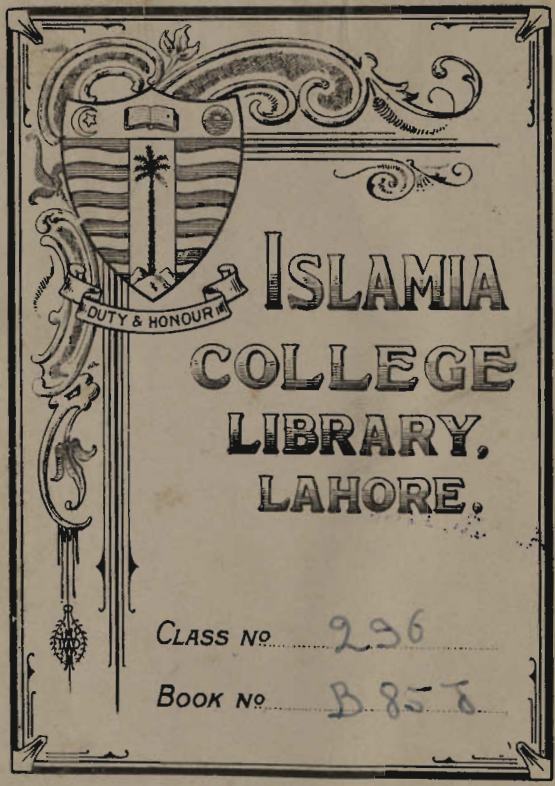


16717

473  
R.I.



**ISLAMIA**  
**COLLEGE**  
**LIBRARY,**  
**LAHORE.**

CLASS No. 296

BOOK No. B 858

Sir Muhammad Iqbal

from

Theodore Morrison

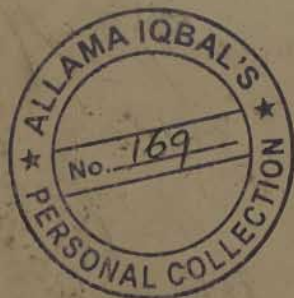
5

17

M.A. SECTION



JEWISH MYSTICISM  
AND THE  
LEGENDS OF BAALSHEM



THE MUSEUM OF THE  
CITY OF BOSTON

RECEIVED



1880

# JEWISH MYSTICISM

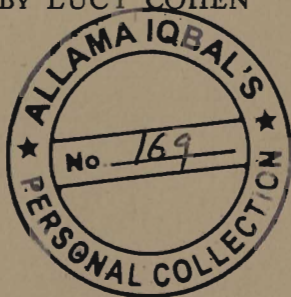
AND THE  
LEGENDS OF BAALSHEM

BY  
PROFESSOR MARTIN BUBER

*Being a section of his work  
entitled "Die Chassidischen Bücher"*

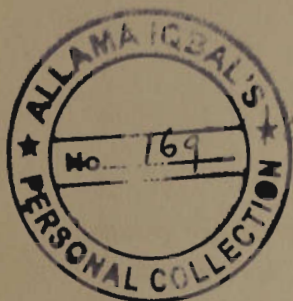
TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

By LUCY COHEN

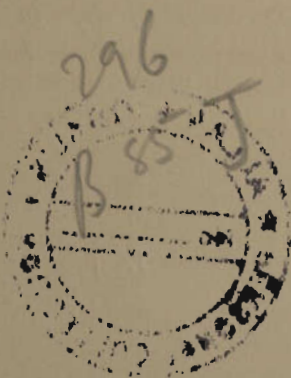


LONDON AND TORONTO  
J. M. DENT AND SONS LTD.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED  
PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT  
THE TEMPLE PRESS, LETCHWORTH, HERTS  
FIRST PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH IN 1931

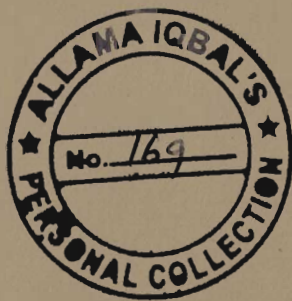


✓  
6717 / 3803

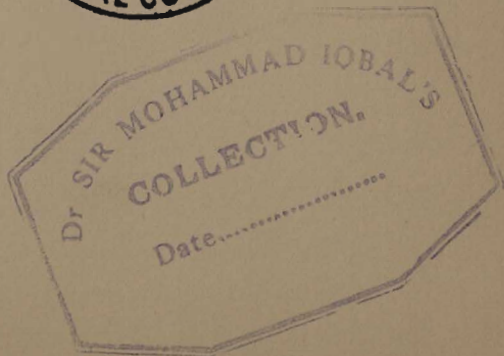


175

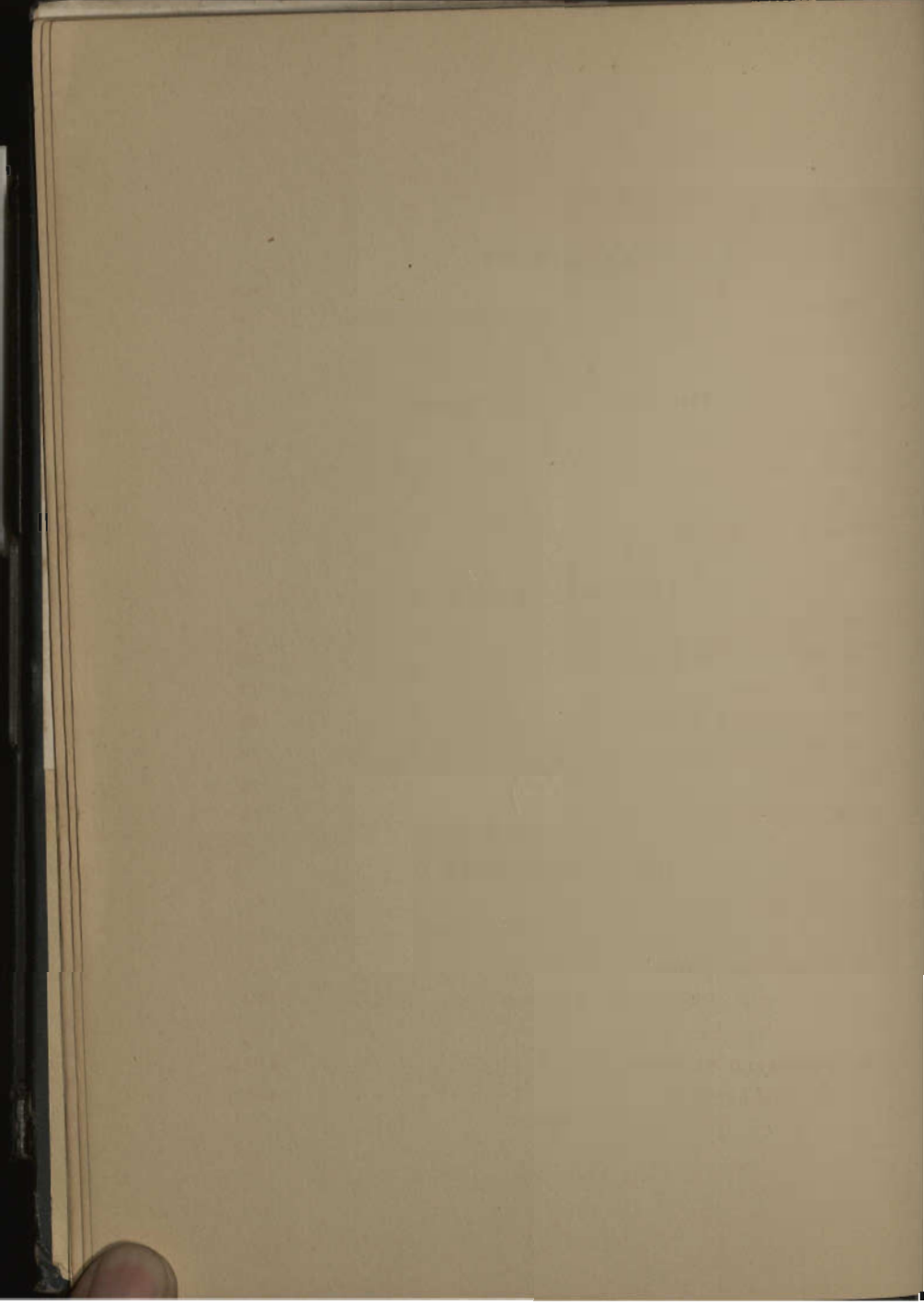
The translator wishes to express her gratitude to Mr. Claude G. Montefiore, without whose help and scholarly knowledge of German and Hebrew, this translation could never have been attempted.



(Asca-ch)







## CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD . . . . .	ix
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	xix

### THE LIFE OF THE CHASSIDS

HITLAHABUT, OR FERVOUR . . . . .	1
ABODA, OR SERVICE . . . . .	9
KAVANA, OR INTENTION . . . . .	19
SHIFLUT, OR HUMILITY . . . . .	28

### THE FIRST CIRCLE

THE WEREWOLF . . . . .	39
THE PRINCE OF FIRE . . . . .	45
THE REVELATION . . . . .	52
THE SAINTS AND REVENGE . . . . .	64
THE HEAVENLY JOURNEY . . . . .	70
JERUSALEM . . . . .	73
SAUL AND DAVID . . . . .	78

### THE SECOND CIRCLE

THE PRAYER BOOK . . . . .	84
THE JUDGMENT . . . . .	89
THE FORGOTTEN STORY . . . . .	98
THE SOUL THAT DESCENDED TO EARTH . . . . .	110
THE PSALM-SINGER . . . . .	121
THE DISTURBED SABBATH . . . . .	130
THE ADVERSARY . . . . .	140

## THE THIRD CIRCLE

	PAGE
THE NEW-YEAR'S SERMON . . . . .	153
THE RETURN . . . . .	160
FROM HOST TO HOST . . . . .	171
THE THREE LAUGHS . . . . .	179
THE LANGUAGE OF BIRDS . . . . .	186
THE CALL . . . . .	196
THE SHEPHERD . . . . .	203

## SUPPLEMENT

## A FRAGMENT FROM BAALSHEM'S LIFE, AND SOME OF HIS SAYINGS

THE MARRIAGE . . . . .	212
BLESSING AND OBSTACLE . . . . .	215
THE LIMITS TO COUNSEL . . . . .	216
SPEECH . . . . .	216
THE HARD ATONEMENT . . . . .	217
THE DANCE OF THE CHASSIDS . . . . .	218
THE MASTER DANCES WITH THEM . . . . .	219
THE STOCKING-MAKER . . . . .	219
THE ANIMALS . . . . .	221
THE JUG . . . . .	221
TWO MIRACLE STORIES:	
The Wrong Answer . . . . .	222
The Power of Worship in Community . . . . .	223
THE END . . . . .	224
GLOSSARY . . . . .	225

## FOREWORD

By THE TRANSLATOR

A FEW months ago I was given a book dealing with the Jewish sect, the Chassids. The sect owed its origin to a reaction against the orthodox Judaism prevailing in the eighteenth century in Poland—a time of many other revivalist movements.

The book much struck me. It seemed to me that the ideals of the Chassids present somewhat new and different religious conceptions from those usually attributed to Judaism, and the quaint form in which they are conveyed through legends and allegories appeared to me sufficiently striking to interest the general reader and therefore to be worth translating.

The author, Professor Büber, lived for six years among the Chassids, and collected from their own lips these stories and the descriptions of their beliefs, just as they had been handed down to them, mostly verbally, for generations, and I only try to transmit his words.

The Chassids, living in remote towns and villages in the south-east of Poland, Rumania, and the Ukraine, were despised for their ignorance by their more learned brethren in other parts of Poland; for they were a primitive and simple people, and their beliefs were mixed with superstition. But they were for the most part a devout people, and their doctrine,

often mystic in character and form, inculcates much humility, charity, and love. They were and they remain, in one sense, completely orthodox. They believed in the divinity of the Law and observed all its enactments minutely, but their religion was not exhausted in their fulfilment of the Law; a less rigid and more emotional element entered into their religious observances.

The founder of Chassidism, Baalshem (the Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, Baalshem, Master of the Wonderful Name of God), lived from 1700 to 1760. He started as a boy as a beadle of the prayer-house in his little village, and studied the Law (the Torah), but always in secret. Later he settled in Brody as a teacher of small children, and he was recognized as an arbiter in disputes. He married the sister of a scholar, but hid his own learning from him. To his wife he, however, revealed it, and she insisted on accompanying him on his wanderings in the Carpathians, where they lived in great privation for seven years. He worked with his own hands for their support, yet devoutly performed all the religious rites incumbent upon a pious Jew. But in addition he would often go away in solitude to the mountain-tops and pray there in rapture and ecstasy. After some years he settled in Mesbiz and taught in Podolia and Wolynia. Finally he came to be regarded as a saint and miracle-worker.

He taught that "Deliverance"—Redemption—lay in simple-minded devotion and in sanctity rather than in learning and in knowledge of the minutiae of the Law. By the rabbis and the ultra-orthodox he

was regarded as a heretic, but his teaching found an instant echo in the hearts of the simple people around him; they had had to endure many centuries of oppression, and the learning and arid disputations of the Rabbis were incomprehensible to them, and did not touch their daily lives. Chassidism, with its appreciation of the humble-minded, and of the divine in man and in every particle of creation, evoked their ardent devotion and inspired a body of legends and of folk-lore.

This book tells these stories and describes the founder's religion and that of some of the more remarkable of his successors. I am only translating one of the "Chassidic Books" of Professor Büber. The legends and teaching are often clothed in words difficult wholly to follow, unless the references are explained, or the central ideas of the sect understood; it may therefore help the reader if I attempt to describe in briefest outline the doctrines of Chassidism.

Professor Büber seems to suggest that the source of Chassidism is the oral teaching handed down from generation to generation of Jews from time immemorial—just as oral teaching was the source of the Cabbala and the book called the Sohar. But the Cabbala was a teaching of mysticism for the elect only, while Baalshem's teaching was for the unlettered people among whom he lived. Moreover, it was a joyful<sup>1</sup> religion, and its outward expression took the form of fervent ecstasy, song, and even of dance.

The distinctive idea of the Chassids seems to be

<sup>1</sup> The mind is established by joy; by melancholy it is driven into exile.—RABBI NACHMAN.

that of the immanence of God. They picture Him at first, before the Creation, alone, complete, supreme. Then from the void He created the Universe, and in so doing sent forth from Himself His own glory or presence—the Shechina. He let it fall upon creation in all its fullness, but man, with his limitations, was unable to receive the measureless gift in that fullness, and it was thus scattered abroad in innumerable sparks. These sparks found homes, not only in man himself, and in all his thoughts and qualities, but also in animals, in vegetation, and even in inanimate things. Thus God was immanent throughout creation. The Deliverance—or Redemption—was to come when all these imprisoned sparks should reunite with their Creator and break the husks in which they were confined. Man in his actions, by dedicating himself and all that he touches to the sanctification of God, can help towards this deliverance. It is not to be brought about by formulæ or special acts of religion, by asceticism or mortification, or even by specific conduct, but by a holy condition of soul, and as a spontaneous outcome of that condition. It was recognized that there was a stain or imperfection inherent in the created world. Yet God did not hold aloof from His creation and was even immanent in it, so as to purify and help it. Man also can help to remove the stain, for he can choose *light rather than darkness*. Evil may be considered as only the reverse side to good, and just as night broadens to day, so man by his life can develop from evil to good. God “can be served even by an evil impulse, if one turns one’s passion and its

devastating flame towards God. And without the evil impulse service cannot be complete."

Creation is continuous, and so is Messiahship. The latter idea is vital to the doctrine. It was thought that the spirit of the Messiah descended upon earth through the Prophets and even through a long line of holy men stretching into the present time, the "Zaddiks" (the righteous). And throughout all these stories this idea will be found to recur. It was also, however, a fundamental belief that the spirit of the Messiah was always *hidden* in "a servant of God," and that when a man laid claim to be the Messiah, this very act of itself disproved his claim, and this, according to Professor Büber, greatly elucidates the Chassidic attitude towards Jesus. Very shortly before Baalshem began his teaching, there was a man, Sabbatai Zewi, who aroused the enthusiasm and hopes of some of the Polish Jews. He began by being an honest zealot, but got intoxicated by his own power and became more or less of an impostor who represented himself to be the Messiah. The movement ended in disaster, and he finally went over to Mohammedanism. Several of Baalshem's tales are directed against such assumption of superior learning or devotion, or the "power to call down the Messiah." He teaches that a man should be himself and develop on his own lines, keeping his individuality intact. Moreover, it is only by really living *in* the lives of others, and by merging all his personal desires and emotions into the Consecration of God, that he can help towards the "Deliverance."

Other interesting beliefs are recorded. The Chassids



had a belief in the "return" of the soul. Departed Zaddiks occasionally descended from above to the souls of other men, in order to help them to rise, to "deliver the sparks of souls." Again, the spark of one man's soul might unite with that of another, and so gain more power for good. On the other hand it might be the fate of a man's soul to "return" to another body in order to fulfil some piece of work that he had left uncompleted.

Running through most of the legends and lives of the Chassids is to be seen their passionate devotion to the "Old Land" and to Jerusalem. Over Jerusalem the spirit of the Prophets was believed to hover; and through visiting it, the holy men of their own time thought to draw ever fresh inspiration.

The sect eventually drew to itself adherents from more learned men in other parts of Poland, as well as many of all conditions in the south-east of Europe, but the seed of disruption in the religion was already sown. The ordinary Chassids, the populace, if I may say so, found the practice of the faith too exacting. They learnt to depend on the "Zaddiks" as mediators, who would safely convey their prayers to Heaven, leaving them free to carry on their everyday pursuits. The Zaddiks were in effect their hostages for redemption, and were exalted into a caste apart, a kind of dynasty; many of them eventually became demoralized by the position of luxury and ease in which they were maintained by their followers. Gradually ambitious and unprincipled men claimed to be Zaddiks, and imposed on the credulity of the Chassids by deceit and magic. Thus the leaders grew less saintly

and the followers became more superstitious and less truly devout. There were many attempts to arrest this moral downfall, and Professor Büber's description of one of these in his account of the life and teaching of Rabbi Nachman is so interesting<sup>1</sup> that I should like to have given it in full. Nachman's was a vain attempt adequately to regenerate Chassidism; yet, two hundred years after Baalshem's birth, his faith still endures among the simple. There are even Zaddiks still. Not so many years ago a dignified Zaddik was seen in Marienbad, immaculately clad in black cloth, surrounded by a group of humble followers, who esteemed themselves sufficiently honoured were they allowed to remove a speck of dust from their master's garments.

But more remains of Chassidism than these vestiges of decay. Professor Büber assures us that the degeneration of the movement cannot kill its regenerative ideas. "In truth," he says (and I think I cannot better end my introductory remarks than by quoting some of his), "nowhere has the spiritual power of Judaism made itself felt in the last centuries as among the Chassids. The old power lives in it which once bound down the Eternal to earth (as Jacob bound down the Angel), so that it might be realized in daily life, and thus, without changing an iota of the old Law, the ritual, or the tradition of daily life, what had become old can live again in a new light and expression."

<sup>1</sup> See Postscript.

## POSTSCRIPT

I hope that if the present collection finds adequate favour with English readers, it may be followed by a companion volume which will contain Rabbi Nachman von Bratzlaw's life and those of his tales that now form part of Professor Büber's *Chassidische Bücher*. Far more is known of him than of Baalshem, and while his life brought him into line with the mystics of all religions, in it is embodied the best ideals (though also some of the superstitions) of Chassidism.

His short life of thirty-nine years was one of abjuration of riches and comfort for the sake of an ideal. After profound study of the Bible, the Talmud, and the Cabbala, he faced poverty and dangers in order to reach the Holy Land, from which he drew, he said, the inspiration for most of his teaching: on his return he lived among the people, and in their lives; in his sympathy with them, in his ardent faith, and the gentleness with which he met enmity and misrepresentation, in his indifference to death, which, indeed, he regarded but as a welcome ascent to a higher grade than this world, he is comparable with many of the great saints, whose lives are far more widely known than his.

His intense belief in the immanence of God in all creation produced in him a very special fervour, which embraced in its pity, love, and delight not only birds and animals, but growing plants and trees.

Some sayings of his are: "Everything lives, grows, rises, and praises God in song."

And again: "All grasses and plants are dead: at the approach of summer they come to life again, and every blade of grass sings a song to God."

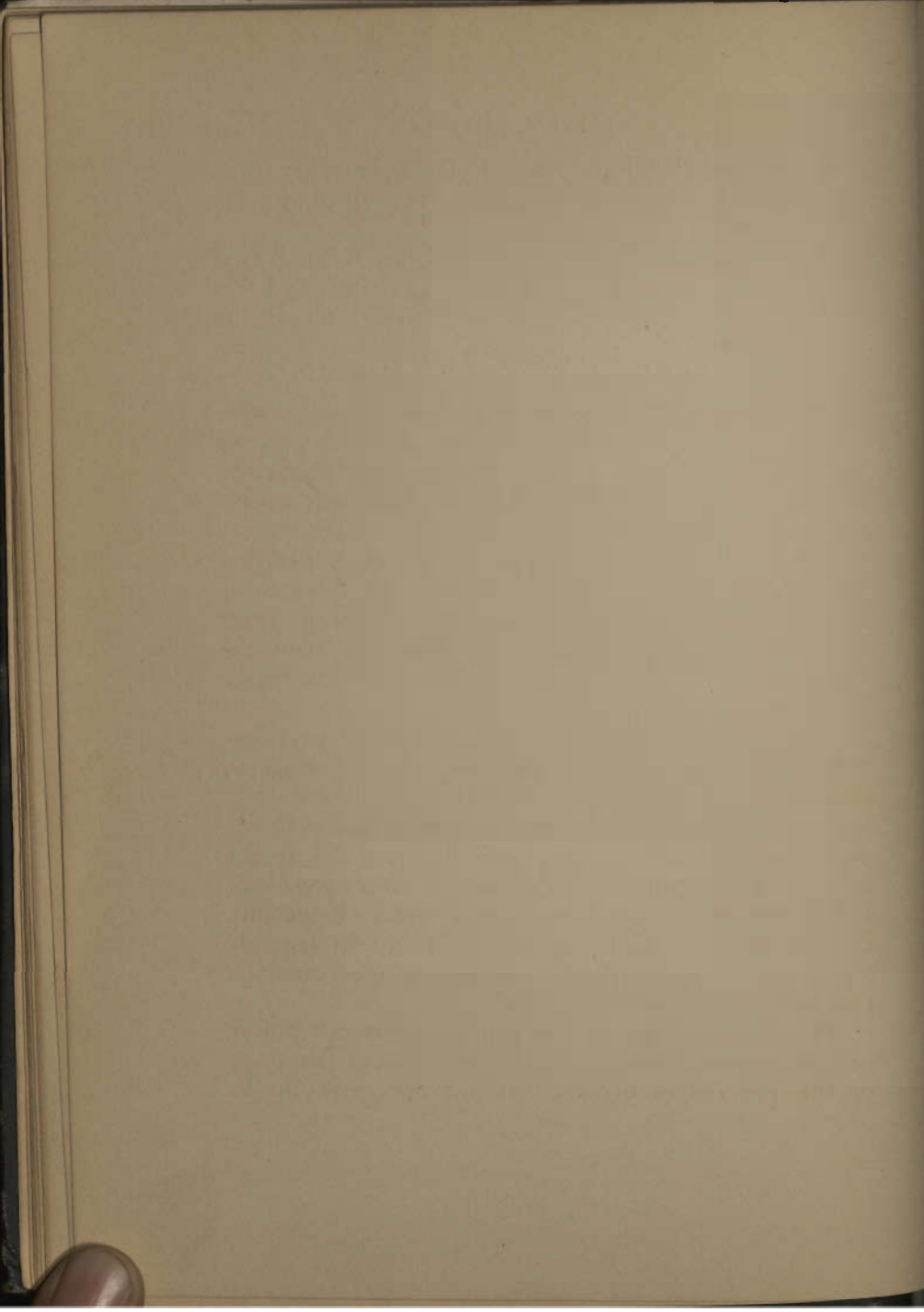
This but leads up to the final mystery: "That which we see is only the external, the visible, and that which is concealed from our view is the internal, the root of it."

And he proclaimed that God "is hidden in every secret place in the secret of secrets."<sup>1</sup>

June 1931.

L. C.

<sup>1</sup> *Leaders of Hassidism*, by Dr. S. A. Hovodesky (1928), pp. 79-109.



## INTRODUCTION

By PROFESSOR BUBER

THIS book consists of a treatise and twenty-one stories. The treatise deals with the life of the Chassids, an East European sect of Jews which arose about the middle of the eighteenth century, and which to-day still exists, though in a degenerate form. The stories recount the life of the founder of the sect, Rabbi Ben Eliezer, Baalshem, who was called the Master of the Wonderful Name of God. He lived from 1700 to 1760, chiefly in Podolia and Wolynia. But the life here portrayed is not a biography in the ordinary sense of the term.

I do not describe the development and the deterioration of the sect, nor its customs. I only wish to describe the relationship between God and the universe, as conceived by these people, as they wished it to be, and how they wished to live according to it. I do not tell of the dates and the facts, which, if they were collected together, would form what is called a biography of Baalshem. I build up his life from the legends about him, in which lie the dreams and the yearnings of a people.

The Chassidic legend has not the strenuous power of the Buddha legend, nor the intimacy of language of the Franciscan legend. It did not grow up in

the shade of ancient groves, nor on hills clad with silvery olive trees. In narrow streets and gloomy little rooms, it passed in awkward words to ears that listened in fear; it was uttered by faltering lips, and faltering lips carried it on from generation to generation. I received it from books of the people, chap-books, and stray leaves: at times from a living mouth, from the mouths of those people who had themselves heard the faltering words. I received it, and I tell the story anew. I have not woven it into a fabric of fables, I have told it afresh as a descendant. I bear in me the spirit and the blood of those who created it; and in my blood and spirit it has become new. I stand in the chain of those story-tellers, a link between links; I tell the story afresh, and if it sounds new, it is only because the new was dormant in it when it was first told.

My account of the Chassidic legends has as little to do with what is called local colour as with the actual facts. There is something tender and reverent, secret and mysterious, artless and ethereal, about the atmosphere of the "stubel" (small room) in which the wise and smiling lips of the Chassid, the Rabbi, the Zaddik, the righteous, the saint, the mediator between God and man, impart mystery and fable. But my object is not to portray this atmosphere. My narrative stands on the earth of the Jewish myth and the heaven of the Jewish myth is over it.

The Jews are perhaps the only people that have never ceased to produce myth. In the beginning of their first great document, there is the purest of all mythological symbols, the plural-singular Elohim,

and the most superb of all mythological sagas, that of Jacob's fight with Elohim (God).

It was in those far-off days that the stream arose which had the power to carry those myths in its course, and which later flowed into Chassidism. The Israelite religion always felt itself to be endangered by this stream of myth, although it was from it that Jewish piety at all times received its inner life. All positive religion depends upon an immense simplification of all that in the world and in our own souls presses on us so inextricably and so importunately, it is the taming and subjugation of the fullness of existence. But *mythos*, on the contrary, is the expression of this fullness of existence, its image and its mark; it drinks without ceasing from the rushing springs of life. On this account, religion looks on *mythos* as its arch-enemy, and fights it, unless it is able to absorb and embody it. The history of the Jewish religion is the history of a battle against myth.

It may be seen in a strange and wonderful manner, how in this battle religion always gains the apparent, and *mythos* the real victory. The prophets in their utterances fight against the multiplicity of the popular instincts and impulses, and in their visions the ecstatic phantasy of the Jews continues to live. The Essenes sought to attain the prophetic goal by simplifying the forms of life, and it was from them that that band of men arose which was to produce the great Nazarene, and to create his legend, the greatest of all the triumphs of myth. The masters of the Talmud thought to build an everlasting barrier against the passion of a people through their gigantic work of codifying the



entire religious law. Yet among these men are found the begetters of the two forces which in the Middle Ages protected and guarded the Jewish myth, for through their esoteric teaching they were the begetters of the Cabbala, and through the Aggada the begetters of folk-lore and legend. The longer the exile lasted, and the more terrible it became, the more necessary did the maintenance of religion seem to be for the maintenance of the race; and so much the stronger grew the power of the Law. The myth had to take flight. It fled to the Cabbala and the popular sagas. The Cabbala, indeed, held itself to be superior to the Law, as a higher stage of knowledge; but it was only the possession of a few, and unapproachably distant and foreign to the people. But the saga, on the contrary, lived among the people, and filled their existence with colour and harmony, with waves of light and secret melody, but it considered itself a miserable thing, with hardly a right to exist; it kept itself buried in the most out-of-the-way corners, and never dared to look the Law in the face; far from being a power comparable to it, it was proud and glad if it were called upon to illustrate the Law.

And suddenly there rose up among the Polish Jews, and among those of the villages in Little Russia, a movement in which the myth became purified and exalted—Chassidism. In this movement mysticism and saga flowed into one. Mysticism became the possession of the people, and at the same time absorbed into itself all the warmth and fervour of the popular saga. And in the dark and despised East, among

simple and ignorant villagers, a throne was prepared for the myth, the child of the ages.

For a time, in Chassidism the subterranean Judaism conquered the official, that Judaism, known and visible to all, whose history people relate and whose character is commonly conceived in certain familiar generalizations. But only for a time. Though there are still several hundred thousands of Chassids, Chassidism is corrupted; nevertheless the Chassidic writings have handed on to us their doctrines and their legends. The Chassidic teaching is the most powerful and unique phenomenon which the Diaspora has produced. It foreshadows a renaissance. No revival of Judaism will be possible that does not contain some of its elements.

The Chassidic legend is the body of Jewish teaching, its messenger, its mark along the path of the world. It is the latest form of the Jewish *mythos* that we know.

The legend is the myth of a calling or inspiration. By this I mean that the original personality in the myth is divided in the legend. In the pure myth there is no differentiation of substance. It recognizes variety, but not duality. Thus the hero stands on a different grade from God, but is not opposed to Him; they are not I and thou. The hero has a mission, but is not inspired. He ascends, but he is not transformed. The God has individuality, as he has, and also limits as he has. The God of pure *mythos* does not inspire, He begets. He sends His offspring, the hero. The God of the legend inspires the son of man; the prophet, the saint. At times, when

myth and legend are intermingled, a God may arise who both begets and inspires.

The legend is the myth of I and thou, the inspired and the inspirer; the finite who enters into the infinite, and the infinite who has need of the finite.

The legend of Baalshem is not the history of a man, but the history of an inspiration. It does not relate his fortunes, but only his destiny. It does not move in a sequence of time, but in three cycles of consecration. Their end is already to be found in their beginning and in their end is a new beginning.

M. B.

RAVENNA, 1907.

## THE LIFE OF THE CHASSIDS

### HITLAHABUT, OR FERVOUR

HITLAHABUT means the burning, the ardour of ecstasy. It is the cup of grace and the key to the Eternal. A fiery sword guards the tree of Life. It is extinguished by Hitlahabut, whose lightest touch vanquishes it. The road is open before it, and all barriers sink before its resistless tread. The world is no more its habitation; it is the habitation of the world.

Hitlahabut reveals the meaning of life. Without it Heaven has neither meaning nor being. If a man is possessed of all learning and fulfils all the commandments, and yet does not feel bliss and fervour, when he dies and passes over, Paradiſe is open to him, but because he did not feel bliss in this world, neither does he feel it in Paradiſe.

Hitlahabut can appear in all places and at all times. Each hour is its footstool, and each deed helps to support its throne. Nothing can stand up against it and nothing can overpower it. It can turn all that is corporeal into that which is spirit. He who is in it is in sanctity. "He may speak foolish words with his mouth, yet at that very hour the teaching of the Lord is in his inmost soul; though he may pray in whispers, yet his heart bounds within his breast. He walks with God even when he sits in the company of men, and though he mix with people, yet he dwells

apart from the world." Each thing and each act becomes hallowed. "If a man cleaves to God, his mouth may say what it will, and his ear may hear what it likes, but he will bind things of this world to their root in the other."

Repetition, that power which weakens and enfeebles so much in the life of man, has no effect upon Ecstasy, which is rekindled over and over again by the most ordinary and uniform events. There was a Zaddik who attained Hitlahabut every time when the words "And God said" occurred in the reading of the Scriptures. When a wise Chassid told this to his pupils, he added: "But I also say that if any one speaks in sincerity, and another listens in sincerity, then one word is enough to uplift and to deliver the whole world." That which is ordinary becomes ever new to the man who is aflame. A Zaddik was standing at his window at early dawn, and he called tremblingly: "But a short time ago it was night, and now it is day. God brings forth the day." And he was filled with anxiety and tremor. And he also said: "Each created man should feel ashamed before his Creator. If he were perfect, as he was destined to be, then he would marvel and awaken and be aflame at the renewal of creation at all times and in every moment."

But Hitlahabut is not a sudden absorption into Eternity, but an ascent step by step to the Eternal. To find God is to find the way without end. It was in this image that the Chassids looked at the world to come, which they never talked of as the Beyond. One of these pious men saw his dead master in a

dream, who told him that from the hour of his death, each day he went onwards from world to world. And that world which yesterday was spread as the heaven above his eyes, to-day lay beneath his feet, "and the heaven of yesterday is the earth of to-day. And each world is purer and more beautiful and more profound than the one before it. The angels rest in God, but the saints move forward. The angel is stationary, and the saint is a traveller. Therefore the saint is above the angel."

Such is the way of Ecstasy. Though it seems to offer finality to achievement, to attainment, or to comprehension, it does not offer a final end. But it *is* the finality of thralldom, the shaking off of the last fetter, the release that comes from the dismissal of all that is earthly. When a man moves from strength to strength, and beyond and beyond, till he reaches the root of all learning and Law, to the "I" of God, to simple unity and limitlessness, as he stands there, all the wings of Law and of command are folded and are become as nothing, for all his evil desire is destroyed and he rises above it.

"Above nature and above time and above thought"—thus is he named who lives in a state of fervour. He has put away from him all difficulties. "Sweet suffering, I receive you in love," said a dying Zaddik, and Rabbi Sussa called in astonishment, when his hand shrank from the fire in which he had put it: "How coarse Rabbi Sussa's body has become, that it can fear fire!" The man who is aflame with ardour has command over life, and no outward event that intrudes within his ken can disturb his sanctity.

At times it reveals itself in some action which it consecrates and fills with holy significance. The purest form of manifestation is in dance. In this the whole body becomes subservient to the ecstatic soul. Out of a thousand waves of movement it evokes in a kindred and visible form an image of the many fluctuations of elation and dejection of the enraptured soul. It is related of the dancing of a Zaddik: "his foot was light as that of a four-year-old child." And among all who saw his holy dancing, there was not one in whom a divine conversion did not take place; in the hearts of all who beheld him he aroused both weeping and delight. Again, the soul takes possession of a man's voice, and makes it say what it has experienced in the heavens, and the voice knows not what it is doing. Thus a Zaddik stood during the "Awful Days" (New Year and the Day of Atonement), and his voice sang new melodies, wonder upon wonder, which the Zaddik had never heard, and which the ears of man had never heard, and he knew not what he sang, nor in what manner he sang, for he was transported to the world above.

But the true life of the man of rapture is not among mankind. It is said of a Master that he was led like a stranger, according to the words of King David—"I am a stranger in the land," like a man who was coming from a distance to the land of his birth. He thinks nothing of honours, and nothing of anything for his own advantage; his one thought is to return to the city of his birth. He can possess nothing, for he knows that "all is foreign, and I must go home."

Rabbi Sussa used to wander among the woods and sing songs of praise with such fervour that it was said of him that "he was out of his mind." It is told of a Zaddik that he said to his pupils, when the holy meal of learning had lasted nearly into the following day: "We have not stepped beyond the boundaries of the day, but the day has stepped within our boundaries, and we need not yield to it."

In ecstasy all the past and the future turn into the present.

Time crumbles, the limits of Eternity vanish; only the moment remains, and the moment is Eternity. In its indivisible light all that was and that will be appears simple and united. There it is, as a heart-beat is there, and it becomes as evident as that is.

The legends of the Chassids tell much of those wonderful men, who could remember their earlier forms of existence, and who were as sure of their future as of their own heart-beats; who looked from one end of the earth to the other, and saw all the changes which happened in the worlds, and who were as much aware of them as though they occurred in their own body. All this does not represent that condition in which Hitlahabut has conquered the world of space and of time. But something of this is indicated in two naïve anecdotes which are allied, and which complete one another. It is told of a Master, that in his hours of rapture he had to look at the clock in order to keep himself in this world, and of another, that when he wished to consider the separate phenomena of life, he had to put on spectacles in order to control his spiritual vision, "for otherwise



he would have seen all the separate phenomena in the world as one."

But the highest grade which is recorded is that in which the man of ardour is deprived of his own enthusiasm. When a pupil once noticed and blamed such a man for his slackening of zeal, he was taught by another: "There is a very high grade of holiness; when a man reaches this, he is freed from a sense of his own existence and is incapable of fervour." Thus fervour is fulfilled by its own annulment.

Another Zaddik could only be found in lanes, gardens, or groves, and when his father-in-law admonished him, he replied with the comparison of the hen who had hatched goose-eggs, and when she saw her children swimming about on the water, she ran distracted hither and thither in order to seek help for the unfortunates, and could not understand that for them all their life would be spent in swimming on the surface of the water.

