

Aubrey L. Glazer

---

## LEONARD COHEN AND THE TOSHER REBBE: ON EXILE AS REDEMPTION IN CANADIAN JEWISH MYSTICISM

### Exile as Redemption: Canadian Conundrum of a “Third Solitude”

Exile as redemption – despite its paradox – is a strange but true experience in the contemporary period,<sup>1</sup> especially in Canada. If indeed “home is a place where people practice identity and intimacy”<sup>2</sup> then exilic living serves as a kind of a homecoming. The question remains whether the vision of Montreal’s prophetic poet, A.M. Klein, continues defining Canadian Jewish identity as being “snatched from the center, we learned circumference”<sup>3</sup> – and whether such circumference enables a unique mystical experience. What is it about the Canadian psyche that uniquely positions its visionaries to write so that “in exile they write home”?<sup>4</sup> If indeed Canadian Jewish writers are “alternating between dystopia and utopia, [so that] the Diaspora’s labyrinth frustrates Zion,”<sup>5</sup> can the claim be substantiated that alternations of Canadian Jewish mystics do more than frustrate but actually create an *imaginal* Zion – that space between imagination and reality – within the Diaspora? To address this particular question of mystical experience and the creation of an *imaginal* Zion from the perspective of two Montreal Jews’ “third solitude,”<sup>6</sup> the larger debate surrounding homecoming from Diaspora to

---

Canadian Jewish Studies, Volume 20, 2012 / Études juives canadiennes, tome 20, 2012

Zion in Israel first needs to be outlined.

On the one hand, a cluster of scholars suggest that in this post-modern, post-Zionist age, given the evolution of the inherited model of homecoming that crosses “the borders between real and imagined spaces” with the founding of the State of Israel, there is an inherent danger “that comes from the fulfillment of desire, the actualization of imaginary worlds.”<sup>7</sup> The dialectic between exile and redemption requires a much more nuanced set of grammars.<sup>8</sup> Not only are “the workings of the imagination” in Jewish diasporic life overflowing with its own cultural creativity, but these “new Jews” and their millennial Judaism are flourishing as alternative paradigms borne of *substitution*, no longer dependent upon Israel as its center for cultural renewal radiating outwards to its perceived periphery of Diaspora.<sup>9</sup> Rather the Boyarins go so far as to suggest that “Diaspora as a theoretical and historical model [should] *replace* national self-determination” to be celebrated not just for Jews but for all people.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, a recent international network of Jewish leaders from twelve countries, including Israel, called *Kol Dor*, actually refuses to use any kind of “Israel-Diaspora” discourse and instead speaks in terms of “global Jewish discourse.”<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, some scholars are still holding fast in order to recover the Zionist project, and retain its central power for meaning-making that extends a determinative Jewish culture and identity to the periphery.<sup>12</sup> Somewhere in between – howling to crack Zionism’s vault – are the voices of lone pragmatists attempting to weigh in over the struggle to recover a centrist space for the meaning-making potential of this rapidly fading dialectic.<sup>13</sup>

Amidst this ongoing debate, I will argue for the abiding spiritual relevancy of the exile-redemption dialectic and how “the Jewish diaspora is the repeated experience of *rediasporization*”<sup>14</sup> leading to the transformation of exile as redemption through Canadian Jewish Mysticism. In the course of this comparative analysis, I will present and reflect upon a working definition of contemporary mysticism, and then make the case

for a Canadian Mysticism that should include its own subgenre of Jewish Mysticism. The majority of this present analysis engages in a comparison between two of the most diverse Canadian mystics from Montreal – a Hasidic rebbe, R. Meshulam Feish Segal-Loewy (b.1924) and a Jewish monk, Leonard Cohen (b.1934). Each Canadian mystical exemplar transmits, challenges, and transforms this dialectic of exile-redemption in remarkably innovative ways. These Canadian mystical exemplars problematize the dialectic of exile-redemption in ways that are both “classical/continuous” and “contemporary/discontinuous” with the flow and transmission of Jewish Mysticism known as Kabbalah.<sup>15</sup>

### **Canadian Jewish Mysticism: Towards the Definition of a Subgenre**

To begin our investigation, a working definition of mysticism as “mystical experience” is in order. If indeed mysticism is to be considered an “interpretive category” that records, reflects and transmits the unitive experience, then consider Ellwood’s definition as a possible framework:

Mystical experience is experience in a religious context that is immediately or subsequently interpreted by the experiencer as a direct, unmediated encounter with the ultimate divine reality. This experience engenders a deep sense of unity and suggests the experience the experiencer was living on a level of being other than ordinary.<sup>16</sup>

Elwood necessarily admits in his definition of mysticism that this category of “religious context” needs to be nuanced, if not expanded, for it is “a matter of language in the broadest sense (perhaps symbolic expression would be a better term: while language is the fundamental model and vehicle for communicating what we think, nonverbal media – music, art, rites, styles of groups – are also such communication).”<sup>17</sup> In this sense, whether the mystical experiences under consideration as transmitted in the discourses of a hasidic rebbe or the poems

and lyrics of a Jewish monk are to be classified as “peak experiences” or “classical mystical experiences” is less the issue than the reality that both are “self-validating” and reflect the language of their particular host culture.<sup>18</sup> What then are the boundaries of such a working definition?

By deliberately choosing to compare exemplars of “discontinuous kabbalah” with “continuous kabbalah”<sup>19</sup> of two Montreal Jews, I am attempting to expand the usefulness of the working definition for the diversity of contemporary mystical experience. The peculiar case of Leonard Cohen’s contemporary mysticism, for example, especially evident in his musical lyrics and poetry has been specifically chosen to challenge the limits of duality in “peak theory” or “high experiences” by being both “joyous and fulfilling” as well as fulfilling the need to be “focused moments of stunning ecstasy and clear realization.”<sup>20</sup> This kind of categorical dualism will be further challenged in the classical kabbalah embedded in the Hasidic teachings of the Tosher rebbe as well as other dualities like exile/redemption, profane/sacred, Babylon/Jerusalem.

Further, in comparing the mysticisms of a Jewish monk and a Hasidic rebbe from Montreal, the question must arise whether their unique experiences as Canada’s “third solitude” have in any way affected their mystical visions and/or intensified their messianic fervor. On the one hand, Cohen ingeniously subverted the 1960s genteel, “hushed cosmopolitanism” of a predominantly anglophone Protestant Westmount.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, the Tosher rebbe confronted the rising tides of nationalism of *La Révolution tranquille*<sup>22</sup> reverberating and even revolting against its Catholic cultural roots to create an insular community of *Kiryas Tosh* set apart while nestled within the suburb of Boisbriand. Between such diverse Quebecois cultural mosaics I am interested in the emergence of a unique texture of Canadian Jewish mysticism. Are these mystical visionaries reacting to the “legacy of the Quiet Revolution, and the moral, spiritual vacuum that has followed the collapse of clerical power in Quebec”<sup>23</sup> or are these mystical

visionaries *sui generis*? The oscillation of such textures within a diverse Quebecois cultural mosaic is what this investigation attempts to explore.

Building on a working definition of mysticism, let us consider the larger question of the possibility of “Canadian Mysticism.” The major trends of mysticism within Canadian philosophical circles attempt to locate its unique core in dissecting mystical visioning and ethics.<sup>24</sup> On the surface, nothing seems to be striking or terribly unique in perusing the Canadian philosophical debates surrounding the nature of mystical experience, its perhaps endangered relationship to ethics, and how philosophy might move beyond the quagmire of categories and definitions that are ultimately limited by local religious culture or transcendental ineffabilities. The outlier in such a conversation about Canadian mysticism, of course, is Richard Maurice Bucke (1837-1902) and his important contributions to the formulation of a new paradigm of modern mysticism, known as Cosmic Consciousness that was revealed to him in London, Ontario, in Canada.<sup>25</sup>

On the one hand, what is most intriguing about such an idiosyncratic category of Canadian Mysticism is the way it has been used to address *everything but* Jewish mysticism. For example, Canadian Mysticism most often is addressed through the medium of painting in the renowned *Group of Seven*.<sup>26</sup> Each member of this painting fellowship – which includes original members from Toronto, and extends to Winnipeg and Montreal to becoming a national school<sup>27</sup> – used “mystical form rather than aesthetically invented or initiated form, in their painting”<sup>28</sup> of the mystical North into theosophy. Beyond what could be argued as an isolated case of Canadian Mysticism predominant within the art world, there are also trends of theosophy spreading rampantly throughout Canada in the early part of the twentieth century, with its ties to nationalism and mysticism. From the establishment of the first Canadian Lodge of the *Theosophical Society* in 1891, to eighteen more lodges sprouting up throughout Canada by 1920, there were

nearly a thousand adherents in Canada by 1922.<sup>29</sup> Coupled with the publication of its own journal, *The Canadian Theosophist* in 1920, the mysticism of theosophy begins to imbed itself in aspects of the Canadian psyche and becomes an early recurring motif in Canadian Mysticism, and specifically in Quebec.<sup>30</sup> What remains absent in almost all of the current research on theosophy, however, are the Jewish mystical roots in this process of theosophical universalization.<sup>31</sup>

On the other hand, the renaissance of the particularistic manifestation of Jewish Mysticism in Canada, specifically in Montreal, deserves further reflection. In his insightful study of R. Yudel Rosenberg (1859-1935), Ira Robinson observes the cultural importance of this Montreal rabbi's translation and commentary to the *locus classicus* of Jewish Mysticism, the Zohar.<sup>32</sup> Given its numerous reprints, Rosenberg's project of translating the Zohar into Hebrew remained, according to Robinson, as significant as Gershom Scholem's academic project of resuscitating the Jewish mystical tradition from Hebrew University in Jerusalem, making it accessible to a new generation of seekers.<sup>33</sup> Again, the question arises whether R. Yudel Rosenberg's Zohar translation emerged from Montreal in response to the "third solitude" or was this work *sui generis*?

