world, and became intermingled already in the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The task of separating good from evil prepares the ground for messianic times, when God “will swallow up death for ever” [Is 25:8] and “all wickedness shall be wholly consumed like smoke”¹¹⁹

Several important features of the exile arise from this description. First, as was emphasized above, the exile is not the product of a historical chain of events, and it is not limited to any particular point in time. Even the primordial sin of Adam did not cause the intermingling of good and evil that is an inherent quality of exile; the only consequences of the sin were that the process of separating good from evil manifested itself as hard labour (ploughing, sowing and reaping) and as a constant struggle between these two aspects of reality, whereas before the sin, separation took place as a harmonious and peaceful process.¹²⁰ The sin changed the character of the exile but not its essence. In short, the world, from its creation until the final redemption, exists in the state of exile. Secondly, the evil that must be separated from good is associated with materiality; the purpose of separating it from good is conceived of as a process of purification aiming to reveal the godliness that resides within the ostensibly ungodly, material lower worlds. Rashaz’s mentor, Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk, in one of his pastoral epistles, pointed to the duality of spirituality and materiality in the world, embodied also in each person through the duality of soul and body. Any activity in which a person cleaves to the spiritual aspect in order to “strip it off all aspects of corporeality [*le-hafshit mi-kol ofenei ha-gashmiyut*] that is dust, and return it to the place of the [divine] will”¹²¹ is considered a redemptive act of “raising the *Shekhinah* from the dust” [*hakamat Shekhinta me-‘afra*].¹²² Rashaz follows his master’s dualistic view of reality and occasionally

¹¹⁹ From the Rosh ha-shanah liturgy. See TO 5d.

¹²⁰ TO 5d-6a.

¹²¹ Heilman, *Igerot Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 18 [Appendix 19].

¹²² See *ibid.*

compares the complexion of man to a state in which the divine soul is in the prison of the body and the animal soul.¹²³ However, he does not identify the redemption with stripping the divine element off materiality, to wit the rejection of materiality. As Rashaz explains elsewhere, the separation of good from evil in the lower worlds is just the first stage in the process of purification. This stage is akin to the process of digestion, in which an energy-giving element of food is separated from refuse, with the former absorbed and the latter rejected by the body. At the second, higher stage, the impure [*tame*], instead of being rejected is transformed into the pure [*tahor*]. The separation of good from evil is effected by the highest *sefirah*, *Hokhmah*. *Hokhmah* organizes reality from within the world, without changing its substrates: good remains good, evil – evil, yet they are separated from one another. However, the transformation of evil into good or the purification of the impure changes the substrates of the world and therefore must be carried out by an entity that is not part of it: it can be achieved only by means of *Keter* – an entity located above the internal hierarchy of the *sefirot*, which precedes the breaking of the vessels.¹²⁴

Notwithstanding the processes of separation and transformation effected by the supernal forces, Rashaz also emphasizes every individual's power to purify the sparks precisely because he is immersed in materiality:

Now, the celestial beings do not have the power to purify and elevate that, which is in the husk of *nogah* as a result of the breaking [of the vessels]. Only the terrestrial beings [can achieve this], for they are vested in a material body [known] as the “hide of the serpent,”¹²⁵ which derives from the husk of *nogah*. These [embodied souls] weaken its strength by crushing the passions, thereby subjugating the *sitra ahara*, so that “all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered” [Ps 92:9].¹²⁶

Clearly, for Rashaz, materiality and its particular mode – corporeality – are as much a curse as they are a blessing. Indeed, as the product of the husks, the body is

¹²³ See note 78 above.

¹²⁴ See LT *Hukat* 59d-60a.

¹²⁵ See *Tikunei zohar* xxi, 48b.

¹²⁶ T4, 26:144b-145a [Appendix 20].

connected to sin and to the evil side of creation, but it is precisely this connection that enables the purifications to take place. One can rectify materiality only by acting through and within it, which is why the task of purification has been given to “terrestrial beings,” namely, to humans who are made up of an immaterial soul and a material body. By contrast, “celestial beings”, such as angels, who are of a more subtle composition than humans, as well as souls prior to incarnation, do not possess a material body and are therefore incapable of subjugating the Evil Side through its materiality. Furthermore, purification is the purpose of the soul’s descent from its supernal source to the lower worlds, where it is to be incarnated.¹²⁷ Thus the body becomes a necessary redemptive tool, to the point where Rashaz states that: “The redemption depends on us, who have bodies. We must quell and break all [worldly] passions. Through this merit we will be redeemed.”¹²⁸ The redemption in this case is referred to as God’s “dwelling place in the lower worlds” [*dirah ba-tahtonim*], achieved by virtue of “our worship and our Torah.”¹²⁹

3.3 Building God’s dwelling in the lower worlds.

The messianic task of establishing God’s dwelling in the lower worlds is placed on the shoulders of the entire Jewish people, both individually and collectively. It starts with the body of each and every individual and extends to the actions of the entire community in space, through all the generations of the Jewish people in time.

The idea of the communal responsibility for realizing the messianic future features extensively in the thirty-seventh chapter of *Tanya*. In the opening lines of the chapter Rashaz writes:

This culminating fulfilment of the messianic era and of the resurrection of the dead, which is the revelation of the light of the blessed *Ein Sof* in this material world, depends on our actions and service throughout the duration of

¹²⁷ See for example T1, 37:48b, 49:69a. See also Ornet, *Ratso va-shov*, 136; Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 140.

¹²⁸ MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 119 [Appendix 21]. See Loewenthal, *Communication*, 69 and 243 n. 32.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

the exile. For what causes the reward of a commandment is the commandment itself,¹³⁰ because by virtue of performing it the person draws a flow of the blessed *Ein Sof*'s light from above downwards, to be clothed in the corporeality of this world, in something that was previously under the dominion of *kelipat nogah*.¹³¹

Thus the advent of messianic time and the fulfilment of the messianic task are dependent on everyday activity carried out by everyone. By addressing this message in print to the readership of his book Rashaz underscores the communal and egalitarian character of the messianic effort: all members of the Jewish community take part in it, both the representatives of the elite, such as Rashaz himself, and the broader circle of his followers, to whom the book was addressed. As the core of the messianic effort lies in the performance of the commandments, there is nothing that takes Rashaz's messianic concept beyond the nomian framework. He turns around the mishnaic saying that "the reward of the commandment is a commandment"¹³² in order to infer from it that the ultimate reward (namely, the redemption) will be granted in return for the fulfilment of the commandments. In other words, the redemption, which is the full revelation of the light of *Ein Sof* in the lower worlds, is brought closer by the performance of commandments, each of which draws down a certain amount, however small, of the light of *Ein Sof*.

The messianic dimension of the commandments is further reinforced in Rashaz's commentary on the laws of the ritual of the red heifer. About this ancient ritual it is said that since the destruction of the Temple, only the king Messiah will perform it again.¹³³ In Rashaz's viewpoint, the commandment of the red heifer represents the totality of the Torah [*kelalut ha-Torah*]¹³⁴ and constitutes the purpose

¹³⁰ See *mAvot* 4:2.

¹³¹ T1, 37:46b [Appendix 22].

¹³² *mAvot* 4:2.

¹³³ Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilekhot parah adumah, 3:9.

¹³⁴ This is based on the phrasing of the biblical verse "This is the ordinance of the law [*zot hukat ha-Torah*] which the Lord hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, and upon which never came yoke" [Nm 19:2], which may suggest that the law of the red heifer is the quintessential law of the Torah.

of the descent of the soul to the lower worlds and its embodiment.¹³⁵ For this commandment is an epitome of the dynamics of *ratso va-shov* inherent in every one of the commandments. In the ritual of the red heifer, the ash from the cremation of the heifer stands for *ratso* while the purifying running water [*mayim hayim*, Num 19:17] stands for *shov*. The significance Rashaz ascribes to the red heifer is rooted not only in the structure but also in the purpose of the ritual, which he understands in much broader terms than his biblical source. While the purpose of the biblical ritual is to cleanse the Israelite who has come into contact with a corpse, Rashaz removes the red heifer from this halakhic context, transposing it to the theosophic structure of the kabbalistic world: the “impurity of the corpse” [*tum’at ha-met*] becomes the impurity of the seven Edomite kings, whose death symbolises the breaking of the vessels.¹³⁶ The red heifer cleanses the cosmic impurity caused by the breaking of the vessels and is thus invested with a redemptive value. In addition, the cremation of the heifer stands for the love of God as expressed by His mode of *ratso*¹³⁷— the living water of Torah, while the vessels in which the ashes and the water are mixed stand for the commandments and the letters that make up the text of the Torah.¹³⁸ Hence Rashaz successfully reinterprets a ritual that has little relevance to daily life in exile as an allegory of the purifying and redeeming powers of both Torah study and the performance of the commandments.

The redemptive role of the commandments starts with the individual. The commandments have a transformative value, and this idea is further reinforced by the correlation between the commandments and the body parts.¹³⁹ By performing all the six hundred and thirteen precepts of the Torah one imbues one’s body with holiness.¹⁴⁰ Moreover, the division of the commandments into positive and negative

¹³⁵ LT *Hukat* 56a-c.

¹³⁶ LT *Hukat* 56d.

¹³⁷ Rashaz refers here to a verse from *Sefer yetsirah* 1:8: “If thy heart fail thee [*im rats libekha*] return to thy place,” which originally refers to *ratso va-shov* in Ezekiel 1:14.

¹³⁸ The letters are called vessels as they contain the light of *Ein Sof*. See LT *Hukat* 57a.

¹³⁹ bMakot 23b. See also Urbach, *The Sages*, 342-3.

¹⁴⁰ The development of this concept in the teachings of the last Habad rebbe, Menahem Mendel Schneerson, is discussed in detail by Elliot Wolfson (*Open Secret*, 130-60), in the chapter entitled “Semiotic Transsubstantiation of the Somatics”.

is reflected in their different functions within the body, and it is for this reason that one is obliged to perform all 613 commandments:

The 365 negative commandments [are performed in order] to restrain the 365 blood vessels of the vital soul in the body, and to prevent them from drawing nourishment or vitality from one of the three completely unclean *kelipot* by means of that sin, [...] as Scripture says: “I will cause the unclean spirit to pass out of the land” [Zec 13:2]. The 248 positive commandments [are performed in order] to draw the light of the blessed *Ein Sof* earthwards, so as to raise up and bind to Him, and to unite with Him in perfect union, the totality of the vital soul, which resides in the 248 organs of the body, so that they would become one, in accordance with His blessed will to have an abode amongst the lowest creatures [*dirah ba-tahtonim*], who would [thus] become a “vehicle” [*merkavah*] for Him, as were the Patriarchs. Once the totality of the vital soul of the whole community of Israel becomes a holy *merkavah* for God, the total vitality of this world, which at present constitutes *kelipat nogah*, would emerge from its impurity and filth and ascend unto holiness, to become a *merkavah* for God through the revelation of His glory, “and all flesh shall see it together” [Is 40:5], [...] and the whole world will be filled with the glory of the Lord, and [Israel] shall behold [it] eye to eye, as at the Giving of the Law.¹⁴¹

Thus the commandments correlate with the body in the following way: the 365 negative commandments correspond to the 365 blood vessels, and the 248 positive commandments correspond to the 248 body parts. Every transgression of a negative commandment enables one blood vessel to draw vitality from the three impure husks, thus rendering the whole body impure and unable to ascent to God. At the same time, however, the prohibitive force of each negative commandment serves to protect a corresponding blood vessel from being penetrated by the impurity of the husks. To emphasize this positive value of the negative commandments, Rashaz quotes the messianic prophecy of Zechariah: since these commandments insulate the body from impure influences by blocking the channels from which the Evil Side

¹⁴¹ T1, 37:47b-48a [Appendix 23].

draws its vitality they actively diminish the power of the Evil Side and bring closer the messianic era, when – according to Zechariah – the spirit of impurity would “pass out of the land.”

By the same token, the positive commandments suffuse the body parts with the divine vitality, thereby transforming every observant Jew into a “chariot” or a “vehicle” for the divine will. Notably, among the 613 commandments, which the individual must perform in order to become a chariot for the divine are the cardinal positive commandments of prayer and Torah study. Both are considered not only as spiritual or intellectual pursuits but also as physical actions, since “moving one’s lips constitutes action.”¹⁴² They are therefore no less involved in the transformation of the body into a vehicle for the divinity than any more manifestly material practical commandments, such as the commandment of *tefilin* or *mezuzah*. Torah study, prayer, and various other positive commandments, especially the commandment of giving charity [*tsedakah*], are often ascribed a particular redemptive significance.¹⁴³

¹⁴² T1, 37:47a.

¹⁴³ The emphasis on prayer, Torah study and charity recurs throughout Rashaz’s teachings and derives from the belief that these three commandments comprise the essence of divine service: “Now, the entire Torah and the commandments may be reduced to the following three steps: Torah [study], prayer and charity, as we were taught: ‘The world is based upon three things: the Torah, divine service and the practice of kindness’ [*mAvot* 1:2]. For [divine service through] prayer has replaced [divine service through] sacrifices, and the practice of kindness is charity. It is in reference to these three things that Scripture says: ‘I have created him, I have formed him, yea, I have made him’ [Is 43:7]. This refers to [serving God with one’s] thought, speech and deed” (LT *Aharei* 25d) [Appendix 24]. Prayer, Torah study and charity are not only the three pillars of worship enumerated by Rabbi Shimon ha-Tsadik in *mAvot*, but they also correspond to the three garments of the soul: thought, speech and deed. This correlation can be explained as follows: prayer as the “service of the heart” [*avodah she-ba-lev*] depends on the intention [*kavanah*] that is in one’s thought, and of Torah study it is said that: “Thou shall meditate therein [Josh 1:8].” Rashaz may well be reading the word “meditate” [*hagita*] as meaning “articulate”, “utter” or “speak out,” as an evocation of the halakhic rule that in Torah study, “thought is not the same as speech” [*bShabat* 150a], which is why Torah must be recited aloud in fulfilment of the commandment of Torah study. Finally, charity is associated with deed’ [*ma’aseh*], following the biblical verse that refers to “the work of righteousness” [*ma’aseh tsedakah*, Is 32:17], which may be alternatively translated as “a deed of charity.” See LT *Aharei* 26a.

The transformation that occurs in each individual by virtue of fulfilling all 613 commandments is part and parcel of the larger process that enables God to occupy “a dwelling place in the lower worlds”, for the accumulation of many such individual transformations gives rise to a cosmic transformation:

The whole community of Israel, comprising 600.000 particular souls, is the [source of] life for the world as a whole, which was created for their sake.¹⁴⁴ And each one of them contains and is related to the vitality of one part in 600.000 of the totality of the world, which [part] depends on his vital soul for its elevation to God through its own [the soul’s] elevation, namely, by virtue of the individual’s partaking of this world for the needs of his body and vital soul in the service of God, viz., [by] eating, drinking, and the like, [by his] dwelling and all his utensils.¹⁴⁵

Rashaz takes Rashi’s view, whereby the opening verse of Genesis is a statement to the effect that the world was created for the sake of Israel, to suggest that the world was created in order to enable Israel to worship God. Every material object in man’s worldly environment is capable of being utilized for the purpose of divine service, and thus of being elevated to the divine – whether by serving as a ritual object or simply as a means of maintaining the individual in a state of physical well-being, which renders him fit for divine service. The commandments, which draw down the divine light into the material world, transport it from the domain of the husks into God’s domain. Thus, by subjecting mundane objects to the rules of *halakhah*, the Jew enables the divinity to pervade the “four cubits” of his mundane environment. This is particularly conspicuous with regard to ritual objects such as the *mezuzah* or the Torah scroll, which are but pieces of leather until they are incorporated in the ritual framework and acquire religious significance. Similarly, money donated for charity, or items of food blessed appropriately, conform to the divine will as expressed in the commandments and are therefore absorbed into the light of *Ein Sof*.¹⁴⁶ Food has an additional significance, because it is converted into new blood

¹⁴⁴ See Rashi to Gn 1:1.

¹⁴⁵ T1, 37:48a [Appendix 25].

¹⁴⁶ See T1, 37:46b-47a. See also LT *Be-har* 42b: “Now, the purpose of and the reason for all the commandments is to turn being [*yesh*] into naught [*ayin*], so that the nullification of being [*bitul ha-*

and can thus provide the body with energy. Blood, as related to the animal soul, is a quintessential derivative of the impure, evil *kelipah*; yet when the energy it generates is used for Torah study and prayer, it is transformed into good and integrated in the domain of holiness.¹⁴⁷ Each and every soul of Israel becomes responsible for elevating its own small share of the world by utilizing it in serving the divine. The transformation of the whole world into God's dwelling place is an outcome of the

*yes*h] would be accomplished. And this is why, according to the Sages, 'the entire Torah was compared to the *tefilin*' [bKidushin 35a], for with regard to the *tefilin*, when one writes 'One' [*ehad*] on a material parchment that derives from the husk of *nogah* and is a being unto itself, it is incorporated in the category of naught [*ayin*], as it becomes a vessel for the divinity that rests upon it by way of 'One' etc. And this applies to all the commandments of the Torah" [Appendix 26].

¹⁴⁷ See T1, 37:47a-b; TO 16c, 55d, 65b-c, 66a, 117c; LT *Tsav* 13b-c, *Tazri'a* 20d, *Sukot* 78d. See also LT *Emor* 38c. Rashaz refers to the talmudic idea that: "As long as the Temple stood, the altar atoned for Israel, but now man's table atones for him" [bBerakhot 55a]. He compares eating food to offering sacrifices: just as the purpose of the latter was to purify the soul of the sacrificial animal and re-unite it with its source, which lies above the breaking of the vessels, so eating – so long as it is accompanied by the appropriate blessing and intention – purifies the inanimate, vegetative and animate [*domem, tsomeah* and *hai*] elements concealed within food. See also *Seder tefilot* 69c, 203a, and 101a-c, discussed in Jacobs, "Eating as an Act of Worship," 163-64, where every meal is considered a war between the holy and the unholy, an idea based on the fact that the Hebrew words "bread" [*lehem*] and "war" [*milhamah*] share the same root. Rashaz also associates the talmudic prohibition on the eating of meat by an ignoramus ['*am ha-arets*, bPesahim 49b] with purifications: red meat that stems from *Gevurot* (for the association of the colour red with *Gevurah*, see Hallamish, *Introduction*, 146) is too closely related to the external forces to be purified by an ignoramus; only a scholar [*talmid hakham*] equipped with wisdom [*hokhmah*] is fit to purify it, according to the saying that ascribes purifying powers to the attribute of *Wisdom* ("through *Hokhmah* they are purified [*be-hokhmah itbereru*, based on Zii, 254b]). See LT *Be-ha'alotekha* 31c-33b. A variation on this motif can be found in LT *Berakhah* 97d, where the inability of the ignoramus to elevate the meat results from the fact that he possesses only "hidden love" [*ahavah mesuteret*], as opposed to the scholar, whose love is ecstatic and powerful "like coals of fire" [*rishfei esh*]. Elsewhere (LT *Tsav* 8a, *Balak* 72b, *Pinhas* 79d) the prohibition on eating before prayer is explained in terms of the obligation to let the soul spread throughout the entire body during prayer, as only then would the food consumed by the body provide energy for the soul rather than the *sitra ahara*. Finally, Rashaz identifies eating with blessing as a realisation of *dirah ba-tahtonim*, for it enables the light of the *Ein Sof* contained in the vitality of food to dwell in man. See LT *Naso* 26b. For a general discussion of the mystical dimension of eating in Hasidism, see Jacobs, "Eating as an Act of Worship," and idem, "The Uplifting of Sparks," 117-121.

accumulation of multiple such individual transformations. Altogether, the six hundred thousand souls of Israel correspond to the same number of particles of divine vitality (sparks) present in the world: when Israel have performed all the commandments, their animal souls and bodies, together with the lower worlds they inhabit, will be divinized by the light of *Ein Sof*.¹⁴⁸

A life governed by the *mitsvot* has the power to transform the body as well as the personal space of the individual, but at the same time it also sanctifies the dimension of time, since the purpose of both the individual's lifespan (seventy years)¹⁴⁹ and the whole chain of his soul's incarnations from one generation to the next, is to perform every one of the commandments, as is required for the redemption to come.¹⁵⁰ In addition, the length of the current exile is understood as being determined by the large number of sparks,¹⁵¹ or by certain aspects of the sefirotic tree, that still require purification.¹⁵²

It is important to point out that Rashaz's messianic concept does not seem to aim at the restoration of the order that preceded Adam's sin or the creation. This is

¹⁴⁸ This idea resembles the concept, present in early hasidic teachings, that the six hundred thousand souls of Israel combine to form the full stature of the Messiah, each responsible for restoring to its source the part it constitutes of the messianic stature, and thus ultimately for bringing on the final redemption. See on this Idel's discussion ("Mystical Redemption," 50-54) of two passages from Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl's *Me'or 'enayim*, 166-7. In the above passage from Tanya, however, there is no reference either to the six hundred thousand souls of Israel as the constituent parts of the Messiah's stature or to the Jews of Rashaz's own time as being the incarnations of those six hundred thousand. Rashaz is aware that the total number of Jews living in his own day by far exceeds that of the Jews who left Egypt at the time of the Exodus. He therefore considers the souls of his contemporaries to be splinters or offshoots rather than incarnations of the original six hundred thousand souls that took part in the Exodus. See TO 27d.

¹⁴⁹ Based on Ps 90:10.

¹⁵⁰ See also TO 53d, where an individual lifespan is associated with the halakhic precept of saying one hundred blessings every day. A Seventy-year lifespan divided into three hundred and sixty five days, in each of which one says one hundred blessings, is apportioned so that every person would say enough blessings to bring about the disclosure of the light of *sovev* in *memale*, in other words, the disclosure of transcendence within immanence.

¹⁵¹ See note above 117.

¹⁵² See note above 115.

because good and evil were intermingled in the Tree of Knowledge even before Adam tasted of its fruit; his sin only complicated the process of purification, turning it into a war between good and evil.¹⁵³ It was not Adam's sin but rather the creation itself that brought about the state of exile. Moreover, Rashaz views the creation positively, as the means of God's self-expression within His so called "dwelling place in the lower world," namely, as a totality comprising even ostensibly separate and self-standing entities. The redemption concludes the process that began with the creation of the world rather than aiming to amend and restore it to any primordial state untainted by sin.

3.4 The role of the individual in the messianic effort.

According to Rashaz, some elements of the liturgy,¹⁵⁴ which arouse the "hidden love" [*ahavah mesuteret*] residing in man's divine soul,¹⁵⁵ prompt it to reveal itself within the animal soul. Thus prayer results in the subjugation of a certain aspect of *kelipah* to an aspect of the divinity that exists within every single Jew, and this constitutes a particular form of the purification of fallen divine sparks.¹⁵⁶ Similarly, Rashaz credits the recitation of blessings with the power to draw down the divine influx into the world, or to bring the transcendent light (*sovev*) into the immanent (*memale*),¹⁵⁷ thus conveying the divine influx from above time into the spatio-

¹⁵³ See TO 5d-6a.

¹⁵⁴ *Keri'at shema*, preceded by *Pesukei de-Zimra* and the blessings "Yotser" and "Ahavah."

¹⁵⁵ On the "hidden love" possessed by every Jewish person regardless of merit, see Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 99-103; Hallamish, "Mishnato ha-'iyunit," 320-3.

¹⁵⁶ See T5, 162a-b.

¹⁵⁷ This is related to the idea that the word "barukh", which opens the standard blessing formula, is etymologically related to kneeling (and in the eighteen benediction of the *'Amidah*, it is also linked to the praxis, as a praying person traditionally bows down on the word "barukh"), and as such it symbolises movement from up downwards, not only in this world but also in the world of the *sefirot*. See, for example, TO 20a, 53b; LT *Be-hukotai* 48b, *Seder tefilot* 142b. In TO 37c Rashaz derives the word "barukh" from the word "bending" [*mavrikh* – see *mKilayim* 7:1: "He who bends the vine shoot into the ground" {*ha-mavrikh et ha-gefen ba-arets*}].

temporal world.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, at the time of prayer man's thought cleaves to God as an act of self-sacrifice,¹⁵⁹ since he eradicates his own will and becomes a vehicle or chariot [*merkavah*] for the divine will, uniting himself with "his father in heaven" through entirely submitting both his will and his heart to God."¹⁶⁰ In this way he brings down the divine life-force into the world, becoming instrumental, on the one hand, in keeping the world in existence, and on the other hand, in establishing the divine kingdom on earth.¹⁶¹ This amounts to creating God's dwelling place within the lower worlds, and ultimately, to bringing about the redemption.¹⁶²

The redemptive role of Torah study is closely related to its legal dimension. As the criterion by which one distinguishes right from wrong, pure from impure, the permitted from the forbidden, the Torah is an instrument of separation between good and evil in the world, and thus an agent of the redemption. Rashaz explains this

¹⁵⁸ See TO 37b-c, where the blessing recited before a commandment is performed constitutes the link that connects the material with the spiritual dimension [*be-gashmiyut* and *be-ruhaniyut*] of the Torah and all its commandments. The Torah, as well as the ritual object, employed in the performance of a commandment is described as a material "sign" [*tsiyun* or *siman*] signifying the spiritual dimension of reality; by reciting an appropriate benediction prior to performing a commandment, one connects these two dimensions of reality. Consequently, by drawing down vitality from the supra-temporal reality of the divine, the spatio-temporal Torah and its *mitsvot* become, for Rashaz, the "source of time and space." See also LT *Be-hukotai* 48b, where Rashaz associates the benediction (from the Passover *Hagadah*), "Blessed is the Omnipresent [*ha-Makom*], blessed is He!" with drawing divine vitality into space [*makom*], and the ninth benediction of the *'Amidah* prayer, pleading for "good years" [*birkat ha-shanim*], with drawing this vitality into time.

¹⁵⁹ On self-sacrifice [*mesirat nefesh*] at the time of uttering the "*ehad*" of *Keri'at Shema*', see, for example, T1, 25:32b, 46:65a, T4, 128:148a; TO 29b. On the role of *mesirat nefesh* in Habad, see Loewenthal, "Self-sacrifice," 463-78.

¹⁶⁰ LT *Aharei* 26a, based on *bSukah* 45b.

¹⁶¹ LT *Aharei* 26a. The creative role of blessings is associated with the blessings of the morning prayer, supposedly fixed by the Sages in order to ensure that the divine vitality would be drawn into the world every morning, namely, at the time when God creates the world anew according to the wording of the morning prayer whereby He "renews each day the work of creation."

¹⁶² The kingdom of God established through the vitality drawn down by everyday prayer is related here explicitly to the idea that "there is no God without a people," which in turn appears throughout Rashaz's teachings as the quintessence of *dirah ba-tahtonim*, the promised redemptive state in which God confirms his dominion over ostensibly individual and independent beings in the lower worlds.

function of the Torah in the following interpretation of a biblical verse, which establishes an analogy between Torah study and the Egyptian exile, the Giving of the Torah, and the final redemption:

Now, Scripture says: “According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvelous things” [Mi 7:15]. This verse draws an analogy between the last redemption and the Exodus. [...] And thus, what was said about the enslavement and exile in reference to the Egyptian exile, [namely, the verse] “And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field” [Ex 1:14], applies also to recent times, [as the phrase] “And they made their lives bitter” refers to the Torah, which is our life; [the phrase] “with hard bondage” [‘*avodah kashah*] refers to a challenging [talmudic] question [*kushiya*]; “in mortar” [*be-homer*] refers to [the hermeneutical principle of] *a fortiori* [*kal va-homer*];¹⁶³ “in all manner of service in the field” refers to the *baraita*¹⁶⁴; and “and in brick” [*bi-levenim*] refers to the clarification [*libun*] of *halakhah*. For we possess no clear *halakhah* and no clear ruling, because all the rulings of the Torah are in dispute: there are those who deem [something] *kosher* and pure, and those who disqualify and deem it impure. Therefore, just as [the Israelites] merited the Giving of the Torah through the Egyptian bondage “in mortar and in brick”, so also, by means of clarifying the *halakhah* in our own time will they merit the disclosure of the inner aspect of Torah in the future-to-come, when “will I shew unto him marvelous things.”¹⁶⁵

The verse in Micah, according to Rashaz, refers to two exiles – one in the past, the other in the present – in order to highlight their common features and purpose. Just as the purpose of the Egyptian exile was the revelation of Torah at Sinai, so the purpose of the current exile is a revelation of Torah. However, while the miracles

¹⁶³ For the seven principles of rabbinic hermeneutics attributed to Hillel the Elder, see *Avot de-rabi Natan*, ch. 37, 69a; for the thirteen hermeneutical principles of Rabbi Ishmael, see *Sifra* 1a-3a.

¹⁶⁴ One of the meanings of “*bar*” in Aramaic is “field.” *Baraita* means a tannaitic tradition that is “external” to the Mishnah and is therefore associated here with work carried out outside, namely in the field.

¹⁶⁵ TO 49a [Appendix 27].

witnessed by the Israelites at Sinai were only the external aspect of the Torah, in the future-to-come they will witness the unfolding of its innermost aspect, including even the enigmatic rationales of the commandments [*ta'amei ha-mitsvot*]. In the context of the present exile, the most important task, common to all Jews, is the labour they are expected to perform, whose character is deduced from the types of work undertaken by the Israelites in Egypt. Rashaz interprets the Hebrew terms for these types of work by relating them etymologically to various elements of traditional Torah study: '*avodah kashah* signals tackling a talmudic *kushiya*, *homer* stands for *kal va-homer*, work in the field refers to the study of *baraitot*, and finally, *levenim* are interpreted as clarification of the law [*libun hilkheta*].¹⁶⁶ Torah study will ultimately lead to redemption because it will eventually produce a final and unanimous exposition of the law that will establish a decisive separation between the pure and the impure, the *kasher* and the *pasul*, in contrast to the current presence of competing rulings within the sphere of Jewish law. It is therefore not surprising that Rashaz defines Torah study for the sake of clarifying *halakhah* as the messianic process of purifying fallen divine sparks.¹⁶⁷

The third rabbinic pillar that supports the world besides prayer and Torah study is charity. As mentioned above, Rashaz, occasionally presents charity as the epitome of a commandment – the one commandment that comprises all the others [*kelalut ha-mitsvot*],¹⁶⁸ the quintessential commandment [*mitsvah setam*],¹⁶⁹ “truly God’s commandment” [*mitsvat Hashem mamash*]¹⁷⁰ or an act that is “equivalent to

¹⁶⁶ Rashaz’s interpretation is based on Ziii, 153a.

¹⁶⁷ TO 49c-d. The idea of the clarification of the law [*libun hilkheta*] as purification of sparks [*berur nitsotsot*] resonates with Rashaz’s diagnosis (TO 49a) of the current exile as a time when there is “no clear *halakhah* [*halakhah berurah*] and no clear judgment [*din barur*].” See also T4, 12:117b, where a person studying Torah *li-shmah* makes peace in both the upper and the lower worlds, namely separates good from evil, the mingling of which characterizes the exile, and the separation between them – the redemption at the end of days.

¹⁶⁸ See for example *Seder tefilot* 16a; TO 29c; LT *Shelah* 43d, *Re’eh* 23c. See also TO 63c, where all the commandments are called “charity” [*tsedakah*], as all of them bring divine vitality and light into the corresponding body parts through an act of goodness and mercy [*be-midat tuvo ve-rahamanuto*].

¹⁶⁹ See for example T1, 37:48b; TO 27c, 29c; LT *Shelah* 43d, *Balak* 68b *Re’eh* 23c.

¹⁷⁰ T4, 17:125a

all the commandments” [*shekulah ke-neged kol ha-mitsvot*].¹⁷¹ The prominent status of charity results from its association with giving the necessities of life, which in turn corresponds to the general purpose of all the commandments – to draw the divine life-force down, into the world. Commenting on this role of the commandments, Rashaz writes:

What is it that causes the drawing down and the descent of the light of the Lord into the lower worlds truly, by way of such a revelation? Surely, it is all the practical commandments in general [...], and in particular the commandment of charity, which is equivalent to them all.¹⁷² This is why it is called simply “the commandment” [*mitsvah sham*] in the Palestinian Talmud, for its purpose and essence is to bring life, grace and kindness to him who has nothing of his own,¹⁷³ and “to revive the spirit of the humble,” etc. [Isa 57:15].¹⁷⁴

Giving charity in our own world is indeed a life-giving act whereby the donor provides “the humble,” that is, the poor, with the necessities of life. As such, it is perhaps the most tangible example of the life-giving force of a commandment, for not only does it infuse the recipient of charity with the hidden divine vitality [*hiyut*] but it also provides him or her¹⁷⁵ with material sustenance.¹⁷⁶ As Rashaz stresses

¹⁷¹ See for example T1, 37:48b, T4, 30:151a; *Seder tefilot* 19b. Based on *bBava batra* 9a.

¹⁷² *bBava batra* 9a.

¹⁷³ An allusion to Zi, 249b, where these words refer to the *Shekhinah*, who is like the moon, which “has no light of her own.” See also T4, 9:114a.

¹⁷⁴ *Seder tefilot* 19b [Appendix 28].

¹⁷⁵ The formula “him or her” is used when the sources either include women in the spiritual experience or at least do not exclude them explicitly. Women’s participation in Rashaz’s model of spirituality will be discussed in chapter 5 below.

¹⁷⁶ This view of charity as an act of overflowing, life-giving kindness is quite distinct from Rashaz’s view elsewhere, presenting the giving of charity as a protective act, which shields the donor from the influence of the husks: “Scripture says: ‘For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head’ [Is 59:17]. The breastplate is [made up of] many scales. Similarly, all the coins [given in charity] add up to a great amount’ [see *bBava Batra* 9b], to serve as a breastplate, which protects all those who shelter in it. So charity becomes a shield and protection from the suckling of the *kelipah* and the Other Side” (TO 29c [Appendix 29]). See also T4, 3:104a.

elsewhere, it is an act of *imitatio Dei*, for just as God gives life by His act of creation, so does man give life by his act of charity:

With his act of charity, which is the provision of [material] plenty [*shefa*'] to those of low spirit, etc., he resembles in his actions the action of the Lord, which is the provision of the divine influx [*shefa*'] to all created beings, who are called "poor."¹⁷⁷

However, there is more to charity than just a mimicking of God's action, as it also has theurgic effect: the act of giving charity in the lower worlds is "the arousal from below" [*it'aruta dile-tata*], which instigates the "arousal from above" [*it'aruta dile'ila*], namely, the flow of the divine light from above downwards.¹⁷⁸

The revelation of the divine light caused by the practical commandments in general, and by the commandment of charity in particular,¹⁷⁹ has an overtly eschatological meaning. The revelation is described as the realisation of God's "dwelling place in the lower worlds" [*dirah ba-tahtonim*] at the point at which the materiality of the world has become so refined that it can receive the revelation of God's infinite light without dissolving in it immediately. The concept of the purification of materiality through the purification of one's own body and one's surrounding 'four cubits' of space was discussed above¹⁸⁰ in the context of the commandments in general. Here it is charity that is foregrounded as the commandment that plays the leading role in this process.

The emphasis that Rashaz places on the commandment of charity is not surprising, given his involvement in collecting donations for the hasidic settlement in the Land of Israel.¹⁸¹ His teachings are replete with direct references to charity as a

¹⁷⁷ *Seder tefilot* 4a [Appendix 30]. See also T1, 34:43b, where charity is recognised as "one of the attributes of the Holy One, blessed be He, who is merciful," and T4, 17:125a, where it is defined as the Lord's commandment, for God causes the worlds to exist by an act of charity.

¹⁷⁸ See for example *Seder tefilot* 17a (where the attribute of mercy [*rahamim*] below triggers an influx of Upper Kindness [*hesed 'elyon*] above), and 19b; T4, 21:133b.

¹⁷⁹ *Seder tefilot* 19b.

¹⁸⁰ See above, section 3.3 of the present chapter.

¹⁸¹ See Etkes, *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 122-42.

redemptive activity, and in *Tanya* one encounters such expressions as: “Israel shall be redeemed only by virtue of charity,”¹⁸² or “charity brings the redemption closer.”¹⁸³ In most cases, the redemptive aspects of charity, as the practical commandment whose fulfilment draws down the divine life-force into the world, are presented in the letters in similar terms to those found in *Tanya* or throughout the corpus of Rashaz’s *ma’amarim*. By referring also to the overtly redemptive characterisation of charity in the classical rabbinic sources, Rashaz emphasizes the importance of donating money to the hasidic settlement in Palestine. This seems to stem from the intrinsic value of the Land of Israel itself¹⁸⁴ rather than from any sense of the immediacy of the redemption or the power of charity as the last step required in order to bring it on at once. Even though Rashaz states in one place that charity constitutes the essence of divine service in the generation of the “footsteps of Messiah,” [‘*ikveta di-meshiha*]¹⁸⁵ it seems that his purpose in choosing this wording was to encourage his followers to donate regularly for the sake of their brethren in the Land of Israel. It seems that the practical commandments in general, and especially the commandments of charity, prayer and Torah study, were considered by Rashaz as no more than important components of divine service.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² See T4, 4:105a, 9:114a, 10:116a, based on Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilekhot matenot ‘aniyim 10:1.

¹⁸³ T1, 37:48b-49a, T4, 21:134a.

¹⁸⁴ See for example T4, 5:106b. On the significance of the Land of Israel in Rashaz’s teachings, see Hallamish, “Ha-hasidut ve-Erets Yisra’el,” 240-55.

¹⁸⁵ See T4, 9:114a. The generation of the “footsteps of Messiah” is the last generation before the coming of the Messiah. This concept will be discussed in section 1.4 of the next chapter.

¹⁸⁶ On the basis of this particular passage in *Tanya* Norman Lamm claims that Rashaz, unlike his *mitnagdic* contemporary, Hayim of Volozhin, holds charity rather than Torah study as the main religious value (*Torah Lishmah*, 151-2). Admittedly, in some instances (e.g. HTT 3.4, 847a) Rashaz does indeed suggest that charity can complement the divine service of a person who is not fit to study Torah extensively. However, such statements show, on the one hand, that Torah study was, in fact, an imperative for Rashaz, which had to be made up for in cases where, for objective reasons, it could not be fulfilled, and on the other hand, it demonstrates Rashaz’s pragmatism as a leader to a broad community consisting of people with a diversity of professions, talents and skills, rather than to an elitist circle of scholars. Rashaz’s strategy of opening up spiritual experience to all by attaching mystical or magical significance to the practical *mitsvot* which are obligatory and – unlike full-time Torah study – attainable by all, should not, in my opinion, be understood as the relegation of Torah

4. Conclusions.

A close reading of Rashaz's teachings uncovers their historiosophical underpinnings. Contrary to their common depiction as an a-temporal mystical doctrine, focused on integration in the divine transcendence within the here-and-now, the teachings examined in this chapter show that Rashaz's model of spirituality depends on his understanding of history: the Jewish exilic past preconditions the present mode of divine service, the purpose of which is to bring about the messianic future. Admittedly, actual historical events or current affairs do not feature in Rashaz's writings as much as one might have expected, given his involvement in the life of the hasidic communities of Belarus and the Land of Israel; to the extent that they feature at all, this is mostly in his letters rather than his mystical teachings. And yet history, understood primarily as the tension between the creation and the final redemption, plays a central role in his doctrine.

The redemption, defined as God's dwelling place in the lower worlds, is inherent in the concept of creation as its ultimate goal and purpose. The creation is thus, by definition, a state that requires redemption; it is the state in which the divine itself is in exile – the one and unique God who invests his infinite light in the multitude of finite, separate beings. All the historical exiles of the Jewish people serve Rashaz, first and foremost, as an allegory of the ontological state of exile that began with the creation itself and will end only with the final redemption. The exile in Egypt occupies a prominent place, as on the one hand, it conveys the idea of confinement within the limitations of the material world (based on the word play *Mitsrayim – metsarim*), and on the other hand, it shows the way that leads from slavery to redemption by means of hard labour through and within materiality. The hard labour of the Israelites in Egypt is an allegory of worship in the state of ontological exile: through the labour of divine service, the body and the material reality of the lower worlds will be filled with the divine presence and redeemed. For Rashaz, nomian worship has a distinctly redemptive value: prayer, Torah study and

study to a low level in the hierarchy of values. I shall return to this issue in the chapter devoted to the mystical meaning that Rashaz invested in the precept of setting time for Torah study. See also Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 148-9 on the interdependence of Torah study and other types of worship in Rashaz's teachings.

the commandments (with special emphasis on the commandment of charity) transform the individual and his/her surroundings into the dwelling place of the divine. Every member of the community participates in this redemptive process, and the collective redemption is the sum total of their individual endeavours.

CHAPTER 3

1. The days of Messiah and the resurrection of the dead.

1.1. *The days of Messiah.*

The twin concepts of the days of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead recur throughout Rashaz's teachings. He often mentions them in one breath while discussing the era that will follow the end of exilic history.¹ In such cases, the two concepts function as one without being clearly differentiated, serving as a regulative device for determining the course of the present. On other occasions, however, Rashaz's wording suggests that the days of the Messiah would precede the resurrection of the dead. An example of this is a passage from *Tanya* (discussed in another context in the previous chapter), in which "the messianic era, and especially [*uvi-ferat*] the time of the resurrection of the dead" are said to be the fulfilment of the creation.² This implies that despite their proximity, Rashaz does distinguish between the two concepts.³

Rashaz elaborates on this distinction in one of his epistles,⁴ where he attempts to reconcile both talmudic⁵ and the zoharic⁶ statements anticipating the future annulment of the commandments with sources that suggest the opposite view, including biblical prophecies referring to death and birth at the end of days [Is 65:20; Jer 31:8], and talmudic speculations on the *halakhah* of messianic times.⁷ He harmonises these conflicting traditions by suggesting that the future abolition of the *mitsvot* refers to the days of the Messiah, while the messianic *halakhah* would not come into force until after the resurrection of the dead:

¹ Conflicting eschatological notions have been present in the Jewish sources since the time of the Sages. See Ginsburg, *Sabbath*, 145-6 n. 46; Klausner, *The Messianic Idea*, 408-19; Rapoport-Albert, *Women and the Messianic Heresy*, 119 n. 35; Urbach, *The Sages*, 651-2.

² T1, 36:46a; see chapter 2, section 1.1 above.

³ For the talmudic distinction between the days of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead, see *bPesahim* 68a.

⁴ T4, 26:142a-145b.

⁵ *bNidah*, 61b.

⁶ Ziii, 124b.

⁷ *bSanhedrin*, 51b.

How is it possible that in the days of the Messiah they will no longer need to know the laws of *isur* and *heter*, and of impurity and purity? How will they slaughter the sacrifices, and also [the animals] for common use, when they will not know the laws of *derasah*, *haladah*, and *shehiyah*, which render the slaughtering unfit, and [the laws] of the defective knife? Will there then be a man born who by his very nature will slaughter without *shehiyah* and *derasah*? Will the knife also be the way it should, and remain forever without defect? [There are] also many more laws [relating to] fat, and blood, and other prohibitions. They will also need to know about the impurity of a corpse, as Scripture says: “The child shall die an hundred years old” [Is 65:20]. It will be further necessary to know about the impurity of a woman in confinement, as Scripture says: “A woman with child and her that travaileth with child together [Jer 31:8]. Even if a woman gives birth every day as a result of one marital union, nonetheless, with respect to the restrictions resulting from her impurity, the law will not change.”⁸

The picture Rashaz draws appears to resemble the Maimonidean notion of the messianic future,⁹ where “the world moves along its customary lines” [*‘olam ke-minhago noheg*]¹⁰: people continue to be born and die, and they still need to know the laws that regulate everyday life, such as the laws of ritual slaughter, purity, dietary restrictions, etc.¹¹ Moreover, the laws of the sacrifices are still in force, which indicates that the Temple has been rebuilt. Even the idea that in the messianic era women will give birth repeatedly, day after day, does not suggest a break from the natural order of the world but only its enhancement by the removal of such obstacles as have so far limited women’s procreative capabilities.¹²

⁸ T4, 26:143a-b [Appendix 1].

⁹ See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilekhot teshuvah, 8-9; Hilekhot melakhim u-milhamot, 11-12. For a discussion of messianism in Maimonides, see Ravitzky, “To the Utmost Human Capacity,” 221-56.

¹⁰ Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilekhot melakhim u-milhamot, 12:1.

¹¹ See also *Seder tefilot* 291a, where Rashaz states that the obligation to remember the Exodus will remain valid in the messianic era.

¹² This will be discussed further in chapter 5.

The messianic days appear, therefore, to be a transitional stage between exile and the ultimate redemption. Rashaz himself is not consistent on the question whether the Messianic days still belong in the time of “doing”, namely, the time of fulfilling the commandments, or whether they are to be considered the time of the reward for so doing, the latter option echoing the talmudic dictum (commenting on Dt 7:11): “Today [namely, the present time] is for doing them [namely, the commandments], tomorrow [namely, the future-to-come] is for collecting the reward.”¹³ In the following passage, Rashaz leans towards the former view:

Now, our Sages of blessed memory said: “There is no difference between this world and the messianic era except for the oppression [of Israel by foreign kingdoms],”¹⁴ because the days of the Messiah are not the world-to-come that follows the resurrection [of the dead], which is the time of rewarding the righteous. Rather, the days of the Messiah are in the nature of what is referred to as “today is for doing,” not of “collecting the reward.”¹⁵ The essential part of “today is for doing,” and the ultimate fulfilment of “doing” belong in the days of the Messiah [...], for the essential part of doing is the sacrificial service, which we cannot perform in the exile, even though the prayers have been established as a substitute for the sacrifices during the exile. Yet this [kind of doing] is not truly “according to the precept of thy will” [*Musaf* for Sabbath and *rosh hodesh*].¹⁶

The messianic days feature in this passage as the time at which worship will reach its culminating point, when the Jews are able to fulfil the commandments that for the time being, during the exile – in the absence of the Temple and the Temple service – they are not able to perform. Despite the attempt to provide ritual substitutes for the sacrifices with the establishment of prayers, there is still a need, even in exile, to perform all the *mitzvot* exactly as God commanded. Rashaz’s quotation from the liturgy emphasizes the insufficiency of this exilic substitute, as it originates in a prayer which pleads with God to gather all the Jews in the Land of Israel precisely in

¹³ *b’Eruvin* 22a; see also *b’Avodah zarah* 3a.

¹⁴ *bBerakhot* 34b, *bSanhedrin* 91b.

¹⁵ See note 13 above.

¹⁶ TO 46a-b [Appendix 2].

order to enable them to offer Him sacrifices. Thus as long as they represent the essence of worship and allow for the fulfilment of all 613 commandments exactly as God willed them to be fulfilled, which entails the reinstatement of the Temple service, the messianic days still count only as a stage in the redemptive process rather than constituting the redemption itself.¹⁷ The redemption is the stage that follows, when all the commandments have been performed in full; it is the resurrection of the dead, the time when the righteous receive the reward of their deeds.

1.2. The resurrection of the dead.

From this viewpoint, the resurrection of the dead appears to be the ultimate purpose of the creation in general¹⁸ and of the fulfilment of all the commandments in particular.¹⁹ The era of the resurrection is also associated with the reward granted to the righteous for their deeds, an association that seems to play down the difference between the exile and the messianic days.²⁰ This is why, in some places, Rashaz explains that while the righteous enjoy their reward for fulfilling the commandments in both eras, the reward they receive in the messianic days is material [*sakhar gashmi*], whereas in the resurrection they will receive a spiritual reward [*ha-sakhar ha-ruhani*].²¹ This spiritual reward exceeds the imaginable, in line with the prophetic

¹⁷ In *Tanya* Rashaz makes a distinction between worship before and during the messianic days, according to the different purposes it serves at each stage. Worship before the messianic days serves to purify the divine sparks, while in the messianic days, when all the sparks have been purified, it facilitates unifications both with and within the divine realm by way of the inner dimension of Torah. See T4, 26:145a.

¹⁸ See for example LT *Va-yikra* 4d.

¹⁹ See for example LT *Hukat* 64c-d. See also *Tsav* 15d-16a, according to which the Jews will merit the resurrection in the future by virtue of their labour and enslavement to money in the present. The resurrection is compared here to the liberation of Passover.

²⁰ Admittedly, Rashaz's corpus contains some statements that suggest the opposite. See for example LT *Shabat shuvah* 64b, where the reward is unambiguously associated with the days of the Messiah. In this case, the new way in which the believers will experience the divinity is to be the main distinction between the exile and the redemption in the messianic days. I will elaborate on this below.

²¹ LT *Nitsavim* 50b.

claim that “since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, o God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him” [Is 64:4].²² As their spiritual reward, the righteous will be elevated and incorporated in the divine holiness,²³ the divine will, and the supernal delight [*ta’anug ‘elyon*],²⁴ While their material reward, as in the Talmudic statement, will amount to the overthrowing of the foreign nations that oppress the Jewish people in exile.

The emphasis placed on the divine will and supernal delight, both of which are associated in the Godhead with *Keter*, links the idea of reward with the resurrection of the dead by means of the divine dew.²⁵ According to Rashaz, this dew originates in *Keter* and represents the overflow of the life-giving light of *Ein Sof*, which is so intense that it revives the dead.²⁶ Since the light confined in the dew bypasses the order of concatenation and enters the world directly from the most

²² Rashaz refers here to the statement of Rabbi Hiya bar Abba [*bBerakhot* 34b], who said in the name of Rabbi Yohanan that the prophets prophesized only with regard to the days of the Messiah, “but as for the world to come, ‘no eye hath seen, oh God, beside Thee’ [Is 64:4].”

²³ LT *Nitsavim* 50c.

²⁴ MAHZ 5566, ii, 703-4. In both the *ma’amarim* that deal with the material versus the spiritual reward, Rashaz replaces the terms ‘messianic days’ and ‘resurrection of the dead’ with ‘Lower’ and ‘Upper’ Garden of Eden respectively [*gan ‘eden tahton* and *‘elyon*]. See *ibid.*, 703 and LT *Nitsavim* 50d. Elsewhere, however, he distinguishes Garden of Eden from the world-to-come [*‘olam ha-ba*] that will follow the resurrection: in the former the souls of the righteous enjoy the radiance of the *Shekhinah*, whereas in the latter all Jews take part, with both soul and body. See MAHZ 5569, 193. The distinction between the soul’s reward after death and after the resurrection will be discussed in section 2.1 below.

²⁵ Resurrection by dew is a common motif in rabbinic literature. See for example *bShabat* 88b, *bKetubot* 111b; *Pirkei de-Rabi Eli’ezer*, ch. 34, 34a. See also T1, 36:46a-b, where Rashaz compares the revelation on Sinai to the resurrection of the dead in the future-to-come. On Sinai, each utterance of the Torah, at which the Israelites’ souls took flight, was followed by another utterance, which restored their souls to them with the dew, by means of which God will effect the resurrection of the dead (see *bShabat* 88b). Then, however, the Israelites sinned by worshipping the golden calf, and this dragged them back into materiality. Only in the future-to-come, when materiality and corporeality are purified, will they merit the dew of resurrection and the full light of Torah.