Yet there are some still further removed from the earth, whose Hitlahabut is not altogether fulfilled. They go about in banishment, "so that they may suffer exile with the Shechina." They are restless and fugitive. It is an old conception of the Cabbala, that the Shechina, the Glory of God, is banished throughout Eternity from its Lord, and that only in the hour of Redemption will it be reunited with Him. So these men of Ecstasy wander over the earth, living in the silent distances where God has His exile, companions of the holy omnipresence, and conscious of the pulsations of the heart of the world. The man that is emancipated in this way is the friend

of God, "as the stranger is the friend of another stranger," because both of them are "strangers upon the earth."

There are repeated moments in which he sees the Shechina in the image of man, yea, face to face, as that Zaddik who saw it in the Holy Land, "in the form of a woman who weeps and laments over the husband of her youth."

But it is not only in the face of darkness, and not only in the silence of pilgrimage, that God gives Himself to those who burn for Him, but the eye of him who seeks may see Him in all the things of the earth. And in every being He offers Himself as a fruit to him who seeks. All being is unveiled to the saint. "When a man ardently desires a woman, he sees her many-coloured garments, but his mind does not dwell on their ornamentation and colour, but on the glory of her whom he desires, and whom the garments enfold. Others see but the garments and no more. So he, who in truth desires and embraces God, in all the things of the world sees only the power and pride of the Creator of the primeval beginnings of the world, who Himself dwells in all these things. But he who has not reached this stage sees things and God as though they were separate."

Such is the earthly life of the Hitlahabut, which transcends all bounds. It is the daughter of a human will, and the ruler of armies—the small spark of a being that must die, and the flame which consumes both space and time. It enlarges the soul to the Universal. It narrows the Universal down to Nothingness. A Chassidic master speaks

of it in the words of mystery: "The creation of heaven and of earth is the unfolding of something out of nothing, the descent of the higher into the lower. But the saints who are freed from themselves, and who ever cleave unto God, see and comprehend Him in reality, as in the void before creation. They turn that which is something back into that which is nothing. And, still more wonderful, they lift up above that which is below." As it is written in the Gemara: "The last wonder is greater than the first."

## ABODA, OR SERVICE

HITLAHABUT is the ecstasy of the divine, beyond time or space.

Hitlahabut is the mystic meal. Aboda is the service of God in time and space.

Between these two poles the life of the saints oscillates.

Hitlahabut is silent, for it lies in the heart of God.

Aboda asks: "What am I and what is my life, so that I may offer up my blood and ardour to thee?"

All *is* God, and all serves God. This is the primeval duality, a duality developed in the life of the saints, and folded up in the being of the world.

This is the mystery from which a man is kept at a distance if he speaks of it, but which lives in the breast of the souls who seek after and possess God. Known in their longing, slumbering in germ in their ecstasy, and linked up in the rhythm of their actions.

Hitlahabut is as far from Aboda as is fulfilment from longing, and yet it streams out of Aboda as does the finding of God out of the seeking after God.

Baalschem related that "A king built a great and splendid palace with countless rooms, but only one door was open. When the building was complete it was announced that all the princes should appear before the king, who was enthroned in the farthest room. But when they entered, they saw that doors

were open on all sides, and from them led winding corridors out into the distance, and beyond there were doors and again corridors, and no goal to it all. Then the king's son came and perceived that all this confusion was but an illusion, and he saw his father sitting face to face in the hall.

The mystery of Grace cannot be shown. The span of a man's life lies between seeking and finding, yea, a thousandfold backslidings of the timid and wandering soul. And yet the flight of a moment is slower than the fulfilment of the soul. For God wishes to be sought after, so how should He not wish to be found? When a saint brings ever new fire in order that the flame on his soul's altar should not be extinguished, God Himself speaks the words of sacrifice. God rules among men as He ruled in the chaos when the world was in making, and as it began to unfold He said: "If it flows farther asunder, it will not be able to return home to its source"; and He said: "Enough!" Thus, if the soul of man is dissolved in sorrow, and the evil in it becomes so mighty that it becomes impossible for it to turn back home, God's pity awakes and He says: "Enough!"

But man can also say "Enough!" to the dissensions within him, if he collects himself and becomes at one with himself; then he draws near to the unity of God and he serves his Lord. This is Aboda.

It was said of a Zaddik: "Doctrine, prayer, eating, sleeping, all are the same to him, and he can lift up his soul to its roots." To bind all action into one and to carry the everlasting life into each deed, this is Aboda. The illimitable should be clothed in all the

actions of man, in speaking, walking, and standing still, looking, and hearing. Out of every action a good or bad angel is born, but from half-hearted or confused actions which are without meaning or strength, angels are born with crippled limbs and without head, hands, or feet. In every action through which the universal rays of the sun stream, and in the collected light from all action, service has its being. But no special course of action is preferred above another. God wills that man should serve Him in all ways. There are two kinds of love: The love of a man for his wife, which should be expressed in privacy and not in the presence of spectators, for only in a place hidden from all can it perfect itself; and the love of brothers and sisters and children which needs no concealment. And so in the love of God there are two kinds. There is the love through doctrine, prayer, and the fulfilment of that which is commanded. This should be practised in silence and not in public, so that it should not become diverted into a love of fame or of pride. And there is the love when a man mingles with his fellow-creatures, talks, listens, gives and takes with them, and cleaves to God in the secrecy of his heart, and never ceases to turn his thoughts towards Him. And this is a higher grade than the other. And of it is said: "O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, I should not be despised." This must not be understood as though there were a difference between the heavenly action and earthly action among the people who serve in this way. Rather is each action of devotion a vessel of

dedication and of power. It is said of a Zaddik that he had so consecrated all his limbs that his every footstep wedded one world with another. "A man is a ladder put on the earth, of which the top leans against heaven, and all his gestures, business, and speech leave their trace in the upper world.

Herein is shown the innate meaning of Aboda; it comes from the depths of the earliest Jewish doctrine, and illumines the mystery of the division between rapture and service, between having and seeking.

God is thus broken in two, through the created world and its action. He is divided into the ultimate being of God, Elohut, which is remote and apart from creation, and the glory of God, Shechina, which dwells in phenomena, wandering astray and scattered. Redemption alone will unite both in Eternity. But it is the property of the soul of man, by means of service, to bring the Shechina nearer to its source, and to let it re-enter into it. And it is in this instant of homecoming, before it must again descend into the being of phenomena, that the whirlpool which howls in the life of the stars is hushed, that the torches of the great desolation are extinguished, and the lash in the hand of fate is lowered, and the pain of the world is stilled and listens, the grace of graces has appeared, and blessing pours down from Eternity, till the powers of entanglement begin to drag down the Glory of God, and all is as before.

This is the meaning of Service. That prayer alone truly endures which is made for the sake of the Shechina. Through his own necessity and wants man knows how to pray that the wants of the Shechina may

be satisfied, and that through him who prays union of God with His Glory may take place. Man must recognize that his suffering comes through the suffering of the Shechina; "he is one of its limbs," and in the appeasing of its privation is alone his own true appeasement. He ought not to think about his own liberation from higher or lower needs, that he should not be like him who hews down the eternal growth, and so creates separation. But he should do all for the sake of the wants of the Eternal, and thus all will be redeemed of itself, and his own suffering is calmed in the calming of the roots above, for all above and below is one Unity. "I am prayer," says the Shechina. A Zaddik says: "Mankind thinks it prays to God; it is not so, for prayer itself is the Divinity."

No prayer can thrive within the narrowness of self. "He who prays in sorrow on account of the heaviness of soul which overwhelms him, and who imagines that he prays in the fear of God, and he who prays in joy from the lightness of his soul, and imagines that he prays in the love of God, their prayers are as nothing. For this fear is only heaviness of heart, and this love is only empty joy."

It is told that Baalshem once remained standing on the threshold of the house of prayer, and would not enter, and said with repugnance: "I cannot enter there, the house is brimful of doctrine and of prayer." And when all his followers were amazed, because to them it seemed that no higher praise than this could have been given, he explained to them: "The words said here from day to day by the people, without devotion, love, or pity, have no wings. They remain



within the walls, they squat on the floor, they are spread like layer upon layer of mouldering foliage till the house is stuffed full of refuse, and there is no more room in it for me."

In two ways prayers can take fast hold: when they are spoken involuntarily, and when the former actions of him who prays spread like a solid cloud between him and heaven. The obstacle can be overcome only if a man grows upwards into the sphere of Fervour, and purifies himself in its grace, or if another soul which is in Fervour sets the fettered words free and takes them above with his own.

Thus it was told of a Zaddik that he was dumb for some time during the prayers of the community, and stood there motionless and dumb, and only later began to pray himself, "just as the tribe of Dan travelled behind the camp and collected all that were lost." His words had been a garment in whose folds the beaten-down prayers had clung, and in which they had been borne upwards.

This Zaddik used to say before praying: "I bind myself with all Israel, with those who are greater than I am, so that through them my thoughts may be exalted, and with those who are less than I am, so that through me they may be uplifted."

But this is the secret of communion, that it is not merely the lower who have need of the higher, but that the higher have need of the lowly. There here exists a further difference between the nature of ecstasy and of service. Hitlahabut is the way and end of the individual; a rope stretched over the abyss, fastened to two slender trees moved by the storm, the adventurer

steps upon it in solitude and in awe. There is here no community of men, whether in doubt or in certainty. But service is opened out to many souls through their union. It does not grant the final awe, but it is free from the darkest of anxieties. It is not a rope, but a bridge. The man coming by the rope is embraced above in the arms of the Beloved, and the traveller by the bridge finds that the king's hall is opened to him. Ecstasy wants nothing but its fulfilment in God, and for this it yields itself up. In service dwells an aim, "Kavana." Those who desire it bind themselves together for greater unity and strength. There is a service which can only be accomplished by a community.

Baalshem tells a parable: Some men were standing under a high tree, and one of them had eyes to see. He saw on the tree-top a bird glorious to behold. But the others did not see it. And the man was overcome by an immense desire to reach the bird and take it, and he could not go away without the bird. But by reason of the height of the tree this was not in his power, and no ladder was to be found. But through his great and mighty anxiety counsel came to his soul. He took the men who stood about him and placed one upon the other, each upon the shoulders of his companion. And he climbed himself upon the topmost, so that he was able to reach the bird, and he took it. And the men, though they had helped him, knew nothing of the bird and did not see it. But he who knew of it and saw it could not have reached it without them. If, however, the lowest of them had deserted his post, then the man on the top

must have fallen on the ground. "And the temple of the Messiah is called in the book Sohar the bird's nest."

But it is not as though God received only the prayer of the Zaddiks, and as though that alone was lovable in His eyes. There is no prayer stronger in grace, and which forces its way in a straighter flight through the heavenly worlds, than that of the simple man who has nothing to say, who knows not how to speak and has only the wish to lay his dire necessity before God.

God accepts it as does a king the singing of a nightingale in his garden, which sounds sweeter to him than the homage of the princes in the throne room.

The Chassidic legend cannot dwell enough on examples of the favour which shines upon the single-minded man, nor of the power of his services. One shall be told here.

A villager, who year by year went to Baalshem's house of prayer during the "awful days," had a boy. He was of weak understanding, and could not take in the shapes of the letters of the alphabet, much less recognize the holy words. As he knew nothing, the father did not take him to the town on the "awful days." But when he was thirteen, and of age according to the laws of God, the father took him with him on the Day of Atonement, in order that he might not, from his want of knowledge and understanding, eat anything on that day of self-mortification. But the boy had a pipe on which he always played in the fields when he minded the sheep and the calves. Without his father's knowing it, he had put this in his pocket. The boy sat in the house of prayer during the holy

hours and did not know how to repeat anything. When the Additional Prayer was begun, he said to his father: "Father, I have a pipe in my pocket, and I will sing with it." Then his father was aghast, and said to him: "Take care not to do this." So he had to keep himself in check. But when the Afternoon (Mincha) Prayer came, he again said: "Father, only give me leave to take my pipe." When the father saw that in his soul he longed to play on the pipe, he was very angry, and asked: "Where have you got it?" and when he showed him the place, he put his hand on his pocket and kept it there in order to guard the pipe. But the Concluding (Niela) Prayer began, and in the evening the lights were shining tremblingly, and all hearts burnt like the lights, unexhausted by the long waiting, and the Prayer of the Eighteen Benedictions sounded once more round the house, tired but distinct, and the great confession was repeated for the last time before the ark of the Lord, forehead on the floor and arms outstretched, before the evening closed and God gave His judgment. Then the boy could repress his rapture no longer, he tore the pipe from his pocket, and made its voice sound loudly. All stood up, afraid and startled, but Baalshem rose above them and said: "The fate is broken and anger is dispersed from the face of the earth."

Thus is each service which comes from a simple or a composed and single-minded soul sufficing and perfect. But there is a higher service still. For he who has ascended from Aboda to Hitlahabut, and has plunged his will into it and from it alone derives

his actions, has got beyond any particular service. Each Zaddik has his peculiar form of service. When, however, the Zaddiks contemplate the roots of their own nature, and attain unto nothingness, then they can serve God at all stages. Thus spoke one of them: "I stand before God as a messenger boy." For he had reached perfection and had come to nothingness till no other way was left to him. "But he stood ready for all the ways that God might point out to him, just as a messenger boy stands ready for all that his lord may command." He who serves in such perfection has conquered the primeval duality, and has brought Hitlahabut to the heart of Aboda. He lives in the realms of life, and yet all walls have fallen and all boundary stones have been pulled down, and all separation is annihilated. He is the brother of creation and feels its glance as his own, its steps as though his own feet were moving, its blood as though it flowed in his own body. He is the son of God, he lays his soul anxiously and safely in the mighty hands of heaven and earth and the unknown worlds, and he rests upon the flood of that sea into which all his thoughts and the wanderings of his existence lead. "He makes of his body a throne of life, and of life a throne of the spirit, and of the spirit a throne of the light of the Glory of God, and the light streams round about him, and he sits in the midst of the light, and trembles and rejoices."

## KAVANA, OR INTENTION

KAVANA is the mystery of a soul, which is concentrated on a single aim, but it is not will. It has no idea of transferring an image of the mind into the world of actual things, nor of materializing a dream into an object, which can be perceived at pleasure again and again. It also does not seek to throw the stone of action into the waves of happenings, to make them restless and disturbed for a time, when they would only turn back again in answer to the deep call of their existence, nor to apply a match to the train which runs from generation to generation, so that a flame should flare out from time to time till it was extinguished without sign or warning. The intention of Kavana is not that the horses, dragging the mighty wagon of the world, should feel a fresh urge forward, or that one more structure should be erected under the overflowing gaze of the stars. Kavana does not signify a definite aim, but a goal. It has only one goal; there is only one goal which does not deceive and which does not get entangled among fresh paths, but to which all paths lead, and from which no road can ever turn away—Redemption.

Kavana is a ray of God's glory, dwelling in all men, and signifying redemption.

It is redemption that the Shechina should return from exile, that all the husks should fall from the

“Splendour of God,” which should purify itself and become one and unite with its Lord in complete unity. “In witness of this the Messiah will appear and set all existence free.” It seems to many a one all his life long as though this must happen here and now. For he hears the voices of that which is to be howling in the defiles, and he feels a germinating of eternity in the fields of time, even as though it were in his own blood, and thus he can never think otherwise but that this and this are the appointed moment, and his longing urges him ever the more hotly, for the voices speak ever more commandingly and the germs swell more and more urgently. It is said of one Zaddik that such was his expectation of redemption, that if he heard a tumult in the street he was at once moved to ask what this meant, and whether a messenger had not arrived; and always when he went to sleep he told his servant that he must awake him the moment the messenger had come.

“For the coming of the Deliverer was as fixed in his mind as when a father expects his only son from a strange country, and stands on the watch-tower with longing in his eyes, and peers through every window, and, if the door is opened, hastens out to see if his son is not yet come.” Others are aware of the length of the path to be trodden and the time it will take, and know how far away is he that is coming. In everything the infirmities of existence speak to them, and the breath of the wind carries bitterness to them. Within themselves they partake of the Glory of God, then they gaze without—all is at strife.

It happened that when the great Zaddik, Rabbi

Menachem, was in Jerusalem, a madman climbed the Mount of Olives and blew on the shofar. No one had seen him. Then a rumour rose among the people that this was the blast of the shofar, and that it announced the redemption. When the Rabbi heard this, he opened a window and looked out into the open air, and said: "There is no renewal here." But this is the way of redemption, that all the souls and sparks of souls, which have sprung from the primeval soul, and which, through the primeval calamity of the world or through the guilt of the ages, have sunk down, and have been scattered among all creatures, all these should cease from their wanderings and should return home purified. The Chassids speak of this in the parable of the prince, who would only allow the table to be cleared when the last of the guests had withdrawn. "All men are the abodes of wandering souls." They live in many existences, and struggle in one shape or another towards completion. Those who are not able to purify themselves are caught "in the world of entanglement," and are housed in pools of water, in stones, in plants, and in animals, where they await the hour of deliverance. Yet not only souls are imprisoned everywhere, but also the sparks of souls. Nothing is without them. They live in all that is, and are imprisoned in every shape. And this is the meaning and purpose of Kavana, that it is given to mankind in order to lift up the fallen and to set free the imprisoned. Not merely to wait, not merely to look on! Man is able to work for the redemption of the world.



Such is indeed Kavana, the mystery of the soul directed towards redeeming the world. It is reported of the saints that they intended to accomplish this redemption in struggle and in violence—in this world, when they were so aflame with the fervour of grace that nothing seemed to them to be unattainable, for they had then indeed embraced God; and as for the next world, a dying Rabbi said: "My friends have gone hence, they wished to bring back the Messiah, but they forgot him in their rapture. I shall not forget." In reality, however, every man has a prescribed area to redeem allotted to him in the existence of space and time; the places which are weighted down by what cannot be uplifted, the souls of which are fettered, await the man who will come to them with the word of freedom. If a Chassid is unable to pray in one place and desires to go to another, then the first place asks of him: "Why would you not speak the holy words over me? And if there is anything wrong in me, then it is for you to deliver me." But all journeys have a mysterious destination, which the traveller does not suspect. It is said of some Zaddiks that they have the power of helping straying souls. At all times, but especially when they have stood in prayer, those that have strayed away from eternity have appeared to them entreating, and have received salvation at their hands. Yet even out of their own impulse they would have known how to find and raise up those who were dumb and in the exile of a weary body. This help is compared to an unwieldy wagon, travelling through threatening dangers, to which the saint alone knows

how to harness himself, so that he should not be crushed beneath it. "He who has a soul may lower himself into the abyss, held fast by his own thought as with a strong rope to the bank above, and he will return home. But he who is only possessed of life and of mind, he is without the faculty of thought, and the cord will not hold him fast and he will fall into the abyss." He who is favoured with a quiet mind can plunge into darkness in order to rescue a soul that is lost in the whirlpool of wandering. Thus it is not denied to the lowliest to raise up the lost spark and to send it home out of its prison.

The sparks scatter everywhere. They cling to material things as in sealed-up wells, they crouch in substances as in caves that have been bricked up, they inhale darkness and breathe out fear; they flutter about in the movements of the world, searching where they can lodge to be set free. All of them are waiting for freedom.

"The spark in a stone, or in a growth, or in another creature is like a complete figure which is fixed in the midst of a thing so that its hands and feet cannot stretch out and its head rests on its knees. He who is able to raise the holy spark leads it into freedom, and no deliverance of a prisoner can be greater than this. It is as though a king's son were saved from prison and brought to his father."

But this liberation does not happen through formulas of exorcism, nor through any kind of prescribed and peculiar action; such things would all grow from the foundation of otherness, and this is not the foundation of Kavana. "With his every

action a man can work at the figure of the Glory of God, so that it may step from its hidden place. It is not the nature of the action which gives it its character, only its consecration. He who prays and sings in holiness, eats and speaks in holiness, in holiness performs the appointed ablutions, and in holiness reflects upon his business, through him the sparks which have fallen will be uplifted, and the worlds which have fallen will be delivered and renewed."

Around each man, built by the wide sphere of his activities, there is a natural circle of things which he is destined to set free. Those things, alive or inanimate, are termed the possessions of an individual: his beasts and his houses, his garden and his pasture, the things of his household, and his food. In so far as he cares for them in a spirit of holiness, he sets free their souls. "Thus shall a man always have care for the things of his house and his possessions." But in the soul itself there are sparks needing redemption, most of these have suffered abasement by their sin in an earlier life. These are the strange, disturbing thoughts which often trouble him who prays: "When a man stands in prayer, and hungers to take firm hold of the eternal, and strange thoughts come and go, these are the holy sparks which have sunk down, and which wish to be uplifted and set free by him, and these sparks belong to him and are akin to the roots of his soul; by virtue of him they shall be liberated. He liberates them when he sends every sad thought back to its pure source; and when he empties all the individual impulses of his mind

into the universal and God-like impulse, and lets all that is separate sink into unity."

This is the Kavana of receptivity: that a man should liberate the sparks in the objects round about him, and the sparks also which draw near him from the invisible world. But there is yet another Kavana: this is the Kavana of giving; it does not lift helping hands to the bewildered soul-rays; it binds the worlds together, and rules among the mysteries; it scatters itself in the thirsty distances; it gives itself to eternity. But it also has no need of miracles; its way is the way of creation and, above all other forms of creation, the Word.

For the Jewish mystic, speech was ever strange and terror-awakening. There exists a theory about the letters of the alphabet being the elements of the world, and about the arrangements of the letters as being the inner meaning of reality. The Word is an abyss through which the speaker treads. "Words should be spoken as though heaven were revealed in them, as though the word did not come out of your mouth, but as though you entered into the word." He who has knowledge of the sacred dance which can melt single stuttering words into the song of the unknown beyond, such a man will be full of God's power, and it is as if he created a new heaven and earth and all the worlds. He does not find his kingdom in front of him as does the deliverer of souls, he stretches it out from the firmament unto the silent depths. But he, too, works redemption, "For in each sign there are the three: World, Soul, and Deity; they rise and entwine and unite with each

other." And the signs unite in like measure, and the Word is created. The words unite in true unity with God, because a man has enshrined his soul in his words, and all the worlds unite with one another and rise up, and the great rapture is born. Thus he who works prepares the way to the final universal unity.

And as Aboda announces Hitlahabut to us, the primal conception of Chassid life, so does Kavana here announce Hitlahabut. For creation is to become created, the Godlike moves and gives us power. The state of being created is ecstasy; he alone who sinks down into the void of the absolute feels the moulding Hand of God.

This is told in a parable. It is not granted to anything on the earth to re-create itself and to pass into a new form until it has first arrived at nothingness; this is "the form of the intermediate." No man can endure in this state; it is the force before creation, and is named chaos. It is, as it is with the fledgling which breaks through its shell, and with the seed which does not sprout until it has been put into the soil and has become decomposed. And this is called wisdom, that is, "thought without revelation." Thus it is that, if any one wishes to be created afresh, then he must do everything in his power to enter into the condition of nothingness, and then God will make out of him a new creation, and he will become as a spring which does not dry up and as a stream which does not cease to flow.

Thus the will of the Chassidic doctrine is twofold, that enjoyment, the conversion of the external into

the inward, should take place in holiness, and that creation, the manifestation of the inward, should take place in holiness. Through holy creation and through holy enjoyment, the redemption of the world is fulfilled.

## SHIFLUT, OR HUMILITY

RABBI NACHMAN of Bratzlaw says: "God does not do the same thing twice."

That which is, is single and for once. It plunges out of the flood of occurrence, new and never having happened before; and having happened, it plunges back into the flood, unrecalable. Each thing reappears at some other time, but each thing is changed. And the turmoil and commotion which rule over all that is created in the wide world, and the water and fire which build up the structure of the earth, and the mixing and unmixing which compose the life of the living, and the spirit of man, with all his attempts and his stretching out to reach some meagre fulfilment of the possible, none of these things can create one thing which is the same as another, nor can bring back again one of the things which are sealed up in what has already happened or taken place. The eternity of the individual is that which has happened once. For with his individuality he is buried irrevocably in the heart of the universe, and he lies in the bosom of eternity for ever as he who has been made in such and in no other manner.

Thus individuality is the essential property of man, and it is given to him so that he may unfold it. This is just the intention of "the return," that individuality

should become ever purer and more complete by the means of it, and that he who returns should in each new life exist in less troubled and in less disturbed individuality. For pure individuality and pure completion are one, and he who has become so totally at one with himself that no dissension has power or place in him, has completed the journey, and is delivered and returns to God.

“Every one should know and remember that his state is unique in the world, and that no one ever lived who is exactly the same as he; for had there ever been any one the same as he, there would have been no need for him to have existed. But in reality each person is a new thing in the world, and he should make his individuality complete, for the coming of the Messiah is delayed through it not being complete.” He who strives can only fulfil himself in his own way and in no other. “He who follows in the footsteps of his companion, and lets his steps be guided, will neither make good his own nor the other’s steps. Many copied in their actions Rabbi Simon ben Jochai, and they did not succeed, because they were not in his circumstances, and only acted as he did because they had seen him in those circumstances.”

But just as a man seeks God in solitary fervour, and nevertheless there is a high service which the community alone can fulfil, and just as a man achieves something prodigious by his everyday actions, but not by himself alone, because he requires the world and things in order to perform those actions, thus the individuality of man is even so manifested by his life with others. For the more a man is truly individual, the more he



can give to others and the more he will give to them. And his one trouble is that his power of giving is limited by those who receive. "For the giver is on the side of grace, and the receiver is on the side of justice." As when a man fills his goblet from out of a large vessel: the vessel pours from out of its fullness, but the goblet sets a limit to the gift.

The individual sees God and embraces him. The individual delivers fallen worlds. But the individual is not a whole but a part, and the purer and more perfect he is, the more intensely is he aware of being a part, and the feeling of the community of existence is the more awake in him. This is the mystery of humility.

"There is a light over every man, and when two men meet in spirit, their lights mingle, and a single light emerges from them. And this is termed to generate." To feel the universal generation as a sea, and oneself as a wave in it, this is the mystery of humility.

If any one abases himself too much and forgets "that a man through his works and behaviour can call down an overflowing blessing on all the world," this is not humility. This is false humility: "The greatest evil is if thou dost forget that thou art the son of a king." He dwells in true humility who feels for others as himself, and who feels himself in others.

Pride is to exalt oneself above others. It is not he who knows himself who is proud-minded, but only he who compares himself with others. No man can overrate himself if he relies upon himself alone. All heaven is open to him, and all worlds are subdued

by him: he overrates himself when he feels himself above others, and regards himself as higher than the most insignificant of things, as though he were one who deals with weights and measures and gives judgment. A Zaddik says: "If the Messiah should come to-day and should say: 'You are better than the others,' then I should say to him: 'You are no Messiah.'"

The soul of the proud-minded lives inactive, and has no substance; it flutters and troubles itself, but it is not blessed. Those thoughts are shadows which do not dwell upon real ideas, but only upon themselves and their glory. The act which has no regard to the goal, but only regards the value of things, has no substance, only surface; no stability, only appearance. He who weighs and measures will be as empty and unreal as are weights and measures. "There is no room for God in him who is full of himself." This is told of a youth who went into seclusion, and set himself free from the things of this world, in order to devote himself solely to learning and to service, and who sat in solitude fasting from Sabbath to Sabbath, learning and praying, but his attention was centred above everything on the pride of his action. It streamed from his eyes, and his fingers burnt to place it as a chaplet upon his brow as though it were the chaplet of the anointed, and so all his work fell over "on the other side," and there was no holiness in it. But his heart did not sink, but swelled higher and higher, though the demons made sport of his actions, and he thought himself wholly possessed of God. Then it happened that once he got outside

himself, and he dumbly perceived the things round about him from another point of view. Knowledge then took hold of him, and he saw his actions piled up at the feet of a gigantic idol, and he saw himself as in a dizzy void, given up to something that had no name. This, and nothing further, is told.

But the humble man has "the power to attract." There is always a limit to a man while he considers himself different from and above others. "God cannot pour His holiness into him, for God is without limit." But if a man thinks nothing of himself he is limited by nothing, and is without limit, and God can pour His glory into him.

The humility which is here meant is no voluntary and practical virtue, it is nothing but an inward state, feeling, and expression. It is never forced, never a self-abasement, self-command, or determination made by himself. It is as involuntary as a glance of a child, and simple as the speech of a child.

The humble man can enter into any existence, and he knows the nature and the virtues of each existence. Because to him no one is "the other," he knows by virtue of his own consciousness that no one is wanting in some hidden value; this he knows because "no man exists who does not have his hour." The colours of the world do not merge in one another, but each soul stands in the splendour of its own individuality. In each man there is something valuable that is in no other man. "Therefore one should honour each man for that which is hidden within him, which only he and none of his companions possesses."

16717 | 3803

"God does not look on the evil side, how do I dare to do so?" He who, in his own life, lives according to the mystery of humility, can condemn nothing. "He who gives judgment upon another man has given it upon himself."

He who separates himself from sinners walks in their guilt. But the saint is able to suffer for the sins of a man as though they were his own. To live in the life of others, this alone is righteousness.

To live with understanding of others is justice. To live in others as in oneself is love. For that feeling of nearness, and that wish for nearness to a few, which among men is called love, is nothing but the remembrance of a heavenly life. "Those who in Paradise sat near each other and were neighbours and kinsmen, they are also nearer to each other in this world." But in reality love is something widespread and far-seeking, and it extends to the living, irrespective of choice or of separation.

A Zaddik says: "How can you say of me that I am a leader for all time, when I still feel for those who are near to me or are of my own blood a love which is stronger than that which I feel for the sons of other men?" In the tales of Rabbi Wolf it is told how this opinion extends to beasts. He never would shout at a horse, and Rabbi Moses Leib used to give drink to the neglected calves in the market. Of Rabbi Sussya it is told that he could not look at a cage without opening it, because of thinking of the birds' longing for their flights in the open air as free wanderers, in accordance with their nature. But it is not only to those beings on whom the short-sighted

multitude bestows the name of the living, who belong to the love of the lovers. "To thee there is nothing in which there is no life, and through its life each thing wears the form in which it stands before thine eyes. And look, this life is the life of God."

Thus it is meant: the love given to the living is the love of God, and it is higher than any other service. A master asked his pupil: "Thou knowest that two powers cannot take possession of the mind of man at the same time. When you rise from your couch in the morning there are two ways before you: love of God and love of man; which is the more important?" The other answered: "I know not." Then said the master: "In the prayer book which is in the hands of the people it is written: 'Before you pray, say the words, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself.'" Dost thou think that those who are worthy of reverence have commanded this without intention? If any one says to you that he has love of God but no love of the living he speaks falsely, and represents that he has that which is impossible."

Therefore it is that if any one has departed from God, the love of man is his one salvation. When a father complained to Baalshem: "My son has departed from God; what shall I do?" he answered: "Love him the more." One of the fundamental sentences of the Chassids is to love more. Its roots bury themselves deeply and spread far. He who can understand this, understands Judaism afresh. There is great moving power within it.

A great movement, and yet but a lost sound. The sound has been lost, if anywhere, in some dark,

windowless room, if at any time, in those days when there was no power in the message, the lips of an insignificant, unknown man, those of Zaddik Rabbi Raphael, formed these words: "If a man sees that his companion hates him, he should love him all the more. For the communion of the living is the chariot of the splendour of God, and if there is a rift in the chariot it must be filled up, and where there is so little love that the join falls apart, man must increase the love on his side in order to supply the want." Once, before going a journey, this Rabbi Raphael called out to his pupil to sit beside him in the carriage. The other said: "I am afraid that it will give you too little room." The Rabbi said in a louder voice: "We will love each other the more, and there will be room enough." Let them be witnesses, the symbol and the reality, different from each other, yet one and indivisible, the chariot of the Shechina and the chariot of friends.

Love is an existence which lives in a kingdom larger than the kingdom of individuals, and speaks from a knowledge deeper than the knowledge of individuals. It is in truth the bond of creation, that is, it is in God. Life covered and guaranteed by life, life emptying itself into life, not till you realize this can you perceive the soul of the world. What is wanting in one man is supplied by another. If one man loves too little, another will love the more.

Things help one another. But to help is to thrust all self away from one by determined will. So he who loves the most does not preach of love to the other one, but only loves, and also to a certain extent

does not trouble about him: thus he who helps does not, to a certain extent, trouble himself about the other, but puts himself aside with the thought of helping. This means: that this quality of help takes place between one being and another, not through their intercourse but of itself, through each apparently unconnected, careless, and purposeless act. This is told in a parable: "If any one sings and cannot lift up his voice, and another comes to help him and begins to sing, then he too is enabled to join with him in song."

This is the secret of union.

To help one another is not considered a task, but is the self-evident reality on which Chassidism is based. To help is not a virtue, but a pulse of its existence. This is the new sense given to the old Jewish saying: "Righteousness delivers from death." It is commanded, that he who helps should not think of the others who could help with him, of God or of men, and that he should not consider himself as part of a power, and as though he only had to contribute, but that each man should stand in integrity, answerable and responsible for himself. There is one thing more, and it is only another way of expressing the mystery of humility: to help, not out of the pity which arises from a sharp, quick pain which one wishes to exorcise, but out of love, which means "to live with others." The man who merely pities does not live with the suffering of the sufferer, he does not carry it in his heart. "To live with others," as if one should share in the life of a tree, in its sucking-up of moisture and its putting forth of foliage, and the dream of its roots

and the desire of its trunk and the thousand movements of its boughs; or as if one should share in the life of an animal, with all its movements and stretchings and clawings, and with all the joy of its sinews and limbs, and the dumb understanding of its brain.

He who only pities receives from the mere outward manifestation of this sorrow, the sorrow of others, a sharp, quick pain, totally unlike the real sorrow of the sufferer.

He who helps must live with others, and it is only the help which springs from living with others that endures in the sight of God. Thus it is told of a Zaddik that when a poor man excited his pity, he first provided for all his needs; but that when he felt the pangs of pity assuaged, he let himself be absorbed in the life and the needs of the other with deep, peaceful, devoted love, till he felt within himself the other's life and needs as though they were his own, and only then did he truly begin to help.

He who in this way lives with others, in his own action realizes the truth that all souls are one, for each is a part of the universal soul, and the whole of the universal soul is in each of these souls. Thus the humble man who is the righteous, the loving, and the helper, lives. Mixing with all and unmoved by all, devoted to the multitude, and collected in his own individuality, fulfilling on the rocky heights of solitude the bond with the eternal, and in the valley of life the bond with the earthly; blossoming out of profound dedication, and withdrawn from all self-desire. He knows that all is in God, and meets his messages as trusted



friends. He fears not the before or the after, nor what is above or beneath, neither this world nor the world to come. He is at home, and never can be rejected. The earth cannot help being his cradle, and heaven cannot help being his mirror and his echo.

## THE FIRST CIRCLE

### THE WEREWOLF

WHEN the old Rabbi Eliezer, the father of the child Israel, was overtaken by death, he surrendered his soul to it without a struggle, for it had grown weary after many years of wandering and tribulation, and it yearned for the fire-spring of renewal. But his sad eyes were turned again and again to the boy's fair head; and when his hour of deliverance appeared, he lifted him in his arms once again, and pressed him to him fervently—the blessed light which had come so late to him and to his ageing wife on their last journey. He looked at him intently, as though wishful to call up a spirit that lay asleep behind the clear brow, and said:

“My child, the Adversary will come to meet thee at the beginning, at the turning-point, and when all is accomplished, in the shadow of dreams, and in the living flesh. He is the abyss over which thou must fly, he is part of thee, he completes thy circle, and thou completest his. There will be a time when through thy powers thou wilt pierce like lightning to his last hiding-place and he will be shattered as a thin cloud; and there will be times when he will surround thee with impenetrable clouds of darkness,

and thou wilt stand alone on thy reef in the middle of a sea of darkness, but those times will be torn to shreds, and these times will be torn to shreds, and thy soul will be a conqueror. For know that thy soul is an ore, which none can crumble, and which only God can weld. Then fear not the Adversary, fear nothing, and never fear."

With wondering eyes, the child drank in the words from the withered lips. They sank within him and remained there. When Eliezer died, the pious people of the community took care of the boy for the love of his father. When it was time, they put him to school. But, as it happened, he disliked the small, noisy room; again and again he escaped into the wood, where, in the green glades, he could enjoy himself among the trees and animals, and where he moved confidently by day or night. When, with violent admonishings, they brought him back, he did indeed remain for a few days quiet under the monotonous chanting of his teacher; then he slipped away like a kitten, and rushed to the wood. After a time the men who looked after him thought that they had done sufficient for their trust, and that their trouble over the wild creature was in vain. So they let him alone, and he remained unquestioned in the wilds, and grew up among the dumb life of the animals.

At twelve years of age he hired himself as an assistant to the teacher, to lead the boys to and from school. Then the people of the dull little town saw a remarkable change take place. Day by day Israel led a singing procession of children to school through the streets, and he led them home by a long,

roundabout way through the meadows and forest. The boys were no longer pale with heavy hanging heads. They made merry, and carried green boughs and flowers in their hands. In their hearts a spirit of devotion was kindled; the rising flame was so great that it broke through the torment of misery and confusion which had pressed them to the earth, and it blazed up to heaven. The abandoned Glory of God ceased to wander about, and lifted its sorrowful countenance towards the light, which was as the rosy dawn of the Kingdom to come.