In the "increasingly globalized mystical culture of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries"<sup>34</sup> this question about the nature of mystical visionaries amidst the "third solitude" of Montreal Jewry lingers. Given the "hybridity" of contemporary mystical visionaries and their yearning to "touch God,"<sup>35</sup> the question remains whether the mystical quests under investigation here are in any way anchored and influenced by this "third solitude" of Montreal Jewry, uniquely positioning them to be *ois velt, in velt* – "in the world, but not if it." Turning to our two mystical exemplars at hand, this tapestry of exile and redemption is masterfully woven from the prayerful poetry of Leonard Cohen to the hasidism of R. Meshullam Feish Segal-Lowey (*a.k.a.* the Tosher rebbe). Each one is a mystic in their own right, constantly engaged in the exilic search for the elusive site of

their redemption – the concealed Zion, their hidden Jerusalem. Seeking space between imagination and reality of Jerusalem – an *interworld* of the *imaginal* – forever seen through the reality of Babylon is the challenge. If indeed Canadian Jewish writers are writing home in exile,<sup>36</sup> then I argue that Canadian Jewish mystics need to be read with a similar lens to truly appreciate their nuanced take on exile as homecoming.

Exile is always just a step away from redemption – much of the spiritual life is a subtle dance in and out of redemption. But what happens when being in exile itself produces the possibility of its own redemption? Or what happens when the homeland of Jerusalem is to be found in the exilic state of Babylon? Such an oscillation from exile to redemption brings with it immense creativity and inspiration. Cultures, both religious and secular, have their narratives of exile and redemption. Some return home, but many remain and flourish as a result of being in exile. Such exilic consciousness is a quintessentially Jewish way of looking at the world. Such consciousness has implications for the creative spirit, especially for the mystics who envisioned God's exile as a necessary precursor to redemption. While the claim that "Everything is in Exile!" is affirmed by some Canadian Jewish thinkers like Fackenheim<sup>37</sup> – the Dalai Lama is a prime example<sup>38</sup> – exile serves as an important catalyst for creativity. The yearning to reunite with the extraordinary experience of unitive consciousness allows both mystic and poet to envision the redemption of *something beyond*, all the while grounded *in the exile of here and now*.

Relating to this question of exile and redemption are questions very rarely asked, namely: what is the nature of mystical inspiration within the Canadian mystical psyche?; and how is Zion mystically envisioned and lived in the exile of the Great White North's Diaspora? When considering the dichotomy of exile/redemption, there are a number of thematic models that effect many artists and writers, including: choosing exile from Canada to go and shape the culture of a new homeland;<sup>39</sup> exile as refuge in Canada, leaving persecution and adapting the pres-

ent place as the new homeland;<sup>40</sup> exile as refuge in Canada as a home base for further traveling back and forth to other homelands. Or one can look at the Great White North's Diaspora from a synchronic perspective that ascends from pioneers, modernists, inheritors, and poet-novelists.<sup>41</sup>

This brings us to the thrust of the argument, namely, that the mystic is one exceptionally equipped to transform exile into homecoming all the while succumbing to the transformation of his/her soul within the host culture. The experience of homecoming in Babylon redeems its inner Zion so that through the process its very demarcations [*ziyyonim*] are transformed. If the role of the mystic is to interpret living in that extraordinary "deep sense of unity" then what exactly is the texture of light that radiates from such Canadian Jewish mystics? To sharpen the question: how is the texture of such mystical visions affected in Quebec writing by a cultural preoccupation with "exile, dislocation and memories of an abandoned homeland"?<sup>42</sup> The variety of Judaism(s) that are in continuous formation and evolution exemplify the pluralism of the Canadian mystical psyche which will now be explored in two Jewish mystics from Montreal.

### **Continuous Kabbalah of Komarno in the Tosher rebbe**

The mysticism of the Tosher Hasidic dynasty is unique in that it remains inflected by the hybridity of the Komarno Hasidic tradition set apart within the local host culture of Boisbriand, Quebec. The hybrid approach of the continuous kabbalah in the Komarno-Zidichov Hasidic lineage is renowned for its intensive correlations of Beshtian Hasidism with Lurianic Kabbalah.<sup>43</sup> These intensive correlations are revisionary in the sense of formulating a reconciliation between these two seemingly divergent mystical schools of Kabbalah and Hasidism. This is by no means incidental to the texture of mystical visions in this lineage, especially in the case of the current Tosher rebbe, R. Meshulam Feish Segal-Loewy (b.1924). The Komarno-Zidichov hasidic lineage<sup>44</sup> retains its longstanding connection



to the devotional aspects of Hasidism,<sup>45</sup> while transmitting its own form of hypernomianism to which we shall return shortly.<sup>46</sup> To what degree does this devotion to reconciling Beshtian Hasidism with continuous Lurianic Kabbalah inspire the Tosher rebbe to envision exile as homecoming?

Nestled just outside of Montreal in a suburb known as Boisbriand is the home of this “third solitude” community, a community of Jews caught between anglophone and franco-phone worlds, neither of which fully accept them. *Kiryas Tosh* is the homecoming that resurrects the Hasidic dynasty originating in Nyirtass (“Tosh”), Hungary,<sup>47</sup> that all but perished in the *Shoah*. Tosh is considered to be one of the largest Hasidic groups in the world today, with its settlements and synagogues across New York in Borough Park, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, *Kiryas Joel*, New Jersey and Monsey, New York. This tremendous growth is in no small part due to the pioneering vision of the Tosher rebbe, who immigrated to Montreal in 1951 and by 1963 had a vision to create *Kiryas Tosh*. That vision of homecoming to *Kiryas Tosh* was a double exile – namely, after being exiled from Nyirtass, the Tosher rebbe took on his own exile from Montreal to Boisbriand.<sup>48</sup>

A good part of the Tosher rebbe’s devotional talks or *sihot qodesh* have been transcribed and written down in Hebrew in a series of five books, entitled, *Avodat Avodah: Dibrot Qodesh*, which will form the basis of the present analysis. This series of devotional discourses or *sihot* printed in Hebrew are organized around the weekly Torah portions and Jewish holidays with guidance for spiritual practice. The *Imrot Qodesh* in Yiddish parallels the aforementioned Hebrew version in scope and structure. It is in the Tosher rebbe’s *sihot qodesh* where the contours of a recurring dialectic of exile/redemption are encountered. The terms of this dialectic are salient if one is to appreciate what demarcates this continuous kabbalah of Komarno-Zidichov within Tosher Hasidism as a unique expression of Canadian mysticism. Is it possible that exile and redemption take on new, more radicalized meaning once

re-contextualized in the local culture of Boisbriand rather than Borough Park?<sup>49</sup> Is the pronounced ambiguity towards Zionism – an a/Zionism bordering on an anti-Zionism – a reaction to the anti-Semitism “that lies just beneath the surface of [Quebecois] society”<sup>50</sup> or is it a veiled critique of the nationalism in the wake of *La Révolution tranquille*? Or is such ambiguity about Zionism already present in the spiritualization of the Land of Israel in Komarno-Zidichov Hasidic lineage?

The source of all spiritual effulgence, for Komarno-Zidichov Hasidic lineage, flows directly from the Holy One through the Land of Israel,<sup>51</sup> so that language itself is even transformed. Upon articulation, the revelatory capacity of language to disclose the otherwise concealed divine presence of the exilic *Shekhinah* is only possible in the Land of Israel.<sup>52</sup> Yet there remains a lingering ambiguity in the Komarno-Zidichov perspective – the true holiness of the Land of Israel can only be experienced once its current state of desolate land and ruined cities (i.e. secular State of Israel) is redeemed from such exile back to its pristine state of divine lands and cities (i.e. messianic sovereignty).<sup>53</sup> Paradoxically, many *rebbeim* within the Komarno-Zidichov lineage displayed an abiding love for Zion in their: dress;<sup>54</sup> yearning to emigrate to the Land of Israel;<sup>55</sup> realization that the most robust innovations in thinking through Torah happen in Israel.<sup>56</sup>

Given this fluid Komarno-Zidichov mystical perspective on the Land of Israel, let us now consider how this is absorbed and retransmitted by the Tosher rebbe; namely, is his highly spiritualized stance toward the Land of Israel to be read as anti-Zionist, or a/Zionist, or some other hybrid? The contours of a recurring dialectic of exile-redemption will now be explored, first in terms of exile and then in terms of redemption and messianism, within the Tosher rebbe’s *sihot qodesh*. The degree to which this Hasidic dynasty has flourished and its mysticism blossomed on the margins of Montreal should come as little surprise. After all, the Tosher community has made valuable inroads with the Quebecois political system.<sup>57</sup> What

is remarkable, however, is the degree to which an otherwise particularistic community – one that prides itself on being set apart – fails to recognize the particularity of its host franco-phone culture. Otherwise how is the Tosher hasidim's nuanced diasporic existence in the charged political context of Quebec glossed over with such general terms for exile like "America" in North America? Notwithstanding the adept political maneuvering of the Tosher Hasidim, exile as homecoming takes on new meaning once recontextualized in Boisbriand. Should not the place of Boisbriand then translate into an equally nuanced discourse about its spiritual homecoming in the Diaspora of *Kiryas Tosh*?