²⁶ See for example LT *‘Ekev* 13d; MAHZ 5562, 103; 5565, i, 22-4, 33, 37, 39, 412-13, 427; 5566 i, 420, ii, 624; 5567, 282-3, 420.

transcendent aspect of God, the world it redeems is no longer subject to the laws of nature as we know them, and the bodies it resurrects are subtler than those of ordinary mortal.²⁷

The transformation of the body marks a transition point between the days of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead. It is comparable to the transformation of the soul, which ascends from the Lower to the Upper Garden of Eden, passing on its way through the River of Fire [*nehar di-nur*] so as to annihilate all its previous cognitions and delights.²⁸ Analogously, the transition from the messianic days to the resurrection comprises both the soul and the body, as they are both being prepared for the ultimate delight.²⁹ The promised delight of the future-to-come is the key to understanding the role of the body after the resurrection. In the previous chapter the body was presented as a necessary tool for the redemption: since its materiality and corporeality stem from the husks, only in and through the body would the husks and the evil side of reality be transformed into good.³⁰ An analogical reasoning underlies the persistence of corporeality in the redeemed world. Delight by its nature is associated with materiality and corporeality, as all delights are experienced sensually. Now, material delights are only the debris of the supernal delight [*pesolet ha-ta'anug ha-'elyon*].³¹ When a righteous person dies and casts off the external husk of his body, his soul can experience an inner, spiritual pleasure in Paradise,³² which is derived from all the commandments he had performed during his lifetime.³³ However, this spiritual delight is merely the immediate source of the material delights confined within the framework of the emanated worlds, which are further

²⁷ On the subtle body at the time of the resurrection, see Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 277-280. On the development of this topic in the *ma'amarim* of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Shalom Dovber Schneersohn (1860-1920), see Wolfson, "Nequdat ha-Reshimu," 90-1.

²⁸ On the River of Fire, see section 2.1 below.

²⁹ See MAHZ 5565, i, 412-13.

³⁰ See chapter 2, section 3.3 above.

³¹ LT *Shelah* 46d.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ According to Rashaz, the traditional blessing formula recited before performing a commandment (Blessed are thou, o Lord our God, king of the universe, who sanctified us with His commandments) hints at the delight derived from the commandments, wherein the word *asher* (who) stems from *ashrei* (happy are those). For the source of this interpretation, see *Tikunei zohar*, xxx, 74b, xxxix, 79a.

contracted in order to be integrated in materiality. The real source of all spiritual, inner delight is the supernal delight [*ta'anug 'elyon*], which transcends the hierarchy of the emanated worlds and the contractions that accompanied the process of their unfolding. As such, it lies beyond any value-charged differentiation between spirituality and materiality, externality and internality: it concerns both spheres equally.³⁴ Thus, although within the unredeemed world, the soul achieves a higher level of delight after the death of the body, in the redeemed world the situation is reversed, and it is the body that grants the soul a higher level of delight. However, this reversal can be effected even in the present, unredeemed world, by means of the practical commandments, which bring the higher level of delight to realisation through the material objects utilised in their performance.³⁵

The redeemed bodies will be different from the bodies conceived and born before the resurrection. Following the resurrection, the body will become a suitable vessel for the infinite light, and the illumination it will receive would be similar to the one that a person receives at the moment of death. Accordingly, in the redeemed world, God will be perceived sensually by resurrected bodies which have become more subtle than their mortal counterparts, of whom God had said: "There shall no man see me, and live" [Ex 33:20]. The resurrected body will be rebuilt from its bones³⁶ and sustained by the divine light clothed in the dew of resurrection, in contrast to the mortal body, which is sustained by the divine life-force while being clothed in flesh.³⁷ There will therefore be no drinking and eating after the resurrection.³⁸

³⁴ LT *Shelah* 47c-d.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Based on the interpretation of Is 58:11 whereby God "will make fat thy bones."

³⁷ MAHZ 5566, i, 420-421. See also LT *Re'eh* 28a: "Thus in the future-to-come the body will be infinitely purer than the human body nowadays, for the body will be [made] entirely out of the bone that would remain for the time of the resurrection [see *Bereshit rabah*, 28:3; *Vayikra rabah* 18:1], from which the body will be constructed as leaven in the dough [see Zi, 69a; Zii, 28b; *Pirkei de-Rabi Eli'ezer* ch. 34, 34a] by means of the dew that will be drawn from above" [Appendix 3].

³⁸ See for example MAHZ 5563, i, 202; 5569, 42-45; LT *Re'eh* 24a, *Shir ha-shirim* 42b. The belief that the resurrected bodies will not need to eat and drink appears in *bBerakhot* 17a. See also MAHZ

The sublimation of the body constitutes only one element of the bigger picture, in which materiality is purified and the laws of nature, including mortality, are abolished. Purified materiality will be capable of receiving the divine world without obscuring it,³⁹ and as a result, the lights of *sovev* and *memale* (the transcendent and immanent aspects of divinity) will shine equally to everyone, there being no difference between light and darkness.⁴⁰ Thus, as Rashaz writes in *Tanya*, “death will be swallowed up for ever” [*yevula ha-mavet*; see Is 25:8], and the “unclean spirit” will pass out of the earth [see Zec 13:2], namely, the *sitra ahara* and the husks will be annihilated.⁴¹ For in the messianic days preceding the resurrection, evil will exist in *potentia*, not *in actu*, in a state of being subjugated by good [*itkafia*], whereas the resurrection entails its actual transformation into good [*ithapkha*].

The cessation of eating and drinking after the resurrection results from the transformation of the world by the transcendent light of *sovev*. Only the divine soul, which is “the portion of God from above” [*helek Elohah mi-ma'al*, Jb 31:2]⁴² is sustained by the vitality that comes directly from the light of *Ein Sof*, whereas the animal soul receives the vitality that is mediated by the order of concatenation. As nowadays the revelation of the vitality comes about mostly through the immanent light of *memale*, the animal soul must sustain itself by the vitality concealed in material food. In the future, however, when the light of *sovev* will shine through *memale*, materiality will not conceal the vitality and the animal soul will sustain

5564, 138, discussed in Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 278, where Rashaz states that bodies after the resurrection will not be sustained by food but by hunger and thirst, namely hunger and thirst for God.

³⁹ See for example T1, 36:46b; TO 22c, 76d; LT *Shabat shuvah* 66a, *Shir ha-shirim* 7b; *Seder tefilot* 19b.

⁴⁰ See for example TO 54c; LT *Re'eh* 28a-b, *Rosh ha-shanah* 90a; MAHZ 5566, i, 382; 5569, 42-45, and Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 279. See also LT *Shir ha-shirim* 41a, where the unification of *sovev* and *memale*, or *Kudsha Berikh Hu* and His *Shekhinah*, is described as God's dwelling place in the lower worlds [*dirah ba-tahtonim*].

⁴¹ See for example T1, 7:12a, T4, 25:139b.

⁴² See for example T1, 2:6a, 35:44a, 41:65b, T4, 15:123a; TO 24a, 84b; LT *Va-yikra* 2d, 6a, 39d, *Va-yikra hosafot* 51c, *Ba-midbar* 1b, *Hukat* 61d, *Mas'ei* 91, 28c, 34a c, 'Ekev 13d, *Tetse* 37d, *Rosh ha-shanah* 62c, *Ha'azinu* 74c, 77c, *Shir ha-shirim* 2b, 5c.

itself directly by the light of *Ein Sof*, just like the divine soul.⁴³ Moreover, because of the revelation of the radiance of *Ein Sof*, all the Jews will have a share in the world-to-come after the resurrection,⁴⁴ which is not the case in Paradise, where only the souls of the righteous enjoy the radiance of *Shekhinah*, which comes from the revelation of the divine light through the order of concatenation.⁴⁵ Finally, different classes of Jews will share in the elevation of the entire world to a higher status at the redemption: the Levites of today will be reborn as priests [*kohanim*].⁴⁶

1.3. Redemption and the gentile nations.

The redemption of the world by means of the subjugation and subsequent transformation of evil will have an impact on non-Jews, too. In the previous chapter, the gentile nations were mentioned as the object rather than the subject of history: they provide the backdrop of world history, in which Israel, who “originated in the beginning of thought” and for whose sake the world was created, play the key role. The nations are ‘matter’ to be purified by the Jews who have been exiled among them.⁴⁷ They therefore play only an ancillary role, defined by their relation to the

⁴³ See MAHZ 5569, 42-45.

⁴⁴ See *bSanhedrin* 90a. Rashaz generally excludes from the resurrection all those whom the Sages had excluded from the future-to-come. See TO 73c; MAHZ 5569, 192. He refers specifically to heretics who deny the resurrection, and who will be punished by way of “measure for measure” [*midah keneged midah*]. See LT *Shelah* 46d. Elsewhere, following the *Zohar* (Zii, 100a; Ziii, 164a, based on *bBava kama* 16a), he excludes from the resurrection “a person who does not bow at the [recitation of] *Modim*,” as the thanksgiving [*hoda’ah*] in *Modim* is an expression of the complete nullification of the self, necessary for both the transformation of evil into good and the unification of the transcendent and immanent aspects of the divinity. See for example LT *Be-har* 42c, *Balak* 71a, *Pinhas* 75d, 76d, *Re’eh* 23d-24a; MAHZ 5566, i, 382, ii, 650-1; 5568, 420.

⁴⁵ TO 73c; MAHZ 5569, 148, 192-3.

⁴⁶ See T1, 50:70b; LT *Korah* 54b, *Berakhah* 96c. See also Vital, *Likutei Torah*, Sefer Yehezki’el, 323.

⁴⁷ See for example *Seder tefilot* 67d; MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 438-40; *Razal*, 316. See also MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 256, where Rashaz quotes a tradition in the name of the Ba’al Shem Tov, according to which the Jews have been dispersed to the most remote parts of the world in order to “purify the land of the nations and its impure air” [*le-tahev et erets ha-‘amim she-avirah tame*], and by this means to prepare God’s dwelling place in the lower worlds. The concept of “purifying the air” as a means of bringing on the

Jews, even if – as in the following extreme example – in order to purify the traces of holiness trapped among the gentile nation of Poland – the Poles’ ancillary role is to kill the Jews “by the sword,” since the Jews’ historical role is to sanctify God’s name by dying a martyr’s death.⁴⁸ Only within this limited scope can the gentile nations be considered Israel’s partners in the redemption.⁴⁹

The gentiles are ontologically different from the Jews: they do not possess the divine soul but only the baser animal soul, which stems from the three wholly impure husks. The Jews, on the other hand, possess not only the refined divine soul but also a superior animal soul originating in the husk of *nogah*, in which good and evil are mixed.⁵⁰ Moreover, in contrast to the gentiles, who even when they do good, do it only for their own benefit,⁵¹ the Jews are characterised by their capacity for self-nullification; the very name *Yehudi* hints at *hoda’ah* – the thanksgiving

redemption by performing rituals all over world will become a trade-mark of the Habad movement in the 20th century. See for example Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 356 n. 67.

⁴⁸ Poles are identified here with Esau, whom Isaac blessed with the words: “By thy sword shall thy live” [Gn 27:40]. See MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 438-40, and Mondshine, *Migdal ‘oz*, 506-7, discussed in Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 91-2. A similar text appears in Mondshine, *Migdal ‘oz*, 454. See also MAHZ 5570, 30, discussed by Mondshine, *Masa’ Berditshov*, 56-57, according to which Jews redeem the sparks from the nations by paying them off [*she-notnin la-hem damim*]; this way they give a part of themselves to the *sitra ahara* in order to stop the flow of the divine vitality to it, and thus they act as a scapegoat for Azazel [*se’ir ha-mishtalah*]. The association of paying off the gentiles with self-sacrifice is underscored by the use of the Hebrew word “*damim*,” which means both money and blood.

⁴⁹ Rashaz’s approach differs from the approach of 20th century Habad, which actively encouraged gentiles to perform the seven Noahide commandments as their contribution to the advancement of the redemption. See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 229-231; Heilman and Friedman, *The Rebbe*, 214. In Rashaz’s teaching this concept is only marginal, appearing in his *Shulhan ‘arukh* in the context of the prohibition on theft that is valid also for non-Jews, which is one of the seven Noahide laws [*Hoshen mishpat*, Hilekhot gezelah u-genevah, par. 23, 881], and again, in a discussion about the prohibition on hiring a *ger toshav* (a non-Jew who took upon himself the seven Noahide laws) as a slave [*Orah hayim*, Mahadura batra, 411a].

⁵⁰ T1, 1:6a. See also Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 231-2, 235.

⁵¹ T1, 1:6a.

benediction which is a mode of acknowledging God that equals complete self-nullification, a capacity that guarantees every Jew a share in the world-to-come.⁵²

The inherently base characteristics of the gentiles would seem to be at odds with Rashaz's notion of a universal redemption: as entities associated with absolute impurity, they should, presumably, be annihilated at the end of days, when all impurity as such would cease to exist. Yet Rashaz often weaves into his sermons references to Biblical prophecies that suggest the opposite. At least as far as the days of the Messiah are concerned, the presence of the impure gentiles is compatible with Rashaz's vision, which reiterates Maimonides' description whereby the world will continue to move along its customary lines, the only exception being the ability of the Jews to live and worship freely under the rule of the king Messiah. In one passage from *Torah or*, Rashaz compares the rule of the king Messiah to the rule of king Solomon: as in the time of Solomon, so in the time of the Messiah, the nations will flock to the royal court to learn the king's wisdom – a vision which echoes the Maimonidean concept of a Messiah who improves the world by motivating all the nations to serve the one and only God.⁵³

Rashaz's idea of the king Messiah who teaches wisdom to the gentiles raises the question of the boundaries between the nations and the Jews in both the days of the Messiah and beyond. After all, the Messiah's wisdom must stem from the Torah, which suggests that, through the Messiah's mediation, the nations, too, will access the Torah. Furthermore, some passages in Rashaz's teachings suggest that the gentiles will be even more deeply involved in the life of Torah and commandments. For example:

[In the days of the Messiah] the principal occupation with Torah will [...] be with the inner aspect [*penimiyut*] of the commandments and their hidden reasons. The revealed aspects, however, will be manifest and known to every

⁵² See TO 99a, discussed in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 233. In *Tanya* the capability of self-nullification is described as the readiness of every Jew for martyrdom expressed in the hidden love of God [*ahavah mesuteret*]. See T1, 14:19b, and Elijior, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 216; Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 100, 180-1; Hallamish, "Mishnato ha-'iyunit," 320-3; Loewenthal, "Self-Sacrifice," 463-5.

⁵³ See TO 6a; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilekhot melakhim 11:4.

Jew as an innate knowledge, which can never be forgotten. Only the mixed multitude will have to occupy themselves with these [revealed aspects of Torah], because they will not merit the taste of the Tree of Life⁵⁴ which is the inner aspect of the Torah and the Commandments. They will need to occupy themselves [as Torah study] with the *Mishnah* in order to weaken (by their occupation with Torah) the power of the *sitra ahara*, which cleaves unto them, so that it will not dominate them – causing them to sin. Thus Scripture says: “But the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed” [Is 65:20]; this refers to the sinners of the mixed multitude.⁵⁵

The above excerpt is a direct continuation of the passage quoted at the beginning of the present chapter, which contained Rashaz’s musings on the status of the Torah and the *mitsvot* in the days of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead. Here he goes on to explain that the commandments will remain valid even in the days of the Messiah, and yet Israel’s access to them will become quite different: they will need to concern themselves only with the inner, mystical layers of the Torah (e.g. the reasons for the commandments), but they will not be occupied with the non-mystical layers, as these will have become their “innate knowledge,” knowledge that does not need to be acquired and memorised by means of study. Only the “mixed multitude” will be compelled to study the revealed, non-mystical, halakhic facet of the Torah, in order to know how to avoid transgressing it. In its original context, the Biblical term “mixed multitude” [*‘erev rav*, Ex 12:38] refers to the people who accompanied the Israelites on their way out of Egypt at the Exodus. Rashi explains the term as “strangers” or “converts” [*gerim*],⁵⁶ and he later finds them responsible for the idolatrous sin of the Golden Calf.⁵⁷ Rashaz accordingly seems to understand *‘erev rav* as the gentiles who will accompany Israel on their way towards the final redemption.⁵⁸ They will comprise those who would accept the yoke of Torah and

⁵⁴ The original has the zoharic Aramaic phrase: *lemat ‘am me-ilana de-hayei* (Ziii, 124b).

⁵⁵ T4, 26:145b [Appendix 4]. See also *bPesahim* 68a; Zi, 114b.

⁵⁶ See also Onkelos to Ex 12:28, where *‘erev rav* is translated as “many gentiles” [*nukhra ‘in sagi ‘in*].

⁵⁷ Rashi to Ex 32:4. On the responsibility of the *‘erev rav* for the sin of the Golden Calf, see also *Shemot rabah* 42:6. See. MAHZ 5572, 69-72.

⁵⁸ Since *‘erev rav* is contrasted here with “every Jew” [*kol ish Yisra’el*], subsequent Habad commentators have suggested that in this chapter of Tanya it should be emended to “nations of the

commandments, remaining the only group that was still susceptible to sin. Moreover, one of Israel's tasks during the exile has been to clarify the *halakhah* in order to purge the divine sparks of the husk of *nogah*.⁵⁹ But in the days of the Messiah, the sparks will be elevated and halakhic studies for the sake of purifying the sparks will become obsolete. This in turn will leave Israel free to delve only into the internal, mystical layers of the law.⁶⁰ By contrast, the mixed multitude, composed of the gentile nations who are ontologically linked to the husks, will remain bound by the revealed aspects of the Torah even in the days of the Messiah, and they will need to study and clarify the *halakhah* for themselves in order to stay on the right path and avoid repeating the sin of idolatry – the hallmark of the *'erev rav* ever since the Biblical Exodus.

The distinction presented above between the function of the Jews and the non-Jews is based on a distinction, mentioned earlier in the same text, between worship for the sake of purification of sparks and worship for the sake of delving into the innermost aspects of the Torah.⁶¹ Once Israel have completed the task of purifying the sparks by means of their divine service, when they have freed themselves from the need to be occupied with *halakhah*, it becomes the nations' task to carry on with this activity. The same idea undergoes an interesting twist in one of Rashaz's *ma'amarim*, where the gentiles are said to be destined to be elevated in the messianic future while still remaining unequal to Israel inasmuch as they will perform only the commandments that are obligatory on women – an idea that stems from the theosophic notion whereby worship during the exile purifies the feminine

world" [*umot ha-'olam*]. See *Likutei hagahot le-Sefer ha-Tanya*; Wineberg, *Lessons in Tanya*, v, 144. For a different interpretation see Ornet, *Ratso va-shov*, 277, where she interprets *'erev rav* as referring to ignoramuses [*'amei ha-arets*], who need to carry on their inner struggle with evil in the messianic era, as opposed to scholars, who by then will have subjugated evil and have become free to study the secrets of the Torah. However, she does not provide any source to support her understanding of *'erev rav* as ignoramuses.

⁵⁹ See T4, 26:144b. On the redemptive aspect of studying *halakhah* in exile, see chapter 2, section 3.4.

⁶⁰ This also conforms to Maimonides' notion that in the messianic days all Jews will reach the intellectual level of the Sages and will know "hidden matters" [*devarim ha-seturim*], for "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord" [Is 11:9]. See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilekhot melakhim*, 12:5.

⁶¹ See note 17 above.

aspect of the divinity (*Nukba*).⁶² Here, too, the gentiles are allowed to merit the life of Torah and *mitsvot*, but their inferior status in relation to the Jews is not that of the *ger* versus Israelite but rather the status of the female versus that of the male.⁶³

The texts discussed above provide a somewhat inclusive perspective on the messianic future, as they incorporate the gentiles in the community of Torah students, even though it grants them only an inferior position within it.⁶⁴ There are, however, many references throughout Rashaz's corpus of teachings to some mode of gentile participation in the resurrection. These references follow the path of the rectification and sublimation of material reality in the future-to-come. For example, while acknowledging that the Israelites had already merited the dew of the resurrection on Sinai,⁶⁵ Rashaz goes on to say as follows:

⁶² See LT *Shelah* 43a. The female aspect of the Godhead and its role in the redemptive process will be discussed in chapter 5.

⁶³ Also the passivity of the gentiles in the process of redemption testifies to the fact that Rashaz constructs the gentiles as being feminine. On Rashaz's association of passivity with femininity, see chapter 5 below.

⁶⁴ Rashaz does not state this explicitly, but the idea concurs with his view whereby the gentile nations will acquire the status of *gerim* in the messianic future. As *gerim* in the Bible gain protected status by virtue of living among Israel, and in exchange, they take it upon themselves to observe some of the precepts of the Torah [see *b'Avodah zarah* 64b], so the gentiles are included in the days of Messiah and need to study and conform to the *halakhah*. The emphasis on the partial participation of gentiles in the life of Torah and *mitsvot* suggests that they will achieve the status of *ger toshav* – resident alien, rather than that of *ger tsedek* – a convert to Judaism. It should also be noted that in many places throughout Rashaz's lore, there appears the idea that the duration of the exile has been granted to Israel as an opportunity to save *gerim* from the nations (see for example TO 6a, 11a-b, 26c; MAHZ 5566, i, 231, based on: *bPesachim* 87b). Nevertheless, in most of these instances, *gerim* symbolise the divine sparks, and the saving of *gerim* by Israel stands for the purification and refinement of the sparks. In TO 20c, however, the term *gerim* appears in the same context in its literal meaning, with the examples of such proselytes as Rabbi Meir, Onkelos, Shema'ya and Ovadiah, whose souls were sparks confined within the soul of Esau. But in this case, the conversion to Judaism of certain non-Jews is not seen as part of the wider transformation of the gentile world but rather as the recovery of the particular sparks of certain Jewish souls that fell into gentile bodies. On a similar motif in the thought of the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 261-2.

⁶⁵ See also note 25 above.

The sin [of the Golden Calf] caused both [the Israelites] and the world to become gross again – until “the end of days,” when the dross of the body and of the world will be purified, and they will be able to apprehend the revelation of the divine light which will shine forth to Israel by means of the Torah, called “might.” And, as a result of the overflow of the illumination on Israel, the darkness of the gentiles will also be lit up, as Scripture says, “And the gentiles should come to thy light” etc. [Is 60:3] and, “O, house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord” [Is 2:5]; and again, “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together” etc. [Is 40:5].⁶⁶

In this excerpt Rashaz evokes the relation between the Giving of the Torah and the final redemption. The Israelites first experienced the resurrection at Sinai, when, according to tradition, every divine utterance caused them to expire, but God was continuously bringing them back to life. They died because they achieved complete self-nullification, but God resurrected them with the dew of the Torah, suffusing their existence with His will, which allowed them to live as individual beings and yet to be at one with Him through the Torah. Thus the giving of the Torah was an experience of God’s union with His creation, while the sin of idolatry, committed soon afterwards, was its ultimate negation.⁶⁷ Idolatry brought the Israelites back to the state in which they considered themselves separate beings and were again becoming engrossed in materiality. This situation will persist until the resurrection, when corporeality and materiality will be purified, and they will no longer limit or obscure the intensity of the divine illumination suffusing the entire world. As a consequence, the world will no longer be experienced as being non-divine. This will inevitably have an impact on the gentile nations, as the light permeating the transformed world will be so intense that at least some of it will be bound to reach them, too, and thus they, too, will be incorporate in the final redemption.

⁶⁶ T1, 36:46b [Appendix 5].

⁶⁷ In *Tanya* Rashaz extends the meaning of idolatry from idol worship or service of other gods to the negation – in thought or conduct – of God’s oneness, His uniqueness, and His unity with the world. Pride is the root of idolatry because proud individuals see themselves as independent beings in their own right rather than a part of the pleroma. See T1, 22:28a.

Still, the manner of their participation in the redemption remains problematic. The transformation of the world will change the relation between Israel and the nations, although – as Rashaz seems to suggest – Isaiah’s prophecy whereby “all flesh” shall see the glory of God “together” will not efface the difference between Jew and gentile. For not only will the messianic advent reverse the relations between the nations as rulers and the Jews as their subjects, but the nations will also learn the divine wisdom of Torah from the Messiah, which means that while casting off the burden of foreign rule, the Jews will become spiritual leaders to all other nations.⁶⁸ Notably, Rashaz’s use of the verse calling on the “House of Jacob” to “walk in the light of the Lord” [Is 2:5] is understood in the Habad tradition as referring to the voice of the gentiles as they address the house of Jacob with the words: “You go first, and by dint of this we, too, will follow in the light of God.”⁶⁹ Moreover, “the house of Jacob” is understood as a reference to the lowest of the Jewish souls, since the name Jacob [*Ya’akov*] derives from the word heel [*’akev*], namely the lowest part of the body;⁷⁰ and if this is the level of the Jewish souls, then the gentile souls, although admitted to the world-to-come, must constitute a class of souls that is lower still.

The new political balance of power in the redeemed world will result, not from any shift in the direction or quality of the divine light itself but rather from the eradication of the husks that obscure it and cause the Jews to be exiled among the gentile nations. The confusion to which the world is subject in its present exilic state allows the gentiles to dominate Israel and thus to create the illusion that they are the primary recipients of the divine vitality, while in fact they are driven to access it indirectly, through Israel’s “hind side” [*ahorayim*]. In other words, the light that the gentiles receive during the exile reaches them only as a consequence of Israel’s sins.⁷¹ But in the messianic era, after the resurrection, the evil husks will be annihilated, and the divine light will shine upon Israel with full force. Moreover,

⁶⁸ See note 53 above.

⁶⁹ Korf, *Likutei be’urim*, i, 221.

⁷⁰ See Shalom Dovber Shneersohn, *Be-sha’ah she-hikdimu*, ii, 992. On this collection of *ma’amarim* see Wolfson, “Nequddat ha-Reshimu.”

⁷¹ On the channelling of the divine light to the gentiles through Israel’s sins, which reinforce the state of exile, see chapter 2, section 2:1.

since Israel will not commit any more sins, the only channel through which the divine light could reach the gentiles will be obliterated. Yet even then, they will not be illuminated directly; the illumination reaching them would be an incidental by-product of the overflow of divine light intended for Israel. In other words, the gentiles will not be annihilated, but their access to the life-giving energy of the divine would remain inferior: they will draw it only from the excess of illumination available to the Jews. Notably, this excess will no longer be channelled to the gentiles as a consequence of Israel's sins but rather it will overflow indiscriminately, reaching them thanks to God's unbound mercy.

However, not all the gentile nations will merit the redemption. While most of them will be purified and saved, some will have to be completely destroyed to achieve purification. According to Rashaz, one third of the nations will be destroyed as punishment for the sin of Noah's son Ham, father of Canaan [Gn 9:22-27].⁷² Canaan's descendants, whose father had seen the nakedness of his own father, Noah, and who allowed it to remain exposed, may be restored to purity only by total annihilation. But the descendants of Ham's two brothers, Shem and Japheth, who "took a garment, laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father, and their faces were backward" [Gn 9:23], will be saved. Rashaz finds an allusion to this in the Biblical emphasis on the two brothers' withdrawal from the scene with their faces turned back [*ahoranit*],⁷³ a term which links them to the "hind-side" [*ahorayim*], namely, to the source of the divine vitality that is available to the gentile nations during the exile, which will be purified at the redemption, when its "external aspect is nullified in relation to the internal" [*hitsoniyut yibatel el ha-penimiyut*].⁷³

⁷² In rabbinic literature, Canaan is identified with the Slavic nations (see Jakobson and Halle, "The Term 'Canaan'"). It is likely, therefore, that Rashaz, too, refers in this *ma'amar* to the Slavs as the gentiles who will not merit a place in the world-to-come. Still, the *ma'amar* itself does not provide any clues that would help anchor it in Rashaz's immediate surroundings. He may be drawing here on the zoharic take on Noah's curse of Canaan in Gen 9:25, which associates Canaan with filth, evil and death (see Zi, 73a) without supplying any topographical reference.

⁷³ TO 102b. See also MAHZ 5563, 81, and an elaboration on the same motif by the Tsemah Tsedek in *Or ha-Torah*, Bereshit, vi, 1127a. The status of one gentile nation, Amalek – Israel's traditional archenemy, in the redeemed world is not easy to determine. In contrast to the Biblical call for the total

There is another reason for the anticipated change in the status of the gentiles, which stems from the prospect of change in the perception of space. Following the purification of the world in the messianic future, the intensity of the divine light will be such that it will raise the lands of the non-Jews and idolaters to the level of the Land of Israel, so that “the Land of Israel will spread all over the entire world,” while at the same time itself being elevated to the level of Jerusalem, which in turn will spread throughout the Land, to encompass its full scope.⁷⁴ One can speculate that Rashaz’s implicit position is that these new boundaries of the Land of Israel, which would stretch to the extent of incorporating even the impure lands of the idolaters, would grant their gentile inhabitants the right to acquire the protected status of *ger toshav*, and thus to become the *‘erev rav* who participate in the redemption, as discussed above.

annihilation of Amalek [see Dt 25:17-19, 1 Sm 15:3], coupled with the rabbinic tradition whereby God’s name and His throne will remain incomplete until the name of Amalek is obliterated [see *Midrash Tanhuma*, Tetse, 11], Rashaz seems to assume the possibility that even Amalek will be redeemed after the resurrection. See MAHZ 5572, 169, discussed in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 253-4. In this *ma’amar* Rashaz explains that because Amalek is rooted in the metaphysical domain that lies above the breaking of the vessels, where the purification of sparks does not obtain, Amalek will not be rectified by way of purification, but it will be included in the redemption when its name is completely blotted out. Wolfson reads this *ma’amar* as an example of Rashaz’s inconsistency, arising from the clash between his notion of a universal redemption that would include even Israel’s arch-enemy, and the “scriptural mandate [...] to erase [Amalek’s] name to the point of ‘complete extermination’ [*bitul le-gamre*]” (Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 254). My own interpretation differs from Wolfson’s. I am inclined to read the Hebrew expression *bitul le-gamre*, not as a reference to actual extermination but rather as a technical term denoting complete self-nullification, which is comparable to the transformation of ‘being’ [*yesh*] into naught [*ayin*]. This reading is reinforced by Rashaz’s description of Amalek’s *bitul* as “hearkening” [*shemo‘a*], which is preferable to “sacrifice” [*zevah*] (based on 1 Sm 15:15 and 22: “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams”), where the sacrifices symbolize purification of sparks while hearkening to God’s voice is compared to the the Israelites’ *bitul* on Sinai, when they said *na’aseh ve-nishma*’. Rather than finding an inconsistency in Rashaz’s view of Amalek’s redemptive prospects, I read this *ma’amar* as an elaborate interpretation that draws on the tradition of erasing Amalek’s name but transforms it into Amalek’s redemption by playing on the meanings of *bitul* as both concrete eradication and self-nullification.

⁷⁴ LT *Mas’ei* 89b-c; based on *Pesikta rabati*, pis. 1, 2a.

1.4 The imminence of the messianic advent.

Rashaz's numerous references to messianic times and Israel's task of bringing them closer raise the question of his view of the imminence of the redemption. Some of his statements appear to suggest that he believed the end of days to be near and was even engaged in calculations of its precise date [*hishuvei kitsin*], although it should be noted that statements of this nature occupy only a marginal place in his vast lore.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, some scholars have taken them to be representative of Rashaz's messianic orientation. According to Tishby, for example, Rashaz's definition of his own times as the era of "the footsteps of the Messiah" [*'ikveta di-meshiha*] attests to the presence of messianic tension in early Habad.⁷⁶ "The footsteps of the Messiah," a common concept in Lurianic kabbalah, stands for the time of the purification of the sparks entrapped in the feet of either *Adam Beliya'al* or *Adam kadmon*.⁷⁷ It originates in the Bible [see Ps 89:51], and is used in the Mishnah⁷⁸ to depict the calamities that will immediately precede the advent of the Messiah, following the continuous erosion of man's spirit, morality and wisdom over numerous generation. Echoes of, on the one hand, the sense that the task of purification is nearing completion, and on the other hand, of the notion that the decline of the generations is about to reach its lowest point, can be heard in Rashaz's teachings associated with the time of *'ikveta di-meshikha*.

At the beginning of *Tanya*, Rashaz explains that despite the fact that all the Jews possess a divine soul that is equally a part of God, there are some souls that stem from a higher and others from a lower aspect of the Godhead. This creates a hierarchy of souls, which has both synchronic and diachronic dimensions:

And though there are myriads of different gradation of souls, rank upon rank, *ad infinitum*, as with the superiority of the souls of the Patriarchs and of Moses our teacher above the souls of our own generations [who live in the

⁷⁵ See Mondshine, *Migdal 'oz*, 483-8. Moreover, one of the texts published there and attributed to Rashaz suggests the futility of any attempts to calculate the time of the end of days. See *ibid.*, 509.

⁷⁶ Tishby, "Ha-ra'ayon ha-meshihi," 512-3.

⁷⁷ Wolfson, "Walking as a Sacred Duty," 194.

⁷⁸ *mSotah* 9:15.

period] of the footsteps of Messiah, which are as the very soles of the feet compared with the brain and head, so in every generation there are the leaders of the Jews, whose souls are in the category of “head” and “brain” in comparison with those of the masses and the ignorant.⁷⁹

From the synchronic perspective, the souls of the leaders of the Jewish people derive from the highest, intellectual *sefirot*, for they are the brain of the nation, whereas the souls of the common folk derive from the lower *sefirot*. Most importantly, however, the souls vary from the diachronic perspective as well: those of earlier generations stem from the higher *sefirot*, but with the passing of time, the souls come into the world from an increasingly lower source within the Godhead, until the generation of *’ikveta di-meshiha*, whose souls are as low in relation to the generation of the Patriarchs as feet are in relation to the head.⁸⁰

The image illustrating the decline of the generations in *Tanya* acquires a functional dimension in Rashaz’s *ma’amarim*.⁸¹ There, the descent of the generations down the *sefirotic* tree refers to the different levels of souls that incarnate with the purpose of undergoing purification, a process that will end with the advent of the Messiah.⁸² Thus the souls of the Tannaim originated in *Hokhmah*, *Binah* and *Da’at* of the World of Creation, those of the Amoraim in *Hesed*, *Gevurah* and *Tif’eret* of the World of Formation, and the souls that have come into the world since the era of Ge’onim originate in *Netsah*, *Hod* and *Yesod* of the World of Making.⁸³

Two main issues emerge from the Rashaz’s depiction of the era of the Messiah’s footsteps. Firstly, this is the time of purification, which is a part of a much

⁷⁹ T1, 2:6a-b [Appendix 6].

⁸⁰ See also MAHZ 5566, i, 423, ii, 685; *Parshiyot*, i, 39.

⁸¹ On the idea of the decline of the generations in Hasidism, see Jacobs, “Hasidism and the Dogma,” 208-13.

⁸² Based on *bYevamot* 62a, 63b: “The son of David will not arrive until all the souls are vacated from the *guf*,” and according to Rashi, until all the souls created in the six days of creation are born. See also Zii, 258a, where Zechariah’s prophecy regarding God, whose “feet [*raglav*] shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives” [Zec 14:4] refers to the day of the end of exile, on which all impurity will be removed from the world.

⁸³ MAHZ 5566, ii, 556-7; 5569, 151-2; LT *Hukat* 63b.

longer process that began many generations ago and yet is distinguished by its own unique features. Secondly, the duration of this process as envisaged by Rashaz is surprisingly long.

The time of the footsteps of the Messiah is devoted to the purification of the lowest levels of the *sefirotic* structure. According to an early Habad tradition, traced back through Rashaz to the Great Maggid and the Ba'al Shem Tov, this final stage in the process of purification is a time of utter confusion and disorder. In earlier generations, Jewish society was divided into various classes, and the class affiliation of every Jew was determined by the origin of the root of his soul within the *sefirotic* hierarchy. The souls originating in the World of Creation were incarnated as scholars; those originating in the World of Formation became businessmen who supported the scholars with their money; and the souls originating in the World of Making formed the lowest caste of ignoramuses [*'amei ha-arets*]. Different types of souls were located in appropriate sectors of the community with an appropriate type of worship designed for each one. But in the present time of *'ikveta di-meshiha*, all these distinctions and classifications have broken down: lofty souls may incarnate as common folk and highborn, educated people may possess lowly souls. In this state of confusion, which reflects the chaotic conditions that would mark the final stage of the exile according to the Mishnah,⁸⁴ people often worship inappropriately, as they do not conform to the mode of worship that is compatible with their social status and the root of their soul.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ See note 78 above.

⁸⁵ See Aharon ha-Levi, *Sha'arei ha-yihud*, Petah u-mevo she'arim, 5a-b. See also Tishby, "Hara'ayon ha-meshihi," 513. Tishby explains this passage in terms of the Hasidic tendency to renounce traditional class divisions within the Jewish community, and to follow the imperative of "In all thy ways acknowledge Him" [Prv 3:6]. Contrary to Tishby, I do not see this confusion as a positive state but rather as a negative aspect of the generation of the "footsteps of the Messiah" and as an example of the tribulations that precede the messianic advent. Although Rashaz certainly subscribed to the idea of knowing God in all His ways, he nevertheless divided his Hasidim into separate groups according to the roots of their soul and their social status, prescribing different paths of worship to different groups. This will be further discussed in the next chapter. See also T4, 26:142a, where the confusion of the present time is said to result in the scholars being left at the mercy of the ignoramuses who support them financially; while in the redeemed world this will be reversed and the ignoramuses will

This is not to suggest that the generation of *'ikveta di-meshiha* is morally inferior to other generations; it is characterised by confusion, which does not necessarily reflect on its moral fibre. However, previous generations were unequivocally either righteous or wicked, because their souls were loftier and thus capable of the complete eradication of such evil as had contaminated them. As a result, there were none among them in whom good and evil were intermingled: those who wanted to worship God did so selflessly, and those who sinned must have been entirely wicked to have done so in the first place. By contrast, the souls of the present generation are of a lower stature, and much greater effort is required for them to eradicate the evil that resides within them.⁸⁶ This prompts Rashaz to raise the question of the mode of worship that is appropriate for this generation. In most cases he identifies it with the practical commandments, with the commandment of charity occupying pride of place.⁸⁷ Rashaz effectively re-evaluates the time of *'ikveta di-meshiha* by defining the practical commandments as the main mode of worship for this time – a necessary and distinct part of the process of redemption. This may be seen as an elevation of the generation of *'ikveta di-meshiha* to a higher level than that of the generation of the Giving of the Torah.⁸⁸ In line the general tendency present in his teachings, Rashaz allows for the possibility that the lowest place to which humanity could fall may be re-evaluated: indeed, the generation of *'ikveta di-meshiha* has sunk to the lowest step of the *sefirotic* ladder, but it also stands out for

be sustained by what they receive from the scholars. Aharon ha-Levi too, in his book referred to above, sees in the confusion a challenge to be overcome rather than an opportunity, and he asks his readers to explore their own souls and to find their own appropriate mode of worship, which would correspond to the root of their soul rather than to their current status in the material world.

⁸⁶ See TO 41a.

⁸⁷ See T4, 9:114a, *Seder tefilah*, 23a. Conversely, in T5, 162a, prayer is identified as the mode of worship appropriate for the time of *'ikveta*, as opposed to Torah study, which was appropriate for the time of the Sages. This should, however, be seen in the context of this particular section of *Tanya*, which focuses on the value of prolonged prayer, aiming to empower those Hasidim who wanted to spend more time on prayer than did some of their fellow-congregants.

⁸⁸ See Rashaz's *ma'amar* "Va-yikhu li terumah," re-edited by his son and published in *Ma'amrei Admor ha-Emtsa'i*, Shemot i, 305. An extract from this *ma'amar*, published by Mondshine in *Masa' Berditchov*, 55, states that the crown of the Messiah's good name [*keter shem tov de-mashiyah*] will be created out of the "yoke of the commandments that are truly in praxis" [*'ol mitsvot be-fo'al mamash*].

being better able to bring God down to the lowest spheres of reality than any of the preceding generations.⁸⁹

The generation that precedes the Messianic advent is thus required to purify the last remaining denigrated sparks. Surprisingly, however, in a text discussed above,⁹⁰ Rashaz defines this generation as spanning the period from Ge'onic times to the present. Rather than constituting an abrupt rupture in history on the verge of the redemption, the last generation endures for almost a millennium – much longer than the preceding generations of the Tannaim and the Amoraim. This puts in questions Rashaz's sense of the imminence of the messianic advent. His view that the present generation was living through the final stage before the redemption must be considered alongside his observation that this stage has already lasted for hundred of years. This observation takes away much of the urgency of the matter, although there is no denying that messianic redemption is a tangible reality for Rashaz. The redemption depends on the collective effort of the community of Israel, he claims, recalling the Talmudic story in which the Messiah replies to Rabbi Yehoshua's question about the date of his anticipated advent with the single word "today", on which Elijah comments: "Today, if ye will hear his voice." [Ps 95:7]⁹¹ In Rashaz's interpretation of this story,⁹² the word "today" [*ha-yom*] refers both to the first day before the emanation of the worlds associated with *Keter*,⁹³ and to the day of the redemption, the "day that is completely a day" [*yom she-kulo yom*].⁹⁴ The redemption would come only if the voice of the Messiah is obeyed, and obedience to the Messiah's voice, according to Rashaz, is a reference to repentance [*teshuvah*]. Notably, repentance originates in *Keter* and was created on the first day, just before

⁸⁹ See also Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 92-3.

⁹⁰ See note 83 above.

⁹¹ *bSanhedrin* 98a.

⁹² See LT *Shemini 'atseret* 85d.

⁹³ *Keter*, according to the Habad tradition, stands above the ten *sefirot* and is their source (see chapter 1 note 69 above). It also stands for God's will to create the world on the first day of creation (*Keter* and *ba-yom ha-rishon* [on the first day] share the same numerical value of 620).

⁹⁴ On the redemption as the everlasting day, see Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, 113-4. This will be discussed further below, in section 2.3 of the present chapter.

the creation of the world.⁹⁵ As such, it is located above the order of concatenation and is therefore free from all temporal restrictions, as the dimension of time develops only once the order of concatenation has begun to unfold. In other words, repentance grants the individual direct access to a transcendent reality; it makes it possible for him to transcend his temporal limitations and to enter a reality that comprises both the world's beginning and its end. Accordingly, in the present generation the redemption is in fact always about to take place, as by repenting the community can leap directly into a reality that is redeemed. The redemption is available on both the collective and the personal level, as Rashaz demonstrates with the example of Eleazar ben Durdaya, who repented and acquired his share of the world-to-come in an instant.⁹⁶ To recap, Rashaz's messianism is not acute in the sense of heralding an imminent end of days, calculating its precise date, or attaching it to a particular historical event or messianic figure. Nevertheless, he holds a deep conviction that the redemption can instantly be brought about by Israel as a whole, or at least by each and every individual Jew who can reach a personally redeemed state of existence.⁹⁷

1.5. Personal redemption.

The second messianic aspect of Rashaz's Hasidic teaching, quite apart from the collective effort to bring about the ultimate redemption, is the personal striving of the individual to achieve the state of redemption irrespective of time and place, which is

⁹⁵ Following the midrashic idea that repentance preceded the creation of the world, on which see *Midrash Tanhuma*, Naso, 11.

⁹⁶ See *b'Avodah zarah* 17a.

⁹⁷ See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 278-84, where he discusses the immediacy of the messianic advent in the teachings of the last Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menahem Mendel Schneerson, as expressed in the often repeated slogan, the Messiah shall arrive "immediately and truly without delay" [*tekhef u-miyad mamash*]. Wolfson points out that Rashaz takes 'immediacy' to mean in this context that the time of the redemption is not bound to any sequence of historical events, as the redemption transcends worldly time and is a "timeless moment, which cannot transpire temporally and therefore must always be capable of occurring (in)temporally" (281). Admittedly, the acute messianism of 20th century Habad was a response to certain historical events, yet the concept of the immediacy of a redemption that may come at anytime because by its very nature, it transcends all temporal limitations, can be found already in Rashaz's teachings.

achievable through everyday worship.⁹⁸ The interpretation of the Exodus as an everyday event is the underpinning of this concept:

“In every generation and every day a person is obliged to regard himself as if he had that day come out of Egypt.”⁹⁹ This refers to the release of the divine soul from the confinement of the body, the “serpent’s skin”,¹⁰⁰ in order to be absorbed into the Unity of the light of the blessed *Ein Sof*, through occupation in the Torah and commandments in general, and in particular through accepting the Kingdom of Heaven during the recital of the *Shema*, wherein the person explicitly accepts and draws over himself His blessed Unity, when he says: “The Lord is our God, the Lord is One.”¹⁰¹

In the previous chapter I presented an excerpt from Rashaz’s epistle that refers to the “serpent’s skin” in which the divine soul incarnates as an opportunity for the individual to subjugate the domain of husks and transform it into divinity, thus bringing the collective redemption closer.¹⁰² Here Rashaz evokes the same idea to show that there is a way out of the confinement of corporeality even before the final redemption.¹⁰³ The personal experience of the Exodus, defined here as an act of incorporation in the perfect unity of God’s infinite light, takes places on a daily basis within and in spite of the unredeemed world’s corporeality and materiality, which create the impression that the individual exists in separation from the divine unity.

⁹⁸ On the relation between personal and collective redemption in Habad, see Lowenthal, “Habad Messianism”. On a variety of modes of redemption in Hasidism in general, see Idel, “Multiple Forms of Redemption,” 61, where he presents the collective redemption that results from many individual redemptions as one of the ways in which messianism manifests itself in the teachings of the Besht. One of the sources to which Idel refers is Gedalyah of Lynitz’s *Sefer teshu’ot hen*, in which the Besht is said to have described the collective mode of redemption (followed by the advent of the Messiah) as the sum total of numerous individual redemptions. For a discussion of personal redemption in other schools of Hasidism, see Faienstein, “Personal Redemption,” 214-24. See also Idel, *Messianic Mystics*, 244; Wolfson, “Walking as a Secret Duty,” 183-4 n.10.

⁹⁹ *bPesahim* 116b.

¹⁰⁰ See *Tikunei zohar* xxi, 48b.

¹⁰¹ T1, 47:66b [Appendix 7].

¹⁰² See above, chapter 2 note 122.

¹⁰³ As Rashaz states elsewhere: “Egypt exists in every person and at all times [*be-khol adam uve-khol zeman*],” TO 62b.

Moreover, the experience of personal redemption from the confinement of physicality is achievable by no other means than the normative rituals of daily life. While the final redemption will come about only once good and evil have been completely separated, during the exile, the experience of redemption is achievable “in the microcosm [*‘olam katan*], i.e. [in] man, at every ‘time when thou [God] mayest be found’ [*le‘et metso*, Ps 32:6] – namely [during] prayer.”¹⁰⁴ And in addition to prayer, other standard elements of worship, such as Torah study and the performance commandments (in particular the commandment of charity) make it possible for the individual to experience the redemption after prayer. The rituals provide a practical way of separating good from evil in order to clinging to good, and as such they constitute an internalization of the redemption. It is important to note that for Rashaz, time-bound rituals such as prayer, which is the “time when thou mayest be found,” or Torah study at set times, have the power to effect a personal Exodus, to which Rashaz refers as the experience of transcending the limitations [*metsarim*] of time and space.¹⁰⁵ Thus the route to the domain that lies above time leads through the subjugation of time to the divine by means of the time-bound rituals of divine service.¹⁰⁶

Rashaz ascribes great significance to the proclamation of faith in the *Shema*, which in his view is not a purely declarative statement but a performative utterance: it bestows the proclaimed unity upon the person who proclaims it. The proclamation of God’s unity is thus an ecstatic experience of ultimate freedom in God. After explaining that Egypt [*Mitsrayim*] stands for the spatio-temporal world, Rashaz adds:

A bond with this material and limited world is called the Egyptian exile, and the mind that is preoccupied with the vanities of the world is called the king of Egypt. When a bond with this world is established so firmly that it is completely devoid of mind, lacking reason and understanding, it is called “The king of Egypt died,” and then “the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried” [Ex 2:23]. This means that “their heart cried”

¹⁰⁴ T4, 12:118b.

¹⁰⁵ See for example TO 64a. See chapter 2.

¹⁰⁶ On prayer and setting time for Torah study as a means of transcending temporal reality, see chapter 4 below.

[Lam 2:18] in the recitation of the *Shema* ' by way of "with all thy might" [Dt 6:5], which means, [to cry] without limit, namely, to go out of the darkness and limitation called "Egypt" in order that their heart would cry for the very essence and being [of God], and this is the Exodus.¹⁰⁷

By strengthening the bond with the material world to the point of emptying it of all reason and understanding, the cry of the *Shema* ' makes it possible to transcend the world from within its own borders and limitations. The *Shema* ' expresses an approach that is not discursive and does not attempt to grasp the world as an object of intellectual comprehension. Discursive thinking inevitably leads to a state of separation between the subject and the object of cognition, and this is a state of multiplicity which is incompatible with the absolute unity of God as proclaimed in the *Shema* '. Unconstrained by the boundaries of cognition,¹⁰⁸ The *Shema* ', reaches the uncognizable, the essence of God, and most importantly, it reaches it from within the world.

The deliverance of the Jews by the miracle of Purim serves Rashaz as yet another example of how the expression of faith in God's ultimate unity transcends cognition, conceptualisation, and even articulation. According to a midrashic interpretation of the Purim story, God decided to save the Jews when he heard their inarticulate outcry, which sounded like the bleating of a goat.¹⁰⁹ The lack of articulation and the animal-like sound highlight the absence of *da'at* from their voice: they cried out to God out of sheer despair, as a kid crying out to its mother. But this lack of *da'at* actually bridged the gap between Israel below and God above: just as God is beyond *da'at*, so the Jews on that occasion transcended *da'at* with their desperate cry of absolute faith.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ TO 64a [Appendix 8].

¹⁰⁸ Rashaz commonly interprets the *Shema* 's "with all thy might" as meaning "without limit". See for example TO 18b, 33b, 35d, 64a, 64d; LT *Shemini* 18b, 19d, Emor 33d, 35b, *Shelah* 47a, 50d, *Hukat* 64c, *Balak* 67d, *Mas'ei* 92b, *Va-ethanan* 9b, *Re'eh* 25b, *Shir ha-shirim* 20c, 25d, 30d, 40a, 43a, 45b.

¹⁰⁹ See Grossfeld, *Two Targums of Esther*, Targum rishon to Esther, 6:1, 69.

¹¹⁰ See TO 94d-95a. Despite the fact that the Purim miracle belongs in an account of the Persian exile, Rashaz refers to it here as if it happened in Babylonia, perhaps drawing on Est 2:6, where Mordecai is said to have been exiled from Jerusalem by a Babylonian king. By doing so, Rashaz emphasises the

Such faith comes from the “depth of the heart, from the truly innermost point,”¹¹¹ which is beyond the attribute of *da’at*. This innermost point is the divine spark possessed by every Jew; its concealment through engagement in worldly affairs constitutes the state of exile, while its full exposure amounts to a state of redemption.¹¹² This is why, according to a classical rabbinic dictum, the Messiah will come inadvertently, namely, “when *da’at* is diverted” [*be-heseah da’at*].¹¹³

The focus on speech and voice is notable, as it casts an interesting light on Habad’s alleged intellectualism.¹¹⁴ It is not study for the sake of intellectual accomplishment but rather prayer uttered inarticulately as a cry of despair that features in Rashaz’s lore as the route to personal redemption in a state of ecstasy. The power of voice seems to take precedence over the power of comprehension. That is not to say that Rashaz’s posture is anti-intellectual, but by highlighting the power of speech, he is able to incorporate in the redemptive experience even his less intellectually gifted followers.¹¹⁵ It is, however, important to clarify that his notion of overcoming *da’at* does not invalidate the importance of cognition in principle. The overcoming of *da’at* by means of the *Shema’* in the ecstatic state of personal redemption is destined to evolve into a redemptive state of total cognition in the messianic future. From this perspective, the redemption constitutes mainly an “epistemological shift” and an “expansion of understanding [*da’at*].”¹¹⁶

inarticulate manner of expressing their trust in God displayed by the Jews in the Book of Esther: “And this was the Purim miracle, which was like Babylonia, for ‘the Lord did there confound [the language]’ [Gn 11:9]” (TO 95a [Appendix 9]). For a discussion of Rashaz’s teachings on Purim in relation to contemporary events, see Loewenthal, *Communicating*, 90-7. For faith that is beyond reason in Rashaz’s teachings, see idem, “‘Reason’ and ‘Beyond Reason,’” 118*-120*.

¹¹¹ T4, 4:105b.

¹¹² See T4, 4:105a.