But hate and fear swelled within the Adversary, and he mounted to the heavens. There he complained about what was happening below, which would cheat him of his work. He asked leave to descend in order to measure himself against these far too youthful messengers, and his prayer was granted.

He came down and mixed among the creatures of the earth. He moved among them, testing and weighing, but for a long time he found nothing that would suit his purpose. At last, in the wood in which Israel had passed his boyhood, he came across a charcoal-burner, a shy fellow, who did not know good from evil, and who avoided mankind. At night-time it was his fate to be transformed into a Werewolf, and he went by secluded paths far away and prowled about the yards, attacking an animal or striking with terror a late traveller, but till now he had done harm to no man. His simple heart turned against his bitter lot, but when the mania came upon him he could not escape it, and lay trembling and fighting with himself in the bushes. Thus the Adversary saw

him sleeping one night, already dull and contorted before the approaching transformation, and he judged him suitable and well fitted to be his tool. He seized hold of his breast and tore the heart out of it, hid it in the earth, and put his own heart in the creature's bosom, a kernel from the kernel of darkness.

When Israel, as usual, led the singing children at sundown in a wide circle through the meadows about the little town, the Werewolf broke into the little group in his wan deformity, with foam dripping from his mouth. The children rushed from one another in all directions; some fell to the ground unconscious, others clung, piteously crying, to their leader. Meanwhile the beast had disappeared, and so no misfortune occurred. Israel collected and comforted the little ones, but the incident caused great confusion and anxiety in the town. Several children fell into violent fever through their fright, and were attacked by nightmares and groaned in darkened rooms. No mother let her child out into the streets, and no one knew what to do.

Now the words of the dying Eliezer came to the young Israel, and it was only now that their meaning reached his heart. Then he went from house to house, and swore to the despondent parents that they might again trust their little ones to him, for he was convinced that he could protect them from harm. There was so much of high power in his speech, and such a clear look of truth on his brow, that none could withstand him; then he gathered the children around him, and spoke to them as he had done to their parents, but still more forcibly, and the timid souls blossomed

again about him. At an early hour he led them far into the meadow, and told them to wait for him while he went alone into the deep forest. Just as he entered it the animal burst out, stood in front of the trees, and grew giant-like before his eyes, grew up to the heavens, covering the wood with its body and the meadow with its paws, while the bloody saliva from its mouth flowed round the setting sun. But Israel did not shrink, for the Word of the hour of death was upon him. And he seemed to be going farther and farther and penetrating into the body of the Werewolf, for there was no halt or hindrance to his steps, till he reached the dark and gloomy heart. It was round and burning before him, and all the existence of the world was mirrored in its dusky surface, and all the existence of the world was then thrown back from it, so that the boy Israel could only think of the depths of God's love, when he sought to find an image that would enable him to resist the immensity of it.

Then it was delivered into his hands. He held the heart and clasped his fingers firmly round it. He felt it contract, saw drops of blood run down, and perceived the eternal suffering that was in it, both now and for ever. Then he let go of it, laid it gently on the earth, which swallowed it up at once, and found himself all alone at the edge of the wood. Then he returned to the children.

On the way, the solitary charcoal-burner was found lying on the edge of the wood. Those who saw him were surprised at the peacefulness of his countenance, and could not understand the fear which they had

had of him, for in death he looked like a large, uncouth child.

But the boys forgot their singing from this day onwards, and began to resemble their fathers and their fathers' fathers, and when they went about the country hung their heads like the others.

## THE PRINCE OF FIRE

WHEN Rabbi Adam, the Miracle Worker, grew old, he was oppressed by this care at the last: to whom should he leave his writings? For in them the way to those great powers was portrayed, by which at times he had taken hold of the machinery of destiny and had directed it as he wished. A son had indeed been born to the master, but he was only the heir of his body. This had been for long a great source of trouble to the master, and it did not seem to be in keeping with his will's high power that herein he could work no change. When he was in the summer of his strength, he raised his fists against Heaven and quarrelled with the Nameless One, who looked down on all his impertinent audacities as a man regards a boy's daring escapades. Then came the hours of weariness, when the body became stubborn and the soul mounted up alone on its steep pilgrimage, while the body sank into sleep. His heart became softened, and he looked into the everlasting eyes for reconciliation. Often at night in his dreams he rose and put the question: "To whom, O Lord, shall I leave the source of my powers?" Often he asked in vain, and the darkness of his dream was wordless; but the answer came one night: "Thou shalt send to the son of Eliezer and share it with him. He dwells in the town of Okop."



In the days which followed, the Rabbi felt the veils of bodily disruption enveloping him. He confided his trouble in secret to his son, and opened the chest which held the mysterious books. The pain of the past rose again while the old man was beginning to speak. But he put away his grief as a thing no longer fitting to one who was departing from life, and gave his son this order:

"Take them to Israel—they belong to him—and regard it as a great grace if he shows himself willing to study with thee, and keep thyself humble at all times, for thou art nothing but a poor messenger chosen to carry to the hero the sword which for long ages the silent spirits under the earth have forged and wrought for him."

Not long after the old man died. The son, when he had delivered his father's mortal remains to the earth, faithful to his last command, arranged his earthly goods, and set out on the journey to Okop with the dead man's writings. He had always been an obedient tool in his father's hands. He was wanting in a will of his own, and had relied on his father's soul to lead his own on his life's journey, as one boat is roped to another on a voyage. But now his spirit put forth on its way fearfully and without a guide, and on his journey he considered how he must proceed to find the Israel in Okop who was appointed as his father's heir and his own safeguard. On his arrival at the town, the people came to do him honour, for he had let them know that he was the son of the miracle-worker, and he found it easy to live among them, keeping his eyes open to find the

Chosen One. When he applied himself to the search, no one seemed so much to answer to his requirements as the young Israel who, aged fourteen years, held a small office in the prayer house. For though the boy behaved in public as simply as was fitting to his years, the seeker was soon aware that in his childish way this lad hid from the curiosity of the world a secret grace. Therefore he determined to approach him. He went to the head-man of the community, and besought of him a quiet place where he might pursue in peace the study of the Holy wisdom, and begged that the boy Israel should be granted to him as a servant. The head-man and the others were well content, and regarded it as an honour for the young Israel to be in the company of the son of the Mighty One.

The Rabbi now appeared to be absorbed in the study of the Holy Scriptures, and paid no attention to his surroundings. The boy was glad at heart over this, for every night he could rise from his couch according to his custom and give himself up to study, while the people supposed him to be in deep sleep. Soon the young Rabbi was on the watch for this, and was only waiting for the right moment to put him to the proof. One night, when the lad had thrown himself on his couch and had fallen asleep at once, the other rose and took a page of the magic writings and laid it on his breast. Then he hastened back to his own bed and lay quiet. After about an hour he saw how the boy first turned restlessly, then still confused by sleep stretched both hands towards the book, and at last, as though seized

by powerful hands, rose from his sleep, and by the light of a small oil lamp buried himself in the contents. It seemed to the spectator as though the room became lighter and larger while the boy was reading. At last Israel hid the page in his garment and tumbled on to his couch. After this the Rabbi never ceased to watch him, and when he had arrived at certainty he delayed no longer, and disclosed his mission to him:

"I give you something," he said, "that in the course of our stars has seldom lain in mortal hands. Before you very few had it for their own. It was sunk for centuries, then it rose again to feed the spirit of man from the primeval stream of its power. My father was the last of these few. Now by a secret dispensation it belongs to you, and if you will be gracious to me, then, when you spend your time over these writings, let my poor soul be the air which shall absorb your Word, which otherwise would escape into the void."

"It shall be as thou sayest, but keep silent so that none save thou and I know of the matter."

The Rabbi assented. In order still further to secure their secrecy, they arranged to leave the prayer house, and went to a secluded dwelling outside the town. The Jews of Okop took it as an unexpected favour that Rabbi Adam's son should have taken Israel under his care, allowing him to take part in his learning; and, not knowing otherwise, they ascribed it to the merits of his father Eliezer.

Thus the two were immersed in a solitude in which the voices of the earth were mute. From Rabbi Adam's book an unimaginable sweetness of spirit

and a splendour as from profound worlds emerged. The young Israel devoted himself solely, and without words, to the wonderful scriptures, and imbibed the essence of them as a sponge sucks up water, or as a stone becomes hot in the sun's rays. But Rabbi Adam's son retained his keen intellect, which daily required something on which to whet itself. He was not satisfied to dwell continuously in the golden air of ecstasy. He longed to test and weigh the information which emerged so wonderfully from the ancient books, and to taste at last the power which lay in the old formulas. This craving caused his soul to contract, and it looked sorrowfully out of his sad eyes.

The young Israel perceived this, and said:

"What do thy looks ask, my brother? What dost thou miss in these days?"

Then the Rabbi sighed, and answered him:

"Boy, if only my soul were as immaculate as thine! But what enters into thine as honey eats into mine as caustic into wounds. Within me doubts go hither and thither, and are never silent. One only can give me help, and if thou wilt, now that thou hast power over the Word, let us call him—the Prince of the Torah."

The boy Israel was afraid.

"Do not let us disturb the humility of our waiting," he said. "The hour is not yet at hand when we can use our weapons."

The Rabbi sank back, disappointed. His looks grew sour and jaundiced, so that Israel in intense pity conquered his timidity, and told the Rabbi to

make ready that they might prepare together for the venture.

In order to attain to the Kavana (Intention) of the souls who wish to subdue the Watchman of the Torah, it was commanded that from one Sabbath evening to the next they should partake of no food or drink, nor should any earthly message be allowed to approach them. And above all else the time had to be spent in complete seclusion and purity. Therefore they prepared the house and barred the doors and windows. They took the ritual bath and then fasted from Sabbath eve to Sabbath eve, and at last, when the decisive night arrived, they stretched their souls to the final rapture, and with uplifted arms Israel called out into the night the words of exorcism. But when he had ended he fell as though struck to the earth, and cried:

“Woe unto thee, my brother, thou hast let an error flow into our Kavana. Thus a fate has gone forth out of the mouth of anger, and I already see him, the Watchman’s brother and neighbour, the Prince of Fire; he rises up and stretches out his wings for a downward flight. If our eyelids close, we are given into the hands of death, and are destroyed in the fiery depths. There is only one salvation for us: that we watch and strive without intermission till the morning.”

They threw themselves down and called upon the spirit of the storm, so that they should not succumb to sleep. A glow like the breath of a summer afternoon surrounded the house, and out of it came soft enticements to rest. Towards morning the Rabbi’s

power of resistance deserted him, and he leant his head against the wall.

The boy called out to him, but the Rabbi's arm was lifted in protest against him, and his lips stammered out black blasphemy. Then the flames stabbed the Rabbi to the heart and he sank to the ground.

## THE REVELATION

ON the most eastern slopes of the Carpathians stood a dark, low, peasants' beer-house. Its small front garden, planted with beetroot, looked towards the mountains, but the high dormer windows on the back of it faced the wide yellow plains on which the sunlight lay like a ripe blessing. The small inn was very lonely. On market days, indeed, there came that way a few people of the neighbourhood, country folk and Jewish dealers from the mountain villages, who spent an hour there drinking to each other, and wishing one another a lucky sale or purchase; and beyond this there entered very seldom a hunter or a traveller. If a guest came, he was greeted by a slender, brown-eyed woman, and invited to sit down. Then the woman stepped before the house, lifted her hand to her mouth, and called in a clear voice over the rocks the name "Israel!"

In the nearest rock, a stone's throw from the house, a vault had been hewn. At its door was plenty of sun, and heavy darkness in its depths. At the sides there were openings into the darkness of the height and breadth of a man, as though conversations with nameless things were held in the hours of the night in the kingdom of the innermost earth. The room was silent and shut away from sounds, but the woman's

clear call reached it, and the air, like a faithful servant, carried it on to him whom it concerned. And wherever he was, and if he lay in the darkness of the depths, or under the sunny sky, he rose at the call, strode to the inn, and stood ready to serve the guest. But a shudder passed through the heart of the guest when he approached, and even the peasants and dealers who had known the man for many years, each time experienced anew a sense of awe at the sight of him, however gentle his greeting and his manner of service might be.

He was thirty years old or more; the years had come to him laden with mystery and had gone past him. He did not look back at them, nor did he look towards those that were coming. Around him was "waiting": the mountain heights looked down on him and waited; the springs looked up to him and waited; but *he* did not wait. Of these years nothing is told but that he had long wandered in misery with his wife, and had lived on the eastern slope of the mountains and served the travellers. But the hollow in the mountain is still undisturbed; you can still see the rough vaulting and the sunken passages. Now at last a morning dawned when the eye of the heights and the eye of the springs was revealed to him. He became aware that he stood in the midst of "waiting." The ground of his cave burnt. The silence had been taken away from the entrance and the whispering from the walls; voices called him. From the vaults there thundered a command. In the passages sounded its echo, and everywhere the voices were gathered into one like the rays of the sun. This morning was followed



by many days; and the command grew above the man's head. He heard the hour come and he heard its steps in the distance.

And again there appeared a morning, and the noise ceased and knowledge came gently to him. The command was mute, and Baalshem looked into the world.

On this morning Rabbi Naphtali arrived at the plains. He had visited a friend towards the south of the mountains, and although his journey had taken some days he was still full of the talk which he had had with him. The talk and counter-talk repeated themselves in his thoughts, but more purely and more powerfully than they had been spoken. Rabbi Naphtali could think of nothing but the talk with his friend. It drew signs in the clouds and its words were strewn in the sound of the wind. So the carriage arrived at the little tavern on the last slope. Then the "word" in Rabbi Naphtali was shattered. He was afraid and looked up. Then he saw the house with the bright front garden, and suddenly it came upon him that he was tired. Yes, he must indeed be tired, as the "word" in him was shattered. He got out of the carriage and went into the house. The woman greeted him, told him to sit down, stood up and, with her hand to her mouth, called up to the rock, "Israel!" A moment later Rabbi Naphtali saw the host coming towards him, with long, firm steps, and bowing with a kindly smile. It was to be seen by his brow and eyes that the man was a Jew; but he wore a peasant dress, the short sheepskin with the thick, coloured girdle, and the earth-coloured

sheepskin boots, and no cap rested on his long, bright hair. This vexed the Rabbi, and he told him what he wanted not too friendlyly. But the man still kept his smile and the humility of his bearing, and served the Rabbi so daintily that it seemed to be almost strange that such a large and evidently strong man could move so gently. When Rabbi Naphtali had rested for a while, he called: "Israel, get my carriage ready, for I am going on." The host stepped outside in order to fulfil the order; but as he went he half turned, and said with a smile: "Six days passed between the Beginning and the Sabbath—why should you not stay here another six days and keep the Sabbath with me?" Then the Rabbi told him to be silent, for frivolous speech annoyed him. The man was quiet, and prepared the carriage.

When Rabbi Naphtali drove on farther it was impossible for him to revive the talk in his mind; it seemed to him like a torn web which no one can make quite whole again. But nevertheless, when he persevered and would not desist, it seemed to him that everything was whirling before his eyes, so that he drove into a whirlpool of things that were confused and jumbled up together. For a long time Rabbi Naphtali had never noticed the things in his life, to him it was enough to know of their existence and to put up with them, and now the whirlpool forced him to look up, and he saw the things of the world, but driven from their places and lost in confusion. It was to him as though a fearful gulf had opened beneath him, eager to swallow up earth and heaven. The Rabbi felt the whirlpool swelling

in his own heart; darkness came upon him; but at this moment he saw a gigantic man in sheepskin, with earth-coloured sheepskin boots, striding towards the carriage. The man went through the disturbance with a light step, and pushed its threatening circles softly aside like a swimmer the waves. Then he took the reins and turned the horses with a sharp jerk, and they at once began to trot back with trebled speed along the way by which they had come, so that in a short time they were standing before the tavern. The anxiety and tumult within Rabbi Naphtali had vanished into emptiness, as though nothing of this had taken place. He did not understand what had befallen him, but no question arose in his mind. When he got out of the carriage he went into the garden, in which stood a table ready laid for a meal. The slender woman again greeted him with a friendly, untroubled countenance. Again she called over to the rocks, and again the peasant-like man stood before him and bowed, just as when he had first seen him. For a long time the spell of the incomprehensible was upon the Rabbi's soul. But when he saw the things about him as usual, and the methodical round of everyday life, the host busy in serving the travellers and watering the horses, it is true with a noble bearing, but just like a small ale-house keeper, he began to think over what had happened. And, as always before this day, his thoughts were again governed by his will, so that he determined that it was nothing but a deception of his tired eyes, worn out by the sharp mountain air, which had gained a power over him. Thus he determined to remain

in the inn overnight and to sleep off all his fatigue, but in the morning to go on farther. When next day the Rabbi was again on his way, he had to laugh out loud over the foolishness of his former drive. The garland of creation, firmly and beautifully woven, lay round about him, everything growing and safe in its own place. He thought that he saw them now for the first time in their true reality, and was glad at it, and surprised at himself. How happy was this freedom and confidence of all existence! But while he wondered and rejoiced, he happened to lift his eyes to heaven, and was amazed, and horror swallowed up his joy. For instead of the vault of light, shot through with varied blues and greys, that he had relied upon with the unthinking habit of sight, he saw round about a solid firmament over the earth, without break or gap. And when he looked down tremblingly, he remarked that none of the things stood in freedom and confidence, but that they grew imprisoned and feeble in their places, and those that moved slunk about as if in a large but gloomy cage. And it seemed to Naphtali that he himself was imprisoned and held enchanted in an eternal and unescapable prison, and he succumbed to a sadness in which neither his thoughts nor his certainty in God were able to bring him comfort. But while he lay in the last stage of sorrow, he looked up and saw a man who seemed to be moving in the firmament. He went the round of the heavens in earth-coloured sheepskin boots, and he lightly touched here and there the brazen roof, and where his finger touched it, it gave way and was loosened. The

finger made breach after breach in the firmament, and a blue light streamed into it. Finally the whole rigid vault melted, and the liquid light spread again over the horizon as each day shows itself to mortal eyes. And all the creatures breathed deeply, and even the sleeping worm shook itself as though it threw away its chains. Rabbi Naphtali breathed with all the others, and he breathed in a freedom which was like the breath of life. He looked up to heaven and sought the Man of Wonder, but he had vanished—then the mystery was solved. The Rabbi turned the carriage and drove the horses until they arrived again before the tavern. He whom he sought met him on the threshold with the old greeting, and without question in words or in gesture; but the greeting seemed to the Rabbi more friendly than the day before. Therefore he chased away all hesitation, and said:

“Israel, what has come to you that I meet you on my way in this strange manner?” Then the other looked up and smiled, and the smile was not according to the manner of men; it was like that of a lake which lies between rocks, a painful, pensive smile from out of its depths when the sunshine streams upon it and says: “Now I leave you to yourself”; but the lake smiles and answers: “To me?” Thus smiled the man and answered: “Me?” The Rabbi not wishing to desist would have asked more, but he felt that his mouth was closed, for the smile of the other had shut it. So he remained silent and full of questioning. Thenceforward he could do no more, and his stay was more perplexing to him hour by hour.

Then night came, and it was as the day had been, but longer, so that each mystery deepened. In the morning only sleep delivered his soul, and he had a dream. But the dream of the Rabbi was about the beginning of creation. The light was divided from the darkness, and the firmament was between the waters, and it seemed to Rabbi Naphtali as though his soul was the confusion from which things were created, and as though it was from its invisible depths that heaven and earth had sprung. And he perceived the moulding hand of the spirit.

When he awoke and went out of the house he was free from uncertainty; all seemed to him simple and settled, and with his eyes he took in the world. It was to him as though he did not look at things from outside them but from within themselves, as seeing how anxious each was about its path in life, reflecting and looking within itself. And he said to himself: "I now know that there are times when the whirlpool breaks over the world and shatters the order of things, and light and darkness are no longer divided, and creatures uprooted from their place whirl about in space, and there are times when the heavens hold the earth imprisoned, and the firmament, which ought only to separate, binds and ties up the creatures in it. But is not all this a mirage and a sport of time? For now I see that there is happiness and joy over everything. The things live together undisturbed by confusion or by enchantment, keep upright and endure amid the anger of the powers, and each one works out its own way in the world and has joy and happiness in its work. There is no whirlwind which

can tear the garland of activity woven by existence; no enchantment can fetter the love which existence has for its work. Creation, that is the blessed world of creating things, is unconquerable in its happiness." As the Rabbi thus spoke he shut his eyes for joy. But when he opened them the first thing he saw was a large veil being lowered, and the world lay before him like an abyss. Out of the abyss the disk of the sun rose in dumb, slow torment, and many trees and plants broke out of the abyss in perpetual and painful birth, and many creatures rose and flew about in meaningless hunting and seeking, and every creature suffered because it must do what it was doing and could not get loose and was wrapped up in suffering. But so it was: all things were shut up in the abyss, and yet the abyss was between each thing and everything, and none could get across to the other; yea, none could see the other, for the abyss was between them all.

And this vision of the Rabbi was not like a sight that you behold and yet suspect, however much you may be possessed by it, that it will disappear some time or other before your death and be no more. But it was to him as though he had spent all his life in illusion and only now knew truth and life, and even should he live to the end of the world, no other picture but this would appear to him. And this vision took from the Rabbi in one moment all that he had won in the last hour and in all hours, and his heart faltered, half drawn to rise up against God and half drawn to suffer with God.

But just as this happened, Rabbi Naphtali was

aware that a man, with whose face and figure he was familiar, appeared in the abyss, and the man was here and everywhere, winged, and with a many-sided and overspreading presence. For his mouth was close to the ear of the sun and he spoke to it, and his arm was flung around the trees, and the animals nestled against his knees, and the birds against his shoulders. Behold, consolation had come into the world. For through the Helper things were set free, and they looked anew and took hold of each other. They felt through the Helper; they saw each other in His eyes and touched each other through His hands. And as the things touched each other, there was no longer an abyss, but a lighted expanse of seeing and embracing, and all was within it.

These were the three first days, then three others followed, and on each one the way before Rabbi Naphtali was broadened. But in the little house on the mountain slope life remained as it was, and the host remained the same in his mode and habits of life. To the Rabbi his world was like the stroke of a pendulum, and the wonder of the distance and the wonder of the near changed without ceasing. He ventured on no further questioning word or look. He lived and waited.

Then the Sabbath evening arrived. In simple and humble words the host gave his greeting to the Heavenly Bride; he observed the meal faithfully after the manner of pious unlearned men. Rabbi Naphtali from time to time looked at him, expecting some salvation, he knew not what. But nothing happened



and he still waited. The host had blessed the table, and he still waited. The host then stretched out his hand to his guest and wished him peace for the night and for all the days to come.

In the night Rabbi Naphtali could not sleep. All his yearnings during the day rushed like a great torrent over him, and to him it seemed as though here and now the wonder of the far and the wonder of the near must flow together.

In the middle of the night the command came to him without word or apparition. He stood up and went. He was already in the other room and saw.

And this is what he saw: The room was filled with flames as high as a man. They rose up dull and murky, as though they were feeding on something heavy and mysterious. No noise and no smoke accompanied the burning. Every article remained unconsumed. But the Master stood with lifted brow and closed eyes in the midst of the flames.

And the Rabbi further saw: That there was a division in the fire, and the light was as a roof over the flames. And the light was double. Below it was bluish and belonged to the fire, but the upper light was white and unmoved, and it spread to the walls over the Master's head. And the blue light was the throne of the white one, and the white rested on it as on a throne. And the colours of the blue light changed incessantly, at times to black, and at times to a wave of crimson. But the white one above never changed, but remained always white, and the blue light was quite embedded in the fire, and the food of the fire was its food. The white light that

rested on it consumed nothing and had nothing in common with the flames.

And the Rabbi saw: The Master's head completely in the white light, and the flames rose up round his body. But those of the flames which rose up turned into light, and thus from time to time the light increased. And the Rabbi saw: All fire had become light. And the blue light began to force its way into the white, but as each wave pressed through, it became white and changeless. And the Rabbi saw that the Master stood completely in the white light. But over his head there rested a hidden light, colourless and invisible, revealed only as a secret mystery to the beholder.

And the Rabbi fell down, for he recognized the man and the goal of the six days. When the morning came they celebrated the holy Sabbath together.

## THE SAINTS AND REVENGE

WHEN the town of Pawlitch fell under the power of Bilbul (Confusion) the false faith triumphed, and the Jews fled far away from the places round about in order to escape from destruction. But several of the pious old men would not be persuaded to go from thence. They said in their souls: "This foreign people is like a dammed-up sluice. In order to taste their power they wish to strike us, but for how long have we not been a dammed-up sluice? And we have not been able to serve God as we would desire. From our birth onwards we have given but a desecrated service to God. For the way here is narrow and close, and we have no space where we can rejoice in the Lord, and we breathe an air that is not the Lord's. In other days the Mazza (Passover Bread) used to be the work of our fields, and in our fields we lived and served God by the work of our hands. But now the Mazza comes to us out of a strange and enemy land. Once the Etag (Apple of Paradise) was the delight of our garden, and the pulse of our joy was in our garden; in it we served God. But now the Etag reaches us as a guest from a foreign land which we cannot see, and the roots of our prayer have remained in this distant land. Now we say the words, but they have no roots, and how can they grow upwards to God? It is not vouchsafed to us

to serve God with our lives, so we will serve Him with our deaths, and we will persevere in the consecration of His Name." Thus they spoke, and allowed themselves to be taken prisoners. And they awaited joyfully the hour of their death. But there was one who did not remain with them, this was the Rabbi of Karitshow. In his young days he had begun a book, in which was told how to serve God with one's life. He had led a strict and severe life, and had put all his strength and desire into the book. Whenever he dreamed or wished for anything, he took it in his hand as a stone, and piled it upon his other dreams and wishes so that his building might grow upwards towards God.

And so one part of his book was slowly added to the other. All was planned in it, so that it seemed an ascent from the lowest grade of service to the highest, and as often as he began to tell of a new grade, the Rabbi prepared his soul in great fervour, and lived all day in retirement till he went to his chamber to write. There he sat and did his work, and none durst call him to remind him of his food or his drink or his sleep. And he spoke of his book to no one. When Bilbul came to the town, the Rabbi discoursed with his soul, and in the quiet chamber there was a great discussion. And the book lay on the table, but he did not look at it. It had now reached the topmost grade, though, so far, he had not begun to write about it. At last his glance fell on the book, and he prepared to flee to Wallachia.

When on his way the Rabbi came to Mesbiz. Baalshem told him to stay with him till he should

let him depart. And he stayed there. Baalshem said to him: "The saints will be saved," and repeated this many times. But on the evening before the Sabbath, a letter came to the Rabbi, and it told him how the saints had been punished with all manner of death penalties, and how they had passed away in great joy for the sake of the consecration of the Name.

When Baalshem read the letter he was about to say the afternoon prayer; he trembled, and whoever saw him trembled also. And one said to another: "As soon as the hour comes when he receives the Sabbath, joy will certainly return to him. For whatsoever has happened to him, he has never failed to receive the Sabbath with joy." But the hour came, and Baalshem trembled greatly as he received the Sabbath, and he held the goblet with a shaking hand. And he went at once to his bed-chamber and lay on the earth, his face on the ground and his arms outstretched, and he lay there for a long time. As the household and the guests were waiting for him, his wife came into the room and said: "The lights will soon go out." He said:

"Let the lights go out, and send the guests home." So they went to their homes, and he lay for long on the earth.

Then the Rabbi could bear it no longer, for his heart burnt within him. He went to Baalshem's room and listened, but all was quiet. He went to the door and looked through a chink into the darkness. So he stood till midnight. Then there appeared a great light in the room, and Baalshem called:

"Blessed art thou who comest, Rabbi Akiba." And he greeted each of the saints by name, and called: "Blessed be he who comes." And thus he spoke to them: "I charge you to take revenge on our adversaries, on the senator who condemned you to torture and on the servants whose hands were ready to torture you, on the people who rejoiced at your suffering." Then a chorus sounded as with one voice out of the gloom: "We beseech thee not to let those words escape thy lips again." But he repeated: "I charge you," and again the saints said: "We met with our death willingly." But Baalshem stood like a red flame in the night and cried: "For the blows and the stabs, for the slow murder, for the humiliation suffered at their hands, and the kicking of their feet, for the humbling and degradation, for the scoffing and the mocking, for the servitude of centuries, and for the misery of our wretched existence, take revenge."

Then there was hesitation and trembling in the chorus of voices as they said: "We beseech thee not to let the fateful words pass thy lips a third time, for know that this evening thou hast troubled the Sabbath of the world. There was a great confusion and we knew not what it was, and we mounted to a higher sphere, and still the confusion was there, and we knew not what it meant. And when we ascended to a still higher sphere, we were told: 'Go down quickly and dry the tears of Rabbi Israel Baalshem.' We tell you this that you should know that all the pains a man suffers in his life are as naught as compared to the pains that we have suffered for the consecration of His Name, blessed be He.

“The evil desire overtook us, and strove to gain mastery over our minds, and we pushed it away with both hands. But it succeeded in touching, with the tip of its finger, one thought in us, and it left its mark upon this thought. For the sake of this it was ordained that we should come for an instant into the depths of Hinnom (Hell), so that we should suffer for a moment the misery of the world, and all the pains which we had endured were wiped out and became as naught beside this pain. And when we came back to the Garden of Eden, we said: ‘We will take revenge for the servitude of the centuries, for the misery of hard living, which has given power to the evil desire to touch our thoughts. For the place where we have lived, for the air which we have breathed, for our lives whose service to God has been troubled and desecrated, we will take revenge.’ Then we were answered: ‘If you desire to take revenge, you must enter new bodies and go back to the earth, and yet again you must live the life of a man on earth.’ We then bethought ourselves, and said: ‘We praise the Lord, blessed be He, and thank Him for the sanctification of His Name, and that we have for a moment suffered fearful torment in the depths of Hinnom. But to-day, if we should return to the earth, where there is no place for us to praise the Lord, and where we should breathe an air that is not the Lord’s, it might happen that we should become more wicked, and that the might of the Evil One would be exalted. We do not wish to return.’ Thus we spoke, and we beg of thee that thou wilt not let the words of destiny pass thy lips for a third

time." Then Baalshem was silent, the light faded from the room, and darkness filled it again. But Baalshem lay on the floor like a red flame.

The Rabbi of Karitshow never finished his book. Yea, no man knows what became of it.



## THE HEAVENLY JOURNEY

IN the daytime he serves the creatures of the earth. Messengers come to him carried on the winds, entreating heralds mount out of the earth. The voice of suffering, merged in a single stream, reaches him from the mouth of all living things. He gives unceasingly his gift of deep consolation, and with the touch of his finger he heals the wounds of the world. In the daytime he serves all creatures, but at evening-tide his soul is set free. It does not crave for rest with the tired disciples. Like two handcuffs it throws away place and duration, and breaks away from all bounds. It pushes the earth away with its foot, it essays a flight, and the heavens receive it in its new-found freedom.

There is no place and duration, only the way and Eternity. Every night the soul goes farther on its way and deeper into Eternity. But a night comes when a wall of the world stands before the soul, and blocks its steps and its sight. And there is no limit to the obstruction, any more than there is to the flight. The way dies away. A dark finger has extinguished the light of all the stars, and the glow of the heavens. A wall without end stretches across the dead way out into the night. The wall has a face, monstrous and shadowy, but it seems to the soul closer than its own eye. And the soul knows it, for

it is the visage of the life, which at evening it had left behind it, and to which at morning it will return, as to a bed made ready for it. But a sound rises from the other side of the wall, a great voice in the wilderness. It is as though the dead way stood beyond it and spoke, and the hidden voice says:

“Soul, yearning soul, soul of power and of dream! Soul that would preserve, and yet lose itself! Soul that desires everything, duration and Eternity, meaning and mystery, at once; here is the boundary, here is the altar of the world. No life goes beyond here; if it did it would sacrifice itself. For this place is named, the choice of God.

“Up to here this and that hold good. But here is the beginning of Unity.

“Soul! which has come thus far, choose quietude or power. Depart from this earthly body and I open before you. Or turn in your flight. For he who has once touched me turns not again.” The voice sinks, and again there is nothing before the soul but a dark, dumb wall.

The soul lifts up its brow. It waits an instant as though it were listening to the words that have sounded, then it gives its answer:

“I depart from——”

On the earth at this moment a woman is bending over a bed, in which there is lying the body of a man. She looks, she touches his pale eyelids, then she shrieks out:

“Israel!”

The cry goes straight up to heaven. It is swifter than the spirit of the stars, quicker than the angels of

space. Before the moment is over it stands at the end of the way which the soul after many nights has reached, and it lays its light hand on his shoulder. The soul stops in the midst of what it was saying, and looks behind it. Then it says no more. It puts its arm round the neck of the messenger and turns in its flight.

This was the Master's last pilgrimage in heaven.

## JERUSALEM

At times Baalshem heard voices calling to him in the night, and his hearing was keen and awake, though sleep lay heavy upon his senses. He could then clearly distinguish the sound, which came to him as though from an immeasurable distance; it reached him from the mouth of many primeval things in their pilgrimage, and a single note of immense woe surrounded his couch. The sound reached his heart and woke it up; but it came to him from past ages, and his heart could not understand the meaning of its language, he was only overwhelmed by a sense of the distress, far away in the distance, which was causing it. But the sound shattered him day and night from this time forward. One night, however, the voices came quite near to the Master's ear, trembling from the weariness of their long pilgrimage. He recognized them and whence they came, and he was aware of one that till now had been foreign to him, and which now spoke to him out of the shame of its ruin. It was the ancient vineyard, now an arid waste, which the flocks of alien, wandering tribes trampled on year by year with their hated hoofs. Its walls were buried, its ore was scattered beneath the weight of countless rocks, and in the place of its gleaming forests there was but a stony slope, and its spring of water was dried up.

And the voice spoke to Baalshem: "Come, come, and tarry not. You are the one whom we await,

whose breath shall lift the stones from our graves, as the wind of spring lifts the down that falls from a bird's nest. The stream will flow, the forest will grow, the vine will bear fruit, and the rock will be clothed. Come and lay your hand upon us."

From this night onward Baalshem was sure in his soul that he ought to arise and go to the Land. He got up and cried to God: "Give me leave, O Lord, and time. Release me from that to which Thou hast here kept me bound, so that I may go to Thy Land, which calls to me."

But God spoke to him at night, and answered: "Israel, my sentence on thee is that thou shouldst stay in thine own place, and that thou shouldst not arise and go to my Land."

Then Baalshem lay many nights in misery. The voices were in his ear, but the words of the Lord were in his heart. The lamentations of the voices rose as a storm in the air, and there was a commotion as of a great death, as on the day when Jerusalem the splendid fell. Then the longing of the dying earth prevailed over the word of Heaven, and the master prepared to journey to Jerusalem. It was the first night that Baalshem and his scribe and scholar, Zwi, lay down to rest under a strange roof. In that night the voices of affliction turned back to the place whence they had come. And when they returned home a great whisper flew to meet them, the old earth trembled with greeting, and everything that lay buried, benumbed, and deserted, lifted itself up and listened. And the voices cried: "Stand up, ye sleepers and ye who are dumb, prepare, for your deliverer is at hand."

Then the body of the earth trembled, and with a monstrous breath it shook off the sleep of ages. In heartfelt tones everything shouted the call of life, a mighty murmur of joy was in the air, there was light, and a great, mysterious upheaval from the ravines up to the mountain-tops. The buried land blossomed, the dried-up waters flowed, and the sap rose again into the corn and the vine, and the stars rose over the old world in this night of expectation.

Baalshem stepped forward unflinching, but he had lost his brightness and joy. He was quiet and full of thought, and when Rabbi Zwi spoke of the wonderful end of the journey the Master hardly answered at all, save with a stifled sigh. Something weighed upon his heart and grew heavier as he went on his way. This was the voice of God, which his longing had silenced and which was now dumb, but it lingered all the while in his heart and did not fade away. At times it seemed to the Master as though a tender child were within his breast, and at nights there was a sound of lamentation without words, so deep and so passionate that he heard it when he awoke, and was forced to listen to it. And each morning, when he journeyed onward, he carried with him this ever-growing burden.

And so he left town and country behind him, the familiar and the strange. The moon had changed over him many times when, one evening, he came in his wanderings to the coast of that sea that separated him from his goal. But there was neither house nor town to be seen as far as the eye could reach; no sail was on the water; there was only the beach, shimmering

and distant, the water breaking on the sand, and a long, silent night, lit only by the stars. Then they both threw themselves down on the earth, which still breathed forth the warmth of the past day; here they could rest and await the morrow. In the middle of the night, the Master found himself on the waves in a rudderless ship, with only a sail of flaming red and yellow over him. The little ship was tossed hither and thither by a fearful storm, and round about it neither heaven nor earth could be seen, nothing but the storm-tossed waters on all sides, and the wind howling above. Baalshem gazed around him, but there was nothing but the deadly solitude of the waters. Then he searched within himself; but all had faded from him, all wisdom and all mastery. Then he felt a desolation greater than the depth of the ocean, and his soul felt as empty as the cast-off rind of a fruit. He was overcome by great weeping. He threw himself beside his companion till it should all pass away. But while he lay for long, a miserable, deaf thing, a voice came to him, first quite softly, gently, and mysteriously; but gradually the voice rose, and the raging of the sea was swallowed up in its sound as a mere whisper. And the Master drank in the voice of God.