The dialectic of exile-redemption takes on new meaning as recontextualized in Boisbriand by the Tosher rebbe's *sihot qodesh*. The diaspora of Boisbriand, Quebec is contrasted with the diaspora of bygone days of Nyirtass, Hungary. Amidst rampant poverty of Nyirtass, the greatest trials over desires of this-worldly materialism were all about necessities for survival, whereas the "American Diaspora" is altogether different. "By habituating oneself to be satisfied with eating less [in Nyirtass], they would sanctify themselves even in the permissible desires, for that was the way they were raised and educated – namely, that this-worldly desires are engaged only by necessity."<sup>58</sup> The Boisbriand context is altogether different because of "the overwhelming negative energy of the American Diaspora to beautify and stimulate whatever one sees through [the lens of] the desires and delights of this world, deluding one to think that these delights are the ultimate bliss of this world."<sup>59</sup> This body/soul dualism of "a desire for the spiritual life takes place amidst a highly materialistic culture to continually high levels of insatiable desire for more."<sup>60</sup>

Even more curious, notwithstanding this dire cultural context, the Tosher rebbe suggests that personal redemption is possible – how? Every seeker has the potential to leave their personal exile in Egypt to be redeemed at any moment through one's personal conduct and deeds.<sup>61</sup> While remaining emphatic

that this is possible “by way of the power of Torah, every individual has the power to leave Egypt *even while in exile*,”<sup>62</sup> the path of love alone will not suffice. The perceived austerity of the Tosher hasidic path may in part stem from this conviction that love alone will not suffice to melt through the power of negative energies that permeate the exile of Egypt *qua* Boisbriand. The personal potential for redemption is felt in this doubled exile of Egypt *qua* Boisbriand,<sup>63</sup> where the Tosher hasidim are surrounded by more French-Canadians than English-Canadians, while unabashedly continuing to speak Yiddish and pray in Hebrew. Notwithstanding the negative energies of “American exile” permeating their host Quebecois culture, their own self-perception of a double exile of knowledge and speech requires a balancing dose of reverence and wonder.<sup>64</sup>

The oppositional energy of the *qelipot* is manifest in many ways, but, apart from overeating, the most striking is the acknowledgement of the overwhelming influence of the media, as incessantly seducing the mind distracts it from the spiritual practice of prayer and study.<sup>65</sup> It is the latter manifestation of the oppositional energy of the *qelipot* through improper consumption that is a recurring challenge in the Tosher rebbe’s devotional life. When these oppositional forces of the *qelipot* are not properly dealt with either by reducing food intake or abstaining completely, then such a person is actually delaying redemption, as the Tosher rebbe teaches:

In *Nissan* we were redeemed and in *Nissan* we shall again be redeemed, and so one needs to contemplate this deeply, how to redeem one’s soul from the forbidden realm, lest one delay redemption through one’s deeds.

And one is never exempt from sitting and lamenting over the delaying of the advent of the messiah, from being perplexed why the Son of Jesse [i.e. Messiah] has still not come, and from wondering why exile has been so extended? For as soon as one does a spiritual stalk-taking, one comes to see how much s/he is actually

causing the delay of redemption. For if one eats for the sake of libidinal impulse alone, consuming whatever sweet things that appeal, then such a person is causing his/her own interior divine portion to descend into the evil within the sparkles of the oppositional realm, causing the exile of the *Shekhinah*.<sup>66</sup>

Furthermore, amidst the darkness of this present exile,<sup>67</sup> there is light, but the question remains: in what direction does it shine – inwards or outwards to Zion? Just as the Redeemer salvages the first and the last, so too the final remnant in Boisbriand will be redeemed from their exile amidst that very exile in their last place on the map.<sup>68</sup> Zion has become utterly spiritualized as an ideal – a spiritual ideal no longer tied to the physical *topos* of the Land of Israel. Holiness through the space of Zion is superseded by the site of holiness in time of the Sabbath. The “Sabbath demarcated and celebrated in the exile [of Boisbriand] is holier than any Sabbath of Temple times.”<sup>69</sup> Once again, Ezrahi’s observations on the transvaluation of exile as sacred center are valuable here:

In traditions culminating in the Kabbalah, time and space become conflated so that the sanctity of place is projected not only onto texts but also onto the rhythm of weekly ritual: the Sabbath becomes a sacred center, analogous to Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden, and the synagogue a miniature temple (*mikdash m’at*), allowing for a regular re-creation of cosmos out of chaos.<sup>70</sup>

On the hypernomianism of the Tosher rebbe’s devotional practice, some preliminary observations in the fieldwork by Lewis and Shaffir are illuminating and suggestive. The Tosher rebbe stresses the importance of prayer and its capacity to redeem one from exile if enacted with the “proper focus.”<sup>71</sup> There is an operative distinction between the levels of prayer, both nomian and hypernomian. On the one hand there is the nomian level, where prayer is a thrice daily spiritual practice that follows the paradigm of patriarchal temporality (i.e.

Abraham for dawn, Isaac for midday, and Jacob for night).<sup>72</sup> By all appearances in the Tosher rebbe's discourses, it is assumed that "praying in a regular *quorum*, day after day, without any change whatsoever, as well as eating according to a regimen only what is absolutely necessary for health, is what strengthens one's powers for study and prayer"<sup>73</sup> means *just that*. Even if this is to be understood merely on the nomian or legal level, the linkage here between increased spiritual power through a decrease in consumption amidst regular prayer beckons further questioning. This decrease in consumption leads "to an overall lack of desire to eat at all"<sup>74</sup> and "through afflictions at the moment of consumption, it is as if one has fasted the entire day."<sup>75</sup> The careful editing of these discourses, according to Lewis and Shaffir, reflects a more toned down version of ascetic devotion, lest the contemporary Tosher hasidim be intimidated by the rebbe's austerity.<sup>76</sup>

On the other hand, there is the hypernomian level, where prayer must include the spontaneous "openings of the heart like fire through the letters."<sup>77</sup> Prayer of the devoted one has the capacity to overturn divine decrees and change the nature of reality.<sup>78</sup> Building on this classic hasidic trope regarding the *tzaddik's* prayer, it is known within his community that the Tosher rebbe does not complete his prayers at the appointed times of morning, afternoon, and evening. Rather he engages in regular daylong fasts, culminating in being joined by a rotation of nine other Tosh *yeshiva* students who are also instructed to fast for their rotation in order to participate in a private quorum to enable the rebbe's recitation of the entirety of the regimented daily prayers – all well beyond their due time.<sup>79</sup> In creating such a hypernomian devotional space of spiritual intimacy through constant rotation of his *yeshiva* students,<sup>80</sup> the Tosher rebbe reveals the spiritual site of a concealed Zion to his community on a regular, rotating basis. The site of this Zion accomplished through hypernomian devotional space is only possible when one accepts that "every person should cultivate a miniature temple within one's own body, so as to be a

vessel for the *Shekhinah*.”<sup>81</sup> Not only is Sabbatical temporality infused with this redemptive capacity of Zion, but now exile is overcome in weekday prayer through the redemption of hyper-nomian devotionality.<sup>82</sup>

### **Kabbalah in Poetry and Lyric: Leonard Cohen’s Redemption of Exile**

If there is a pop-saint, poet laureate of Montreal, it would undoubtedly be Leonard Cohen.<sup>83</sup> The Montreal bard’s journey through the recording of his song, “*Un Canadien Errant*” captures the deeply exilic landscape that typifies his paradoxical yearning for homecoming. New layers in the theme of exile are revealed as this 1840s patriotic folk song about a rebel from Quebec, banished to America, longing for home, sung in English by a Canadian Jew who had wandered to California, accompanied by a Mexican Mariachi band living in L.A.<sup>84</sup> At this very moment in his exilic wanderings, the nearest home Cohen had was in the presence of spiritual intimacy with his Zen master, Roshi.<sup>85</sup>

Over the course of his career the Montreal bard has claimed that “he is tired of moving around” and he would like to “stay in one place for a while” yet “there always seemed good reasons to move.”<sup>86</sup> Cohen’s life as a poet has been a peripatetic one that has followed a course of continuous, self-imposed exile from his homeland in Montreal to sparse-rooms in: hotels in Manhattan and Mumbai; a house on the Grecian Island of Hydra; and a monk’s cottage at the Zen Monastery of Mount Baldy in Los Angeles. The ascetic aesthetic of bare rooms has always attracted Cohen and informs his lyric and poetic *imaginality* of Jerusalem and Babylon.<sup>87</sup>

Montreal as homecoming for Cohen was always brimming with redemption as he claims to have had “a very messianic childhood.”<sup>88</sup> Growing up on Belmont Street in Westmount, a classmate recalls how much “Leonard was embedded in religion, deeply connected with the *shul* through his grandfather, who was president of the synagogue, and because of his respect

for the elders; I remember how Leonard used to recount how his grandfather could put a pin through the Torah and be able to recite every word on each page it touched”<sup>89</sup> In addition to a regular exposure to traditional synagogue life, his grandfather, Rabbi Solomon Klonitzki-Kline Leonard expressed solidarity with his grandson as they were both writers. The two of them would sit together many evenings “going through the Book of Isaiah, which the rabbi knew by heart, and Leonard came to love for its poetry, imagery and prophecy.”<sup>90</sup> Early on the city of Montreal – much like Dublin was to Joyce – came to serve and symbolize exile as homecoming for Cohen.<sup>91</sup>

Amidst his wanderings to New York, London, and Greece, Cohen always viewed Montreal as a homecoming, albeit with the ambivalence of exile. For example, “in December 1963 at a symposium held in Montreal on the future of Judaism in Canada, Leonard’s address, entitled “Loneliness and History” castigates the Montreal Jewish community for abandoning the spiritual for the material.”<sup>92</sup> This recurrent material-spiritual dichotomy is echoed in its Babylon-Jerusalem counterpart. Early on in novels like *The Favorite Game*, Leonard turned the spotlight onto those who succumbed to the material at the expense of the spiritual, “like his uncles, who occupied the front pews at the synagogue were pledged only to their businesses; religious observance was an empty masquerade. They did not believe their blood was consecrated... They did not seem to realize how fragile the ceremony was. They participated blindly, as if it would last forever... Their nobility was insecure because it rested on inheritance and not moment-to-moment creation in the face of annihilation.”<sup>93</sup> This castigation of his hometown Jewish community made national headlines, ultimately reinforcing a sense of exile as homecoming. His attempt to bridge the irreconcilable gap between the material-spiritual dialectic, as echoed in Babylon-Jerusalem, leads Leonard into the mystical orchards.