¹¹³ T4, 4:105b, based on *bSanhedrin* 96a. See also Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 51. In LT *Hukat* 61b-c Rashaz describes faith [*emunah*] as complete trust in the Creator without any reason or understanding [*be-lo ta’am ve-da’at*], by dint of which one takes oneself out of Egypt.

¹¹⁴ For Habad’s “intellectualism”, see the discussion in the Introduction. For the significance of voice and orality in Hasidism, see Idel, *Hasidism*, 160-70.

¹¹⁵ See the discussion in chapter 4 below.

¹¹⁶ Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 164-5, 273-4. Wolfson describes the messianism of the last Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menahem Mendel Schneerson, as contingent not on historical, national redemption or on

The declaration of faith in the *Shema*’ bridges the gap between God and the world, as it makes it possible to uncover the redeemed, divine reality from within itself, without the mediation of discursive knowledge, which by its nature obfuscates the unity of God. This possibility arises from Rashaz’s paradoxical view of the creation of the world: on the one hand, the world is a product of the divine will, filled with the godliness that is revealed throughout it, while on the other hand, the creation veils the presence of the divinity in the world, concealing it behind the facade of the existence of separate beings. Rashaz expresses this paradox by playing on the ambiguity of the Hebrew root *ayin-lamed-mem*, which is shared by the words for both world [*’olam*] and “concealment” [*he’lem*].¹¹⁷ Moreover, according to Rashaz, the world is sustained in existence thanks to a very delicate balance between concealment and revelation: a more intensive revelation of the divine light would nullify the world by absorbing it into the undifferentiated infinity of the Godhead, while a greater concealment of the light would deprive the world of its vitality and lead to its total disintegration.¹¹⁸ Only the redemption resulting from the purification of materiality will allow for a clear perception of the divinity within a world that no longer obfuscates the source of its own existence:

In the days of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead, when the materiality of this world is purified, [people] will be able to bear exposure to an infinitely stronger radiance, by way of a revelation that is perceived and grasped by everyone, so that each person according to his own ability to grasp [it] will point with his finger, so to speak, and say: “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him [Is 25:9],” etc.¹¹⁹

personal, spiritual redemption, but rather on the expanding consciousness that apprehends the world as being redeemed and filled with godliness. While Wolfson focuses his analysis on Menahem Mendel’s millenarian enthusiasm, which had an impact on his messianic teaching, I argue that the idea of the expanding consciousness of messianic times features already in the teachings of Rashaz, albeit less prominently. Idel has singled out a “noetic” model of the redemption, which he claims to be ever present, in a variety of forms, in the Jewish mystical tradition as a whole. See his *Messianic Mystics* 51-53, and “Multiple forms of redemption.”

¹¹⁷ On the use of this wordplay in Habad thought, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 103-14.

¹¹⁸ See LT *Balak* 68d.

¹¹⁹ *Seder tefilot* 19b [Appendix 10].

Thus in contrast to the conditions of exilic reality, in the redeemed world everyone – each according to his or her level – will enjoy immediate access to God and perceive Him sensually. In order to demonstrate the nature of this anticipated intimacy and thorough familiarity with God, Rashaz uses an ostensive definition: the presence of God will be so concretely obvious that one could be able to point one’s finger at it with no need for further cognition. Elsewhere the difference between cognition of God in exile and in the redeemed world is defined as the difference between knowledge [*yedi’ah*] and vision [*re’iyah*] of God. Moreover, the tangible, sensual experience of God in the redeemed future is the promised reward for the labour of striving to know God during the exile.¹²⁰

The totality of cognition in the redeemed world is sometimes presented as a synesthetic experience that overcomes the distinction between the senses, which is itself a phenomenon of exilic provenance. This is hinted at in the account of the Giving of the Torah at Sinai (a prefiguration of the future redemption), where “all the people saw the [audible] thunderings” [Ex 20:18]:

They saw what is heard and heard what is seen,¹²¹ because there was a disclosure of divinity without any division to a multitude of levels. Rather, they saw only the revealed totality of the life-giving energy and the divine influx, and there was no separation between seeing and hearing, heaven forefend.¹²²

Rashaz takes literally the phrasing of the biblical narrative and concludes that the Sinaitic experience transcended the division between the senses of sight and hearing, which meant that the Israelites enjoyed the Giving of the Torah as a total experience. This experience was due to the fact that at *Matan Torah* they overcame corporeality

¹²⁰ See LT *Shabat shuvah* 64b. Notably, the word used here to describe the nature of comprehension in the conditions of exile is “knowledge” [*yedi’ah*], which shares its root with the word “understanding” [*da’at*]. Although Rashaz does not say so explicitly in this particular passage, the visual perception that transcends exilic knowledge is beyond *da’at* as well. See a LT *Va-ethanan* 3c on the superiority of vision, which is understood as complete and intuitive cognition as opposed to discursive knowledge, and its relation to the future redemption.

¹²¹ See Vital, *Likutei Torah*, ‘Ekev, 246.

¹²² LT *Ha’azinu* 77c [Appendix 11]. See also T1, 36:46a

as their souls “took flight with every utterance of the Law,”¹²³ liberating them from the “confinement of the body.”¹²⁴ Such an experience, however, is not limited to *Matan Torah* or to the future redemption: it is also the experience of the penitent in the act of *teshuvah*.¹²⁵

The redemption is also marked by a shift to greater clarity of language. As mentioned above, Rashaz sees faith in the exile figuratively as an inarticulate cry to heaven out of Babylonia, the land of linguistic confusion.¹²⁶ The redemption, by contrast, will be the era of “pure language” [Zep 3:9]. The transparency of language is associated with the idea of redemption as the ultimate disclosure, referred to as the “circumcision from above”¹²⁷ or “circumcision of hearts”, which reveals the innermost part of the heart¹²⁸ and allows for the direct experience of the divinity, without any mediation. It points, on the one hand, at the purification and preparation of the Jewish body for entering the covenant with God while still inhabiting the world in a state of exile, and on the other hand, it points at the act of revelation and exposure as inextricably tied to the experience of redemption. In Rashaz’s interpretation, circumcision [*milah*] stands also for the etymologically linked word for the power of speech [*ruah memalela*],¹²⁹ which brings “the divine Wisdom out of potentiality into actuality, out of concealment into disclosure.”¹³⁰ The exile is defined by the confusion of languages and the impossibility of expressing the unity

¹²³ *bShabbat* 88b.

¹²⁴ *LT Ba-midbar* 10c.

¹²⁵ See *Seder tefilot* 308d. See also *LT ‘Ekev* 13d-14a, where God’s great mercy [*rahamim rabim*] rests upon every person who performs repentance and brings him back to life, which constitutes a personal experience of the future resurrection of the dead [*tehiyat nafsho ki-tehiyat ha-metim*]. On the relation between the Sinaitic experience and the resurrection of the dead, see note 25 above.

¹²⁶ See note 110 above.

¹²⁷ See Wolfson, *Alef, Mem, Tau*, 113-5. This will be discussed below.

¹²⁸ See *T4*, 4:105b. On the nexus of circumcision, theophany and the divine word in Kabbalah, see Wolfson, *Circle in the Square*, 41-47.

¹²⁹ See *Onkelos to Gen* 2:7.

¹³⁰ *TO* 12b.

of God in a discursive manner, whereas the redemption liberates language, transforming it into a suitable means of divine revelation.¹³¹

To sum up, the redemption has an epistemological dimension. In the redeemed state, the individual is released from his corporeal limitation and can perceive Godliness intuitively, totally and directly, in a manner unmediated by discursive thought or the division between one sense and another. Still, this liberation from corporeality does not entail the rejection of the body: just as at the Giving of the Torah, so in the throes of personal ecstasy, the senses absorb Godliness freely, as a synesthetic experience; and in the future-to-come, the body will exist in its subtle, sublimated form, enabling everyone to experience God sensually.

1.6 The messianic figure.

The definition of redemption as synonymous with *teshuvah* raises the question of the role of the messianic figure in the redemptive process: if the redemption comes about through Israel's repentance, results in the divinization of the entire world by filling it with the overflowing light of the Infinite, then the messianic figure, whose task is to redeem the Jewish people or the world becomes irrelevant, all the more so if, regardless of the final redemption of the future-to-come, everyone can achieve a redeemed state of being individually, while still in exile. Indeed, in light of the redemptive significance of repentance, the messianic figure plays only the marginal role of prompting the righteous to repent.¹³² As explained above, repentance is a means of transcending the time limits of the emanated worlds, to enter the redeemed reality of an "everlasting day" filled with divine light. Thus, while penitents [*ba'alei teshuvah*] are both the instruments of redemption and its beneficiaries, the righteous, who technically do not need to repent, appear to be excluded from the redemption.¹³³ The Messiah is therefore given the task of concluding the redemptive process by

¹³¹ Elsewhere Rashaz describes circumcision as a revelation of God's voice to the mute congregation of Israel. See LT *Pinhas* 79c.

¹³² Following the description of the redeemer's mission in Ziii, 153b.

¹³³ This follows on from Rashaz's valorisation and empowerment of ordinary people's mode of worship, which will be further discussed in the next chapter.

elevating the righteous to the redeemed state which the penitents have already merited by dint of their repentance.¹³⁴

Even though the messianic figure plays only a marginal role in the process of redemption, its significance grows in the post-exilic world. As mentioned above, while the Messiah reigns primarily over Israel, his authority spreads to the gentile nations who flock to his court in order to learn wisdom from him.¹³⁵ The messianic task of revealing wisdom can be linked to one of the distinctive features of messianic times: the gentiles will be permitted to study the revealed layer of the Torah, while the Jews will freely explore its inner mystical meanings. In this context, the task of the Messiah reflects that of Moses, through whom the Torah was first given to the Israelites: just as Moses drew down the revealed aspect of Torah on Sinai, so the Messiah will draw down its inner aspect.¹³⁶

Finally, one other question should be raised about the messianic figure in Rashaz's teachings: can the Hasidic *tsadik* fulfil this role? There is no indication that Rashaz's followers associated him with this redemptive role,¹³⁷ and yet some of the *tsadik*'s functions may be interpreted as being messianic.¹³⁸ In his sermons, Rashaz

¹³⁴ See for example LT *Rosh ha-shanah* 58d, *Ha'azinu* 75b, *Shemini 'atseret* 92b, *Shir ha-shirim* 45a, 50a-c; MAHZ 5562, 274, 542. This concept is based on the Talmudic dictum "In the place where penitents stand, the completely righteous cannot stand" [*bBerakhot* 34b]. See also Tishby, "Hara'ayon ha-meshihi," 38; Tishby and Dan, "Torat ha-hasidut," 794-5.

¹³⁵ See note 53 above.

¹³⁶ See LT *Tsav* 17c. Thus Moses is the first and the Messiah the last redeemer. See for example *Seder tefilot*, 307a.

¹³⁷ As in the case of the seventh Habad rebbe, Menahem Mendel Schneerson, who to this day is believed by some to be the Messiah. On the messianic ferment in Habad of the 20th and 21st centuries, see Bilu and Kravel-Tovi, "The work of the present"; Dahan, "Dirah ba-tahtonim"; Dein, *What Really Happens*; Elior, "The Lubavitch Messianic Resurgence"; Heilman and Friedman, *The Rebbe*, 197-247; Loewenthal, "Habad Messianism."

¹³⁸ This was the claim of J. Dan, who saw the idea of cleaving to the *tsadik* as the way in which Hasidism in general neutralized apocalyptic messianism by transforming it into redemption through affiliation to a certain Hasidic court. In Dan's view, the *tsadik*'s court is a redeemed space, and its dynastic character guarantees the continuity of redemption over time. See Dan, "Kefel ha-panim," 300-10; Margolin, *Mikdash adam*, 406-8.

distinguishes between two types of *tsadikim*.¹³⁹ The first type are the hidden *tsadikim*, such as Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai.¹⁴⁰ Their souls are so lofty that they are detached from the material world, worshipping God spiritually by performing unifications and ascensions of the soul. By contrast, the second type are the revealed *tsadikim*, who worship through materiality. The two types are likened respectively to the Leviathan and the wild ox [*shor ha-bar*] – the two creatures that will be served up at the feast of the righteous in the future-to-come.¹⁴¹ The hidden *tsadikim* are called Leviathan because like the deep sea creature, they are concealed from the eye, and their lofty mode of worship links them directly to *Ein Sof*.¹⁴² The revealed *tsadikim*, on the other hand, are called *shor ha-bar* because they labour within materiality and have the strength required for carrying the yoke of Torah and the commandments. Even though in the present, the Leviathan type *tsadik* seems to be loftier due to his otherworldliness, in the future-to-come the *shor ha-bar* type *tsadik* will be elevated above him by dint of his transformative work within materiality. Moreover, while the service of the former is based on his individualistic connection to God, the latter's service is engaged with the world and is connected to other people. The former's detachment from the lower worlds brings him "close to the level of prophecy," while the latter, by virtue of his involvement in the lower worlds, draws down the light of *Ein Sof* and its vitality into them, and thus he transforms into divinity not only himself but also his surroundings.

The category of *shor ha-bar* is thus applicable to the Hasidic rebbe who functions as leader to his community of Hasidim. The divine attributes are contained within the soul of such a *tsadik* without being distorted by his corporeality,¹⁴³ and

¹³⁹ See LT *Shemini* 18a-19d; MAHZ 5571, 163-9.

¹⁴⁰ Who studied in seclusion for twelve years. See *bShabbat* 33b. Rashaz includes in this category also the Patriarchs, who fulfilled the Torah spiritually before it was handed down on Sinai, as well as Isaac Luria and the Ba'al Shem Tov.

¹⁴¹ See *Vayikra rabah*, 13:3.

¹⁴² Based on the deriving Leviathan etymologically from the root *lamed vav yud* (or *he*), which means to accompany or to connect.

¹⁴³ See T1, 29:36a, where Hillel treats his own body as if it was a strange object, which is based on *Vayikra rabah*, Be-har 34:3.

they are achievable by his followers through his “thoughts, speech and deeds.”¹⁴⁴ The *tsadik* “heals the souls of those who are of his ‘root’ [...], imparts ‘understanding of the divine’ and arouses the depths of the ears of those in his generation.”¹⁴⁵ Just as the philosopher who has emerged from Plato’s cave to see the light of day and to grasp the true nature of things returns to help other people share his insight, so the redeemed *tsadik* shares his own grasp of the divine with his followers. Thus the social role of the *tsadik* as leader and teacher to his Hasidim has a deeper, mystical meaning: he can help an ignoramus [*am ha-arets*] who is not capable of cleaving to God by himself but who can cleave to the *tsadik* and scholar [*talmid hakham*], whose own soul is in complete unity with God, and through his mediation be united with God himself.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, the death of the *tsadik*, too, has a redemptive value. As the ultimate display of *mesirat nefesh*, death is related to Torah study and prayer in total devotion.¹⁴⁷ Thus, when a *tsadik* passes away, all the “light” that he accumulated through his divine service is fully revealed and grants atonement for sins to his generation in much the same way as the sacrifice of the red heifer.¹⁴⁸ The death of the *tsadik* therefore becomes invested with messianic significance, just as the ritual of the red heifer is unambiguously connected to the messianic advent.¹⁴⁹ In contrast to Dan’s claim,¹⁵⁰ I suggest that for the *tsadik*’s followers, the experienced of being redeemed was sustained over time not by their allegiance to the same dynasty of *tsadikim* (and there is no indication that Rashaz ever intended to found a dynasty), but rather by cleaving to the *tsadik* even after his

¹⁴⁴ See T4, 27:146b.

¹⁴⁵ See Loewenthal, “Self-sacrifice,” 460.

¹⁴⁶ See T1, 2:6b-7a. This resembles J. Dan’s idea of Hasidic redemption *qua* cleaving to the *tsadik* and joining his court. See note 138 above.

¹⁴⁷ Loewenthal, “Self-Sacrifice,” 463-5.

¹⁴⁸ See Rashaz’s epistle to Levi Yitshak of Berdichev, on the occasion of the passing of the latter’s son, T4, 28:148b.

¹⁴⁹ See Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilekhot Parah Adumah, 3:9.

¹⁵⁰ See note 138 above

death, as “when the *tsadik* departs he is present in the world more than during his life-time.”¹⁵¹

2. The world-to-come.

2.1. *The world-to-come and this world.*

In Rashaz’s teachings, as in the classical rabbinic sources, the “world-to-come” [*ha-‘olam ha-ba*] is often contrasted with “this world” [*ha-‘olam ha-zeh*].¹⁵² If this world is marked by confusion, then the world-to-come will be marked by fixed order:

When Scripture says “Today to do them” [Dt 7:11], [it means today] and not tomorrow,¹⁵³ stressing that this world is the world of doing [*‘olam ha-ma’aseh*], in which man was given free will [*behirah*] to choose [to do] good. Moreover, even if he has already transgressed, he can repent and [then] resume his divine service. But this is not the case in the world-to-come, where man has no free will [*behirah hofshit*]; rather, once he is in the world to come, he remains the same as he was in this world [...]. The reason for the difference between this world and the world-to-come is that everything in the world-to-come has its own set place, and the levels are all separated from one another: angels and souls are segregated within their own holy quarters, and evil has nothing whatsoever to do with good. For this reason, where there is evil, there is no trace of good. But this is not the case in this world, where good occurs even where there is evil. Therefore, even if a person has

¹⁵¹ Ziii, 71b. See Rashaz’s epistle sent to the Hasidim in the Land of Israel, following the passing away of his teacher, Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk, T4, 27:146a-b.

¹⁵² See Klausner, *The Messianic Idea*, 409.

¹⁵³ The ‘doing’ refers to the performance of the commandments. See *b’Eruvin* 22a and *b’Avodah zarah* 3a, on the verse “Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee today, to do them” [Dt 7:11]. According to Rashi *ad loc.*, “today” refers to this world and “tomorrow” to the world-to-come, where after death, there will no longer be any point in performing the commandments, because [*b’Avodah zarah* 3a] ‘[only] he who has toiled on the eve of the Sabbath will eat on the Sabbath’” [Appendix 12].

committed a transgression, he can perform a commandment and change his demeanour from evil to good.¹⁵⁴

Rashaz identifies here two crucial differences between this world and the world-to-come, one cosmic and the other personal. From the cosmic perspective, this world is a place in which good and evil are intermingled. Good can be drawn to evil entities and vice versa: evil can reach places which are intrinsically good. This means that, the hierarchical structure of this world is fluid and constantly liable to be disturbed: what is high may become low, and what is low can rise up. The fluidity of the mundane hierarchy results from the two types of divine light that illuminate it, the immanent and the transcendent. The immanent light, which “fills all the worlds” [*memale kol ‘almin*], varies according to the order of concatenation [*seder hishtalshelut*] and determines the hierarchy of beings in the world by shining on each and every one according to its place in this hierarchy. This light can be compared to the powers of the soul that animate all the body parts, each according to its place and function.¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, the transcendent light, which “surrounds all the worlds” [*sovev kol ‘almin*], shines equally everywhere, so that the lower entities in the hierarchy of concatenation receive it in equal measure to the higher entities. Effectively, the lower entities can rise above the level determined by their status, as the surplus of transcendent light makes up for and supplements the lesser radiance of the immanent light.

The state of confusion in the lower worlds is closely related to the idea of the breaking of the vessels, described above as a stage in the process of creation: following the breaking of the vessels, the creative divine sparks were scattered throughout this world, trapped in the material broken shards of the vessels. The world-to-come, by contrast, is “the world of purification, which has already been purified, where everything is in its proper place: a head is a head and a foot is a foot.”¹⁵⁶ The world-to-come is thus the world of the reinstated order of creation, with clear-cut borders between different levels within its hierarchy. The difference between the transcendent and the immanent light is annihilated there, and the light

¹⁵⁴ LT *Pinhas* 75b-c [Appendix 13].

¹⁵⁵ See for example LT *Pinhas* 75c.

¹⁵⁶ LT *Pinhas* 75c; see also LT *Va-ethanan* 4d, *Yom ha-kipurim* 70a.

shines by way of *memale* only.¹⁵⁷ Effectively, what is fixed at the bottom of the hierarchy of the world-to-come can no longer move upwards, an idea which Rashaz expresses by resort to the allegory of the soul that suffuses and animates the body: in the world-to-come, the head remains the head and the foot remains the foot. Paradoxically, then, owing to its firmly fixed order, the world-to-come is associated with the restricting powers of *Gevurot*, a motif that Rashaz links to the classical rabbinic notion whereby God created the world-to-come with the letter *yud* of the Tetragrammaton.¹⁵⁸

However, the idea that this world is distinguished from the world-to-come by the absence of a fixed hierarchy of beings can be approached also from a more personal perspective. For the individual who inhabits this world rather than the next, both sin and redemption are possible. This is because in this world, good and evil are intermingled, and people tainted with evil are able to veer towards the good, thus lifting themselves to a higher position in the hierarchy of beings. Here, too, the illumination of this world by both types of divine light plays a key role: if the sinner was to be sustained in this world by the immanent light alone, he would receive only the precise measure of vitality required for his lowly position in the hierarchy, and this would never allow him to change his demeanour from evil to good. But since he is illuminated also by the transcendent light, which is bestowed upon everyone in equal measure of intensity, he is just as able to do good as is the righteous individual, and this means that he has the opportunity to fully repent and become good. Thus, according to Rashaz, the scope for individual redemption in this world is practically unlimited, as one can change oneself in an instant from one extreme to another, rising from the lowly status of the wholly wicked [*rasha' gamur*] to the lofty status of the wholly righteous [*tsadik gamur*].¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ See also LT *Re'eh* 33c.

¹⁵⁸ This world was created with [the letter] *he*, and the world to come with [the letter] *yud*' [*bMenahot* 29b]. See LT *Re'eh* 33c. In numerous places (e.g. LT *Pinhas* 76c, *Shemini 'atseret* 83d), the *yud* is associated with the contraction and with the restricting powers of *Gevurot*.

¹⁵⁹ See LT *Devarim* 1b. In LT *Shemini 'atseret* 85d-86a, Rabbi Eleazar ben Durdaya is presented as a paragon of radical transformation through repentance (see *b'Avodah zarah* 17a). This stands in apparent contradiction to Rashaz's definition in *Tanya* of the complete *tsadik* as one who has never

This scope for redemption is further associated with the existence of free will in this world as against its absence from the world-to-come. Notably, the concept of free will seemingly clashes with the concept of God's omniscience (the paradox of *yedi'ah u-vehirah*¹⁶⁰). In Rashaz's view, free will is associated with the equal access to the transcendent light that is granted to everyone,¹⁶¹ but when he raises the question of free will in other contexts, he links it to the immanent light [*memale*] while associating divine omniscience with the transcendent light [*sovev*].¹⁶² Nevertheless, there is no contradiction between these two positions, as while in this world, one can always transcend oneself, reach out to the aspect of *sovev* and become a better person than before, in the world-to-come, the two types of light are no longer distinguishable from each other, as the transcendent light shines also upon the immanency.¹⁶³ Consequently, in the world-to-come, individuals are no longer able to access any distinctly transcendent divine force by means of which to improve and rise up the hierarchy of beings; rather, they remain permanently fixed at the

even harboured a sinful thought [T1, 10:14b-15]. However, *teshuvah* transcends time and can therefore undo whatever has been done within time's boundaries. On Rashaz's concept of *tsadik* see a Halamish, "Mishnato ha-iyunit," 352-63; Loewenthal, "Self-Sacrifice," 458-60. The confusion between divine and ostensibly non-divine elements in exilic reality prompts Rashaz to compare it to a dream [*halom*], which is characterised by the "withdrawal of consciousness" [*histalkut ha-mohin*]. According to this analogy, the wakeful mind perceives reality as a divine wholeness, whereas the imagination, which is active in a dream, tends to divide its object into separate and independent entities (see TO 28c-d). However, a dream can also combine "two opposites in one subject" [*shenei hafakhim be-nose ehad*]: *sacrum* and *profanum*, Godliness and materiality, and so on (see MAHZ 5565, i, 184-5). While the imagination generating the dream-like reality of the individual living in exile does not provide the sharp and explicit cognition of the divine reality that is available to the wakeful consciousness of the redeemed individual, it nevertheless, makes it possible to overcome the chaos of exile by finding Godliness within the separate beings that inhabit the lower worlds. See Wolfson, *A Dream*, 203-17. The states of sleeping and dreaming evoke also other association with the exile: the dream is the debris of materiality that remain in the body after the divine vitality [*hiyut*] has departed from it while the person is asleep. Analogously, the state of confusion in the exilic world constitutes the material waste that is being purified in the course of the exile; see MAHZ *Razal* 315-6.

¹⁶⁰ On the paradox of *yedi'ah u-vehirah* see Jacobs, "Divine Foreknowledge."

¹⁶¹ LT *Pinhas* 75b-c.

¹⁶² See Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 265, n. 75.

¹⁶³ On the transformation of the two divine lights, and the question of the transcendent and the immanent in the redeemed world, see below.

level, determined by the immanent light, that they occupied while still inhabiting this world.

2.2 *Gehinom and Paradise.*

In some cases Rashaz speaks figuratively about living in this world as clothing the soul in garments, whether the pure garments of Torah and commandments or the impure garments of worldly existence. Clothed in these garments, the soul enters the world-to-come, where she can no longer change them. This places Rashaz's notion of the world-to-come in the rabbinic context of reward and punishment. The fixed hierarchy of the world-to-come preserves the pure garments of Torah and *mitsvot* as the reward of the righteous, while preserving the garments of worldly pleasures as punishment for the wicked, keeping every individual “separately, each in his place, with every righteous person having his own section.”¹⁶⁴ He writes:

Now, it is written: [“Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee] today, to do them” [Dt 7:11]. “Today” specifically, for in this world [*ba-‘olam ha-zeh*], which is called the world of doing [*‘olam ha-ma’aseh*], one can repent, which is not the case in the world-to-come. There, one will remain as he is, for one has no power to change oneself from what one is, unless his impure clothings are removed from him by means of the hollow of a sling [*kaf ha-kela’*], etc.¹⁶⁵

As in the classical rabbinic sources, in Rashaz's *ma’amarim* the world-to-come features as the world of the promised reward for the commandments performed in this world.¹⁶⁶ This world is distinguished from the world-to-come as the domain of “doing,” in contrast to the domain of rest, where individuals reap the fruits of their actions.¹⁶⁷ When depicting the punishment of the wicked, Rashaz refers to the

¹⁶⁴ LT *Shemini 'atseret* 86a [Appendix 14].

¹⁶⁵ LT *Re'eh* 33b-c [Appendix 15].

¹⁶⁶ See note 153 above.

¹⁶⁷ This idea is related to the concept of the future-to-come as the everlasting Sabbath, which will be discussed in section 2.3 below.

rabbinic depiction of the sinner's soul in the world-to-come being cast from the hollow of a sling – an image based on Abigail's cursing of David's enemies [1 Sm 25:29]. The rabbis envisaged this as the angels casting the souls of the sinners from one corner of the earth to another,¹⁶⁸ or as God shaking them out of the redeemed Land of Israel “as a man who shakes his garment,”¹⁶⁹ while according to the *Zohar*, the image refers to the banishment of sinful souls to this world, where they are doomed to suffer endless wanderings through countless incarnations,¹⁷⁰ even as demons.¹⁷¹ In one place, the *Zohar* explains that the cord of the sling is formed out of all of man's deeds which have not been entirely devoted to divine service.¹⁷²

Rashaz clearly draws on this idea. Even though he sees man's mundane actions as his garments rather than the cord of the sling, as described above, he still considers them a yoke, which must be carried over to the world-to-come, where it attracts appropriate punishment. In Rashaz's interpretation, the hollow of the sling is a procedure that shakes off the impure, worldly garments of the soul¹⁷³ rather than the punishment of transmigration. Thus, for example, the zoharic understanding *kaf ha-kela'* as the expulsion of the soul back to a series of embodied lives in this world is reflected in Rashaz's *ma'amarim* as the expulsion of the soul back to its mundane, impure frame of mind:

This is the meaning of the hollow of the sling: he [i.e. the soul of the departed] is slung, cast out and thrown down into those thoughts that – while he was still alive in this world – drew him to the vanities of the world [*hevlei 'olam*]; and he is ridiculed and made to believe that he still exists in this world, thinking, speaking and acting in his usual manner.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁸ See *bShabat* 152b.

¹⁶⁹ *Pirke de-Rabi Eli'ezer*, ch. 34, 33b.

¹⁷⁰ See *Zii* 142a-b.

¹⁷¹ See *Ziii* 25a

¹⁷² See *Zii* 59a.

¹⁷³ See *LT Re'eh* 33b and *Va-ethanan* 4d, where it is compared to the cutting of the cord that keeps the soul clothed in the sackcloth of mundane deeds, words and thoughts.

¹⁷⁴ *LT Pinhas* 75c [Appendix 16].

After death, the wicked are made to suffer, not by undergoing a chain of incarnations but rather by entertaining the illusion that they are still alive in this world.¹⁷⁵ This, as explained above, will last only until they have been stripped of the unclean garments of mundane thoughts, words and deeds. The purpose of *kaf ha-kela'*, therefore, is not to punish the soul for the misdeeds it committed in this world, but rather to purify and prepare it for entering the world-to-come. Following Rabbi Meir's pronouncement on the death of Elisha ben Avuya, that it would have been better to have judged him first and then allowed him to enter the world-to-come [*'alma de-ate*],¹⁷⁶ Rashaz sees the suffering of the sinner's soul as a transitory stage on its way to the redeemed world – its recuperation, and as such, a process whose true purpose is to grant “kindness, not retribution” [*hesed ve-lo nekamah*].¹⁷⁷

The hollow of a sling is not always sufficient for the purification of the soul. In particular cases, the tribulation of the “*Gehinom* of snow,” or the “*Gehinom* of fire” may be necessary, depending on the severity of the transgressions at stake.¹⁷⁸ In several instances, however, the punitive role of *Gehinom* is downplayed against its purifying and transformative functions, and it is presented as a stage that the soul must go through on its ascent to the highest level – the upper Garden of Eden [*gan 'eden 'elyon*]. For this reason, all the souls that do not merit immediate elevation to the upper Garden of Eden may ascend after death gradually: from the hollow of a sling, through *Gehinom*, to the lower Garden of Eden, the River of Fire [*nehar dinur*], right up to the upper Garden of Eden.¹⁷⁹ Thus the sufferings of the hollow of a sling, *Gehinom* and the River of Fire prepare the soul for its final ascension. In a

¹⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the concept of metempsychosis is present in Rashaz's teachings and will be briefly discussed below.

¹⁷⁶ See *bHagigah* 15b.

¹⁷⁷ LT *Korah* 53d. Notably, it is often difficult to ascertain whether Rashaz regards the hollow of a sling as something that happens to individual souls in the unredeemed world, immediately following their death, or as a transitional period preceding the resurrection and the collective redemption. Such confusion between the realm of the souls after death and the redeemed world (either in the messianic era or at the resurrection of the dead) is common in rabbinic literature. See n. 1 above.

¹⁷⁸ See T1, 8:13a; see also Zi, 62b, 237b; Zii 150a-b; Vital, *Likutei Torah*, Shemot, 122.

¹⁷⁹ See for example LT *Devarim* 1b, *Yom ha-kipurim* 70a. See also LT *Re'eh* 23c, where Rashaz states that three things were given to Israel by God through sufferings: the world-to-come, Torah, and the Land of Israel [see *bBerakhot* 5a].

beautiful metaphor, Rashaz compares the fire of *Gehinom* to the fire of the crucible: just as the latter, in the process of smelting ore, separates silver from waste matter and slag, so the former separates good from evil, thus enabling the soul to ascend to the Garden of Eden.¹⁸⁰ The sufferings of *Gehinom* are worth enduring, as they lead to the ultimate delight,¹⁸¹ and since they are much more grave than any suffering experienced in this world, it is much better to suffer for one's sins in this world (for example by self-mortification – fasts, etc.), than in the world-to-come.¹⁸²

Gehinom and the River of Fire play similar but distinct roles. Just as passing through the fire of *Gehinom* purifies the soul before it enters the lower Garden Eden, so immersion in the River of Fire is necessary before ascension to the upper Garden of Eden.¹⁸³ In some places, Rashaz even goes on to discern more than two Gardens of Eden in the world-to-come, which are distinguished from one another by the level of delight experienced in each one.¹⁸⁴ In contrast to the static image presented above,¹⁸⁵ whereby, the hierarchy of beings in the world-to-come is fixed once and for all, the world-to-come, according to Rashaz, can also be in permanent motion, with the righteous constantly ascending from the lower to the higher levels of the Garden of Eden.¹⁸⁶ This is in line with the classical rabbinic statement that the

¹⁸⁰ See TO 49a.

¹⁸¹ See for example TO 49a-b; LT *Be-shalah* 1d, *Be-ha'alotekha* 33b, *Va-yikra hosafot* 52b, *Hukat* 62b, *Shir ha-shirim* 4b.

¹⁸² See LT *Re'eh* 23d. See also T3, 12:101a, where Rashaz links his position that it is preferable to suffer in this world than in the world-to-come to the idea that this world was built with the attribute of Kindness [*Hesed*], while the world-to-come was built with the attribute of Judgement [*Din*]. See also LT *Pinhas* 76c. On the significance of fasts and other mortifications, see T3, 1-12:91a-93a, 7:97a. In some places, Rashaz states that to confront all the obstacles, sufferings and labours of this world would result in a higher elevation in the world-to-come. This is also the reason why, according to Rashaz, Abraham preferred the enslavement of Israel by other nations [*shi'abud malkhuyot*] to the sufferings of *Gehinom* [see *Bereshit rabah* 44:21]: from the lowest level of Exile one can ascend to the highest levels of the world-to-come. See TO 8b.

¹⁸³ See for example TO 31a, 69c, 96a; LT *Be-shalah* 1d *Be-ha'alotekha* 33d, *Va-yikra hosafot* 52b, *Shemini 'atseret* 84d-85a; *Seder tefilot*, 10; MAHZ, *Ethalekh*, 168. See also Zii 211b.

¹⁸⁴ See TO 49a, 98b, and LT *Be-har* 41b, where Rashaz reasons that only these two were revealed to us, which is why the sources mention only them out of the whole range of different Gardens of Eden.

¹⁸⁵ See section 2.1 above in the present chapter.

¹⁸⁶ See for example TO 32d, 49a, 81d, 98b; LT *Ba-midbar* 18a, *Be-ha'alotekha*, 33d.

righteous [*tsadikim*] “have no rest in the world-to-come, as Scripture says: ‘They go from strength to strength’ [Ps 84:7].”¹⁸⁷ However, these ascensions, and the delights related to them, refer most likely to life after death rather than to the messianically redeemed world at the end of days.

The River of Fire, therefore, can be seen as a transitory stage, either between the Lower and the Upper Gardens of Eden, or between countless other levels of the Garden. The image of the River of Fire is not uncommon in the Jewish sources; it originates in the vision of Daniel [Dn 7:10] and was reinterpreted time and again in the mystical tradition. It is said to issue from the perspiration of the four living creatures [*hayot*] of the vision of Ezekiel [Ez 1:5-14],¹⁸⁸ and it surrounds the Throne of Glory, regulating access to the Divine Presence; it invests the Throne of Glory with extra splendour, and has both a punitive and a restorative function: it pours fire over the heads of the wicked, and yet the angels bathe in it to be renewed every day.¹⁸⁹ In the *Zohar*, the River of Fire has one effect on the souls of the wicked and another on those of the righteous: “The souls of the righteous immerse and are purified in it, [while] the souls of the wicked are judged in it, and they burn before it like a straw before fire.”¹⁹⁰ The *Zohar* also underlies Rashaz’s idea that the River of Fire constitutes the second stage of purification, because even in the Lower Gan Eden, the soul has not yet been fully cleansed of its worldly appearance:

When she [the soul] is raised above, she must separate from all lowly appearance and matters; so she is passed through that River of Fire. Then the soul is cleansed completely; she emerges and appears before the Master of the Universe.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ *bBerakhot* 64a; *bMo’ed katan* 29a. Note, however, that in both these instances, the Talmud refers to “scholars” [*talmidei hakhamim*] rather than to “the righteous” – *tsadikim*, as Rashaz does in most cases, for which see note 186 above.

¹⁸⁸ See *bHagigah* 13b; *Bereshit rabah* 78:1; *Zii* 221b, and *LT Shelah* 41a, *Matot* 86b.

¹⁸⁹ See, for example, *3 Enoch*, ch. 18:19, 33:5, and the notes there; *bHagigah* 13b; *Eikhah rabah* 3, *Het*; *Tikunei zohar*, *Hakdamah*, 4a.

¹⁹⁰ *Ziii* 16b [Appendix 17]; see also *Zi*, 201a; *Zii*, 247a; *Ziii*, 159b.

¹⁹¹ *Zii* 211b [Appendix 18]. See also de Vidas, *Reshit hokhmah*, *Sha’ar ha-yir’ah*, ch. 33.

In some of Rashaz's sermons, the stage of being cleansed in the River of Fire acquires special significance: the pure souls who have arrived in the lower levels of the Garden of Eden do not need to shed off any traces of worldly impurity, but rather they must leave behind the worldly delights that they experienced there, so as not to be confused when they experience the delights of the higher Garden of Eden. The crossing of the River of Fire grants them the experience of complete oblivion and prepares them for the new delights awaiting them at the higher level of the garden they are about to enter.¹⁹² It is worth noting that, the function of the River of Fire here resembles that of the River Lethe which flows through Hades, whose waters were drunk by the dead in order to make them forget their earthly lives.¹⁹³

2.3 *The end of time at the end of days.*

Rashaz sees time and space as the two factors that shape the condition of metaphysical exile in which the world has endured since its very creation. Inevitably, therefore, the transformation of the world at the redemption into God's own dwelling place, the overthrowing of material limitations, and the sublimation of corporeality will all have an impact on time. Time will not cease to exist in the future-to-come. Like other elements of God's creation, time, too, appears to exist in its own right only from the perspective of the created beings, while in fact it is a part of the divine.¹⁹⁴ For the time being, during the exile, God reveals His infinite will to the world by means of the Torah and commandments, as well as by certain ritual objects.¹⁹⁵ But in the future-to-come, He will reveal Himself in His transcendent mode (the light of *sovev*) throughout all the worlds, so that He will be fully perceived by "the sense of vision" [*bi-re'iyah hushit*], at which point both time and space,

¹⁹² See note 183 above.

¹⁹³ See TO 69c, where Rashaz directly refers to the river Dinur as the river of oblivion: "This is like the level of the Lower Gan Eden, that comes after this world, which requires immersion in the River of Fire that separates between them, in order to forget the disposition of material memory; for as long as one remembers materiality, one is not able of delight in Gan Eden [Appendix 19]."

¹⁹⁴ See MAHZ *'Inyanim*, 92.

¹⁹⁵ See chapter 2 above.

without being annihilated, will no longer appear to contradict the divine infinity and transcendence.¹⁹⁶

Thus the status of time in the redeemed world conforms to the pattern wherein mundane reality continues to exist in a manner that does not obfuscate the absolute unity of God. In order to understand the change that will affect time after the resurrection, one has to return to Rashaz's functional definition of time as primarily a measure of the flow back and forth [*ratso va-shov*] of the life-giving energy,¹⁹⁷ and of history as the process of gradual purification of worlds in preparation for the overflow of divinity. In the future-to-come, when the process of purification is completed, the limitation of materiality will be overturned and there will be no further need for the mode of *ratso*. Consequently, the redeemed world will be the world of the overflowing divine abundance in the mode of *shov*, from above to below.¹⁹⁸ If the rhythm of time in the exile has been regulated by the constant pulse of the divine energy that annihilates all existence by way of *ratso* only to re-create it by way of *shov*, then in the future-to-come, due to the abundance of the divine life-giving energy, the world will cease to vanish, however briefly, at every single moment.

Without the *ratso* mode that pushes it forward, time will effectively stop. The resurrection of the dead will mark the end and the fulfilment of cosmic history, and the world will enter “the day that is entirely Sabbath” [*yom she-kulo Shabat*] or “the day that is entirely long and entirely good” [*yom she-kulo arokh ve-khulo tov*].

The Sabbath is a rupture in the course of the week, a transcendent moment that is separated from mundane time.¹⁹⁹ It interrupts the sequence of the six working

¹⁹⁶ See MAHZ *Inyanim*, 93-4.

¹⁹⁷ See section 3.2 of chapter 1 above.

¹⁹⁸ See TO 2b-d.

¹⁹⁹ See for example MAHZ *Nevi'im* 252-4, or MAHZ *Parshiyot*, i, 296-7, where Rashaz defines the Sabbath and the delight [*oneg*] associated with it as originating above time and above the order of concatenation. He reads the following verse literally: “then [on the Sabbath] shalt thou delight thyself above the Lord [*al YHVH*]” [Is 58:14], taking it to mean that the delight of the Sabbath lies above the Tetragrammaton, which comprises all three dimensions of time in the, past, present and future tense of the Hebrew verb to be.

days and elevates the sparks that have been purified during the week to their supernal source; the influx of divine energy flowing to the worlds during the six days of the week returns to its infinite source, and all the lower worlds experience a moment of eternity by being elevated to the *sefirah* of *Keter*, which lies above time.²⁰⁰ But when the Sabbath ends, the worlds descend and time is recreated anew.²⁰¹ Now, the supernal Sabbath, or “the day that is entirely Sabbath,” follows the same pattern, as it marks the conclusion of the work of purification performed during the days of the exile, and the supernal delight of the upper Sabbath is the source of the delight experienced on each and every Sabbath day throughout history.²⁰² In the era of redemption, the world will return to its source within *Keter* – the transcendent attribute of God’s will and His delight.²⁰³

In some cases Rashaz presents circumcision day as an alternative paradigm of the redemption, “the day that is entirely long and entirely good.” He interprets circumcision, which marks the covenant between Abraham and God, as the disclosure of Israel that conditions full receipt of the divine revelation in the world. He also sees it a more important rite than the Sabbath, for according to the Sages, “circumcision and all its preliminaries takes precedence over the Sabbath.”²⁰⁴ The delight of the Sabbath, which comes from above, is still somehow dependent on the preparatory work done during the six days of the week. By contrast, as a process that takes place within the divine realm, removing all the obstacles that prevent the full revelation of God, circumcision is a free gift “from above,” which is independent of any activity carried out in the lower realms.²⁰⁵ Moreover, circumcision is performed on the eighth day, and thus it supersedes the Sabbath, which is the seventh day.²⁰⁶ The number eight also symbolises the Messiah inasmuch as it comprises the number

²⁰⁰ See for example TO 10a; LT *Shir ha-shirim* 32a; *Seder tefilot* 169a-174a.

²⁰¹ See for example LT *Shir ha-shirim* 25a,

²⁰² See *Seder tefilot* 139c; TO 8c.

²⁰³ On the idea of delight, see Idel, “Ta’anug.”

²⁰⁴ *bShabat* 131b; see *Seder tefilot*, 139a, 141b.

²⁰⁵ On “circumcision from above” as “arousal from above” without prior arousal from below, see LT *Tazri’a’* 21a.

²⁰⁶ See *Seder tefilot*, 139a.

seven of the Sabbath day, representing holiness, and the additional number one, representing the freedom it brings.²⁰⁷

The eschatological circumcision “from above” will come to pass only after the fulfilment of the whole Torah and the ingathering of the exiles.²⁰⁸ Its description is based on the Biblical account of Abraham’s circumcision:

Abraham merited the disclosure of the mode of “and the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart” [Dt 30:6], and therefore Scripture said: “was Abraham circumcised,” [Gn 17:26] etc. And this is the meaning of [the beginning of the same verse], “in the selfsame day was [Abraham] circumcised”, that is to say, in the essence of that day, and that day is the day that is entirely long and entirely good, etc. And the essence of that day is the disclosure that will come to pass in the future-to-come, the disclosure of “thy great goodness” [Ps 31:19, 145:7].²⁰⁹

The passive voice used by the Biblical author in the verse “In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised” [Gn 17:26] indicates to Rashaz that Abraham’s circumcision was not merely a rite that he performed upon himself, but rather an act initiated entirely by God and conducted “from above to below,” as a result of which his heart was circumcised.²¹⁰ The emphasis in the verse on “the selfsame day” [*be-‘etsem ha-yom ha-zeh*] alludes, in Rashaz’s view, to the essence [*be-‘atsmiyut*] of the final redemption, which was revealed to Abraham on that occasion; thus his circumcision

²⁰⁷ See LT *Tazri’a* 21d, based on Bahya bar Asher *Midrash Rabenu Bahya*, Naso, 4:47; *Bamidbar rabah* 15:11.

²⁰⁸ See TO 13c.

²⁰⁹ TO 13d [Appendix 20], discussed in Wolfson, *Alef Mem Tau*, 113-15.

²¹⁰ See also T4, 4:105a-b, where Rashaz compares the two stages of circumcision, *milah* and *peri’ah*, to circumcision as performed respectively by man (from below) and by God in the messianic era (from above). *Milah* stands for contemplation, in which the individual casts off all his worldly concerns and strives to understand and know God; *peri’ah* stands for God’s response to man’s contemplation, whereby He uncovers the innermost part of man’s heart, ceases to be an object of man’s contemplation, and becomes “literally your whole life” beyond discursive comprehension. This spiritual transformation, achievement by the individual’s worship of God will become a collective experience in the messianic era, “when *da’at* is diverted” (T4, 4:105b). On individual worship that transcends *da’at*, see section 1.5 above.

and its theosophic consequences prefigured the final redemption. On the eighth day of the redemption, the divine abundance and all its goodness will be revealed in full (hence: “entirely good”), with no hindrances, equally everywhere, both above and below.²¹¹ Here too, Rashaz’s concept of time gives away its functional character of a measure of the flow of the divine light, which at the end of days will radiate equally everywhere, filling the entire cosmos and turning it into the everlasting divine day.

3. Conclusions.

The chapter explored the eschatological ideas that feature in Rashaz’s teachings. Not unlike the earlier rabbinic sources, Rashaz often fails to distinguish clearly between various traditional eschatological concepts. However, some of his teachings that deal with practical issues related to the redeemed future make it possible to distinguish the messianic era from the subsequent era of the resurrection. The messianic era is a transitional stage between exile and redemption, in which the world moves along its customary lines, and Jewish law is as much in force as in the time of exile, but the Jews are no longer subjugated to the power of other nations and are free to perform all the commandments and to study the deepest layers of the Torah. Following the resurrection, the sublimated revived bodies receive the full revelation of the divine light and experience the supernal divine delight. The sublimation of bodies is a part of the transformation and purification of the world, as a result of which materiality is sublimated and no longer obfuscates the divine light as it did during the exile. Rather, it becomes a perfect vehicle for the full revelation of the light. Rashaz’s concept of the redemption involves also the non-Jews, who – purified by Israel in the time of exile – will be resurrected thanks to the the surplus of the divine light.

Rashaz’s teachings do not convey a sense of acute messianism, such as has been present in the teachings of the 20th-century Habad leaders. They display no urgent expectation either of the imminent, abrupt and apocalyptic end of the world or of the immediate advent of the Messiah. On the contrary, the Messiah seems to play no part in the process that culminates in the redemption but acquires a significant

²¹¹ See TO 18d.

role only as leader of the liberated Jewish people in the redeemed Land of Israel. And yet the redemption is a tangible reality for Rashaz. He is convinced that the world stands on the threshold of redemption, a situation to which he refers as being the generation of the “footsteps of the Messiah.” This generation has already lasted for hundreds of years, but it may nevertheless complete the task of purifying the world at any moment now, and thus finally bring about the messianic era. Moreover, even in exile, the individual can reach the divine by way of personal redemption. As repentance, according to Rashaz, is above temporal limitations, it can redeem the individual, and indeed, the whole world, at anytime.

The exilic world is a world of confusion, as opposed to the redeemed world, in which the hierarchy of beings is fixed. This worldly confusion has both negative and positive aspects, e.g. the enslavement of the Jews by the nations on the one hand, and the possibility of repentance and self-improvement, on the other. The process of the soul’s purification does not end with death, which is followed by the purifying torments of *Gehinom* or the “hollow of the sling.” Only then does the soul ascend through the numerous Gardens of Eden, constantly uncovering new aspects of the light of the *Shekhinah*. In the redeemed world, however, after the resurrection of the sublimated bodies, not only the radiance specifically of the *Shekhinah* but the whole divine light of *Ein Sof* will be fully revealed, which would mark the end of the process of the souls’ ascension. In the perfected world following the resurrection, the constant rhythm of the divine light’s descent and withdrawal will cease, as the overflow of light will be never-ending. Time, which measures the pulse of the divine light, will come to a complete halt in the everlasting Sabbath – the holy day that transcends mundane time, or on the eighth day of circumcision, that day that is “entirely good.”

CHAPTER 4

1. Setting Times for Torah Study

There seems to be a scholarly consensus that Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi broke new ground by making esoteric lore meaningful and inspirational to broad circles of his followers.¹ The innovative path of the founder of Habad had already been acknowledged by many of his contemporaries: on the one hand masses of followers flocked to his court,² while on the other hand, many responded with fierce criticism. A wave of criticism was prompted by the publication in 1796 of *Sefer ha-Tanya*, perceived as a far too radical attempt to open up hasidic experience to nonpneumatic individuals. Rashaz's opponents among hasidic Jews were displeased by the fact that *Tanya* enfolded hasidic concepts in Lurianic garb and so made them intelligible and meaningful to broader, supposedly unworthy, audiences.³ Additionally, in his teachings Rashaz invested common experiences and the precepts of normative, nonmystical Judaism with mystical meanings, and thus proposed a new, inclusive

¹ On the communicative aspect of Hasidism in general and Habad in particular, see Loewenthal, *Communicating*, 3-4; see also Elijah, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 21-22.

² Nahman of Bratslav is reported to have said of Rashaz that his following numbered eighty thousand Hasidim. See Rapoport-Albert, "Hasidism," 117. The problem of dealing with the masses that reached Rashaz's court led to the so-called "Liozna Ordinances" [*Takanot de-Lozni*], aiming to restrict access to the court and the rebbe. See Hillman, *Igerot Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 58-70, and Etkes, *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 70-80; idem, "Darko shel R. Shneur Zalman," 334-341.

³ For the famous letter by Avraham of Kalisk criticising Rashaz's attempt to popularize the esoteric, see Hillman, *Igerot Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 105-07, discussed in Loewenthal, *Communicating*, 51-52; Elijah, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 21; eadem, "Vikuah Minsk," 193-96; Etkes, "Darko shel R. Shneur Zalman," 343; idem, *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 317-29. According to Habad hagiography, the conflict between Rashaz and other hasidic masters about the idea of communicating the esoteric to the masses can be traced back to the time when Rashaz was still a student of the Great Maggid. One should keep in mind, however, that Habad stories transmitted by the sixth leader of the movement, Rabbi Yosef Yitshak Schneersohn, in which Rashaz defends the idea of teaching the esoteric against the criticism of Rabbi Pinhas of Korets, were aimed to present the Habad communication ethos as the genuine expression of the teachings of Dov Ber of Mezeritch and the Ba'al Shem Tov, and can hardly be seen as a historical source. See *Ha-tamim* 2 (1936): 49, and 8 (1938): 50-1, and Glitzenstein, *Sefer ha-toledot*, 29-30. On Habad historiography originating in Yosef Yitshak Schneersohn, see Rapoport-Albert, "Hagiography," 154-55.

concept of mystical experience. The reinterpretation of the precept of setting times for Torah study [*kevi'at 'itim la-Torah*] in Rashaz's writings was one of the factors that greatly contributed to the re-evaluation of the role of ordinary people in religious life, and to shaping Habad's inclusivist vision of mysticism.