In the morning twilight Baalshem and Rabbi Zwi rose from the sand. Hair, face, and raiment were wet, as with those whom the sea throws up on its shores. They did not speak, each avoided the other's eye, and they turned, and without a word walked back along the path by which they had come the night before. When they had travelled several hours, and

the sun had risen high and had dried their garments, by chance the Rabbi looked at his Master, and was aware of the old holy light on his countenance.

In the night in which Baalshem had fought with the loneliness of the waters and with the loneliness of his own soul, the land which had called to him lay awaiting him. The voices of those awoken from the grave spoke from out of the earth, and asked of the voices of the air: "What do you hear?" Then the sisters of the air answered and said: "A storm is raging, and he who would deliver us struggles on the angry waters."

Some time passed, and again the voices of the earth asked: "Does he draw near to the land?" And the answer came: "The word is upon him." Again time passed, and once more came the question: "What do you hear?" Like the sound of wings tired to death came the answer: "We hear in the distance the sound of his steps, and he is turning back again." On that the old world opened its mouth and answered: "Then I will lay me down and die." It hid its face and shut its eyes, and everything turned back to the place of its rest and prepared for death. A silence spread over the land, and in the silence was grief and in the grief was death.

But the silence was broken by a living cry which shattered it. The cry encircled the land, and said to it: "You will not die, my friend. Earth of the Lord, you will grow and will live, and find no quarrel with him whom you have called. For he is born as one who shall live again and shall return, and the Lord's hand is upon his roots, that He may bring him back in His own time."



## SAUL AND DAVID

Soon after Baalshem had returned from his fruitless journey, the people began to collect around him to gain their salvation from his blessed hands and his wise mouth. All their souls seemed to beat in unison as they sat together at his table; thus to each of them the Master's word appeared as a secret, intended for his ear and no other. About this time Baalshem occasionally used to come to a standstill while he was speaking, and grow pale. For a long while he would remain speechless and absent-minded among his friends, and with an undecided expression in his eyes.

The faithful would then gradually become silent, and wait till the Master's mind came back to him. When, after a time, this took place, the saint appeared very exhausted, as if a secret power had sapped his intelligence till it was almost dried up. He did, indeed, give them a kindly greeting, but after doing so he would rise directly, and go to his room and shut himself up for some hours.

The scholars often spoke to one another about these strange happenings; but, however much they tried, they never discovered the meaning of this odd behaviour. Then the merry Rabbi Wolf, who would never admit of any fear, but always felt secure in his

Master's love, agreed to approach him on this subject, and he received an explanation. So much we know of what took place then. But the later events have been explained by the man who was concerned in them.

In the years which Baalshem spent in the town of Kossow there was a Rabbi who was at enmity with the Exalted One, and in his gloomy and powerful mind this hatred was of long standing, and had its primeval source in the great days of the kings. It was reported that Israel, Eliezer's son, whom we call Baalshem, bore within him, as a trust and heritage for the ages, the soul which had quitted David the king after his youth was spent and passion had gained a hold on him.

But the soul of Saul, the Prince of Dreams, had migrated into the body of the Rabbi of Kossow, so that an inexorable anger, causing every sort of torment, sometimes attacked the Rabbi. It was not native to him, but it lasted for days and days, and was nourished by the life in his veins. At length he tore himself away from it, and sent forth his maddened soul to encounter the saint's soul, like a phantom bird, and to whisper to it that they should measure themselves against one another. And when the saint's soul was silent, then the other rose like a dragon of darkness, and shrieked words of deafening thunder against his hidden adversary. Thus at times Baalshem was suddenly deserted by his soul, when it went forth to fight. But time upon time it tore itself from the throttling grasp, and shot like a pillar of flame straight up to heaven, while the other was extinguished and powerless.

It is true that Rabbi of Kossov never spoke against the Master; but he could not banish the shadow from his countenance when from all mouths he heard the living testimony to the saint. This was not hidden from his adherents, who often suffered at seeing his soul so disfigured, and taunted the Rabbi with stinging words in order to rouse him to an open conflict which should set his heart free from this gnawing secrecy.

"Tell us, sir," they would say: "How is it that all these people gather round this man, and shout his praise, their voices as marvellously transformed as though they were hailing one moved by grace? Is it because no one has come whose spirit is powerful and subtle enough to frustrate his deeds? Go, and measure yourself against him; then shall we and all the world know the inwardness of the truth."

For some time the Rabbi turned a deaf ear to their words, out of an honest respect for himself and his enemy. But as the scholars never ceased from pressing him, gradually they prevailed over him, and he and his followers made ready for the journey to Mesbiz. The Master himself came to meet them as they entered his house. He greeted the Rabbi, who bowed and returned his greeting. It was as though two heroes of olden times welcomed each other. To the disciples they seemed to be bewitched, while they themselves were conscious of nothing but each other. The scholars remained in the hall, but the others went into a room, and to the waiting crowd—when the door closed behind them—it seemed as though it were more than a wooden door which separated them.

They stood eye to eye, and the ancient passions between them, which used to consume their hearts, rose up again: love, bewilderment, hatred. The past years rustled like a field of ripe corn. But now the Rabbi was only moved by anger; he framed many artful speeches and hurled them with cunning intent against Baalshem, to catch him and to overpower him—but they fell to the ground, harmless and powerless. After a while, when they had talked of various things, the spirit of the saint remained as tranquil and secure as a child's. Then the Rabbi asked:

“Is it as thou sayest, Baalshem, that thou knowest every thought of man?”

The Master said: “It is so.”

“Then thou dost know what is in my thoughts at the moment?”

“Thou knowest,” said Baalshem, “that the thoughts of men are not wont to rest, but they circle round and round as do the gulls over the waters. But if thou wilt concentrate thy mind on one thing I will tell thee what it is.”

The Rabbi did as he was told; and Baalshem said:

“Thy thoughts are fixed on the ever-mysterious name of God.”

When the other realized that the saint had seen into his mind he was seized by a fevered bitterness, and cried out:

“This thou couldst have known without any miraculous vision, for I must ever carry within me the name of God, and if thou dost demand that all my thoughts are to be centred on one single thing,

what is left to me but this final one? I think but little of thy gift."

But Baalshem persisted in his gentleness, and said: "Has not God many names? But I only speak to thee of one, the Unnameable."

When, however, he noticed that the Rabbi's features were convulsed in resistance to him, he drew near to him, and unbounded love streamed from his eyes, and he said:

"This is what thou hast thought, Nachman: 'Shall I remain for ever imprisoned in the power of the name? Will this tyrannous Word always rule me? The ages have passed away, yet they rise up again, and the spirit holds me in chains of torment. Whither art thou flown, the last of those days when I trod the land of Benjamin in happiness, my head held high above all the people? Day of the sun, Day of pride, never, never hast thou returned. But thy brother remained, who had followed thee, he remained with me, with the vial of oil and the name of the Lord. He encompasses my neck if I lie down, he cleaves to my bones if I rise from my couch. He has made me drunk with anger, and has fed me with madness.' This, too, is what thou hast thought, Nachman:

"'Shall I remain for ever held in the power of the name? How would it be if I could set myself loose, and were again as I used to be before I came to this town!' But I say to thee, Nachman, my friend, thou, the friend of God: Wilt thou set thy heart free from thy breast, and thy brain from thy head? Look! thou hast understood thyself—Dost

not thou feel thy will burning within God's will? Take in thy hands the burden of the ages—Has it not vanished already? Embrace the day which exorcised thy spirit—Art thou not already redeemed? Rouse thy heart in God, as thy heart is roused within thy breast. Now the day of freedom has returned to thee."

"Thou hast spoken truth, Israel," the Rabbi said. Then he bowed himself and spoke the word of peace, and that hour he departed, and his heart was quieted.

## THE SECOND CIRCLE

### THE PRAYER BOOK

ON the two holy feasts, which are called the Awful Days, that is, a celebration of the New Year and the Day of Atonement, the Rabbi of Dynow, when he stepped before the Ark of the Covenant in order to pray, used to open the great prayer book of the Master Lurya<sup>1</sup> and to put it on the desk in front of him.

But he did not look in it nor touch it, but let it lie large and open in sight of the altar and before the eyes of the community, so that the dark, unfaded black of the letters showed far away against their broad yellow background, and there it stood, spread open in front, like a high priest sacrificing before the altar. Thus it used to happen, and every eye was always forced to look at it; but none of the Chassids dared to speak about it. Once, however, several of them summoned up courage and asked the Rabbi: "If our Lord and Teacher prays out of the Master Lurya's book, why does he not look at one or other of the pages according to the order of the prayers; and if he does not pray out of it, why does it lie before him?"

Then the Rabbi said to them: "I will tell you what happened in the days of the holy Baalshem, blessed be his memory.

<sup>1</sup> A great master of the later Cabbala, 1534-72.

“In a village there lived a tenant with his wife and his little son. The landlord was well disposed to the quiet man, and granted him many favours. Nevertheless the man had some bad years. One bad harvest was followed by a worse and ever a worse, so that his want grew greater and greater till the grey waves closed over his head. He had held his ground against every trouble and privation, but he could not look destitution in the face. He felt his life becoming weaker and weaker, and when his heart at last stood still, it seemed as the dying away of the beat of a clock, which up till then had been so steady and soft that it was unnoticed until it stopped. And as his wife had been with him through bad and good fortune, so she also departed with him. When his grave was made ready she could control herself no longer, she looked at her little son and yet she could not control herself; and so she lay down and persuaded herself that she was not going to her death till she was already there.

The little Nachun was three years old when his parents died. They had come from far away, and no one knew of any relations. Then the landlord took the boy, who pleased him, with his small, white, blossom-like face, gleaming out of his gold-red locks. Soon the child's tender, almost dreamy nature grew more and more dear to him, and he brought him up as one of his own children. So the boy grew there in light and joy, and was instructed in all learning. But he had no knowledge of his parents' race and religion. It is true that his landlord did not make a secret about his parents being Jews, but when he spoke of



them he added: 'But now I have adopted you, and you are my son, and all that is mine is yours.' Nachun understood this well; but that which was told him about his parents seemed to him to belong to the stories which the servants told of forest devils, nixies, and coloured elfin folk. It was only wonderful and incomprehensible that he himself had to do with such a story, and he felt himself bound up with something obscure and distant.

"One day he came by chance to an out-of-the-way room in the house, in which all sorts of rubbish was piled up which his parents had left behind. There were strange things there of which he knew nothing. There was a peculiar white, shapeless mantle with long black stripes. There was a stitched forehead cloth of a splendid yet subdued fashion. There was a mighty, many-branched candlestick of faded splendour. There was a spice-holder whose many branches met in a crown, about which a thin breath of perfume of bygone days seemed to linger. And finally there was a great heavy book bound in dark brown velvet, with beaten silver corners and silver clasps. These were the things which his parents could not give up, not even when in sight of their final misery. And now he stood and looked at these things, and the messengers out of the darkness were nearer to him than ever. Then he took the book into his room, and carried it shyly and carefully, with both arms clasped firmly round it. Then he loosened the clasps and opened it quite gently, and the broad, black letters stared up at him, strange, and yet not strange; they looked at him like a crowd of little comrades,

hovered away from him, flew in and out of each other, and danced away; and then there were no more letters, and the book was like a dark lake from which two eyes looked at him. They were tearless, but full of eternal suffering, and Nachun knew that this was the book out of which his mother had prayed. From that time forth he kept it hidden by day, but each evening he fetched it from its hiding-place, and by the light of the lamp, but better still by the living light of the moon, he gazed at the strange letters, till they joined themselves into rows and at last flowed into a lake from which his mother's eyes looked out.

Then the days of judgment approached, the Days of Grace, the Awful Days. From all the villages the Jews drove down to the town, to stand as a community of people in a single murmur of sound before God, and to bring to Him their guilt with the guilt of thousands, and to let it be consumed in the fire of God. Nachun stood before the house door, and saw the carriages hastening past, too many to count. He saw in them men and women, in holiday dress, and over them all was a spirit of preparedness. All these people seemed to be messengers to him, no longer messengers of darkness, messengers of the sun and of a bright spirit realm, as though they hastened away from him only because he did not call out to them. So he called to one: 'Whither are you going, and what season is this to you?' He was answered:

"We go to meet the day of renewal, the day of the beginning; for in the book of Heaven, our deeds and our deliverance are written down.'

"And we go in a great multitude to speak to God

and to bind our voices in a single prayer.' Then on the Day of Atonement he again saw them crowding to the house of prayer and asked what they were doing, and was told: 'This is the day for which we have hoped and prayed, the Day of Atonement; for then our sins will be redeemed in the light of the Lord, and He will receive His children in the house of His grace.' Then the boy ran to the town and fetched his prayer book, and said:

"'Lord of the world, I know not how to pray, I know not how to speak; but here, O Lord, is the whole prayer book'; and he laid his head on the open book and communed with God. On this day the prayers of the congregation did not go upwards, and were like birds that flutter on the ground with broken wings. The house was full of these prayers, and the air heavy with them, and the minds of those who prayed were sad and discouraged. Then the word of the boy came and carried them into God's bosom.

"But Baalshem saw and was aware of all these things, and he said the prayer in great joy. After the feast he took the boy home with him and taught him the pure truth." Thus said the Rabbi: "I also know not what I should do, nor how I should fulfil the intentions of the holy men and of those who prayed in former times, and from whose mouth come these prayers. Therefore I take the book of the Master Lurya and open it so that it may lie before me in the house of prayer, and I offer it to God with all the will that is in it, and all the fervour and the meaning in it."

## THE JUDGMENT

It once happened, on the fourth day of the week, and at the first hint of evening, for the sun had only just disappeared, that Baalshem left his house to make a journey. He had not spoken of his destination to a soul, neither to a scholar nor a friend, so that the meaning and object of the journey lay hidden in darkness from every one, even from those who accompanied him. He drove a long distance in a short number of hours, for it is known to all that the Master was not, like ourselves, hampered by place and time, neither of which acted as a restraint or obstacle to his will. By midnight the drive had been so rapid that we who were with him could distinguish neither house nor tree on our way. Baalshem stopped at a strange village before the house of a tax-collector and innkeeper, that he might rest there for the remaining hours of the night. It proved that the landlord knew neither Baalshem nor any of his followers, and was very curious, as is common among many of his trade, to know the standing of this guest and for what purpose he had undertaken the journey. While he offered the Master and the others a late meal, and prepared a couch for them, there was questioning and answering. Baalshem gave his host to know that he was a preacher, and that on the evening preceding the next Sabbath a rich and

respected man in Berlin was to be married; and he wished to arrive there in time for the ceremony at which he was to officiate. When the host heard this he was quiet for a time, and debated with himself, before he said: "Sir, you may despise me for being inquisitive, but I know that the town of Berlin is fully a good hundred miles from here. How will you drive this distance in the time that is left to you? Indeed, if you did not spare man or horse, and did not allow yourself to rest at night, you would hardly be able to reach there on the Sabbath after this, but never in time for this Sabbath." Then Baalshem smiled a little, and answered:

"Do not worry yourself about it, friend, I am certain of my horses. They have already done many a good day's work for me before this." Baalshem and his people laid themselves down to rest, but the host was awake on his bed all night, for the unknown man and his affairs seemed to him most extraordinary. There was also in the look of the man something that prevented one from thinking him either a jester or even a fool. As he was considering how to find a suitable excuse for offering to escort the strange preacher, it occurred to him that there was much business which he could transact with advantage in Berlin. So he resolved to talk it over with his guest in the morning. When the Master and his people had risen from their couch, the host went to him and made his suggestion, and Baalshem agreed to it. But he showed no special haste to depart, and looked about the house in a leisurely fashion, and said a prayer with his people, and at last told the host to

prepare a large meal. All of them partook of it, and remained some time in talk, while the host, consumed by inward restlessness and curiosity, ran hither and thither.

When evening came on the Master ordered the carriage to be got ready and the horses to be harnessed. They drove away, and night soon fell upon them. Baalshem sat silent with his people. It all seemed strange and queer to the host, and this journey appeared to him different from any which he had undertaken. There was nothing but darkness. At times it seemed to him as though the carriage rolled through mysterious passages of the earth beneath the ways of men, and then, again, the path which they took seemed so devoid of substance, so buoyant and transparent, that it was as if they were floating through the air. They encountered neither sound, nor man, nor animal, nor habitation. The host could not bring his thoughts to rest; all in and about him seemed to be dissolved into rapid motion.

Suddenly the air around was heavier, and the early dawn rose. He felt again the jolting of the carriage on the ground beneath it; beyond, a dog barked and a cock crowed, and in the dusk a hut could be seen by the roadside. Thus they drove on for a time. The morning was bright, and when the last mists had vanished in the sunshine, the landlord saw a large town lying before him. In less than a quarter of an hour they had reached Berlin.

The Master put up at a modest inn on the outskirts of the town, where the small houses standing in their little gardens seemed to be almost in the country.

Here he sat down in an arbour, with his scholars, for a morning meal. When they had eaten they passed the time in prayer and quiet converse. The landlord who had driven with them remembered the preacher's words, and that he had said that he was travelling to Berlin for the wedding which was to take place to-day of some great man, and he could not understand how Baalshem could remain here so peacefully, instead of joining the guests at the bridegroom's house. Still confused by the events of the night, yet pricked by curiosity over this new problem, he approached the Master. But just when he was about to open his mouth Baalshem looked at him brightly, and the host saw in his face the merry mockery with which the Master smiled good-humouredly at his restless spirit. Then the courage to put his question failed him, and he asked leave to take a turn in the town. He had only been away an hour when he saw that half of the people were standing together, telling each other some news and talking about it. So he went up to them, and asked humbly what could have taken place that made people leave their business and stand about in such excitement. He was informed that, in the household of a rich Jew who should have celebrated his wedding to-day, the bride had suddenly died, though up till midnight she had been joyfully preparing for the ceremony and had been superintending all the arrangements for the festival, and had passed the remainder of the night in placid sleep. Moreover, she had never been ill or weakly, but was a beautiful and strong young creature, known to them all.

The landlord made them show him the bridegroom's house. When he entered it he found the wedding-guests standing about the dead girl in sorrow and consternation; she was lying pale, but not disfigured, on her bed. The doctors must have been still trying their utmost for her, as they were only just taking leave of the master of the house, and declaring, with some embarrassment, that she who was dead must indeed remain dead. The bridegroom stood motionless; sorrow had cast a grey veil of grief over his face. One and another among the guests went up and whispered words of consolation to him, but the man seemed to be stunned, as though he did not hear. Then the landlord ventured to approach him, and recounted what a strange journey from a great distance he had made this night with an unknown preacher. And he thought that a man as miraculous as he, and able to make such a journey as this, would understand many other things which were out of the ordinary; and he advised the master of the house to go and confide his grief to him. The mourner seized his hand and held it fast, and insisted on going to Baalshem's inn. He went to the Master and told him all about the sad event, and asked him to come to the death-bed. Baalshem at once went with him to see the lifeless bride, and looked for long into her silent face. All those around held their peace and waited for his words. But he turned from the sleeper, and said to the women: "Prepare the bride quickly in her burial garments and perform all your customary rites without delay." To the bridegroom he said: "Hire men to prepare a grave for her



also, among those of your house whom you lay to rest in the place of life [the churchyard].”

Then the Master said further: “I am going with you as an escort to the dead. But take the wedding garments and the jewels which she had chosen herself and bring them to the grave.” When all was arranged, they laid the corpse in an open coffin and carried it away. Baalshem walked nearest to the bier, and many people followed, holding their breath. At the grave Baalshem ordered them to lay the coffin with the dead girl in it uncovered, so that her face should be exposed to the heavens and could be seen by all. He said further that no earth was to be thrown over her. He gave instructions to two men to stand by him, and to be ready for his signal. Then he stepped to the open grave, leaned on his staff, and let his eyes rest on the face of the dead. Thus he stood, motionless. Those who looked on noticed that he also seemed to be lifeless, as though his soul had departed from him or that he had dispatched his spirit away to some other place. They all stood in a wide circle around the grave. After a time he nodded to both the men. They went up to the grave, and saw that the rosy flush of life was spreading over the face of the dead, while the breath came and went between her lips.

Baalshem bade them lift her out of the grave. They did so; and she stood upright and looked about her. Then the Master stepped back, and told the bridegroom to let the bride forthwith be decked in her veil in silence, that then he should lead her to the canopy and not remind her by a word of what

had happened. The bridegroom begged the Master to consent to bless the marriage. So they led her, veiled, into the house and under the canopy. But when Baalshem raised his voice and spoke the words of blessing over the couple, the bride tore the veil from her face, looked at him, and cried: "This is the man who has absolved me." Then Baalshem said to her:

"Be silent." The bride was dumb, and before the people were aware, the Master had left the house.

Later, when all the wedding-guests sat at the feast and the shadows of the past events had begun to fade, the bride, of her own accord, embarked on her story.

Her bridegroom had been already married, and sought her as his bride after he had become a widower. His first wife had been her aunt, and had taken her as a little orphan and had looked after her and let her grow up in the house. Then his wife grew hopelessly ill, and knew well that her end was drawing near. Her mind was greatly burdened by the thought that, after she had been dead a short time, her husband, who was still young, could hardly fail to put another in her place. And when she thought it over, she was convinced that it would be the young relative, who was as well versed in the ways of the great house as herself, and on whose charms his eyes would rest every day of his life. And because she had loved her husband dearly, and thought with dread of the shortness of the time she was still to be at his side, she envied the young creature greatly. When she felt her last hours approaching she called them both to

her bedside. They saw that she was dying, and they loved her; and their hearts overflowed with sorrow. Holding their hands, she required a promise from them never to marry each other. This did not seem hard to either of them, and in their grief for the dying woman they gave it willingly. Then the dead woman was carried away, and her place was empty, and even her shadow had faded from the rooms. The living only were still there; life was about them everywhere; and as hourly they looked into each other's eyes, they quickly came to realize that they could not part from one another. Then they broke their vow, and plighted their troth. But on the wedding morning, while the whole house was full of brightness and joy in life, and none remembered the sad days which had been spent there by one now dead, the spirit of the dead woman came back to her haunts demanding that her rights should be vindicated, and seeking to kill the happy new bride. And now, at the bidding of the unknown power, the bride's life departed from her body, which lay there rigid, and her soul fought fiercely for the bridegroom with the soul of the dead wife. While her body was carried to the grave, both their souls appeared before the tribunal. A man's voice above them delivered the law, and they both struggled for a verdict. And the voice gave this sentence: "You who are dead, as you no longer have any portion on this earth, let her alone. For know that the right lies with the living. This man and woman who desired this thing are not to blame. They had to do what they did, not because they wished it, but in order to quiet the necessity of

their souls." And, as the dead woman did not desist from troubling the bride, the voice cried to her: "Leave go of her, do you not see that she *must* go to the wedding. The canopy is waiting." Then the bride awoke to life, let herself be carried from the grave, and clad in her veil, still slightly dazed, she followed the women to the canopy.

"But," she said to the bridegroom and guests, when she had finished her story, "when the preacher said the words of blessing over us, I recognized the voice which had pronounced judgment over me."

## THE FORGOTTEN STORY

WHEN Baalshem came to die, he called Rabbi Simon from among his pupils, and said: "Friend, it is ordained that thou shouldst journey about the earth and find out all the places where the Jews dwell, and that thou shouldst go to their houses and tell them about me." Then Rabbi Simon wondered how he could go about like a pious beggar with no home and possessing nothing, an eternal wanderer and guest at strange hearths. He could not resist saying half aloud to the dying man: "What is the sense of this? I should become restless and fugitive like the poorest pilgrim." But Baalshem comforted him, and said: "Thy road will have an easy end, and thou shalt also find earthly prosperity in it."

After Baalshem died, Rabbi Simon did as he was bid, and his way was easy. He went all over the beautiful earth, and gave his message and felt no fear.

After two and a half years he met an old man from Jerusalem, who told him that in a certain town in Italy there was a rich Jew who bore an astounding love for Baalshem. Then Rabbi Simon thought this would be the right listener, instead of the many foolish ones who were hardly able to take in his words. So he bought a horse and journeyed on,

stopping at many houses and telling the people about Baalshem and his teaching, and they on his departure would bring him gifts which enabled him to continue his journey. As soon as he had come to the town in Italy, he went to a Jew's house and made inquiries about the man who paid such great reverence to Baalshem. The people told him that the Jew about whom he spoke had come to the town some ten years ago, and even then he had brought great riches with him. A few months after his arrival the last of a princely house had died; his palace and all the surrounding property had been bequeathed to a distant relative in Rome, who did not wish to leave his ancestral home, and desired to sell the property. Then the foreign Jew had gone to him, and had put down in pure gold the large sum of purchase-money. And all the Jews of the country were overjoyed that the foreigner should be so splendidly housed among them, for within and around him was a kindly spirit of benediction. He had erected on his property a splendid temple for the community, where his soul was for ever taking its flight to God's feet, and could carry with it to Heaven the souls of the lukewarm and the worldly. On the Sabbath his palace was open to every worthy Jew; the Sabbath tables were spread in the large halls, where the candle light shone on the linen and bright silver; and nowhere since the fall of the Holy City had the Lord's Day been so splendidly celebrated.

At all the Sabbath meals a story of Baalshem was told, and he who had anything to say about the man so rich in God's grace was granted a more than

customary reward, which on the following day the wealthy Jew himself paid him in coin of the realm.

When Rabbi Simon heard this, he sent to the great man, announcing that a scholar and servant of the saint had arrived in the town. The steward fetched him, and with many signs of honour, took him to the castle, where fine and comfortable rooms were allotted to him. Meanwhile the news had spread among the Jews in the town, and even in the surrounding country, that one of Baalshem's scholars had arrived. On the Sabbath all those who were curious to hear thronged to the hospitable man's table in greater numbers than ever. When the songs of the first Sabbath meal had been solemnly and fervently chanted in the pillared hall, the great man in a soft voice asked the Rabbi, for the comfort of their souls, if he considered him and those of his house worthy to listen, to tell them of the great Master.

Rabbi Simon rose from his seat and leaned against the carved chair back. He opened his mouth, to give, in reverent words, a picture of his miraculous Master. He was accustomed to the tales coming of themselves from his lips, and at each thought of the Master his heart was wont to overflow like a vessel of balsam. But as he waited for the words to come from his mouth, suddenly he felt cold as ice, the words froze on his lips, he stared and grew pale; then a burning wave came over him, he grew hot and reddened, and all consciousness left him. As through a veil, he saw the eyes of many watching his lips in eager expectation, but when he opened his mouth the sounds died away. The dumb questioning of all

those faces, turned so inexorably upon him, hurt him. With all his power he tried to picture to himself his dead master, and thought of the town in which he lived, its houses, walls, and gardens, and all the small things which he knew so well, but the thoughts would not form into a picture and his heart remained empty. He felt that all the people thought him an impostor, except his host, who kindly said: "We will wait till to-morrow." On the next day he again forgot, and even on the third day he still forgot, and the guests scorned him; but he now felt that this must be happening for some wonderful purpose, and therefore he was not ashamed. The Sabbath passed, and Rabbi Simon lay in tears all night, waiting for the image of Baalshem to come back to him. But his mind was arid. When he appeared for the Sabbath meal, all turned away from him and looked across him, as though the space where he stood was idle air. Then the host said again: "Perhaps you can tell us a tale now." Then Rabbi Simon spoke to him, and assured him that this night of forgetfulness in which his soul was sunk was no vain thing, but that it must certainly depend on the will of some power above, whose purpose was full of deep meaning.

The rich man answered: "Let us wait till the third meal"; and Rabbi Simon saw a humble smile on his face. But at the third meal his memory did not return, and he fell into deep distress. The guests had become hardened against him, for they thought that he had wished to mock them with false words. But he armed himself with love, and bore all with a trusting heart, for now he felt assured that all had



happened to fulfil some wonderful purpose. The Sabbath passed; it was all the same, no words came to his lips, and the host sadly let him go, but gave him rich gifts to help him on his further journeys. He also gave him a comfortable travelling carriage, and servants to take him across the border, after which it would be easier for him to manage his travelling. Rabbi Simon took his seat in the carriage, and the coachman was about to drive off, when it seemed to him as though he were pierced by a beam of white-hot lightning, and when his senses returned there rose before him, clear as a picture, a story of the holy Baalshem full of power. For a time he gave himself up to the violent rapture of this moment of grace, and then he bade the coachman, who had already by several streets passed the palace, to turn back, and to send a servant to its master to let him know that Rabbi Simon had returned, as he had called to mind a splendid story of the saint. He was received by the great Jew, but the trembling expectation in his demeanour escaped Rabbi Simon, who could think of nothing but his story. His host said: "I beg of you to sit down and tell me all that you remember of what happened."

Rabbi Simon then told him what follows:

"It happened once in the early spring, just before the day when the Christians celebrate their Easter, that the holy Baalshem spent all the Sabbath in sadness.

"He went about the house in deep melancholy, as though his soul had deserted him, and had been drawn away to fight in some dangerous battle, and he seemed to be awaiting its return in trembling and

doubt. After the third meal he told them to harness his horses. His sadness and anxiety had hung like a dark and threatening thundercloud over all his people. It was as though they would all be consumed by inward weeping. But now they breathed more freely after his command to prepare for a journey, for they knew that on his Sabbath drive through the country all the evil which had accumulated was wont to be cleared away. This night there were only three of his followers whom he allowed to accompany him, and I was one of them. We drove all night and, as so often happened, we knew nothing about the goal of the journey. At daybreak, when we arrived at a large town, the horses slackened their pace, and suddenly stopped, as though pulled up by a powerful jerk, before the door of a gloomy house, one side of which looked on a narrow lane, while the other looked towards a large square. The gates were locked and the shutters closed, and the whole lane was silent and deserted. The Master told me to get down and knock. I did so, and for some time did so in vain; finally, my desire for rest made me knock with such force that the grey street of houses resounded with my blows. Then a small door in one of the mighty double portals was opened from the inside. An old woman, with looks distraught and starting eyes, stood before us. She gazed at us for a time, and then suddenly screamed: 'What are you doing that just to-day you must come here? Do you not know that you are on the road to the slaughter-house?' I looked at her without understanding, for it seemed to me that we had come across a mad-

woman. She pulled us into the doorway, and said: 'Now I see that you are strangers and are unacquainted with the ways of our town. For some years there has been a Christian bishop here, a strange, unbending man, who has had a blood feud against the Jews. He has now given a command that all the Jews who are in the streets on Easter Day are to be seized and murdered, out of revenge for their Messiah; therefore on these days we take care to hide ourselves in the darkest depths of our houses. They know this well, and now they want to draw lots for those on whom the penalty must fall.' She shrieked, pushing us back to the carriage. 'They will spare you, as you are strangers. You know not the people of this town; they are raging beasts when their blood is roused. Hasten, hasten, and seek the nearest place and wait till this unhappy day is over, and then return and do your business.' So cried the old woman, throwing up her hands. The hearts of us three who had accompanied the Master grew dark. But Baalshem paid no heed and pushed her aside, and told us to open the gates and to put the carriage and horses in the stables, and to conceal the necessaries which we had brought with us in the house. He stood quietly, looking to see that his commands were obeyed. Then he told us to shut the gate and doors again, and we found ourselves in the large, dark vestibule. The Master beckoned to us, and mounted a short, carved, wooden staircase. He opened a door, and we found ourselves in a stately room, slightly raised above the ground. I stood for some time before I could see in the room, for though it was now

daylight outside the room was in darkness, the shutters were closed, and the heavy curtains were drawn. After looking about I became aware of many people in hiding in the room. They were cowering without a sound in the corners in the mere remembrance of their pain and anxiety; and the whole household might well have been assembled there. Meanwhile the old woman had followed us from the hall, opposing Baalshem with violence when he forced his way in, and charging him with bringing misfortune on the house. He did not answer her, but with long steps strode through the room, up to a window which looked into the open square. He carelessly stretched out his hand, pulled back the curtain, opened the window and the wooden shutters behind it, and stood with his whole figure in the wooden frame. The old woman did not dare to speak, but with despairing gestures she pressed the Master to shut the window and to draw back from it. But he paid no attention to her, and she at length sank down with the others on the floor. The open window did not overlook the narrow lane by which we had entered, but had a good view over the large square.

"In the square I saw a church of fine white stone, from which rose two slender towers. Just opposite our window a pulpit, wonderful to see, had been placed; it was like the open chalice of a flower, was magnificently decorated, with sculpture in high relief, and its sides were ornamented with gold. Some thirty steps led up to it. Few people only had been about when the Master had thrown open the window, but a considerable number now stood around the

pulpit. The sound of many bells overhead vibrated through the room, and outside a movement could be seen among the people, a pushing and crowding, and then a broad, bright path was made in the dark crowd, and, in a magnificent procession, with banners, candles, and clouds of incense, the bishop appeared under a silver baldaquin. All were still and waited; but the bishop in his shining, brocaded robes mounted the steps to the pulpit, where he sank to prepare seemingly in silent prayer for his sermon. All the multitude knelt without a sound. But the Master, unmoved, stood in the open window and looked out. Then, in this utter silence, he said with a clear voice: 'Simon, go and say to the bishop: "Israel, the son of Eliezer, is here and calls to you."' Then all in the room abused Baalshem as a traitor, who would deliver them to a murderer; but he remained calm and repeated his command to me, and I departed; and I went through the multitude, and no one touched me, and I said in Hebrew: 'Baalshem is now in that house over there. He wishes you to be told to come to him.' And the bishop answered in Hebrew: 'I know of his presence. Tell your Master that I will come directly after the end of the sermon.' Meanwhile, the people in the room had been peering through the shutters, and when they saw that I was unharmed, they became aware that Baalshem must be a great man, and they clustered round him and questioned him; but he only looked at me as though he and I were alone together, and I gave him the message. He said: 'Go again to the pulpit, and say to the bishop: "Be not foolish, come at once; for

you are called and invited by the man Israel, son of Eliezer." I did his behest. The bishop grew pale, but turned to the people and said: 'Have patience. I will soon return.' And in his gold and his purple he followed me to the house. He went to the holy Baalshem, and they repaired to a private room and talked for two hours; and when Baalshem came out, alone, a light shone in his eyes; he told us to harness the horses and to depart. I do not know what took place between the bishop and our Master; even to this day I do not know the name of the town, for Baalshem never told me what it was, then or later. I only know that when he came to us out of that closed room, some great deed had been performed by the saint; for the light of the mighty spirit of the Lord shone upon his brow, and he looked like one of the angels of the heavenly hosts.

"I omitted making any inquiries about what happened, as the matter went absolutely out of my mind on our return. It is only now, just as I was leaving your house, that I have remembered it."

The rich man stood up, and tears streamed from his eyes, and, amidst words of praise, he said: "Blessed be thy coming and blessed be each of thy words. I will tell thee what remained dark to thee concerning this event.

"I was that bishop. I was a Jew filled with true wisdom and the Holy Spirit, but the spirit of the evil power came over me, and I fell away from belief. But my soul remained strong, and full of fire, and I soon gained ascendancy among the believers of the

new faith, and attained to great honour among them, and became a bishop.

"I was filled with hatred against my own belief, and this grew every day. But in the nights, when I was defenceless, the shame of my apostasy came upon me. In the day I took revenge for the unrest of my nights, and persecuted my people. But now it was that my Jewish ancestors showed themselves as a race proud of their faith and full of honour, who had shown great service to their Lord, and many a one of whom had sealed the covenant with his heart's blood. My evil deed had destroyed their peace in eternity; they had assembled together and had sought out Baalshem, and had begged of him to take pity on my fallen soul and to work for my redemption.

"Then the saint came to me in my dreams, and struggled with the evil spirit which possessed me; they were both powerful fighters, and I was tossed to and fro between them as in a fiery storm. But on the Sabbath of the Jews which preceded the Christian Easter, the spirit of the holy day and night was on my side, and it had already conquered my will during the night; and I had resolved to flee next morning and leave all and turn back to the people of my childhood.

"But with the day doubt arose within me, and when the bells rang for me, and the waiting multitude surrounded the church, and the servant placed the golden robes on my shoulders, I was not able to sacrifice all my power over the minds of men, and I stepped up to the pulpit.

"Then the saint sent you to call me. But I wished

first to preach my sermon, for I thought that I should strengthen my will through my own words and through the inflamed minds of those around me. And then I thought I should be able to persist in my pride against the Master. But when you came again my resistance fled, and I followed like a child who, in the twilight, comes in answer to his mother's call.

"The Master strove with my soul and won it. Before the king and all the people I acknowledged my faults, and went away and left the country. I came here and spent my days in purifying my soul and waiting for the godlike words of release. For Baalshem had told me: 'If any one comes to you from a strange land and tells you your story, it signifies that you have obtained your release from the chains of your actions.' At first, when you forgot what you had to say, I thought that my atonement was incomplete; but now that you have remembered, I know that I am blessed. But you, my friend, need wander no longer, and all that I have is yours."



## THE SOUL THAT DESCENDED TO EARTH

AMONG the many noble and childless women who came with their prayers and lamentations to Baalshem, there was one who returned regularly at short intervals, in order to weep at his feet, and to touch his heart by the void in her life. There were no loud laments and no violent outbursts of prayer from her. She appeared and vanished with few words, but with her eyes aflame. She had been a lovable creature, brimming over with the freshness of youth, when Baalshem had first seen her. But in the years when, in her impressive silence, she had so often returned, her face had become wan and haggard, as though everything within her had been burnt up and withered by her great longing, and by her long journeys from her far-away home.