Leonard Cohen as a non-dual<sup>94</sup> Jewish mystical poet and songwriter has already been astutely and comprehensively analyzed by Elliot R. Wolfson.<sup>95</sup> The Montreal bard is a mystic



attracted to “celibate piety” thus enabling Wolfson to masterfully display the poet’s attunement to “the insight regarding the erotic nature of asceticism, which implies the ascetic nature of eroticism.”<sup>96</sup> Cohen stands as a poet who, in Wolfson’s reading, utilizes unabashedly Jewish mystical imagery (whether Zoharic, Lurianic or Hasidic kabbalah).<sup>97</sup> Consider the following prelude of Jewish mystical imagery to a song proffered by Cohen during his concert in Jerusalem at *Binyanei Ha’uma* in the early 1970s:

It says in the Kabbalah that if you can’t get off the ground you should stay on the ground. It says in the Kabbalah that unless Adam and Eve face each other, God does not sit in his throne, and somehow the male and female part of me refuse to encounter one another tonight and God does not sit in his throne and this is a terrible thing to happen in Jerusalem. So listen, we’re going to leave the stage now and try to profoundly meditate in the dressing room to try to get ourselves back into shape if we can manage, . . . we’ll be back.<sup>98</sup>

It is this kind of mystical imagery that “both expands and constricts the boundaries of his Judaism *vis-à-vis* other traditions [especially Buddhism] in an effort to legitimate the validity of the *other* on the basis of affirming the distinctiveness of his own cultural formation.”<sup>99</sup> Intimations of this approach are also present when he says that “we are creating a loose church where each man can have his own vision.”<sup>100</sup> Such a vision oscillates between Jerusalem and Babylon, between Buddhism and Judaism. As a novelist, poet, and singer-songwriter, Cohen uses these diverse media to expose the anarchic landscapes of life with a healthy dose of Canadian suspicion – believing in God without knowing what God purposes.<sup>101</sup> Decades dedicated to Zen practice by Cohen can be seen as a commitment to redeeming the frequently xenophobic, triumphalist content of strains within the Jewish tradition through the rigor of an atheistic, acosmic Buddhist lens. His master, Joshu Sasaki Roshi has instructed Cohen that there is ultimately no

contradiction between the prayerful worship of Judaism and a/theistic practice of Zen. Notwithstanding his deep involvement with Buddhism, Leonard insisted to anyone who asked that he remained a Jew, more than satisfied in having a perfectly good religion, as he writes in his poem: “Anyone who says/I’m not a Jew/is not a Jew/I’m very sorry/but this decision/is final.”<sup>102</sup> Cohen also pointed out that Roshi never made any attempt to give this Jewish monk a new religion.<sup>103</sup> Rather, this exiled monk and teacher, Roshi, becomes an anchor amidst the tumult of Cohen’s wanderings, helping him become centered and feel at home, to the point where this Zen master becomes interwoven in the lyric of “Bird on the Wire” – from “a worm on the hook” to “a monk bending over a book.”<sup>104</sup>

Being anchored by his Zen master, the exilic Leonard finds his Zion on every road he travels. This is all the more remarkable given Cohen’s suspicion of holy men and his first criticism of Roshi as a kind of false messiah like Sabbetai Tzvi.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, the complementary nature of Zen practice with a Jewish mysticism like Cohen’s, as Wolfson’s study shows, is what allows for the Montreal bard to manifest his deepest appetites concerning the absolute, whereby the nameless unity and the nothingness of being coincide “with the monotheistic idea of one God as the ontic source of all reality.”<sup>106</sup>

Even the Montreal bard was strongly influenced by the 1967 turning point of North American Jewry’s renewed sense of ethnic pride emboldened through a strident Zionism. As one first encounters Leonard Cohen’s poetry and songwriting on Jerusalem, especially in the 1970s, the imagery appears idyllic, if not intoxicated by a naïve romanticism of a genteel nationalism. Jerusalem comes to the forefront of his own self-interrogation:

Between the mountains of spices/the cities thrust  
up pearl domes and filigree spires./Never before  
was Jerusalem so beautiful./In the sculptured  
temple how many pilgrims, lost in the measures  
of tambourine and lyre,/kneeling before the glory  
of the ritual?/Trained in grace the daughters of

Zion moved,/not less splendid than the golden  
statuary,/the bravery of ornaments about their  
scented feet.<sup>107</sup>

Immediately with the onset of the *Yom Kippur War*, October 6, 1973, Leonard takes leave of his family (who at the time, lived on Hydra) the next day, flying from Athens to Tel Aviv to enlist in the Israel Defense Forces. In 1974, Cohen describes his motives for the sudden leave-taking from Hydra to what he called his “myth-home” as a complex commitment: “I’ve never disguised the fact that I’m Jewish and in any crisis in Israel I would be there...I am committed to the survival of the Jewish people.”<sup>108</sup> For the next few weeks, Leonard joined up with Israeli musicians Oshik Levi, Matti Caspi, Mordechai “Pupik” Arnon, and Ilana Rovina to sing for the I.D.F. soldiers in “outposts, encampments, aircraft hangars, field hospitals, anywhere they saw soldiers, and performed for them up to eight times a day.”<sup>109</sup> While Cohen appears to be a prolific songwriter, his craft goes through grueling stretches of agonizing rewrites until the song emerges complete. By contrast, this early trip to Israel stands out as one of the few times where Cohen was able to write a song so miraculously quickly. Leonard improvised the song, “Lover Lover Lover” in front of the soldiers during his second performance with the band of Israeli musicians and the lyrics revealed to him the effects of war in Zion:

May the spirit of this song/May it rise up pure  
and free/May it be a shield for you/A shield  
against the enemy.

What is remarkable about Cohen’s ongoing struggle with the dialectic of exile-redemption is that by his 1974 tour, the Montreal bard would introduce “Lover Lover Lover” as a song “written in the Sinai desert for soldiers of both sides.”<sup>110</sup> Just as the dialectic of exile-redemption merges into exile as redemption, Israel and her Arab neighbors merge into one people.

After Israel, Cohen kept journeying onwards, delving even deeper into the war torn zone of Ethiopia. The

self-imposed exile from his self-proclaimed “myth-home” of Israel into Ethiopia raises the question as to why Cohen needed to continue journeying if, like all Jews, he was supposed to finally be at home in Israel? This journeying for Cohen in search of his “myth home” was more than merely avoiding domestic marital battles,<sup>111</sup> but an attempt to exhaust the narratives of nationalism swirling around him in Zionist circles of Montreal. Amidst this cultural context, there is an evolving nuance of negation that begins to emerge in Cohen’s addressing the dialectic of exile-redemption by 1975 through the symbol of Zion in Jerusalem. Cohen’s language seems to almost interrupt its own thought pattern midflight:

I won’t be sitting here long. I’m in a terrible hurry.  
I’m going to Jerusalem. I’m going with the happy  
Israeli soldiers and I’m going with the King of  
Saudi Arabia to kneel down in the place that we  
were promised...*I won’t be going to Jerusalem  
after all.* You will have to go to Jerusalem alone.  
It is yours. *It was given to you by the angels of  
culture and time.* But I can’t go.<sup>112</sup>

Already early on, the poet makes an ironic contrast between the physicality of Jerusalem “with the happy Israeli soldiers” and an inaccessible supernal and eternal Jerusalem. Throughout his *oeuvre*, whether in prose, poetry or lyrics, Cohen is constantly searching in exile for the elusive site of redemption – the hidden Jerusalem. What keeps this Montreal mystic from disclosing this redemptive site is the prevalence of Babylon or the pervasive exilic experience which he names anew – not as Rue St-Denis, or St- Catherine – but as “Boogie Street.” As the Montreal bard reflects, Boogie Street is the mundane routine of life, and we believe that we leave it from time to time. “We go up a mountain or into a hole, but most of the time we’re hustling on Boogie Street one way or another.”<sup>113</sup> Cohen observes a double exile at play, in that a monastery is also part of Boogie Street. Closing one’s door at home allows for an elimination of the world, whereas “a monastery is designed to eliminate

private space,” leading the bard to ruminate paradoxically that “there’s really *more respite from Boogie Street on Boogie Street* than there is in a monastery.”<sup>114</sup>

The myth of homecoming for a mystical recluse in a retreat center like Mount Baldy – far away from Montreal – is shattered. The “three solitudes” that informed Cohen’s Canadian Jewish upbringing are extended – beyond the anglophone-Protestant and francophone-Catholic sphere for the Montreal Jew – but now through the fourth solitude of Zen Buddhism. Retaining a disarming sense of irony when discussing his foray into Zen Buddhism, Cohen is consistent in his continuing loyalty to the Montreal Judaism of his upbringing, even when it is in need of a spiritual reboot.<sup>115</sup> Such a re-orientation for Cohen necessarily takes place most efficiently through the spiritual technologies of fasting shared by Judaism and Zen Buddhism. Already early on in his wanderings as a peripatetic poet, Cohen becomes aware of the pull that the monastic life has upon his soul. In his 1961 poetry collection, *Spice Box of the Earth*, Cohen claims:

I have not lingered in European monasteries/and discovered among the tall grasses tombs of knights/who fell as beautifully as their ballads tell...I have not held my breath/so that I might hear the breathing of G-d,/or tamed my heartbeat with an exercise,/or starved for visions.<sup>116</sup>

This “celibate piety”<sup>117</sup> that Cohen both craves and flees is most cogently expressed through his exilic wanderings as homecoming. The devotional posture of fasting is what brings Cohen most directly into alignment with exile as homecoming. Before entering into retreat at the monastery on Mount Baldy, and even on the island of Hydra, Cohen was “a monk with benefits”<sup>118</sup> who observed the Sabbath. This recurring practice throughout Cohen’s life has been one of an erotic asceticism amidst his self-imposed exiles bringing him great meaning. This recurring image of the Jewish monk evokes the image of Leonard’s favorite book of biblical prophecy, Isaiah, who envisions such celibate piety through the symbol of those “Eunuchs who observe the

Sabbath.”<sup>119</sup> While eventually marrying Suzanne, the material-spiritual dialectic deepened, forcing Leonard into deeper yearning for exile and the emptying power of hunger.<sup>120</sup> Fasting continued to hold sway over Leonard as a spiritual discipline that complemented his self-imposed exilic wanderings.<sup>121</sup>

This process of celibate piety reaches ecstatic heights in Cohen’s writing his most provocative 1966 novel, *Beautiful Losers*.<sup>122</sup> This novel of Canadian Jewish mysticism, *par excellence*, envisions a “post-modernism grounded in Canadian history, Native myth, and Cabbalistic games,”<sup>123</sup> expanding its mysticism into new horizons of the Canadian *imaginality*. This recasting of the third solitude now invokes the triad of Jews, Catholics, and Aborigines by masterfully repainting the opening portrait of Catherine Tekakwitha (1656-1680), Iroquois Virgin or Lily of the shores of Mohawk River.<sup>124</sup> It is Cohen’s mystical vision in this novel that allows for the “postcolonial recuperation of seventeenth-century native Canada, complicated by and aligned with a ‘post-diasporic’ Jewish sensibility” whereby “Jewish tribes lie behind Indian tribes.”<sup>125</sup> Notice how the third solitude of Montreal Jews between British and French colonial legacies is now extended and challenged by the Jew’s separation from the aboriginal. This daring excavation of one dyad within the third solitude triad, opens an *imaginal* stream – between the St. Lawrence and Sambation rivers, between aboriginal and Jew – that positions Cohen on this mystical journey to expand Zion.