2. Setting time for Torah study in *halakhah*.

2.1. In pre-hasidic halakha.

The origins of the precept of setting times for Torah study can be traced back to a talmudic saying attributed to Rava. According to Rava, when a person is judged in the next world, the second question the heavenly court asks him is if he had set times for Torah study [*kavata 'itim la-Torah?*].⁴ Commenting on this passage, Rashi observes that the basis of setting times for Torah is practical. A person ought to divide his time between Torah study and his mundane occupation [*derekh erets*]; fixing times for Torah study is intended to establish a balance between these two. On the one hand, one should not entirely neglect his worldly responsibilities for the sake of Torah study; on the other hand, one can easily become engrossed in worldly matters and shun his religious obligations. Accordingly, allotting a certain time of the day solely to the purpose of study is regarded a simple technique that makes it possible to integrate Torah learning into the daily routine and preserve one from transgressing the commandment of Torah study.⁵

Medieval commentators followed Rashi's view on fixing time for Torah study as a means to fulfilling a *mitsvah* rather than a *mitsvah* in its own right, and did not count it as one of the 613 commandments. For example, both the author of *Sefer ha-hinukh* and Maimonides considered fixing times for Torah study a procedure which makes the commandment of Torah study accessible to everyone, including the less gifted and the busiest of men: married men and bachelors, the rich and the poor, the healthy and the sick alike. Although the commentators did not dwell upon the technicalities of *kevi'at 'itim la-Torah*, they read it as an obligation to study Torah

⁴ *bShabat* 31a. The first question concerns business ethics.

⁵ "If there is no *derekh erets*, there is no Torah." Rashi to *bShabat* 31a, quoting *mAvot* 3:17.

day and night in order to fulfil the biblical obligation “This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night” [Jo 1:8].⁶ Some of the rabbis attached particular significance to the fact that the Talmud uses the plural form of the noun “time” [*itim*], and perceived it as an implicit obligation to set at least two times for study, one during the day and one during the night.⁷ Additionally, the main codices of Jewish law determined the time just after the morning prayers to be appropriate for the daily fixed time of study.⁸

2.2 In Rashaz’s halakhic writings.

Ideas outlined by the medieval halakhists are fostered by Rashaz in *Hilekhot talmud Torah* – one of his few books published during his lifetime, and the first attempt since Maimonides’s *Mishneh Torah* to provide an extensive and original treatment of the subject of Torah study.⁹ Just like the aforementioned halakhists, Rashaz juxtaposes setting times for study with full-time learning. In Rashaz’s view, one should strive to learn the whole of the Oral Torah, and in order to do so, one should devote one’s entire time to study. But if this were not possible, one is obliged by the Torah to allot “a significant portion of time [*et gedolah*] to Torah learning,” defined by Rashaz as at least half a day, in addition to night-time study. Rashaz explains, referring to the Talmud [*bYoma 19b*], that in order to fulfil the biblical command: “And thou shalt talk of them” [Dt 6:7], one should “Make his Torah [study] perpetual and his occupation - casual” [*Torato keva’ u-melakhto ‘ara’i*]. The opposite situation – occasional study and permanent work—makes studies futile: one

⁶ *Sefer ha-hinukh*, 419; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilekhot talmud Torah*, 1.8.

⁷ Shmuel Eidels (Maharsha), *Hidushei agadot*, 18b to *bShabat 31a*: “And he said: did you fix times [for study]? Two times: one during the day and one during the night.” See also Horovits, *Shenei luhot ha-berit*, *Masekhet shavu‘ot, ner mitsvah*, 11: “*Itim* in the plural, because one should set as many times as possible, whenever he is free from his occupation.”

⁸ Ya‘akov Ben Asher, *Arba‘ah turim: Orah hayim*, par. 155; Karo, *Shulhan ‘arukh*, *Orah hayim*, par. 155; for the talmudic source informing the codices, see *bBerakhot 64a*.

⁹ See Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 137.

ends up forgetting what one has learned before managing to memorize the entire Oral Torah.¹⁰

Rashaz was aware of the fact that to devote most of one's day and night to study was an ideal that not many could realize. He maintained, rather pragmatically, that only a scholar [*talmid hakham*] who has prior experience of study, or someone who has a "fine mind" [*she-da'ato yafah*], which renders him capable of becoming a scholar in the future, could make Torah study his permanent occupation. In every other case, to sacrifice most of one's time to learning would be pointless, as such a person's lack of disposition would prevent him from grasping the entire Torah, no matter how much time he would be able to invest in study. Therefore, full-time Torah study was an occupation restricted to the intellectual elite.

Such an elitist approach to full-time study should not be read as the relegation of Torah learning to a secondary role in divine worship, as has been argued by Norman Lamm;¹¹ on the contrary, Rashaz held Torah study in very high esteem.¹² Instead, his approach should be viewed as pragmatic: even though the religious ideal dictated that everyone should master the entire Torah, reality showed that only a few gifted individuals were predestined to do so, while the vast majority of the Jewish people were doomed to remain "ignoramuses" [*burim*] as a result of their limited intellectual disposition.¹³ The term *bur*, used by Rashaz to denote the unscholarly class, may be misleading, as in this context, it refers to people who study the Torah yet do not stand up to the very high standards of *talmid hakham*. These standards include the ability to memorise the entire Oral Torah¹⁴ and to master the "rationales and sources of the commandments" [*ta'amei ha-halakhot u-mekoran*].¹⁵

¹⁰ HTT 3:2, 846a.

¹¹ Lamm, *Torah Lishmah*, 152.

¹² For arguments in favor of the centrality of Torah study in Rashaz's doctrine, see Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 137-39.

¹³ Rashaz refers to *Kohelet rabah* 7:28 on Ecclesiastes 7:28 to illustrate the relation between these two groups: "One man among a thousand have I found. Usually if a thousand men take up the study of Scripture, a hundred of them proceed to the study of Mishnah, ten to Talmud, and one of them becomes qualified to decide questions of law" [Appendix 1]; HTT 3:4, 846b-847a.

¹⁴ HTT 3:1, 841a.

¹⁵ HTT 3:4, 446b.

As a result of setting such high standards, Rashaz sometimes counted among the *burim* even people who had mastered the Pentateuch and the Mishnah but had not been trained in the Talmud.¹⁶ For this reason, *bur* in this context should not be understood as a pejorative reference to those who are actually ignorant,¹⁷ but rather as a loosely defined term that covers a broad range of people who do not fall into the category of scholars. For this class of people Torah study still plays a highly important role in religious life, but this is based on setting special times for study as opposed to full-time study, and on being orientated towards the practical laws as opposed to aiming at a comprehensive knowledge of the entire Torah.¹⁸

Consequently, Rashaz's *halakhah* delineates a community of Torah students who are divided into two groups: scholars and ordinary men.¹⁹ Both these groups

¹⁶ See HTT, *Kuntres aharon*, 3:1, 844a; *Ma'amar "Perek ehad shaharit,"* in Ashkenazi, *Hilekhot talmud Torah*, 5:621, and in Mondshine, *Migdal 'oz*, 5.

¹⁷ See Ashkenazi, *Hilekhot talmud Torah*, 5:102.

¹⁸ Rashaz referred to his Hasidim as "learned" [*yod'ei sefer*], a category that covers a wide range of literacy levels falling short of the elitist status of scholar [*talmid hakham*]. His Hasidim were conversant with rabbinic literature (see for example Rashaz's epistle on the yearly cycle of Talmud study in congregations of his followers in T4, 1:102a-103a), and capable of following his mystical sermons, transcribing and distributing them in manuscript form, and reading as well as understanding the *Tanya* – either on their own or with the help of prominent Hasidim who functioned as local leaders (see T1, *Hakdamah*, 4a). The classification of the vast majority of Rashaz's Hasidim who set times for Torah study as non-scholars certainly does not imply that they were ignorant; it simply aims to distinguish them from the scholarly elite [*talmidei hakhamim*], who were free to study Torah continuously and capable of learning and remembering it accurately. On the high standard of Torah education among Rashaz's followers, see Etkes, *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 168, 186-87; idem., "Darko shel R. Shneur Zalman," 349, 352-53.

¹⁹ The distinction between the elite and the common people is addressed in Rashaz's writings in various ways. Two such distinctions occur in both his sermons and his halakhic writings. The first one, which is focused on their Torah knowledge and position in society, is between scholars [*talmidei hakhamim*] and nonscholars such as businessmen – *ba'alei 'asakim*, householders – *ba'alei batim*, and those who perform commandments – *ba'alei mitsvot*. The second one distinguishes between penitents [*ba'alei teshuvah*] and righteous men [*tsadikim*] in terms of their relation to God: the latter are permanently united with God, while the former may return to God from their secular activities by means of ritual. Several sources indicate that these two distinctions are synonymous. See for example the excerpt from LT *Shir ha-shirim* 44d-45a, discussed below. Finally, in the first part of *Tanya*, Rashaz introduces the distinction between the intermediate and the righteous person (*beinoni* and

have certain obligations, which are determined by different criteria.²⁰ The scholars are obliged to study full-time at all costs, even if this compels them to live in poverty and destitution, whereas the laymen should not risk poverty but rather engage in full-time mundane occupations. For the latter group Rashaz prescribed setting limited times for study every day and night as a way of fulfilling the commandment of *talmud Torah*.²¹ Moreover, in particularly difficult circumstances, their study may be further limited to one chapter in the morning and one in the evening. And if someone is compelled to work the whole day, he may fulfill his obligation of Torah study by merely reciting the *Shema* during the morning and evening prayers.²²

The distinction and different obligations that follow are based on Rashaz's understanding of the commandment of Torah study. In his collection of the laws of Torah study, he pointed out two substrates of the commandment:²³ the commandment of knowing the Torah [*mitsvat yedi'at ha-Torah*]²⁴ and the commandment of "Thou shalt meditate therein day and night" [*ve-hagita bo yomam*

tsadik), namely, between two ethical paradigms. The *beinoni* has the potential to sin, yet he always manages to suppress his urge to do so, whereas the *tsadik* not only never sins, but is also able to transform evil into good. While the level of *tsadik* is attainable by a very small group of saintly individuals (if it is attainable at all – see LT *Tazri'a* 22b), the level of *beinoni* seems to be designed to be the ethical ideal of Rashaz's followers, who were predominantly householders and businessmen (see Etkes, "Darko shel R. Shneur Zalman," 353; idem *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 168). On the problem of transposing the categories of *beinoni* and *tsadik* from *Tanya* to the sermons, see Moshe Hallamish, "Yahasei tsadik ve-'edah," 90; Dan and Tishby, "Torat ha-hasidut," 792-93. See also Etkes, *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 208, where he resolves this problem by defining the categories from *Tanya* as abstract ideals, which the Hasidim should strive to achieve, and the categories prevalent in the sermons as descriptions of real-life people that emerged from Rashaz's direct contacts with his followers.

²⁰ The importance of such a stratification of the Jewish community in Habad ideology is evident in a letter written by the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Yosef Yitshak Schneersohn, in 1932, in which he emphasizes the traditional difference between businessmen [*ba'alei 'asakim*], including those who spend a good deal of time on study, and scholars [*yoshvei ohel*], sharply criticizing the modern idea that "everyone should be equal" as wasteful [*mevaleh*] and destructive [*mekhaleh*]. See his introduction to Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, *Kuntres 'ets ha-hayim*, 7.

²¹ HTT 3:4, 847a.

²² HTT 3:4, based on *bMenahot*, 99b.

²³ HTT, *Kuntres aharon*, 3:1, 843b.

²⁴ On the novelty of this notion, see Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 138-140.

va-lailah, Jo 1:8].²⁵ These two components are interrelated. On the one hand, despite the apparent superiority of *mitsvat yedi'at ha-Torah* over *ve-hagita*,²⁶ achieving the former does not exempt one from the latter. On the other hand, the inability to achieve the former does not amount to transgressing the commandment of Torah study; in this case, the focal point is moved to the latter part of the commandment [*ve-hagita bo*], which is fulfilled by setting special times for Torah study, while the criterion for fulfilling the commandment of knowing the Torah is relativized, to adjust to individual intellectual dispositions. Therefore, a layman still ought to fulfil the obligation of knowing the Torah, but in his case, this means that he should “grasp and comprehend as much as it is possible for his soul to grasp from the knowledge of the Torah [*yedi'at ha-Torah*].”²⁷ Moreover, the commandment of “Thou shalt meditate therein day and night” obliges the unscholarly to invest every moment free of work in Torah study, as anything else is considered by Rashaz as “idle chatter” [*devarim betelim*].²⁸ Similarly, Rashaz prohibits studying gentile wisdom on the grounds of the sin of neglecting the Torah [*avon bitul Torah*], permitting only the scholars [*talmidei hakhamim*] to learn it occasionally, for the sake of divine service.²⁹

Rashaz's pragmatism is conspicuous in further concessions, as regards Torah study, that he was willing to grant those who were particularly troubled. Perhaps in

²⁵ An analogous typology appears in MAHZ 5562, i, 182-3, where Rashaz lists two *mitsvot* included in the Torah: reasoning and study [*higayon ve-iyun*], and reading out loud [*keri'ah be-dibur*]; see also Hallamish, “Mishnato ha-iyunit,” 276 n. 7.

²⁶ HTT, *Kuntres aharon*, 3:1, 843c. However, in TO 108d-109a, Rashaz dismisses this view and presents the verbal articulation of Torah as superior to comprehension, for through “speech” of Torah one draws down *Keter* (divine nothingness and the source of *Hokhmah*) into *Malkhut* (speech) and achieves self-nullification. On the mystical re-evaluation of Torah study by laymen, see below.

²⁷ HTT 1:4, 831b-832a. Elsewhere Rashaz presents knowledge of Torah in general as a regulative idea rather than something that anyone could really achieve, given the infinity of the Torah: “No one can reach the end of the Torah [*takhlit ha-Torah*], which in itself does not have an end or limit.” Even if someone would memorize the entire corpus of Written and Oral Torah, he should continue with learning its possible interpretations. See HTT 2:5, 835a.

²⁸ HTT 3:6, 847b-848a; T1, 8:13a.

²⁹ HTT 3:7, 848a. See also T1, 8:13b, where Rashaz brings the examples of Maimonides and Nahmanides, who studied gentile wisdom in order to use it in the service of God.

response to the social and economic hardships experienced by his followers,³⁰ he expanded the scope of the circumstances in which fulfillment of the obligation of Torah study might be limited to two chapters a day or even merely to the recitation of the *Shema*. Not only the sick and the elderly, whose poor health makes lengthy periods of study impossible, but even scholars, when occasionally burdened by work necessary to secure their livelihood, should set special times for study.³¹ This last leniency, however, refers specifically to unplanned situations and does not stand in contradiction to the earlier obligation to suffer deprivation rather than give up on the commitment to full-time study. Interestingly, Rashaz imposes the obligation of full-time study on everyone who is sustained by others or lives off charity, regardless of his intellectual skills. Although in certain conditions one can limit study to allow time for work, people who live off charity and do not work at all should spend their time on study and on nothing else, even if their capabilities prevent them from mastering the Torah.³² However, their obligation to study permanently is not bound by the commandment of knowing the Torah [*mitsvat yedi 'at ha-Torah*], but rather by the commandment “Thou shalt meditate therein day and night” [*ve-hagita bo yomam va-lailah*] literally [*ke-mishma 'o*].³³ In addition to obligating individuals to study at set times, Rashaz obligated entire communities to study the whole of the Talmud every year, by apportioning the tractates among the congregants.³⁴

³⁰ In letters sent to his followers, Rashaz acknowledges their worsening economic situation. See for example T4, 16:124a-b; Hillman, *Igerot Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 32, 94, and 320, where Dov Ber, Rashaz's son, notes that not even the most gifted and intelligent young men are being spared the toil of trade, and he fears that before long, they would forget everything that they had learned. Similarly, according to the Habad chronicler Hayim Meir Heilman, Rashaz began working on his *Shulhan 'arukh* in order to ensure that his contemporaries would be able to learn all 613 commandments despite the economic situation which deprived them of the time necessary for deep halakhic studies. See Heilman, *Bet rabi*, 3b. See also Hallamish, “Mishnato ha-'iyunit,” 309, where Rashaz's affirmative attitude toward tradesmen among his followers is said to have been motivated by his compassion [*salhanut*] and understanding of the circumstances in which they lived.

³¹ HTT 3:4, 847b.

³² HTT 3:5, 847b.

³³ *Shulhan 'arukh Rabenu ha-Zaken*, Orah hayim, Seder masa u-matan, par. 156.

³⁴ T1, 4:102a; T5, 163a.

The distinction between *mitsvat yedi'at ha-Torah* and *hagita bo* in Rashaz's halakhic works effectively identifies two parallel modes of Torah study: elitist and egalitarian. The former, available to the few, is based on continuous study with the purpose of memorizing the entire Torah. The latter, intended for the majority, is based on limited study sessions, focused on the laws that govern proper conduct.³⁵ The majority is not obliged to comprehend the entire Torah; the criterion for determining whether they have fulfilled the commandment of knowing the Torah [*mitsvat yedi'at ha-Torah*] depends on their particular intellectual disposition. The main focus of their study is on the second part of the commandment of Torah study: "Thou shalt meditate therein day and night" [*ve-hagita bo yomam va-lailah*], which means reciting the Torah twice a day at fixed times.³⁶ Following the main codices of the Law, Rashaz identified the time immediately after prayer as being the most appropriate for a fixed period of study.³⁷

³⁵ HTT 3:4, 847a.

³⁶ The distinction between these two modes of Torah study is rendered in Rashaz's mystical writings as a distinction between two types of souls: the souls of scholars [*talmidei hakhamim*] and the souls of those who perform the commandments [*ba'alei mitsvot*]. The former are committed to full-time study, the latter devote a limited time to learning, but make up for this by performing other commandments, especially charity (T4, 5:109a; LT *Ha'azinu* 74b; see also Lamm, *Torah Lishmah*, 149-50). The scholars' souls derive from limitless *Hesed*, whereas the souls of *ba'alei mitsvot* derive from the constraining *Gevurah*, which is the reason for the precept of fixing limited times for study. However, in Rashaz's doctrine, every Jew contains both traits, which in practical terms means that *ba'alei mitsvot* should complement their constrained Torah study with generous charity (T4, 13:119a). This charity should facilitate Torah study by scholars and credit the donor "as if he truly studied himself" (HTT 3:4, 847a). See also Ornet, *Ratso va-shov*, 181-2 on the two types of souls, those of scholars and businessman, and their respective obligations in relation to the biblical distinction between the tribes of Issachar, predestined to study the Torah, and Zebulun, commanded to support the Issacharites. On Issachar and Zebulun in rabbinic literature and Hasidism, see S. D. Breslauer, "Zebulun and Issachar."

³⁷ *Shulhan 'arukh Rabenu ha-Zaken*, Orah hayim, Hilekhot talmud Torah, par. 150.

3. Setting time for Torah study in Rashaz's mystical teachings.

This discussion of the mystical aspects of Torah study at set times aims to reintroduce the worldly aspect of Rashaz's doctrine into the scholarly Habad discourse. Admittedly, the quest for transcendence is of paramount importance in early Habad, but it is crucial to keep in mind that Rashaz was the leader of a broad community of Hasidim who were fully engaged with the world rather than a secluded group of mystics and pneumatics. His hasidic leadership was not limited to the delivery of mystical sermons but comprised a good deal of halakhic teachings, too. It is not surprising, therefore, that the endeavour to incorporate ordinary householders in the hasidic experience he offered constituted an important aspect of his project. For the majority of his followers, the opportunity to find God within their mundane existence must have been much more compelling than a highly abstract and sophisticated quest for transcendence. Placing the routine of Torah study at set times within a mystical framework was an expression of the worldly and practical dimension of the early Habad doctrine, and one of the ways by which Rashaz injected hasidic spirituality into the everyday religious experiences of his followers.

3.1 Setting time for Torah study as repentance.

One of the reasons why the halakhists embraced the obligation of setting times for study was to incorporate Torah learning into a daily routine. Allotting times for study was meant to prevent neglect of the commandment to study twice a day under the pressures of everyday life.³⁸ However, in one of his discourses, Rashaz presented this ostensibly commonsensical idea as underlying his mystical concept of repentance [*teshuvah*]. In Habad tradition, setting times for Torah study is related to repentance in nonmystical ways, too, as the praxis that helps to keep away from sin;³⁹ here, however, Rashaz explored the literal meaning of the Hebrew word for

³⁸ *Shulhan 'arukh Rabenu ha-Zaken*, Orah hayim, Hilekhot talmud Torah, par. 1.

³⁹ See for example Dov Ber Shneuri, *Pokeah 'ivrim*, 54.

repentance⁴⁰ in order to present setting times for study as an actual act of return to God from profanity and mundaneness:

When businessmen [*ba'alei 'asakim*], who are not always for God but only sets [sic!] times for Torah study, returns from dealing with mundane affairs to learning, then this is called repentance [*teshuvah*], for he returns [*shav*] from what he was dealing with at first, etc. In this way ecstasy [*hitpa'alut*] becomes more intensive than if he had not been dealing with worldly matters at first [...] for ecstasy is an essential change [*shinui mahut*] [...]. Ecstasy comes about because his essence has changed, from dealing with worldly matters to being a Torah student [...]. Scripture says: “According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things” [Mi 7:15], namely, like at the Giving of the Torah [*matan Torah*], as Scripture says: “The Lord spoke face to face” [Dt 5:4]. The disclosure of God below is in the aspect of “face,” for the prior concealment of the face [*hester panim*] during the 212 years of the exile in Egypt was necessary so that later, “face to face” would be possible.⁴¹

This excerpt encapsulates several ideas that recur throughout Rashaz’s writings and here are intertwined into the praxis of setting times for Torah study and the concept of repentance. The concept of repentance presented above seems to lack an element that is usually perceived as its condition sine qua non – the commitment of a sin.⁴² Here, the tradesmen are not sinners; they do not transgress Jewish law, and yet everyday matters separate them from God. For them, the setting of times for Torah study, defined by the *halakhah* as the absolute minimum required for observing the law of Torah study, becomes both a vehicle for the return to the divine and an inner transformation.⁴³ The latter is tantamount to a transformation of the attributes [*midot*]

⁴⁰ *Teshuvah* literally means “return.”

⁴¹ LT *Shir ha-shirim* 44d-45a [Appendix 2].

⁴² LT *Shir ha-shirim* 75a; on repentance which is not related to sins, see TO 74a; LT *Re'eh* 24d, 33a, *Nitsavim* 48d, *Rosh ha-shanah* 60d, *Shabat shuvah* 65c, 66c, *Ha'azinu* 77b, *Shir ha-shirim* 44d; MAHZ 5565, i, 493-94; 5572, 5; *Seder tefilot*, 226a.

⁴³ Although in several discourses (MAHZ 5571, 84, 92, 106, 119) Rashaz mentions people who are completely “unable to study and to fix times,” and for that reason their worship is based exclusively

through redirecting them from mundane desires to the desire for God. This process, which entails a pivotal change of self, demands the eradication of one's interests in this world by way of complete nullification [*bitul amiti*], drawn from the "Kindnesses of the Father" [*hasadim de-aba*], a place that is beyond the reach of the "external" [evil] forces [*hitsoniyut*]. In this description, setting times for Torah study, a routine ritual demanding no special intellectual or spiritual abilities, proves to have an advantage over permanent studies, which allow one to reach only the "Kindnesses of the Mother" [*hasadim de-ima*], a divine aspect that lies below the "Kindnesses of the Father."⁴⁴

In the idea that by means of setting times for Torah study, one can prepare oneself for the experience of a personal Exodus and the Giving of the Torah, one can discern echoes of the commandment to remember the Exodus everyday,⁴⁵ and the talmudic dictum that everyone should see himself as if he had personally come out of Egypt [*bPesachim 116b*]. In Rashaz's doctrine, however, the ritual of remembrance becomes an actual act of personal redemption. When ordinary people turn their mind away from mundane affairs to delve into the Torah, they actually go forth out of Egypt [*Mitsrayim*], which was decoded by Rashaz as the "boundaries and limits" [*metsarim u-gevulim*]⁴⁶ of materiality and finitude. They thereby reconnect themselves to the spiritual and infinite divine.⁴⁷ Indeed, routine study twice a day becomes the personal experience of the Giving of the Torah [*matan Torah*], during

on good deeds, one can surmise that they are still obliged to recite the *Shema*, which in certain circumstances is considered Torah study, too.

⁴⁴ MAHZ 5565, ii, 873. "Father" and "Mother" are two *partzufim* which refer to the *sefirot Hokhmah* and *Binah*, the sources, respectively, of unbounded *Hesed* (Kindness) and constricted *Din* (Judgement); one who is engrossed in worldly affairs and studies at set times needs to dissolve himself in the unbounded Divine Wisdom in order to arouse in himself love of God, whereas a full-time Torah student is able to find the love of God by means of contemplation (*hitbonenut* – a term deriving from *binah*) of the Godliness within the constrictions of the world. For the Lurianic doctrine of *partzufim*, see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 140-44. For the source of the notions of "Kindnesses of Father" and "Kindnesses of Mother," see Vital, *Ets hayim*, Sha'ar ha-kelalim, chapters 10, 15-6.

⁴⁵ Rashi to *bBerakhot* 21a.

⁴⁶ See for example TO 64b-d, 67b, 102a; LT *Tsav* 13c, 18a, *Shelah* 48c, 50c-d, 51b, *Mas'ei* 96b. See also section 3.2 of the chapter 2 above.

⁴⁷ LT *Sukot* 81a.

which God reveals himself to the student in the recited words of *halakhah* “face to face,” as to Moses on Mt. Sinai. Hence, Rashaz re-evaluates the seemingly routine ritual of studying Torah at fixed times, and endows it with profound mystical implications by inscribing it into his concept of repentance.

The excerpt above reveals an ostensibly paradoxical feature of Rashaz’s thought: he seems to value study at fixed times by ordinary people more than continuous study by full-time scholars. This seemingly contradictory approach is based on an appreciation of the transformative aspect of *kevi‘at ‘itim la-Torah*, and of the much greater effort a simpleton must make to direct himself to God than the effort required of a Torah scholar.⁴⁸ According to Rashaz, a merchant who returns to the Torah at fixed times attains a higher level of ecstasy [*hitpa‘alut*] than someone who has been studying continuously. The meaning of *hitpa‘alut*, one of the prevalent terms in Rashaz’s writings, remained a matter of dispute in later generations of Habad.⁴⁹ In this context, it is defined in ontological rather than psychological terms, as an essential change [*shinui ha-mahut*] in a person, which need not be accompanied by an emotional outburst.⁵⁰ The transformative aspect of setting times for Torah is emphasized elsewhere, this time without reference to the psychological factors mentioned above:

⁴⁸ Elsewhere Rashaz points at another advantage of Torah studies undertaken by an ignoramus. According to him, Torah study requires ultimate attentiveness to its object, namely, that the student’s entire mind [*sekhel*] would be devoted to the Torah. A wise person, preoccupied with numerous worldly matters, may find it difficult to disengage from them and to focus entirely on the Torah, whereas the ignoramus [*‘am ha-arets*], who in fact has no mind at all, is not distracted by worldly matters when he undertakes Torah study, and from this perspective, he is paradoxically more successful in his studies than the more intellectually gifted person. See LT *Shir ha-shirim* 25d.

⁴⁹ Elior, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 191-200; eadem, *Torat ha-‘elohut*, 290-315; Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer*, 100-03; Etkes, *Ba‘al ha-Tanya*, 430-45.

⁵⁰ LT *Shir ha-shirim* 44d; see Ornet, *Ratso va-shov*, 182-3. See also: MAHZ 5565, i, 494-5, where the essential change is defined as the cause of ecstasy, and MAHZ 5565, i, 502-03, where the cause of ecstasy is the renewal [*hidush* or *hithadshut*], inherent in penitence.

This is the advantage of setting times for Torah study by a tradesman, that it is more in the nature of subjugation [*itkafya*] [of the evil side] than is [the case of] those who dwell in tents [i.e. full-time scholars].⁵¹

In the dynamic image of reality that emerges from Rashaz's writings, ordinary people, subject to the ongoing struggle with materiality, seem to be valued more than the scholars and mystics who permanently dwell in lofty spiritual realms. The gesture of the layperson who gives up some of his worldly interests in order to set times for Torah study is tantamount to the subjugation of profanity to holiness, termed in Habad "the subjugation of the evil side" [*itkafya de-sitra ahara*]. This is not the case of the full-time scholars, who are constantly joined with the divine, and who therefore do not need to make any effort to achieve the the state of subjugating the evil side and reconnecting with God.

To summarize: setting times for Torah study means return-repentance, which is tantamount to self-transformation and preparation to receive God's revelation in the words of Jewish law. Additionally, worship by means of setting times for Torah study produces a more intense state of ecstasy [*hitpa'ahut*] and is more effective at subjugating the evil side than the worship of full-time scholars by means of their constant Torah study.

3.2 *The theurgical significance of setting times for Torah study.*

Rashaz's notion of repentance is not confined to the spiritual life of the individual. Alongside its personal aspect, repentance also has a theurgical significance: it effects a restitution of order in the divine realm by way of restoring the order of the letters constituting the divine name.⁵² The personal and the theurgical aspects of repentance

⁵¹ TO 80c [Appendix 3].

⁵² "Let us begin with the *Zohar's* esoteric interpretation of *teshuvah*. [*Teshuvah*] is *tashuv he* ["the *he* is to be returned"]. [The reconnection of] the latter *he* [to the preceding letter *vav*] is *teshuvah tata'ah* ["lower-level *teshuvah*"]; [the reconnection of] the former *he* [to the precedent letter *yud*] is *teshuvah 'ila'ah* ["upper-level *teshuvah*"]. T3, 4:93b, based on Ziii 122a [Appendix 4]. The letters of the Tetragrammaton refer to different aspects of the *sefirotic* tree: *yud* to *Hokhmah*, *he* to *Binah*, *vav* to the six lower *sefirot* (*Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferet*, *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*), and the second *he* to the

converge in the commandment of setting times for Torah study. According to *Tanya*, one must overcome one's nature and join one's emotional and intellectual attributes to their counterparts within the Godhead. In particular, one's mind and speech should cleave to "God's word, namely to *halakhah*."⁵³ Overcoming one's nature also means achieving more than one was used to achieve in study, as the Midrash states: "If he was accustomed to study one page [of Written Law], let him study two; if he was accustomed to study one chapter [of Oral Law], let him study two."⁵⁴

What Rashaz presents in *Tanya* in general terms as the obligation to increase the regular measure of Torah study acquires much more concrete shape in one of his discourses, where the "two chapters" are understood as referring to the two times [*'itim*] that one must set for studying Torah: "'If one was accustomed to study one chapter, let him study two': this stands for setting times for Torah study: [two] times indeed."⁵⁵ Given that halakhic material constitutes the divine word, its study and recitation bring about the re-unification of the soul, which is the "part of God above,"⁵⁶ with the divine life-force [*hiyut*]. This is identified as a theurgical mode of repentance [*teshuvah*], through the reconnection of the letter *he* with the rest of the divine name. The theurgical process of restoring order in the divine name appears to be available to practically everyone and is actually commanded of everyone. Thus an activity, previously reserved for pneumatic figures immersed in mystical texts and practices, appears here to be open to any literate person through the routine study of normative halakhic literature.⁵⁷

This re-evaluation of the laymen's study at fixed times may seem paradoxical, given the prevalent image of Habad as an intellectualist Hasidic

lowest *sefirah Malkhut*, identified with the divine speech. See T3, 4:94b. For a scholarly discussion of this motif, see Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 133-36.

⁵³ T3, 9:98b. See also T3, 8:98b, where Rashaz presents Torah study as the "upper-level" *teshuvah*, following Ziii, 123a.

⁵⁴ *Vayikra rabah*, 25:1 [Appendix 5].

⁵⁵ MAHZ *Ketuvim*, i, 17; in a similar vein, Maharsha interprets the plural of *'itim* as referring to morning and evening study. See Eidels, *Hidushei agadot* 18b, to *bShabat* 31a.

⁵⁶ Jb 31:2. On the soul as part of God, see for example T1, 2:6a, 35:44a; TO 16a; LT *Va-yikra* 2d.

⁵⁷ On the possibility of achieving mystical union through halakhic study, see Loewenthal, "Finding the Radiance," 301-08.

school,⁵⁸ yet it is compatible with Rashaz's broader enterprise, intended to empower *ba'alei mitsvot*, the less scholarly and the supposedly lower class members of Jewish society. In numerous places throughout his writings, Rashaz cites or refers to the talmudic saying: "Where penitents [*ba'alei teshuvah*] stand, not even the perfectly righteous can stand" [*bBerakhot* 34b], and it is clear that he saw in fixing times for Torah study a mode of repentance. Setting times for study similarly serves as a means of elevating the ordinary person above the righteous and the scholarly, and of drawing attention to the more intense ecstasy [*hitpa'alut*] and greater subjugation of the evil side that the layperson can achieve.

4. The relation between Torah study at set times and full-time study.

Rashaz acknowledged that nonscholars would always constitute a substantial proportion of the Jewish community, be it because of the socioeconomic situation, the intellectual limitations of common folk, or because of their place in the hierarchy of souls. Moreover, in the *Tanya*, Rashaz stated explicitly that there was only a handful of true *tsadikim*,⁵⁹ divided from the *beinonim* by a clear-cut and nonnegotiable border.⁶⁰ He did not perceive as problematic the existence of tradesmen who were engrossed in materiality and immersed in the troubles of everyday life. On the contrary, their inferior position presented them with opportunities and tasks that the full-time scholar would never have.⁶¹ Hence setting times for Torah study can serve complementary yet different purposes from full-time Torah study; it can incorporate laymen in activities that were previously restricted to the spiritual vanguard, and can even offer them opportunities that are beyond the reach of the scholarly and pneumatic class.

⁵⁸ See for example Dubnow, *History*, 113, and Introduction, n. 7 above.

⁵⁹ T1, 10:16a

⁶⁰ See T1, 14:20a, 27:33b-34a, and Polen, "Charismatic Leader," 57-59. Rashaz, however, does not deny the possibility that by means of repentance, the wicked person [*rasha*] could be transformed into a *beinoni* or even into a *tsadik* in some particular cases, such as that of Eleazar ben Durdaya [*b'Avodah zarah* 17a] (*Seder tefilot*, 226c; LT *Aharei* 26c, *Va-ethanan* 9b, *Nitsavim* 46d, *Shemini 'atseret* 84d-85a; TO 20d; MAHZ *Razal* 106-07). See also chapter 3, note 159 above.

⁶¹ MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 119; see also Loewenthal, *Communicating*, 69.

4.1 Torah study at set times as a complement to full-time study.

In one of his late discourses, Rashaz resorts to the kabbalistic imaginary in order to express the interdependence of scholars and laymen.⁶² He takes a passage from the Song of Songs as his point of departure: “Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my bride; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one bead of thy necklace” [Sg 4:9]. In his interpretation, this passage refers to two separate groups among the Jewish people: the “eye” denotes leaders of the community, namely the scholarly elite, whereas the “bead of thy necklace” represents the laymen. Such an interpretation aims to bring to the reader’s attention the equal status granted by the biblical author to both these groups. In spite of the fact that “Ostensibly there can not be any comparison between them at all” [*li-kh’orah ein ‘arokh benehem kelal u-khelal*],⁶³ they capture the heart of the Song’s groom equally, or in other words, they are equally cherished by God. As Rashaz continues to explain, both these groups are assigned different, albeit complementary roles. The scholars, as “the eyes of the congregation,” bring down Wisdom [*Hokhmah*] from its source in direct light [*or yashar*], while the laymen respond by elevating the Torah in reflected light [*or hozer*].⁶⁴ Rashaz stresses not only two different modes of study (“drawing down” in full-time study and “elevation” when it is pursued at set times), but also two different dispositions: the scholars’ study is intellectual, for they bring down the wisdom of the Torah, whereas the power of the laymen’s Torah lies in their voice, and they draw it from their deeds. Rashaz explains that the laymen purge the husks of *nogah* by means of conducting faithful business transactions [*masa u-matan*] and achieve the state of “polished precious stones”—hence the “bead of thy necklace”— which are capable of reflecting the divine light.⁶⁵ For these reasons, ordinary men participate alongside the scholars in a theurgical act of bringing the flow of divine light and the Torah’s wisdom into the world. Through their effort to study Torah at

⁶² MAHZ 5571, 204-05.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ On Cordoverian notions of direct and reflected light see Scholem, *Major Trends*, 261-273; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 131.

⁶⁵ On extracting the sparks of holiness from the husk of *nogah*, see Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 22.

fixed times they enable the reunification of the light of the Torah with its supernal source, once it has been drawn down to the world by the scholars' study. Therefore, their Torah study at set times is perceived as a necessary element of the dynamics of the divine light, and it serves as a kind of counterbalance to the learning of Torah by the scholars.

The picture, in which ordinary people purify the material world around them, becoming a mirror that reflects the divine light encapsulated in the sound of the Torah they recite, demonstrates not only the interdependence of scholars and laymen, but also the correlation of Torah study and deeds. The excerpt cited above from MAHZ 5571 states that purification through deeds paves the way for the reunification of the Torah with its supernal source in the reflected light; yet in another discourse, the relation between deeds and Torah study appears to be reversed: setting times for Torah study actually provides strength ['oz] for purifying the sparks of holiness, which fell into the husks during the cosmic process of the breaking of vessels.⁶⁶ At this point mystical imagination intertwines with halakhic pragmatics: According to Rashaz's halakhic works, those who fix times for study should concentrate on practical laws that regulate their everyday lives and determine the way they act. Accordingly, it is precisely their *halakhah*-abiding deeds that purify the sparks of holiness entrapped in material reality. Rashaz anchors this idea in the talmudic saying: "Study is greater [than practice] for it leads to practice" [*b*Kidushin 40b], and explains: "A deed without study cannot prevail; however, study without a deed is not the essential thing [*ha-ikar*] either, for 'The essential thing is not study [*midrash*], etc. [but deed] [*m*Avot 1:17]."⁶⁷ This saying has evolved with time into one of the popular slogans of Habad-Lubavitch: "Deed is the main thing" [*ma'aseh hu ha-ikar*], while the attitude that underlies it has led some scholars to present Rashaz's doctrine as relegating Torah study to a secondary place.⁶⁸ However, both excerpts from MAHZ 5571⁶⁹ seem to prove the opposite, for

⁶⁶ MAHZ 5571, 105. On the breaking of the vessels in Lurianic Kabbalah, see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 135-40; idem, *Major Trends*, 265-68.

⁶⁷ MAHZ 5571, 105 [Appendix 6].

⁶⁸ Lamm, *Torah Lishmah*, 152.

⁶⁹ MAHZ 5571, 105 and 204-05.

they show Rashaz's efforts to reveal the hidden significance of fixed times of study, both mystical, as reflected light [*or hozer*], and magical, as the strength necessary to achieve the purification of the sparks. The passage discloses a broader function of Torah study than mere intellectual cognition, and through the idea of study at fixed times it finds a way to incorporate the nonscholars' study into the hasidic mystical project. As a result, even apparently futile study at fixed times, by less qualified or even ignorant men, who are nevertheless devoted to the halakhic lifestyle, serves a purpose complementary to the Torah study of scholars and pneumatics.

4.2 Torah study at set times as an alternative to full-time study.

In certain cases, when laymen set times for Torah study, their study gains a dimension previously reserved for the Torah study of scholars and pneumatics. This is expressed, for example, in the idea of the person as a substitute temple for the Divine Presence.⁷⁰ The hasidic authors based the idea of a human temple on the biblical verse: "Let them make me a sanctuary and I will dwell in them" [Ex 25:8]. The fact that God had said "in them" [*be-tokham*] — in the people of Israel—instead of using the seemingly more suitable "in it" [*be-tokho*] - in the sanctuary - led the Safedian kabbalists and the hasidic masters who followed in their footsteps to believe that Scripture had actually intended to declare that humans are God's sanctuary [*mikdash*] in the world.⁷¹ In their view, the commandment of building the sanctuary is detached from its biblical setting and should be understood as referring to everyone, at anytime: "It is not written 'in it,' but 'in them,' to say that each and every Jew must build the tabernacle [*mishkan*] in his soul," that is, draw down the revelation of God through prayer,⁷² commandments, and Torah study.⁷³ Among

⁷⁰ On the idea of the human temple in the beginnings of Hasidism, see Margolin, *Mikdash adam*, 127-138.

⁷¹ See for example Vidas, *Reshit hokhmah*, Sha'ar ha-ahavah, ch. 6, 58a; Alshekh, *Torat Mosheh Alshekh*, Terumah, 148a; Horovits, *Shenei luhot ha-berit*, Sha'ar ha-otiyot, ot kuf, 5.

⁷² LT *Naso* 20b.

⁷³ See TO 87a, where commandments are compared to the curtains [*yeri'ot*] that cover the sanctuary on the outside, and Torah study to the instruments of the tabernacle [*kelei ha-mishkan*], the inner components of the sanctuary.

these three, Torah study occupies a distinguished place, and the talmudic saying that: “Since the destruction of the temple, the Holy One blessed be He has nothing in the world but four cubits of halakhah alone” [bBerakhot 8a], prompted Rashaz to declare the Torah “verily the tabernacle of the Holy One, blessed be He.”⁷⁴ According to Rashaz, drawing down the Divine Presence into the human temple is achievable not only by lengthy studies but also by setting times for studying halakhah.

The process of building a human sanctuary is detailed in *Tanya*.⁷⁵ It follows the pattern of the biblical narrative, albeit in a spiritual setting. In the biblical narrative, the Israelites were commanded to build the sanctuary when it became clear that they were not able to receive divine revelation and remain alive. As this is described in the Talmud, during the revelation at Mount Sinai, “at every utterance their soul took flight” [bShabat 88b]. Rashaz interprets this to mean that they could not handle the ultimate nullification of existence [*bitul bi-metsi’ut*] that the revelation entailed.⁷⁶ Accordingly, only the creation of the sanctuary—a suitable vessel for the divine revelation—made it possible for union with God [*yihud*] in the world to take place without the annihilation of existence.

The creation of the human temple follows the very same pattern. Full disclosure of the Torah is to come about only in the future.⁷⁷ Yet even before this happens, it is possible to draw the divine down to one’s personal temple through the ritual of Torah study. Admittedly, in terms of the position of the *Shekhinah* in the order of concatenation, there is a difference between divine revelation in the Jerusalem Temple and the revelation within its human counterpart during the exile. In contrast to the time of the Temple, the *Shekhinah* in exile descends to the lowest *sefirah* within the lowest of the four worlds: *Malkhut* of ‘*Asiyah*. Nonetheless, what apparently can be taken as the degradation of the *Shekhinah* is given a rather positive characterisation in Rashaz’s writings. In the Temple, only the high priest was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies in order to commune with the divine, yet in the

⁷⁴ LT *Be-har* 43a. See also T1, 53:74b; TO 90d; LT *Va-yikra* 1d, *Balak* 74d, *Va-ethanan* 10a.

⁷⁵ T1, 34:43a-b.

⁷⁶ On different types of nullification in the Habad tradition, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 75-6.

⁷⁷ On the complete disclosure of the Torah in the future-to-come, see for example LT *Matot* 84a-b.

exile, where a person's heart is the Holy of Holies,⁷⁸ this experience is open to every *halakhah*-abiding Jew able to recite the words of Torah.⁷⁹ Elsewhere Rashaz stated explicitly:

Therefore, after one has meditated deeply, according to his abilities, on the subject of this above-mentioned self-nullification [*bitul bi-metsi'ut*], let him reflect in his heart as follows: "The capacity of my intelligence and of my soul's root is too limited to constitute a chariot and a sanctuary [*merkavah u-mishkan*] for God's unity in perfect truth, for my thought cannot grasp or apprehend His unity at all with any degree of comprehension in the world, not an iota, in fact, of that which was grasped by the patriarchs and prophets. This being so, I will make Him a sanctuary and an abode [*mishkan u-makhon*] by studying Torah at fixed times by day and by night, to the extent of my free time, as stipulated by the law governing each individual's situation, set forth in *Hilekhot talmud Torah*, as our sages say, "Even one chapter in the morning [and one at night]" [*bMenahot 99b*].⁸⁰

Rashaz states unequivocally that God's abode on earth is not created by a scholarly or pneumatic elite, but rather by anyone who sets times for Torah study, even if he fulfils only the halakhic minimum of reciting one chapter in the morning and one at night during the morning and evening prayers. Obviously, a scholar differs from the ordinary person in the way in which he grasps the divine, yet it is beyond question that both of them, according to their degree of comprehension, constitute the abode for God. This difference is illustrated by the verse "How goodly are thy tents, o Jacob, thy dwellings, o Israel!" [*Nm 24:5*], where tent, or casual abode [*dirat 'ara'i*], stands for study at fixed times, and dwelling [*mishkan*], or permanent abode [*dirat keva'*], for study by the scholar.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Horovits, *Shenei luhot ha-berit*, Sha'ar ha-'otiyot, 'ot kuf, 5.

⁷⁹ T1, 53:74a-b.

⁸⁰ T1, 34:43a-b [Appendix 7].

⁸¹ LT *Balak* 74d-75a; *Va-ethanan* 11a.

4.3 Torah study at set times as a higher level than full-time study.

Rashaz's persistent effort to reinstate a balance between scholars and laymen, full-time and part-time Torah study, as well as Torah and deeds, is conspicuous in the idea of a human being as an intermediary who carries down the divine light into the world. This idea is rendered in different configurations throughout hasidic lore, especially in reference to the role of the *tsadik* as a connection between heaven and earth.⁸² In several places in his teachings, Rashaz indicates that ordinary people are bound to play an analogous role.⁸³ This follows the more general tendency present in Rashaz's teachings, to re-evaluate the layperson's immersion in the material aspect of reality. The particular place that the layman occupies in the world impacts on his task as transmitter of the divine vitality:

Also a businessman [*ba'al 'eseq*] must fix times for Torah, for every drawing down [*hamshakhah*] [of divine influx] needs to go by degrees, through a transmitter [*ma'avir*]. Even though the essence of drawing down is performed here by a deed [*ma'aseh*], the first stage must be performed by thought and speech [*mahashavah ve-dibur*], and only later by deed. Therefore one needs to set times for Torah study, which is thought and speech."⁸⁴

The passage follows Rashaz's description of drawing down the divine light, divine will [*ratson*], and associated with it, divine delight [*ta'anug*],⁸⁵ by means of Torah study for its own sake [*Torah li-shmah*].⁸⁶ He explains that the Oral Torah preceded the Written Torah in drawing down and disclosing the divine light, for through elucidation of the laws that are mentioned only in the Written Torah, the Oral Torah spread the divine will in the world and made it comprehensible.⁸⁷ Rashaz adds that

⁸² Idel, *Hasidism*, 198-207.

⁸³ See for example LT *Tetse* 40c.

⁸⁴ MAHZ 5571, 83 [Appendix 8].

⁸⁵ On delight in Kabbalah and Hasidism, see Idel, "Ta'anug."

⁸⁶ On the notion of *Torah li-shmah* in Rashaz, see Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 152-54. See also Idel, *Hasidism*, 176-85, where different understanding of *li-shmah* in Hasidism are discussed, and Lamm, *Torah Lishmah*, 191-92, where functional, devotional, and cognitive definitions of *li-shmah* are proposed.

⁸⁷ MAHZ 5571, 81-82.

not only extensive and detailed studies of the Oral Torah bring down the divine light, but also study at fixed times by ordinary men. Indeed, an ordinary person draws down the influx mainly through his deeds, yet the deeds must be preceded by thought and speech, as these three dispositions amount to the “three garments of the soul” which a person should direct to God.⁸⁸ Drawing down [*hamshakhah*] by means of deeds takes place when someone follows the *halakhah* in performing practical commandments, while the initial drawing down by means of thought and speech is achieved by studying Torah at fixed times.⁸⁹ The reference to the delight [*ta’anug*] derived from Torah study elsewhere provides the reason for studying twice a day rather than continuously. Rashaz refers to a hasidic maxim, whereby “constant delight is no delight” either to the donor or to the recipient.⁹⁰ For this reason, setting two times in the morning and evening is truly a source of delight, whereas continuous study turns delight into an affliction.⁹¹

The discourse effectively juxtaposes studying Torah *li-shmah* and at fixed times. Here, the meaning of *li-shmah* is explicated as “drawing down the light of the Infinite [*Or Ein Sof*] into *Hokhmah* and *Binah*,” a goal achievable not only through detailed intellectual studies or mystical practices, but also by the repetition of the words of Torah at set times by an ordinary, *halakhah*-abiding Jew.⁹² Moreover, in some cases, Torah study at set times, described as “spiced wine” [*yein rokeah*], is cherished more than continuous study by scholars - “plain wine” [*yayin stam*], even

⁸⁸ T1, 4:8a.

⁸⁹ See also TO 47c on set times for study as disclosure of the divine will in thought and speech.

⁹⁰ See for example *Keter shem tov*, par. 121, and Dov Ber of Mezeritch, *Or Torah*, 1:84d. For a discussion of this issue see Idel, “Ta’anug,” 132-35, where he places this dictum in the context of avoiding routine worship. Notably, in his discourse Rashaz uses the same dictum precisely in order to empower religious routine.

⁹¹ MAHZ *Parshiyot*, i, Hosafot, Va-yetse, 7; 5572, 102-03.

⁹² See also LT *Ha’azinu* 76a, discussed in Hallamish, “Mishnato ha-‘iyunit,” 274, where it is explicitly stated that a businessman can draw down the divine light by *li-shmah* study at set times. In this case, the difference between a full-time student [*she-Torato omanuto*] and a businessman who studies at set times is annulled, for they both allow the Torah to speak through them. Businessmen, however, must complement their study with charity. Notably, some passages in Rashaz’s *ma’amarim* seem to exempt those “who cannot set times for study at all” and are “empty of Torah,” but nevertheless draw down the influx through their *mitsvot*, MAHZ 5571, 84, 92, 106, 119.

when they delve into the secrets of Torah, for the Torah of ordinary people crosses the boundaries of intellect and is brought into the material world: "This is the case of tradesmen [*oskei masa u-matan*] who occupy themselves with the Torah and commandments by means of their palate and tongue, as Scripture says: 'And the roof of thy mouth (of the congregation of Israel, etc.) like the best wine' [Sg 7:9], in the manner of scent that is above the delight limited to wisdom and understanding, which are the vessels."⁹³ In this passage, Rashaz takes the opportunity to present the intellectual deficiency of nonscholars as their advantage. Indeed, their study is restricted to short sessions twice a day, and they do not enter the secret, inner pathways of the Torah; nonetheless, this should not be perceived as a disadvantage, but rather as a gift, by virtue of which they bring the Torah out of the ivory tower of intellectual cognition. In other words, the nonscholars do not comprehend the Torah fully, be it because of lack of time or because of their intellectual deficiency, but they can experience it sensually, or as Rashaz put it, with their "palate and tongue," and therefore they disclose the Torah on the sensual, material levels, which are beyond the reach of the scholars. Greater delight results from such revelation of the Torah, than from its revelation on higher, intellectual levels, for the former transcends the "vessels" of the Torah—wisdom and understanding—and reaches down to the lower, sensual attributes.⁹⁴

Worship through setting times for Torah study is thus presented in three ways in Rashaz's doctrine. Firstly, it is a necessary complement to worship through full-time Torah study or, in kabbalistic terms, the reflected light that complements the direct light in the economy of the divine light. Secondly, Torah study at set times resembles the Torah study of the spiritual elite inasmuch as it makes a human being the transmitter of divine influx to the world, or the sanctuary and abode of the divine in the lower worlds, allowing the ordinary man to attain in exile the spiritual level of the high priest in the Temple. Thirdly, particular features of Torah study at set times, when it is accompanied by deeds and immersed in materiality, determine its superiority to full-time study: Torah study mixed with materiality is more far reaching than purely intellectual study.

⁹³ MAHZ 5571, 119 [Appendix 9].

⁹⁴ MAHZ 5571, 119; see an alternative version of the discourse in TO 80c.