Once, when she again reverentially besought him by only bending her small head before him, her dark eyes wet with silent tears, he laid his hand on her head thinking deeply, his eyes looked into the far distance like one who awakens a long row of vanished pictures out of past times, with a deep sigh he looked down and said mildly:

“Woman, go home; thou wilt in a year’s time bear the son for whom thy soul yearns.”

The woman went away. During the space of seven

years she was not seen by the Master. Then he found her again one day among the crowd of those who chose him as an advocate for their souls; she was leading a splendid boy by the hand.

"Master," she said, "look at this boy who was born to me according to your word. I bring him to you, for know that his nature causes me to tremble; it does not seem to be born from me as his body is."

Balshem looked at the child, and to him it seemed as though he had never seen anything so charming and so proud as this little creature in his poor little clothes. The boy looked up, but by no means shyly or confidingly as a child; but he let his eyes gaze earnestly into the Master's. In his own eyes there was either a question or a seeking for something. Balshem lifted the boy high up in his arms, and asked the woman:

"How canst thou conquer thy soul enough to let him leave thee when to have him thou hast wrestled with thy soul all the days of thy life?"

The woman answered: "Sir, when the boy opened his eyes and looked at me for the first time, with a strange, far-away gaze, my poor heart contracted with wonder, as though he was not of my blood. With his far-away eyes he looked beyond our little house and all our doings, and not like a child of our own, though he was quiet and good and gave me little trouble over his bodily needs; but all the time I felt anxious, for in his little face there was ever a waiting and a listening and a strangeness in his nature, and before long the courage to bring up the child failed us, for it seemed to us that he who should lead him

should see farther than we poor people. Therefore I offer him to you."

Baalshem nodded silently and let the woman go, but he kept the boy in his household. He allowed him to grow next his heart, and he fed his soul with the holy fire of his nature. The boy clung to his teacher with a fidelity as ardent as it was devoted; no pleasure was so blessed to him as to breathe the air of the same room as his Master, and to suck in every word of his speech. The child was endowed with such high grace that he won favour from all hearts. Many of the rich would willingly have done honour to the boy in their own house, by betrothing a daughter to him, and some of them spoke to this purpose to the Master. But he barely listened to them, and refused them with a slight smile, as one does about something impossible. And so it was the opinion of every one that no connection seemed to him splendid enough for his ward. And veneration for their leader made them forget their wishes.

One day Baalshem told one of his faithful to come to him; he desired him to seek out a man whose name he gave, and bade him deliver a missive to this man, which he put into his hands. The messenger did as he was bid, and after a journey of two weeks reached the place named, and inquired after the man among the houses of the pious. Only it proved that no one knew the name of the man. Day after day passed by, but no information was forthcoming, and the man's courage failed and shame fell upon him. One day he met an elderly, bent, and poor Jew, who offered fresh garden fruit for sale. When he casually

asked him his name it was obvious that he was the man for whom Baalshem's missive was intended. The messenger handed him the letter, though it seemed to him extraordinary that the saint could have anything of importance to communicate to this mean and foolish-looking man. But it was soon evident that the dealer did not know how to read, so the messenger opened the letter and read it to him. It was written there that the Master demanded the poor man's third daughter as a wife for his ward; the name and age were stated, and it was added that he himself would be willing out of his own means to provide for the dowry and wedding, and further, that he would come to the assistance of the father if his need were pressing.

"Are you satisfied?" asked the messenger of the old man.

"Oh, sir," he said, and smiled all over his careworn face, "how could I not be satisfied? Have I not a houseful of daughters who run barefoot and scrimp among each other for their scanty bits of food? But this one whom the exalted one has desired as a wife for his boy is far too distinguished for my poverty: she goes and does her day's work as though she wandered in a dream, and expresses herself so that I, old simpleton, hardly understand what she says."

The next day they set off to go to Baalshem: the messenger, and the old Jew with his child. When they arrived at the Master's house he received them both warmly, and was so kind to both, that they revived like plants in the morning light. The house was soon prepared for the wedding, and Baalshem

himself said the blessing over the two young people. When the meal came to an end, and all sat round the bare tables, happy and festive of heart, the saint turned towards his neighbour, and casually, in a soft voice, began to tell him a story. Yet by his manner, and the earnestness of his wonderful eyes, each one guessed that the matter of which he began to speak arose out of the deep springs of his vision, and touched on the significance of this holy day. So they listened in silence and left off all that they were doing; their souls as well as their bodies turned towards the Master. The bridal pair held each other's hands and listened.

This is what the Master said:

"In a distant country of wide extent there once ruled a king; for many years he was very sad, for his wife had borne him no child.

"He once spoke to a magician about this shadow over his life. The wise man listened thoughtfully, smiled mysteriously, and then said:

"My Lord, there is that which can be forced from the powers above by the vehement longing of a man's soul. But it may be that you are tired by the violence of your grief, so wait a little and I will help you to make your invocation. Only follow my advice, and now let the people of the country know that you decree to the Jews who dwell among them, that they are sentenced to forget their faith and their customs, and that they are not to practise them on pain of death, until Heaven has granted you a son to be heir to your glorious kingdom."

"Although the king had no idea for what reason

the man gave this order, and how it all had to do with the heir of his body whom he so longed to have, he agreed directly to the proposal and let the news of it be spread throughout all his land. Then the heart of each Jew was afraid, and terror and grief crept into their souls. As the Jews were devoted to their religion they did not fall away from it, but in dark nights and in secret dungeons and armed communities served it as faithfully as ever.

“And so it came to pass that the souls who were held in the cruel fangs of the evil beast, Anxiety, sent up in the nights, when none denied them their God, their united prayers, strong as a whirlpool, that the Lord might grant the king a child, that they might be delivered from the disgrace of servitude.

The persistence of the throng was so ardent that Heaven was moved, and the saintly souls who exist ever steadfast in the Joy of God trembled again with the people in the mortal cry of lamentation. But the spirit of the Most High was untouched. Then one of the transfigured souls was so touched by compassion that it put shame aside, and appeared before the throne of the Eternal and prayed: ‘Thou whom I name not, let me return again to the earth from which thou hast delivered me, so that I may be born as a son to the king, and set the Jewish people free by dwelling in mankind.’ The Lord granted this, and the son whom he desired was born to the king.

“But in his perfect happiness the king forgot the Jews; and he neglected to give the word which would put an end to their misery. And there was none in the land to be their mediator.

“The child was beautiful beyond measure and magically pure of soul, and graced from his earliest years with a thoughtful earnestness and wisdom. Later, when he became a youth, it was shown that the lessons of his teachers must pale as false metal in the pure light of his spirit, so that it was a real difficulty for the king to appoint a guide for his son. Just about this time there was a great stir in the country over an old stranger who had only recently come to the capital, and about whose origin there was much surmise but no knowledge. Although the grey-headed man sought no one, and avoided the streets and the market, men told each other much concerning his knowledge, and the power of his proud but kindly soul, which if need called for it made of him a counsellor and a helper. They also told much of his strange habits, which differed entirely from those of that country and that time. The end of all this was that the people suspected him of dealings with the higher powers, and men paid great reverence to him. The king was also told of him, and so it came that he viewed him in the light of teacher to his only son.

“The wise man was willing to comply with the king's wish on one condition.

“‘Know,’ he said, ‘there are some hours when I wish to be apart from all living beings. Therefore, if I am to dwell in your house, you must give orders that during the hours when I have shut up my rooms no one is to enter, either by force or by cunning.’

“The king granted this request, and gave all his household as well as his son to know that, according

to his will, the wise man's wish was to be observed as they valued their lives.

"The king's son conceived a great love for the wise man, and was more obedient to him than to his own father. It gave him bitter pain when the teacher told him at times to leave him, and after the way of youth he urged the man to suffer him about him at those mysterious times, but without ever gaining his consent. Then he hid himself one day in the corner of the room which led to a garret, and waited there with beating pulse. When the Master had bolted the door, and all after a time was still, the king's son walked out and found his teacher standing before a desk, on which was an old book; he was dressed in a praying-scarf and crowned with a phylactery. The old man looked at him silently with a troubled countenance. Then the youth, getting quite red, said: 'I did not wish to cause you any trouble, for I am true to you from the bottom of my soul. But now, honour me with your confidence and explain to me this strange behaviour that I remark in you.'

"Then the old man said that he was a Jew by birth and race, and by the king's command was forbidden his religion, and condemned to secrecy. The youth became curious to know something of the laws and nature of this religion. And the teacher let him have his will, and the youth was at once drawn towards the Scriptures, and day by day the other instructed him with the utmost zeal and secrecy. The ancient, wonderful, and heroic life disclosed in the revered signs, and which became alive in his young soul, took such possession of the youth that he could no



longer enjoy this life in secrecy, but must openly acknowledge and choose it. This he explained to the teacher, who advised him that if it were so, he should throw away position, honour, and all the splendour of the future, and flee with him in the silence of the night to a distant land, where they would live untroubled, following their doctrine and free from dispute. The youth agreed, and they went away in haste, in silence, and with great precaution, so that none should know the way they went.

“Then they came to a country where the Jewish people could practise their religion in peace. Here they lived for many years in seclusion. The youth grew great in knowledge and graced in the mysteries. Then it fell out that a Zaddik of a very old and high family came to this town, where the Jews received him in great honour. The king’s son and his teacher hastened to greet the saint. So it fell out that the youth, through noble bearing and the great sincerity which went out from him, so much won the approbation of the Rabbi that he offered him his only daughter in marriage. When the marriage of the king’s son took place he said to his young wife:

“‘On this day I make a prayer to you, my dear one; at times it happens that, in moments of exaltation, my body falls to the ground and seems dead. Then you must not give way to grief, or call in witnesses to revive me, but you must wait CALM AND AT PEACE till the time when my soul returns to its corporeal life.’

“His wife, who was of a spirit as gracious as it was courageous, promised to do as he wished, and

when the occasion came acted accordingly. She was a gentle-hearted, happy companion to her husband, and they passed all their time in loving communion. It once happened that the husband fell into an unusually long trance, so that his body did in fact become like dead. The young wife bore the sight at first with calm courage, but after the usual time had elapsed she was overcome by a maddening anxiety. She wished to call people to him, then suddenly remembered his command, and sank down by his lifeless body, waiting in despair. After a long time the first signs of returning life showed. He got up slowly and came to full consciousness. His wife wished to give him a joyous greeting, but he answered her words slowly and sadly, and it was to her as though his gloomy glance rested on her with a trembling pity. He remained pensive and sad for the whole day. In the evening his wife asked him with insistence what it was that was weighing on his heart, and begged him not to keep anything secret. He answered her:

“‘Know, my wife, that to-day when I hovered in the regions above, there were sad tidings. On account of my birth and for the first years of my life, which were passed in pomp and idle worldliness at the king’s court, my soul is denied a higher ascent, and has to be seized by death, and born again of a poor, humble, and pure woman. And therefore I beg of you, my darling, and my spouse, that you will be of one mind with me, and will grant that I go away without delay.’

“The wife said: ‘I am satisfied if you will let me die with you, and if I may return again with you in

your renewed life and may again be united to you as your wife.'

"They laid themselves down together in the sleep of death, and went away at the same moment, united. They passed a long time, in which their souls were in darkness, for there is no measure in Time. The man was born in the quietude of poverty to someone rich in humility. And the woman saw earthly life in a needy home. And behold, their childhood and their youth were a long, unconscious search for the unknown, which was sleeping in the depths of their hearts. They looked beyond their nearest with strange, wandering eyes, each seeking for the spouse of their heart, and were only fearful because they knew no longer what they were expecting from out of the tides of oblivion. And you, my friends, must all know that they have found themselves and have met each other, and that they, as bride and bridegroom, sit united in gentleness, among you." Then, when Baalshem was silent, all hearts were moved, and over all brows there hung a glory as of an understanding of the everlasting ways of transformation.

## THE PSALM-SINGER

NOT far from Baalshem's town there lived a rich man, who felt drawn towards the service of God during the rare hours when he communed with himself. But usually he gave himself up to a gay course of life and to jolly company, letting the good qualities of his soul lie fallow. He had, indeed, often heard of the saint, and he knew that all the pious thronged to him, yet he avoided him, either because he was shy of him, or that each day, laden as it was with every kind of worldly prosperity, prevented him from perceiving any impulse that might urge him to seek the bright serenity of the Master.

But Baalshem knew about him and his life, as he did about that of all creatures, and from a distance secretly loved him. For the nature of this noisy man was based upon an instinctive goodness. This was sometimes overshadowed by a desire for amusement, and at other times darkened by an effervescent anger; but it would break out with force ever and again, and in the shelter of its large beneficence a modest enjoyment was granted to many of the poor and oppressed.

Once, when he communed with himself afresh, he felt that he must do something for the honour of God, and he resolved to have a Torah written. When

the quiet of his soul had evaporated, the will remained indeed, but humility had deserted him, and he began in his usual way to carry out the task with much parade and show. A celebrated Torah-writer was summoned. Then the rich man had the choicest animals slaughtered, and divided their flesh among the poor, and had their skins worked into parchment, on which the Holy Scriptures were inscribed. The work took a long time, and when finished was the wonder and talk of the town. Its owner had had a costly chest made ready for it, and a covering of precious material with ornaments of metal and stones. For he wished to kindle a fire of joy in all hearts by his superb service to God.

For three days the house had already been filled over and over again by men who sat eating and drinking at the long tables. And during all this time his servants had had no sleep. Among them was one, a straightforward, honest fellow, who was called the Psalm-Singer, because the psalms were never off his lips; all his work was done to their accompaniment, and he chanted them in a fine, direct kind of way, not like a book of the Scriptures, but like the words of a man who is suffering and who feels God's ear close to his mouth. The rich man often came softly and listened to him, and his heart sang with the singer's. To him it was as though in this man's song there was the quiet that so seldom visited him. And, as if to obey it, he honoured the singer, and never set him to hard labour.

During the feast-days the Psalm-Singer, like the other servants, had been obliged to serve the guests

and to wait at the tables, but the father of the house had allotted to him the guests whom he held in most honour, and whom he entertained in his own room. On the evening of the third day the guests required some water for their hands, for the ablution before the benediction of the meal. They called to the servant, but they could find him nowhere. Then the host himself went to seek him throughout the house, and found him after a time in one of the rooms, dressed, and asleep on a bed. He called out to him, but the man was in deep sleep, and neither spoke nor answered. Then the master's fury was roused; he caught hold of the sleeper by the shoulder and shrieked to him: "Go to the black year, you psalm-singer!" The servant looked sternly into his master's eyes, then he said: "Sir, you are mistaken if you think there is no one who will have justice done to the poor psalm-singer." But the master paid no attention to his words and went back to his guests.

When, after a short time, he went down from the reception hall to greet some new-comers, a strange man entered the gate, dressed as a servant, and said: "Sir, my master has something about which to speak to you; it is of an importance which brooks of no delay. Therefore he begs of you to come to him at once. You need not be afraid of the least trouble, just get into the carriage which stands at the door. The way is short and the horses are quick, and it will take up but little of your time."

The rich man was astonished at the unknown servant and his strange business, but something which crippled his thoughts, and forbade him to question, drove him

onwards. So in his thin indoor dress he got into the carriage, and it moved quickly away. The moon rose in the heavens large and yellow, but not yet full. After a time, which seemed neither long nor short to the man, he noticed that the sound of the horses' hooves had ceased, though the carriage still moved on. There was no longer a road, and there was no light to the right or to the left of him, no air around him, and nothing to help him to know where he was. All within him was lost in an amazement devoid of expectation or anxiety. He felt as though he had walked into the beyond, and what had mattered before no longer mattered.

Then the carriage stopped. Following an impulse as incomprehensible as it was powerful, he got out. Looking back, he was aware that the carriage from which he had just stepped had disappeared. He stood in a very dense wood, the trees of which shot up like soaring pillars, but he could not see their summits, for the branches must have met too high above him, and his sight was also obscured by a milk-white mist between their stems. The frost crackled beneath his feet. A biting wind froze all his limbs. It drove him onwards, and he went on and on. Instead of air there was a milky vapour, out of which it seemed to him that he saw apparitions looming; they were completely merged in it, and figures of no more substance than the mist moved and danced within it. He wandered through it all, and, as on his drive, he neither knew how far nor whither he was going, until, streaming out of the vapour, he saw a light, which seemed to lure him towards a goal; it proved

to be a house veiled in mist, and the brightness streamed from the light coming through an open door. He walked on and went inside. The fog cleared away as soon as he stepped over the threshold, changing into air clear as crystal. He looked into a room with a ceiling of mighty beams of dark brown colour, but the walls and floor were of shining white. The room was full of a sweet, mysterious warmth, and a seven-branched candlestick, its candles burning as at a feast, stood on the massive table, its flames giving out a strong, heavy scent. Against the wall stood chairs with wide-spaced arms, large, dark, and capacious and almost as imposing as thrones.

The intruder also noticed an immense and glittering stove, which filled a corner of the room. He stepped nearer timidly, as in a dream, not daring to touch the table or chairs, and hid himself behind the stove to await what should happen, the frosty air singing strangely in his ears.

Then three men entered the room one by one, at short intervals. They were very old and bent, yet so tall that their heads seemed to touch the ceiling. They had flowing, ice-grey hair and beards, and it seemed as though Time were entangled in the waves of their hair. Their eyes hid sun and lightning under the shade of their white lashes.

The dress of all three was of white linen and fur. They exchanged large-hearted, gentle greetings, calling each other by their patriarchal names; and they then sank down in their chairs, and rested in silence as after a long pilgrimage. While they were sitting a fourth entered; he was not so old as the others, but



wore the dress and had the mien of a ruler. He bowed before them reverently, as though he were their grandson, and they greeted him by the name of David, the king.

Then he lifted up his voice, and it was as though the air trembled with horror, and as though the lights would fain flicker away, when he said: "I have a suit against the man sitting behind the stove." The words tore open the heart of the man in hiding, as though a sword were thrust into it, and as though his own heart-beats were raging up against him; nothing but horror hung over him. But the fathers lifted up their heads to listen. Then the rich man felt as though there were an abyss between one happening and another happening, and that somewhere a gigantic wheel stood still.

The King said: "He who is in hiding here has for a mere nothing given utterance to a curse against a defenceless servant. This fellow was my servant, and my songs never died from off his lips, so I have risen up to protect him, and I demand justice for him, and that he who has infringed it should die on account of his crime."

At the King's words the blood of the listener in his hiding-place already seemed to run cold. He raised his eyes that they might be granted one last look. Then he recognized on the other side of the table one whom, at times during his life, he had met at a distance, and who was named the Miracle-Worker and the Master of the Name.

This man stood exactly opposite the king; he held his head high and there was a steely glance in his

eyes.<sup>1</sup> He took up the King's last word as it rang through the air, and raised up his voice against him, saying, while the fathers turned their heads, looking at him in silence, open-eyed and confidently: "Brother David, thou comest from Heaven, and yet to me it is as though thou satest upon thy throne in Jerusalem! Wilt thou annul evil with evil? Wilt thou appease a little woe by an unbearable woe? Wilt thou purify impotent revenge with devastating revenge?" Then the King answered him, and his words fell as a block of stone sent rolling from mountain to mountain: "Thou dost not mock me, brother? I am not greedy for revenge but for justice. Or is it thy intention that the faithful servant should be downtrodden and his tormentor should dwell proud and unpunished?"

But Baalshem raised his voice, which had grown in the silence to the voice of an archangel, forged by the Eternal in the sparks of the elements. And he said: "There is a little stranger within me as a guest; he has the pink-and-white face and the clear eyes of a shepherd, and above his shadeless brow there rests a chaplet and a bandage.

O King! a king's soul is within me. It came when I returned and was born again of woman, and in the night hours it nestles down into my ears, speaking timidly and intimately. And it speaks out of primeval depths and from an abyss of suffering: 'I was with him when he said to his trusty fellow<sup>2</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of this passage is that the innocent soul of David the shepherd (supposed to have been born again in Baalshem) confronts the fierce soul of David the King.--TRANSLATOR.

<sup>2</sup> Uriah the Hittite. 2 Sam. xi, 8, 10, 11.

"Go down to thy house." And I heard when he said to him the next day: "Why didst thou not go down to thy house?" And I was with him when he wrote the letter on the following day, saying: "Put him in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him that he may be smitten and die." At that hour I arose against him in blood and anguish, and I have suffered from that hour onwards."

Then David lifted up his brow under the chaplet, and his brow and his crown shone as he said, with a deep undercurrent in his voice: "I have been plunged too deep in the horror of revenge, and I have ascended up towards the light; the hem of my garment went black and it clung to me with spilt blood, and I carried up my song above with me. For my song has been born to me out of sin and pollution, and it awakened a new soul within me, and it mounted up and made peace between God and me."

After these words the expression of Baalshem's face changed. First mysterious and then transparent, it was like the firmament unveiling its beauty, and revealing its glorious expanse behind the clouds. His voice changed also. "Thy song is the diamond bridge which leads up to God's heart out of the cauldron of desolation, and even though on one night it groaned from out of a monster, yet it is an angel, and will carry him above the spheres and will cradle him in God's breast. When thy song took me by the hand, I forgot my condemnation of thee, and when it smiled on me all my doubts vanished."

Then the King bowed his head before the Master, and a mighty movement arose from that which is

timeless, as when a mystery fulfils itself and passes away.

A white beam fell upon the eyes of the man behind the stove. He found himself in his house, holding the latch of the door of his room, and there were the guests, washing their hands before the evening meal.

---

This legend is a plea for mercy. There is a Chassidic saying: "The return (or repentance) dwells in sin, as oil in the olive."—  
TRANSLATOR.

## THE DISTURBED SABBATH

BAALSHEM went, as he did every week, for his Sabbath drive, and with him were three of his pupils—they were called the three Davids, namely, Rabbi David Mikolajed, Rabbi David Leihes, and Rabbi David Fiskes—and the servant Aleska, who drove the horses. It generally happened that the Master determined the speed and direction of the drive by his will, without any words.

If the servant Aleska had turned his back to the horses they would have brought the carriage to its destination at the wished-for hour. But this time Baalshem felt that his will was of no avail against the strong pulling of the horses, and he saw that they were drawing the carriage to an unknown goal, and would obey no command of the frightened coachman. Then he wished to turn, and called out: "Wait!" and took the reins himself; but he had no power over the horses, and they went in the opposite direction to that which he wished, at a sharp trot whither the invisible force urged them. Thus they came to a wilderness. They drew the carriage into it till there was no longer a road or anything to be seen; then they wandered in short, regular steps round and round the wilderness. This lasted for three days, and Baalshem bore it as though it were a fate against which he could not murmur; but the scholars sat, dazed and miserable;

and the servant Aleska behaved as though he were mad, and as if he had never before known anything miraculous happen to his master.

But after three days the horses had a new impulse. They ran out of the wilderness into a wood which bordered it, and dragged the carriage into the deepest thicket there. Then they remained standing, and they fed as placidly as though they had returned to their stall and had the finest fodder in front of them. Those in the carriage could distinguish no longer between day and night. They ate of the scanty provisions which they had brought with them, and they got no sleep, for the anxiety in their hearts was too great. Hours and hours went by. But in one of these hours Baalshem knew, by the sevenfold sadness which forced its way into his heart, that it was the Sabbath. Then the sadness of his meditations swelled within him, overflowing and engulfing all his wisdom.

He sat there in his great trouble, looking before him; his limbs felt weary, and at last he fell into heavy sleep.

Now hope rose in his scholars' breasts, for they knew of the sanctification which always hung over the Master's sleep; for that which seemed dim and confused when he was awake grew clear in his dreams, and out of all his troubles the shining apparition of truth made its appearance; for when he lay with his senses closed to outward things, the words of reality reached his ears and his spirit was open to the inner voice. But Baalshem woke in a restless mood, and he was so stiff that he seemed to be almost crippled. However, he got up, and pointed with a trembling

finger towards the distance. A light, a little quivering light, was visible in the distance behind a thick under-wood. They left the carriage and made their way with difficulty towards the light; gradually the face of the earth was lit up; the everlasting sun stood above their heads, and they said: "Blessed be the Lord, and blessed be His Name!" In the light they saw a small house, which lay like a faint grey spark in the midst of the deep green of the wood.

They went to the house. Before the door stood a gigantic, bull-necked man, clad in the fashion of the frivolous people who despise the good customs of the fathers; he had hair of a yellowish red, and clumsy bare feet, and none of the fringes of the Lord could be seen on his clothes. He placed his fists on his lips and looked at the new-comers, full of scorn, and was silent. They bowed before him, and asked: "May we be allowed to pass the holy Sabbath in your house?" Then he cried with a shrill voice:

"I do not wish and I will not allow you to step over my threshold. Do I not know you? Your faces speak for you. You are Chassids, and carry your piety to the market-place and speak in the alleys. Go! I am iron against your idle words. I hate you, and you are hateful to my grandfather and to all my house. Therefore go away quickly, for I want to see your faces no more."

They bore his words in silence, and only said: "Then tell us if there is any dwelling in the neighbourhood where we can go to celebrate the holy Sabbath." Then the man laughed loudly, and said savagely:

"It will take you as long to get to any dwelling of man as it has taken you to come here." After he had said this, laughing even louder, they almost lost their new-found courage. But the youngest David, Rabbi Fiske, who till now had not said a word, and had remained sitting in thought, came up and spoke softly and friendly to the man:

"It may be that something or other in us is repugnant to you. But is it really your wish to push us into the wilderness? For look, the Sabbath is your sanctuary and ours, and if we enter it, sometime and somewhere we must come across your steps. Do you wish to spoil the Sabbath in the future life? Behold, the Lord is your God and ours, and if you control your rage and are silent, and call your soul back into silence, at that instant you will perceive how the Lord will look upon you from the heart of the world."

The man was then quiet, and looked from one to the other without speaking. But the eldest David, the Rabbi Mikolajed, who thought himself well versed in the working of men's minds, said: "Remember that we desire no gifts. Rather will we pay you as much as you demand, even if it is ten times as much as is usual elsewhere."

The man looked away from him laughing scornfully, and turned to the youngest, saying, in grumbling surly tones: "Let it be so; but do not think that you shall dare to bring your Sabbath into my house. My customs and my laws alone reign here. Also mark well my orders. Firstly, I know well that you spend much time in preparing for any



prayer, not caring how late it may be, but waiting till the spirit moves you. But I do not care to sit down and wait. I just pray what has to be prayed, and begin to eat, for I require much food, and must satisfy my hunger often and quickly. Secondly, I know your way of praying, how you shriek and bluster, and how each man wishes to speak louder than the other. But here there is no room for your ecstasies, and I won't have my people and myself bothered with such doings. Thirdly, like utter fools, you like at every meal to criticize and ponder for hours whether this or that is clean to you Chassids; this shall not take place here."

To be forbidden to practise the holy customs and to hear such misrepresentations of them was to Baalshem and his followers a hard dispensation of providence. But they had no alternative, and so they promised to comply with everything. Then he told them to enter. They came into a narrow, chilly room. When they had stretched themselves on the floor for a while, and were somewhat refreshed, Baalshem asked if there was a spring or a water-trough where he could perform his ablutions in honour of the Sabbath. Then the other again fell into fury, and cried:

"Could I have thought that you would be a miserable rabble of thieves? You want to spy about and to see where I keep my valuables. Truly I shall take those seven things of yours and throw them outside, and you with them." Then they had to beg and pray a long time for reconciliation, till he seemed again to be inclined to keep them.

Baalshem and his people now sat looking at the man, who paced up and down the room, and wondered about him; for they had never seen a man so clumsy, so rough, and so dirty as he was. In the room, too, the floor and the walls were soiled; there was neither table nor bench, but only four posts stuck in the floor, and on them lay an unplanned plank. Soon they remarked that this was the only living-room, for though there were indeed other rooms in the house, they were all shut up, and the doors were grey, and covered with cobwebs as though they had never been opened. There was no sign of any living creature in the house, not even a cat or a dog.

The evening drew near, but there was no sign of dishes or food in honour of the Sabbath. The huge man moved idly about, and at times cut a slice from a monstrous water-melon which lay in the corner, and put it into his mouth, and then again he hummed to himself, as is the manner of peasants. A horror fell on the travellers that he could so disregard the Sabbath and refuse it the consecration which Jews all over the world practise with holy zeal and eagerness. But then he took a bit of coarse, unbleached linen and spread it out on his miserable table. Upon it he laid a little bit of clay, bored a hole in it with his finger, and put in it a miserable wax candle. Then he began the sweet and holy words with which, from time immemorial, week after week, throughout the earth, the Sabbath has been received as the bride of our souls. He spoke in idle haste, as the mad do in whose mumbling the sense of the words is drowned. In a moment he finished the prayer, and the guests,

bound by their promises, had to do the same. But, however much his nature and his ways pained them, in the holiness of the Sabbath evening, they could not harbour any hate towards him. And they called to him: "Good Sabbath." He only snarled as an answer:

"May a bad year befall you."

Then they wanted to sing the psalm, "Peace be with thee." He flew out at them and made them be silent. Then he began to speak the blessing over the wine. They begged him to give them some wine so that they could also give the blessing over it; but he refused, and called out if they all wished to bless it the light would soon go out. "Let me do it for you all." So he took the cup between his two fingers and murmured the words to himself. Then he opened his mouth wide and poured in all the wine so that only a drop or two remained in the cup. This he handed to them, saying: "There, you boozers; but don't take too much in case you get drunk." Then he put a hard, mouldy loaf of black meal and rye bran on the table, and broke off a bit for each of them. And when one of the pupils tried to get hold of the loaf in order to cut off another bit, the master of the house struck him and pushed him away, and said: "Do not dare to touch my bread with your disgusting hands." Then he put before them a dish with thin lentil broth, put a great spoon before each of them, and told them to dip the spoons in and eat, for plates and such luxuries were not to be found here. After this he bent over the dish and gave himself a spoonful of broth, and ate with such greedy haste

that the broth dropped out of the corners of his mouth back into the dish, and the travellers felt absolutely unable to stretch out a hand towards the food.

After the meal they wanted to sing the Sabbath hymn, but he forbade this and quickly gabbled grace, and neglecting all customs, he rose in order to prepare a miserable couch on the floor for the guests.

In the early morning they woke, and they heard their host going about and singing the morning psalm, which begins with the words: "The soul of all the living"; and this he sang as though it were a peasant dance. And with this the day began for them, and it was even more wretched than the evening before, for Baalshem had lost all his power of looking inwards, and his holy wisdom had faded from him. He sat and beat his hands together, and could only think: "What is this, and wherefore has God done this to me?" At last the night fell and sleep came over him softly and kindly. When he got up in the morning he felt a new strength seething in him, and prayed with all his power, for he never went away from a place without having spoken to God. And then he commanded his servant Aleska to bring the horses, which had been put in the stable, and to harness them. But the servant returned directly and informed him that the house door was shut. Baalshem went to his host and begged him to open the door, adding: "Take our thanks for all the friendship you have shown us, and now show us the way so that we may return home as quickly as we can."

The other only gave answer: "By no means, but you shall remain my guests."

He would not be persuaded, and held them all imprisoned in his house till the fourth day.

But on the morning of the fourth day he came to them and said: "To-day I will open the door." And while he said this, he looked at them in a curious way and went. Then the scholars were overcome with horror, for they did not understand his manner, and the thought that he might murder them slipped into their minds. While they were thinking about this, the door of one of the closed rooms opened, and a beautiful, richly clad woman stepped out of it and bowed before the Master, and said:

"Rabbi, I beg of you that you and your scholars will celebrate the Sabbath with me."

Baalshem answered her: "You call me Rabbi. How could you permit my Sabbath to be disturbed in such a way?"

The woman asked: "Rabbi, don't you recognize me?"

He said: "No, I don't know you."

She then said: "When I was hardly more than a child, I served in your house. I was an orphan, and had no one belonging to me in the world. I was clumsy with my hands and broke many valuable vessels, which I dropped, smashing them to pieces. Your wife often warned me about this. The Sabbath meal was ready one day and your wife wished to carry the dishes. But I wanted to show that I had become more skilful, and begged to have the Sabbath dish in my hands. But no sooner did I hold it than my fingers trembled and I let it fall. Your wife was angry with me and gave me a light slap on the face.

You sat not far off, and saw it and let it pass in silence. Then a voice shrieked in the heavens, and a judgment was passed on you, that on account of your silence you should lose what was destined for you in the next world. But later I had the good fortune to be taken as wife by this man, who, though his actions disguise it, is secretly a Zaddik. It was he who disclosed to me the fate that hung over you. Then we began to pray to God to alter his decree. Our prayers were granted; the sentence became milder and milder, till it was pronounced that one of your Sabbaths must be disturbed; for the Sabbath is the source of the world to come, and it was entrusted to us to inflict this upon you. But only if we performed this absolutely thoroughly should we be able to avert the fate, and so we have acted with sorrow in our hearts. And now your portion is with the leaders in the topmost paradise." At this instant the Master's wisdom returned to him, and his inward vision revived; he saw into the depths of destiny, and saw his salvation, and saw the saintly and mysterious man standing as he really was before him. They went into the fine room and spent this and the next days together, and celebrated the Sabbath in great joy.

## THE ADVERSARY

RABBI JACOB JOSEPH was one of the most eager of those who rose up against Baalshem. In no other man did the desire to fight spring from such a deep and hidden source. For the idea of the heretical ways which made him shudder lay within his own soul, as a sort of foreboding and profound growth beneath the range of words, deeper than where thought takes its birth. There were, above all, three usages of the new-comers that were most repugnant to the Rabbi: the joy of their feasts, which broke down the hedge round the holy Law, and which showed itself in dance and song; the peculiarity of their service, which only held the community loosely together, and in which each one was wont to speak to God in his own way, and often with wild and unrestrained gestures. But what displeased him most was when, after the third meal on the Sabbath, the Master preached in low tones vibrating with mystery. And the Rabbi had often heard about this preaching. It was not, as custom demanded, built up from the meanings of the Scriptures, from which yet further skilful interpretations were piled up. It spoke of the things of the soul as though men were allowed to speak of such things. Many times, indeed, it told ordinary stories such as common folk tell when they sit drinking together; but these stories were said slowly and

solemnly like the words of the mysteries of the Kedusha,<sup>1</sup> and the people listened to them as though they continued the revelation on Mount Sinai. Whenever the Rabbi was informed of this, he was as much overcome by anger as he had been on first hearing of it. Stories on the Sabbath! what sense could stories have? And still more angrily he told himself to silence the voices which were awakened far below. He reminded his soul of the true way to completion, through the avoidance of the living, through mortification and fidelity, through fasting and silence.

Once upon a time Baalshem made ready to go to Sharmagrad. He had no followers with him, and discoursed with the summer night as with a friend. When the night took leave and the day gradually rose, the Master's carriage arrived at the little town. There lay the houses in twilight, with closed shutters, like the heavy eyelids of those who slumber joylessly. Pity came to Baalshem for those who slept their dull morning sleep behind those closed windows. He went with steady steps under the growing light of the day, till after a time a man drew near. This man drove several animals before him, which fed in the meadows. The Master began to speak to him as though by chance, while the man answered at first simply and shyly. Gradually Baalshem began to tell him a story. As he spoke a second man approached, and soon a third, and then more and more, mostly servants, and poor people who begin the day early. They all stood and listened eagerly, and called to others from the houses round about. As the hours

‡ Blessing over the wine on the Sabbath.



went by, the maidens came with water-jugs on the way to the well, and stopped; the children came springing out of their small rooms, and even the fathers themselves came out of their way and left their business in order to listen to the unknown man.

He told a story that was woven in so strangely delightful a fashion that as soon as any one arrived he seemed to be at the beginning of it, but to any one unconcerned with the past, the story seemed to be directed towards the future, and he could hear therein of the fulfilment of his most beautiful hopes. Thus all listened to one great history, and yet each one found in it that which seemed to him the most important; his own little history. And these small, insignificant histories crossed each other, and one joined on to another, as though they must become entangled together; and then all of a sudden they became unravelled and pursued their course in an orderly sequence, and when one of them was finished it just led on to the next new story.

Soon the whole of the village was in the market-place. All listened, and each had forgotten that which he was accustomed to do at that hour. The artisans had their tools in their hands, and the women their spoons for cooking. But right in front of them stood the servant of the Temple with a large bunch of keys; he had just been to the house of prayer in order to open it. The story had taken hold of him with such force that he had thrust himself just in front of the Master, and now stood and listened with his ears and his heart and his whole body, thinking as little of his office as though it were a vanished dream.

Baalshem's narrative was not born of the present as one of our own narratives, which are crooked like the little fate of man, or round like the little thoughts of man. But the many-coloured charm of the sea was in it, and the pure charm of the stars, and, most incomprehensible of all, the tender wonder of boundless space. And yet what the story told was no romance about the future, but each one awoke, touched by the words of the mysterious melody which spread and burst forth with a premonition of death, and each one received the message of his life. It opened out before him, and his soul was troubled by it. The melody spoke to all, it spoke to him alone, as though there was no other man; he was all men, and he was the story.