The mystical process of writing *Beautiful Losers* also expands the spiritual landscape of Cohen’s exile as homecoming through Zion. For Cohen to consider *Beautiful Losers* as a prayer, one immediately senses the intimate linkage to the process of a saintly erotic asceticism of fasting in exile:

*Beautiful Losers* is a prayer – at times a hysterically funny, filthy prayer – for the unity of the self, and a hymn to the loss of self through sainthood and transfiguration...It was “written in blood,” said Leonard. He was writing, at various

points, ten, fifteen, twenty hours a day... When he finished typing the seven last words – “forever in your trip to the end” – Leonard went on a ten-day fast. He says, “I flipped out completely. It was my wildest trip. I hallucinated for a week. They took me to the hospital in Hydra.” He was put on a protein drip. After they sent him home, he spent three weeks in bed, hallucinating, he said, while Marianne took care of him. “I would like to say that it made me saintly,” he said.<sup>126</sup>

To become the saint of celibate piety, Cohen must dare to excavate his own *imaginal* experience of the aboriginal from the dyad of his Jewish tribal roots within the third solitude triad. This process of excavating his own Jewish tribalism leads to the lost root of his Canadian aboriginal tribalism. In this early, almost prophetic gesture in his novel, Cohen affirms lyrically later on that “coming up against someone else all the time is *Boogie Street*.”<sup>127</sup> It is through his encounter with the *other* – in the figure of Catherine Tekakwitha – that enables Cohen to break down the dualism of Babylon-Jerusalem and complicate his third solitude as a Montreal Jew in order to break through to his truer spiritual self by recovering the aboriginal impulse his ancestors settled.

The more distance Cohen traverses in escaping his Montreal Jewish home, the more he is drawn back into that exilic place of *no-place*. Cohen captures this exilic sense of place that is no-place in another recent refrain: “So let’s drink to when it’s over/and let’s drink to when we meet/I’ll be waiting on this corner/ where there used to be a street.”<sup>128</sup> Forever the peripatetic poet, Cohen’s exilic journeying in search of the Beloved – much like early Hasidic itinerants and their exilic wanderings through Eastern Europe<sup>129</sup> – is a search for Zion in exile. Through his wanderings to London and New York, Cohen realizes how much self-discovery of his personal Zion is linked to disclosure of the self before the *other* amidst all the shrouds, especially in times of rupture. This is captured in his famous lyric, “Famous Blue Raincoat” that for Cohen came to symbolize “that unassailable romantic life, the opposite of

a cloak of invisibility, the garment that would lead you into marvelous erotic and intellectual adventures.”<sup>130</sup> In confronting the double disclosure of this revealed raincoat of visibility, Cohen comes to terms with the exilic nature of his spiritual quest for Zion. Namely, that exile is a necessary part of the return to true self, a “homecoming. Despite approaching octogenarian status, it is this exilic experience of self that continues to drive and inspire the poet on his journey.

The exilic reality of Babylon colors and confounds the poet’s seeking of the *imaginality* of Jerusalem – the netherworld between imagination and reality. In that place of no-place, the poet yearns to reveal what is concealed, “a secret meeting, a warning, a Jerusalem hidden in Jerusalem.”<sup>131</sup> While the topography of Jerusalem has never been what the poet has been seeking, the secret symbol hides another within it. The *imaginal* experience of “a Jerusalem hidden in Jerusalem” is doubly concealed from most seekers, leading to delusions of grandeur. If the Jewish religion is concerning itself solely with the physical topography of Jerusalem, then the deeper spiritual “Jerusalem hidden in Jerusalem” will remain in exile. This kind of nationalistic, exoteric reductivism that often passes for religion – and Cohen is unabashed about seeing Judaism as one prime exemplar of this – cannot reconcile itself with the spiritual longing of the doubly concealed Jerusalem.

From the revelation that is doubly concealed, there also is the real desire for a double revelation of a redemption. It is that redemption that then brings its own concealment of exile in the *imaginal* symbol of Babylon. This symbol of Babylon recurs from his earlier musings and is refined, especially in Cohen’s latest songwriting. At an earlier phase, the poet succumbs to the intoxication of exile, forgoing any redemption beyond the time-space of his present experience, as he writes: “I really hope you stumble on/The Great Red Whore of Babylon/Forget the Grace/Enjoy the Lace.”<sup>132</sup> This same sense of abandonment is evident in his more famous lyric, “Chelsea hotel” where New York serves as Babylon:



I remember you well in the Chelsea Hotel,  
you were talking so brave and so sweet;  
giving me head on the unmade bed,  
while the limousines wait in the street.  
And those were the reasons, and that was New  
York,  
we were running for the money and the flesh;  
and that was called love for the workers in song,  
probably still is for those of them left.<sup>133</sup>

New York symbolizes yet another recurring exilic experience along the path of this peripatetic poet. Notice how rarely Cohen pines for the Montreal of his childhood, rather Babylon has many more stations along the journey of meaning-making. What matters is the underlying desire, the insatiable yearning that is Jerusalem despite being stranded for the moment at the bohemian refuge of Babylon, symbolized in the form of Chelsea Hotel.

The evocation of the exilic *imaginality* of Babylon continues to grow more intense in Cohen's lyrics; the more insatiable the yearning for Jerusalem, the more Babylon is evoked, as in another renowned song, "Dance me to the End of Love":

Let me see your beauty  
when the witnesses are gone  
Let me feel you moving  
like they do in Babylon  
Show me slowly what I only  
know the limits of  
Dance me to the end of love.<sup>134</sup>

Babylon is troped here as the site of a deeply dynamic desire, yet the poet desires so much more. The yearning displayed here is to be shown beyond what he "only knows the limits of" and to take that dance "to the end of Love" ultimately reuniting with the unsaid Jerusalem.

This journey to the end of desire and immersion into the deeper love of Jerusalem is evident in the poet's most recent lyrics. These words are marked by a deepening spiri-

tual journey of retreat and return. The retreat and return to Babylon is marked upon the lyrics of his recent song, “By the rivers dark”:

Though I take my song  
From a withered limb,  
Both song and tree,  
They sing for him.

Be the truth unsaid  
And the blessing gone,  
If I forget  
My Babylon.<sup>135</sup>

Through this song, Cohen is inverting the *imaginability* of desire that links exile and redemption within its dialectical dance that already begins in the exilic psalms of the bible.<sup>136</sup> Whereas the Psalmist yearns in exile for Jerusalem “by the rivers of Babylon *there* we sat down and cried” – the pleonastic “there” defines exile as the place that is always *elsewhere*, far away from Zion, and as Ezrahi suggests, this becomes “the pre-text for poetry.”<sup>137</sup> Cohen seeks and discovers the *imaginal* Crown of Jerusalem “by the rivers dark” in Babylon – that is, in exile as homecoming. Precisely in that dialectic lies the key to redemption. Namely, the Babylon of exile becomes the exilic site of redemption – Zion. No longer is Babylon the place from which one yearns for Zion as in Psalm 137:1, but this exilic existence evolves from having lived there, to belonging there at last, as alluded to throughout the course of the song: “I lived my life/in Babylon... And I had no strength/In Babylon... I belonged at last/to Babylon.” Once that sense of succumbing to exile has overtaken the poet, and his heart is broken open, does he truly come to understand the necessity of exile in realizing redemption: “Be the truth unsaid/And the blessing gone,/If I forget/My Babylon.” While exile can lull any seeker into a deep state of spiritual comatose, the poet is awakened by his encounter with the darkness of Babylon. In that process of encountering the shadow side of desire, the poet opens to realize the underlying unity within the dichotomies to which he was once enslaved:

“Then he struck my heart/With a deadly force,/And he said,  
‘This heart:/It is not yours.’” The key to the redemption that Cohen seeks is a classic mystical paradox – the redemption of Jerusalem is found in the exile of Babylon – where “singing becomes mnemonic compensation for absence”<sup>138</sup> so that exile becomes homecoming.

But this spiritual quest that began in Montreal and has taken Cohen the world over and back again, is much more complicated than any simple dualism of Babylon-Jerusalem and exile-redemption. This is most evident once the Montreal bard actually returns again to Zion despite his earlier post-*Yom Kippur* War poetic reflections on the impossibility of reaching Jerusalem: “I won’t be going to Jerusalem after all. You will have to go to Jerusalem alone. It is yours. It was given to you by the angels of culture and time. But I can’t go.”<sup>139</sup> This early realization of the impossibility of reaching the real Zion by traveling to Israel returns again over three decades later when Cohen reaches Israel at the end of his European Tour in 2009. Playing the finale of his concert in Tel Aviv, Cohen, wearing his signature black suit and fedora, gives this preamble to his invocation of the Priestly Benediction:

I want to draw our attention to the Israeli and Palestinian member of the *Bereaved Parents For Peace*...and those other men and women, some of whom have been called foolish, irrelevant, defeatist, but no, no, not at all friends! They have achieved the victory, perhaps the only victory available – the victory of the heart over its own inclinations for despair, revenge, and hatred. So dear friends...[positioning his fingers into the Priestly formation bowing with his musicians on stage he begins reciting the benediction] *Yevarkekha Adonai*...