5. Study That Follows Prayer.

Halakhah, which dictates study in everyone's daily routine, encourages the undertaking of study immediately following prayer, on the assumption that otherwise one would be liable to be overwhelmed by mundane responsibilities and forget about learning. The pragmatic considerations that underlie the halakhic regulations acquire a variety of other explanations in Rashaz's mystical doctrine, connected to the theurgical purposes of Torah study. These include the idea that prayer is a necessary preparation for study by way of the *ratso* that precedes *shov*, and that the Torah is a factor that perpetuates the self-nullification and union with God that are achieved during prayer.⁹⁵

5.1 Prayer as preparation for Torah study.

The assumption that prayer is an appropriate preparation for Torah study is compatible with the halakhic call to set times for study immediately after prayer on pragmatic grounds. According to Rashaz, Torah study and other religious obligations are interdependent: Torah study cannot function on its own but should form part of a harmonious, multifaceted regimen of divine service. Moreover, study *li-shmah* demands self-nullification. According to Rashaz, "The Holy One, blessed be He, does not come to rest on someone who is an existent being [*yesh ve-davar*], for I and

⁹⁵ On the ideological implication of setting study sessions immediately after prayer, see Hallamish, "Mishnato ha-'iyunit," 257-58, where he presents Torah study at set times as a finalization of the process which begins with prayer and effects the spiritualization of the self. Foxbrunner rejects Hallamish's speculation on the grounds that Rashaz's emphasis on setting time for study immediately following the morning prayers "is based wholly on explicit statements to that effect in the Talmud, *Tur, Shulhan 'arukh (Habad, 219).*" However, Hallamish does not question the halakhic origins of the principle and points out himself its halakhic formulations in Rashaz's *Shulhan 'arukh*. The talmudic and halakhic statements do not render invalid Rashaz's far-reaching ideological implications of this principle as outlined by Hallamish.

he [*ani ve-hu*] cannot dwell [together] in the world.”⁹⁶ Nullification of the self [*ani*], equivalent on the spiritual level to self-sacrifice [*mesirat nefesh*] in sanctification of the Divine Name [*kidush ha-Shem*], is achievable through the recitation of the *Shema*’ and, more generally, prayer.⁹⁷ Following the nullification of one’s will, one substitutes it with God’s will, which is embodied in the words of the Torah, thus achieving a level similar to that of Moses when “the *Shekhinah* was speaking from his throat.”⁹⁸ According to *Tanya*, the blessings of prayer repeat the gesture of returning one’s soul to God and reuniting it with Him; they function as necessary preparation for the *beinonim* to attain the intention *li-shmah*. Only after such a preparation can one begin one’s regular course of study [*shi’ur kavu’a*]. This preparation should be repeated whenever one sits down to learn the Torah.⁹⁹

The interdependence of Torah and prayer is set forth in numerous places in Rashaz’s lore, as the relation between ascending and descending, or the lower and upper “arousal” [*it’aruta dile-tata* and *it’aruta dile-’ila*]. The soul ascends to God in ecstatic love during prayer, and through this it merits the power to bring the divine light down to earth in the Torah.¹⁰⁰ Thus prayer and Torah are inscribed on the scheme of *ratso va-shov*,¹⁰¹ the continuous dynamics of ascent and descent, nullification and the drawing down of the divine. The former, *ratso*, is achieved through the desire to leave the body and to efface subjectivity in ecstatic prayer; only when there is no subjectivity, no particular will, which functions as a barrier separating one from God, can the divine light descend, clothed in Torah and commandments.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ LT *Va-yikra* 4d; see also T1, 6:10b. On the interdependence of Torah and other types of worship in the context of *bitul*, see Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 148-49.

⁹⁷ On *mesirat nefesh* and *kidush ha-Shem* in the Habad school, see Loewenthal, “Self-Sacrifice,” 457-494; Elijior, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 185-89.

⁹⁸ LT *Shir ha-shirim* 22a. On the development of the idea of the *Shekhinah* which overtakes man’s vocal apparatus in prayer and study, see Idel, “Adonai Sefatai Tiftah,” 34-49; idem, *Enchanted Chains*, 196-202.

⁹⁹ T1, 41:58b; LT *Be-har* 40c-d, *Ha’azinu* 74a, *Tazri’a*, 22d-23a, *Va-yikra* 5a.

¹⁰⁰ See for example LT *Ha’azinu* 74a, *Shir ha-shirim* 17a, 49a-b.

¹⁰¹ On *ratso va-shov* see above, chapter one, n. 99.

¹⁰² See for example TO 25b; LT *Shir ha-shirim* 46a; MAHZ *Ethalekh*, 17-18.

What is expressed here in technical kabbalistic terms as *ratso va-shov*, lower and upper arousal, is elsewhere directly applied to the routine stages of everyday worship. Praises of God, recited out loud in *Pesukei de-zimra*, serve as a means of attaining ecstasy, which reaches its peak when the word “one” [*ehad*] of the *Shema*’ is spoken. The silent prayer of ‘*Amidah*, which follows, signifies the eradication of self.¹⁰³ The hasidic masters, in a manner recalling the Aristotelian definition of a human being as *zoon logon echon*, defined the faculty of speech as the unique faculty that elevates human beings above other creatures;¹⁰⁴ hence silence during the ‘*Amidah* equals giving up one’s uppermost faculty and substituting God’s speech for it by means of Torah study, since it is not a person itself who recites the words of Torah but rather “the *Shekhinah* speaking from his throat” with “my words which I have put in thy mouth” [Is 59:21].

Despite stressing the importance of preparatory prayer, Rashaz did not mean that studying Torah without it did not have any impact on the divine reality. Nevertheless, he argued in favour of study that followed prayer: “with all thy might” [*be-khol me’odekha*; Dt 6:5], which draws on *Keter* to *Hokhmah*, in contrast to study with no preceding prayers, which draws only from *Hokhmah*.¹⁰⁵ As Rashaz put it elsewhere, study that follows prayer brings down “verily supernal wisdom” [*hokhmah shel ma’lah mamash*] and is identified with *Torah li-shmah*, while study without preceding prayer brings down merely shades of the supernal wisdom [*novlot hokhmah shel ma’lah*].¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ See for example TO 45c; LT *Tsav* 15c, *Shir ha-shirim* 5c-d; MAHZ 5564, 238; *Seder tefilot*, 116a, 132c, 237d. See Ornet, *Ratso va-shov*, 229-1

¹⁰⁴ According to Rashaz, all created things are divided into four categories: inanimate [*domem*], vegetative [*tsomeah*], animate [*hai*], and speaking [*medaber*]. Only the human being comprises all the four categories. See T1, 38:50b; TO 3d.

¹⁰⁵ LT *Shir ha-shirim* 20d.

¹⁰⁶ LT *Berakhah* 96b-c; see also LT *Va-ethanan* 4a. On self-sacrifice in prayer as the condition to Torah study, see also LT *Shir ha-shirim* 41a, *Emor* 33c, *Be-har* 40d, *Ba-midbar* 19d; MAHZ 5570, 8; *Ethalekh*, 90.

5.2 Temporal prayer and eternal Torah.

Discussion of ecstatic prayer leads to another significant aspect of the obligation to study directly after prayer: the self-nullification and unity with the divine achieved by means of prayer are only temporary; while the spiritual achievements attained through Torah study are eternal. Contemplation of the words of *Pesukei de-zimra* and the *Shema* stands for accepting the yoke of Heaven. Therefore, whoever does so:

will always be bound in contemplation, i.e. nullification of the worlds, to the one who brings them to life and constitutes them [*mehayeh u-mehaveh*], and it is only in his corporeal body he will not be able to achieve true nullification, so during the recitation of the *Shema*, he shall direct his mind to Torah study in the words ‘thou shalt talk of them’ [*ve-dibarta bam*; Dt 6:7]. Namely, through Torah study his divine soul [*nefesh elokit*] will become truly unified [*na’aseh yihud amiti*] with the Torah, and the Torah and the Holy One blessed be He are verily one [*Orayta ve-Kudsha berikh hu kula had mamash*].¹⁰⁷

According to the hasidic worldview, corporeality separates human beings from the divine and prevents them from true unity with God. One possible path of breaking this barrier leads through prayer, culminating in the nullification achieved by pronouncing God’s unity in the first passage of the *Shema*. Such nullification, however, is only temporary, for the ecstatic state achieved during prayer ceases when the recitation of the *Shema* is over, and the ecstatic love of God is transformed into its opposite, the love of corporeality.¹⁰⁸ One can sustain the ecstatic state so long as one undertakes Torah study immediately after the prayer.¹⁰⁹ In Rashaz’s writings, the Torah emerges as the third way that transcends the duality of divinity and

¹⁰⁷ TO 16b [Appendix 10]. On the principle of unity of the Torah and God, see Tishby, *Hikrei kabalah*, 3.941-953; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3.1085-86; see also LT *Sukot* 79c: “A man can have the impression [*roshem*] of the nullification of *Shmoneh ‘esreh* set and affixed, so it will never be shaken, every day in his Torah studies,” [Appendix 11] and the discussion of this passage in Hallamish, “Mishnato ha-‘iyunit,” 257-258.

¹⁰⁸ TO 28d; see also T1, 12:16b-17a.

¹⁰⁹ On twofold ecstasy in Rashaz, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 145; idem, “Oneiric Imagination,” 141.

materiality, and bestows lasting unity with God in the material world.¹¹⁰ The principle that Israel, Torah, and God are a unity is used to present the way to perpetuate self-nullification through Torah study.¹¹¹ However, the unity is understood as an obligation one should strive for rather than a description of the actual state of things. Accordingly, a person who studies Torah and puts its laws into practice nullifies his will before the will of God,¹¹² and even when he is busy with his daily concerns, he does not break his communion with God.¹¹³ Here too, prayer plays a preparatory role, as substituting one's will with the divine will requires of the ordinary person that he transcend his nature, and prayer arouses the hidden love concealed in the heart of every Jew, a love that surmounts his nature.¹¹⁴ Obviously, one may choose not to study immediately after prayer, and return to study later in the day, but in that case, one loses the state of love achieved during prayer, and moves away from God.¹¹⁵

Rashaz continued to elucidate the essential difference between Torah study and prayer that determines whether the *devekut* they engender is temporary or perpetual. According to one explanation, the union with the divine can be perpetuated by memorization of the words of the Torah. Since "Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one," when a person has the words of the Torah "carved in the mind of his memory which is in his soul," it is as if he is united with God Himself, even if he is engaged in mundane occupations.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ On Habad worship through corporeality, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 138-140.

¹¹¹ On the origins of the expression see Tishby, *Hikrei kabbalah*, 3.941-953, where he corrects the common erroneous attribution of the expression to the *Zohar* by pointing out to its origin in Moshe Hayim Luzzatto's writings.

¹¹² Based on *mAvot* 2:4.

¹¹³ LT *Shir ha-shirim* 25d-26a; on the mystical role of ritual routine, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 74: "Indeed, even the minimal halakhic routine should and can be endowed with this mystical valence predicated on the consubstantiality of God and the Jewish soul."

¹¹⁴ LT *Ba-midbar* 13d.

¹¹⁵ See LT *Tavo* 43a.

¹¹⁶ LT *Kedoshim* 30d. Ideally, everyone ought to memorize the entire Written and Oral Torah. However, because of the "affliction of the times, shortness of the comprehending consciousness and

According to another explanation, the difference between these two modes of worship lies in their different ontological features. The love engendered by prayer ceases, for prayer is time-bound, whereas the Torah is above the dimension of time.¹¹⁷ The Torah itself is eternal,¹¹⁸ and therefore Torah study provides a glimpse into eternity. The words of Torah recited by a student are the very same words that were spoken to Moses on Mount Sinai:

Even though the Torah was given in time and place, and it has been already three thousand years since the Torah was given, it shall be in your eyes as if it was given verily this day [*ha-yom mamash*], as it is written: “Which I am commanding thee this day” [Ex 34:11], namely every day when we recite the *Shema*. And this is why they said: “Every day [these words] will be in your eyes as new,”¹¹⁹ and the meaning is that the “I” [*anokhi*] is the one who “commands thee,” and is in the nature of the general encompassment [*sovev ha-kelali*], namely he is completely above time [...] And the sages said that “He who sits and reads and learns, the Holy One blessed be He sits and reads and learns in front of him,”¹²⁰ that is to say, even if a man reads in time and the Holy One blessed be He is above time [...], the Holy One blessed be He sits and learns in front of him, from above time to the dimension of time, and because of that, He said: “Which I command thee this day,” as verily in the time of the Giving of Torah [*matan Torah*], which was above time.¹²¹

A dichotomy of the corporeal and the spiritual is inscribed into the hasidic metaphysics of light: Torah study is bound to the light of *Ein Sof*, the surrounding light that shines equally everywhere and is above time, as opposed to the light that

the deepness of the subject” it is enough for a scholar to memorize merely the Pentateuch and the *Seder kodashin* from the Talmud.

¹¹⁷ LT *Re'eh* 23b.

¹¹⁸ On eternal Torah, see for example: LT *Ba-midbar* 13a-b, *Balak* 68b.

¹¹⁹ *Pesikta zutarta* Va-ethanan, 69; Rashi to Dt 26:16; Bahya bar Asher, *Midrash Rabenu Bahya*, Devarim 6:10; see also *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana*, Ba-hodesh ha-sheleishi, pis. 12:138-139, 107a.

¹²⁰ *Tana de-vei Eliyahu*, ch. 18, 51a.

¹²¹ MAHZ 5570, 10 [Appendix 12]. See also LT *Shir ha-shirim* 42a-b, *Matot* 82a-b.

fills all the worlds and is bound to time.¹²² For this reason, the words of Torah are not subject to the passage of time, but are always perceived as new. Every time someone recites the words of Torah it is as if he has just received them from God: “Each interpretative gesture is a re-enactment of the revelatory experience, albeit from its unique vantage point, each moment a novel replication of the past.”¹²³ Even though study by man is bound to time, the words of Torah are not; hence studying the Torah brings down the eternity and unity into the world of temporality and multiplicity, whereas in the case of prayer, the situation is opposite: one reaches out of temporality into the moment of infinity in an ecstatic gesture of unity with the oneness of the divine.

The relation between prayer and study, described above in terms of the mutual relation between two types of divine light (*sovev* and *memale*), is depicted in sefirotic terminology as a correlation of *Malkhut* and *Ze’ir anpin*:¹²⁴

Contemplation in prayer [...] is in the nature of *ratso*, the elevation of *Nukba*, and is called “temporal life” [*hayei sha’ah*], for time is in *Malkhut*, and when one elevates it from the state of being [*yesh*] it is called “temporal life.” The main thing, however, is “eternal life” [*hayei ‘olam*], namely that *Ze’ir anpin* should become specifically world [*‘olam*]. This is *shov*, the disclosure of the [light] surrounding all the worlds [*sovev kol ‘almin*] and which comes to dwell specifically in the lower worlds [*dirah ba-tahtonim*], which is called “eternal life”: drawing down the divine actually and specifically into the world.¹²⁵

Rashaz described prayer in terms of the elevation of *Nukba* (the feminine aspect of the Godhead, a term used interchangeably with *Malkhut*)¹²⁶ above the sphere of being [*yesh*]. Furthermore, since *Malkhut* is identified in Rashaz’s writings as the

¹²² On *memale kol ‘almin* and *sovev kol ‘almin* as technical terms for divine immanence and transcendence in Habad, see chapter 1, n. 36 above.

¹²³ Wolfson, *Aleph, Mem, Tau*, 64-65.

¹²⁴ On the symbolism of *Ze’ir anpin* and *Nukba* in Lurianic Kabbalah, see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 141-42. On the masculine and feminine aspects of the Godhead in Rashaz, see chapter 5 below.

¹²⁵ MAHZ *Ketuvim*, i, 233 [Appendix 13]; *Boneh Yerushalayim*, 80 (77); MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 251.

¹²⁶ Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 141.

source of time in the sefirotic structure,¹²⁷ prayer appears as an ecstatic moment that restores time back to its source, where all three tenses exist as a unity.¹²⁸ “Temporal life,” a phrase coined by the Talmud in reference to prayer [*bShabat* 10a],¹²⁹ emphasizes here the momentariness of this experience: as ecstatic love that ceases immediately after the completion of prayer.¹³⁰ In fact, in prayer one transcends the differentiation between past, present, and future; yet one does not transcend time as such. Prayer is a transcendental experience that reaches the borderline between divine nothingness and worldly being—the *sefirah* of *Malkhut*, the point comprising the past, the present, and the future, and yet not going beyond it.

Torah study, by contrast, is called “eternal life,” for it draws that which is beyond time into temporal reality. The passage is based on the double meaning of the word *‘olam*, as both “world” and “eternity.” Here, *Ze‘ir anpin*—an aspect of the divinity above *Malkhut*, which is not subject to temporality—is drawn down into the world [*‘olam*] to give it eternal life [*hayei ‘olam*],¹³¹ which amounts to transforming it into “the dwelling place [of the divine] in the lower worlds,” a conspicuously eschatological idea in the Habad tradition.¹³² Prayer leads to the source of time, where the three temporal dimensions coexist, albeit *in potentia* only; Torah study, however, allows for apprehension above this source, at the level of *Ze‘ir anpin*, of the “source of the coming-to-be of time that is in *Malkhut*” [*mekor hithavut ha-*

¹²⁷ See for example T2, 7:82a; TO 37a; *Seder tefilot* 75b.

¹²⁸ See also *Seder tefilot* 75a-b, where *sha‘ah* is identified as the unity of past, present, and future. An instructive passage on *Malkhut* as *hayei sha‘ah*, in the sense of an ecstatic moment encapsulating all three tenses, can be found in Menahem Mendel Schneerson (*Tsemah Tsedek*), *Derekh mitsvotekha*, 1:151a-b, and is discussed in Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 277-8. On the relation between contemplation and ecstasy in Habad worship see Elijor, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 162.

¹²⁹ The comparison of prayer to “temporal life” and of Torah to “eternal life” is used by Rashaz to justify exempting professional scholars from praying the *‘Amidah*, see HTT 3:5, 851a, *Shulhan ‘arukh Rabenu ha-Zaken*, Orah hayim, par. 106, discussed in Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 139.

¹³⁰ *Seder tefilot* 28a.

¹³¹ See also T5, 155b. The connection between the temporal life of prayer with *Malkhut* and the eternal life of Torah study with *Ze‘ir anpin* appears in Mosheh Hayim Luzzatto, *Sefer adir ba-marom ha-shalem*, 109-10, see also Liwer, “Torah shebe-‘al peh,” 329.

¹³² See section 3.3 of chapter 2 above.

zeman shebe-Malkhut], as described by Rashaz’s son, R. Dov Ber.¹³³ The “eternal life” in Rashaz’s discourses also denotes “articulation of words of *halakhah*,”¹³⁴ that is, the egalitarian study of *halakhah* has an eschatological value, too. In their day, Rashaz explained, the sages could give up on temporal life (prayer) and focus solely on eternal life (Torah),¹³⁵ but nowadays, at a time of “the footsteps of Messiah” [*ikveta de-meshiha*], to enable the articulation of *halakhah* in order to draw down the divinity into the world, one had to sacrifice one’s soul in prayer.¹³⁶

There emerges a paradoxical relationship between worship by means of prayer on the one hand and Torah study on the other. Prayer liberates from the limits of transience and corporeality, but some of its essential features make its purpose – the attainment of ecstatic experience – fallible. Firstly, since the rhythm and time of prayer are externally determined by Jewish law, the ecstatic experience one strives to attain is incorporated in the temporal frames set by *halakhah*; secondly, ecstasy in prayer is the product of human’s corporeal powers, namely love and fear of God. As such, it is subject from its inception to the limitation of corporeality. Consequently, the ecstasy of prayer is a transcendental experience that reaches the borderline of temporal existence, where the past, present, and future are amalgamated, but it does not reach beyond temporality and is followed immediately by a return to the domain of time and matter.¹³⁷

¹³³ Dov Ber Shneuri, *Perush ha-milot*, 59b. For a discussion of this excerpt in the context of the difference between “time” [*zeman*], attributed to *Malkhut*, and “the order of times” [*sefer ha-zemanim*], attributed to *Ze’ir anpin*, see Wolfson, *Aleph, Mem, Tau*, 110. See also section 2.5 of chapter 1 above.

¹³⁴ MAHZ *Ethalekh*, 90.

¹³⁵ *bShabat* 10a.

¹³⁶ MAHZ *Ethalekh*, 91. On worship at the time of the “footsteps of Messiah,” see section 1.4 of chapter 3 above.

¹³⁷ One of the characteristics of Hasidism that was met with fierce criticism by its opponents was a its flexible attitude to the halakhically set times of prayer. Indeed, in many hasidic courts, proper preparations for prayer were considered more important than adherence to the halakhically prescribed times for each of the three daily services, and the desire to attain ecstasy and *devekut* led to unusually prolonged prayer. See Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer*, 48-53; Schatz Uffenheimer, *Hasidism*, 245-6; Wertheim, *Law and Custom*, 134-43. Rashaz addressed this issue in his teachings. In some of his epistles, sent to various communities, he seems to encourage *shelihei tsibur* to lead the morning

On the other hand, permanent release from time is attainable by means of the ritual of Torah study at set times. Through Torah study one draws down onto oneself and into the world the eternity enclosed in the letters of the Torah. In contrast to the ritual of prayer, the precise time of ritual Torah study is determined not by an external authority (Jewish law), but rather by the individual himself (even though preferred times are suggested in the halakhic texts). The gesture of setting times for ritual study triggers the process of release from the bounds of time, achievable within the material world rather than beyond it, by adhering to an entity (Torah) that originates above and beyond the source of time.

6. Setting time for Torah study in the context of Rashaz's leadership.

The teachings of Rashaz demonstrate that adherence to the Torah, which entails the transformation of self and the sanctification of the world, can be achieved through the seemingly trivial ritual of Torah study at set times. The precept of Torah study at set times, framed in halakhic literature as a means of motivating even the unscholarly classes to a routine of daily study, has been endowed in Rashaz's sermons with mystical and magical significance. This reinterpretation of setting times for Torah study should be considered not only in the framework of Rashaz's concept of time

prayer for an hour or an hour and a half (T4, 1:103a, and see Etkes, *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 104), but he also seems to understand that working members of his communities were prevented by their mundane obligations from investing too much time in prolonged prayer (T5, 161b-2a, and see Etkes, *Ba'al ha-Tanya* 103-4). Rashaz relates the deferred time of prayer to the status of different classes of souls: the souls that originate in the world of *Atsilut* pray according to the time of prayer set specifically for that supernal world, while the souls that originate in the lower worlds of *Beri'ah* and *Yetsirah*, which are more distanced from God, need to wait until the souls of *Atsilut* have finished praying before commencing their own prayers, at which point they can gather the particles of the innermost light of *Ein Sof* leftover from the prayer of the souls in the world of *Atsilut*; the souls of *'Asiyah*, however, owing to their engrossment in materiality, do not have any access to this aspect of the light of *Ein Sof*, and are therefore forbidden to delay their prayers but must comply with the normative set times. In practical terms, this means that while the most distinguished righteous men [*tsadikim muflagim*] are allowed to delay their prayers, simple men and ignoramuses [*'amei ha-arets*] are forbidden to do so. See Mondshine, *Migdal 'oz*, 378-80. According to Heilman, (*Bet rabi*, 89a), Rashaz himself used to prolong the morning prayers until 2 p.m.

but also in the wider context of his unique style of leadership, marked by his endeavour to empower ordinary people to re-evaluate their mode of religious service, and to create a more inclusive Judaism, which was eventually to become the emblem of the Habad movement.¹³⁸

The emphasis placed on the precept of setting times for Torah study exemplifies some conspicuous trends in Rashaz's style of leadership and in the early Habad community. It shows the level of spiritual independence enjoyed by Habad Hasidim under the leadership of Rashaz: although he was eager to provide guidance in divine service to his followers, he nonetheless held each and every Hasid responsible for his own spiritual achievements.¹³⁹ The "Liozna Regulations" bear witness to Rashaz's continuous efforts to set limits on access to his court for the growing number of his followers.¹⁴⁰ It is therefore plausible that the elevation of routine Torah study at set times as spiritual engagement was aimed to create the

¹³⁸ See also Hallamish, "Mishnato ha-'iyunit," 309, where he suggests that Rashaz's positive attitude to nonscholarly folk, exceptional when compared to the scholarly ethos of Lithuanian Jewry, contributed to the growing popularity of Hasidism in general and Habad in particular. Hallamish's opinion on Rashaz's exceptional attitude to ordinary men is based on Rashaz's instruction to call up businessmen to the Ark on the Sabbaths and Festivals (T4, 1:103a) and not on his egalitarian approach to Torah study, which also should be mentioned, in particular when comparing Rashaz to his mitnagdic contemporaries. Thus, for example, the Vilna Gaon, according to a tradition transmitted by his student and cousin Avraham Ragoler (for information on him see Fishman, *Russia's First Modern Jews*, 102-03), compared a man who studies Torah intermittently [*ha-lomed Torah li-ferakim*] to an adulterer (see *bSanhedrin* 99b), for one who comes to join with the Torah occasionally treats it as a harlot, not as a wife with whom one should be joined continuously (Avraham Ragoler, *Ma'alot ha-Torah*, 8). The Habad tradition refers to the same talmudic passage in quite a different way: "The Tsemah Tsedek said: This world is a world of falsity. Therefore, even good is adulterated with chaff and must be purified 'from below upward' as well as from 'above downward.' The Coming World is the world of truth. In Torah there are discussions of matters which may appear negative, yet the same matters, as they are studied in Gan Eden — are actually positive qualities [...]. In This World the statement 'He who studies Torah *li-ferakim*,' refers to one who studies Torah intermittently; in Gan Eden they interpret the statement to mean that he studies Torah and the Torah 'takes him apart,' [namely,] the words of Torah possess him." (Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Ha-yom yom*, entry for 11th Elul, 86) [Appendix 14].

¹³⁹ Etkes, *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 47.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 70-80.

possibility of full spiritual involvement for every follower, without the need for his permanent, or even temporary, presence at the rebbe's court.

One can surmise that Rashaz's style of leadership was to a great extent determined by the fact that his constituency of followers consisted predominantly of middle-class businessmen and householders, people whose everyday duties allowed only limited time for study, prayer, or visits to the rebbe's court.¹⁴¹ The re-evaluation of their limited daily Torah study was one of the means by which Rashaz included them in his spiritual project. Other means were the re-evaluation of their prayer,¹⁴² and in connection to this, Rashaz's direct instructions not to appoint as *shelihei tsibur* men who overly prolong the prayers. All this was intended to accommodate the needs of many congregants, who "have to get up early and leave for their daily travail,"¹⁴³ and who therefore cannot afford to stay in the synagogue for longer services. Finally, frequent visits to Rashaz's court were replaced with guidance through pastoral letters and emissaries, as well as with the transfer to local leaders of some of the functions usually performed by the rebbe during the private audiences he granted his Hasidim on an individual basis [*yehidut*].¹⁴⁴

One can only speculate about the factors that shaped Rashaz's unique doctrine and style of leadership. The Habad tradition has preserved an image of Rashaz as a reluctant rebbe, who even considered immigration to the Land of Israel in order to avoid taking on the mantle of leadership.¹⁴⁵ It may have been this reluctance that prompted him to construct his ideal of the distanced hasidic leader, who guides a decentralised network of autonomous congregations of followers by means of letters and emissaries rather than direct involvement with a central court. The personal example of Rashaz's mentor, Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk, who continued leading his followers in a similar way over many years following his

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 168.

¹⁴² Ibid., 86.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 103.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 99.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 30.

immigration to the Land of Israel, must have had an impact on Rashaz.¹⁴⁶ During the years preceding his ascent to leadership, Rashaz was responsible for maintaining a network of fundraisers for the hasidic settlement in the Land of Israel.¹⁴⁷ After his emergence as an independent Hasidic leader, this network was used to spread and enforce his hasidic doctrine and lifestyle.¹⁴⁸ Hence it comes as no surprise that in Rashaz's Hasidism, so much attention is paid to the spirituality of middle-class, independent, and relatively well-educated householders and businessmen; these people had constituted the core of Rashaz's successful fundraising network, and when he became a rebbe in his own right, they formed the core of his hasidic community. The implications of Rashaz's transition from chief regional fundraiser for the hasidic settlement in the Land of Israel to full-fledged hasidic leader still await thorough research. It seems reasonable to assume that emphasis on the spiritual efforts of businessmen and householders was closely related to this transition.

Rashaz's teachings have reverberated in the traditions of all subsequent Habad leaders. It is thus plausible that Rashaz's re-evaluation of Torah study at set times laid the conceptual basis for the rejection of the so-called "*kolel*-culture" by the seventh leader of Habad-Lubavitch, R. Menahem Mendel Schneerson.¹⁴⁹ The relation between the conceptual and the historical contexts of Torah study in twentieth-century Habad demands further investigation.

7. Conclusions.

The precept of setting time for Torah study constitutes an integral part of Rashaz's project of making hasidic spirituality accessible to "intermediate" men, a project that attracted many people to Habad during his lifetime and beyond. This precept, which occupied a secondary place in the halakhic tradition as a means of preserving study

¹⁴⁶ On Menahem Mendel as one of three most important sources of inspiration for Rashaz, see Etkes, *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 42.

¹⁴⁷ On Rashaz's role in collecting donations for the Hasidim in the Land of Israel, see *ibid.*, 122-42.

¹⁴⁸ On the role of the "collectors for the sake of the Land of Israel" [*ha-gaba'im de-Erets Yisra'el*] in enforcing the "Liozna Ordinances" in Habad communities, see Etkes, *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 99

¹⁴⁹ Schneerson, *Igerot kodesh*, xiv, 30-31; *idem*, *Likutei sihot*, xxiii, 443.

within the daily schedule of working men, was employed by Rashaz to form a new spiritual paradigm, in which the routine religious praxis was invested with mystical meaning. Rashaz saw setting time for Torah study as an ideal for the majority of his community, and restricted full-time study to a presumably narrow scholarly elite. The many remarks in his mystical sermons touching on the requirement to set times for study show that not only did he ascribe equal value to this method as to full-time study, but also that he invested study at set times with particular importance because of its perceived role in both the individual and the cosmic dimensions of repentance.

In some sermons, Torah study at set times by the masses is presented as a complement to the full-time study of the elite: while the elite draws down the divine light by fulfilling the ideal of full-time study, ordinary men reflect it by purifying the lower world when they comply with the halakhic requirement to study at set times. In other sermons, Rashaz makes study at set times an alternative means of achieving comparable effects to those achieved by the elite, as both scholars and ordinary people play a part in the construction of God's sanctuary by means of their study. Moreover, even simpletons could do so by fulfilling the minimum halakhic requirement of reciting no more than one chapter of the Torah during the morning and the evening prayers. To underscore the value of this method of study, in some places Rashaz presents Torah study at set times as superior to full-time study, because it brings the wisdom of Torah out of the intellectual ivory tower of scholarship into the sphere of materiality and corporeality. This mode of study, which enables the ordinary person to detach himself from mundane affairs and to turn instead toward the divine words of Torah, generates more divine delight and produces a more intense state of ecstasy than the static study of the full-time scholar who is permanently engrossed in holiness.

The instruction that Torah study at set times should follow prayer is of paramount importance. What was traditionally seen as a means of encouraging ordinary people to study before leaving the synagogue after prayer to resume mundane work, is incorporated by Rashaz into the dynamics of *ratso va-shov*: while prayer is identified with the *ratso* mode of worship at the preparatory stage, in which one effaces one's subjectivity in ecstatic prayer, study is identified with the *shov* mode, where the divine light clothed in the Torah descends into the world.

These two sequential modes of worship have special significance in the personal quest for eternity. Prayer, whose timing is determined arbitrarily by Jewish law, grants the worshipper an instantaneous release from the bonds of past, present, and future, but this transcendental experience of ecstatic prayer is ephemeral, as it depends on the corporeal powers of love and fear. Paradoxically, it is Torah study whose times are set by the worshipper himself that ultimately allows him to transcend temporality by drawing down the eternal Torah into the temporal world.

Rashaz's concept of setting times for Torah study allows for a better understanding of the ideology that lay behind his unique style of hasidic leadership. It highlights one of the tools that helped him build and sustain a decentralised network of Habad communities, whose members could remain his Hasidim in the full sense of the word even without frequent visits to his court, engagement in lengthy ecstatic prayer, or full-time dedication to study. It freed his Hasidim from the need to resort to activities that put their livelihood at risk. The mystical reinterpretation of the halakhic precept of setting time for Torah study helped Rashaz to reinvent Hasidism as a movement open to broad circles of independent businessmen and householders. This ideology may well have played a part in shaping Habad's inclusivist vision of mysticism in the twentieth century, but the question of doctrinal continuity and change in the history and ideology of Habad still awaits further research.

CHAPTER 5

1. Reading Gender in Rashaz's Writings

The issue of gender in Hasidism came to the attention of scholarship through S. A. Horodecky, who claimed in his book that Hasidism had brought about full equality of Jewish men and women in the field of spirituality.¹ His thesis remained undisputed until relatively recently, when it was reviewed and rejected by Ada Rapoport-Albert.² Contrary to Horodecky's claims, Hasidism was not more inclusive of women than any non-hasidic orthodox stream of Judaism: it neither improved women's position in the community, nor included them in the ethos of Torah scholarship, nor enabled them to ascend to leadership positions; the only stream of Judaism that actually sought to overturn the androcentric *status quo* was the heretical movement of Sabbatai Tsevi.³ However, the change in the role of women that Hasidism in its formative years never envisaged did begin to take shape in the twentieth century, when the challenges to the hasidic communities posed by the processes of modernity encouraged some of their leaders to consider the possibility of harnessing women to their cause. In particular, the activity of the last two leaders of the Habad-Lubavitch movement, Yosef Yitshak Schneerson and Menahem Mendel Schneerson, placed Habad in the vanguard of the process of creating space for women in the hasidic model of spirituality.⁴

Whether the particular interest of contemporary Habad in the role of women is an expression of ideological continuity or change remains an open question.⁵ The

¹ Horodecky, *Ha-hasidut*, iv, 65-71.

² See Rapoport-Albert, "On Women in Hasidism," and eadem, "The Emergence," 7*-14*. For an attempt to attenuate Rapoport-Albert's argument, see Polen, "Miriam's Dance". For Rapoport-Albert's rejoinder to Nechemia Polen's article, see "The Emergence," 11* n. 12.

³ Rapoport-Albert, *Women and the Messianic Heresy*, 12.

⁴ See Rapoport-Albert, "On Women in Hasidism," 508-09 and 523 n. 82; eadem, "From Woman as Hasid," 447-73 and "The Emergence," 44*-51*; Loewenthal, "Daughter/Wife," 21*-28*; idem, "Women and the Dialectic," 42*-65*.

⁵ Loewenthal ("Women and the Dialectic," 8*) argues in favour of continuity, claiming that the development of the role of Habad women in the twentieth century was motivated by the spiritual concept of "Lower Unity," which was present in Habad thought from its inception. See also

Rashaz's own written lore provides little indication of how he envisaged the role of women. His teachings, sermons and letters were intended for a male audience, and as such they dealt predominantly with matters relevant to their spiritual welfare. His halakhic work *Hilekhot talmud Torah* did advocate that women should study Torah, albeit within a limited scope,⁶ yet neither was this innovative, nor did it result in any organized framework for women's Torah education.⁷ Moreover, the manuscripts of his sermons, prepared by his Hasidim, were subjected to extensive editing, which makes it impossible to determine what he actually said and what was changed, deleted or added by various editors.⁸ Besides, topical references were often removed as irrelevant in the process of writing down, translating from the vernacular into Hebrew, and editing the sermons.⁹ One can therefore assume that any direct references to women that Rashaz may have made in his oral communications would have been edited out of their written renditions as being of little significance to their male transcribers and readers. In general, the early Habad materials are much more abstract and detached from the social reality of their time than the materials left by the last Lubavitcher Rebbe, which, in addition to his formal discourses [*ma'amarim*], include a large number of informal talks [*sihot*], among them many that circulate in unedited form [*bilti mugah*],¹⁰ thus giving much better access to the immediate

Rapoport-Albert, "From Woman as Hasid," where she shows that while kabbalistically-informed teachings on the female had always been part of Habad's teachings, they were first applied to the change in the role of women within the Habad community only in the 20th century. However, scholars are divided on the question of continuity or change in Habad thought, especially with regard to the watershed of the Holocaust. Thus, for example, Elier ("The Lubavitch Resurgence," 387) argues for change, whereas Wolfson (*Open Secret*, 23-24) and Schwartz (*Mahashevet Habad*, 12) see Habad's thought as a continuity.

⁶ HTT 3:2, 835a-b, see Loewenthal, "Women and the Dialectic," 20*-21*.

⁷ See Rapoport-Albert, "The Emergence," 15*-16*.

⁸ See above, Introduction, n. 17.

⁹ See Saperstein, *Jewish Preaching*, 22-23, where he discusses this problem in the history of Jewish homiletics in general. On problems arising from the fact that hasidic homilies, spoken primarily in Yiddish, were transmitted in Hebrew translation, see Etkes, *Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 85; Gries, "The Hasidic Managing Editor," 141-2; Loewenthal, *Communicating*, 66-8.

¹⁰ On the sources for the doctrines of the last Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menahem Mendel Scheerson, see Roth, "Ha-korpus ha-sifrut ha-habadi"; Dahan, *Dirah ba-tahtonim*, 35-9; Kohanzad *The Messianic Doctrine*, 24-42; Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 15-16.

circumstances and topical issues that concerned him, including his perspective on women in Hasidism.

In the lack of direct evidence on Rashaz's notion of the role of women in society, scholars have sought to extract his view from indirect evidence, in the belief, explicitly expressed by Rivka Dvir-Goldberg, that in hasidic literature "woman [...] is a subterranean spring, which greatly influences life and people, though not publicly but rather silently and beneath the surface."¹¹ Moshe Rosman has raised the possibility that the arguably favourable attitude to women in *Shivhei ha-Besht* may point to a more positive evaluation of women in early Habad, since the book was published by a Habad printer.¹² Habad tales seemingly support the claim that there always was a special attitude to women in Habad, by ascribing extraordinary intellectual and spiritual achievements to some female members of Rashaz's family, but the evidence they provide is questionable. The Habad chronicler, H. M. Heilman, ascribed outstanding scholarship to Freida, Rashaz's daughter,¹³ yet even he cast doubt on the only hard proof which could corroborate this tradition, namely a scholarly letter traditionally attributed to Freida,¹⁴ whose attribution to her has been convincingly refuted.¹⁵ Additionally, from Heilman's book, Shterna, Rashaz's wife, emerged as a woman who not only initially facilitated Rashaz's ascent to leadership, but who had also absorbed from him some of the spiritual powers typical of a *tsadik*.¹⁶ Here, however, not only may one argue that this characteristic is yet another link in the long chain of tradition, which "acknowledged certain women's capacity to acquire scholarly or spiritual accomplishments by virtue of their intimate association

¹¹ Dvir-Goldberg, "Kolo shel ma 'ayan," 28.

¹² Rosman, "'Al nashim va-hasidut," 162. On women in *Shivhei ha-Besht* see Dvir-Goldberg, "ha-Besht u-'mahbarto ha-tehorah," 45-54. On *Shivhei ha-Besht* see Rosman, *Founder of Hasidism*, 143-155; Etkes, *The Besht*, 203-248.

¹³ Heilman, *Bet rabi*, 57b and 92a n. 2. On women in *Bet rabi*, see Dvir-Goldberg, "Ha-Besht u-'mahbarto ha-tehorah," 59-61.

¹⁴ Heilman, *Bet rabi*, 57b; for the letter, see Hillman, *Igerot Ba'al ha-Tanya*, 235-6.

¹⁵ Mondshine, "Igeret mi-bat Rabenu marat Freyda(?)." See also Loewenthal, "Women and the Dialectic," 21*-22*; Rapoport-Albert, "The Emergence," 15*; eadem, "On Women in Hasidism," 518 n. 41.

¹⁶ Heilman, *Bet rabi*, 54a. For a discussion of Shterna's personality, see Loewenthal, "Women and the Dialectic," 21*-22*; Rapoport-Albert, "The Emergence," 56*-57*.

with distinguished men,”¹⁷ but there are other hagiographic traditions which claim that Rashaz denied the existence of any such strong, spiritual bond between him and his wife. The following tale was apparently transmitted by a certain Avraham Abba Person, a follower of Menahem Mendel, the Tsemah Tsedek, who is known among Habad Hasidim as a repository of hasidic stories. The tale is told in the name of Ze’ev Volf Vilenker, who was a follower of Rashaz:¹⁸

Once our Rebbe [Rashaz] overheard the *rabbanit* [Shterna] sitting and talking with her [female] friends, and in the middle of the conversation she said: “and mine [that is: my husband, Rashaz] says such and such.” When he heard it he called out to her, saying: “what makes me yours? One single *mitsvah*! No, I am not entirely yours!”¹⁹

Contrary to the image of the close relations between Rashaz and Shterna presented by Heilman, this tradition, published by Yehoshua Mondshine from manuscript in *Migdal ‘oz*, shows Rashaz to be rebuking his wife for speaking out in his name, as if the marital bond between them gave her special access to her husband’s spirituality and wisdom, while in fact this bond was restricted to one commandment only, presumably the commandment of “be fruitful and multiply,” or the commandments of *‘onah* (regular conjugal relations).

Notably, an expanded version of this story appears in *Ha-yom yom* – a collection of Habad sayings and thoughts, published in the early 1940s by Menahem Mendel Schneerson:

Once, as the Alter Rebbe stepped out of his room, he overheard his wife remarking to several women, “Mine says...” The Rebbe said: “With one *mitsvah* I am yours; with how many are we G-d’s!” With these words he fell onto the doorpost in *devekut*. On “awakening” from the *devekut* he said: [Sg 3:11] “Go out and see” – to step out of self and perceive the Divine comes from [the following words in the verse] “daughters of Zion,” *Malkhut*

¹⁷ Rapoport-Albert, “The Emergence,” 15*; see also *ibid.*, 57*; eadem, “From Woman as Hasid,” 436-7.

¹⁸ On A. A. Person, see *Ha-Tamim*, 6 (1937) 89-90 (312a-b), n. 1.

¹⁹ Mondshine, *Migdal ‘oz*, 174. [Appendix 1]

arousing *Ze'ir anpin*. The Future will bring the fulfilment of [Prv 12:4] “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband.”²⁰

This version of the story introduces the mystical dimension, absent from the *Migdal 'oz* version, whereby Rashaz ecstatically loses consciousness as he experiences *devekut* (cleaving to the Divine). Remarkably, Rashaz's experience is triggered by hearing his wife talking to other women, and it is followed by his kabbalistic exegesis, spoken out apparently still in front of the female gathering, which renders his personal experience a discourse about the feminine and masculine (*Malkhut* and *Ze'ir anpin*) aspects of the Godhead, alluding to the supremacy of the female in the future to come [*le-'atid la-vo*]. Indeed, this version turns the message of the story from *Migdal 'oz* on its head, showing women as both playing an important part in triggering the mystical experience, and as recipients of a mystical teaching. It stands to reason, however, that the version from *Ha-yom yom* is more recent than the one from *Migdal 'oz* and should be perceived as expressing the 20th century stance of Habad's last leaders, rather than the 18th century stance of its founder. Indeed, many other Habad stories stand in contrast to the *Ha-yom yom* version, claiming that early Habad masters refrained from dealing with women.²¹ Furthermore, the story as presented in *Ha-yom yom* is not only much more elaborate, and as such most likely a revised version of the older, plainer version published in *Migdal 'oz*, but *Migdal 'oz*, unlike *Ha-yom yom*, actually provides us with the names of the transmitters of this tradition.²² The way the story has been retold resembles other attempts of the sixth leader of Habad, Yosef Yitshak Schneerson, to revise and re-write the history of Habad, so as to adjust it to his vision of the movement in the 20th century.²³

²⁰ Schneerson, *Ha-yom yom*, entry for 23rd Shevat, 22 [Appendix 2].

²¹ See Rapoport-Albert, “The Emergence,” 19*-23*.

²² The editors of later edition of *Ha-yom yom* claim that the version presented in *Migdal 'oz* is of lower credibility: “It is however known that there [in *Migdal 'oz*] it is only an oral tradition [*mi-pi ha-shemu'ah*], and this suffices for him who understands” (*Ha-yom yom*, 251 n. 1). In other words, they attribute more credibility to the version of the story supported by the authority of their own leader. For yet another version of the story, see Menahem Mendel Schneerson, *Sihot kodesh 5713*, 137.

²³ See Rapoport-Albert, “Hagiography with Footnotes.” In this context it is worth mentioning the memoirs of Yosef Yitshak Schneerson, which also enhanced anachronistically the notion of the special attitude to women in early Habad. The memoirs were first published in Yiddish in instalments

In fact, the story presented in *Ha-yom yom* is a compilation of three layers of tradition. First of all, the anecdote about Rashaz rebuking his wife has been merged with a concept presented in a homily of Dov Ber of Mezeritch, in which the verse “Go out and see, daughters of Zion” refers to the act of going forth out of corporeality, which is triggered by gazing at women.²⁴ Notably, in the retold story in *Ha-yom yom*, the mystical experience is no longer prompted by looking at women but by hearing them, perhaps because gazing at women did not seem to accord with the standards of modesty maintained by Habad in the 20th century. Moreover, elements of Rashaz’s teachings are indeed present in the *Ha-yom yom* version, for this story, unlike its Maggidic source, introduces the idea of a dynamic relation between the masculine and feminine constellations [*partsufim*] now and in the future-to-come, which is a recurrent motif in Rashaz’s writings.

Feminine imagery occurs throughout Rashaz’s lore, and to describe it in full would require a separate monograph. The present chapter will focus on the use of feminine imagery in Rashaz’s discourse on time. It will begin with a brief overview of hasidic attitudes toward women and their reverberations in the teachings of Rashaz. This will be followed by a discussion of the relation between time and femininity, discerning a range of temporal modes related to women as well as to the gender category of the female. Finally, I shall try to establish a link between, on the one hand, the theosophical discourse on time in relation to the female, and on the other hand, the religious praxis and the reality of flesh-and-blood women.

in the *Morgen zhurnal* from October 7, 1940 to February 23, 1942, and subsequently appeared as a book in 1947. An English translation by Nissan Mindel was published as *Lubavitcher Rabbi’s Memoirs*, Brooklyn, Kehot, 1949. Solely on the basis of the memoirs, Nahman Shemen in his Yiddish book on the attitude to women in Judaism (*Batsiyung tsu der froy*, 334-338) singled out Habad’s approach to women, to which he devoted a separate subchapter. On the non-historical character of these memoirs, see Rapoport-Albert, “Hagiography with Footnotes,” 154-55.

²⁴ See Dov Ber of Mezeritch, *Magid devarav le-Ya’akov*, 7c-d, par. 19, discussed in Rapoport-Albert, *Women and the Messianic Heresy*, 269-70. On gazing at women as a route to mystical experience in Kabbalah and Hasidism, see Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 153-78; idem, “Female Beauty,” 317-334; idem, *Hasidism*, 61-64.

2. Female Imagery in Rashaz's Teachings.

Hasidic teachings associate women with materiality, corporeality, incompleteness, the evil inclination and irrationality.²⁵ A similar approach is endorsed by Rashaz, though generally flesh-and-blood women are replaced in his teachings by the gender category "female." Nonetheless, in some cases the border between women and the abstract category "female" is blurred, as, for example, when kabbalistic ideas are employed to provide justification for certain halakhic rulings with regard to women, or conversely, when a saying of the Sages or a principle of Jewish law provides Rashaz with an insight into the female aspect of the Godhead.

The source of the division between male and female aspects of the Godhead lies in the image of *Adam kadmon*: the upper part of his body is linked with the male, and the lower part with the female [*binyan ha-nukba*], mirroring a common association of upper body parts with spirituality and lower body parts with sexuality and corporeality.²⁶ Not only does the attribution of gender to the upper and lower parts of the divine body suggest the lower status of the female, but the female aspect is perceived as more remote from the infinite divine source than the male. In this connection, Rashaz offers an interpretation of the verse [Gn 1:26]: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness":

It is written in the *Zohar*:²⁷ "Image [*tselem*] [refers to] the man, likeness [*demut*] – to the woman"; "image" is when it is drawn from an image of the face itself, as in the case of the letters of a stamp [impressed] in wax, or similarly in the appearance of the face itself in water and in a mirror, whereas "likeness" of the female is when it is drawn from a separate object that received the essence of the form; and this is the meaning of [1 Sm 2:2]: "There is no rock [*tsur*] like our God" who [*bBerakhot 10a*] "forms a form within a form [*tsar tsurah be-tokh tsurah*]," for he derives it from the form

²⁵ See Rosman, "Al nashim va-hasidut," 157; Rapoport-Albert, *Women and the Heresy*, 271-76.

²⁶ LT *Ba-midbar 7d*. The distinction between lower and upper parts of the body was enforced in Hasidism by the custom of wearing a sash [*gartel* or *avnet*] during prayer. See Wertheim, *Law and Custom in Hasidism*, 113-14.

²⁷ Ziii, 35b.

which had been drawn from the essence of the attribute [‘*etsem ha-to’ar*], called the primary form [*tsurah ha-rishonah*], etc.²⁸

Rashaz leans on a zoharic interpretation of this seemingly pleonastic expression in the Bible, where it is understood as referring to male and female as close (image) and remote (likeness) impressions of the divine. Notably, Rashaz’s discourse draws on a philosophical terminology: the male is formed out of the primary form, which makes him a direct reflection, or impression, of the divine, whereas the female is only a reflection of a reflection, or a divine form mediated through the male form. In a sophisticated wordplay based on the multiplicity of meanings associated with the root *tsade vav resh*, God-rock [*tsur*] becomes a demiurge who formed [*tsar*] or drew [*tsiyer*] both male and female forms [*tsurot*].

The linking of the male with the upper, loftier and intellectual sphere in contrast to the female, who is associated with the lower, material and corporeal one, implies the inferiority and dependence of the latter on the former. Already in the Talmud [*bShabat 33b*] “all women are light-minded” [*nashim da’atan kalah*] while every man is a mindful person [*bar da’at*]. Equipped with *da’at*, he always strives for the main thing, whereas the female tends to mistake the secondary for the primary, as is evident in the difference between male and female love: the male’s love aims at God himself, whereas the female’s is self-interested and seeks a reward.²⁹ The talmudic notion that women are light-minded creatures reoccurs in Rashaz’s discourses to express not only the inferiority of the female but also her dependence on the male. The light-minded female needs to be complemented by the mind [*da’at*] drawn down from the male. The process of drawing down *da’at* from the male to the female finds its expression in the ritual of waving the four species, where the palm tree stands for the six attributes constituting the male constellation of *Ze’ir anpin*,³⁰ while the *etrog* stands for the feminine *sefirah* of *Malkhut*.³¹

²⁸ *Seder tefilot*, 113d [Appendix 3].

²⁹ LT *Tazri’a* 20b.

³⁰ *Hesed, Gevurah, Tif’eret, Netsah, Hod and Yesod*.

³¹ *Seder tefilot* 261c-264b. On the gender symbolism of the four species, see Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being*, 151-2; idem, *Circle in the Square*, 118-9.

The drawing down of *da'at* to the female may in turn serve as an example of Rashaz's grasp of femaleness as receptivity. One of the recurrent ideas in Rashaz's teachings is the juxtaposition of the male and the female or, alternatively, of the bride and the groom, as donor and recipient (*mashpi'a* and *mekabel*).³² The female is characterized as a passive vessel for the influx bestowed upon her by the male, and her weakness [*teshishut koah*]³³ manifests itself in the fact that the influx she receives is limited and drawn from the backside [*ahorayim*] and external aspect [*hitsoniyut*] of the male, rather than from its innermost parts.³⁴ Furthermore, in the hasidic doctrine of creation by means of the divine word,³⁵ the female is identified with the divine speech³⁶ while her name is explicated as *nekev he* – a wordplay that alludes to the unlimited voice emerging from the unbounded divine attributes through an aperture [*nekev*], and subsequently being dispersed and formed into separate words of divine speech, uttered by the five³⁷ organs of verbal articulation [*he motse'ot ha-peh*].³⁸ These are subsequently identified with five “Judgements” [*gevurot*], symbolized by the five final letters: *kaf, mem, nun, pe, tsade*.³⁹ Indeed, the

³² On the zoharic sources of this juxtaposition, see Hellner-Eshed, *A River Flows from Eden*, 73. For examples of its use in Rashaz's lore, see LT *Shelah* 47c; MAHZ 5562, i, 403; 5569, 180; 5572, 129.