Then the Master lifted his eyes and looked up smilingly into the distance. He saw through houses and walls, how the Rabbi stood before the house of prayer; and the house was shut and the servant was missing, and there were none of all of those who at this time used to assemble to wait for him. Baalshem looked into the Rabbi's spirit; he saw anger and bitterness grow within him, and how he restrained his displeasure and forced himself to patience. The Master resolved to set free the servant from the story. Instantly the man came to himself, like one who awakens, and without thinking he ran as quickly as he could to the house of prayer. When he came to the door he found the Rabbi frowning, his eyes cast to the ground, forcing back his words of displeasure, and only demanding with an abrupt gesture that the door should be opened quickly. But the

servant, still filled with, and immersed in, the story, was not aware of his own negligence nor of his master's anger, but began to tell of the strange man who stood on the market-place, and who told tales with all the people grouped around him listening. He described the figure and appearance of the stranger, and then the Rabbi knew who had come, and who had fought with him for the souls, and an angry and sad spark shone in his eyes. Without a word he pushed the servant aside, stepped into the house of prayer, and began to pray.

After a time it happened that one of Baalshem's followers promised his daughter in marriage to the beloved pupil of the Rabbi of Sharmagrad. The marriage was to be celebrated in Baalshem's town.

Rabbi Jacob Joseph was thrown into deep grief over this betrothal. When he knew of it the news was as if his own son had fallen among evil companions. His love, however, proved to be stronger than his anger, for when his pupil came to him, and himself informed him of everything, he had to forgive him. But he refused his request to come to his high feast at Mesbiz, and explained that he could never enter the place of the heretic. The youth, however, day by day made urgent appeals to him, till the Rabbi once let fall the words: "How can I go with you? You and your friends will be the first to go to the unholy man in Mesbiz who ruins the people of Israel." Then the pupil, in order to get a favourable reply from his teacher, said that he would not look upon the face of Baalshem, and the Rabbi agreed to go with him on this condition. But while they were

on the way, and stayed at an inn not far from their journey's end, he noticed that his pupil and his friends were talking together, and he knew that they were discussing how they could arrange to go into Baalshem's house without his knowledge. Then the Rabbi got up and said to the bridegroom: "I have done wrong to put upon you a condition with which you are not able to comply. But as it does not suit me to go on the homeward journey alone, I will stay here until you return from the wedding, and then go back with you to my town." The pupil stammeringly renewed his prayers and promises, but the Rabbi did not listen to him, and, turning to the landlord, begged to be shown a room in which he could pursue his studies undisturbed.

A little while later he sat in his room with his books laid open before him, but when he bent over them wishing to begin to read he saw that the letters, instead of, as always, standing in their fine order, each one joyously waiting till he reached it, proudly satisfied if he had read it, now swung about in a mad dance and threw their limbs into the air; yes, a thick round thing kept rolling away over and over itself, without stopping. The Rabbi shut his eyes and opened them again. As the commotion would not cease, with a hasty hand he shut the book. Then for the moment all was still and orderly as though nothing had ever moved there, and, instead, a couple of upstanding letters looked full of joyful expectation. But when the Rabbi again wanted to read, out of the book there came to him a hundred thin voices.

These were the words struggling with one another.

It was not like two camps of combatants, but each word contradicted the other, and each of them asserted that it was surrounded by liars and hypocrites that were solely intent on robbing it of its native meaning from a teasing spirit of envy, while there was no sense or soul in the meaning of the other words.

And when the Rabbi had silenced this strife, the sentences stood up, and declared that they would no longer serve an unknown end that hovered over them all, but that they would live their own lives unrestricted.

The Rabbi looked at the book and smiled; then he shut it up and smiled again. Within himself he had a book, great and abounding in riches, which no one could disturb. But when he wished to call up the first thoughts his smile ceased. For no thought came to him, only a dull forgetfulness lay upon his mind as over a neglected graveyard. Then the Rabbi was afraid, and the first fear of his life came upon him, as the agony of death. He realized that he was commanded to go to Mesbiz. And directly the thought became so alive within him, and so insistent, that he was almost frightened for a second time.

It did not occur to him to hire a carriage. He stepped into the street and went straight on his way. When he reached Mesbiz, he was carried along involuntarily till he came across a large house, standing alone, from which the light of many candles and the sound of many voices met him. He knew that it was Baalshem's house, and wished to go farther on, when he suddenly stood still. Then the light appeared to him three times as bright as before, and a voice began to speak to him out of the darkness. It sounded

so wonderful that he stepped nearer and was forced to listen to it; and he heard the voice say: "I will tell you a story.

"There was once a Rabbi, a wise and severe man. On the ninth night of Ab<sup>1</sup> he sat in his room and grieved over the Temple of Jerusalem. And on this night his grief was different from what it had been on any other night. For in the other years it had seemed to him as though he were transported into the devastation of Jerusalem, and as though he saw the conflagration and ruin with his own eyes. But on this night it seemed to him that he was a bronze pillar of the house of the Lord, and he felt the Chaldean's hand upon him, and it broke him, and again it seemed to him that he was the bronze of the broken pillar, and that he was taken to Babylon. And the song of sorrow came from his mouth, but it was not like the song of sorrow of one who sees and who grieves, but as the groaning of a shattered pillar. And not like that of a living man, but like that of a thing that has lived in splendour and which is now crushed into bits and dragged into the lowest abasement. He called to Jerusalem: 'Stand up, shriek in the night at the beginning of the watch, and scatter your heart out like water before the Lord.' And it was to him as though he was Jerusalem the City; the conflagration and ruin were upon him, and the thousandfold desolation happened to him in his own limbs. Then a cry broke from him and shook him as though it came from the dead, and he fell back upon his couch.

<sup>1</sup>The ninth of Ab commemorates the taking and destruction of Jerusalem.

“There he lay for a time, but his body was bereft of life as that of one who is passing away. The hours of the night struck him and came upon him; he was without sensation, as though time had turned into sand which trickled over him and would bury him beneath it.

“And at midnight he felt a movement in the air, and a breeze wafted the breath of life to his brow. He opened his eyes, and was aware of the figure of a boy, and recognized the face of his favourite pupil, his gentle features now distorted by fear. The boy touched his hand and said: ‘Rabbi, you lie like one whose soul is ready to flee and to desert him. You must have a little to eat in order to strengthen you.’ The Rabbi turned his head and whispered, his teeth clattering: ‘Child, what dost thou say? Is not to-day the ninth day of Ab, and the greatest of the fasts?’ But the youth clasped his hands firmer with both his own warm hands, saying: ‘Rabbi, remember it is forbidden of thy own will to give thyself up unto death.’ He went away, and returned. Now he held in his arms a large dish full of splendid fruits. He knelt before the Rabbi, looked at him pleadingly, and, begging of him, bowed his head. And the Rabbi, revived by the pleasant sight of the many-coloured fruits and their good smell, got up and said the blessing on the fruits of the trees as beseems one who is about to eat. But when the last words had left his mouth, a wild horror seized him at what he had done. He lifted his hand against his pupil, and shrieked: ‘Go away, spirit of temptation, you who borrow a trusted figure in order to befool me.’

The pupil trembled at his master's words, and left the house in alarm.

"And the Rabbi fell into a trouble, profound as an abyss. The years of his life appeared to him with all their sacrifice and their renunciation, with their wars and triumphs, and with the power which he had gained over himself year by year. And then there appeared before him a small, weary-eyed wish, that slunk as a tired dwarf past the years, and washed them away with its finger, so that there was no more trace of them.

"The trouble of the Rabbi grew ever deeper, till the sadness of the days and the pain of Jerusalem were lost in this trouble. It swallowed them and spread itself and ruled over his soul with sorrow and conflagration. Now nothing remained to the Rabbi of that hour when he had been as a pillar in the House of the Lord, and when he had been the City under the hand of evil, but he *was* this very man, lying here in the night, on his couch. A man who had gathered more and more together, with a hard and untiring hand, and who was now robbed of everything in the dark by a sick dwarf with a mere jerk of his dry fingers. He felt the night unchangeable above him and around him, the night and the abyss.

"But the night did not stand still. It passed over him with the masses of its hair and the waves of its veils. And before it vanished it laid its hand on his eyes and gave him sleep, and the dream took root and grew and testified.

"The dream led him under the open midday sun, which looked down on him through the cluster of



tree-tops in a large fruit garden. He went through the narrow, winding paths of the garden. They were bordered with high grass and with trees, whose branches hung down heavy with fruit. Thus he came to the end of the garden, and looked out over the low wall. There he saw the narrow streets of the town where he dwelt. But in his dream he knew that a garden of that sort did not exist there; he turned his steps, afraid and full of doubt, and thought to find someone with whom to speak. When he approached the centre of the garden, where all the paths crossed and met together, he saw a man in the dress of a gardener; he was bent low over the earth, but now he lifted his head and looked at him with gleaming eyes. The Rabbi asked: 'What sort of garden is this, and tell me whose it is?' The man answered shortly and in a hard voice: 'It belongs to the Rabbi of this town.' The Rabbi answered back wonderingly: 'I am poor, and I know of no property belonging to me. How does this garden come to me?' Then the man spoke again; lightning flashed from the depths of his eyes, and thunder played in his voice: 'Hell has caused this garden to come to you. It has come out of the pain of wishing, out of evil and shame, and out of empty words of blessing.' He stamped with his foot, and the earth split open to its fiery kernel, and the Rabbi saw the roots of trees entangled in the primeval depths. He saw them unite and sink therein, and nourish themselves on the flames.

"Then he awoke; and the horror of the dream took possession of him till evening, when the day of sorrow ended. Then the Rabbi drew himself up, and shook

away everything from his soul, and went into his room and shut the door. He took the books of psalms in his hands, and stood, and repeated the psalms in a strong voice. He had repeated the first book when there was a sound far out in the night, and it said: 'Enough, the fruits have already fallen.' But the Rabbi lifted his head and repeated the second book. And when he had finished the sound recurred again, and it sounded nearer and nearer: 'Enough, the foliage is already withered.' But the Rabbi renewed his strength, and prayed from the third book. Now the voice was quite near, and it said: 'Enough, the branches are dried up.' The Rabbi with all his power strained his soul to read the fourth book. Then the floor of his house shook, and the voice sounded as though it had taken birth from the ground under his feet: 'Enough, the branches are dead.' The Rabbi knew that exhaustion was stealing upon him, but his glance did not waver, and he put forth his inward strength, and the last book came from his mouth in tones rising high and rolling like the smoke of incense. When he was silent the door of his room sprang wide open, and in the doorway stood a dark messenger, bowed and crouching and hunted-looking as after a long and wild chase, and his voice seemed as though it flickered in a draught: 'Enough, enough, thou hast conquered us. The trunks are hewn down.' And with this last sound the figure vanished.

"Thus it happened long ago. The days, the months, and the years are passed by. But the roots of the garden are still in the earth; and the Rabbi

wakes many a night thinking how he can root them up, but he can never think of a way."

Thus the voice spoke in the bright room. Rabbi Jacob Joseph stood in the shadow, his forehead pressed against the wall, and the words fell on his heart like a stream of fire. When the speaking was stilled he sighed, rushed through the door into the room, and falling at the feet of the oracle called: "Master, teach me what I should do to root them up." "Know that this garden was not born to you out of that wish, but because you had trouble and pain, and therefore were deluded into thinking that you were polluted, and so you troubled yourself and strewed sorrow like ashes upon your head. Thus you gave substance and durability to your wish, and made corporeal what before was but a shadow. But while I have been telling you this, the substance has been transformed into only a word, a hovering breath, and has become even lighter than the faint image of your wish had been. And as I, a man of joy, speak to the joyous, so has joy entered into the garden of your wish and has torn up the roots in it."<sup>1</sup>

And Rabbi Joseph became the great apostle of Baalshem who preserved his teaching in writing and handed it on to future generations.

<sup>1</sup> God should be worshipped in joy. One of the machinations of the Evil One is to make a man fall into despondency through exaggerating his minor faults or failings.

## THE THIRD CIRCLE

### THE NEW-YEAR'S SERMON

THE New Year's sun was at its noonday's height, and the air resounded with the sound of the shofar.<sup>1</sup> It was to be heard on all sides; indeed, it made the scholars feel as if the encircling notes gave a strange, glowing light, which they believed they saw, to the grey, early autumn day. At Baalshem's house the scholars sat round the old table, of which the feet seemed to be more firmly planted on the ground than ever, as though to defy time. Some of them looked out into the light beyond, the others looked at the blackened walls, as though any moment they must vanish and disclose the realm of mystery. The blessing upon the midday meal had been said, and Baalshem began to preach his sermon on the New Year. The scholars could not look upon his face, but if they closed their eyes the words came in on them one by one, as though they had a face, now bright like lightning, and now of the darkness of an abyss, and then again the third would be as pure and peaceful as the love of God for the world. They sat there, young and old, their eyes closed, and listened and waited.

And Baalshem spoke. His voice generally sounded

<sup>1</sup> A ram's horn blown at solemn festivals, especially the New Year.

like a soft clang of bronze, and there mingled with it in deep prayer a note like that from the throat of the lark. But to-day on the New Year his voice was changed and new. It was the shofar which breathed in it and became a human voice. The alarum of the Tekia<sup>1</sup> came and rattled at the gates of the soul, and the rippling sound of the Shewarin<sup>1</sup> encircled the redeemed like a timorous longing. The lofty jubilation of the Terua<sup>1</sup> carried the Deliverance on high, and the words which Baalshem spoke were of the New Year: "Blow on the great shofar for our Deliverance. Blow on the great shofar," thus he cried to the Lord, "when the year's circle is closing and the souls of all things plunge into the darkness, to be reborn. Thy children are exhausted from the assaults of the tempests. The brand of the desert has set its mark upon them. Now that the circle of Thy year is complete, and the tides of the darkness of change ebb, blow on the great shofar, O Lord, for a new birth.

"Thy afflictions have wounded our hands until they are unfit for life's work. Thy wanderings have hurried our feet till they staggered even on firm ground. Thou hast sent the worm into our hearts till they are gnawed like decayed leaves. Thy messenger has laid his hand on our brows, and our thoughts are frozen stiff.

"Blow on the mighty shofar, O Lord, for our freedom.

"The messenger of the Lord laid hold of me in the night and led me away, and I stood in the void. Night lay upon my shoulders like a heavy burden,

<sup>1</sup> Different notes on the horn.

and night danced beneath the soles of my feet. And the messenger said: 'Look!' The darkness faded, and I stood at ease in the bright void, and I saw. There was a zone between two abysses; it was a small, round ridge. Within the circumference of the circle was a red abyss like a lake of blood, and outside the circumference stretched a dark abyss like a sea of night. I saw this: A man who seemed to be blind walked with tottering steps along the ridge, and his two weak hands rested on the abysses to the right and left of him, and his breast was of glass; and I saw his heart fluttering like dead leaves in the wind, and on his brow was a sign of ice. And the man went farther and farther along the ridge, without looking to the right or to the left, and he had already nearly reached the end of the circle which was its beginning. I wanted to call to him, but my speech was crippled by my sight. Suddenly the man looked up to the right and to the left, stumbled, and from both abysses arms stretched out to catch him. Then the messenger touched my lips and my tongue was loosened, and I called to the man: 'Stretch your wings and fly!' Then the man stretched his wings, and there was no longer weakness or numbness about him; the ridge disappeared beneath his feet, the abyss of blood was swallowed in God's springs of water, and the abyss of night disappeared in God's light, and on every side appeared the city of the Lord.

"Now note that our year is a circle, and we travel on a small round ridge between two abysses, and we are unaware of them. But when we have come to the end, which is the beginning of the ridge, then

fear and trembling beset us like the storm of the Lord, and as his lightning shoots across the abysses we see them and totter. But the shofar sounds over us and holds our souls, and each blast from the shofar carries many souls on its wings. And the sound of the shofar soars up to heaven, and the heavens listen and are overcome by anxiety and trembling, as though it were the storm of the Lord. And the world shofar sounds, and it carries on its wings the soul which has been born out of our souls and which is the soul of the Messiah. It soars up to the kingdom of mystery, and beats against the door with its wings; the door opens wide, and it is no longer a wall and a door, but the city of the Lord is on all sides.

“Blow on thy shofar, O Lord, for the soul’s birth!”

Until it became silent Baalshem’s voice sounded like the sound of the shofar. Then he rose and went to his room, and shut himself up. The scholars rose with him and went out. They went through the narrow streets, unseeing and afraid, as though in a dream. They had a small house outside the town, where they gathered together and where they were wont to contemplate the things of Eternity. There they now went, and the wings of the voice were over them.

In Baalshem’s house there then lived a boy, and all called him Joselle. When the Master had gone to his room, and all the disciples to their house outside the town, he remained alone at the long table, for he was too young to be taken by the others to their house of contemplation. Thus he sat within the blackened walls, and felt the wings of the voice

brushing his shoulders. And when the first shadows of the late afternoon trembled in golden brown on the white tablecloth, Joselle put his head in his hands, for he was afraid because of the wings of the voice which he felt about his shoulders. It was dark to him, for his fingers were tightly pressed over his eyes, but a voice woke in the darkness, which sang to him like the voice which had made him afraid, and it took hold of Joselle with overwhelming force, like tears which are held back and which burst forth suddenly:

“Now, but now, the Messiah will come.”

The room opened out, the walls disappeared, and there was a light before him; it shone like the rays of sunset, and Joselle ran out towards the light. But the door came in his way like a stabbing, awakening pain. The boy stood for a moment looking at a small ridge between two abysses, and the lightning of the Lord went on before him, and he shuddered and staggered. But then the power seized him with the grasp of the cherubim, and the voice roared and the light reached his heart and burnt there. Joselle opened the door and ran out, ran through the narrow streets of the town in precipitate haste, till he came to the scholars' house. There his feet stopped, and from his parched throat he cried out: “Messiah!”

But there was no sound about him, only his voice spoke, and it sounded very low, and was as the voice whose wings he had felt on his shoulder. He forced his eyes to look up, and would not rest till he could see. There sat all the disciples before the threshold of the house, in a long row, crescent-shaped, and the



mouth of each was firmly closed, and each one looked into the distance, and no limb stirred. Joselle heard his voice call:

"Now, directly, the Messiah will come."

And he heard the voice die away amid stony silence. Then the boy's soul flew on the wings of the voice; it flew up to a scholar, and laid itself on his breast, and said:

"Nachun, do you still remember how you fasted from one Sabbath to another in order to call down the Messiah? Do you know now how I came to you when you lay on the floor on the last day, and you beat your head on the boards, and how we wept and prayed? Look, the Messiah comes!"

But Nachun was silent. The soul turned and flew to the second one, and stroked his eyelids; and Joselle said:

"I saw you once bend over a fire till your hair caught fire, and your lips whispered: 'Messiah!' I saw you once lift up your fist against Heaven, and your lips whispered: 'Messiah!' Mendel, He comes!"

But Mendel remained silent. Again the soul flew to a third one and glided over his hand, and Joselle said:

"Meir, I heard you at the time when you threw a spell over the waters and cast the dark saying on the wind's breath. But the spell got lost in the waters and the saying was blown away in the wind. But listen now, Meir, He comes now; do you not hear Him coming? Meir, let us go to meet Him."

But Meir was silent. Joselle looked at the disciples; with his soul he looked at them, and then he saw that they did not hear his words, and he saw them

listening for a distant step. There they sat in a long row, crescent-shaped, and listened for a distant step, and looked into the distance. Then Joselle was overcome by solitude, and it laid its cold hand on his neck, and the nails of the hand buried themselves into his flesh, the hand lay on his neck like a gigantic, living, clawing seal. And Joselle saw how the light quitted his heart and flickered out before his eyes. And Joselle felt how the wings on his shoulders shrivelled and fell away. And Joselle wished to speak, but no sound came from his throat. And Joselle wished to go away, but he could not lift a foot. And Joselle sat with the others, and looked into the distance, and listened for a distant step.

They sat together till the stars came out. Then they parted, and returned to the town. And Joselle stood in his room as though he were blind, with tottering steps, and weak hands resting on the abysses to right and left of him, and his heart fluttered like withered leaves in the wind, and the sign of ice was upon his brow.

## THE RETURN

ON the anniversary of the death of the saint, Rabbi Ropshitz, many Zaddiks had assembled in Ropshitz. There they sat together in sadness and sorrow, when the door of the room flew open and a woman with flaming eyes rushed in. She threw herself on the floor groaning, and shrieked: "You masters, be gracious to me, and hear what a misfortune has befallen me! A few weeks ago I had entrusted a Jew with eight hundred silver guldens, so that he should go to the villages and buy flax. The profits, of which we were certain, were to be shared between us, half and half. Several days passed and I heard nothing, and my heart was troubled. Now to-day, in the early morning, someone who lives in the neighbourhood has come and told me that the man has met with a sudden death, and neither money nor bills of exchange have been found on him. Now I ask and demand, what has become of my money? Rabbis, give me good advice! You sit together like the archangels of the Lord of Heaven, and the heaven over your heads is open before you like a door. It is in your power to force your way in; what the Zaddiks decree, that the Lord makes to happen."

Then the woman's lamentation took such hold of the hearts of several of the Zaddiks who were present, that they said: "Be still, woman; we will see that your money is found."

But upon this the Rabbi Zaddik Shalom of Kaminka stood up, and called out: "Hear! all of you! and you, woman! There can be no promise which will bear fruit here. The money is lost for all time. Whoever wished to search for it would have to take hold of the chains that run over the wheel of all the ages. Are you, woman, able to say in what body your soul was housed, and what it did in that body, before it came in the course of its pilgrimage into your present body? It may be that from your past life you brought an unpaid debt, and that this Jew was born in order to pay your debt, and now that he has done it he has completed his actions in this world, and has departed hence. You, however, should be glad and grateful that the debts of your soul are annulled."

And when he had said this, the Rabbi Shalom turned to the Zaddiks, and said: "My teachers, if it should please you to hear me, I will tell you a story of the holy Baalshem. May his everlasting merits strengthen us.

"In the days of the great saint a distinguished Jew was living in Rischen. He was a rich man, learned and well versed in the Scriptures. Although he was not exactly numbered among the Chassids, he regarded Baalshem as a man of wonder and of grace, and he listened with curiosity to the talk which went about concerning the astonishing testimonies of the Master. And at last he had a longing to become acquainted with him face to face.

"One day he had his carriage harnessed, and the coachmen and servants were told to be in readiness.

He drove in state, magnificently attired like a nobleman, to Mesbiz, the dwelling-place of Baalshem.

"He entered the house, and made up his mind to let the saint discover his learning, for he thought that then he would consider him worthy of speech concerning the interpretations of the Scriptures or the mysteries of the Cabbala. But Baalshem purposely pushed the subjects aside, and spoke simply and thoughtfully of all kinds of worldly matters, at which the rich Jew thought he showed him no great honour. Yet he wished to take his leave of him in a worthy and dignified manner, so he quietly laid on the table before him a packet of roubles. Baalshem looked at it, and a subtle smile came to his face; it seemed as though he were looking at some distant event outside, beyond the room and the guest—indeed, beyond the earth.

"With the Jews it is a custom to visit the Zaddik at his house, and to ask him to force the Heavens to grant the fulfilment of their wishes through the power of his prayers. And for this they hand a gift to the Zaddik, so that thereby he, who for their sakes so constantly lifts his spirit up on high, may satisfy the daily needs of himself and his household. Therefore Baalshem appeared as though he thought he had to do with such an offering, and said: 'Praise be to God, I want nothing. My house is prosperous, my children have grown up to be the joy of my soul, my daughters have brought me worthy sons-in-law, and I have many grandchildren. No, sir, I need nothing.'

"Now Baalshem thought such an offering was

rare and not to be badly received. It had hardly ever happened to him that a Jew had come with an offering like this, without at once opening his heart and pouring out the bitterness of his woes. One would want him to look at a troublesome wound, from which he sought to be healed; another would weep that his wife had borne him no children, and the third would be threatened with prison from which he sought to escape. This man, however, gave, but required nothing.

“Wherefore have you come to me?” he asked. “I only wished to see you,” answered the man, “for the people marvel at you and call you a godlike man. So I said to my soul: ‘I will go to him, and know him by sight and by voice.’”

“Then said Baalshem: ‘Now, my friend, is it really the case that you have come this long way, only to stand before me, to look at me, and to hear me? Then look and listen well; I will tell you a story, and give it you as a present for your journey. But listen well to me, my friend, with all your might. Here is what happened in my story:

“There were once two rich Jews, neighbours; each had a son. The youths were of the same age, with souls of grace, and they were of good understanding. They played and learned together, and loved each other with a deep unswerving affection that was life to them both. But for how long is youth vouchsafed to Jewish children? Are they not torn early from that slumber which should protect the strength of their years? Thus with these two; they were thirteen and fourteen years old when they were

married. One went many miles away to the south, and the other still farther in the other direction.

“But now listen, my friend. Both of these lads were scarcely used to domestic love, and thus they wrote long letters each week to one another, in which they poured out their souls. But gradually their looks rested on that which was round about and near to them, and this engulfed their thoughts and minds; still they wrote each month and were not silent about what happened to them. But at length the world held them in its arms, and pressed the free breath out of them, and they were ashamed to put in their letters that their hearts were in need of the quiet which brings forth living words of love. At last they were completely silent, and rumours from strange mouths only now and again span thin threads between them; each heard about the other that he was prosperous, great, and blessed in this world's goods.

“But it happened after many years that one of them lost all that had made him happy, secure, and rich. Yes, he became too poor to have decent garments. When he found himself in this condition, and struggling against his misery, he thought of the friend of his youth, and said to himself: “He, who was once the whole world and much more beautiful than the whole universe to me, will, if I go to him, relieve me of the misery which cripples and confines me.” With much humiliation he borrowed money to travel, went to the town where his friend lived, and sought him out. There he was received with blessed warmth of heart, and the whole household

united in hospitality. At meal time, when they sat side by side, his friend asked: "Soul of my childhood, tell me how the world goes with you." The other said: "I need not say much when you know that the clothes which I wear are not mine." And as he spoke, tears of sorrow fell from his eyes and trickled on to the fine linen with which the table was festively covered. His companion asked no more, and the meal was continued with mirth, jest, and song.

"When it was ended and the friends sat side by side, the master of the house called his scribe and told him to reckon up all his fortune, and when this was done, to divide it in two equal parts, and to give one to the brother of his heart.

"Then he, who the day before had been poor, went home blessed with riches, and met both with work and success, so that his house was richer and more secure than it had ever been. But, during this time, misfortune had visited the other friend, and it proved to be a stiff-necked companion that did not yield, though the man strove with all his power to drive it away; finally he was forced to leave his home. Then his necessity became overwhelming, and he also found no kind soul to give him help or comfort on his bitter way. He sat in a wretched room enveloped in misery, as if a large, greedy spider had woven a grey web about him, which, growing closer and thicker, stifled him. Then he bethought him of his childhood's friend, and at this the web was torn asunder, and he felt his spirit soar in freedom out of the depths, ready to start life afresh and to struggle against the inimical and evil elements of the



world. He wrote at once to his friend, of whom he had heard that his present prosperity far exceeded the wealth which he used to possess; and in his great adversity he suggested going to this friend, in order that he might unashamed beg for help from his beloved hand. And he let him know the day and even the hour when he would leave his town in order to go to him. Then, quite cheerfully, at the right time, he went on his way, by foot. He hardly took notice of his great weariness. As his friend knew the day of his departure, behind each turn of the road, in every cloud of dust, he hoped to see his carriage come to meet him. He approached the unknown town, but still alone, and exhausted to death.

““Perhaps my friend went the other way to meet me—there must be many roads that lead from his town to mine,” thought the traveller. “As he did not meet me, he will have gone home, and I shall find him there.”

““When he saw the houses and gardens of the town, shining in white and green, the heaviness of his limbs left him, and he went on quickly. It was not necessary to inquire the way to his friend’s house, for it lay in a handsome street, solid and stately. He entered, and found the reception hall, filled with heavy, flaunting furniture, but nobody was there.

““Strange,” he thought, “that my friend does not expect me here. Can my letter have been lost, or was the messenger untrustworthy?” He sat down and waited.

““Meanwhile his friend was sitting in his room

in the top story of his fine house among books and tables of accounts. His head was buried in his hands. For days he had been battling with his soul. When he had received the letter from the friend of his youth, the day came to his mind when that friend had divided all that he had between them, for the sake of the love of their childhood, in those times when their souls used to be united in brotherhood. And now he was conscious that it was his turn to do the like.

“His nature had once sprung pure and kindly from the hands of the Eternal, like a clear, singing brook, but now that from sudden poverty he had rapidly gained unexpected wealth, he had become troubled and gloomy. At first he had been afraid of becoming impoverished again; later, a love for riches grew upon him, and this developed into cold avarice, so that his inner being had thereby become empty. And now the thought of parting with anything which belonged to him weighed on his mind.

“At last he determined not to give anything. But now he grew anxious, for he was aware that all his hardness of heart might melt, and that dew would fall on his soul at the sight of his friend, and on hearing the silvery sound of his voice. He summoned his servants, and told them to show the man out of the house, and he put hard and heartless words into their mouths.

“From the crowd of servants, one came to the room where the friend was waiting. On being asked for his master, he inquired the name of the guest, and when he heard it he told him to go

away, and, obeying his orders, showed him out of the house.

“The poor friend went to a place outside the town where he could be alone with his soul. There he wept bitterly, and cried to God: “The friend to whom I granted one-half of what I possessed would not let me see his face.” And at that hour, when his soul dissolved in bitter weeping, exhausted by his long journey taken without rest or nourishment, the poor man died.

“A few days later the rich man also passed away.

“They both stood together before the Judge of the World. Through suffering and goodness the poor man had gained for himself an existence in the light above, but the rich man was to sink into that place where ice burns like fire, and where hard hearts must abide.

“When his companion heard the sentence, he called aloud with tears: “Lord, even the light which goes out from Thee cannot lighten the dark sorrow which I should feel through all Eternity, if he, who was my whole world, when as a child I played at Thy feet, should be plunged into that dark realm of torment.”

“The Voice of Heaven spoke, and said: “Thou shalt be thine own and his judge. What dost thou desire for both of you?”

“Then the other answered: “Grant that we may both descend to the earth, and let new bodies be born to us. Let him once again determine which way his soul shall take. Let him be born to riches and me to poverty: I will appear to him in the garb of a

beggar, and ask back of him that which he owed and denied me in our past life. If his mind is niggardly as before, I will pour burning tears over his heart, and I will devise words that shall move the air about him like wings. And in order to obtain the money from him farthing for farthing, on my knees I will wrestle with his hard soul."

"Then the voice above decreed to them both a new return.

"The hard man lived a luxurious life in his rich house; the other found himself among needy people in a distant land.

"They neither of them ever knew what had happened during the pilgrimage of their souls in the former life. The poor man of necessity went forth to beg, and thus he came to where the other abode in earthly bliss, in his beautiful house among riches and good living. On the day when the poor man entered that town, his misery and privation had mounted to its height like a swelling flood of water. He wandered among the houses and reached the rich man's house. Here he stopped and lifted his hand to touch the knocker of the door. At that moment a man passed, saw the beggar at the door, and called to him: "You must know that it is in vain! From that house none has ever gone away comforted." When he knew that he would receive no gift, his hand sank down, but something in his heart said to him that if he were to be helped, he must receive alms here and nowhere else. Then he knocked, and stood before the master of the house and asked for a meagre gift with which to still his gnawing hunger.

““If you give me nothing I shall die,” he said. “You hold my life in your hands.” A laugh contorted the gloomy face of the master of the house, and he scoffed: “Waste your time no more. Every child in the street knows that I give no alms. I shall not break my rule for you.”

“Then the poor man felt a peculiar compelling force rise within him; it was to him as though he begged for more than his life. Strange words full of power came to his lips, and with impassioned gestures he wrestled with all his force with the closed heart of the other man.

“When the rich man felt such a great power raging over him, fury seized him and he struck at the beggar, and he who had put the whole power of his life into his prayers sank down dead under the blow.

“Now, friend,’ said Baalshem, ‘hast thou heard me to the end? Dost thou still want nothing?’

“Then the Jew broke into tears at the Master’s knees: ‘Rabbi, I am that bad man. You have lifted the veil of the past; my eyes have seen the links of all that happened. What shall I do to purify my polluted soul?’

“Baalshem answered: ‘Go, and see in every beggar on thy way the child of the beggar whom thou didst strike. Give of thy goods and of thy help all that thou canst. And while thou givest, let thy heart overflow with love.’”

This is what the Rabbi Shalom told the Zaddiks the year when they were assembled in Ropshitz.

## FROM HOST TO HOST

IN the days of Baalshem there lived two friends. They were in the prime of youth, when the heavens are alight with the glamour and uncertainty of dawn. The wild dreams of twilight still tremble, but soon the sun will arise, making visible the kingdom of form, although as yet, in the holy gleam of this solemn hour, dream and day pale before the questioning of rosy dawn concerning the meaning of life.

The two friends often sat together, leaning against a tree or the bare wall of their little room, and they spoke of the meaning of life. To the one, the world was revealed according to the word of Baalshem. In everything he received a message, and with his every deed he sent an answer back. He threw himself down on the new-ploughed fields, and drew grace from the upturned earth; he greeted the wind and the waters and the beauty of the creatures which everywhere abounded, and his greeting was a prayer. This angered his companion, who said that it was nothing but a sin against the spirit of truth. For there are many aspects and forms of existence, and whoever lowers his soul to be the slave of a belief sees everything only in one aspect, and one form; and his way is a poor and comfortable way, and the search for truth and the meaning of life is dead within him. To which the other answered below his breath that

in the world of transfiguration there are no aspects and forms, for in it everything stands in its own purity. Thus the two friends often disputed with one another, and each, as he spoke, felt the barriers fall from his soul, and he looked anxiously, yet delighted, into a world about which the Word had nothing to say.

Then it befell that the youth who was devoted to Baalshem was overtaken by a heavy illness, and he was aware by the strength and stubbornness of his pain, that it was the messenger of a power which wished to bring his life on earth to an end. Therefore he did not resist, but let his desire rest in that of the mighty element, which held his body clasped in its burning arms. However willingly he awaited the lightning which flashed between both worlds, yet before him there stood a horror of the coming that led in its unspeakable reality to all that should take place in the abyss of Eternity. Therefore he let Baalshem be told that he was preparing for death, and when the Master stood by his side, he said:

"How and with whom shall I go? A horror is upon me and disturbs my peace."

Baalshem took the sick youth's hand in his, and said:

"Child, remember: hast thou not always gone from Host to Host and from goal to goal? So shalt thou go yet farther in the garden of Eternity."

And he put his hand on the boy's brow and calmed him: "And as the hour of the last sunrise is upon thee, that blissful and solemn hour, and because thou hast lived truly in it and hast not been afraid of its happiness, I will lighten thy way and will write my

sign upon thy forehead, so that none shall make thee afraid and block thy path; so go hence, my child, when Death calls thee, and I bless thee and thy truth." And he bent over him, and pressed forehead to forehead and blessed him.

But when the Master had left, the other youth crept into the room and knelt down by the bed. He kissed the sick boy's hand, and said:

"My beloved, they want to take you, and I know that you will not resist. Remember how we used to speak to each other under the birch trees in the summer evenings, and finally you only said: 'Yes, it is.' And I said: 'No, it is not.' And now I feel full of fear, and you go away from me, and with you go your eyes, and you go willingly. My beloved, the birches and the summer evenings are in your eyes. And they all say: 'Yes, it is.' And I now feel that it is. I myself say: 'Yes,' and know that it is, for otherwise there would be no meaning in anything. You go away from me, and where do you go?"

And he sobbed over his friend's hand and kissed it over and over again. The dying youth said:

"Dear friend, I go farther on the way, and on my path I will remember you, and our love and the intercourse of our souls. So I will come to you and tell you of my journey. Therefore give me your hand. Behold, I clasp it in mine and twine my fingers in yours with all my strength, and this is my promise to you that I will come." Then the other cried aloud:

"You shall not go! I hold you! you shall not go."

But in his peace the dying boy said:

"Nay, do not so. You can do nothing against the



Lord. Still you shall hold my hand till the breath leaves me, and this will soon be; and my promise to you is: my message to the earth, which carries with it beauty of winds and water and roaming animals, my message that I will come again to see it and you." This was his parting.

When he ascended, the gates of heaven opened to him at the sign on his forehead, and it took him far into the Kingdom to Come. He wandered from gate to gate and from sanctuary to sanctuary, and experienced the unattainable, and received the meaning of life. There, time was silenced, and there was no space. Only the way of existence, without place or duration, only the blossoming in the air of living stillness.

But suddenly his steps were arrested, and time buzzed on his ears and space buffeted him rudely about. Then he stood among voiceless powers and could go no farther. He called to them and showed them the sign on his forehead. But the powers seemed to stare, and laugh, and almost to shake their heads, and he realized that he no longer bore the sign on his forehead. So he stood and became a man, and the despair of mankind drifted down and sought to strangle him. But he resisted it, and turned, and then he saw an old man standing before him, who spoke to him, and said: "This is not good, that you linger here instead of going farther and farther."

He answered: "I can go no farther."

The old man said: "It is not good; for if you linger here and do not go farther and farther, then you may lose the life of the spirit, and remain at this

place like a dumb stone, for the whole life of the world to come consists in stepping from Host to Host, higher and higher, till you reach the unearthliness of Eternity."

The youth asked him: "What shall I do?"

Then the old man said again: "I will go into the sanctuary once more and ask what and why this is."

He went, and came back and said: "You promised your friend to come to him and to give him tidings of your journey, and you have forgotten, and not done so; therefore the sign on your forehead is washed away, and it is denied to you to enter this sanctuary, which is the sanctuary of truth."