This return to Zion with its invocation of the Priestly Blessing in Tel Aviv rather than at the Western Wall in Jerusalem reveals Cohen’s own exilic journey to redemption. The universalist tone of his poetry that incubated in the early 1960s in

Montreal, now resounds decades later, while remaining imbedded in his particular religious path. After the finale to end all finales – with High Priest invoking his Priestly Blessing in Tel Aviv – the particular has become universalized with “*Leonard Cohens* everywhere.”<sup>140</sup>

Ultimately here one encounters the divergence between the two Canadian mystics we have been exploring thus far. While Leonard Cohen crosses cultural boundaries from the hushed Westmount cosmopolitanism and privileged status of his Jewish upbringing blossoming into a bohemian bard-*kohen* and returning as a contemplative mystical Jew to Israel via Tel Aviv, by contrast, the Tosher rebbe, R. Meshulam Feish Segal-Loewy deepens the dualism that began in Nyirtass, Hungary, as it is transplanted into the *accommodement raisonable* of Boisbriand. Whereas Cohen traverses his Judaism as a mystic who surpasses his precursor poets, like A.M. Klein and Irving Layton, along the path towards a non-dual mystical apperception, the Tosher rebbe continues developing a deeply devotional mystical dualism that cannot fully reconcile itself with the boundary-crossing visions of his master, R. Yitzhak Ayzik Yehudah Yehiel of Komarno amidst the insular, self-imposed exile of *Kiryas Tosh* in Boisbriand. Regarding this heightening of dualism in the Tosher rebbe, I have argued that the Tosher rebbe’s mysticism cannot escape its further radicalizing of the holy/profane dichotomy given its insular exile from surrounding local Quebecois culture. By comparison, Cohen revolts against the assimilation and apathy rampant amidst the Montreal Jewish elite of his upbringing. Without such a spiritual revolution, Cohen would have forfeited performing in Tel Aviv, given the irreconcilable dualism between Israeli and Palestinian members of the *Bereaved Parents For Peace*. Rather, what emerges for this Montreal bard is a dissolution of any notions of dualism into a unified vision to heal the broken heart through an expanded Zion in exile.

### **Conclusion: Canadian Mysticism's Redemption in Exile**

The dialectical *to and fro* between Babylon and Jerusalem, between living in the Diaspora and yearning for Zion, causes creative tension for the two Jewish mystics from Montreal – the Hasidic rebbe and the Jewish monk. Zion is transformed through each of their unique experiences of the exilic Babylon within Quebecois culture. Whether in the form of prayerful poetry, song, or even Hasidic discourse, the Jewish mystic ensconced in the Montreal landscape, is influenced by Canada and Quebec's complicated politics of homeland and identity.<sup>141</sup> I have shown that there is a unique texture to the universal and particular lights that radiate from these two Jewish mystics who remain connected to their exile as homecoming in Montreal. Within each of these mystics' hypernomianism, both turn to fasting as constituting their devotional experience of homecoming to Zion. The mystical varieties of these diverse Judaism(s) are in continuous formation and evolution, exemplifying a pluralism of the Canadian psyche that extends beyond state-based multiculturalism.<sup>142</sup>

The dialectical tension that inspires Leonard Cohen to deepen his mystical apperception of the Zion concealed in Babylon is that same creative tension in Tosher rebbe envisioning the final remnant of hasidim in Boisbriand being redeemed from their exile amidst that very exile. What is remarkable here is how each of these unique encounters with the spirit in exile retains a distinctly local cultural process for redemption of Zion within the third solitude of Montreal Jewish culture. In each case, some part of that yearning for the redemption of Zion has become spiritualized as Zion in exile rather than embodied in the physical Land of Israel. This essay has attempted to show how both mystic and poet find their possible pathways of redemption as a spiritualized Zion within an exilic Babylon. It is within this reconfigured third solitude that the unique mystical experiences and records of a Hasidic rebbe and a Jewish monk are expanding Canadian Jewish mysticism.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Acknowledgements: both anonymous reviewers of an earlier draft of this essay were helpful in refocusing the argument of the present version. I am also deeply indebted to CJS editors, David Koffman and Stephanie Tara Schwartz, for their further insights into the nuances at play of “the third solitude” for Canadian Jewish Mysticism. Sidra D. K. Ezrahi, *Booking Passage: Exile and Homecoming in the Modern Jewish Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), esp. 3-32, 234-245; Jonathan Boyarin and Daniel Boyarin, *Powers of Diaspora: Two Essays on the Relevance of Jewish Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 1-34; Caryn Aviv and David Shneer, *New Jews: The End of the Jewish Diaspora* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 1-26.

<sup>2</sup> Aviv and Shneer, *New Jews*, 23.

<sup>3</sup> See A.M. Klein’s unpublished essay “In Praise of the Diaspora” as quoted in Michael Greenstein, *Third Solitude: Tradition and Discontinuity in Jewish Canadian Literature* (McGill-Queen’s Press: Montreal, 1989), 11.

<sup>4</sup> Greenstein, *Third Solitude*, 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>6</sup> For more on how the “two solitudes” of anglophone and franco-phone linguistic and ethnic clusters give way to Montreal Jews’ vibrant and warmly embracing “third solitude,” see Harold M. Troper, *The Defining Decade: Identity, Politics, and the Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 39-80. For the influence of this “third solitude” upon Canadian literature, see Greenstein, *Third Solitude*, 3-17; see also Tom Marshall, “Third Solitude: Canadian as Jew,” in *The Canadian Novel: Here and Now*, ed. John Moss (Toronto: NC Pr, 1983), 147-155.

<sup>7</sup> Ezrahi, *Booking Passage*, 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 4. “For Jews who had developed a culture of *substitution* in all the lands of their dispersion, reconnecting Zion, or Jerusalem, meant an intoxicating – and toxic – encounter with the only place that had the status of *the real*. Repudiating mimetic culture in favor of reclamation of “original space” also activates, at the deepest level, a mechanism for renouncing the workings of the imagination, the invention of alternative worlds, to replace them with the recovery of what is perceived as the bedrock of the collective self.”

<sup>9</sup> This renowned model for Israel-Diaspora relations in the modern period by *Ahad Ha'am* (a.k.a. Asher Ginsburg) posited Israel as center for cultural renewal, radiating outwards like spokes on a wheel to the peripheral diaspora. For more on *Ahad Ha'am's* vision for Zionism, see Steven J. Zipperstein, *Elusive Prophet: Ahad Ha'am and the Origins of Zionism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

<sup>10</sup> Jonathan Boyarin and Daniel Boyarin, "Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 19.4 (1993):711; see also Boyarin, and Boyarin, *Powers of Diaspora*, and Aviv and Shneer, *New Jews*.

<sup>11</sup> Aviv and Shneer, *New Jews*, 21.

<sup>12</sup> Yoram Hazony, *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Daniel Gordis, *Saving Israel: How the Jewish People Can Win a War That May Never End* (Hoboken, N.J: John Wiley & Sons, 2009); Alan M. Dershowitz, *The Case for Israel* (Hoboken, N.J: John Wiley & Sons, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> David Hartman, *Israelis and the Jewish Tradition: An Ancient People Debating Its Future* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). See also, Jonathan W. Malino, *Judaism and Modernity: The Religious Philosophy of David Hartman* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). More recently, see David Novak, "Zionism and Jewish Theology" (New York: *The Tikvah Institute for Jewish Thought*, March 10, 2011) and his full length study (Stanford University Press: Stanford, *forthcoming*).

<sup>14</sup> Boyarin and Boyarin, *Powers of Diaspora*, 11.

<sup>15</sup> Jonathan Garb, "Contemporary Kabbalah and Classical Kabbalah: Breaks and Continuities," in *After Spirituality: Studies in Mystical Traditions*, vol. 1, ed. Phillip Wexler & Jonathan Garb (Peter Lang: New York, 2012), 19-46.

<sup>16</sup> Robert S. Ellwood, *Mysticism and Religion* (New York: Seven Bridges Press, 1999), 39.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 46.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 47.

<sup>19</sup> Garb, "Contemporary Kabbalah," 19-46.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, *Mysticism and Religion*, 47-48.

<sup>21</sup> Greenstein, *Third Solitude*, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Translated as, "The quiet revolution."

<sup>23</sup> Ira Robinson, "The Bouchard-Taylor Commission and the Jewish

Community of Quebec in Historical Perspective,” in *Religion, Culture and the State: Reflections on the Bouchard-Taylor Report* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2011), 61.

<sup>24</sup> James R. Horne, “Mysticism Demystified,” *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review*, 24.2 (Summer: 1985), 291-296; Donald Evans, “Mysticism and Morality,” *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review*, 24.2 (Summer: 1985), 297-308; James R. Horne, “Reply to Evans” *Dialogue: Canadian Philosophical Review*, 24.2 (Summer: 1985), 308.

<sup>25</sup> Richard Maurice Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind* (E.P Dutton: New York, 1901). In 1880, American poet, Walt Whitman spent the summer with Bucke at his home in London, Upper Canada. As one of Whitman’s most devoted friends and supporters in the poet’s later years, Bucke had a messianic view of the poet and drew on his poetic record to inspire his views on Cosmic Consciousness. Accessed Jan. 3, 2013. <http://whitmanarchive.org/criticism/disciples/bucke/biography/anc.00247>.

<sup>26</sup> Ann Davis, *The Logic of Ecstasy: Canadian Mystical Painting 1920-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1992), 42-163; Roald Nasgaard, *The Mystic North: Symbolist Landscape Painting in Northern Europe and North America 1890-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto/AGO, 1984).

<sup>27</sup> The original formation of painters from 1911-1913 in Toronto included: Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A. Y. Jackson, Franz Johnston, Arthur Lismer, Jock E.H. MacDonald, and Fred Varley. The group became a national school once joined by Montreal’s Edwin Holgate in 1930 and Winnipeg’s L.L. Fitzgerald in 1932. See Christopher Varley, *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Group of Seven.” Accessed Feb. 10, 2013. <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/group-of-seven>

<sup>28</sup> Davis, *The Logic of Ecstasy*, x.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 96-97.