³³ Rashaz uses the expression “fatigue such as a woman's” [*teshishut koah ki-nekevah*], which is derived from Rashi's commentary on Nm 11:15 and Dt 5:25.

³⁴ LT *Kedoshim* 29d.

³⁵ On the doctrine of creation by means of divine speech in Hasidism, see Idel, “Le-‘olam ha-Shem,” 219-286, and in particular 239-43, where he discusses Rashaz. See also Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 104-5.

³⁶ The identification of the feminine aspect of the Godhead with the divine speech is a classical kabbalistic theme. See Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape*, 181-2

³⁷ The numerical value of the letter *he*, which also stands for the “lower letter *he*” – the final letter of the Tetragrammaton, identified with *Malkhut* and the divine speech.

³⁸ LT *Kedoshim* 29d.

³⁹ See for example T2, 4:79b; TO 63c, 117d; LT *Emor* 38d, *Ba-midbar* 7c, *Hukat* 58d; *Seder tefilot* 236d. Rashaz combines here three kabbalistic themes: the identification of the five Judgements with the five organs of verbal articulations and the five final letters (see Poppers, *Sefer ha-likutim*, *Be-reshit*, par. 2, 15-16), the correlation of the five Judgements with the five “naked things” in a woman enumerated in *bBerakhot* 24a (ibid. See also Ziii 142a), and the interpretation of the word *nekevah* as the *nekev he* (see for example Vital, *Ets hayim*, Sha'ar 34, ch. 2, par. 9, 151; ch. 3, 156; Poppers, *Sefer ha-likutim*, *Shir ha-shirim*, par. 2, 336).

female is envisioned as the recipient of the divine voice and as the factor responsible for limiting and transforming the unlimited voice into articulated words of divine speech.

The feminine *sefirah Malkhut* functions as a liminal entity in the *sefirotic* tree that bridges the gap between the divine unity and the multiplicity of creation.⁴⁰ As such, it is associated with forces of “Judgements” [*gevurot*] that restrain the unbounded influx of the divine life force [*hiyut*] in the process of creation, while her role as an intermediary between the divine and the worldly puts her in proximity to evil and impurity.⁴¹ The contractions of the divine life force caused by *Nukba* in order to vitalize the lower worlds are so intense that they enable the external (namely: evil) forces to draw from it: “Woman is the aspect of “Judgements” [*gevurot*], the aspect of *Malkhut* whose [Prv 5:5] “feet go down to death” (...), the source and root of the grasp of the external forces [*ahizat hitsoniyut*].”⁴² Here cosmology and halakhic praxis intertwine: the proximity of the abstract “female” to death precludes flesh-and-blood women from performing the purification ritual of the Red Heifer by sprinkling its blood.⁴³ Moreover, Rashaz buttresses the concept of the female who strengthens the external forces with the rabbinic saying that [*bBerakhot 24a*] “The hair of woman is a naked thing,”⁴⁴ by using female hair as a symbol of the life force divided, diminished and enclothed in an entity so remote from its source that cutting it off causes no pain.⁴⁵ In a similar vein Rashaz links

⁴⁰ On *Malkhut* as a liminal *sefirah*, see above, chapter 1, n. 56.

⁴¹ This is based on the kabbalistic notion of the affinity between the *Shekhinah* and “the other side.” See Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, i, 376-379 and ii, 469.

⁴² LT *Hukat* 60c [Appendix 4].

⁴³ Ibid. For the source of the law, see Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Hilekhot parah adumah, 10:6.

⁴⁴ See for example LT *Emor* 32a, *Nitsavim* 52b.

⁴⁵ See for example MAHZ 5568, i, 194. Elsewhere, a similar function is ascribed to nails. See for example TO 7a-c, 12d, 26b, 63b; MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 69. For the use of the image of hair in Rashaz’s teachings on the contraction of the Divine [*tsimsum*] and its Maggidic sources, see Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 94 n. 279. This view of hair and nails has a Lurianic source. On hair as the representation of Judgements [*Dinim*], see for example Vital, *Peri ‘ets hayim*, Sha’ar ha-berakhot, ch. 6, 43. On nails, see for example Vital *‘Ets hayim*, Sha’ar 31, ch. 2, 112.

menstrual blood with the external forces,⁴⁶ thus exacerbating the perception of women as impure by extending impurity from the halakhic domain to metaphysics. This in turn is echoed in the conduct instructions that appear in *Tanya*, where the talmudic comparison [*bShabat* 152a] of woman to “a vessel full of filth” is used in reference to evil and decay embodied in worldly delights, which one should learn to abhor.⁴⁷

2.1 *The fluidity of gender categories.*

Pejorative characteristics of the female in Rashaz’s writings are only part of the picture. In fact, Rashaz provides theoretical underpinnings for the re-evaluation of the function of the female in the world. First of all, according to Rashaz, there is no place void of God,⁴⁸ which means that there is room for divine service also in the lower domains of reality;⁴⁹ secondly, Rashaz refers in multiple places to such principles as “what descends lower ascends higher”⁵⁰ and “Their [namely the *sefirot*’s] end is fixed in their beginning,”⁵¹ which allows him to bring back the female with all its features to the centre of the divine drama.

As in the kabbalistic writings on which Rashaz was drawing, one can discern in his teachings a certain need for balance between masculine and feminine

⁴⁶ See for example *Seder tefilot*, 57a-b, where five colours of impure blood (see *mNidah* 2:6) are depicted as “a level which is entirely devoid of good”. See also MAHZ 5564, 262; 5568, 194 and 199. TO 59d associates impure blood with external thoughts [*mahashavot zarot*].

⁴⁷ T1, 14:20a. See also Rosman, “‘Al nashim va-hasidut,” 157 n. 24.

⁴⁸ One of the sayings that frequently recur in Rashaz’s writings is the zoharic “There is no place void of him [*let atar panui mineh: Tikunei zohar*, lvii, 91b],” underscoring the divine omnipresence in the world. See for example T1, 21:26b, 40:54b, 51:71a, T2, 7:83b, T3, 5:95b, T4, 1:102a, 11:116b, 20:131b; TO53c.

⁴⁹ This idea appears in Loewenthal, “Women and the Dialectic,” where it is suggested that the mystical concept of Lower Unity, that is unity of God within the world, was used in 20th century Habad as a theoretical framework for opening up for women the possibility of fully participating in the hasidic spiritual enterprise. See in particular 15*-19*.

⁵⁰ For the significance of this principle in Rashaz’s thought, see Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 74-77.

⁵¹ *Sefer yetsirah* 1:7.

aspects.⁵² Masculinity and femininity are presented as mutually dependent, a rule underscored by frequent use of the talmudic saying that [*bBerakhot* 60a]: “If the man first emits seed, the child will be a girl; if the woman first emits seed, the child will be a boy.” In some contexts Rashaz refers to this passage to show that the influence of the masculine divine name 45 is feminine, while that of the feminine name 52 is masculine; in others, the passage underpins the idea that the male, which currently stands higher than the female, was feminine in its source.⁵³

Just as the genders are mutually related and cannot function in isolation, so Adam must be complemented by his female partner – Eve, for “without Eve he is not called Adam at all.”⁵⁴ Rashaz refers here to the numerical value of the name of Adam (45 – related also to one of the divine names), and divides it into two substrates: the Tetragrammaton (numerical value – 26) and Havah (19).⁵⁵ Elsewhere, Rashaz identifies the lack of balance between feminine and masculine as the essence of the sin of the spies:⁵⁶ all the spies were men, deriving from the world of the masculine [*‘alma di-dekhura*],⁵⁷ and as such, they did not find it necessary to conform to the feminine Upper Land (*erets ‘elyonah* – an alternative term for *Malkhut* of the World of Emanation [*atsilut*]),⁵⁸ which on the practical level meant that they did not want to move on from performing the commandments spiritually (in thought) to actually performing them materially (by means of speech and deeds).⁵⁹ To sum up, in some contexts, the interconnection between the genders is seen by

⁵² For the balance between the male and female aspects in the *Zohar*, see Liebes, “Ha-mashiah shel ha-Zohar,” 198-203; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, i, 426-8.

⁵³ *Seder tefilot* 134b.

⁵⁴ *Seder tefilot* 115b, based on the zoharic saying [*Ziii*, 145b] that “Adam includes equally male and female.”

⁵⁵ See also, for example, LT *Va-yikra* 3d and Vital, *‘Ets hayim*, Sha‘ar 10, ch. 3, 140, Sha‘ar 38, ch. 2, 203.

⁵⁶ See Nm 13:1-14:9.

⁵⁷ See LT *Shelah* 41b; TO 44b. The world of the masculine [*‘alma di-dekhura*] corresponds to *Binah* in the sefirotic system, whereas the world of the feminine [*‘alma de-nukba*] represents the *sefirah* of *Malkhut*. See Wolfson, “Min u-minut,” 232; idem, *Circle in the Square*, 89 and 99-100; Scholem, “Le-heker kabalat r. Yitshak ben Ya‘akov ha-Kohen,” 40-41.

⁵⁸ See TO 43d.

⁵⁹ See LT *Shelah* 38b. *Binah* corresponds to thought, and *Malkhut* to speech and deeds.

Rashaz as a relation between two forces that need to be balanced; alternatively, Rashaz shows man to be a male entity that needs the female – a woman – to complement him and achieve wholeness, quite the reverse of the image discussed above of the imperfect female in need of complementation by the male.

On the one hand, the association of the female with the material world connects her to the evil side, but on the other hand, it presents her as a tool of creation, of the creation coming into being from concealment to revelation, and as an accumulation of all the divine powers, rooted more deeply in the divine than the male:⁶⁰ “The meaning of “bride” [*kalah*] is *kol he*, that is, *kol* means the inclusion [*klaliyut*] of all attributes [...], while *he* is the aspect of disclosure.”⁶¹ Notably, in such cases the female is usually presented as “bride” or “wife,”⁶² that is, she is contextualized in the framework of halakhically sanctioned union with the male rather than as an independent entity.

It is important to stress here that the gender categories in Rashaz’s teachings, as in the Kabbalah, are fluid.⁶³ Defining the male as donor and the female as recipient not only detaches both gender categories from sex categories, but in fact

⁶⁰ See for example *Seder tefilot* 46d: “It is also so according to the literal meaning [of the statement] that [*bKetubot* 59b] ‘a woman is only for the sake of beauty’: since women are by way of the creation more beautiful than men in their nature, as is well known, this is a sign that the issue is to be understood in this way also on high. This is why they are more beautiful in their nature, because ‘their end is fixed in their beginning’ [*Sefer yetsirah*, 1:7] and they receive from the light of *Keter*” [Appendix 5]. See also Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 198, where he discusses a similar concept found in the teachings of Dov Ber the Maggid of Mezeritch, and transmitted by his student Ze’ev Volf of Zhitomir in *Or ha-me’ir* 14b, based on the same passage from *bKetubot* 59b: “All the worlds in general were created only in order that the Holy One, blessed be He, will enjoy the lower degrees which are called Woman, which will receive an illumination from Him, blessed be He” [Appendix 6].

⁶¹ LT *Shir ha-shirim* 8d [Appendix 7]. This can be compared, for example, to T4, 5:107b, where the letter *he* “which, in its written form, also has dimensions of length and width, indicates the extension [*hitpashtut*].”

⁶² See for example the image of the feminine aspect of the Godhead that sustains and purifies the lower worlds, compared to the woman of valour who [Prv 31:15] “giveth food to her household” in *Seder tefilot* 115a. I will return to this issue later in the chapter.

⁶³ For a discussion of this phenomenon in Habad, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 204-05. For references to kabbalistic sources, see idem, “Min u-minut”, 231-262; Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 82-83.

makes all gender attributions relative, for depending on circumstances, the same entity can be seen as both feminine and masculine. Hence, following the *Zohar*,⁶⁴ even *Malkhut*, the epitome of femininity in the sefirotic tree, goes by a masculine name “lad” [*na‘ar*] until it receives the influx from the world of the masculine [*‘alma di-dekhura*], when it takes the name of “maiden” [*na‘arah*].⁶⁵

Thus, in certain contexts, male and female can stand for God and the people of Israel, for God injects life into Israel,⁶⁶ and Israel longs for God as the wife longs for her husband.⁶⁷ Conversely, the people of Israel may represent the male, while the Torah – the female, particularly in contexts in which Rashaz implements an alternative interpretation of the verse [Dt 33:4]: “Moses commanded us a law [*torah*], the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob,” which reads “betrothed” [*me‘orasah*] instead of “inheritance” [*morashah*].⁶⁸ Also the Torah itself can be perceived as a junction of two substrates: the masculine Written Torah and the feminine Oral Torah.⁶⁹

The identification of the bride with both the Torah and Israel creates a problem which Rashaz himself tries to resolve by ascribing the Torah-bride and Israel-bride to two different types of divine service, namely to worship through recitation of the Torah by learned men, and to worship through performance of the commandments, charity in particular, by uneducated men who cannot recite the whole Torah.⁷⁰ Elsewhere, the letters constituting the prayer text are described as feminine, as opposed to the masculine letters constituting the Torah.⁷¹ In some cases gender characteristics can be ascribed to different stages of worship; thus, for

⁶⁴ See Zii 38b

⁶⁵ LT *Matot* 85c, *Tsav* 9d. For an analogous example where *Shekhinah* changes her name from *Tsedek* to *Tsedakah*, see MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 159.

⁶⁶ See for example MAHZ *Razal*, 492.

⁶⁷ See for example MAHZ *Parshiyot*, ii, 567; *Seder tefilot* 280d.

⁶⁸ Based on *bBerakhot* 57a, *bPesahim*. 49b. See for example: TO 44d, 54d, 99c; LT *Shelah* 45b, 47c.

⁶⁹ See for example TO 6d; LT *Be-shalah* 1a; *Seder tefilot* 132c.

⁷⁰ MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 268-9.

⁷¹ See for example TO 63d-64a; MAHZ 5567, 40-42.

example, humility, described as descending to the level of a woman, is a condition necessary to achieve the state of cleaving to God, accessible to every Jewish soul.⁷²

Furthermore, gender categories are used to draw borders between different modes of hasidic worship and between a hasidic *tsadik* and his flock. On the grounds of the distinction between the active male and the passive female, Rashaz distinguishes between feminine and masculine modes of hasidic worship, where the former concentrates on receiving spiritual power from the *tsadik*, and the latter puts a stress on individual spiritual effort. Even though the “feminine” Hasidim excel in the attribute of awe, this awe is more limited than the “masculine” attribute, for by dint of being feminine it lacks mind [*da‘at*].⁷³ By contrast, one whose worship is based on his individual spiritual powers, is equipped as a “male” with *da‘at* – the attribute that comprises two opposite aspects simultaneously.⁷⁴ Thanks to this he may serve God even when he is struck by “alien” thoughts, and reach a loftier level than one who stays on the “feminine” level of worship.⁷⁵

Additionally, in a manuscript text by a follower of Habad, the relation between *tsadik* and Hasid is compared to the relation between man and wife: just as a man acquires his wife by money, document or intercourse,⁷⁶ so the *tsadik* acquires a follower by drawing down love of God⁷⁷ (or alternatively, by the money the Hasid gives to the *tsadik*⁷⁸), by his teachings,⁷⁹ and by a one-on-one encounter between them [*yehidut*].⁸⁰

⁷² See MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 170-1.

⁷³ See *bShabat* 33b.

⁷⁴ See *Seder tefilot* 80d.

⁷⁵ Mondshine, *Migdal ‘oz*, 380-1, where this idea is set in the context of the polemics about Rashaz’s way of leadership as opposed to that of the Polish *tsadikim*. For a slightly different version of the discourse, see *Boneh Yerushalaim*, 60.

⁷⁶ See *mKidushin* 1:1.

⁷⁷ A play on the double meaning of Hebrew root *kaf samekh pe* meaning both money or silver and yearning or love. For the overt use of this concept, see for example T1, 50:70b; LT ‘*Ekev* 16d.

⁷⁸ Based on *Shulhan ‘arukh*, Even ha-‘ezer 27:9 – a man can acquire a wife by way of the pleasure he derived from a monetary gift he received from her.

⁷⁹ See LT *Be-shalah* 1c: “The Sages of blessed memory said: [*mKidushin* 1:1] ‘A women is acquired by three means’ [...] ‘by document’ [*bi-shetar*] refers to the letters constituting the Torah.” See also

3. The female in relation to time.

The distinctive position of the female in time-related discourse is stressed in the following passage from Rashaz's sermons:

Now, *Malkhut*, which is the supernal speech, receives from the aspect of *Ze'ir anpin*, that is, from the chest down, for the constitution of the feminine [*binyan ha-nukba*] begins there, and that is why it is called [Hos 1:10] "the number of the children of Israel," for the root of the aspect of number [comes] from there (as does the root of the aspect of time's coming to being, as is written in *Likutei Torah*, pericope *Be-reshit*,⁸¹ namely time, too, is an aspect of number and division [*mispar ve-hithalkut*]). But in the future-to-come [*le-'atid la-vo*], when *Malkhut*, which is speech, will ascend to receive from the very aspects of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, which constitute the aspect of [Ps 147:5] "his understanding is infinite" [*li-tevunato en mispar*], then it will be by way of [Hos 1:10] "the number of the children of Israel (...) which cannot be measured nor numbered". That is to say, even the world of disclosure [*'alma de-itgalya*] which is currently in the aspect of finitude [lit. "number" – *mispar*], will be in the future on the level of secret and the world of concealment [*'alma de-itkasya*], which is in the aspect of infinity [lit. "no-number" – *lo mispar*].⁸²

This passage not only hints at the position of the female in the sefirotic tree and its relation to the divine speech, but also at the correlation between the feminine and time, and in particular at the function of the feminine in two temporal settings: the

MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 178-9: "[b]Kidushin 9a] 'He writes on paper or on a shard, [that is to say,] whether he studies Kabbalah [and] *Zohar* or simple *Gemarah* – she is sanctified unto him."

⁸⁰ Mondshine, *Migdal 'oz*, 291-92. A similar concept of the relationship between the "male" *tsadik* and the "female" Hasid can be found in the writings of other hasidic masters, including those who preceded Rashaz. See Rapoport-Albert, *Women and the Heresy*, 273-4. In hasidic literature the *tsadik* can be perceived as changing gender roles, being male as "donor" in relation to his followers but female as "recipient" when in relation to God, see Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 97.

⁸¹ See Vital, *Likutei Torah*, Hakdamah le-Ta'amei mitsvot, 34-35.

⁸² LT *Ba-midbar* 7d [Appendix 8].

time of creation and the time of redemption. The female aspect of the Godhead is identified as the source of time, for time is an aspect of multiplicity, which originates in *Malkhut* from the influx she receives from *Ze'ir anpin*. However, in the future-to-come, the female shall rise above *Ze'ir anpin* to receive the influx from the higher *sefirot* of *Hokhmah* and *Binah*, and therefore it will transcend the boundaries of time. The material world of revelation, linked with femininity, will be elevated and transformed to the level of the loftier world of concealment. The transition from temporality to eternity, which the created world will undergo in the future-to-come, is unequivocally related to the dynamic of the feminine. I shall discuss this relation in the next section of the chapter.

3.1 “A help meet for him.”

Rashaz’s exposition of the female is deliberately ambiguous and may be seen as an expression of a general tendency that is discernible in his teachings to view evil as an epistemological rather than an ontological problem, which vanishes if looked upon from a proper perspective. In accordance with this tendency, the female as the negative factor that brings about separation from God, impurity, and enhancement of the power of the external forces, is to be re-examined when looked upon from a different, soteriological perspective.

Rashaz’s soteriology is rooted in his doctrine of creation: the contraction and apparent withdrawal of God from the world in the process of creation⁸³ constitute a part of the divine plan to bring into existence separate beings opposed to the divine unity, which in time would carry out the task of reinstating cosmic unity and bringing about the redemption. Leaning on the maxim that what was “last in production, came first in thought,” [*sof ma’aseh ‘alah be-mahashavah tehilah*],⁸⁴ Rashaz explains that the creative thought of God above, with which everything began, would be completed through actions by Israel below – a power bestowed upon the congregation of Israel by virtue of its own origin in the primordial divine

⁸³ On the contraction in Rashaz’s doctrine of creation, see Elijior, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 79-91 Schwartz, *Mahashevet Habad*, 86-114.

⁸⁴ See chapter 2, n. 21 above.

thought.⁸⁵ Hence the eschatological state, described as [God's] "Dwelling place in the lower worlds" [*dirah ba-tahtonim*], is to be reinstated through the efforts of the congregation of Israel, identified as the female, who is to be elevated to the level of its male counterpart:

As Scripture says [Prv 12:4]: "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband": the aspect of *Malkhut* of the world of Emanation, [which is] the source of the congregation of Israel [*keneset Yisra'el*], is the "crown to her husband," [that is, to] the aspect of *Ze'ir anpin*, which is the end of the world of *Ein Sof*, for "their end is fixed in their beginning [*Sefer yetsirah* 1:7]."⁸⁶

This passage introduces the topic of the elevation of the female from her lowly state to be the crown of the male at the time of the redemption. The female, identified here with the congregation of Israel, is lifted out of her state of separateness to be reinstated within the unity of *Ein Sof*, and to rise above the male *Ze'ir anpin*, a constellation [*partsuf*] which somewhat paradoxically marks the limit of the world of limitlessness - *Ein Sof*.

The eschatological elevation of the female above the male will be discussed further below. For the time being, it is important to emphasize the negative function ascribed to the female at the time of the creation, which is to be reversed at the time of the redemption. The dialectic character of the female is exposed in Rashaz's exegesis of Gn 2:18: "I will make him a help meet for him" [*'ezer ke-negdo*].⁸⁷ In Rashaz's exegesis, Adam and Eve allegorically represent God and the *Shekhinah*, hence the verse [Gn 2:18] "It is not good that the man should be alone" is interpreted as referring to God and explained as meaning that it is not desirable for there to be nothing other than God, with everything else being annihilated in relation to Him [*ha-kol be-vitul elav yitbarakh*]. Therefore, God created woman as a help [*'ezer*], who would be opposed to him [*ke-negdo*], namely:

As an aspect of contraction and concealment [*tsimtsum ve-hester*] opposing the expansion of the [divine] illumination [*hitpashtut he'arah*], [...] because

⁸⁵ See *Bereshit rabah* 1:4: "[God's] thought of Israel preceded everything else."

⁸⁶ *Seder tefilot* 109b [Appendix 9].

⁸⁷ TO 5a-b.

of which the body and the animal soul, which are separate beings [*yesh venifradim*], come into existence [...]; and it is precisely this that will be “the help,” for from this concealment there will later be made the reflected light [*or hozer*] far higher [*le-ma’lah ma’lah*].⁸⁸

Rashaz reads the expression *ke-negdo*, used in the biblical narrative in reference to the woman, as referring to the constraining force that opposes [*menaged*] and limits the unbounded expansion of the divine light, and consequently leads to the emergence of beings that are separate from the divine unity. Indeed, in Rashaz’s sermons, as in the Lurianic Kabbalah, the alterity of the female stands for the “principle of transformation and shaping.”⁸⁹

The process of creation, however, is not finished with the emergence of non-divine beings, and consequently the role of the feminine is not limited to it. Unlike the commentators on whom Rashaz bases his exegesis, who considered *‘ezer* and *ke-negdo* as referring to two mutually exclusive possibilities of what woman can become for man,⁹⁰ Rashaz sees these two terms as complementary. Not only has the female helped in the process of creation, but she has also brought out of concealment the reflected light [*or hozer*], which “returns and ascends to a far higher level than that of the source of the illumination [*le-ma’lah ma’lah mike-fi ‘erekh koah mekor ha-he’arah*].”⁹¹ In other words, it is precisely the materiality and limitedness of the feminine that intensifies the flow of divine light, to the point of its full revelation in the future to come, when it will be brighter than its source. Thus Rashaz says:

From all this we may understand what one says in the wedding blessings, where in the blessing “grant perfect joy” [*sameah tesamah*] [one says]:

⁸⁸ TO 5b [Appendix 10].

⁸⁹ See Jacobson, “The Aspect of the ‘Feminine,’” 244. See also *ibid.*, 246 n. 17: “The emphasized speculative presentation of the *Malkhut* as a metaphysical principle is a late stage in the course of a long development of the early Lurianic allusions concerning the appearance of the female principle.”

⁹⁰ “If he is worthy, she will be a helpmate [*‘ezer*]. If he is not worthy, she will be against him [*ke-negdo*]” (Rashi, to Gn 2:18. See also *bYevamot* 63a; *Bereshit rabah* 17:3, 11; *Pirke de-rabi Eli‘ezer*, ch. 12, 11a). By contrast, Rashaz states that even if Adam had not sinned at all, the helpmate would have remained in opposition to him, albeit in a more subtle form [*be-dakut yoter*]. See TO 5b.

⁹¹ TO 5a.

“gladden the bridegroom and the bride” [*ve-kalah*], while in the last blessing, “who created,” one says: “gladden the bridegroom with the bride” [*‘im ha-kalah*]. This means that the bride stands for *Malkhut*. In the beginning she receives the light from the bridegroom, drawn from the world of the masculine [*‘alma di-dekhura*] into the world of the feminine [*‘alma de-nukba*]. And this is [the meaning of] “bridegroom and bride.” However, later he “gladdens the bridegroom with the bride,” because by means of the bride he gladden the bridegroom, for she is verily made a helpmate [*‘ezer*] for him and an addition of light from the aspect of “opposite him” [*ke-negdo*], as mentioned above. And this is what is meant by: she becomes a crown to her husband.⁹²

In Rashaz’s sermons, the different wording of the two wedding blessings is expounded in overtly eschatological terms as the reversal of gender polarity at the time of redemption.⁹³ The wording of the first blessing refers to the present time, when the male facet of reality [*‘alma di-dekhura*] draws down the divine light to its female counterpart [*‘alma de-nukba*], and the primacy of its influx is mirrored in the wording of the blessing, where the female follows and is thus secondary to the male [*hatan ve-kalah*]. But in the future time of redemption, this relationship will be reversed: the female will become the donor, and the male the receiver of the divine influx, a configuration reflected in the wording of the final wedding blessing, according to which the bridegroom is to be gladdened by means of the bride [*‘im ha-kalah*].

Remarkably, Rashaz interprets the reconfiguration of divine powers in the end of time by returning to the events of its beginning: the elevation of the female above the male marks the completion of the act of the creation of woman, for by becoming the donor who brings an additional influx of light to the male she fulfils her task of being his “helpmate” [*‘ezer*]. Her opposition to the male is not effaced;

⁹² Ibid. [Appendix 11].

⁹³ See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 206-9; Polen, “Miriam’s Dance,” 6; Rapoport-Albert, “From Woman as Hasid,” 444-5. In some of the discourses, Rashaz talks about the equality of the male and the female rather than the supremacy of either at the time of redemption. See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 206. For the list of relevant sources see Loewenthal, “Woman and the Dialectic,” *65 n. 192.

quite the contrary – while the genders are transfigured in the future-to-come, woman retains her otherness in relation to man, but in the perfected state, her opposition to the male does not function as a limitation; rather it complements and enriches him, or in the words of Rashaz’s allegory, the one who opposes the male [*ke-negdo*] is simultaneously his helpmate [*‘ezer*]. Indeed, in the time of redemption the female is elevated to a state in which the two gender opposites coincide, and while the female retains her separateness from the male, she is rid of her negativity.

In some places Rashaz further reinforces the idea of the empowerment of the female in the future-to-come. In the time of exile, he says, the bride remains silent during the rite of marriage, but in the future-to-come, she will gain her voice:

One also says [in the last of the Seven Blessings] that the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride will be heard, for in the future [to-come] the bride will have a voice. The voice stands for drawing down and revelation [*hamshakhah ve-hitgalut*], as in the case of the material voice that is drawn down and revealed from the breath of the heart to the trachea. In the future, when [Prv 12:4] “a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband”, the bride will have the voice of drawing down and revelation.⁹⁴

The transfiguration of genders in the future to come, expressed by the quotation from Proverbs whereby the “virtuous woman,” to wit *Malkhut*, will ascend to be a crown to her husband, namely to *Ze‘ir anpin*, will invest the female with a voice. That is to say, it will turn the female from passive to active. References to activity versus passivity in terms of silence versus voice or effacement versus the drawing down of the divine influx, recur in Rashaz’s sermons.⁹⁵ Analogously, when *Malkhut* is elevated in the future-to-come, it will be transformed from a receptive vessel of the influx into its transmitter to the *sefirot*.

⁹⁴ LT *Shir ha-shirim*, 48b [Appendix 12]. For a discussion of this motif, see Levin, “Kol ha-kalah le-‘atid,” 365-368. The notion of the exile as the time when the congregation of Israel [*keneset Yisrael*] is speechless, appears in Zi, 36a. See also Wiskind Elper, “Be-tselem Elohim,” 21.

⁹⁵ For the voice as the drawing down and revelation of the divine influx, see for example LT *Shir ha-shirim* 15b, 48b; MAHZ 5566, ii, 677. For the idea of silence as nullification, see for example TO 45c; LT *Tsav* 15c; MAHZ 5564, 238; *Seder tefilot*, 116a, 132c, 148c, 237d.

The disclosure of divinity in the future-to-come reveals the negative feminine force as being entirely good. While in the present time of exile, the female, and particularly feminine carnality, is linked to “the other side,” in the future-to-come it will be tempered and directed to the side of holiness only:

It is written [Dt 21:13]: “And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her,” [Dt 21:12] “and pare her nails,” for she is [Dt 21:11] “a woman of goodly form” [*ishah yefat to’ar*] [in reference to] whom, currently [Is 50:3] “I clothe the heaven with blackness”. But in the future “she shall put off” etc., “and pare her nails,” which refers to the rectification of the nails [*tikun ha-tsipornayim*] so that there will be no aspect of excess [*motarot*] at all.⁹⁶

The passage juxtaposes the present, in which the woman – here symbolizing the congregation of Israel – conceals her beauty, and the future-to-come, when she will cast off her clothing, pare her nails, and enter her marriage with God. The otherness of woman is enhanced by a reference to the biblical verse which deals with a gentile woman seized as a captive and subsequently taken as bride by an Israelite soldier. However, the male – God – has the power to release her from captivity – undoubtedly a reference to the exile of the Jewish nation, to uncover her hidden beauty, and to unite with her in a halakhically sanctioned marriage. Moreover, the *rite de passage* from captivity to freedom prescribed by Scripture includes the paring of nails. The nails, like hair,⁹⁷ stand for the divine vitality when it is drawn by the external forces; hence, in the future-to-come, by paring the “excess” of the nails, the female will cut off the flow of divine vitality to the “external forces,” and all her carnal beauty will be revealed for the enjoyment of the male. Hence, the elevation of the female in the future to come is related to the transformation of evil into good in the end of days.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 69 [Appendix 13].

⁹⁷ See note 45 above.

⁹⁸ See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 209 where he notes this transformation.

3.2 *The female and the purifications of sparks.*

The elevation of the female in the end of days is an outcome of the continuous process of purification of sparks, in which the gender dichotomy plays an important role. Although the final redemption is to come at the end of days, there are special times in the as yet unredeemed world which temporarily bring closer, or anticipate, the time of the redemption. This temporal gender dynamics is illustrated, again, with the image of a wedding:

And behold, in the future-to-come there will be [Is 62:5] “as the groom rejoiceth over the bride” (...), there will be [Jer 31:22] “a woman shall compass a man [*nekevah tesovev gaver*],” the bride will ascend with her vessels to the aspect of canopy surrounding all the worlds [*sovev kol ‘almin*], and then there will be “he gladdens the bridegroom with the bride” – by means of the bride; [...] whereas now there is [*bKetubot 16b*] “how does one dance before the bride,” as in the example of the dance, during which one draws near [to one’s partner] and then moves away, and this is the essence of delight, as in the case of two lovers who have not seen each other for a long time, but who later draw near [to each other], which gives rise to great delight. Similarly, since she [the bride] has descended and clothed herself below by way of distance, when later she draws closer to her groom and rises up, great delight arises from it, and [Eccl 2:13] “light excelleth darkness,” for she has [Lv 22:13] “returned unto her father’s house.”⁹⁹

In the passage quoted above, Rashaz employs the image of a wedding ceremony to express the idea of ultimate redemption, in which the female – *Malkhut*, the congregation of Israel – ascends to the wedding canopy. Since the image of the canopy spread over the bride and groom represents the transcendent aspect of God (“surrounding all worlds”), and the bride (*Malkhut*) stands for the immanent aspect of the divine (“filling all worlds”),¹⁰⁰ the ritual of the ascent of the bride to the canopy symbolizes the unification of transcendence and immanence at the end of days. In addition, the words of the prophet proclaiming that “Woman shall compass

⁹⁹ MAHZ *Hanahot ha-Rap*, 64-5 [Appendix 14].

¹⁰⁰ See Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 65-66 and the sources enlisted there.

a man,” traditionally rendered by the bride during her customary encircling of the groom seven times, in Rashaz’s exposition gain an eschatological meaning as referring to the elevation of the female above the male – the state envisioned by the final wedding blessing, “gladden the bridegroom with the bride.”

The future delight derived from the union between the groom and his bride, God and Israel, can be foretasted in the present, but their present union is not permanent, as they constantly draw near and then separate from each other, a dynamics reflected in Rashaz’s homily as the *mitsvah tants* – the customary dance in which the groom dances in front of his bride, drawing near and withdrawing from her again and again, until he finally holds her hands.¹⁰¹ Similarly, the male and the female aspects of the Godhead draw near to each other only to be subsequently separated, until finally, in the end of days, they will be permanently united. The reference to Eccl 2:13 points to one of Rashaz’s main topics, the idea that greater power comes from transforming evil into good than from the good itself.¹⁰² It provides justification for the distance between the male and the female in the present: the final return of the bride to the house of her father, namely, the reunification of the female and the male facets of the Godhead at the end of days, will bring about greater light and more intense delight than when both these aspects were one. Moreover, the verse from Jer 31:22 – “The woman will compass the man” – may be read as well as meaning that “The woman will court the man.”¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ On the custom of the wedding dance, see Friedhaber, “Dance with the Separating Kerchief,” 65-9. For an overt use in hasidic sources of the *mitsvah* dance as an allegory of the purifications of the holy sparks on the way to redemption, see *Keter Shem Tov*, par. 179, 23a, noted by Fishbane in “To Jump for Joy,” 378 n. 18.

¹⁰² See for example T1, 39:52b, 49:69a; TO 8d, 9a, 71c, 80c; LT *Va-yikra* 2d, *Naso* 28c, *Shelah* 47a, *Hukat* 48d, *Balak* 74c, *Tetse* 38b, *Rosh ha-shanah* 55b, *Shemini ‘atseret* 90b.

¹⁰³ See for example the commentary of David Kimhi (Radak) on Jeremiah 31:32: “‘For the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth.’ In the future a new thing will be created after you have sat for many years in the exile. What is the new thing? That the woman shall compass a man, for it is the custom of the world [*derekh ‘olam*] that the man woos [*mehazer*] and courts [*mesovev*] the woman, as the Sages said [*bKidushin* 2b]: ‘The loser goes in search [*mehazer*] of the lost article.’ But when the woman shall court her man, that is to say, when the children of Israel return to the Lord their God, he will redeem them, as is stated in the prophecy of Hosea [3:5]: ‘Afterwards shall the children of Israel

Considering that Rashaz refers to the present as the times when [*bKidushin 2b*]: “It is the way of man to go in search of (or: to woo) a woman, but it is not the way of a woman to go in search of (or: to woo) a man,” and [*bYevamot 65b*]: “It is the nature of man to conquer, but it is not the nature of woman to conquer,” his use of the passage from Jeremiah to depict the future-to-come suggests a future reversal of the traditional setting, in which the male is active and the female is passive. Nonetheless, in the present time, the active role decidedly belongs to the man. During the lengthy process of purification that still lies ahead, as in the image of *mitsvah tants*, the masculine and feminine aspects draw near to each other at certain times, only to be separated again, until the process is finally completed at the end of days and they are permanently united as bride and groom under the canopy.

3.1.1 Nocturnal purifications.

The Lurianic concept of the breaking of the vessels, which effects the falling of the holy sparks into the world of husks, is integrated into Rashaz’s teachings. According to these teachings, the present time is devoted to the process of purifying the sparks from the impure husks, and the completion of the process will mark the transition to the time of redemption. The process of purification features in the Lurianic discourse on the four divine names derived from the Tegrammaton: the name of 72 letters corresponding to the constellation of *Aba*, the name of 63 to *Ima*, of 45 to *Ze’ir anpin* and of 52 to *Malkhut*.¹⁰⁴ The process of purification takes place between the lower two names, which subsequently are depicted as masculine and feminine.¹⁰⁵

return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days” [Appendix 15].

¹⁰⁴ See Kallus, “The Theurgy of Prayer,” 134-36.

¹⁰⁵ See for example LT *Va-yikra* 3c-d, where Adam is identified with the name of 45 (since the numerical value of Adam is 45) and Eve is identified with *Malkhut* and the name of 52. Consequently, as Eve was taken out of Adam’s flesh, the feminine name of 52 is derived from the masculine name of 45. Rashaz applies the distinction between these two names to his psychology (where 45 refers to the divine soul and 52 to the animal soul, for 52 equals *behemah* – animal. See for example T1, 46:66b; TO 18a, 47d, 76b; LT *Va-yikra* 3b-d, *Tsav* 8b, *Shemini* ‘atseret, 19a, *Emor* 35d, as well as Rashaz’s doctrine of divine service (where 45 represents Torah study and the ecstatic “great love” [*ahavah*

The name of 52, corresponding to *Malkhut* of the World of Emanation, fell down during the breaking of the vessels and is responsible for the purification of the lower worlds – Creation, Formation and Making, that is, for the separation of good from evil, whereas the name of 45 subsequently purifies the name of 52, transforming it to good.¹⁰⁶

These processes are described in terms of the elevation of female waters [*mayin nukbin*] and the drawing down of male waters [*mayin dukhrin*],¹⁰⁷ which corresponds to two types of nullification [*bitul*] – the nullification of being [*bitul ha-yesh*] and the uppermost nullification [*bitul 'elyon*].¹⁰⁸ In the former, independent existence is nullified (“included in the aspect of nullification”¹⁰⁹) whereas in the latter the female waters are “verily included in the divinity by way of nullification, that is, in the [World of] Emanation, [in the] upper unification [where] ‘He and his life forces and his causations are one.’”¹¹⁰

The lower purification is attributed to Aharon and the upper to Moses,¹¹¹ which indicates the different temporal configurations of each one:

rabah], whereas 52 stands for prayer and “worldly love” [*ahavat 'olam*], namely love of God that results from contemplation of the world. See TO 47d-48a. For a discussion of these two types of love, see T1, 43:62b and Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 178-85).

¹⁰⁶ See TO 47d-48a.

¹⁰⁷ On male and female waters see Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape*, 187-8; Wolfson, *Circle in the Square*, 110-115.

¹⁰⁸ On different types of nullification in the Habad tradition, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 75-6.

¹⁰⁹ LT *'Ekev* 15d.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. The expression “He and his life forces and his causations are one” comes from *Tikunei zohar*, Hakdamah, 3b.

¹¹¹ See TO 99c. The attribution of the lower nullification to Eliyahu in the same passage is based on the numerical value of his name which is 52, whereas the relation of Moses to the upper annihilation is based on Moses’ expression [Ex 16:7-8]: “And what are we? [*ve-nahnu mah*]”, where the word “what” [*mah*] equals 45, and the whole phrase is interpreted as an expression of Moses’ ultimate humility. Since Moses’ words refer to both himself and Aharon, the latter, too, is comprised in the name of 45. However, Aharon is not on the same level as Moses, and therefore he is referred to as “52 of 45” and related to the purification of the lower worlds by *Malkhut*.

“Therefore Scripture said [Nm 8:2]: “When thou lightest the lamps” [*be-ha‘alotekha et ha-nerot*] with reference to Aharon, who is called “the best man of Matrona” [*shushbina de-matronita*], [Ex 27:21] “From evening to morning”, which is the totality of time in twelve combinations of night and twelve combinations of day. This is not the case with Moses, who is called a man of God [*ish Elohim*], which is above the aspect of time, and in reference to whom it is said [Ex 27:20, Lv 24:2] “To cause the lamp to burn continually” [*le-ha‘alot ner tamid*].”¹¹²

In this passage the upper purification, linked to the figure of Moses, is described as being beyond the limits of time, for Moses’ candle burns everlastingly. Moses’ bynames, such as “man of God” [*ish Elohim*], or “the king’s best man” [*shushbina de-malka*],¹¹³ point to his relation with the male aspect of the Godhead.¹¹⁴ In contrast to Moses, Aharon is “the best man” of Matrona (i.e. *Shekhinah, Malkhut*), and as such he remains under the governance of time, which is why his lamp burns “from evening to morning” only.

The expression “from evening to morning” can be interpreted in a twofold way. On the one hand, it points to the totality of time comprising night and day, as in the quotation above. On the other hand, however, it suggests that the purification of the lower worlds is linked to nocturnal time. The connection between night and *Malkhut*, well attested in the Kabbalah,¹¹⁵ occurs in Rashaz’s writings, where he states that *Malkhut* descends at night to purify the lower worlds, while during the day it returns to its position within the Godhead.¹¹⁶ One of the reasons for the bond that ties *Malkhut* to the night may be found in the idea, expressed above, that the twenty-four hours of the day and night are governed by different combinations of the divine

¹¹² TO 111b [Appendix 16].

¹¹³ TO 111a.

¹¹⁴ Even though the name *Elohim* is often interpreted as meaning “nature” (both *Elohim* and *ha-teva’* equal 86 numerologically; see above, chapter one, n. 47), and therefore as related to the feminine *sefirah* of *Malkhut*, in the *ma‘amar* from which the passage quoted above is excerpted, Rashaz casually interprets *Elohim* as referring to the “essence of godliness” [*‘atmut elokut*], and thus to the aspect of the Godhead that is beyond its lower hypostases.

¹¹⁵ See for example Vital, *‘Ets hayim*, Sha‘ar 34, chapter 7, 165.

¹¹⁶ TO 47d.

name - twelve combinations of the Tetragrammaton governing twelve daily hours, and twelve combinations of the name *Adonai* (corresponding to *Malkhut*)¹¹⁷ governing twelve nocturnal hours.¹¹⁸ Hence the transition between day and night reflects processes that take place in the upper worlds.

In another sermon¹¹⁹ Rashaz refers to the zoharic idea that “in the night the gates of paradise are shut.”¹²⁰ In his interpretation this expression refers to the cutting off of the divine influx that flows into the lower worlds through *Malkhut* of the World of Emanation from the internal aspect of the Godhead. Rashaz differentiates here between the internal and external aspects of the Divine. The internal aspects are *Hokhmah*, *Binah*, *Da'at*, the intellectual attributes described collectively as *mohin*, together with the six lower *sefirot*, corresponding to the emotional attributes [*midot*]. Together, *mohin* and *midot* represent in this sermon the unity of the transcendent God. The external aspects of the Divine are the sparks of holiness trapped in the world since the breaking of the vessels. They represent the state of separation from the divine unity and correspond to bodily functions, such as digestion. *Malkhut*, given its role of mediator between the Divine and the created worlds, binds together the external and the internal aspects. During the daytime she transmits the internal influx, while at night, in the absence of the internal influx, the overflow of the divine vitality is transmitted from the external aspect of *Malkhut* of the World of Emanation, which purifies the 288 sparks trapped in the lower worlds. This is how Rashaz interprets the biblical verse [Prv 31:15]: “She riseth while it is yet night and giveth food to her household,” where “food” [*teref*], whose numerical value is 288 plus one, indicates the 288 holy sparks.¹²¹ Rashaz compares this to sleeping: when a man is asleep, his emotional and intellectual faculties depart from him and are contracted into his heart; at the same time his less vital faculties become

¹¹⁷ On the correspondence between *sefirot* and divine names, see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 107-08.

¹¹⁸ See T1, 41:58b; MAHZ 5567, 347.

¹¹⁹ MAHZ 5566, i, 105-6; see also TO 12c.

¹²⁰ Based on Zi, 92a, 172a, 242b.

¹²¹ See also MAHZ 5566, i, 107. For another example of translating *teref* as 288+1 see TO 110. Elsewhere Rashaz explains that *teref* (pray) alludes to the power of Judgements by means of which *Malkhut* purifies the lower worlds [Ez 22:25] “like a roaring lion ravening [the pray]”. See LT *Emor* 36b and MAHZ *Parshiyot*, ii, 678.

active, and he digests more intensively than while he is awake, digestion in turn functioning as a ubiquitous metaphor for purification in Rashaz's lore.¹²²

Nevertheless, the nocturnal activity of *Malkhut* should not necessarily be read as if it bestowed upon her a certain degree of independence; quite the contrary – even the image of *Malkhut* as a housewife, on whose shoulders rests the responsibility for sustaining the entire household, is used to stress her dependence and subordination to the male. Thus the nocturnal descent of *Malkhut* to purify the lower worlds is compared to the wife who is adorning herself at night to please her husband.¹²³ Moreover, insofar as the gender perspective is imposed on the weekly time cycle, the role of the female is diminished even more:

It is known that in truth, woman, namely *Nukba* of the World of Emanation, in herself [*bYevamot* 65b] “it is not in her nature to conquer.” Rather, the fact that *Malkhut* of the World of Emanation purifies [the husks of] *noga* in the worlds of Creation, Formation and Making on the week days is only by virtue of her being en clothed by *Ze'ir anpin's* purifying attributes, for Sunday is the radiance of *Hesed* of *Ze'ir anpin* in her, giving her the power to purify; Monday is the radiance of *Gevurah*, etc. [...]. This is due to the powerful potency of the male, who purifies throughout the six days of the week, which are called [*Ez* 46:1] “working days” [*yemei ha-ma'aseh*], by en clothing the female [*Nukba*]. The proof of this is that the Sabbath is the seventh day corresponding to the female [*Nukba*] of *Ze'ir anpin*, as Scripture says [*Ex* 31:14]: “For it is holy unto you” [*kodesh hi*], using the feminine form [in reference to the Sabbath], which is followed by [*Lv* 23:3, 23:31; *Nm* 29:7] “You shall do no work therein,” for sorting [*borer*] is forbidden at that time,¹²⁴ and every type of work [*melakhah*] out of the thirty-nine types of work, including purification, arises from the fact that with regard to the female, *Nukba* of *Ze'ir anpin* herself, “it is not in her nature to conquer” but

¹²² This is because digestion separates the life force from waste in food. See for example: *TO* 47d; *LT Emor* 36a.

¹²³ See *MAHZ Ketuvim*, ii, p. 239.

¹²⁴ Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilekhot Shabat*, 8:11–13, 21:17; *Shulkhan 'arukh Rabenu ha-Zaken*, *Orah hayim*, 319.

only to elevate the purified [sparks] that have already been purified during the week days, “the days of work,” by means of the radiance of the name of 45 - the male of *Ze'ir anpin* – within her.¹²⁵

Rashaz reiterates the view of the female as weak and passive by claiming that even the purifications of the lower worlds associated with her nocturnal activity in fact derive from the powers bestowed upon her by her male partner.¹²⁶ In terms of the inner dynamic within the Godhead, this means that every day corresponds to the influx from one of the six *sefirot* constituting *Ze'ir anpin*, whereas the seventh day – the Sabbath – corresponds to *Malkhut*. The purification takes place on the six week days, defined by Scripture as the days of work and characterised by Rashaz as masculine, whereas on the Sabbath, the day whose feminine character is alluded to by the feminine personal pronoun *hi* (she), every type of work [*melakhah*], including the work of purification, must cease. Rashaz applies the halakhic prohibition on the work of “sorting” to the purification of the sparks by way of separating them from the “husks,” and he draws the conclusion that just as sorting is prohibited, so the purification of sparks cannot take place on the Sabbath. This arises from the fact that according to the Sages, “it is not woman’s nature to conquer,” it is the male (*Ze'ir anpin*, 45) who carries out this work through her during six days of labour, so that she would later carry the sparks up with her as she rises on the Sabbath.

¹²⁵ MAHZ *Parshiyot*, ii, 671 [Appendix 17]. See also MAHZ 5568, 223-24; *Ethalekh*, 11; *Ketsarim*, 346-47.

¹²⁶ See also LT *Shir ha-Shirim* 9a, where Rashaz explains the roles of the male and female in procreation: “As a matter of fact, the essence [*ikar*] of the foetus comes from the seed of the woman, even though the woman is called the aspect of receiver, for she does not have the power to coagulate [*le-hakpi*] [her seed] and form a foetus of it. This can be done only by the seed of the man, which is like milk that coagulates when one adds rennet to it” [Appendix 18]. Thus the seed of a woman, of which the foetus is formed, is a passive matter shaped by the active power of the male seed. Consequently, pregnancy and birth are used by Rashaz as an allegory of exile and redemption, for they represent, on the one hand, the concealment and diminution of consciousness [*katnut de-mohin*], and on the other hand, the disclosure and augmentation of consciousness [*gadlut de-mohin*]. See for example *Seder tefilot*, 295a-c. Similarly, birth pangs [*hevlei ledah*] become the tribulations that would precede the coming of the Messiah [*hevlei Mashiyah*], which arise from the purification and separation of the new-born (souls of Israel) from the impure female blood (husks). See MAHZ *Ketuvim*, i, 63-64; TO 106a-b, 55a-d.

4. Anticipation of redemption.

4.1 The Sabbath.

The elevation of the female on the Sabbath effects a union of the male and female. This union is expressed by the occurrence of the words “‘observe’ [*shamor*] and ‘remember’ [*zakhor*] in one utterance,” in the Sabbath hymn *Lekhah dodi*, where *shamor* corresponds to the female and the Sabbath’s eve, and *zakhor* to the male [*zakhar*] and the Sabbath day.¹²⁷ Moreover, the commandment to sanctify the Sabbath [*le-kadesh*] is interpreted in a clearly sexual setting: not only does Rashaz explain the function of this commandment as drawing down delight [*ta’anug*] – a notion burdened with sexual connotations,¹²⁸ but he also oftentimes interprets the verb “to sanctify” (*le-kadesh*, which also has the meaning of “to betroth”) as denoting sexual union.¹²⁹

Even though the relation between male and female on the regular days of the week also happens to be depicted in terms of marital union, Rashaz makes sure to stress the difference between the two types of union. Naming the Lurianic work *Peri ‘ets hayim* as his source, he defines the union of male and female on week days as the union of “Jacob and Rachel,” as opposed to the union of “Israel and Rachel” on the Sabbath.¹³⁰ Through an invented etymology, he explains that the name of Jacob denotes *Yesod* of *Aba*, which descends to the lower world, whereas the name of Israel denotes *Ze’ir anpin*, which ascends to receive the influx from the lights of *Aba*;¹³¹ alternatively he refers to a similar zoharic exegesis, where Jacob, who descends to the lower worlds, is linked to the provision of the divine vitality to the external forces, whereas Israel, who [Gn 32:28] “has striven with God” [*sarita im*

¹²⁷ See for example *Seder tefilot*, 188a. For a scholarly discussion of this issue, see Wolfson, *Luminal Darkness*, 146-7 and the literature listed there.

¹²⁸ On the notion of delight [*ta’anug*] and its sexual connotation, see Idel, “Ta’anug.”