Then the youth saw the earth and his friend, and he grieved over his forgetfulness. After a time he asked: "What shall I do to be set free?"

The old man said: "Go to your friend, and appear to him in a dream and acquaint him with that which he desires to know."

Thus he spoke and departed. The youth descended to earth and appeared in a dream to his friend. He stroked the sleeper's forehead and whispered in his ear:

"Dear friend, I have come to tell you of my journey. But do not be angry that I have delayed. For how can one remember a man, even the dearest, in the sight of the whirlpool of God, which transcends all words."

The other threw himself about in his sleep, pressed his eyes with his hand, and hissed through his clenched teeth:

"Go from me, you lying image, I will be befooled by you no longer. I waited and waited, and the promised one never came, and now my mind is

distraught, seeing that I have been deceived night after night, and have imagined that I saw the promised one, but all became dark and vanished into shadow. And now I will be befooled no more. I command you to disappear at once at my bidding, for I will not suffer your deceptions to come upon me like a bolt out of the empty night. And come not again; hear me, and never come again."

Then the youth trembled, and bending over his companion said:

"Truly there is no fraud; but I am your friend, and have come to you out of the world of being. And remember how we sat under the birch trees in the summer evenings, and think how our right hands were clasped at the hour of death."

But the dreamer cried: "Night after night you say the same, and I raise myself up to you, and then you go away into the shadows. So let go of me. Behold, I will set myself free." Then the visitor renewed the contest once more, and cried:

"Did you not yourself say: 'Yes, it is'?"

Then the other gave a hard laugh, and said: "I have indeed said, and I have also waited. But the PROMISED ONE DID NOT COME! And now I see what it is; I was the sport of an hour of terror. It mastered and shamed me and brought me to shame, and drew the 'Yes' of treason to my lips. But I cry against you: 'No, it is not.' No, no, I will tear you to pieces, mad lie that you are."

Then the youth yielded, and resigned himself to depart; but there came to him one thing at the last, and out of the faint distance he called to his comrade:

"Then I will bring a sign to you, and I will return with it in broad daylight."

And he saw the head of the beloved sink back among his pillows, tired, but with a spark of wonder in his eyes, like the first appearance of hope.

In the world above, he hastened to the temple of truth, and sought the old man and asked him:

"Speak and help me, what sign can I bring to my friend that I am real?"

The old man said: "I will advise you in this also, my son, and may God be with you. Baalshem preaches every Sabbath at midday in the house of teaching in Eternity, which stands in the Heaven of the Holy Knowledge; he speaks of the mysteries of the doctrine; and at the third meal of the Sabbath, which is called the Meal of the Holy Queen, he preaches to the ears of mortals of these mysteries, after his Word has been sanctified in the world above. Therefore, go at midday on the Sabbath and listen to your Master's words in the Heavens, and then descend to your friend, when he lies stretched on his bed in the afternoon, and is no longer in his waking mind, and yet can find no rest, and report the Master's sayings to him. And this shall be a sign to him: that when, at Baalshem's house, he comes to the Meal of the Queen, he shall hear the words from his lips."

The youth did as he said, and listened to the Master's speech, then descended and slipped into the daydream of his friend and poured the words like balsam over him. He bent over him and kissed him mouth to mouth with the kiss of Heaven. Then he flew away.

The other rose immediately; and to him it was as though he had attained the Unattainable. He went outside, and there stood the birch trees in the midday sun. He sat under them like one who knows; and fulfilment streamed into his young and eager mind from far and near. At sundown he went to Baalshem's house, not from doubt but from longing. He stood in the doorway and heard the words from Baalshem's lips as if from the mouth of God's power. Then he bowed at the speaker's feet, and said:

"Rabbi, bless me, for I wish to die. For what is there for me to do here?"

But the Master said: "Not so. Go out to the birch trees which still stand in the summer night, and say to them in your joy: 'Yes, it is.' I do indeed bless you, but not with death, but that you should here and now step from goal to goal and from Host to Host."

## THE THREE LAUGHS

ONE Friday evening, when Baalshem and several of his scholars sat at table, and he had just spoken the blessing over the wine, his serious face was suddenly suffused with a happy light, as though from within, and he began to laugh; and he laughed long as though to himself. The scholars looked about the room and at each other, but there seemed nothing which could have excited this laughter. After a time Baalshem laughed again, and just in the same way, with the bright, involuntary merriment of a child. And then, after a short time, his laughter sounded again a third time.

The scholars sat silent at the table. This incident was strange and incomprehensible to them. For they knew the Master well, and that he was not easily moved in this manner.

Thus they suspected a deep unknown cause for this merriment, and would have gladly known it, but none of them found courage to approach Baalshem on the subject. Then all eyes turned to Rabbi Wolf, who was among them, asking of him to inquire of the Master the reason of this burst of laughter. For, at the going out of the Sabbath, when Baalshem sat in his room and rested, it was customary for Rabbi Wolf to go to him, in order to hear what might have occurred in the course of the Sabbath.

So this time the scholar again came to the Master, and asked:

"May we know the cause of the laughter which overcame you yesterday?"

The Rabbi said: "Now, wouldst thou not indeed like to know whence this happiness came to me? Get ready to come with me, and thou shalt hear."

Then he told the servant to harness the horses, for he was wont at the going out of the Sabbath to leave the town and take a drive in the open country. He, with his pupils, got into the carriage, and did not return home as usual after several hours, but drove on through the darkness during the whole night. In the morning they arrived at a place where Baalshem made the carriage stop at the head-man's house.

His arrival soon became known to all the Jews, and they came and surrounded the house to do him honour. He, however, paid attention to no one, but told the head-man to have Shabtai fetched. Then, rather ill-content, the latter answered:

"Master, what do you want with this man, who is a small, unregarded member of our community? We do, indeed, every one of us, know that he is an honest Jew, but I never heard that he was famed for the least learning. What has this pious, simple fellow to do with you?"

"All the same, it is my wish that thou shouldst call him to me."

Shabtai was sent for, and came, a humble, grey-haired old man. Baalshem looked at him, and said:

"I also want thy wife to come."

And she made her appearance directly.

Now said the Master: "Thou mayest tell me what thou didst on the night of last Sabbath. But tell the plain truth and have no shame, and conceal nothing."

"Sir," answered the other, "I will hide nothing from you, and if I have sinned you will find me ready to take my penance at your hands, even as though God himself had descended.

"All the days granted to me by Heaven, anything that I possessed was the fruit of my labour. At one time it was blessed, and I was then able to put away a little. It had always been my custom from the beginning for my wife to go on the fifth day of the week to buy with great care what was necessary for our requirements in flour, meat, fish, and candles, to celebrate the Sabbath. And when the tenth hour on the day before the Sabbath had passed, I left my work and went to the prayer-house in order to stay there till after the evening prayer. This I have done since my youth.

"But now that I am growing old, the wheel of fortune has turned against me, my property has slipped through my hands, and my power to gain reward for my work is small.

"Now I live a life of care, and often it is not granted to me to earn by the fifth day enough to provide for the Sabbath needs, as was our custom in the good old days. My one comfort, and this I need not forgo whatever happens, is to end my work on the tenth hour on the day before the Sabbath, and to go to the prayer-house and stay there during the chanting of the Sabbath songs.



“Now hear me, my Master: It was the tenth hour of the day before the Sabbath, and there was not a farthing to provide what was needful, and my poor wife had not a crumb of meal left in the chest. All the days of my life I have never required anything from any one, and this day also I wished to exist without alms, and not to step over any man’s threshold as a beggar; and I had made up my mind that it was better to fast on the Sabbath than to ask a gift from flesh and blood. But I feared that it would weigh too heavily on my wife’s heart, if she did not even see a candle burning on the table, and that she might somehow or other accept a candle or a little bit of fish, if out of kindness a neighbour should offer it to her. So I spoke to her and begged of her to promise not to take help from any one, even though it were that of which we were in need; for know, my Master, that the Jews among whom we live are good-hearted, and it would go hard with them to see that on the Sabbath our table was bare. And my wife agreed. Before I went to the prayer-house, I said to her:

“‘To-day I shall linger and remain in prayer till the day is over. For if I went home with the others from the prayer-house and they saw no light in the house, they would ask the reason, and I should not know how to answer them. But when I do come home, then, my wife, we will receive in love what Heaven has decreed.’ This I said to comfort my old wife.

“She remained, and cleaned every nook and corner, and, as the hearth was cold and she had no food to prepare, she had plenty of time on her hands, and, not

knowing how to pass it, she opened an old chest, and took from it the clothes of our youth, grown yellow with age, in order to spread them out and to brush and clean them again. Then, among all the old worn-out stuff, she saw a sleeve that we had missed years ago and had never been able to find. On this piece of dress there were several buttons, like small flowers, wrought out of gold and silver, such beloved ornaments as one comes across on old things. My wife cut them off and took them to the goldsmith, and he gave her enough money to provide what was necessary for the Sabbath, as well as two large candles—there was even enough for what we should need next day.

“In the evening, when all the people had left, I went slowly along the lane to our house, and from afar I saw that a light was burning, and the candle-light looked festive and familiar. But I cared not, and thought: ‘My old wife has acted after the manner of women, and she could not refrain from accepting something.’

“I entered, and found the table well covered and prepared with Sabbath bread and fish, and I also found on the table wine over which to say the blessing. However, I guarded myself from being angry, as I did not wish to spoil the Sabbath. So I controlled myself, and said the blessing and ate the fish. Then I said to my wife gently, for I had pity on her poor troubled soul:

“‘Now it is proved that your heart is not ready to bear hardship.’

“She let me finish, and then said in a clear voice:

“Do you not remember, my husband, the old thing with silver buttons that has been missing for years? I found it when I scoured out the old chest. I gave the buttons to the goldsmith, and with the money I have arranged for the Sabbath.’

“My Master, when I heard this my eyes overflowed with tears, so great was the joy which filled my heart. I threw myself down before the Lord and gave thanks to him for remembering my Sabbath. I looked at my wife, and saw happiness shining over her good old face. Then my heart warmed within me, and I forgot the many days of misery. I took my wife in my arms and danced round the room with her. Then I ate the Sabbath meal, and my heart became even more light and happy. And in joy and laughter I danced a second time, and I did so a third time when I had eaten what was over. For behold, my Master, it made me so happy that these gifts for the Sabbath had come to me from God alone and not from man. I could not contain myself in this overpowering joy. But if, sir, as it has occurred to me to submit to God, it was a piece of unworthy foolishness in the eyes of the Almighty to have danced with my wife, then graciously set me a penance and I will not fail to perform it.”

Then Shabtai, the bookbinder, was silent. Baalshem said to his scholars:

“Now know that all the Heavenly Hosts have rejoiced with him and have moved with him in dance, and that on account of the joy in these old hearts a golden joy shone in Paradise. And I who saw all this, laughed with them thrice over it.”

Then he turned to the couple, and said:

“May a son be born to your childless old age, and name him Israel after me.”

And thus it happened. This boy became the Maggid of Kosnitz, the great man of prayer.

## THE LANGUAGE OF BIRDS

RABBI ARJI, the preacher of Polnaj, bore in his soul a burning desire for a wisdom which is so rare in the human race that there is never more than one man in a generation that has it within him. The nature of the wisdom was that he who possessed it had ears to hear the language of all creatures under the sun. What the animals on the earth and in the air confided to one another of the secrets of their existence entered into him. Yea, even the speech of the trees and plants was known to him. And if he pressed his ear against the black earth or against the naked rocks, the whispers of the animals that shun the light and that live in clefts and in caves reached him.

Now Rabbi Arji well knew the presumption that there was in his wish, yet he supposed, when he set himself to judge his soul, that he might harbour it on account of the high aspirations from which it sprang. He was a preacher whose words could be penetrating and terrible, but he thought that if he could understand the speech of all creatures, and could give it forth from his own lips, then his discourse would have more power than ever to lead all souls to him; he would then preach from the spirit of earth and heaven, and thus would rule over the hearts of his community as an emperor rules over his dominion.

And in his innermost soul he thirsted after this mysterious power which appeared more desirable to him than anything on earth.

So he summoned courage to go to Baalshem, who had long held him in friendship, in order to disclose his desire to him. He hoped to gain such a hold on the will of the saint as to induce the holy one to grant him from his own lips the instruction raising him to this wonderful grade, in which the ear of man is open to all the voices under heaven, and he thought that this end for which he lusted was so high that the Master of Testimony would not deny it to him.

His wish and hopes gave wings to his feet. So he went on his way wrapped up in his dream of soul power without thinking about man or matter. And thus he entered the Master's room. The room was filled with listeners sitting or standing, for Baalshem was speaking. When Rabbi Arji had shut the door behind him and bowed his head in silence, he rose; his glance, which had become hard and dazed from his never resting desire, dived into the Master's mildly shining eyes. Baalshem stood speaking opposite to him. By his look the Rabbi felt that he had seen and recognized him, but the saint did not make this known by any word or sign, and so the greeting was unanswered, for all who were present, out of honour to the exalted one, did not speak or move. The guest remained standing and waiting by the door. He noticed that the Master was telling a parable, but he was not in a condition to follow the words with his mind, for he was deeply hurt that Baalshem did not break off to give him a slight welcome in words, or,

at least, with a motion of his hand; but he subdued his impatient thoughts, and resolved to keep quiet until the Master had ended, for surely then he would offer him welcome or peace. But Baalshem had spoken, and now he made one or other among his listeners utter his thoughts; for while he was speaking he had read from their demeanour what each one among them was feeling — opposition, doubt, or argument. While question and response were being exchanged, neither the host nor his guests paid any attention to the new-comer, and thus the Rabbi stood, sad as death, at the door. The shame of seeing himself so disregarded stifled him till it almost took away his breath. He felt as though he must slink away softly in order to weep, no matter where; but while his hand tried to steal to the latch in order to press it gently down, he bethought him of the desire that had brought him here, and his unceasing wish flamed up and mastered him, and he felt that no shame could be so burning but that he would bear it for the sake of his purpose. Thus he stayed on.

Meanwhile many of the guests turned to go. The host accompanied them to the door, bestowing peace on them. Then, when his garment touched the Rabbi, he turned his head to him and almost imperceptibly gave him a greeting over his shoulder, without joy or emotion, as if to one whom he had never seen before, and about whom he did not trouble his mind. The preacher now lost all heart. He felt as though the ground had gone from under his feet, and as though he were gradually sinking into a chilly darkness. Yet his longing awoke once more and animated

him again. He mustered all his power and patience, and armed himself against the injustice which this day had brought him. And he said to himself: "It may be a terrible accident, or a trial which the Master thought fit for my purification. I shall remain and watch for the favourable hour." So he spent the day till the late afternoon in Baalshem's house among friends and scholars.

Towards evening the Master had his carriage and horses made ready for a drive, for he meant to start on a journey that same day. Upon which Rabbi Arji felt despair, for he saw the Master going away from him; when the latter beckoned to him with a friendly movement of his head, and bade him accompany the other men of his escort on his journey. Then the preacher's face quivered with joy, for he knew that the saint chose as companions for his journeys those among his disciples to whom he had the intention of communicating in some way or other his will or his knowledge. He felt that the saint had known of his desire, and that he meant to satisfy it on the way.

The companions drove out into the country, which was already becoming dark; they were silent and full of anxiety. Now, when after sunset the scent of plants and the vapours of the earth were set free and perfumed the air, expectation rose in their souls, for things of moment were wont to happen when the Master took these journeys with his pupils. On their way white mists in strange forms emerged from the ploughed fields and drew near to the carriage, adding to the awe of those who sat in it. Then



darkness came on, the horses went still more quickly, and all became indistinct.

After the first ecstasy of his spirit, Rabbi Arji had fallen into a strange torpor. The coolness of the night during the quick drive tried him, and his heart was exhausted by the varied sensations of the day. With difficulty he kept his burning eyes open, for he thought that the Master might call him by name at any moment, in order to speak to him of that which he desired, but Baalshem remained in wordless absorption. At midnight he ordered the carriage to stop. They stopped at an inn in a little town on the way. The Master mounted the stairs at once to the room above, where the host prepared him a sleeping-place. The disciples remained together in a large room on the ground floor. There the servant quickly arranged on the wooden benches a few pillows and blankets for them to sleep. All threw themselves down, wearied out, and slept. Rabbi Arji laid himself down with the others, but as soon as his body touched the couch, the crippling fatigue from which he had suffered on the journey left him. His thoughts flew away in a whirling dance, and his everlasting wish circled around them. The storm in his soul seemed like a noise without. He listened with attention to each sound in the house. Would the Master call him to his room now, now when all slept, at the most mysterious hour of the night, in order to make a revelation to him? And so he lay, consumed by the fever in his spirit, and waited for the morning.

While the shades of the night faded from their deep black into a pale grey, he heard a sound on the

boards above him, and recognized the Master's step. Then a door was softly opened and there followed a silence as before. The preacher lay for a time and listened; then his impatience conquered him, and he crept past the sleepers and went upstairs, for he felt sure that Baalshem, the springs of whose being were always renewed during a short spell of sleep, had left his couch. And Rabbi Arji thought that these hours born of the night to the approaching day would be favourable to his prayer.

On the last step of the stairs he was met by such a strong and dazzling light that he stumbled backwards, and for a time clung to the balustrade with his eyes shut. When with difficulty he was able to open his eyes he was aware of the saint in the doorway, and Baalshem's countenance formed the core of the fiery light which had just thrown him backwards. The Master's head seemed to be of a pale glowing, translucent substance, and from his eyes beams of a silver blue streamed forth. The sight in its beauty and in its fearfulness was such that a trembling weakness seized the preacher in every limb, and he threw himself down on the last step, hiding his face on the ground. He felt that the exalted one was now one with the highest stream of glory, and only the shimmering husk illuminated by his distant soul was standing before his eyes.

When he again dared to look, the countenance of the Master resembled a paling constellation fading in the light of day. After a time Baalshem called to him by name. He rose from his knees and, with down-cast looks, hastened to his Master, and there threw

himself on the ground again and burst into tears. "Friend, what dost thou desire of me at this early hour?" asked the saint. The preacher found no word of reply for the trembling of his awestruck heart. "Stand up, and do not fear," said the Master encouragingly; but when the Rabbi tried to speak, only a hoarse stammer came from his lips. Then he rose, disturbed and ashamed, and leaving the Master, went softly down to his companions and sought his couch again. They were lost in sleep, and did not hear him coming. He went with them to the early meal, sat silent in the midst of their conversation, and did not by a syllable betray the events of the night. But Baalshem was, as ever, peaceful in the midst of life.

When he was departing, he called the preacher to him, and said: "Friend, thou shalt take the seat by my side. We will be alone together." Thus they drove into the clear, busy day. When the little town lay behind them, and the fields stretched around, with woods beyond them, dark against the blue of the sky, Baalshem bent a little forward and looked in his neighbour's eyes with a peculiar smile, and said: "The cause of thy arrival and sojourn in my house is known to me, my friend. Thou didst hope that I would initiate thee into my knowledge, so that thine ear, like mine, might be open to all creatures. I know that only this led thee to me." Rabbi Arji seized the Master's hand and buried his burning face upon it, and no word of answer came to his lips. But Baalshem looked on to the tender green of the ploughed fields, and the smile lingered on his lips. After a time he said again: "Sit nearer to me and bend thine

ear to my mouth. Now I will really teach thee my wisdom. But before I let thee into the inmost depths of the mystery, it is needful that I put before thee a matter which thou knowest, and reflect that this which I am about to tell thee is only to prepare thee for the final revelation. Thou knowest of the mighty chariot which stands in the highest spheres of the upper world. At each of its four corners there is always the head of a creature: of a man, of a bull, of a lion, and of an eagle. These four creatures guard within them the source and origin of all belonging to our living world which has breath and which is born as speech. From the man's countenance there come to us the spirit and soul of the speech which we here below interchange with mankind. From the bull's head there come to us the beasts, which are serviceable and helpful to us, and the sounds of their strength and their meanings. From the lion the information about the roaring which the un-governed and wild animals of woods and deserts give forth to call and to entice each other in the twilight; but the eagle's head generates the sounds with which the birds fill the heavens.

"And know this, friend: he who is able to stretch his soul far enough for it to penetrate into the upper world, where the chariot stands, and who looks so clearly out of the eyes of his soul that he learns the secret of the essence of the nature of these four animals, which are the mind's image of the creatures of our world—he has his mind open to all the sounds of the earth. He can distinguish between the false and the true word, between the deceitful and the heartfelt

voice; he hears the voices of the earth talking among themselves, while to the race of man silence is complete and every sound seems to have died away; and the voices of the beasts of the earth and of the birds of the air carry to him those secrets to which the senses of man are not attuned. So the world is never silent to him; it forces itself upon him with all its marvels; for in the chariot above he has looked into the primeval source. But understand this: What I am now about to say to thee is the very core of the revelation, so bend thine ear close to my mouth, and listen with thy whole soul. Shut thyself up for this moment from everything outside thee and wait for my words." And now the Master whispered of high matters never before heard, which had been opened up to him from the depths of the mystery of the chariot and its figures. Baalshem continued to speak, and to the preacher it was as though door beyond door sprang open before him; all shadows and darkness disappeared; all sadness and inferiority were cleared away, and his heart was near to the great heart of the world.

As he sat pressed against the Master, so that his ear might be near the saint's mouth, and listened while they went along, the carriage entered a wood. The road was too narrow for the stately equipage, and pointed twigs touched one of his ears. Then he became somewhat mindful of the place, and noticed that birds of all kinds were gaily singing their morning song. Soon, strangely enough, he distinguished separate words and jests. It was one great conversation full of charm and gaiety. Then the preacher's heart became merry and proud. He continued to

listen with all his might, and soon, with intense pleasure at his marvellous powers, he distinguished the voices of other animals, and also the meaning of their talk.

But, none the less, with his other ear he did not stop listening intently to his Master's words, and thus with a divided mind he took in the voices of both. The wood grew lighter, and soon the town which was Baalshem's goal came into view.

He had ended his discourse, and looked at the preacher searchingly. "Hast thou taken in well what thou hast heard from me?" he asked after a pause; and Rabbi Arji looked at him now with certainty in his eyes, and said: "Yes, Master, I have well understood all." Then the saint put the palm of his hand lightly over his brow.

And now the Rabbi had forgotten everything which Baalshem had laid in his soul as a revelation. He sat there comfortless, empty, and as though he were burnt out, and he heard the birds calling in the furrows of the fields, and understood as little as he had done before this day—merely the unmeaning sounds of animals.

But Baalshem smiled, and said: "Woe to thee, Rabbi Arji, for thou hast a greedy soul. Couldst thou not entrust it wholly to me at the moment when I wanted to pour grace into it? Woe to thee, friend, who wished to enrich thyself in multiplicity and undue haste! God's miracles are for those who are unified and humble-minded." Then the preacher shrank back sobbing.

## THE CALL

RABBI DAVID, the Silent, wished to call down the Messiah. He wished to make a whirlwind of his will, so that it should rattle at the gate above and force its way through, and should have the power to call upon, to seize, and pull down the Messiah to the earth. He cut his life loose from all beings and earthly powers, mortified himself, and lived for many days and nights independent of all but the spirit. But soon he became aware of his limitations, and recognized that he was alone. Though he ought to speak for the spirit of the age, he could not do so. He ought to announce that the time was ripe, but he did not feel this, he was not in touch with the time. The abodes of man stretched far away from him.

Then Rabbi David discovered what it was fitting for him to do. Every year, on the Day of Atonement, he was called on to repeat the great prayer for the community. Now he understood the reason for this, he knew that he would carry the prayers of all on the wings of his words, the prayers of the community and the prayers of all Israel, for was not Baalshem's house the centre of the spiritual world? He decided that he would cast his words over the people like a great net, so that their fervour should all be drawn away from narrow, individual aims, and that the Messiah should be brought down.

He wished to bind together the souls of all Israel into one striving throng, that should take flight in urgent petition. All words should flow into his word, and in it they should all stream upwards. Yea, he wished to announce the ripeness of time. The manifold should grow into a unity without flaw. He wished to wed himself with the time, to mix his blood in its blood, his soul in its soul, to throw into the night for the sake of the morning that which had been so wedded.

The Day of Atonement arrived, and the community were assembled for the early morning prayer. They stood as the dead in the garments of the dead, and prepared themselves to look into the eye of eternity. The Master alone was missing. Usually, as God's doorkeeper, Baalshem was first in the House of God. But to-day he tarried, and the crowd of his people waited for him, full of anxiety, for they knew that all he did was determined by the secret happenings of the world. When the morning had already overflowed into broad day, Baalshem entered softly and almost hesitatingly. He went past the congregation and looked at no one, went to his place, and laid his head on the praying-desk. All stood, and looking towards him did not dare to begin to pray. But after a time he lifted his head, and his eyes blinked like one who tries to look at the sun, then his head sank, and he lifted it; and this went on for a time. After this he shook himself like one who awakes from a haunting dream, which he wishes to shake from his limbs, and he made a sign that they should start the morning prayer. But when this had been said, and the



community had prepared their hearts in dedication for the great prayer, which is called the Mussaf,<sup>1</sup> the Master looked around the circle, and saw them all standing in a great multitude, dumb in the garments of the dead, resigned to die or to live. And softly he spoke to those who stood around him, one word dragged out of another as from the depths of death: "Who will pray aloud the Mussaf?" Although his voice was almost inaudible, at that very moment astonishment was kindled in the hearts of the community, and hovered silently in the silent space. For all knew that this was the office of Rabbi David, who had been appointed years and years ago by the Master, and who was God's servant, to carry upwards in loud and vibrating tones, on the Day of Atonement, the wishes and petitions from all the trembling hearts and all the whispering lips, and to free from fear all hearts and all lips. But none dared to answer the saint, and amazement hovered silently in the air. He, however, asked again and again, till someone softly and with hesitation said: "But it is Rabbi David who prays."

Then Rabbi Baalshem lifted himself up and turned to the Ark, before which stood Rabbi David, pale as death and rigid as though he were dead; and he turned to him in high scorn: "Wilt thou then, Rabbi David, pray aloud the Mussaf? Thou knowest nothing, and thou dost wish to pray aloud the Mussaf on Yomkippur<sup>2</sup>?" Then they all stood in consternation, and did not understand what had happened; each one asked of his soul how it was that the Master should put a man and even a Zaddik to shame in such

<sup>1</sup> Prayer spoken on the Sabbath.

<sup>2</sup> Day of Atonement.

a way, and even on the Day of Atonement. But the fear was great, and no one dared to speak a word. Rabbi David still stood before the Ark, rigid and upright, and it seemed to him as though a whirlwind bore him into the night. Fists were lifted out of the whirlwind and struck him, and icy claws tore forth his soul and threw it into the night; thus he stood in empty space, oblivious of all time. Suddenly, however, the whirlwind faded from him, and he saw himself standing before the Ark, and the words of Rabbi Baalshem reached him: "Is there no one here to pray aloud? Then go thou, Rabbi David."

Then his tears burst forth, and Rabbi David wept and wept, and began to pray in the midst of his weeping; and he prayed amid great weeping, and his breaking heart wrung from him tears and ever fresh tears. And his tears bore away all his assurance and his strong will, and they carried away with him all the Kavana of his soul, the fruit of his days and nights, the reaching after eternity. He felt and knew no more than the sorrow of his heart, and out of his heart's sorrow he prayed to God and wept.

And the sorrows of the community were inflamed by his sorrow and rose up. He who had spread a covering over some corner of his life now drew it aside and showed his wounds to God as though to a physician. He who had built a wall between himself and other men pulled it down, and suffered in the pain of others as in his own pain; and he whose heart was heavy because it could not find within its own narrow range the way to the kernel of destiny, now found it and breathed in freedom.

But when the fast had ended, and the last of the holy tones of the Neila<sup>1</sup> had vanished, Rabbi David stood before Baalshem. When he stood before him, unable to look up at him, and when he could not see but only feel the kindly, peaceful countenance not far from his own, he could hold himself together no longer, but sank at the Master's feet and lay there for a while, writhing and dumb. At last he raised his eyes and said with great difficulty: "Master, what sin didst thou see in me?" The community had crowded behind him, and all waited on the Master's words. With eyes that had been cleared and calmed by prayer, they watched his mouth. The same question rose in all those hearts, now appeased through the fountain of God's grace.

Baalshem said: "I find no sin in thee, Rabbi." He laid his hands on his shoulders and bent towards him like a father who in silence blesses his son, and spoke again: "I find no sin in thee." And when the other's glance met his, sad and expectant, he said further: "Thou hast prepared and sanctified thyself; thou hast bathed thy body in the fire of mortification, and thou hast stretched thy soul as a bowstring of the Kavana, in order to call down the Messiah." He remained silent, and the other bowed his forehead, then he spoke further: "O Rabbi David, thou didst wish to cast thy net over the people of Israel, and to make all wills subservient to thee, in order to call down the Messiah." The other bowed his forehead yet lower, and Baalshem spoke again: "O Rabbi David, thou didst wish that through thine own power

<sup>1</sup> Final prayer on the Day of Atonement.

thou shouldst grasp the incomprehensible, and that thy power should force itself into the innermost heaven, and should, in compelling arms, embrace the Messiah's throne. Didst thou think that thou couldst hold it as my hand grasps thy shoulder? The Messiah wanders over the suns and the earth, in thousands and thousands of shapes, and the suns and the earth ripen in readiness for Him. Gathered up in His supernal form, scattered through immeasurable space, He tends the growth of the soul in every corner of the universe, and lifts the fallen sparks out of the depths. He dies daily in silent deaths, and He springs up daily in silent births; daily He climbs upwards and downwards. Then when the pure soul dwells in perfect freedom on a pure earth, the Hour of the Messiah will knock at his heart, and he will no longer inhabit any form, but will withdraw himself from all form and will sit on the throne, the Lord of the flames of Heaven, the flames that have sprung from the liberated sparks, and He will step down and come and live, and will let the soul enter into His Kingdom." And Baalshem said further: "But thou, Rabbi David, what hast thou done? Thou didst desire to throw thy soul with Israel's soul into the night, for the sake of the morning; but dost thou know the Lord of the Night, the Lord of the Other Kingdom? Know, then, that there is always one who asks of time and another who answers for time; one who is willing to give and one who is not able to accept. And this is he, the Lord of the Night, this is he who is destined to make known the sins of time, and shall fulfil them.

"When he saw that thou didst prepare and sanctify

thyself, a great joy smouldered within him, and he thought that he would catch the prayers of Israel within thy prayer, and that out of it he would make a plaything and a trinket, and he also stretched his soul as a bowstring of the Kavana; he placed himself on the road by which thy prayer should ascend, and he tried to catch it. I strove with him this morning and wished to chase him away, but I could not do so. Then I struck thy soul with a whirlwind of shame, so that it should lose its will, and should dissolve in tears. And thy prayer then rose in the midst of the prayers of Israel and mounted upward to God."

Then Rabbi David's brow was bowed more and more to the ground, but Baalshem lifted him up and drew him near him, and said: "When suffering overcame thy soul, then the suffering of Israel was inflamed by thy suffering. Each man stood before God in the fire of the purification of his heart's sorrow, each man became purified in the stream of his own tears, then how many fallen sparks hast thou not raised upwards? Truly, Rabbi, when thou didst weep, the Messiah was within thee."

## THE SHEPHERD

WHENEVER Light sends out his messengers, Night also sends forth his. Light has only his eye, but Night has a thousand arms. Light's messenger has but his deed, but Night's messenger has a thousand disguises.

In those days he was called Jacob Frank, being versed in all the arts of deception; he counterfeited the Holiest, and with twelve of his chosen, he went through the towns of Poland and had himself honoured as a Messiah and the Son of God. He spread abroad the many-coloured spell of falsity; and his gentle, winning looks intoxicated the country, and every unstable heart clung to him.

One morning Baalshem felt a hand on his shoulder, and when he turned he saw the Angel of Battle, with his pale forehead and wrathful brows. "What dost thou desire, O Lord?" he said with an uncertain voice. The other only said: "You know," and Baalshem felt that the hand had let go of his shoulder, but that it had left a burden behind that would never leave him.

Nevertheless he prepared himself; and as he knew that the strength within him was not sufficient, he determined to call back to him all the rays which he had ever contributed to earthly existence. He invoked the beams from afar, and sent a cry over all

the earth: "Come, my children, for I need you for the fight." The children of Light flew to him at once; they surrounded him in a wide circle and were silent. Israel, son of Eliezer, gazed around him, where shining zones of those who belonged to him embraced other zones, as the setting sun sees its own reflection poured over the whole horizon in the glow of evening. Then he said slowly and gently: "My children, stars of my power, and wandering flames, I once sent you away and gave you up that you might bring joy in redemption. Now I call you home, to be mine again and to help me in the great conflict against the messengers of Night. And behold, I would not have drawn you away from your places in the world of the living, in which you grow and awaken life, if it had not concerned salvation and the birth of the future. And so now I call you." Then there was again silence, and it lay over the land, as though every sound had been extracted from the silent light of the children of the rays.

At last one said: "Father and our Master, forgive; and all of you also forgive me for speaking to you of a trivial matter. But this is what I wish to pray of thee, dear lord, that thou wilt let me go again to my place. For when thou sentest me out from thee, thou didst send me into the heart of a youth who was very sad. He looked from his window on to a hill which was now grown wild, and which was green, yellow or red, and white, according to the seasons of the year. And the youth stood there looking out on it as any one might. But since I have been in his heart he sees from his window the hill of life, and he sees

green, red, and white as the lights of a sweet and magical game."

Then Baalshem was silent, and nodded consent to the little spark. But then other voices rose directly, and told of the men whom they had delivered from doubt and emptiness, giddiness and bitterness, from blindness and deep necessity, and who must, if they left them, sink down again and be swallowed by the cruel darkness. And soon, in the air, from a thousand mouths there sounded: "Wilt thou ruin all those whom thou hast redeemed? And what salvation could ever atone if all these should now be without salvation?" Thus the question was asked in a thousand tones.

Baalshem sat long, and listened to the troubled air, which would not be quiet even after the last voice had sounded, but which yet trembled and sang. Then a strange smile came over his face, and he said: "Well, then, my children, I bless you once more. And now—turn homewards." He rose and stretched his hands over the shining hordes, and it was like a farewell greeting.

When he was alone, and saw that the last golden ray in the horizon had flown back to the world, he spoke to his soul: "Then seek thee a companion, dear soul, who will be as wrapped up and engrossed in her actions as a resting bird is enfolded within its wings, and who exists so in the glory of her grace that the power of her brightness but weaves the sheen of her garments closer and closer. Seek thee a sister, dear soul, and lay the mission and command upon her shoulders, and lay thine arm about her neck, and



lead her against the man of a thousand disguises, that she may destroy him." He swung himself up into the world above, and stepped into the heaven of the prophets. There he found Ahijah of Shilo, the old man who had once trodden the Holy Land as a messenger of God's wrath against the kings of Judah. He greeted Baalshem, and said: "Blessed be thou who comest, Israel, my son. I hear the rustling of a wish in thy steps—yea, the roar of a mighty wish. As at the time when I climbed down in the night to thee, the boy, and taught thee the mystery of ardour, and, even before I reached thee, thou camest towards me aflame and threw about me thine arms of fire; so thou art as full of fire to-day, glowing through and through. Truly like one of the Seraphim—the fiery ones—who eternally drink of their own flames and yet nourish all the universe with them." But Baalshem contradicted him, and said: "Not so, dear Master, for I have offered the flames of my innermost heart in sacrifice many and many times, and now I am but the shadow of my flames, moved as they are, but dark. And this is the wish which thou didst hear in my steps, and even a mightier one, to find a soul that breathes in its own fire like the Seraphim. Then I will throw her fire on the messenger of Night and bring him to naught." Ahijah said: "I cannot give you these tidings, my son, for my office is to teach the mystery of ardour to the chosen spirits. But the one which needs such teaching and to whom it is revealed, even if it were the highest of souls, is not the one whom thou dost seek. But let us ask Elijah, the messenger of the Covenant. On one of his

journeys about the earth he may well have seen the one whom thou seekest." They went to Elijah, who was just passing with hasty steps through the halls of the Heaven of the Prophets, his limbs stretched for flight, and his heart already on the watch for a new path. When they drew near to him he turned to them, and it was as though a falling star had stopped in its course to look at a man. Before the question had even been asked, the seer said to Baalshem: "Him whom thou seekest is Moses the shepherd, and know that he tends the sheep in the mountains which are called the Polinen." Hardly had the words left him when Elijah again descended to earth and prepared himself for a new journey.

The pleasant mountain meadows were curved like waves, moved by the quiet, deep breathing of summer. The air was full of a knowledge that could not speak. Baalshem went on, and nothing touched his soul, for his will was upon it, and held it shut away from everything to which it had given itself in such overflowing sympathy during a long life. He did not notice the animals that came out of the wood with trusting eyes as soon as they heard his step; he did not respond to the branches as they caressed his arm. He went through the pride of the country completely self-absorbed. His feet knew not which way they were bound, and each step seemed to be his first. Thus he reached the great mountain meadow, which stretches from behind a wide ditch in a sharp slope upwards to the mountain tops. Moses' sheep were scattered far over its surface like little white clouds. When Baalshem saw the meadow he covered his

eyes as though he were striving against an afflicting vision, and he stepped at once behind a thicket so as to look at the shepherd unseen, for he felt that the Word was not yet in him.