<sup>30</sup> In the construction of its own history, the Theosophists cite one of its world leaders, Katherine A. Tingley, as having spent formative time leading up to her mystical illumination in a Roman Catholic Convent in Quebec, see *Theosophy*, vol. 12: 1-7 (New York: Theosophical Society, 1896), 46-47. See also Michele Lacombe, “Theosophy and the Canadian Idealist Tradition: A Preliminary Exploration,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 17.2 (1982): 100-118; Samuel E. C. Wagar, “Theosophical Socialists in the



1920s Okanagan: Jack Logie's Social Issues Summer Camps" (master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2005).

<sup>31</sup> Boaz Huss, "'The Sufi Society From America': Theosophy and Kabbalah in Poona in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Kabbalah and Modernity: Interpretations, Transformations, Adaptations*, eds. Boaz Huss, Marco Pasi, Kocku von Stuckard (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 167-193. More recently, see Boaz Huss "Cosmic Kabbalah: Kabbalah and Western Esotericism in the Writings of Max Theon and his Followers" (lecture, AJS 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, Chicago, December 17, 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Ira Robinson, "Kabbalist and Communal Leader: Rabbi Yudel Rosenberg and the Canadian Jewish Community," *Canadian Jewish Studies*, 1 (1993): 41-58.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-53.

<sup>34</sup> Jonathan Garb, "After Spirituality: Introducing the Volume and the Series," in *After Spirituality: Studies in Mystical Traditions* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012), 3.

<sup>35</sup> Aubrey L. Glazer, "Touching God: Vertigo, Exactitude, and Degrees of *Devekut*" in *Mystical Vertigo: Contemporary Kabbalistic Hebrew Poetry Dancing Over the Divide in Jewish Thinking* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013), 21-70.

<sup>36</sup> Greenstein, *Third Solitude*, 14.

<sup>37</sup> The Canadian Jewish Thinker most preoccupied with the challenges of Exile/Redemption remains Emil Fackenheim. See Fackenheim's re-articulation of the theosophy of exile through *shevira* and *tikkun* in Lurianic Kabbalah in Aubrey L. Glazer, "*Tikkun* in Fackenheim's *Leben-Denken* as a trace of Lurianic Kabbalah," *Emil L. Fackenheim; Philosopher, Theologian, Jew*, eds. Jim A. Diamond, Sharon Portnoff, and Martin D. Yaffe (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 235-249. Another cogent translation of *shevira* and *tikkun* in Lurianic Kabbalah is found in Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1947), 280. Compare with Scholem's 1917 journal entry: "Better to live eternally in exile and carry my sins alone than to lead a hedonistic life in the land of Israel," as quoted in Eric Jacobson, *Metaphysics of the Profane: the Political Theology of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 62.

<sup>38</sup> Rodger Kamenetz, *The Jew in the lotus: A Poet's rediscovery of Jewish identity in Buddhist India* (New York: Harper One, 2007), 11-12.

<sup>39</sup> Nicolas James Mount, *When Canadian literature moved to New York* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

<sup>40</sup> Dany Laferrière, *Comment faire l'amour avec un negre sans se fatiguer* (Ottawa: Archambault, 2007); Dany Laferrière, *How to make love to a Negro without getting tired: a novel*, tr. David Homel (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010). Laferrière's journey from tanning cowhides in a Montreal factory to becoming a wordsmith, from exile to redemption, remains so compelling because he "understands the lesson of the great Jewish-American writers: you can get to the top with words too." *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>41</sup> See this synchronic model in the study by Tom Marshall, *Harsh and Lovely Land: The Major Canadian Poets and the Making of a Canadian Tradition* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979).

<sup>42</sup> "Writing about exile, dislocation, memories of an abandoned homeland, loss of mother tongue – some of the themes found in many migrant texts – reflect to a certain extent the nationalistic preoccupations of native Quebecois writers," see Frédéric Royall, *Contemporary French Cultures and Societies*. Vol. 26 of *Modern French Identities* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), 348.

<sup>43</sup> Abraham Segal, "The Relation between Lurianic Kabbalah and Hasidism in the Thought of R. Yisshaq of Komarno," in *Kabbalah: A Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts*, 15 (Cherub Press: Los Angeles, 2006): 305-334.

<sup>44</sup> For more on this Komarno-Zidichov lineage, see Yitzhak Alfasi, *Torat ha'Hasidut*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Mossad haRav Kook, 2009), 267-321. The current Tosher rebbe's great-grandfather was a disciple of R. Yitzhak Ayzik Yehudah Yehiel of Komarno (1806–1874). R. Yitzhak Ayzik's disciple was R. Meshulam Feish Segal-Loewy, father of Elimelekh Segal-Loewy, father of Mordechai Segal-Loewy of Demescer, father of the current Tosher rebbe .R. Yitzhak Ayzik was a disciple of R. Tzvi Hirsh of Zidichov (1763-1831), tracing lineage back as disciple to the *Seer of Lublin* (1745-1815). The Seer was a disciple of Rebbe Elimelech Lipman of Lizhensk (1717-1787), who was a disciple of Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezeritch (1704-1772), the primary disciple of the *Baal Shem Tov* (1698-1760).

<sup>45</sup> On the prevalence of Komarno-Zidichov customs integrated into contemporary Tosher spiritual practice, see R. Meshulam Feish Segal-Loewy, "Minhagai ha'Sabah Kadisha" in *Zemirot 'Avodat haLevi (Kiryas*

*Tosh*: Boisbriand, 2010), 770-774, wherein a sampling of customs allocates prominence to Komarno-Zidichov at a ratio of 8:5.

<sup>46</sup> Rather than using terms like “non-normative” or “antinomian” it is more accurate to use the term “hypernomian” which denotes a devotional mode of fulfilling the law by overflowing its traditional form to reformulate its expression, as shown in the extensive work of Elliot R. Wolfson, “Beyond Good and Evil: Hypernomianism, Transmorality, and Kabbalistic ethics,” *Crossing Boundaries; Essays on the Ethical Status of Mysticism*, eds. G. William Barnard and Jeffrey J. Kripal (Seven Bridges Press, New York, 2002), 103-156.

<sup>47</sup> Also spelled as *Tash*, adapted from the Hebrew/Yiddish: טאַש

<sup>48</sup> Alfasi, *Ha'Hasidut meDor leDor*, 456, 488.

<sup>49</sup> Consistently higher levels of anti-Semitism and ethnocentrism have been documented in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada. See Paul M. Sniderman, David A. Northrup, Joseph F. Fletcher, Peter H. Russell, *et al* “Psychological and cultural foundations of prejudice: The case of anti-Semitism in Quebec,” *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 30.2 (1993): 242-270. Compare with anti-Semitism and ethnocentrism as experienced by American Jews with Afro-Americans in Borough Park rather than the rest of New York, see Arnold Eisen, “Limits and virtues of dialogue,” *Society*, Sept./Oct. 31.6 (1994): 17-22. See also Saul Brenner “Patterns of Jewish-Catholic Democratic Voting and the 1960 Presidential Vote,” *Jewish Social Studies*, 26.3 (1964): 169-178 where Brenner analyzes this correlation between anti-Semitism and ethnocentrism in the Borough Park Jewish community as opposed to the Bay Ridge Irish Catholic community.

<sup>50</sup> Robinson, “The Bouchard-Taylor Commission,” 65-66.

<sup>51</sup> Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Yehuda Yechiel Safrin of Komarno, *Zohar Chai*, part 4, 184b.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, *Haikhal Berakhah: Deuteronomy* 169a.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, *Aseereet ha'Aifa*, 152b, challenges the *Sifra's* acceptance of never returning to Israel after its curse of desolation and ruin in Leviticus 26:32.

<sup>54</sup> R. Yaakov Moshe of Komarno was constantly acquiring and using only *kippot*, *tzitzit* and ritual objects from the Land of Israel, see Hayyim Yaakov Safrin, ed. *Shalshleth haQodesh* (Bnai Brak, n.p., 2003), 519a.

<sup>55</sup> R. Yaakov Moshe of Komarno had a deep desire to immigrate to

the Land of Israel near the end of his life but was stopped by his disciples. See Safrin, *Shalshleth haQodesh*, 528b. Consider for example, R. Barukh of Komarno, who preferred a life removed from the public rabbinate, rather yearning to immigrate to the Land of Israel, *ibid.*, 559a.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, *Shalshleth haQodesh*, 575a.

<sup>57</sup> William Shaffir, "Hassidic Jews and Quebec Politics," *Jewish Journal of Sociology*, 25 (1983): 105-18.

<sup>58</sup> R. Meshulam Feish Segal-Loewy, *Avodat Avodah, Parshat Kedoshim* (Boisbriand, Quebec: 2011), 96b.

<sup>59</sup> Segal-Loewy, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 2, *Parshat Kedoshim*. 96b.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 2, 28<sup>th</sup> Sivan, 176b-177a.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 1, *Parshat Vayetzeh*, 77a; *ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah, Parshat Vayishlakh*, 84b-85b; *ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 2, *Parshat Tzav-Shabbat haGadol*, 36a-b.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 2, *Parshat Tzav-Shabbat haGadol*, 36a-b; *ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah, Parshat Acharai Mot*, 90a-b; *ibid.*, "Galut v'Geulat Mitzrayim" in 'Avodat haLevi: Haggadah shel Pesach (Kiryas Tosh: Boisbriand, 2005), 279a-296b.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, "Galut v'Geulat Mitzrayim" in 'Avodat haLevi: Haggadah shel Pesach, 284b-287b.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 1, *Parshat Vayishlakh*, 83a-b; *ibid.*, "Galut v'Geulat Mitzrayim" in 'Avodat haLevi: Haggadah shel Pesach, 286b.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 1, *Parshat Vayigash*, 144a; *ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah, Parshat Vayigash*, 146a-b.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 2, *Parshat VaYikrah*, 11a-b; compare with similar claims about the exile of the soul and divine portions through improper eating habits, see *ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 1, *Parshat Hayyai Sarah*, 50a; *ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 1, *Parshat Vayetzai*, 77a-b; *ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 2, *Parshat Shemini*, 52a, 55b; *ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 2, *Parshat Tzav-Parah*, 23a; *ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 2, *Parshat Shemini*, 52a, 55b.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 1, *Parshat Vaera*, 180a-b; *ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 1, *Parshat Bo*, 185a-b; *ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 1, *Parshat Ki Tissa*, 279a-b; *ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 2, *Parshat Shelakh*, 185b-186b.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 2, *Parshat Nitzavim*, 313b.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 1, *Parshat Vayakhel*, 282a, 284a-b.