¹²⁹ See for example LT *Ba-midbar* 16c: “The meaning of the expression ‘He sanctified us’ [*kidashnu*] comes from marriage [*kidushin*] and betrothal [*erusin*].”

¹³⁰ See Fine, *Physician*, 199-200.

¹³¹ LT *Balak* 72c. Rashaz derives the name of Jacob [Ya’akov] from the letter *yud* denoting *Yesod*, and the word *‘akev* (heel) denoting the lower worlds.

Elohim] is beyond the name *Elohim* (nature)¹³² and therefore beyond the reach of the external forces.¹³³

The distinction between the masculine days of the week and the feminine Sabbath serves Rashaz's to express the difference between the time of exile and the time of redemption. Referring to the *Zohar*,¹³⁴ Rashaz presents the time of exile allegorically as the time when the groom, triggered by his love for his bride, spends the night with her in a tanners' market, and, as the *Zohar* continues: "Since she is there, it is for him as a market of spices, where all the good smells of the world are." The image of a tanners' market, a smelly, dirty and despicable place, stands for the world of nature, while the bride who lives there is the *Shekhinah* – *Malkhut*, the feminine divine presence who enclothes herself in the husk of *nogah* in order to give life to this world. Finally, the bridegroom who comes down every night to his bride's humble residence represents the masculine facet of the Godhead that is beyond the world of nature, yet it bestows its attributes upon the female.¹³⁵

This allegory in its original context serves to provide an explanation for the incidence of miracles in the exile, and in particular for God's miraculous acts described in the Scroll of Esther, in spite of the fact that this biblical book does not mention God's name. However, together with the previous example, it shows very well the parallel between the descent of the male to the female, on the one hand during the six days of the week and the Exile, and on the other hand at the promised elevation of the female in the future-to-come. This analogy is further corroborated by the correspondence between the six *sefirot* of *Ze'ir anpin* (or the six supernal days), the six thousand years of the exilic world, and *Malkhut* on the one hand, and on the other hand, the six attributes of *Ze'ir anpin*, the six working days of the week and the

¹³² See above, chapter one, note 47.

¹³³ LT *Balak* 72d. See also MAHZ 5664, 184-5.

¹³⁴ Ziii, 115b.

¹³⁵ TO 100b. See also MAHZ 5564, 266, where the descent of *Malkhut* to the husk of *nogah* is interpreted as "the distancing of the impure blood" [*rihuk de-dam nidot*], which echoes the medieval concept of the exile of the menstruant *Shekhinah*. See Koren, "The Woman from whom God Wanders," 171-205.

Sabbath on the other hand.¹³⁶ Therefore, the Sabbath for Rashaz, as for many others before him,¹³⁷ functions as a prolepsis of the redemption, a foretaste of the future-to-come, which is indeed described as a day that is “entirely Sabbath,”¹³⁸ or as the supernal Sabbath, for the process of purification will be completed by then, and there will be no need for the days of work, while *Malkhut* will transcend the level of the lower Sabbath, the one she occupies on the regular Sabbath day that occurs every seven days.¹³⁹

4.2 Circumcision.

According to Rashaz, the elevation of the female on the Sabbath by means of the male potency occurs in one of two ways: either when the male descends to the female during the six weekdays in order to provide her with the strength required for the purification that enable her to rise on the Sabbath above the impurity of the husks, or else in the eschatological dimension, once the rectification of the world has been accomplished, on the day which is “entirely Sabbath”. At the same time, however, Rashaz points to an utterly masculine ritual that surpasses the feminine Sabbath – the ritual of circumcision.

Circumcision derives from a source which lies above the polarity of weekdays and Sabbath. Its supremacy over the Sabbath has already been hinted at by the Sages, who claimed that “circumcision and all its preliminaries takes precedence over the Sabbath”¹⁴⁰ and is performed on the eighth day in order to ensure that the new-born baby would experience the Sabbath before being circumcised.¹⁴¹ Rashaz weaves these classical rabbinic notions into a theosophical structure. According to him, circumcision is located in *Yesod of Adam kadmon*, that is, above the division

¹³⁶ For the correspondence between the days of week and the attributes, see for example LT *Pekudei* 5b; *Seder tefilot* 26d-27a.

¹³⁷ See Wolfson, *Luminal Darkness*, 147 and the sources listed there.

¹³⁸ See for example TO 8c, 9b, 10a, 25c, 97c.

¹³⁹ TO 10a.

¹⁴⁰ *bShabat* 131b.

¹⁴¹ See *Vayikra rabah* 27:10, and above, Chapter 3, section 2.3.

between the worlds of Emanation, Creation, Formation and Making, whereas the Sabbath ascends from the lower worlds to the world of Emanation, but not beyond it. Since *Adam kadmon* is above the four cosmic worlds, he is also above the distinction between the weekdays and the Sabbath.¹⁴² The ritual of circumcision therefore releases the radiance of a brighter light, one which has not been materialised or “enclothed” by passage through the four cosmic worlds,¹⁴³ and it must be preceded by the Sabbath, as the release of light from beyond the four worlds must be preceded by the release of light in the World of Emanation.¹⁴⁴

Circumcision ultimately transcends time. Following traditions which have been traced to the medieval Ashkenazi Pietists,¹⁴⁵ Rashaz decodes the Hebrew word *milah* as an acronym of [Dt 30:12] “Who shall go up for us to heaven?” [*mi ya’ale lanu ha-shamaymah*], whose final letters constitute the Tetragrammaton,¹⁴⁶ which according to Rashaz’s teachings, represents supratemporal reality.¹⁴⁷ This is made even clearer through the emphasis he places on the symbolic significance of the eighth day, the day which is beyond the seven days of the week, and the messianic connotation of the number eight.¹⁴⁸ This in turn links the ritual of circumcision to Hadar, the eighth Edomite king,¹⁴⁹ the only king of Edom whose death is not mentioned and whose spouse is named in the Torah, which represents the

¹⁴² See for example *Seder tefilot* 141d.

¹⁴³ On the connection between circumcision and apophany, see Wolfson, *Circle in the Square*, 29-48.

¹⁴⁴ LT *Tazri’a* 20d-21a.

¹⁴⁵ See Wolfson, “Circumcision and the Divine Name,” 87-90.

¹⁴⁶ LT *Tazri’a* 21d. See also TO 13b, 31c.

¹⁴⁷ See for example T2, 7:82a; TO 106a.

¹⁴⁸ In LT *Tazri’a* 21d the eight days stands for the eight-string harp of the Messiah, made out of seven strings corresponding to the disclosure of light from seven “worldly days” (*yemot ‘olam* – namely seven attributes from the World of Emanation corresponding to the seven days of the week), and from the radiance emanating from the “primordial days” (*yemei kedem* – namely *Adam kadmon* who precedes the division into attributes-days).

¹⁴⁹ Gn 36:31-39. On the relation of circumcision, Hadar, and the eight-string harp in later Habad, see Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 54-55. On the myth of the Edomite kings in the Lurianic Kabbalah, see Wolfson, “Min u-minut,” 254 n. 109, and the literature listed there.

rectification of the breaking of the vessels and the reconnection of the male to the female.¹⁵⁰

Although this restoration is achieved by means of a ritual which seems to be exclusively masculine, there is a talmudic tradition that counts women among the circumcised,¹⁵¹ and one can find it incorporated in those of Rashaz's teachings that utilize the fluidity of gender categories.¹⁵² Since gender attribution is based on the duality of donor and recipient [*mashpi'a* and *mekabel*], it may change when a certain *sefirah* changes from donor to recipient or vice versa. Furthermore, the very same *sefirah* can be considered both female and male, depending on the perspective from which it is being viewed. Hence the feminine *sefirah* of *Malkhut* can be perceived as masculine when bestowing the divine life-force on the lower worlds, and as such it, too, is subject to circumcision. Still, the covenant of the circumcision of the female (*Malkhut*) differs from the one of the male (*Ze'ir anpin*):

This clarifies the statement of the Sages, of blessed memory, [*bSanhedrin* 22b] that the woman “concludes the covenant only with him who transforms her into a vessel,” for the covenant of the female [*brit de-nukba*] is made out of the overflowing *Yesod* of the male, who is the one who transforms her into a vessel, as Scripture says [Is 54:5], “for thy maker is thine husband.” This refers to the conclusion of her covenant [*keritat ha-berit*] with him who transforms her into a vessel [...] (and the meaning of [the words]: “who transforms her into a vessel” is that she becomes an aspect of the male to beget, etc., and this should suffice for one who understands) [...], for the covenant of the female [*brit de-nukba*] is actually called a covenant of the aspect of the masculine donor after it has become a vessel for the covenant of the male [*brit di-dekhura*] [...]. Therefore it was said [*b'Avodah zarah* 27a] that “the woman is considered as though she is circumcised,” for she is called

¹⁵⁰ See Wolfson, *Language Eros Being*, 311.

¹⁵¹ See *b'Avodah zarah* 27a.

¹⁵² See *Seder tefilot* 113c-114a.

an aspect of the male, yet she is not such on account of herself [*mi-tsad 'atsmah*], but rather on account of having received from the donor.¹⁵³

It appears that even the relativity of gender is, in fact, relative: even though the female acquires a masculine character, she does not do so by herself but is rendered masculine by the male. The female enters the covenant, and is referred to [*b'Avodah zarah 27a*] “as one who is circumcised” during her first marital intercourse, or to be more precise, she is brought into the covenant by her husband’s phallus – *yesod didekhura*, which makes her a “vessel,” that is, when it enables her to take upon herself the maternal role, which - because of its active character - is described specifically in masculine terms.¹⁵⁴ This concept of women as being subject to circumcision seems to serve their masculinisation rather than their empowerment as women.

5. Between theosophy and life praxis.

5.1 Time, the female, and the time-bound commandments.

Rashaz identifies the female [*Nukba*] with the coming to being of time in *Malkhut*. The attribution of time to *Malkhut* reoccurs throughout Rashaz’s writings and is related to the definition of *Malkhut* as the transition point between divine unity and created multiplicity, hence its name “the number of the children of Israel” in the passage from *Likutei Torah* quoted above.¹⁵⁵ The consequent juxtaposition of the temporal female (*Nukba, Malkhut*) and the eternal male (*Ze’ir anpin*) reverberates in Rashaz’s interpretation of prayer as “temporal life,” for it elevates *Nukba*, and Torah study, as “eternal life,” while bringing *Ze’ir anpin* down.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, Rashaz uses this juxtaposition to justify the exemption of women from the time-bound commandments.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ *Seder tefilot* 114a [Appendix 19].

¹⁵⁴ See for example Wolfson, “Min u-minut,” 232; idem, *Circle in the Square*, 98-106.

¹⁵⁵ *LT Ba-midbar* 7d.

¹⁵⁶ See MAHZ *Ketuvim*, i, 233; *Boneh Yerushalaim*, 80 (77); MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 251. For the talmudic distinction between the temporal life of prayer and the eternal life of Torah, see *bShabat* 10a. See also above, Chapter 4, section 5.2.

¹⁵⁷ *mKidushin* 1:7; *bKidushin* 29a, 34a; *yKidushin* 1:7 (19a); *Sifre*, Shelah 115.

This is to explain what is written in *Likutei Torah*¹⁵⁸ about the meaning of the exemption of women from the positive time-bound commandments and their obligation by those that are not time-bound. Since the root of women's souls derives from the world of the feminine [*'alma de-nukba*], [namely from] *Malkhut*, which is within the dimension of time by way of "reigned, reigns and will reign etc,"¹⁵⁹ and since *Malkhut* is clothed up to the chest of *Ze'ir anpin*, that is, up to the mind [*da'at*] of *Ze'ir anpin*, which contains *Hesed* and *Gevurah*, and in which is the source of the five Kindnesses [*Hasadim*] of the 288 positive commandments and the five Judgements [*Gevurot*] of the 365 negative commandments, the mind of the female is included in the mind of the male. For this reason women are exempted from the positive time-bound commandments, which is the aspect of *Malkhut* enclothed up to the chest only. For this is where she is included in, and taken care of by the mind of the male, and this is why women fulfil their obligation by the positive commandments performed by their male husbands. But they are obliged to perform for themselves the positive commandments which are not time-bound, whose source is above the chest [of *Ze'ir anpin*], where *Malkhut* is not enclothed, and they do not fulfil their obligation by means of their male husbands, for [at that level] they are not included in their husbands.¹⁶⁰

This elaborate interpretation of the halakhic principle that excludes women from the positive time-bound commandments is at variance with numerous blunt references to this halakhic principle, which occur throughout Rashaz's sermons, where he simply takes the exemption to be a self-evident consequence of the association of the feminine with the source of time, and refers his readers to the Lurianic corpus.¹⁶¹ Here ontology intertwines with *halakhah*: the exemption of women arises from the fact that they derive from the category of 'female', associated with *Malkhut* and the source of time. This association makes the female a lower element of the Godhead: it

¹⁵⁸ See note 81 above.

¹⁵⁹ See Zi, 34a.

¹⁶⁰ MAHZ 5572, 136 [Appendix 20].

¹⁶¹ See for example TO 111b; *Seder tefilot* 75a; MAHZ 5567, 78; *Parshiyot*, i, 138 and 353; *Ketsarim*, 43.

is dependent on the male (*Ze'ir anpin*) and nests within the lower part of the male body in order to attain inclusion in the male mind [*da'at*]. The inclusion of the female in the male mind is reminiscent of the concept of women's light-mindedness, which makes it necessary for the female to be complemented by the male. Moreover, Rashaz defines *da'at* by its function of joining opposites together¹⁶² - here the five Judgements and five Kindnesses, the roots, respectively, of the negative and positive commandments. Consequently, the male, who comprises both attributes, is obliged to perform both types of commandments.¹⁶³ The female, on the other hand, is predominantly associated with Judgements, and therefore she is obliged to perform only the negative commandments, while relying on the flow of Kindnesses from the male, which determines her performance of the positive commandments. To be specific, the female, incorporated within the male, accesses the Kindnesses from below the male's chest, namely from the feminine – and consequently the time-bound- part of the male body. Practically speaking, she does not need to perform the positive time-bound commandments, for she receives the influx of Kindnesses flowing from the time-bound commandments performed by her husband, but she is still obliged to fulfil the positive commandments which are not time-bound, for her union with the male does not grant her the Kindnesses that lie above the chest of *Ze'ir anpin*. Notably, the female's spirituality is again shown to depend on legitimate sexual union, for on the practical level, a woman's service of the divine is complemented by her husband's service, while on the theological level, the female category is incorporated in the male body, an incorporation which is underscored by the category of *da'at* bearing sexual connotations, as Rashaz stresses throughout his works.¹⁶⁴ Notably, Rashaz assumes the possibility that, in the messianic future, women, too, will fulfil the time-bound commandments. This will happen when the difference between time and what-is-above-time ceases to exist within the eternity of redeemed reality, where the consequent distinction between men and women in respect of the commandments no longer obtains. Temporality as we know it will have no impact on this redeemed reality, and therefore it will not impede women's

¹⁶² See note 74 above.

¹⁶³ See Vital, *Ets hayim*, Sha'ar 50, ch. 4, 398.

¹⁶⁴ See for example T1, 3:7b; LT *Bamidbar* 9a; MAHZ 5572, 46.

observance of the time-bound commandments. In this regard, women and men will be equal in the world-to-come.¹⁶⁵

5.2 *The Sabbath candles.*

Jewish law exempts women from a certain group of commandments, an exemption which Rashaz explains by the interconnection of time and femininity, limiting women's spiritual capability by definition. As against this, the modern Habad movement has designated certain tasks, considered crucial to Habad's twentieth century renewal of Judaism project, as being specifically feminine, emphasizing the immense spiritual potency of the traditional women's commandments: immersion in the ritual bath, the lighting Sabbath candles, and the separation of a portion of dough when baking bread.¹⁶⁶ This emphasis on the participation of women in the spiritual enterprise of the Jewish people seems to be absent from the writings of Rashaz, where the actions performed by a woman are generally presented as merely facilitating the enhancement of men's spirituality rather than being spiritually significant in their own right.

Such a change between early and late Habad can be seen in the attitude to the commandment of lighting the Sabbath candles, which in recent years has been propagated by Habad Hasidim as the quintessential feminine commandment, even though Rashaz did not seem to attribute any special significance to it. Following early rabbinic tradition, Rashaz states in his *Shulhan 'arukh* that the woman should light the Sabbath candles by way of punishment, for she "extinguished the candle of the world and was given the commandment of lighting the Sabbath candle in order

¹⁶⁵ See MAHZ 5572, 151, and Wolfson, "Nequddat ha-Reshimu," 98-99, n. 91.

¹⁶⁶ See *Bereshit rabah* 17:8 and *Midrash Tanhuma*, Noah 1, where these three commandments are listed as having been given to women in retribution for the sin of Eve. On the special role of a woman in respect of these commandments according to contemporary Habad, see Loewenthal, "'Daughter/Wife of Hasid,'" 24*-8*; Heilman and Friedman, *The Rebbe*, 176-80.

to make good the damage she had caused;”¹⁶⁷ but she still performs this commandment only as “an agent of her husband [*sheluhoh shel ha-ba’al*].”¹⁶⁸ It was the last Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menahem Mendel Schneerson, who viewed his own lifetime as a moment of unprecedented darkness, and therefore encouraged not only married women but also young girls and children to light the Sabbath candles, even though they are not halakhically obliged to do so:

This is a mission [*shelihut*] from the Most High, who himself gives strength to the small girl, so that by her act of lighting a candle in her candleholder, she will bring down into her home radiance, Jewishness [*Yidishkeyt*], and Godliness [*Gotlekhkeyt*].¹⁶⁹

The change brought by the modern world of the second half of the twentieth century demands special actions. Even children are recruited to help disperse the darkness of “alien thoughts” and the “thoughts of the street,” as Menahem Mendel Schneerson calls them.¹⁷⁰ In his spiritual project, a girl who lights the Sabbath candles becomes an agent of God Himself, whereas in the writings of Rashaz, this function is reserved for the married woman, who acts as an agent of her husband.

5.3 *The Sabbath as the propitious time for sexual union.*

Despite the fact that Rashaz attributes a great deal of significance to sexual union both in this and in the upper world,¹⁷¹ it seems that he views the spiritual dimension

¹⁶⁷ This is a reference to Eve, who caused the death of Adam. See *Shulhan ‘arukh Rabenu ha-Zaken*, Orah hayim, 263:5, 173, based on yShabat 2:6 (20a); *Bereshit rabah* 17:8; *Midrash Tanhuma*, Noah 1, Metsora’ 9; Zi 48b.

¹⁶⁸ *Shulhan ‘arukh Rabenu ha-Zaken*, Orah hayim, 263, Kuntres aharon 2, 177.

¹⁶⁹ “Sihat motsa’ei Shabat Kodesh Bereshit – li-neshei u-venot Yisra’el ti. 5735” in Schneerson, *Sihot kodesh 5735*, i, 133 [Appendix 21]. An abridged version of the talk was published in Shalom Dovber Levin, *Kuntres nerot Shabat Kodesh*, i, 5-12.

¹⁷⁰ Schneerson, *Sihot kodesh 5735*, i, 132; Levin, *Kuntres nerot Shabat Kodesh*, i, 11.

¹⁷¹ See TO 92d, where Rashaz stresses that contrary to a popular view of sexual union as repulsive [*davar ma’us*] because it requires an ablution in the *mikveh*, it is a “great thing” [*davar gadol*], both in this world and in heaven. See also Loewenthal, “Women and the Dialectic,” 19* n.39.

of women's role as extending no further than to facilitate the spiritual development of their husbands. Rashaz invokes the figure of the defiantly unmarried Shimon Ben Azzai, of whom the Talmud says that he entered paradise [*bHagigah* 14b], "cast a look and died," in order to stress the value of marriage in a man's life. In Rashaz's opinion, Ben Azzai failed because he did not find the right balance between the spiritual and the earthly dimensions of his life:

Ben Azzai was in the aspect of *ratso*,¹⁷² of "great love"¹⁷³ [...], in the nature of the expiration of the soul [*kelot ha-nefesh*], and he did not want to be reduced to the aspect of *shov*. For this reason he refused to marry,¹⁷⁴ saying that the world could be preserved by others,¹⁷⁵ and this is why he [*bHagigah* 14b] "cast a look and died," for he completely withdrew [*nistalek*] from the vessel.¹⁷⁶

Ben Azzai's example serves Rashaz to show that marital relations are a necessary element of life even for the most pious and devoted Jew, while at the same time also to reiterate the characterisation of woman as a material "vessel." However, in his halakhic work, he states that a man should postpone marriage until he has learned the entire Oral Torah,¹⁷⁷ although, if the sexual urge distracts him from his studies, he may marry before mastering it all.¹⁷⁸ Indeed, even though Ben Azzai's approach is discouraged,¹⁷⁹ marital union is seen either as a means to the end of performing the commandment of "be fruitful and multiply," or else as the lesser evil that a young man may commit, to enable him to study in a state of purity.

¹⁷² *Ratso* and *shov* represent here two opposed aspects of worship. *Ratso* stands for the striving of the worshipper to transcend his corporeality and unite with the Divine, whereas *shov* stands for his drawing down the Divine into the world by means of worship. On *ratso va-shov* see above, chapter 1, n. 99. On *ratso va-shov* in the context of divine service, see above, Chapter 4, section 5.

¹⁷³ On the concept of "great love" in Rashaz's teachings, see Foxbrunner, *Habad*, 179-84.

¹⁷⁴ The candidate was the daughter of rabbi Akivah.

¹⁷⁵ See *tYevamot* 8:4; *bYevamot* 63b; *Bereshit rabah* 34:14.

¹⁷⁶ TO 25b [Appendix 22].

¹⁷⁷ HTT 3:1, 841a.

¹⁷⁸ HTT 3:2. 845b.

¹⁷⁹ HTT, *Kuntres aharon* 3:1, 841a.

Rashaz attributes significance to the timing of sexual union, pointing to Friday night [*leil Shabat*] as the appropriate time for it in terms of the role of the Sabbath in the dynamic of genders within the Godhead. Already the talmudic Sages had singled out Friday night as the appropriate time for Torah scholars [*talmidei hakhamim*] to engage in marital intercourse,¹⁸⁰ and the idea was reenforced in the halakhic codices,¹⁸¹ including Rashaz's *Shulhan 'arukh*.¹⁸² In the *Zohar*, and later on in Eliyahu de Vidas' *Reshit hokhmah*, the same idea was linked to the commandment of sanctifying the Sabbath. In addition, Torah scholars were considered as wanderers who leave their home and their wives in order to study for the six working days of the week, returning home only for the Sabbath. Their sexual union with their wives on Friday night causes the *Shekhinah* to descend upon them and stay with them during the subsequent days of the week, when they devote themselves to Torah study, which is considered as their sexual union with the *Shekhinah*. Thanks to this, Torah scholars remain permanently in the state of union between male and female.¹⁸³ Rashaz, on the other hand, stresses the importance of sexual union in the process of restoration: the phallus [*yesod di-dekhura*] brings down Kindesses [*hasadim*] to sweeten the Judgments [*gevurot*] of the female, although these Kindesses can be drawn down only at specific times, for "the corporeal kindness [*ha-hesed ha-gashmi*], if drawn down in an inappropriate combination [*mizug*] and at an improper time, is not a kindness at all,"¹⁸⁴ and the proper times would be the Sabbath and the three pilgrimage festivals, described as [Ez 16:8] "the time of the lovers above" [*et dodim le-ma'lah*].¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ See *bKetubot* 62b

¹⁸¹ See Ya'akov ben Asher, *Arba'ah turim*, Orah hayim, 240; Karo, *Shulhan 'arukh*, Orah hayim, 240:1

¹⁸² *Shulhan 'arukh Rabenu ha-Zaken*, Orah hayim, 280:1. In this passage Rashaz refers to the broader explication of the issue in paragraph 240 of his codex, which unfortunately has not come down to us.

¹⁸³ See Zi, 49b-50a; Zii, 89a-b; de Vidas, *Reshit hokhmah*, Sha'ar kedushah, ch. 16, 302-304. On this and other aspects of sexual union on the Sabbath in Kabbalah, see Fine, *Physician*, 197 and 414 n. 32; Ginsburg, *Sabbath*, 134-5, 289-93; Tishby, *Wisdom*, 3:1357-8.

¹⁸⁴ *Seder tefilot*, 54d.

¹⁸⁵ This follows the idea that the *'Amidah* prayer is an aspect of the Sabbath. See for example TO 9b; LT *Be-har* 44a, *Yom ha-kipurim* 68b, *Shir ha-shirim* 19a; *Seder tefilot* 213a. Rashaz adds that "during

6. Women in the future-to-come.

The envisioned elevation of the female in the future-to-come to the top of the theosophical structure does not seem to have any significant implications for the place and role of women in the redeemed world, and nor does it ascribe any redemptive significance to the commandments performed by women.¹⁸⁶ Rashaz's presentation of the transposition of gender hierarchy as a result of the redemption rather than a path leading to it has the effect of neutralizing the subversive message of his teachings regarding the female, while also reaffirming the *status quo* rather than challenging it.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, even his scant comments on the fate of women in the redeemed world do not anticipate any change in their status or roles. An example of this is his elaboration on the status of the commandments in messianic times. About women in this context he writes:

It will be further necessary to know the laws governing the impurity of a woman who has given birth; as Scripture says [Jer 31:8]: "A woman with child and her that travaileth with child together." Even if a woman gives birth every day as a result of one marital union, nonetheless, the law with respect to restrictions resulting from her impurity will not change.¹⁸⁸

Even though women are only a marginal concern of Rashaz in this passage, one may learn from it that he subscribes to the view that women will continue to fulfil their function of giving birth, albeit with an unconstrained capacity for this function, as they will give birth every day.¹⁸⁹ To avoid the contradiction implicit in the notion that the laws of ritual purity will persist and yet women will conceive every day,

the daily *'Amidah* of the morning service "something of this nature" occurs [*yesh ketsat me- 'ein zeh*]" (*Seder tefilot* 54d).

¹⁸⁶ The seventh Habad leader, Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson, claimed otherwise. See Wolfson, *Open Secret*, 220-23.

¹⁸⁷ See Rapoport-Albert, *Women and the Messianic Heresy*, 121-23, and eadem, "From Woman as Hasid," 445-6.

¹⁸⁸ T4, 26:143a-b [Appendix 23].

¹⁸⁹ Based on *bShabat* 30b.

including their quota of impure days following childbirth, Rashaz adds that all these daily births will result from a single marital union.¹⁹⁰

Subsequent Habad thinkers, who noted that Rashaz mentioned explicitly the impurity of a woman who gives birth but made no reference to the issue of her menstrual impurity, took this to be a hint at the annulment of menstrual impurity in the world-to-come.¹⁹¹ The Tsemah Tsedek, for example, explains that the meaning of female impurity, *nidah*, is that the *Shekhinah* has wandered away from God during the exile,¹⁹² while in the redeemed world of the future, when the exile comes to an end, the state of impurity caused by distance from God will cease to occur, and the laws of impurity will become redundant.¹⁹³ The Tsemah Tsedek seems to conform to Rashaz's grasp of menstrual impurity¹⁹⁴ as a connection to the external forces, which will not prevail in the future-to-come.

Be that as it may, the future capacity of women to give birth every day will arise from the eradication of the barriers between the spiritual and the material spheres of reality:

[bShabat 30b] "In the future a woman will give birth every day," that is to say, the sowing and growing [*ha-zeri'ah vaha-tsemihah*] will occur every day in full disclosure, so that it will not be necessary for them to take as long as nine months.¹⁹⁵

While in this world the limitations of materiality account for the lapse of time between the "sowing" of the divine life force and its disclosure, these limitations will be removed in the future-to-come, when the sowing will yield immediate fruit, or -

¹⁹⁰ *Mi-bi'ah ahat*. An interpretation given by the Rebbe, Menahem Mendel Schneerson, reads this phrase alternatively as *mevi'ah ahat* – "she shall bring one [offering]." See *Igerot kodesh*, xxiii, 296-97; *Likutei sihot*, xii, 178, and Wineberg, *Lessons in Tanya*, v, 130-31.

¹⁹¹ See Schneersohn (*Tsemah Tsedek*), *Or ha-Torah*, Be-reshit, i, 51a; idem, *Be'urei ha-Zohar*, ii, 945.

¹⁹² An idea based on the word play *nidah* – *nad he*: the letter *he* representing the *Shekhinah*, which has wandered.

¹⁹³ See Schneersohn (*Tsemah Tsedek*), *Or ha-Torah*, Be-reshit, i, 51a.

¹⁹⁴ See for example *Seder tefilot* 57a-b.

¹⁹⁵ MAHZ *Ketsarim*, 534 [Appendix 24].

as in the excerpt quoted above – women will give birth immediately after conception.

7. Conclusions.

I have attempted to examine the early Habad perspective on the female as it emerges from Rashaz's writings. Aware of the methodological problems posed by the scarcity of evidence with which to reconstruct the social reality of women in the Habad community of his time, I chose to examine his speculative and homiletical writings instead, in order to establish the role of the female in his doctrine. Additionally, I tried to ascertain whether a link between the conceptual "female" and flesh-and-blood women is present in Rashaz's teaching, as later Habad sources seem to suggest.

Although Rashaz's teachings may seem to reiterate the traditional and generally negative characterisation of the female, his temporal discourse enables him to underscore the positive features of the female, which also are inherent in the kabbalistic sources he draws on. Thus the female facet of the Godhead, with all her apparently negative traits, has a legitimate place in the divine plan as a crucial factor that facilitates the emergence of separate beings in the process of creation. Subsequently, in the future-to-come, through the process of purification, she will ascend to (or above) the male facet of the Godhead, in order to bring him the creative light, intensified precisely because it is reflected in her materiality.

However, one should keep it in mind that whilst referring to the elevation of the female, Rashaz seems neither to anticipate the overturning of the patriarchal order in messianic times, nor to attempt to empower women in his own time. The role of the female in facilitating the redemption remains dependent on the strength she draws from the male, while her ascent in the future-to-come is imagined in terms of her reunification with the male in the rite of marriage. It is hard to speak of the empowerment of the female in this context: even though she indeed casts off her negative traits during the transition from exilic to redemptive times, she does so only by virtue of her union with the male, where her role is to delight him. By the same

token, in the image of the rite of circumcision as a prolepsis of the redemption, the female enters the redemptive event only through the male.

The elevation of the female in the future-to-come can be seen, on the one hand, as the integration of the female in a male-dominated structure. But on the other hand, it can be perceived as the masculinisation of the female, where – defined as the receiver – she takes on the male function of donor, ascends from the world of the feminine to the world of the masculine and is transformed from “female” [*nukba*] to “mother” [*ima*], who in turn is described in overtly masculine terms.

Nor does there seem to be an indication of significant changes in the status of flesh-and-blood women in the future-to-come. From the scant remarks on this score scattered throughout Rashaz’s lore, one can deduce at most that the nullification of the barriers between the material and the spiritual realms, followed by the transformation of the female from recipient to donor, will reverberate in the life of women, freeing them from the limitations of their roles as life-giving mothers.

Analogously, the special role attributed to the gender category “female” in Rashaz’s theosophy does not seem to have an impact on the role and position of women in the present. Rashaz does make use of the theosophical nexus of time and the female when he interprets women’s participation in religious life, which is particularly conspicuous in his explanation of the halakhic principle that exempts women from the time-bound commandments. Remarkably, however, his use of this example further reinforces the notion of women’s inferiority to men, which mandates that the spiritual task of performing some of the commandments is entrusted to their husbands. Similarly, Rashaz holds a rather conservative view of the commandment of lighting the Sabbath candles, seeing in it an element of masculine spirituality, which women perform as proxy. He disregards the possibility of linking the apparent feminine character of this commandment with the particular time at which it is performed, namely with the Sabbath, which is defined as the time of elevation for the female aspect of reality. In a similar vein, although he recognizes the Sabbath as the propitious time for conjugal relations, he does not seem to invest the act with any particular spiritual meaning for women; quite the contrary, for him, the role of women remains solely to facilitate their husbands’ spiritual fulfilment. It appears, therefore, that although Rashaz did create the conceptual framework for the re-

evaluation of women's spiritual capacity, he refrained from drawing any conclusions from it. This was to be done only by his most recent successors in the leadership of Habad.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore the significance of the temporal–historical discourse in Rashaz’s teachings, and to establish its implications for the everyday religious experience of his followers. It sought to discover whether messianic tensions, so prominent in contemporary Habad, were present already in the teachings of the movement’s founder, and to examine the worldly dimension of these teachings, which is often overlooked in the scholarship on Habad.

The argument pursued in the thesis is that temporality was one of Rashaz’s main concerns on all fronts – as a mystic, as a thinker, and as a fully engaged leader to a large community of Hasidim. Contrary to the common depiction of his teachings as a mystical doctrine focused primarily on transcendent realities, this study assembles the textual evidence that shows Rashaz to have been equally concerned with the concepts of worldly time, temporality, and history. As demonstrated in the chapter devoted to the practice of setting times for Torah study, his engagement with the idea of time enabled him to transform his following into a large and broadly based movement. Moreover, while Rashaz’s teachings are commonly portrayed as being devoid of messianic tension, the thesis shows messianic awareness to be inherent in his concept of both individual and communal divine service.

Rashaz does not attempt to provide a systematic exposition of his concept of time, yet throughout his teachings, he tackles such questions as the nature of time-flow, its relation to the supra-temporal God, and its role in the lives of the ordinary Hasidim who are all subject to temporality and yet are aiming at union with the infinite and timeless God.

Chapter One discussed these theoretical underpinnings of Rashaz’s concept of time. It showed that he harmonised the kabbalistic concept of *ratso va-shov* with the philosophical definition of time as a measure of movement, this resulting in the notion that time is a rhythm of the constantly alternating descent and ascent of the divine life-giving energy, which amounts to a continuous cycle of creation, annihilation and recreation. Locating the source of time in the *sefirah Malkhut*, the chapter proceeded to explore the various means by which Rashaz connects

temporality with the supra-temporal God so as to solve the enigma of the apparent flow of time prior to the creation of the world and of time itself.

Having set the theoretical framework of time and its origin in Rashaz's work, the thesis proceeded to consider Rashaz's understanding of history as the period that has elapsed since the beginning of time at the very moment of the creation, and its progress towards its end at the final redemption. The second and third chapters thus explored Rashaz's interest in instances of exile and deliverance throughout Jewish history, which he uses to highlight his sense of the current exile, and to present both individual and communal worship as the path leading towards the messianic future. Messianic redemption, albeit fragmented as a project to be accomplished by all Jews and suspended in the protracted transitional period of the "heels of the Messiah," underpins Rashaz's concept of worship in the era of exile. Admittedly, there is no evidence of acute messianic tension among Rashaz's followers, yet his teachings clearly convey the message that not only does every righteous act bring the redemption closer, but the fulfilment of the commandments specifically of prayer and Torah study enables everyone to attain to the state of redemption even within the unredeemed world.

Rashaz saw the final redemption as the transformation of the world in the messianic era as well as in the subsequent time of the resurrection of the dead. This is the time when the Jews, having purified their bodies during the exile and become capable of receiving the full revelation of God, will delve into the secret levels of the Torah, and be sustained by direct exposure to the divine light. Moreover, the divine illumination, due to God's unbound mercies, will be so abundant that even the gentile nations will be resurrected and sustained by it.

For Rashaz, time and timelessness, or exile and redemption, were not abstract ideas but tangible realities woven into the fabric of his own and his followers' everyday lives. The fourth chapter showed that Rashaz's interest in time helped him make his model of spirituality accessible and meaningful to a broad mass of followers, whose occupations did not leave them the time required for total commitment to study. Rashaz encouraged them to set special times for Torah study as a means of drawing the supra-temporal divinity down to their temporal reality. He showed that not only could everyone subjugate temporality to the Torah through this

relatively simple and undemanding halakhic precept, but also that study at set times was equally, if not even more important to his Hasidic project than the full-time study of the scholarly Hasidim. This awareness of time, and the control exercised over it by means of nomian ritual, allowed him to include in his quest for the infinite God even ordinary people who are engrossed in worldly affairs.

Rashaz's temporal discourse also displays gendered characteristics, which are discussed in the fifth and final chapter of the thesis. Following in the footsteps of the kabbalists, he associated the source of time, *Malkhut*, with the feminine aspect of divinity, and foresaw the elevation of the female at the end of days – an idea that served his 20th-century successors as a doctrinal basis for re-thinking the role of women in the Habad movement of their day. Unlike them, however, Rashaz did not translate the overturning of the gender hierarchy at the end of days into any actual change in the role or status of women within his own community. He employed the nexus of femininity and time to explain the exclusion of women from some commandments in the unredeemed world, and he commented occasionally on women's elevation to a higher status than men in the future-to-come, but his ideas of the messianic future only reinforce the traditional role of women in the present, where their spiritual capacities are entirely subordinate to those of their husbands.

Study of Rashaz's concept of time enables us to look at his whole body of teachings from a new perspective. It shows the early Habad doctrine to have recognized the path that leads to God above all in worldly action that is temporally bound rather than in pursuit of timeless transcendence by means of an acosmistic doctrine that is completely detached from worldly concerns.

Certain elements of this doctrine, such as the messianic idea, or the nexus of women and time, are echoed in the acute messianism of 20th century Habad. The present study can therefore serve as the starting point for a thorough analysis that would trace the development of these ideas in the Habad teaching from its inception to the present. Furthermore, the scope of the present investigation could be expanded by exploring the extent to which Rashaz's concept of time may have shaped other elements of his unique model of spirituality, or by comparing my findings on his conception of time to the perception of time in the teachings of some of his contemporaries. It would be particularly interesting to examine Rashaz's notion of

setting times for Torah study in light of the Torah Study ideology and practices of other Hasidic groups, as well as the *mitnagdim*. This would help determine whether or to what extent Habad's spiritual inclusivity was unique.

Habad scholarship still awaits a broad, comparative analysis as well as a full study of the phenomenology of Habad's relationship to time.

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APPENDICES

Appendix to Chapter 1

1. מאה"ז ענינים, ע' מט.

כי הוא ית' [ברך] למעלה מן הזמן [...] כי הוא אחד פשוט בלי שום התחלקות ה"ו [חס וחלילה] כלל רק הכל קשור ביחד.

2. תניא, ספר של בינונים, פרק מח, דף סז, עמ' ב.

פי' [רוש] מלת ערך במספרים שאחד במספר יש לו ערך לגבי מספר אלף אלפים שהוא חלק אחד מני אלף אלפים אבל לגבי דבר שהוא בבחי' [נת] בלי גבול ומספר כלל אין כנגדו שום ערך במספרים שאפי' [לו] אלף אלפי אלפים וריבוא רבבות אינן אפי' [לו] כערך מספר אחד לגבי אלף אלפי אלפים וריבוא רבבות אלא כלא ממש חשיבי.

3. מנחם מנדל שניאורזאהן, דרך מצותך, דף נז, עמ' א.

הוא ית' [ברך] אין לא התלות בזמן כלל א"כ [אם כי] אומרינו קדמון אינו קדימה זמנית חלילה שנאמר שקדם להעולם בזמן [...] אלא ענין הקדמות שאנו אומרים בו הוא שהוא קדם לכל וגם לבחי' [נת] הזמן [...] אלא שהוא ית' [ברך] הוא לבדו הי' [ה] טרם מציאת הזמן וכשברא העולם ברא ג"כ [גם כן] הזמן.

4. תורה אור, דף ט, טור א.

הוא בבחי' [נת] א"ס [אין סוף] ממש היה הוה ויהיה בלי שינוי ממש וכמאמר אתה הוא קודם שנברא ואתה הוא לאחר שנברא כו' [לי].

5. בראשית רבה, ט, ב.

א"ר [אמר רבי] תנחומא בעונתו נברא העולם לא היה העולם ראוי לבראות קודם לכן.

6. סדר תפילות, דף עה, טור ד – דף ע"ו, טור א.

הנה בתחלת ספר ע"ח [עץ חיים] מקשה בשם המקובלים למה לא היתה הבריאה בזמן קודם ותירץ משום דלפי סדר השתלשלות מעילה לעילה כו' [לי] יצא זמן הבריאה בזמן רב כו' [לי] ע"ש [עיין שם] ובזה התירוצו אינו מיושב הקושיא כלל דעדיין הקושיא במקומה עומדת למה היתה סדר השתלשלות מעילה לעילה בזמן הזה ולא בזמן מוקדם או מאוחר לזה הזמן כו' [לי]. אך התירוצו האמיתי ידוע בשם ה"מ ז"ל [הרב המגיד

זכרונו לברכה] משום דהזמן עצמו הוא בא ונמשך בבחי' [נת] בריאה יש מאין והוא בחי' [נת] נברא מחודש כו' [לי] כשאר כל הנבראים.

7. מאה"ז פרשיות, כרך א, עמ' קכו.

העולם הוא בחי' [נת] זמן והשפעת העולמות הוא בחי' [נת] זמן.

8. סעדיה גאון, ספר אמונות ודעות, מאמר א, דף כב, עמ' ב.

ואם יאמ' [ר] למה לא בראם קודם הזמן הזה, נאמר כי לא היה זמן שנשאל עליו, ועוד כי זה דרך כל בעל בחירה שיעשה בכל עת שירצה.

9. חיים ויטל, עץ חיים, היכל א, שער א, ענף א, עמ' כה.

[החקירה ב', היא] קרובה אל שאלת מה למעלה, ומה למטה. מה לפני, ומה לאחור [...]. והנה להיות השאלה זו עמוקה מאוד, אשר כמעט מסתכן האדם בהעמיק הסתכלותו בחקירה זו. וענינו כאשר הזכירו חז"ל [חכמינו זכרונום לברכה], במשנה הנ"ל [הנוכרת לעיל], כל המסתכל בד' דברים אלו, ראוי לו שלא בא לעולם.

10. רמב"ם, משנה תורה, ספר המדע, הלכות יסודי התורה, א:א.

יסוד היסודות ועמוד החכמות לידע שיש שם מצוי ראשון והוא מציא כל נמצא וכל הנמצאים משמים וארץ ומה שביניהם לא נמצאו אלא מאמתת המצאו.

11. מאה"ז פרשיות, כרך א, עמ' צה.

והנה כן הוא כבי' בהשגות אלקות אשר מושג לנו מפעולת ובריאות העולמות ומילואיהם הוא הנק' [רא] מצוי להיות מציא מקום וזמן אשר אין לך דבר בעולם אשר אינו נופל תחת הזמן אשר יוכל להאמר עליו עבר הוה ועתיד, וא"כ [אם כן] מוכרח היות בדבר המחיהו בחי' [נה] וכח זה להיות מחי' [ה] אך כי שם אינו בהתחלקות כלל ולכן נק' [רא] הוא למעלה מהזמן אבל אעפ"כ [אף על פי כן] נק' [רא] אותיות הוי' [ה] להורות על הוה הי' [ה] ויהי' [ה] להורות כי הוא המחי' [ה] עבר הוה ועתיד בכל רגע אין דבר חוץ ממנו ואצלו שוה עהו"ע [עבר הוה ועתיד].

12. לקושי תורה, שיר השירים, דף ז, טור ב.

הרי בכל דבר נמשך אור א"ס ב"ה [אין סוף ברוך הוא], כמ"ש [כמו שכתוב] והר סיני עשן כולו עולם שנה נפש עולם בחינת מקום ששם נמשך בחי' [נת] א"ס [אין סוף] כמ"ש [כמו שכתוב] הנה מקום אתי. וכן בבחינת

שנה בבחי' זמן מלך ומלך עבר עתיד הוה הכל הוא בבחי' [נת] א"ס [אין סוף] כו' [לי]. וכן בנפש יש הארת אור א"ס [אין סוף].

13. מאה"ז עניינים, עמ' צג.

[...] אמר והיו הדברים האלה אשר אנכי מצוך היום דהיינו בחי' [נת] תורה שהיא חכמתו ית' [ברך] [...] שיורדת ממקום גבוה למקום נמוך. [...] מקום נמוך הוא בחי' [נת] זמן ומקום שהוא דבר הפך [...] וזהו רצונו האמיתי, הגם שהוא בעצמו למעלה מן זמן ומקום [...] אעפ"כ [אף על פי כן] חכמתו ית' [ברך] דוקא בבחי' [נת] זמן ומקום, דהיינו כמו ציצית ותפילין וזמן ק"ש [קריאת שמע] ושבת ויו"ט [יום טוב] ועד"ז [על דרך זאת] כל התורה, ולכן התורה היא מקור החיות של כל העולמות שכך חייבה חכמתו ית' [ברך] שיהי' [ה] רצונו בבחי' [נת] זמן ומקום, ועי"ז [על ידי זה] נתגלו כל העולמות עד שבא לבחי' [נת] זמן ומקום.

14. מאה"ז עניינים, עמ' רסה.

[דהיינו ש] מקשר ב' הפכים בחי' [נת] סוכ"ע [סובב כל עלמין] שהוא למעלה מו בחי' [נת] שהוא למעלה מן בחי' [נת] זמן ומקום, עם בחי' [נת] זמן ומקום.

15. מאה"ז תק"ע, עמ' י.

וכבר יש ג' אלפים שנה שנתנה התו' [רה] יהי' [ה] בעיניך כאילו נתנה היום ממש.

16. מאה"ז עניינים, עמ' רסה.

והנה כתיב כי שמש ומגן הוי' [ה] אלקים, כמו השמש יש לה נרתקה שיכול לסבול אורה [...] ככה ד"מ [דרך משל] אלהים הוא נרתק לשם הוי"ה שמסתיר את הוי"ה, וזהו הוי' [ה] הוא אלקים, שהתהוות העולמות הוא מחמת אלהים דהיינו מחמת צמצום, ואלהים הוא צמצום כללי שמחמת שהזיו הוא בלי גבול כדי לברוא דברים נפרדים הוצרך להיות ב' צמצומים כללי ופרטי [...] והוא בחי' [נת] זמן ה' [וי"ה] מלך ה' [וי"ה] מלך וכו' [לי], ואדני הוא צמצום פרטי, דהנה [...] בחי' [נת] אדון לא שייך לפניו ית' [ברך] אלא על דברים נפרדים, נמצא שזהו הצמצום הוא פרטי.

17. תניא, שער היחוד והאמונה, פרק ד, דף עט, עמ' א.

שם הוי"ה פירושו שמהוה את הכל מאין ליש והיו"ד משמשת על הפעולה שהיא בלשון הוה ותמיד.

18. מאה"ז עניינים, עמ' צב.

בחי' [נת] זמן ומקום הוא ג"כ [גם כן] ממנו ית' [ברך] ואינו דבר נפרד חוץ ממנו [...] רק לבחי' [נת] מקבלים הוא דבר נפרד והפך ממש, אבל באמת ג"כ [גם כן] בחי' [נת] סכ"ע [סובב כל עלמין] הוא ממלא בחי' [נת] המקום וזמן.

19. תניא, שער היחוד והאמונה, פרק ז, דף פב, עמ' א.

והנה כל בחי' [נות] אלו אין להן שייכות במדות הקדושות העליונות כי אם במדת מלכותו ית' [ברך] לבדה שייך לומר שהוא ית' מלך למעלה עד אין קץ ולמטה עד אין תכלית וכן לד' סטרין וכן בבחי' [נת] זמן ה' מלך ה' מלך ה' ימלוך ונמצא שחיות המקום וכן חיות הזמן והתהוותם מאין ליש וקיומם כל זמן קיומם הוא ממדת מלכותו ית' ושם אדנות ב"ה [ברוך הוא].

20. לקוטי תורה, אחרי, דף כז, טור ב.

מלכותך מלכות כל עולמים וממשלתך בכל דור ודור כל עולמים בחי' [נת] מקום דור ודור בחי' [נת] זמן.

21. תניא, שער היחוד והאמונה, פרק ז, דף פב, עמ' א.

והנה אף על פי שהוא ית' למעלה מהמקום והזמן אף על פי כן הוא נמצא גם למטה במקום וזמן דהיינו שמתייחד במדת מלכותו שממנה נמשך ונתהווה המקום והזמן וזהו יחודא תתאה.

22. מאה"ז, תקס"ד, עמ' קצט.

מל' [כות] דאצי' [לות] [...] היא שרש ומקור להתהוות הזמן [...]. כידוע שהתהוות עבר הוה ועתיד שבעולמות בי"ע הוא מבחי' [נת] מלך מלך וימלך כו' [לי], והוא בחי' [נת] עולם שנה כו' [לי] כמ"ש [כמו שכתוב] במ"א [במקום אחר]. ומקור הזמן אינו אלא מבחי' [נת] המל' [כות] שהוא גילוי האצי' [לות] עלמא דאתגלי' [א] [...], משא"כ [מה שאינו כן] למעלה בחי' [נת] עלמא דאתכסי' [א] אינו נופל לשון מקור הזמן מאחר שהוא בחי' [נת] סוכ"ע [סובב כל עלמין] בבחי' [נת] העלם העצמיות.

23. לקוטי תורה, דרושים לשבת שובה, דף סז, טור ג.

לשון נצחיות [...] אינו נופל כ"א [כי אם] בבחי' [נת] וגדר זמן שיומשך זמן רב כ"כ [כל כך], אבל מה שאינו בבחי' [נת] וגדר הזמן שם לא שייך המשך הזמן כלל אלא היה הוה ויהיה הכל א' [חד] ולא שייך בחי' [נת] זו ולשון זה [...] אלא בבחי' [נת] מלכותו יתברך שהוא בבחי' [נת] וגדר הזמן מלך מלך וימלך.

24. מאה"ז, תקס"ה, כרך א, עמ' שכג.

הוא הנק' [רא] מחשבה קדומה שצופה ומביט בה עד סוף כל הדורות בסקירה אחת ונק' [רא] מפני זה בשם מחשבה אחת כי אינה אלא מחשבה אחת בלבד.

25. בראשית רבה, ג, ז.

אר"י [אמר רבי יהודה] בר סימון יהי ערב אין כתיב כאן אלא ויהי ערב מכאן שהיה סדר זמנים קודם לכן א"ר אבהו מלמד שהיה בורא עולמות ומחריבן עד שברא את אלו.

26. לקוטי תורה, בלק, דף ע, טור ג.

הנה באמת אני הוי' [ה] לא שניתי שאין שום שינוי אצלו ית' [ברך] [...] שהיה הוא ושמו בלבד כמה אלפים ורבות שנה קודם שנברא העולם (וכמ"כ [וכמו כן] קודם התהוות בחי' [נת] הזמן שהזמן ג"כ [גם כן] נברא ומחודש רק שהיה סדר זמנים קודם בריאת עוה"ז [עולם הזה] והיינו מעת אצילות והתהוות עולמות רוחניים כמ"ש [כמו שכתוב] בע"ה [בעץ חיים] שער עגולים ויושר. אבל קודם לזה לא היה שייך שום סדר זמנים שהוא ית' [ברך] למעלה מהזמן לגמרי).

27. מנחם מנדל שניאורזאהן, ספר החקירה, דף קיד, עמ' א.

וה"ר [והרבי] חסדאי כנראה מדברי בעל העקדה ס"ל [סברה ליה] ששייך קודם ומתאחר ויוכל להיות דס"ל [סברה ליה] כן לא בעצם הבורא, כ"א [כי אם] מעת אצילות עשר ספירות אז דוקא שייך קודם ומתאחר, וזהו הנק' [רא] סדר זמנים ר"ל [רצונו לומר] קודם ומתאחר, שמדת החסד נאצלה תחלה ואחר כך נאצלה מדת הגבורה ומדה"ד [מידת הדין] ואחר כך נאצלה מדת הרחמים כו' [לי].

28. לקוטי תורה, דרושים ליוה"כ, דף סה, טור ג.

יתבונן המשכיל כי באמת חדשים לבקרים כו' [לי] ומחדש בכל יום תמיד מ"ב [מעשה בראשית] מאין ליש ובהתחשך החשך של לילה ויסתלק ונעשה אור של יום. וכך יראה האדם בעצמו שבליילה ישן וחיותו מסתלק ממנו ובקומו נעשה בריה חדשה ומזה יבין על כל יצורי עולם שכן הוא וחיותם רצוא ושוב.