Then he saw a youth who stood at the edge of the ditch; his fair hair hung over his shoulders, he had a child's blue, wide-open eyes and a stalwart figure roughly clad, and though there was no one far or near, he kept up a conversation with some being and spoke to it in ardent words. And so he talked: "Dear Lord, instruct me in what I may do for Thee: if Thou didst have sheep that I might tend, I would watch them day and night unwishful for a reward. Say what I should do." Then he was silent, and his glance fell on the ditch of water. He at once made ready, and began, with feet together and with outstretched arms, to jump over the ditch. It was broad, and full of slime and vermin, and his jumping cost the boy bright drops of sweat. But he did not leave off and did not remain on one bank, but jumped backwards and forwards, saying: "For love of Thee, sweet Lord, and to give Thee pleasure." He only broke off from what he was doing in order to look after his sheep, which had climbed much too far. He tended them kindly, and spoke loving little words to them, after which he went back to the ditch. Baalshem looked on for some time, and he felt that this service was greater than any which he had rendered, though his soul was dedicated and devoted to God. Finally he came out of his hiding-place, went up to Moses, and said: "I have a word for thee." The shepherd said: "That is not allowed me, for my

day belongs to him who hired me." The Master said: "But I see thee jumping, regardless of the time." The shepherd answered: "That I do for God's sake, and I may waste my time for Him." But Baalshem put his kind hand on his arm, and said: "Friend, I have also come to thee for the sake of God." Then the other understood, and they sat side by side under a tree, and the saint spoke of godly matters in clear and powerful terms, so that he that was near him listened to his words with a trembling soul.

Baalshem spoke of the ruins of God's temple in Jerusalem, and of the heart that beats and waits under the ruins. And he spoke of separation, of the only God whose light of glory is sunk; He looks into the whirling abyss of phenomena and waits. But the Shechina wanders through the abyss, like a rejected maiden, in its robes of sunshine, and trembles and shines, and all existence drinks of its light and of its fear. And all beings shine and glow from out of God's gift, and they burn upwards like flames that offer themselves in sacrifice. And the buried heart beats faster, and there is more longing in the Splendour, and the look of the Holy One is more profound. And it seems already as if all the souls wished to return home and redeem the exile of God and fulfil the mystery of eternity.

But Night is watchful. From their hollow sockets a thousand eyes peer out into existence, and a thousand arms entwine themselves around existence. And as the time has now come, Night sends his messenger; he passes over the earth in tender, alluring darkness.

The covering of Light falls away from him whom his word has touched, and the flames of sacrifice are extinguished in him who has received his glance.

When Baalshem spoke of the messenger, the shepherd sprang to his feet, and cried: "Lord, where is the man of whom thou didst speak? for he shall not live a moment after I have found him." But the Master told him to be quiet, and began to instruct him about the battle.

But the demon adversary hovered in the air and became aware of the bond between the souls, how the soul ripe in wisdom guided the strength of the other, and supported and led it when it stumbled. And as through his accursed power he was able to look into the essence of all that happens in the world, he understood what the words that passed between the old man and the lad in the wood signified to him and to eternity. Then he stretched himself over the world, and by his power drew up to him all the evil which then existed on the earth. Then he fought his way to the kingdom above and demanded in shrill tones his rights over the ages. And from the nameless centre of solitude there came a Voice which was as full and overflowing with sadness as a shell over which the waves of the sea pass, and the sadness rolled and broke around the Voice like the waves of the sea. The demon fell down—afraid—for knowledge had come upon him. But the Voice said: "One fullness thrusts out another and one circle is merged in the next. In which time dost thou wish to rule? The moment is thine, and the moment is thine always until thy soul is mastered and thou

dost throw thyself into My light because thou canst no longer bear to be lord of the moment. And behold thou knowest it." The Voice ceased, but the waves of the flood of grief still moved, and the demon lay beside them in the fetters of his knowledge. Soon, however, he shook them off, and journeyed downwards; trembling he seized the clouds and threw them down with mighty hands. He sent forth the storm and let loose the lightning, and again and again forced the thunder to its work. He sent forth clammy fear in its wake, and it took hold of the hearts of men with hands of death. Fire fell on the town, and the bells tolled.

Moses the shepherd started up when he heard the sound and tumult above the holy words; he thought of his animals remaining on the mountain helpless and scared, and exposed to the fury of the heavens. He sprang up and with long, swift strides he hastened to soothe the straying flocks with kindly, coaxing words. And he never listened to the saint and his warning.

Baalschem became quiet, and sadness fell upon his brow, and he bowed himself before death, and slowly with bent head and downcast eyes he climbed down. But when he stood in the valley he felt an arm about his neck. He turned and saw the Angel of Battle, with shining forehead and looks full of love. The angel then laid his other arm round his neck and kissed him; so Israel, the son of Eliezer, knew that this was the Angel of Death, called Resurrection, and this knowledge comforted him.

## SUPPLEMENT

A FRAGMENT FROM BAALSHEM'S LIFE, AND SOME  
OF HIS SAYINGS

### THE MARRIAGE

IN his youth, Israel ben Eliezer was assistant teacher in a small community not far from Brody. Though the people knew nothing about him, the parents thought well of him because their children learnt from him with such joyous zest. Soon the report spread that he was learned; people applied to him for advice, and when there was a dispute, the young teacher was often approached to settle it. He did this in such a way that the man against whom he gave the verdict received it with no less satisfaction than the man in whose favour he decided, and both of them would go away in good humour.

At this time a very learned man lived in Brody, Rabbi Gershom Kitower, whose father, Abraham, had a lawsuit with a member of the little community where Baalshem taught. He sought out his opponent and suggested that they should both go to Brody, and apply to the Jewish religious court there for a judgment. The other man spoke so much of the wisdom and sense of justice of the young teacher that he agreed to consult him. But when he entered

Baalshem's room he was afraid when he looked at him, for Israel's brow was lit up by a sign hanging over it, exactly similar to one which he could never forget, for he had seen it for a moment on his own little daughter's brow when the midwife had shown him the new-born babe. And he found it difficult to express his petition to Israel in words, but when he lifted up his lowered eyes, the sign had disappeared. Israel listened, asked, and listened again, and finally he gave judgment, and at once peace fell upon the hearts of both the men who heard it, for it seemed to them that the clear light of justice itself had emerged out of the foggy mass of diverse opinions.

After this Rabbi Abraham came to Baalshem, and begged of him to take his daughter as a wife. Israel agreed, but insisted on two conditions: that the betrothal should remain secret for a time, and that, in the document which was to be drawn up, his learning should not, as was customary, be extolled; moreover that he should be designated by no other title than his name of Israel ben Eliezer. "For," he added, "your daughter wants me and not my learning as a husband." All was done according to his wishes.

After Rabbi Abraham returned from his journey, he fell ill suddenly, and died in a few hours. His son, Rabbi Gershom Kitower, came to bury him. Among his father's papers he found the marriage document; in it he read that his sister was promised to a man with no learned titles, of an unknown family, and even the home of the stranger was not once mentioned. In violent language he communicated these unheard-of facts at once to his sister; however,



she only answered that if this marriage had been her father's will, there was nothing else in the world which it would be right for her to do.

Meanwhile Israel waited till he had completed his year's office in the school, then he determined to leave. The parents did not wish him to go, but he would not be detained. He laid his outer garments aside, and dressed himself in a sheepskin with a broad leathern girdle such as the peasants wear, and assumed their manner of speech and behaviour. Thus he came to Brody and to Rabbi Gershom's house. Here he remained standing on the inner threshold. The learned Rabbi, who had been comparing some difficult passages in the Talmud, gave orders for the needy-looking man to be given a coin; but Israel said that he had something to disclose to him. They went together into an adjoining room, when Israel told the Rabbi that he had come to fetch his wife. The Rabbi, much concerned, called his sister, so that she might look at the man on whom her father's choice had fallen. She said: "If he had determined on this man, then it is so determined by God." So he gave orders to prepare for the wedding. Baalshem spoke to his bride before she stepped under the canopy, and revealed his secret. But she was to swear to keep it inviolate whatever might happen, and he did not conceal from her that much misery and hardship awaited her. She only answered that all was well.

After the wedding the Rabbi tried day by day to teach the Torah to his ignorant brother-in-law, but it was impossible to give him any notion of even one word of the teaching. At last he said to his sister:

"I am ashamed of your husband. If you will part from him, it is well; but if you will not, then I will buy you a horse and cart, and you can drive away with him wherever you like." She was content.

So they drove away till they came to a village in the Carpathians, where the wife took up her abode. Israel went to a mountain hard by and built a hut and dug up loam. She came to see him two or three times a week, and together they loaded the cart with loam, took it to the town, and sold it for a small sum. When Israel felt hungry, he put meal and water into a small hollow, kneaded the dough, and baked it in the sun.

#### BLESSING AND OBSTACLE

Baalshem once asked his pupil, Rabbi Meir Margoluth: "Meir, do you remember that Sabbath when you began to learn the Pentateuch? The large room in your father's house was full of guests; you were put on the table, and repeated what you had to say." The Rabbi said: "I remember it well. My mother came in suddenly and pulled me down from the table in the midst of my speech. My father was displeased, but she pointed to a man who, in a peasant's short sheep-skin, was standing at the door looking at me; then they all understood that she was afraid of the evil eye. While she was still pointing at the door the man had disappeared."

"It was I," said Baalshem. "A gleam of great light is poured upon the soul at such times. But man builds walls in front of the light."

## THE LIMITS TO COUNSEL

Baalshem's scholars heard of a man who was reputed wise. Some among them desired to seek him out to hear his teaching. The Master gave them his permission; but they also asked: "How shall we know if he is a real Zaddik?" "Ask his advice how you can possibly avoid any unworthy thoughts from disturbing you in your prayers or studies," said Baalshem"; "and if he gives it, you will know that there is nothing in him. For it is the duty of every man in the world to struggle time after time with what is alien to him [the stranger] and which he must uplift time after time to be in harmony with the qualities of the Holy Name."

## SPEECH

Baalshem used to go into his room every evening after he had finished his prayer; two candles were then placed before him, and the mystic book of the "Creation," and other books as well, were laid on the table. Then all who required counsel from him were admitted at the same time, and he would speak to them till the eleventh hour.

As the people were going away one evening, one of them told a disciple how much good the words which the Master had addressed to him had done him. But the disciple forbade him to chatter thus, for they had all entered the room together, and the Master during the whole of the time had spoken to

him alone. A third, who heard this, smilingly intervened: how extraordinarily mistaken they both were, for it was with him that the Rabbi had held an intimate conversation all that evening; and a fourth was under a similar impression, and at last they all announced what they had experienced. But the next moment, even, the crowd had become silent.

### THE HARD ATONEMENT

The young Rabbi Michael, the "Slotscher," had given a hard penance to a man who had unwittingly desecrated the Sabbath. For it had happened that the man's cart had broken down, and, journeying hard, he had not reached the town before the holy time had set in. The man tried with all his might to fulfil what had been imposed on him, but he soon became aware that his strength was failing and that he was becoming ill, and finally that his mind was weakening. He learnt that Baalshem was travelling through the country, and that he was stopping at a place near by; summoning courage, he went to him and besought of the Master to impose a penalty to set him free from the sin which he had committed. "Take a pound of candles to the prayer-house," said Baalshem, "and have them lit for the Sabbath; that shall be thy penance." The other thought that his communication could have been only half heard, and urgently repeated his request. When Baalshem still persisted in his mild sentence, the man confided to him what a severe penance had been inflicted upon him. "Only do as I bid thee," said the Master.

"But let the Rabbi Michael know that he is to come to the town of Chowstaw, where I am keeping the next Sabbath." With a lightened countenance the petitioner took his leave.

Rabbi Michael's carriage-wheel broke on the way to Chowstaw, and he had to proceed on foot. Although he made as much haste as he could, when he entered the town it was already dark, and when he stepped over Baalshem's threshold, he saw that he had risen, goblet in hand, in order to say the blessing over the wine in preparation for the day of rest. The Master stopped short in what he was doing, and said to the man who stood dazed before him: "Good Sabbath, thou man free from sin! Thou hast not tasted the pain of the sinner, and hast never borne within thee his broken heart; thus it came easy to thee to administer a penance. Now taste the pain of the sinner! Good Sabbath, you sinner."

#### THE DANCE OF THE CHASSIDS

At the feast of the Simchat Torah,<sup>1</sup> according to the doctrine, a day of rejoicing, the disciples in Baalshem's house made merry; they danced and drank and had fresh wine constantly fetched from the cellar. Baalshem's wife came to him after a few hours, and said: "Soon, if they do not stop drinking, there will be no wine over for the Kiddush [the blessing over the wine for the Sabbath evening] and Havdala [cere-

<sup>1</sup> Simchat Torah (Rejoicing of the Law) is the last day of the Feast of the Tabernacles, when the last chapter of Deuteronomy is read, and immediately after it the first chapter of Genesis.—Jr.

mony at the end of the Sabbath].” He answered laughingly: “You are right; then go and tell them to stop.” When she opened the door of the great room, she saw the disciples dancing in a ring, and around the circle of dancers there glowed a ring of blue flame. Then she herself took a can in her right hand and a candle in her left, and hastened into the cellar, motioning the servant aside, to return directly with the vessel replenished.

#### THE MASTER DANCES WITH THEM

On a Sinchat Torah evening, Baalshem himself danced with the community. He took the scroll of the Torah in his hand and danced with it. Then he laid it aside. At this moment a scholar intimately acquainted with all his movements said to the disciples: “Now the Master has let the body of the teaching go out of his hands, and has received the spirit of the teaching within himself.”

#### THE STOCKING-MAKER

Baalshem got ready to go on a journey to a small town whose name is not given to us. In the morning he smoked his pipe as usual before his prayer, and looked out of the window. A man was going past, who carried his praying scarf and a bundle of prayers in his hand. He was walking steadily and solemnly, as though he were going on the way to the gates of heaven. Baalshem asked one of the faithful, in whose

house he dwelt, who the man was. He answered that he was a stocking-maker who went day by day, summer or winter, to the house of prayer, even when ten of the pious were not present, as is commanded. Baalshem bade them fetch the man, but the master of the house said: "The fool would not interrupt his course, even if the king himself were to call to him."

After the prayer Baalshem sent for the man, and ordered him to bring him four pairs of stockings. The man soon stood before him, and spread out his well-made wares before the Rabbi Israel. "What do you want for a pair?" asked Rabbi Israel. "A gulden and a half." "Surely you will be satisfied with one gulden?" "Then," answered the man, "I should have named that price." Baalshem at once paid the man what he had demanded, and then he asked him further: "What do you deal in?" "I follow my trade," answered the man. "And how do you follow it?" "I work till I have collected forty or fifty pairs of stockings; then I put them in a trough with hot water, and then I press them till they are as they should be." "And how do you sell them?" "I do not go out of my house, but the merchants come to me and buy them. They also bring me good wool which they have purchased for me, and I reward them for their trouble. Only out of honour for the Rabbi I have gone out of my house this once." "When you get up early in the morning, what do you do before you go to pray?" "Then I make stockings." "And what do you do about saying the psalms?" "Those psalms which I know by heart I say to myself as I work," answered the

man. When the stocking-maker had gone home, Baalshem said to the pupils who surrounded him: "To-day you have seen the foundation-stone on which the Temple shall stand, until the Redeemer cometh."

### THE ANIMALS

It is told that Baalshem was once obliged to celebrate the Sabbath in the open fields. A herd of sheep were grazing not far off. When he spoke the blessing to greet the approaching bride, the sheep stood on their hind legs and remained in this position, turning towards the Master, until he had ended his prayer. For during the time while each creature was listening, it was in the primeval attitude in which it stands at the throne of God.

### THE JUG

Baalshem once told his scholars: "As the quality of the root dwells in each leaf, so the quality of the man who made it dwells in each article that he has made, and in it a knowledge of his nature and demeanour is recognizable." His glance then fell upon a beautiful beer-jug standing before him, and he pointed to it and added: "Can one not see by this jug that it was made by a man without feet?"

After Baalshem had finished speaking, one of his scholars casually took up the jug to put it on the shelf. But as soon as he put it there it fell into small pieces.



## TWO MIRACLE STORIES

*The Wrong Answer*

It is told:

When Rabbi Wolf took leave of his Master before going to the Holy Land, Baalshem touched his mouth with his outstretched finger and said: "Take heed of your words, and know what to answer." He refused to say any more.

The ship in which Baalshem's pupil sailed was struck by a storm, and it had to put in at an unknown and apparently desert island. The storm soon subsided, but on account of the damage which it had sustained the ship could not put out to sea again. Some of the travellers, Rabbi Wolf among them, went on land in order to examine the wonderful and strange surroundings, but Rabbi Wolf had fallen into such deep abstraction that he was unable to prevent himself from going on farther and farther, until he reached a large, old-fashioned house, which seemed to be still intact. And only then did he remember that the ship was not waiting for him. Before he could reach any decision, there stepped from the door a man dressed in white linen; judging from his features and the whiteness of his hair he must have been very old, although his figure was still unbent. The man greeted him with these words: "Be comforted, Rabbi Wolf, and spend the Sabbath with us; you will be able to continue your journey on the following morning."

As in a dream, the Rabbi let himself be led by the

grey-haired man to the ritual bath, and he prayed among ten tall old men and ate with them, and as in a dream the Sabbath passed away.

On the next morning the old man accompanied him to the shore, where a ship lay at anchor, and took leave of him, and blessed him. Rabbi Wolf with hasty steps was about to set foot on the landing-stage, when the old man asked: "Tell me, Rabbi Wolf, how the Jews in your country are prospering." "The Lord of the world does not desert them," the Rabbi answered quickly, and went on. Only when he was on the high seas and his mind had grown clear, did he remember his Master's words, and he was overcome by such acute remorse that he determined to discontinue his journey to the Holy Land and return home at once. He made inquiries from one of the sailors, and from his reply he learnt that he was already on the homeward journey.

When Rabbi Wolf stood before Baalshem, the Master looked sadly but mildly at him, and said: "You have not given a good answer to our father Abraham. Day by day he asks God: 'How are my children prospering?' And God answers: 'I do not desert them.' If only you had but told him of the sufferings of our exile!"

#### *The Power of Worship in Community*

It is told:

One evening after the Day of Atonement, the moon was hidden by clouds, and Baalshem could not go outside to repeat the blessing over the moon.

This oppressed him greatly, for he felt now, as he often did, that an incalculable fate hung upon the words from his lips. In vain did he direct his inmost power upon the moon's light, that she should throw off the thick veils which shrouded her, and help him; as often as he sent forth his power he was told that the clouds had become still denser. At last he gave up hope.

Meanwhile the Chassids, who knew nothing of Baalstem's trouble, had collected in the outhouse, and had begun to dance in festive joy, as on this evening they were wont to do, in order to celebrate the Atonement which had been wrought by the high priestly service of the Zaddik.

As their holy joy grew ever greater they pressed into the room where Baalstem was sitting gloomily, and overpowered by their enthusiasm, they took hold of his hands and drew him into the dance.

At this moment a call was heard outside. The night had cleared unexpectedly, and in a splendour, such had never been seen before, the moon was hanging on high in the unclouded heavens.

#### THE END

At the hour of his death Baalstem said: "Now I know why I was created."

## GLOSSARY

*Aboda*, literally service: the service of God. Specifically the explanation given each Day of Atonement of the old sacrificial service on that Day.

*Amoraim*, plural of Amora, preacher or explainer; used to describe the Masters of the later and much the larger portion of the Talmud known as the Gemara. They explained and elaborated the work of the Tannaim, namely the Mishna.

*Badchen*, Yiddish, from the late Hebrew Badchan, a merry-maker. He greets the people at weddings with an accompaniment of music, he celebrates the bride and bridegroom with song, makes witty rhymes about all the guests, calls out the presents, and so on. Among these poets and composers there were many who showed much native Jewish power and many special Jewish characteristics.

*Bet-ha-Midrash*, literally house of study; more generally house of learning and of prayer.

*Bilbul*, confusion, hence false accusation, especially false accusation of ritual murder.

*Chasan*, the intoner of the public prayers.

*Etrog*, the fruit of "goodly trees" (Lev. xxiii, 40), generally called Apples of Paradise, over which a blessing is said on the Feast of Tabernacles.

*Galut*, exile, banishment, Diaspora.

*Gemara*, literally completion (of the teaching); that which is fully learnt. The second and larger part of the Talmud, in which the first and earlier part, the Mishna, was discussed and interpreted. The Gemara of the Talmud of Jerusalem and that of the far more extensive Babylonian Talmud (Babli) were composed between the Mishna and the sixth century A.D., the one

in a Western Aramaic and the other in an Eastern Aramaic idiom.

*Golus*. See *Galut*.

*Goyim*, literally nations, peoples; Gentiles, non-Jews.

*Haggada*, See *Pesach*.

*Havdala*, separation: the ceremony at the end of the Sabbath. First the blessing is said over the wine, then over the herbs, which are smelt, then, the finger-nails having been looked at by the candle-light, the blessing on the flame; finally God is praised, "who separates the Holy from the Profane."

*Hinnom*, the Valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem (2 Kings xxii, 10), where what is wrongly described as the cult of Moloch took place. Later it became the name of Hell (Gr. Gehenna).

*Kiddush*, sanctification, especially the blessing over the wine, with which the Sabbath is inaugurated on Friday evening.

*Klaus*, the prayer chamber of a private praying association, generally Chassidic.

*Klesmer*, from the Yiddish for musical instrument, a player.

*Kol Nidre*, a prayer beginning with the words "All vows," recited on the opening evening service of the Day of Atonement. It is supposed to dissolve any vows which either have not been or cannot be fulfilled.

*Mazzot*, unleavened bread which is commanded to be eaten during "Passover" week. Its preparation has to be undertaken with special solemnity and care.

*Menora*, candlesticks, especially the seven-branched candlestick used in the synagogue.

*Midrash*, literally research, study; then, more especially, the interpretation of Scripture which went beyond the literal meaning of the text. The Midrashim (plural of Midrash) are the many collections of these interpretations of the various Biblical books. They contain a wonderful mass of legends, parables, stories, similes, and sayings.

*Mincha*, originally a specific kind of sacrifice (Lev. ii); now the word is used for the afternoon prayer, which was originally the substitute for the afternoon sacrifice (cf. Ezra ix, 4).

- Mishna*, verbal repetition, and later instruction in general; then specifically the oral tradition as supplementing the written Torah; also the first and earlier main portion of the Talmud, which was compiled in Hebrew between the last quarter of the first century A.D. and the end of the second.
- Mitnagdim*, contradictors, opponents; the deliberate opponents of Chassidism were so called.
- Mussaf*, addition. Originally the additional special sacrifices on the Sabbath and feast days; later the prayer substituted for these sacrifices, read after the usual morning prayers.
- Neila*, conclusion: the final prayer on the Day of Atonement, "when the sun sinks below the tree-tops," "when the heavenly gates of justice and grace close."
- Pesach*, passing-over, sparing; specifically the lamb which was eaten in remembrance of the deliverance of the first-born of the Jews during the tenth Egyptian plague (Exodus xii, 17); then the seven days (in the Diaspora the eight days) of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt. (This festival falls between the last week in March and the last week in April.) The domestic meal on the first and second evenings includes certain symbolic foods, and commemorative cups of wine. Its special liturgy, a combination of history and legend, sayings, prayers, and hymns, all dealing more or less directly with the Exodus from Egypt, is called the "Haggada" *par excellence*, and the meal itself is called "Seder" (literally "order," "arrangement"). "Seder night" is the evening on which the meal is held.
- Purim*, the feast of lots (Esther ix, 25), the joyous commemorative festival of the victory over the wicked Haman through Mordecai and Esther. It includes a meal of rejoicing and an exchange of presents, distribution of alms to Jews and non-Jews, much mummery (some of which is preserved in various old comedies), and all kinds of jokes and games.
- Rav*, master, teacher, later Rabbi, in the sense of one who gives instruction in the Law, and in the rules of its observance.
- Rosh-ba-shana*, literally the "head" of the year; the solemn festival of the New Year, which is celebrated on two successive days,

and falls between the first week of September and the first week of October. It is, too, the festival of God's constant renewal of the world, which was originally created on this day by Him. It is also the day of the renewal of the human soul in acts of self-contemplation and repentance. It is also the season of the divine Judgment and of the divine Grace, which begins on New Year and lasts during the ten following days (the ten penitential days) and ends with the Day of Atonement; together they are called the "awful," or "solemn" days. In the school of the great Maggid Rosh-ha-shana was called the head of the year, as being the moment of creative thought; Yomkippur the heart of the year, as the day of perfect fulfilment. Every zealous Chassid used to go to the town of his Zaddik, in order to be near him in these most solemn hours.

*Shebat*, the fifth month of the Jewish year, more or less corresponding with February.

*Shebuot*, literally weeks; a one-day feast (in the Diaspora two days). It is called the "Feast of Weeks" because it comes seven times seven days after Passover, and falls on the fiftieth day. It had been a nature-festival in Palestine, the Feast of the First Fruits, more especially of wheat, which was offered, like all other first-fruits, to God. It then became the festival on which was celebrated the giving of the Law, the revelation at Sinai. Small trees are set up in the synagogues and in the houses, and young green is scattered on the floors, "for green plants grew on Mount Sinai." There is a saying of Rabbi Isaac Lurya: "Every year, at the time of the three festivals, Passover, Shebuot, and Sukkot, it is as though it were the first time: at Passover each man escapes out of Egypt himself, and at Shebuot he receives the Law himself."

*Shechina*, "indwelling"; the Glory of God, God as dwelling, or as immanent, in the world.

*Shofar*, the ram's horn, which is blown in the synagogue in remembrance of the revelation at Sinai (Exodus xix, 16) and as a fore-warning of the Last Judgment, for the awakening of souls, and as an invocation to God. It is blown most on the New Year's Day.

*Sukkot*, "Huts," or Tabernacles, the eight-day feast, falling on the fifth day after Yomkippur. It has, as its ninth day, the "Rejoicing of the Law," Simchat Torah. It is called Tabernacles in remembrance of the tent-like huts in which the people are supposed to have lived during their wanderings in the desert. Originally it was a nature-festival, a great thanksgiving after the harvest and vintage. It was the merriest of the three joyous festivals, when all Israel used to go to the City of the Temple (Jerusalem), and was called "the Season of our Rejoicing." The relationship to nature is typified by the custom of spending the whole period of the festival (where possible) in wooden huts covered with fresh foliage ("the happiest of all commands," said a Rabbi, "for one fulfils it with one's whole body"). Special features are also (a) the wand made up of palm, willow, and myrtle bound together, which is waved towards west, east, north, and south, upwards and downwards, and (b) the Etrog, the "fruit of goodly trees" (Lev. xxiii, 40), commonly called the "Apple of Paradise." On Simchat Torah the Scrolls of the Law are taken from the Ark, and carried seven times round the synagogues with enthusiastic joy. The Scrolls are decorated and crowned, and the people embrace them, kiss them, and dance with them. Since the eleventh or twelfth century the last chapter of the Pentateuch is read in the synagogues, and the reading of the Law is at once restarted by the recitation of Genesis i.

*Tallit*, a four-cornered praying-shawl (originally an Oriental outer garment), to which fringes are attached, and in which the men (except those who are unmarried) envelop themselves. The custom is based on the Law in Numbers xv, 38.

*Tannaim*, plural of Tanna, repeaters or teachers, the Rabbis of the Mishna.

*Tefillin*, phylacteries, or cases containing four texts of the Law written on parchment. On weekdays they are fastened to the left arm and forehead with straps, in accordance with the commandment (Deut. xi, 18); on the Sabbath and feast days such a testimony is unnecessary. Some pious men used to wear two sets of Tefillin containing different texts.



*Tekia, Terua*, blowing on the Shofar. The Rabbi names to the blower of the ram's horn the different kinds of blasts which he is to blow, namely:

Tekia: a sound of awakening, or alarum.

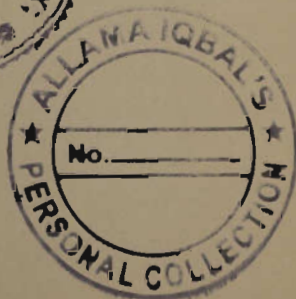
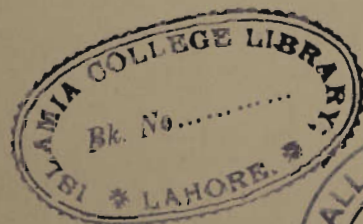
Shebarin: a trill or ringing chord.

Terua: a call of joy.

The mystery of the Shofar is indicated by the prayer which is repeated after it is blown. God is besought that the angels which ascend through its tones may reach the Throne.

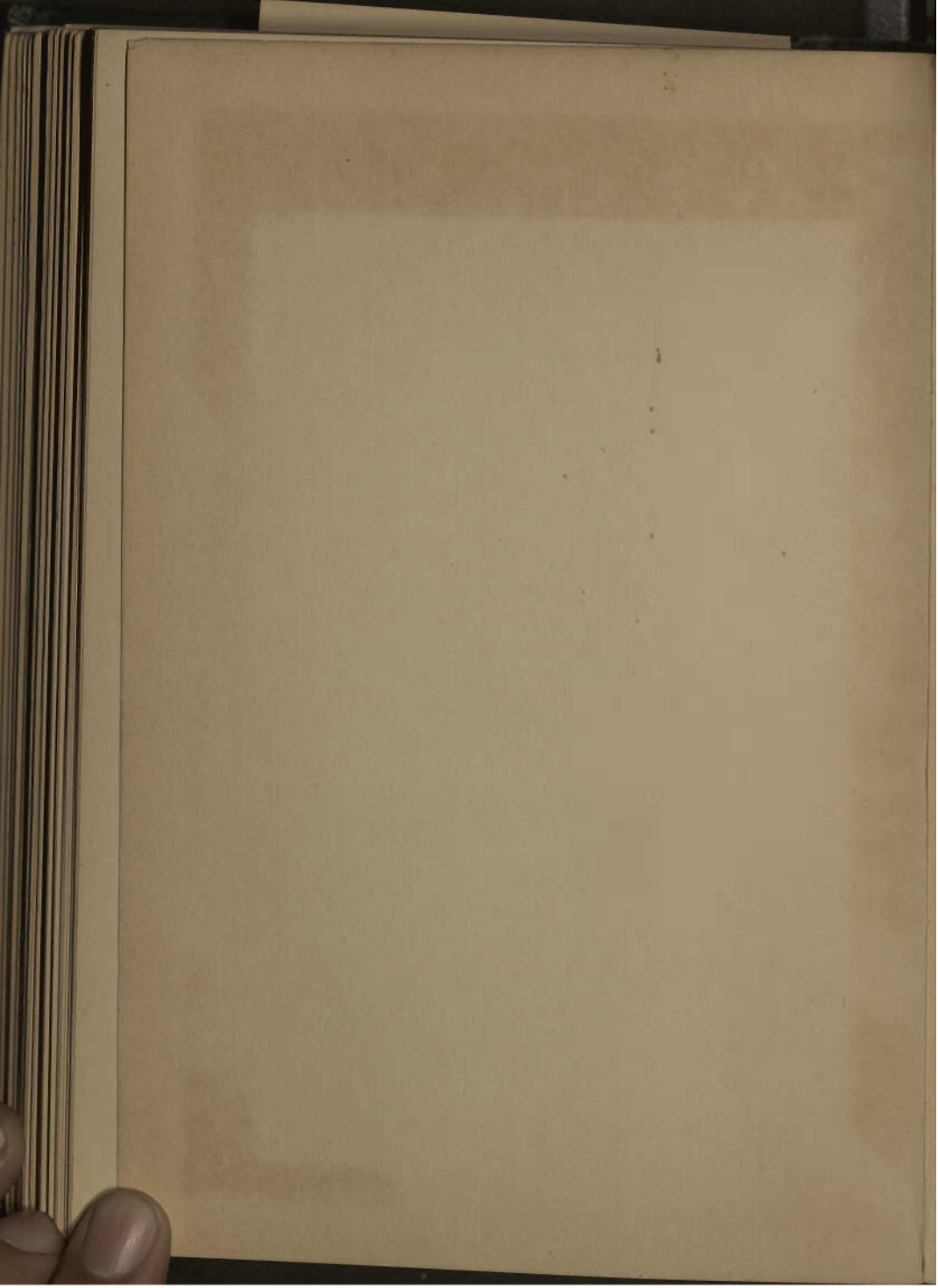
*Torah*, instruction, doctrine, law; the written or the oral law; also the Pentateuch as a whole.

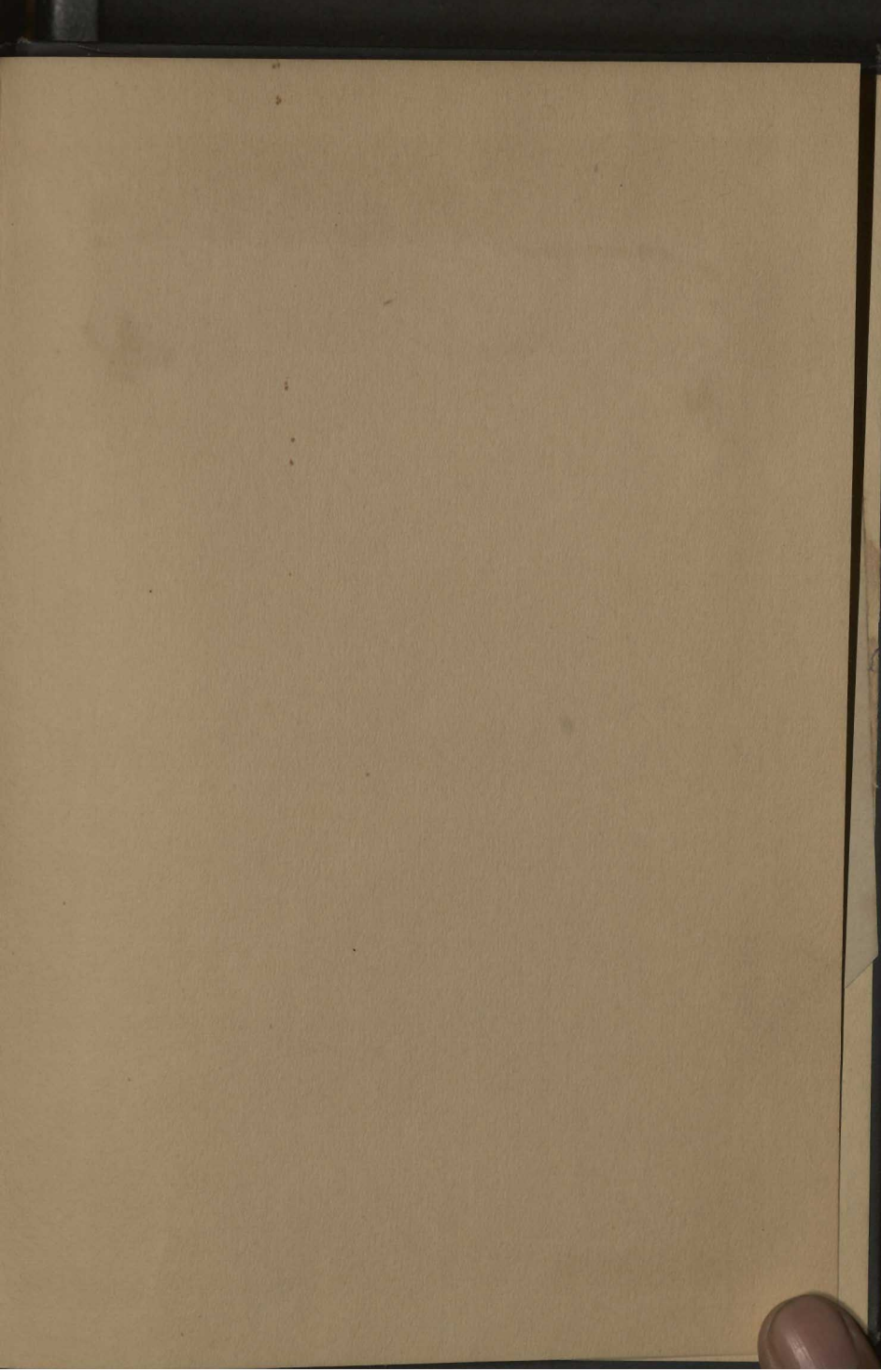
*Yomkippur*, the Day of Atonement; the day when, of old, the scapegoat was sent out, and the High Priest performed the solemn sacrificial service in the Holy of Holies (Lev. xvi): in the Talmud it is often called simply "The Day," for on it the repentance and renewal of the soul, which begins with Rosh-ha-shana (the New Year), finds its zenith and completion. It is the day of confession of sins and of purification, and a strict fast from sunset to sunset. There is a long service the evening before, and on the day itself the service lasts from morning to evening, and the worshippers (in Poland) stand unshod, in white garments resembling shrouds. Before the fast all must forgive one another, since the day atones for sins against God, but not for sins against man.



MADE AT THE  
TEMPLE PRESS  
LETCHWORTH  
GREAT BRITAIN







296

R

B858

This book was taken from the Library on  
the date last stamped. A fine of one  
anna will be charged for each day the  
book is kept overtime.

M.A. SECTION

16717 | 3803

TA  
GE  
RARY,  
LAHORE.

*Extract from the Rules:—*

Books are issued for  
fourteen days only.

A fine of one anna  
per day will be charged  
for each volume kept  
over time.

Borrowers will be held  
responsible for any  
damage done in  
books while in  
their possession.