29. ליקוטי תורה, במדבר, דף א, טור א.

מחיה את כולם ומוציאם מאין ליש ומחדשם בטובו בכל יום ובכל רגע.

30. מאה"ז תשס"ו, כרך א, עמ' סא.

שהם בבחי' [נת] רו"ש [רצוא ושוב] שזהו סדר הזמן שמזה יסתעף סיבת הזמן בחי' [נת] השיהוי המשתהה מהרו"ש [מהרצוא ושוב] שהוא כענין דפיקא דלבא שתנועת רו"ש [רצוא ושוב] שמאחר שיש חיוב ושלילוי' [ת] החיוב זה גורם לסבת השיהוי של זמן מ"ה דהיינו השוב ואח"כ [ואחר כך] הרצוא שהוא הגילוי השפע וההעדרו כו' וכמו במורה שעו' [ת] התנועה אנה ואנה גורם השיהוי זמן הרגע (שזהו מה שקוראי' [ם] אומרי"א בזייגער) שהוא כעין דפיקא דלבא.

31. מאה"ז תשס"ח, כרך א, עמ' תקמג.

דהנה הטעם שנתחלקה השעה למספר תתר"ף רגעים דוקא הנה ידוע לפי שיש שעור תתר"ף נשימות בכל שעה וכל נשימה ונשימה היא כלולה מבחי' [נות] רו"ש [רצוא ושוב] [...] ונק' [ראת] בשם דפיקו דלבא שהלב דופק בבחי' [נת] רו"ש [רצוא ושוב] כי דופק בשתי דפיקות הא' הוא בחי' [נת] הסתלקות החיות והב' בחי' [נת] המשכתו [...] ועד"ז [ועל דרך זה] הוא ענין הנשימה הגשמי שבאפו של אדם כמ"ש [כמו שכתוב] כל אשר נשמת רוח חיים באפו כו' כדוגמת הנשימה באדם הישן כנודע ושיעור שהיית הנשימה הכלולה מרו"ש כנ"ל [מרצוא ושוב כנזכר לעיל] הוא הרגע שהיא חלק א' מתתר"ף בשעה.

32. מאה"ז תשס"ו, כרך א, עמ' ס.

[הכל נכללי' [ם]] כאחד בסקירה א' [חת] בלי שיהוי זמן מה ואין מוקדם ומאוחר.

33. מאה"ז תקס"ד, עמ' רה.

ושרש ענין עת לאהוב כו' [לי] הנה מבואר בזהר שדרש הינוקא בזה דהוא אהבה שבמל' [כות] הנק' [ראת] עת ונק' [ראת] ג"כ [גם כן] את באל"ף כי אלפין עיינין כו' [לי]. ושרש הדבר דהזמן מתחיל במל' [כות] והן אותיות את שקבען בפה כמ"ש [כמו שכתוב] בס"י [בספר יצירה] וד"ל [ודי למבין].

Appendix to Chapter 2

1. תניא, שער היחוד והאמונה, פרק ז, דף פא, עמ' ב.

תכלית בריאת העולם הוא בשביל התגלות מלכותו יתברך דאין מלך בלא עם פי' [רוש] עם מלשון עוממות שהם דברים נפרדים וזרים ורחוקים ממעלת המלך כי אילו אפילו היו לו בנים רבים מאד לא שייך שם מלוכה עליהם וכן אפילו על שרים לבדם רק ברוב עם דווקא הדרת מלך.

2. תורה אור, דף כז, טור ג.

והנה עצמות המאציל ב"ה [ברוך הוא] הוא יחיד ומיוחד ובתכלית היחוד כנודע ולזאת כדי שיתהוו בבחי' [נת] הנבראים שהם בחי' [נת] ריבוי גדול ובבחי' [נת] פירוד שהם בחי' [נת] יש ודבר בפ"ע [בפני עצמו] שזהו ממש המנגד אל אמתות אחדותו ב"ה [ברוך הוא] שאין עוד מלבדו. הוצרך להיות ע"י [על ידי] שבה"כ [שבירת הכלים] שמחמת שנתפרדו לחלקים קטנים רבים מאוד עי"ז [על ידי זה] נעשה בחי' [נת] הרבוי של הנבראים וגם ע"י [על ידי] פירוד הזה נעשה כל נברא מהות בפ"ע [בפני עצמו].

3. סדר תפילות, דף רלז, טור א.

סיבת טעם הצמצום הנ"ל [הנזכר לעיל] הוא בא מחמת שעלה ברצון המאציל להיות לו תענוג מבחי' [נת] מלכות על נפרדים כדי שיהא לו דירה בתחתונים וכו' [לי]. ומפני התענוג שיש לו מזה בעצמותו הוא בא לידי בחי' [נת] הצמצום לצמצם א"ע [את עצמו] כדי שיוכל להיות מלך על עם כנ"ל [כנזכר לעיל].

4. תניא, ספר של בינונים, פרק לו, דף מו, עמ' א.

ונודע שימות המשיח ובפרט כשיחיו המתים הם תכלית ושלמות בריאות עולם הזה שלכך נברא מתחילתו.

5. בבלי מגילה, דף כט, עמ' א.

בוא וראה כמה חביבין ישראל לפני הקב"ה [הקדוש ברוך הוא] שבכל מקום שגלו שכינה עמהן גלו למצרים שכינה עמהן [...] גלו לבבל שכינה עמהן.

6. תניא, ספר של בינונים, פרק ו, דף י, עמ' ב.

אבל כל מה שאינו בטל אצלו ית' [ברך] אלא הוא דבר נפרד עצמו אינו מקבל חיות מקדושתו של הקב"ה [הקדוש ברוך הוא] מבחי' [נה] פנימית הקדושה ומהותה ועצמותה בכבודה ובעצמה אלא מבחי' [נת] אחריים שיורדים ממדרגה למדרגה רבבות מדרגות בהשתלשלות העולמות דרך עלה ועלול וצמצומים רבים עד שנתמעט כל כך האור והחיות מיעוט אחר מיעוט עד שיכול להתצמצם ולהתלבש בבחי' [נת] גלות תוך אותו דבר הנפרד להחיותו ולקיימו מאין ליש שלא יחזור להיות אין ואפס כבתחלה מקודם שנברא.

7. תניא, ספר של בינונים, פרק יט, דף כד, עמ' ב - דף כה, עמ' א.

ככי בחי' [נת] החכמה שבנפש האלהית עם ניצוץ אלהות מאור א"ס ב"ה [אין סוף ברוך הוא] המלוּבש בה הם בבחי' [נת] גלות בגופם בנפש הבהמית מצד הקליפה שבחלל השמאלי שבלב המולכת ומושלת בגופם בסוד גלות השכינה כנ"ל [כנזכר לעיל].

8. רד"ק על ישעיהו, פרק מג, פסוק יט.

כי תשוב אל ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך, והשבים לבבל לא שבו אל ה' בכל לבבכם.

9. תניא, ספר של בינונים, פרק יז, דף כג, עמ' א.

כמארז"ל [כמאמר רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] גלו לאדום שכינה עמהם דהיינו כשהאדם עושה מעשה אדום מוריד וממשיך לשם בחי' [נת] וניצוץ אלהות המחיה את נר"נ [נפש, רוח, נשמה] שלו.

10. בבלי פסחים, דף קטז, עמ' ב.

בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים.

11. תורה אור, דף נא, טור א.

כל בחי' [נת] הגלות הוא בחי' [נת] גלות מצרים.

12. תורה אור, דף סד, טור ד.

והנה ארז"ל [אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] גלו למצרים שכינה עמהם כמ"ש [כמו שכתוב] אנכי ארד עמך מצרימה שבחינת מלכות דאצילות מתלבשת בבי"ע [בבריאה, יצירה, עשייה] ממש והוא גלות השכינה לגלות מצרים שהשכינה שהיא מלכות דאצילות היא בגלות בתוך מצרים וגבולים.

13. תורה אור, דף נח, טור ב.

וענין יצ"מ [יציאת מצרים] הוא יציאת המוחין ממצר הגרון בהתפשטות בגוף ומשם הם נמשכים בבחי' [נת] מל' [כות] שהיא ארץ טובה ורחבה מקום רחב. משא"כ [מה שאין כן] הגרון הוא בחי' [נת] מצרים מקום צר כנ"ל [כנזכר לעיל].

14. תורה אור, דף נז, טור ד.

שהקול שהוא בגרון הוא המקשר ומחבר בחינת מוחין שבראש לבא לידי גילוי הלב.

15. תורה אור, דף צה, טור ד.

הנה ישראל זכו למתן תורה על ידי יסורים דגלות מצרים בחומר ובלבנים. והקדימו נעשה לנשמע [...] וזהו ענין הקדמת נעשה לנשמע שהוא בחי' [נת] הבטול שמבטל רצונו מכל וכל כאלו אין לו רצון בפ"ע [בפני עצמו] רק שירצה כל מה שהוא רצון עליון ב"ה [ברוך הוא] וזה בחי' [נת] עבודה ואותו תעבדו. שהעבד אין לו דעת בפ"ע [בפני עצמו] רק את אשר יאמר רבו עושה. וע"י [ועל ידי] שהקדימו בחי' [נת] נעשה שהוא בטול זה יוכל להיות ונשמע דהיינו לקבל הגלוי והאור מאין סוף ב"ה [ברוך הוא].

16. תורה אור, דף יא, טור ד.

אך באמת יש פנימי' [יות] וחיצוני' [יות] והקיום שלו היה בפנימי' [יות]. ויאמר הוי"ה היינו התגלות והמשכת אא"ס [אור אין סוף] כ"ע [כל עלמין] מלמעלה למטה בבחי' [נת] פנימי' [יות] אבל שיוכל להתגלות גם בחיצוניות שיהיה בדבר גשמי בקלף ממש גילוי אלקות כנ"ל [כנזכר לעיל]. אין זה דרך השתלשלו' [ת] רק ע"י [על ידי] וימררו חייהם כו' [לי] בכל עבודה קשה נעשה התגלות מבחי' [נת] למעלה מהשתלשלות כי אז יוכל להתגלות גם למטה מהשתלשלות כי שם מעלה ומטה שוין גם חכמה לבחי' [נת] עשי' [יה] יחשב כולם בחכמה עשית.

17. תורה אור, דף סה, טור ב.

[...] ישראל זכו לזה [...] ע"י [על ידי] שיעבוד מצרים בחומר ובלבנים שעי"ז [שעל ידי זה] אתכפיא סט"א [סטרא אחרא].

18. תורה אור, דף מט, טור א.

והענין דהנה כתיב ירד ירדנו כו' [לי] ירידה אחר ירידה וכן ביצ"מ [ביציאת מצרים] וגאולה כתיב ואנכי אעלך גם עלה כו' [לי] עלה נעלה כו' [לי]. היינו ב' עליות שהוא עילוי אחר עילוי ובאמת ביצ"מ [ביציאת מצרים] לא נתעלו רק פעם א' כמ"ש [כמו שכתוב] אעלה אתכם מעני מצרים כו' [לי] אל ארץ זבת חלב ודבש. אך עלייה זו השנית היא רומזת על גאולה העתידה להיות בב"א [במהרה בימינו אמן].

19. אגרות בעל התניא ובני דורו, אגרת י"ד, עמ' יח.

שהוא להפשיט מכל אופני גשמיות שהוא עפר ולהעלותם עד מקום אל הרצון.

20. תניא, אגרת הקדוש, סימן כ"ו, דף קמד, עמ' ב – דף קמה, עמ' א.

והנה העליונים אין להם כח לברר ולהעלות מהשבירה שבקליפת נוגה אלא התחתונים לבד לפי שהם מלובשים בגוף החומרי משכא דחויא מקליפת נוגה והם מתישים כחה בשבירת התאוות ואתכפיא ס"א [סתרא אחרא] ויתפרדו כל פועלי און.

21. מאה"ז הקצרים, עמ' קיט.

ובנו בעלי הגוף להכניע ולשבר כל התאוות תלוי הגאולה שבזכות זה נגאל.

22. תניא, ספר של בינונים, פרק לז, דף מז, עמ' ב.

והנה תכלית השלימות הזה של ימות המשיח ותחיית המתים שהוא גילוי אור א"ס ב"ה [אין סוף ברוך הוא] בעו"הז [בעולם הזה] הגשמי תלוי במעשינו ועבודתנו כל זמן משך הגלות כי הגורם שכר המצוה היא המצוה בעצמה כי בעשייתה ממשיך האדם גילוי אור א"ס ב"ה [אין סוף ברוך הוא] מלמעלה למטה להתלבש בגשמיות עוה"ז [עולם הזה] בדבר שהיה תחלה תחת ממשלת קליפת נוגה.

23. תניא, ספר של בינונים, פרק לז, דף מז, עמ' ב – דף מח, עמ' א.

שס"ה ל"ת [לא תעשה] להפריד שס"ה גידים של דם נפש החיונית שבגוף שלא יינקו ויקבלו חיות בעבירה זו מאחת משלש קליפות הטמאות לגמרי [...] כמ"ש [כמו שכתוב] ואת רוח הטומאה אעביר מן הארץ ורמ"ח מצות עשה להמשיך אור א"ס ב"ה [אין סוף ברוך הוא] למטה להעלות לו ולקשר ולייחד בו כללות הנפש החיונית שברמ"ח אברי הגוף ביחד גמור להיות לאחדים כמו שעלה ברצונו ית' [ברך] להיות לו דירה בתחתונים והם לו למרכבה כמו האבות. ומאחר שכללות נפש החיונית שבכללות ישראל תהיה מרכבה קדושה לה' אזי גם כללות החיות של עו"הז [עולם הזה] שהיא קליפת נוגה עכשיו תצא אז מטומאת [ה] וחלאתה ותעלה לקדושה להיות מרכבה לה' בהתגלות כבודו וראו כל בשר יחדיו [...] וימלא כבוד ה' את כל הארץ וראו עין בעין כמתן תורה.

24. לקוטי תורה, אחרי, דף כה, טור ד.

והנה כלל כל התורה ומצות הם ג' מדרגות שהם תורה ותפילה וצדקה וכדתנן על שלשה דברים העולם עומד על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים כי תפילה הוא במקום עבודת הקרבנות וגמילות חסדים היינו צדקה. וכנגד ג' דברים אלו כתיב בראתיו יצרתיו אף עשיתיו שהם מחשבה דבור ומעשה.

25. תניא, ספר של בינונים, פרק לז, דף מח, עמ' א.

כי כללות ישראל שהם ששים רבוא נשמות פרטיות הם כללות החיות של כללות העולם כי בשבילם נברא וכל פרט מהם הוא כולל ושייך לו החיות של חלק אחד מששים רבוא מכללות העולם התלוי בנפשו החיונית

להעלותו לה' בעלייתה דהיינו במה שמשמש מעו"הז [מעולם הזה] לצורך גופו ונפשו החיונית לעבודת ה' כגון אכילה ושתייה ודומיהם ודירה וכל כלי.

26. לקוטי תורה, בהר, דף מב, טור ב.

כי הנה תכלית ויסוד כל המצות הוא להפוך היש לאין דהיינו שיהיה ביטול היש, וזשארז"ל [זה שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] הוקשה כל התורה לתפילין. כי בתפילין כותבין אחד על קלף גשמי ששרשיו מק"נ [מקליפת נוגה] שהוא יש ונפרד ונכלל בבחי' [נת] אין שנעשה כלי לאלקות השורה עליו בחי' [נת] אחד כו', וכך הוא ענין כל מצות התורה.

27. תורה אור, דף מט, טור א.

דהנה כתיב כימי צאתך מארץ מצרים אראנו נפלאות שמקיש הכתוב ענין גאולה אחרונה ליציאת מצרים. [...] וכך בענין השעבוד והגלות שנאמר בגלות מצרי וימררו את חייהם בעבדה קשה בחומר ובלבנים ובכל עבדה בשדה. קאי גם על זמן האחרון וימררו את חייהם היא התורה כי היא חיינו. בעבדה קשה דא קושיא. בחומר דא קל וחומר. ובכל עבדה בשדה דא ברייתא. ובלבנים דא לבון הלכתא. שאין בידינו הלכה ברורה ודין ברור כי כל דיני התורה במחלוק' [ת] שנויה הללו מכשירין ומטהרין והללו פוסלין ומטמאין. וא"כ [ואם כן] כמו שע"י [שעל ידי] שעבוד מצרים בחומר ובלבנים זכו למתן תורה כך ג"כ [גם כן] ע"י [על ידי] לבון הלכתא שבזמננו זה. יזכו לגלוי פנימי' [יות] התורה לע"ל [לעתיד לבוא] להיות אראנו נפלאות.

28. סדר תפילות, שער התפילה, דף יט, טור ב.

אך מי הוא הגורם המשכות וירידת אור ה' לתחתונים ממש בבחי' [נת] גילוי כזה - הנה הן הן כל המצות מעשיות בכלל [...] ובפרט מצות הצדקה השקולה כנגד כלן שלכן נקראת בשם מצוה סתם בירושלמי לפי שעניינה ומהותה היא השפעת חיים הן וחסד למאן דלית ליה מגרמיה ולהחיות רוח שפלים כו' [לי].

29. תורה אור, דף כט, טור ג.

וכתיב וילבש צדקה כשריון וכובע ישוע בראשו. שריון הוא מקשקשים רבים. וכך הנה כל פרוטה ופרוטה מצטרפת לחשבון גדול. להיות בחי' [נת] שריון שהוא מגן לכל החוסים בו. וכך הצדקה נעשה בחי' [נת] מגן ומחסה שלא יהיה יניקת הקליפה וסט"א [סטרא אחרא].

30. סדר תפילות, שער הציצית, דף ד, טור א.

וע"י [ועל ידי] שנותן שפע לנמוכי רוח כו' [לי] דומה הוא במעשיו למעשה ה' שהוא בחי' [נת] השפעת שפע אלקי' [ת] לכל הנבראים הנק' [ראים] דלים.

Appendix to Chapter 3

1. תניא, אגרת הקדש, סימן כ"ו, דף קמג, עמ' א-ב.

איך אפשר שלימות המשיח לא יצטרכו לידע הלכות איסור והיתר וטומאה וטהרה כי איך ישחטו הקרבנות וגם חולין אם לא ידעו הלכות דרסה וחלדה ושהי' [ה] הפוסלים השחיטה ופגימת הסכין וכי יולד איש בטבעו שיהא שוחט בלי שהי' [ה] ודרסה וגם הסכין תהי' בריאה ועומדת בלי פגימה לעולם ועוד הרבה הלכות חלב ודם ושאר איסורין וגם טומאת המת יהי' [ה] צריכין לידע כדכתיב הנער בן מאה שנה ימות וגם טומאת יולדת צריך לידע כדכתיב הרה ויולדת יחדיו אם תלד אשה בכל יום מביאה אחת אעפ"כ [אף-על-פי-כן] דין איסור טומאתה לא ישתנה.

2. תורה אור, דף מו, טורים א-ב.

הנה אמרו"ל [אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] אין בין עולם הזה לימות המשיח אלא שעבוד בלבד כי ימות המשיח אינו עוה"ב [עולם הבא] שלאחר התחיה. שזהו מתן שכרן של הצדיקים. אבל ימות המשיח הוא בבחי' [נת] היום לעשות ולא לקבל שכרן. ועיקר היום לעשותם ותכלית השלימות של המעשה יהיה בימות המשיח [...]. שעיקר המעשה היא עבודת הקרבנות שאין אנו יכולים לקיים בגלות אלא שבגלות נתקנה התפילה כנגד הקרבנות. ועדיין אין זה כמצות רצונך ממש.

3. לקוטי תורה, ראה, דף כח, טור א.

וכן לע"ל [לעתיד לבוא] יהיה הגוף יותר זך לאין קץ מגוף האדם עכשיו שהגוף יהיה רק מאותו העצם שישאר לעת התחי' [יה] שממנו יבנה בנין הגוף כחמירא גו עיסה ע"י [על ידי] הטל שיומשך מלמעלה.

4. תניא, אגרת הקדש, סימן כ"ו, דף קמה, עמ' ב.

עיקר עסק התורה גם כן בפנימיות המצות וטעמיהם הנסתרים. אבל הנגלות יהיו גלויים וידועים לכל איש ישראל בידיעה בתחילה בלי שכחה וא"צ [אין צריך] לעסוק בהם אלא לערב רב שלא יזכו למטעם מאילנא דחיי שהיא פנימיות התורה והמצוה וצריכים לעסוק [בתורה] במשנה להתיש כח הס"א [הסטר אחרא] הדבוק בהם [ע"י] [על ידי] עסק התורה) שלא תשלוט בהם להחטיאם כדכתיב והחוטא בן מאה שנה יקולל שיהיו חוטאים מערב רב.

5. תניא, ספר של בינונים, פרק לו, דף מו, עמ' ב.

גרם החטא ונתגשמו הם והעולם עד עת קץ הימין שאז יזדכך גשמיות הגוף והעולם ויוכלו לקבל גילוי אור ה'

שיאיר לישראל ע"י [על ידי] התורה שנקר' [את] עוז ומיתרון ההארה לישראל יגיה חשך האומות גם כן כדכתיב והלכו גוים לאורך וגו' [מר] וכתיב בית יעקב לכו ונלכה באור ה' וכתיב ונגלה כבוד ה' וראו כל בשר יחדיו וגו' [מר].

6. תניא, ספר של בינונים, פרק ב, דף ו, עמ' א-ב.

ואף שיש רבבות מיני חלוקי מדרגות בנשמו' [ת] גבוה על גבוה לאין קץ כמו גודל מעלת נשמות האבות ומשה רבינו ע"ה [עליו השלום] על נשמות דורותינו אלא דעקבי משיח' [א] שהם בחי' [נת] עקביים ממש לגבי המוח והראש וכן בכל דור ודור יש ראשי אלפי ישראל שנשמותיהם הם בחי' [נת] ראש ומוח לגבי נשמות ההמון וע"ה [עמי-הארץ].

7. תניא, ספר של בינונים, פרק מז, דף סו, עמ' ב.

והנה בכל דור ודור וכל יום ויום חייב אדם לראות עצמו כאילו הוא יצא היום ממצרים. והיא יציאת נפש האלהית ממאסר הגוף משכא דחויא ליכלל ביחוד אור א"ס ב"ה [אין סוף ברוך הוא] ע"י [על ידי] עסק בתורה והמצות בכלל ובפרת בקבלת מלכות שמים בק"ש [קריאת שמע] בשה מקבל וממשיך עליו יחודו ית' [ברך] בפירוש באמרו ה' אלהינו ה' אחד.

8. תורה אור, דף סד, טור א.

וגלות מצרים נק' [ראת] ההתקשרות בזה העולם הגשמי והמוגבל ומלך מצרים נק' [רא] השכל של הבלי העולם. וכשנעשה התקשרות לזה העולם כ"כ [כל כך] בחוזק עד שהוא בלי שכל כלל בלי טעם ודעת נק' [ראת] אז וימת מלך מצרים ואזי ויאנחו בני' [בני ישראל] מן העבודה ויזעקו שנעשה צעק לבם בק"ש [קריאת שמע] בבחי' [נת] ובכל מאדך שהוא בלי גבול דהיינו לצאת מן החושך וגבול הנק' [ראת] מצרים רק להיות צעק לבם למהותו ועצמותו ממש והוא בחי' [נת] מ' [יציאת מצרים].

9. תורה אור, דף צה, טור א.

וזה היה הנס בפורים שהוא בחי' [נת] בבל כי שם בלל ה' והבן.

10. סדר תפילות, שער התפילה, דף יט, טור ב.

לימות המשיח ותחיית המתים שיזדכך חומריות עוה"ז [עולם הזה] יוכלו לסבול לקבל הארה יותר גדולה לאין קץ בבחי' [נת] גילוי לעין כל בשר והשגתם. כשל א' [חד] לפי השגתו מראה באצבע עד"מ [על דרך משל]

ואמר הנה אלהינו זה קיונו לו וגו'.

11. לקוטי תורה, האזינו, דף עז, טור ג.

רואים את הנשמע ושומעים את הנראה שהיה גילוי אלקות בלי שום התחלקות ריבוי המדרגות רק היו רואים גילוי כללות החיות ושפע אלקי ואין שום פירוד ח"ו [חס ושלום] בין ראייה לשמיעה.

12. בבלי ערובין, דף כב, עמ' א.

היום לעשותם ולא למחר לעשותם היום לעשותם למחר לקבל שכרם.

רש"י: שלאחר מיתה לעתיד לבוא אם בא לקיים מצות אינו מועיל דמי שטרה בערב שבת יאכל בשבת.

13. לקוטי תורה, פינחס, דף עה, טורים ב-ג.

מ"ש [מה שכתוב] היום לעשותם ולא למחר לעשותם שהעוה"ז [שהעולם הזה] דוקא הוא עולם המעשה ובו נתנה הבחירה ביד האדם לבחור בטוב ולא עוד אלא אפילו אם כבר עבר עבירה יכול הוא לשוב בתשובה ולחזור לעבודת ה'. משא"כ [מה שאין כן] בעוה"ב [בעולם הבא] אין הבחירה חפשית ביד האדם רק כמו שנמשך בעוה"ז [בעולם הזה] כך נשאר בעוה"ב [בעולם הבא] [...] וטעם ההפרש וההבדל שבין עוה"ז [עולם הזה] לעוה"ב [לעולם הבא] הוא כי בעוה"ב [בעולם הבא] אין לך דבר שאין לו מקום שכל מדרגה היא מובדלת מחברתה מלאכים ונשמות דקדושה הם מובדלים בפ"ע [בפני עצמם] ואין להרע שייכות עם הטוב כלל ולכן במקום שנמשך רע לא נמשך טוב כלל. משא"כ [מה שאין כן] בעוה"ז [בעולם הזה] נמשך הטוב גם במקום שיש רע ולכן אע"פ [אף על פי] שעשה עבירה יכול לעשות מצוה ויכול הוא לשנות את טעמו מרע לטוב.

14. לקוטי תורה, שמיני עצרת, דף פו, טור א.

בעוה"ב [בעולם הבא] שכבר נבדל איש על מקומו וכל צדיק יש לו מדור בפני עצמו.

15. לקוטי תורה, ראה, דף לג, טורים ב-ג.

והנה כתיב היום לעשותם. היום דוקא שבעוה"ז [שבעולם הזה] הוא נק' [רא] עולם המעשה ויכולים לעשות תשובה משא"כ [מה שאין כן] בעוה"ב [בעולם הבא] הנה כמו שהוא כך ישאר שאין לו כח להפוך עצמו מכמו שהוא אם לא שיסירו ממנו הלבושים הצואים ע"י [על ידי] כף הקלע כו' [לי]

16. לקוטי תורה, פינחס, דף עה, טור ג.

והוא ענין כף הקלע שמקלעין ומשליכין ומפילין אותו במחשבותיו שנמשך בהם בעוה"ז [בעולם הזה] בהבלי עולם שמתלוצצים ממנו ומראים לו כאילו עודנו עומד בעוה"ז [בעולם הזה] וחושב ומדבר ועושה כדרכו.

17. זהר ג', דף טז, עמ' ב.

נשמתהון דצדיקייא טבלין ומתדכין ביה, ונשמתהון דרשיעי נידונין ביה, ואתבעירו קמיה כקש לפני אש.

18. זהר ב', דף ריא, עמ' ב.

וכד סלקין לה לעילא, אצטריך לאתפרשא מכל חיזו ומכל מלין דלתתא, ואעבירו לה בההוא נהר די נור, כדין נשמתא אתלבנת ביה מכל וכל, ונפקת ואתחזיאת קמי מאריה דעלמא.

19. תורה אור, דף סט, טור ג.

היינו כגון מדרגת ג"ע [גן עדן] התחתון שאחר עוה"ז [עולם הזה] שצ"ל [שצריך להיות] נהר דינור מפסיק לטבול בו כדי שישתכח ממנו כח הזוכר הגשמי. שכיון שהוא זוכר גשמיות א"א [אי אפשר] לו להתענג בג"ע [גן עדן].

20. תורה אור, דף יג, טור ד.

אברהם זכה לגילו בחי' [נת] ומל ה' את לבבך ע"כ [על כן] נאמר נמול אברהם כו' [לי]. וזהו בעצם היום הזה נמול פי' [רוש] בעצמיות של היום הזה ויום הזה הוא היום שכולו ארוך כולו טוב וכו' [לי]. והעצמיות של היום הזה היינו אותו הגילוי שיהי' [ה] לע"ל [לעתיד לבוא] גילוי בחי' [נת] רב טובך.

Appendix to Chapter 4

1. קהלת רבה, ז, כת.

אדם אחד מאלף מצאתי בנוהג שבעולם אלף בני אדם נכנסים למקרא יוצאים מהן ק' למשנה יוצאים מהן עשרה לתלמוד יוצא מהם אחד להוראה.

2. לקוטי תורה, שיר השירים דף מד, טור ד- דף מה, טור א.

כי הנה בעלי עסקים שאינם תמיד לה' רק קובע עתים לתורה כו' [לי] הנה כשחוזר מעסקו במילי דעלמא ללמוד נק' [ראת] תשובה. דהיינו ששב ממה שעסק בתחלה כו' [לי]. ועי"ז [ועל ידי זה] נעשה גודל ההתפעלות ביתר שאת מאם לא הי' [ה] עוסק בתחלה במילי דעלמא כו' [לי] [...] שיהיה התפעלות שהוא שינוי המהות [...] התפעלות שנשתנה מהותו במה שהי' [ה] עוסק בתחלה במילי דעלמא להיות לומד תורה [...] כי הנה כתיב כימי צאתך מארץ מצרים אראנו נפלאות והוא כמו בבחי' [נת] מ"ת [מתן תורה] דכתיב פכ"פ [פנים בפנים] דבר ה' גילויי אלהות למטה בבחי' [נת] פנים היה צ"ל [צריך להיות] תחלה הסתר פנים גלות מצרים רד"ו שנה כדי שאח"כ [שאחר כך] יכול להיות פכ"פ [פנים בפנים].

3. תורה אור, דף פ, טור ג.

והנה זהו יתרון מעלת קביעות עתים לתור' [ה] של הבעל עסק שהוא בחי' [נת] אתכפייא יותר מביושבי אוהלים.

4. תניא, אגרת התשובה, פרק ד, דף צג, עמ' ב.

בהקדים מ"ש [מה שכתוב] בזה"ק [בזהר הקודש] בבאיור מלת תשובה ע"ד [על דרך] הסוד. תשוב ה'. ה' תתאה תשבה תתאה. ה' עילאה תשובה עילאה.

5. ויקרא רבה, פרשה כה, א.

אם היה למוד לקרות דף אחד קורא שני דפים ואם היה למוד לשנות פרק אחד ישנה שנים.

6. מאה"ז, תקע"א, עמ' קה.

מעשה בלא תלמוד אינו מתקיים וגם תלמוד בלא מעשה אינו עיקר כי לא המדרש עיקר כו' [לי].

7. תניא, ספר של בינונים, פרק לד, דף מג, עמ' א-ב.

ולכן אחר שיעמיק האדם מחשבתו בענין ביטול הנ"ל [הנזכר לעיל] כפי יכלתו זאת ישיב אל לבו כי מהיות קטן שכלי ושרש נשמתי מהכיל להיות מרכבה ומשכן ליחודו ית' [ברך] באמת לאמיתו מאחר דלית מחשבה דילי תפיסא ומשגת בו ית' [ברך] כלל וכלל שום השגה בעולם ולא שמץ מנהו מהשגת האבו' [ת] והנביאים אי לזאת אעשה לו משכן ומכון לשבתו הוא העסק בת"ת [תלמוד תורה] כפי הפנאי שלי בקביעות עתים ביום ובלילה כדת הניתנה לכל אחד ואחד בהלכות תלמוד תורה וכמאמר רז"ל [רבתינו זכרונום לברכה] אפי' [לו] פרק אחד שחרית כו' [לי].

8. מאה"ז, תקע"א, עמ' פג.

גם הבעל עסק צריך לקבוע עתים לתורה כי כל המשכה צריכה להיות דרך מעביר כפי ההדרגה והגם שעיקר ההמשכה כאן הוא ע"י [על ידי] מעשה דוקא מ"מ צ"ל [מכל מקום צריך להיות] תחלה במחשבה ודיבור ואח"כ [ואחר כך] במעשה ולכן צריך גם לקבוע עתים לתורה שהיא מחו"ד [מחשבה ודיבור].

9. מאה"ז, תקע"א, עמ' קיט.

וקאי בעוסקי מו"מ [משא ומתן] שעוסקי [ם] בתו"מ [בתורה ומצוות] בחיך ולשון וז"ש [וזהו שכתוב] וחיכך דכנ"י [דכנסת ישראל] כו' [לי] כיון הטוב בבחי' [נת] הריח שלמעלה מתענוג המוגבל בחו"ב [בחוכמה ובינה] בבחי' [נת] כלי.

10. תורה אור, דף ט"ז, טור ב.

שיהא תמיד קשור בהתבוננות זו ביטול העולמות להמחי' [ה] ומהווה אותם רק מפני היות כי גופו הגשמי לא יוכל לקבל ביטול אמתי הנ"ל [הנזכר לעיל] יגמור בדעתו בק"ש [קריאת שמע] ענין למוד התורה באמרו ודברת במ. דהיינו שנפשו האלקית בעסקו בתורה נעשה יחוד אמתי עם התורה ואורייתא וקוב"ה [קודשא בריך הוא] כולא חד ממש.

11. לקוטי תורה, דרושים לסוכות ושמ"ע, דף עט, טור ג.

ויוכל האדם שיהיה רושם בחינת הביטול שבתפלת שמונה עשרה קבוע ונטוע במסמרות בלי ימוט לנצח כל היום בעסקו בתורה.

12. מאה"ז, תק"ע, עמ' י.

דהנה הגם שהתו' [רה] נתנה בזמן ומקום, וכבר יש ג' אלפים שנה שנתנה התו' [רה] יהי' [ה] בעיניך כאילו נתנה היום ממש כמ"ש [כמו שכתוב] אשר אנכי מצווך היום שהוא בכל יום שאו' [מרים] ק"ש [קריאת שמע] וז"ש [וזהו שכתוב] שבכל יום יהי' [ה] בעיניך כחדשים והטעם הוא כי אנכי הוא אשר מצווך שהוא בחי' [נת]

סובב הכללי הנ"ל [הנזכר לעיל] שהוא למע' [לה] מבחי' [נת] זמן לגמרי [...] ומה שאמרו ז"ל [זכרונם לברכה] דכל היושב וקורא ושונה הקדב"ה [הקדוש ברוך הוא] יושב וקורא ושונה כנגדו, אעפ"י [אף-על-פי] שהאדם הקורא הוא בבחי' [נת] זמן והקב"ה [והקדוש ברוך הוא] הוא למע' [לה] מבחי' [נת] הזמן כו' [לי] [...] דהקב"ה [דהקדוש ברוך הוא] יושב ושונה כנגדו מלמע' [לה] מן הזמן לבחי' [נת] זמן כו' [לי] וע"כ [ועל כן] אמר אשר אנכי מצווך היום כמו בשעת מ"ת [מתן תורה] ממש להיותו למע' [לה] מן הזמן.

13. מאה"ז, כתובים א, עמ' רלג.

וכל ההתבוננות בתפלה [...] הוא בבחי' [נת] רצוא עליות נוק' [בא] ונק' [ראת] חיי שעה שהזמן הוא בבחי' [נת] מלכות וכשמעלין אותו מן היש נק' [רא] חיי שעה אבל העיקר הוא חיי עולם שהוא ז"א [זעיר אנפין] שיהי' [ה] דוקא עולם וזהו בבחי' [נת] שוב התגלות סוכ"ע [סובב כל עלמין] דירה בתחתונים דוקא וזה נק' [רא] חיי עולם המשכות אלהות לעולם דוקא.

14. היום יום, יא אלול.

הואיל הצ"צ [צמח צדק] לאמר: עוה"ז [עולם הזה] הוא עלמא דשיקרא, לכן הנה גם בהטוב מעורב הפסולת, וצריך בירור בדרך מלמטה למעלה ובדרך מלמעלה למטה. העוה"ב [העולם הבא] הוא עלמא דקשוט – הנה גם הדברים בדברי תורה המדברים בענינים הנראים לחסרון, הרי כמו שלומדים אותם בג"ע [בגן עדן] הם מעלה. [...] בעלמא דין איז דער טייטש פון דעם מאמר הלומד תורה לפרקים אז ער לערענט תורה צייטענווייז. אין ג"ע [גן עדן] טייטשט מען דעם מאמר אז ער לערענט תורה און די תורה נעהמט איהם פאנאנדער, די דברי תורה דערנעמען איהם.

Appendix to Chapter 5

1. מגדל עוז, ע' קעד.

פעם שמע רבנו את הרבנית יושבת ומסיחה עם חברותיה ובתוך דבריה אמרה "און מיינער זאגט אזוי." בשמעו זאת קרא רבנו: "מיט וואס בין איך דיינער, נאר מיט איין מצווה, ניין! איך בין ניט דיינער אין גאנצען!"

2. היום יום, כג שבט.

אַמאָל אַרויסגינדִיג פֿון זיין חדר, האט דער אלטער רבי אָנגעטרָאָפֿען, ווי די רביצין זאָגט צו עטליכע פֿרויען: "מיינער זאָגט."

האָט דער רבי געזאָגט: מיט איין מצוה בין איך דיינער, מיט מצות וויפיל איז מען דעם אויבערשטען'ס. און איז געפאלען אויף דער פֿריטעלקע און האָט זיך פֿאַרדבֿק'עט. אויפֿכאַפֿנדיג זיך פֿון דבֿקות, האָט ער געזאָגט: צאינה וראינה – אויף אַרויסגיין פֿון זיך און זעהן אלקות, ווערט דאָס פֿון – בנות ציון, מלכות מעוררת ז"א [זעיר אנפֿין], לעתיד לבוא וועט זיין אשת חייל עטרת בעלה.

3. סדר תפילות, דף קיג, טור ד.

ומ"ש [מה שכתוב] בזהר צלם דכר ודמות נוק' [בא] כי צלם הוא המצטייר מצלם הפנים עצמו כמו באותיות החותם בשעוה וכה"ג [וכהאי גונא] במראה הפנים עצמו במים ומראה ודמות נוקבא הוא המצטייר מן הנבדל שקבל עצם הצורה וזהו אין צור כאלהינו צר צורה בתוך צורה שצייר מצור' [ה] שנצטיירה מעצם התואר שנקרא צורה הראשונה כו' [לי].

4. לקוטי תורה, חוקת, דף ס, טור ג.

אשה היא בחי' [נת] גבורות בחי' [נת] מל' [כות] שרגליה יורדות מות.

5. סדר תפילות, דף מו, טור ד.

וגם על דרך הפשט דאין אשה אלא ליופי לפי שהנשי' [ם] יפות מן האנשים בדרך הבריאה בטבען כידוע הרי זה מופת להבין גם למעלה בענין הנ"ל דלכך יפות יותר בטבען מפני שנעוץ סופן בתחילתן ומקבלים מאור הכתר כו'.

6. זאב וואלף מז'יטומיר, אור מאיר, חיי שרה, דף י"ד טור ב.

כל העולמות בכלל לא נבראו [כ"א] כי אם שיקבל הקב"ב [הקדוש ברוך הוא] שעשועים ממדריגות תחתונים, שנק' [ראות] אשה להיות בחי' [נת] מקבל הארה ממנו ית' [ברך].

7. לקוטי תורה, שיר השירים, דף ת, טור ד.

פי' [רוש] כלה כל ה' היינו כל ר"ל [רצונו לומר] בחי' [נת] כלליות מכל המדות [...] והה' הוא בחי' [נת] התגלות.

8. לקוטי תורה, במדבר, דף ז, טור ד.

והנה עכשיו המל' [כות] שהיא הדבור העליון מקבל מבחינת ז"א [זעיר אנפין] והינו מהחזה ולמטה ששם מתחיל בנין הנוק' [בא] ולכן נקרא מספר בנ"י [בני ישראל] שמשם הוא שרש בחינת מספר (וגם משם הוא שרש בחינת התהוות הזמן כמ"ש [כמו שכתוב] בלק"ת [בלקוטי תורה] פ' [רשת] בראשית והיינו כי הזמן הוא ג"כ [גם כן] בחינת מספר והתחלקות) אבל לע"ל [לעתיד לבוא] שתתעלה המל' [כות] שהיא הדבור לקבל מבחינת חו"ב [חכמה ובינה] עצמן שהוא בחינת ולתבונתו אין מספר אזי יהיה בחינת והיה מספר בנ"י [בני ישראל] כו' אשר לא ימד ולא יספר. דהינו שגם עלמא דאתגליא שהוא עכשיו בבחינת מספר. יהיה לעתיד במדרגת בחינת סתים ועלמא דאתכסיא אשר הוא בבחינת אין מספר.

9. סדר תפילות, דף קט, טור ב.

וז"ש [וזה שכתוב] אשת חיל ע"ב [עטרת בעלה] בחי' [נת] מ"ל [מלכות] דאצי' [לות] מקור כנ"י [כנסת ישראל] עטרת לבעלה בחי' [נת] ז"א [זעיר אנפין] שהוא סוף עולם הא"ס [האין סוף] מפני שנעוץ סופן בתחילתן כו'.

10. תורה אור, דף ה, טור ב.

...מבחי' [נת] הצמצום וההסתר המנגד להתפשטות ההארה כנ"ל [כנזכר לעיל] שמחמת זה מתהווה הגוף ונפש הבהמית שהם בחי' [נת] יש ונפרדים כנ"ל [כנזכר לעיל] ומזה דוקא יהיה העזר כי מהעלם זה נעשה אח"כ [אחר כך] או"ח [אור חוזר] למעלה מעלה.

11. תורה אור, דף ה, טור ב.

ובכ"ז [ובכל זאת] יובן מה שאומרים בברכת חתנים בברכת שמה תשמח משמח חתן וכלה ובברכה אחרונה שהיא אשר ברא אומרים משמח חתן עם הכלה פי' [רוש] כי הכלה היא בחי' [נת] מל' [כות]. תחלה היא מקבלת האור מהחתן שנמשך מעלמא דדכורא בעלמא דנוקבא. וזהו חתן וכלה. אמנם אח"כ [אחר כך] הוא משמח חתן עם הכלה שע"י [שעל ידי] הכלה הוא משמח את החתן שהרי נעשה לו עזר ממש ותוספת אור מבחי' [נת] שנגדו כנ"ל [כנזכר לעיל]. וזהו שנעשית עטרה לבעלה.

12. לקוטי תורה, שיר השירים, דף מה, עמ' ב.

אומר גם כן ישמע קול חתן וקול כלה כי לעתיד יהיה לכלה קול. קול היינו המשכה והתגלות כמו קול גשמי שנמשך ונתגלה מהבל הלב לקנה. ולעתיד כשיהיה א"ח עט"ב [אשת חיל עטרת בעלה] אז יהיה להכלה קול המשכה והתגלות.

13. מאה"ז הקצרים, עמ' טו.

וזהו [וזה שכתוב] והסירה את שמלת שביה ועשתה אצ צפרני' [ה], כי אשה יפ"ת [יפת תואר] היא כנ"ל [כנזכר לעיל] אשר כעת אלביש שמים קדרות ולעתיד והסירה כו' [לי] ועשתה את צפרני' [ה] שהוא תקון הצפרניים שלא יהי' [ה] בחי' [נת] מותרות כלל.

14. מאה"ז הנחות הר"פ, עמ' סד-סה.

והנה לעתיד יהי' כמשוש חתן על כלה וכו' [...] יהי' [ה] נקבה תסובב גבר הכלה תתעלה עם כלי' [ה] לבחי' [נת] חופה סוכ"ע [סובב כל עלמין] ואז יהי' [ה] משמח חתן עם הכלה ע"י [על ידי] הכלה כנ"ל [כנזכר לעיל], ועתה הוא כיצד מרקדין לפני הכלה כמשל הריקוד שפעם יתקרב ופעם מתרחק וזהו עיקר התענוג כמו שני אוהבים שלא ראו זא"ז [זה את זו] זמן רחוק ואח"כ [ואחר כך] נתקרבו שיש מזה תענוג גדול כמו"כ [כמו כן] מחמת שירדה ונתלבשה למטה בבחי' [נת] ריחוק ואח"כ [ואחר כך] כשמתקרבים הכלה עם החתן ועולה למעלה נעשה מזה תענוג גדול ויתרון האור מן החושך אחרי ששבה אל בית אבי' [ה] כו' [לי] וד"ל [ודי למבין].

15. רד"ק על ירמיה לא, כא.

עתידי לברוא חדשה אחר שתשבי בגלות ימים רבים ומה היא החדשה כי נקבה תסובב גבר שדרך העולם שהאיש מחזר ומסובב אחר האשה וכן אמרו רז"ל [רבתינו זכרונם לברכה] בעל אבדה מחזר על אבדתו ואז הנקבה תסובב אחר אישה כלומר שישבו בני ישראל אל ה' אלהיהם ויגאלם וכן אמר בנבואת הושע ואחר ישבו בני ישראל ובקשו את ה' אלהיהם ואת דוד מלכם ופחדו אל ה' ואל טובו באחרית הימים.

16. תורה אור, דף קיא, טור ב.

ולכן אמר בהעלותך את הנרות דאהרון שנק' [רא] שושבינא דמטרוניטא בערב עד בקר שהוא כללות הזמן בי"ב צירופים דלילה וי"ב צירופים דיום משא"כ [מה שאין כן] במשה שנק' [רא] איש האלקים שהוא למעלה מבחי' [נת] הזמן נאמר להעלות נר תמיד כנ"ל [כנזכר לעיל] וד"ל [ודי למבין].

17. מאה"ז פרשיות, כרך ב, עמ' תרעא.

נודע כי באמת אשה הוא הנוק' [בא] דאצי' [לות] בעצמה אין דרכה לכבש, רק מה שמל' [כות] מבררת בבי"ע [בכריאה יצירה עשייה] בירורי נוגה בימות החול הוא ע"י [על ידי] התלבשות המדות דז"א [דזעיר אנפין] המברר בה כי יום ראשון הוא הארת חסד דז"א [דזעיר אנפין] בה לתת כח לברר ויום שני הארת גבורה כו' [...] וזהו ממש הכח החזק של הדכר המברר בכל ו' יומים דחול שנק' [רא] ימי המעשה רק ע"י [על ידי] התלבשותו בנוק' [בא] וראי' [ה] לזה כי שבת הוא יומא שביעאה נגד הנוק' [בא] דז"א [דזעיר אנפין] וכדכתיב [ב] כי קדש היא דייקא לכם לשון נוק' [בא] אז לא תעשו כל מלאכה שבורר אסור וכל מלאכה דל"ט מלאכות בכלל בורר הוא מצד דאשה הנוק' [בא] דז"א [דזעיר אנפין] בעצמה אין דרכה לכבש רק להעלות המתבררי' [ם] שכבר נתבררו בימות החול כו' ימי המעשה ע"י [על ידי] הארת ש' [ם] מ"ה הדכר דז"א [דזעיר אנפין] בה.

18. לקושי תורה, שיר השירים, דף ט, טור א.

ואדרבה עיקר הווית הולד הוא מזרע הנקבה רק שמ"מ [שמכל מקום] נקרא הנקבה בחינת מקבל, כי זרע הנקבה אין בה כח להקפיא ולהתרקם ממנו הולד רק ע"י [על ידי] זרע הזכר וכמו החלב שנקפא להיות גבינה ע"י [על ידי] שנותנים בו קיבה.

19. סדר תפילות, דף קיד, טור א.

ובזה יובן מה שארז"ל [שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] שאין האשה כורתת ברית אלא למי שעשאה כלי כו' כי בחי' [נת] הברית דנוקבא נעשה מבחי' [נת] יסוד המשפיע דדכורא וזהו שעשאה כלי כמ"ש [כמו שכתוב] כי בועליך עושיך כו' וזהו בחי' [נת] כריתת ברית שלה לגבי מי שעשאה כלי כו' [...] (ופירוש שעשאה כלי שתהיה בחינת דכר להוליד וכו' [לי] וד"ל [די למבין]) [...] משום דבחי' [נת] ברית דנוק' [בא] נק' [ראת] בחי' [נת] ברית ממש בחי' [נת] דכר משפיע אחר שנעשית כלי מבחי' [נת] ברית דדכורא (...). וע"כ [ועל כן] אמר דאיתתא כמאן דמהיל' [א] דמיא להיות נק' [ראת] בחי' [נת] דכר רק שאין זה מצד עצמה רק מה שקיבלה מן המשפיע.

20. מאה"ז תקע"ב, עמ' קלו.

להבין מ"ש [מה שכתוב] בלקוטי תורה בעינין טעם דמ"ע [דמצוות עשה] שהזמן גרמא נשים פטורות ושאין הזמן גרמא חייבות לפי ששורש נשמות הנשים הוא מעלמא דנוק' [בא] בחי' [נת] המל' [כות] שהוא בבחי' [נת] זמן מלך מלך וימלוך כו' ובחי' [נת] המל' [כות] מלבשת עד החזה דז"א [זעיר אנפין], שהוא עד בחי' [נת] הדעת דז"א [זעיר אנפין] שכולל חו"ג [חסד וגבורה] שמשם שורש ה"ה [חמישה חסדים] דרמ"ח מ"ע [מצוות עשה] וה"ג [חמש גבורות] דשס"ה ל"ת [לא תעשה] והדעת דנוק' [בא] כלול בדעת דדכורא ע"כ [על כן] מ"ע [מצוות עשה] שהז"ג [שהזמן גרמא] שהוא רק בבחי' [נת] המל' [כות] שמלבשת לחזה בלבד הרי שם נכללת ונטפלת בדעת דדכורא, ולכך פטורים לפי שיוצאים י"ה [ידי חובתן] במ"ע [במצוות עשה] שעושיין בעליהן הזכרים אבל מ"ע [מצוות עשה] שאין הז"ג [הזמן גרמא] ששרשם למעלה מן החזה שאין בחי' [נת] מל' [כות] מלבשת שם חייבות לעשות בעצמן ואין יוצראות בהן במה שעושיין בעליהן הזכרים אחר שאין נכללי' [ם] שם בבעליהם כו'.

21. שחות קודש, תשל"ה, חלק א', עמ' 133.

(...) דאס איז אַ שליחות פון אויבערשטן, ער אַליין גיט כחות צו דער קליינער מיידעלע, אַז דורך דעם וואָס זי וועט צינדן אַ ליכט אין איר לייכטער, וועט זי אַריינבריינגען ליכטיקייט און השראת השכינה – אידישקייט און ג-טלעכקייט – אין דער הויז.

22. תורה אור, דף כ"ה טור ב.

כי בן עזאי היה בבחי' [נת] רצוא דאה"ר [אהבה רבה] הנ"ל [הנזכר לעיל] בבחי' [נת] כלות הנפש ולא רצה להיות נשפל בבחי' [נת] שוב לכך לא רצה לישא אשה ואמר אפשר לעולם שיתקיים ע"י [על ידי] אחרים לכן הציץ ומת שנסתלק לגמרי מן הכלי.

23. ספר התניא, אגרת הקודש, פרק כו, דף קמג, עמ' א-ב.

וגם טומאת יולדת צריך לידע כדכתיב הרה ויולדת יחדיו אם תלד אשה בכל יום מביאה אחת אעפ"כ דין איסור טומאתה לא ישתנה.

24. מאה"ז הקיצרים, עמ' 534.

עתידה אשה שתלד בכל יום פי' [רוש] שהזריעה והצמיחה בגילוי רב יהי' [ה] בכל יום שלא יצטרך להתעכב כ"כ [כל כך] ט"ח [תשעה חודשים].