<sup>70</sup> Ezrahi, *Booking Passage*, 13.

<sup>71</sup> R. Meshulam Feish Segal-Loewy, “*Galut v’Geulat Mitzrayim*” in ‘*Avodat haLevi: Haggadah shel Pesach (Kiryas Tosh: Boisbriand, 2005)*, 286b-287b.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 286b.

<sup>73</sup> R. Meshulam Feish Segal-Loewy, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 1, *Parshat Bereshith*, 12b.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah* vol. 1, *Parshat Vayishlakh*, 89b; *ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 1, *Tu B’Shevat*, 209a.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, *Avodat Avodah* vol. 1, *Parshat Shemot*, 169a.

<sup>76</sup> “Asked directly about the books, the Toshers we spoke with agreed that they accurately represent the Rebbe’s approach to spiritual life – except that some of his most demanding teachings were left out because they were seen as being addressed only to an earlier, spiritually stronger generation.” See Justin Lewis and William Shaffir, “Tosh, Between Earth and Moon: A Hasidic Rebbe’s Followers and his Teachings,” in *From Antiquity to the Post-Modern World: Contemporary Jewish Studies in Canada*, eds. Daniel Maoz and Andrea Gondos (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 149.

<sup>77</sup> R. Meshulam Feish Segal-Loewy, “*Galut v’Geulat Mitzrayim*” in ‘*Avodat haLevi: Haggadah shel Pesach (Kiryas Tosh: Boisbriand, 2005)*, 286b.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 287a-b.

<sup>79</sup> Lewis and Shaffir, “Tosh, Between Earth and Moon: A Hasidic Rebbe’s Followers and his Teachings,” 147-150.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>81</sup> R. Meshulam Feish Segal-Loewy, *Avodat Avodah*, vol. 2, *Parshat Shemini*, 52a.

<sup>82</sup> See footnote 46.

<sup>83</sup> For more on the poet, Leonard Cohen as a pop-saint in his own self-imposed sainthood, see Michael Ondaatje, *Leonard Cohen, Canadian Writers Number 5* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1970), 61; compare more recently, Alan Light, *The Holy or the Broken: Leonard Cohen, Jeff Buckley, and the Unlikely Ascent of Hallelujah* (New York: Atria Books, 2012).

<sup>84</sup> Leonard Cohen, “*Un Canadien Errant*” on *Recent Songs* (Sony

Music Entertainment: September 27, 1979, CD).

<sup>85</sup> Sylvie Simmons, *I'm Your Man: The Life of Leonard Cohen* (Harper Collins, New York, 2012), 319-320.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 325.

<sup>87</sup> Michael Harris, "An Interview with Leonard Cohen," *Duel Journal* (1969).

<sup>88</sup> Sylvie Simmons, *I'm Your Man*, 72.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 113-114.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>94</sup> The usage of "non-dual" mysticism here refers to that mystical experience defined by "...the strictly inward nature of ultimate enlightenment has appended to it an open-eyed state where every object is seen as ultimately formed of consciousness itself." See Paul Eduardo Muller-Ortega, *The Triadic Heart of Śiva: Kaula Tantricism of Abhinavagupta in the Non-Dual Shaivism of Kashmir*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 9.

<sup>95</sup> Elliot R. Wolfson, "New Jerusalem Glowing: Songs and Poems Leonard Cohen in a Kabbalistic Key," *Kabbalah: Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts* 15 (2006): 103-153.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 124-126.

<sup>98</sup> Simmons, *I'm Your Man*, 262-3.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>100</sup> Ondaatje, *Leonard Cohen*, 61.

<sup>101</sup> See Marshall, "A History of us all: Leonard Cohen," in *Harsh and Lovely Land: The Major Canadian Poets and the Making of a Canadian Tradition*, 142.

<sup>102</sup> Leonard Cohen, "Not a Jew," *Book of Longing* (McClelland & Stuart: Toronto, 2006), 158.

<sup>103</sup> Simmons, *I'm Your Man*, 316.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 186: "Late into the night, says Sanfield, 'he told me a long version of the tale of Sabbatai Sevi, the false Messiah.' I said, 'Why did you

tell me that?' He said, 'Well, I just thought you should hear it.' I think it was because I was talking in such superlative praise of my Roshi. Leonard was suspicious of holy men."

<sup>106</sup> Wolfson, "New Jerusalem Glowing," 111-122.

<sup>107</sup> Leonard Cohen, "Isaiah," in *Stranger Music: Selected Poems and Songs* (New York: Pantheon, 1993), 40.

<sup>108</sup> Simmons, *I'm Your Man*, 272.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 272-3.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, *I'm Your Man*, 273-4.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, *I'm Your Man*, 275. "[I]n traveling to these combat zones [of Israel and Ethiopia], Leonard was avoiding the war that awaited him at home with Suzanne. He was weary, though and ready to make peace. He had seen too much blood and death and hatred in Israel. He felt he should go back and tend this little garden whose seed he had planted and see if somehow he could make a success of family life. But first he went to the monastery to sit in retreat with Roshi. When he finally went home to Suzanne and Adam at the end of the year, peace reigned in the cottage in Montreal, long enough for Suzanne to become pregnant with their second child [Lorca]."

<sup>112</sup> Leonard Cohen, "The Politics of this Book," in *Stranger Music*, 291. [my italics]

<sup>113</sup> Leonard Cohen, "Leonard Cohen: Zen And The Art Of Songwriting," interview by Terry Gross, *NPR*, April 03, 2009. [my italics]. Accessed Feb. 7, 2013. <http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=102692227>.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.* [my italics]

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* "I wasn't looking for anything exalted or spiritual. I had a great sense of disorder in my life, of chaos, of depression, of distress, and I had no idea where this came from, and the prevailing psychoanalytic explanations at the time didn't seem to address the things I felt... So I had to look elsewhere, and I bumped into someone [named Zen master Roshi] who seemed to be at ease with himself. It seems a simple thing to say, he seemed to be at ease with himself and at ease with others. And without ever deeply studying at the time what he was speaking about, it was the man himself that attracted me."

<sup>116</sup> Leonard Cohen, "I have not lingered in European Monasteries," in *Stranger Music*, 18.

<sup>117</sup> Wolfson, "New Jerusalem Glowing," 109.

<sup>118</sup> Simmons, *I'm Your Man*, 81-2. "The ritual routine and sparsity of this life [on Hydra] satisfied him immensely. It felt monastic somehow, except this was a monk with benefits; the Hydra arts colony had beaten the hippies to free love by half a decade. Leonard was also a monk who observed the Sabbath. On Friday nights he would light the candles and on Saturday, instead of working, he would put on his white suit and go down to the port to have coffee."

<sup>119</sup> Isaiah 56:4

<sup>120</sup> Simmons, *I'm Your Man*, 288.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 104. "Leonard continued to fast, as he had in Montreal. The discipline of a week of fasting appealed to him, as did the spiritual element of purging and purification and the altered mental state it produced. Fasting focused his mind for writing, but there was vanity in it also; it kept his body thin and his face gaunt and serious (although the amphetamines helped with that too). There seemed to be a deep need in Leonard for self-abnegation, self-control and hunger...Leonard abstained from eating meat, but he was less restrained when it came to his appetite "for the company of women and the sexual expression of friendship."

<sup>122</sup> Leonard Cohen, *Beautiful Losers* (McClelland & Stewart: Toronto, [1966] 2003).

<sup>123</sup> Greenstein, *Third Solitude*, 119.

<sup>124</sup> Michael Greenstein, *Contemporary Jewish Writing in Canada: An Anthology* (University of Nebraska Press: Lincoln, NB, 2004), xxiv-xxv.

<sup>125</sup> Greenstein, *Contemporary Jewish Writing in Canada*, xxv.

<sup>126</sup> Simmons, *I'm Your Man*, 132-3.

<sup>127</sup> Cohen, "Leonard Cohen: Zen And The Art Of Songwriting."

<sup>128</sup> Leonard Cohen, "The Street," in *The New Yorker*, March 2, 2009.

<sup>129</sup> Elliot R. Wolfson, "Walking as a Sacred Duty: Theological Transformation of Social Reality in Early Hasidism," in *Along the Path: Studies in Kabbalistic Myth* (SUNY Press: New York, 1995), 89-109.

<sup>130</sup> Cohen, "Leonard Cohen: Zen And The Art Of Songwriting."

<sup>131</sup> Leonard Cohen, "Moving into a period," *Book of Longing*, 34.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, "Fragment from a Journal," in *Stranger Music*, 386.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, "Chelsea Hotel," in *Stranger Music*, 197.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, "Dance me to the end of love," in *Stranger Music*, 337.



<sup>135</sup> Ibid., “By the rivers dark,” *Ten New Songs* (2001).

<sup>136</sup> Specifically, see Psalm 137: “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat, yea, sat and wept, as we remembered Zion. There on the poplars/ we hung our lyres,/for our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors, for amusement,/'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.'/How can we sing a song of YHVH on alien soil? If I forget you, O Jerusalem,/ let my right hand wither;/ if I cease to think of you,/if I do not keep Jerusalem in memory/even at my happiest hour.”

<sup>137</sup> Ezrahi, *Booking Passage*, 9.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>139</sup> Leonard Cohen, “The Politics of this Book,” in *Stranger Music*, 291.

<sup>140</sup> Nathan Jeffay, “‘Hallelujah’ in Tel Aviv: Leonard Cohen Energizes Diverse Crowd,” *Forward*, September 25, 2009. Accessed Feb. 7, 2013. <http://forward.com/articles/115181/hallelujah-in-tel-aviv-leonard-cohen-energizes-di/#ixzz2KLI8BboN>. “Even that wasn’t the last that concert-goers saw of Leonard Cohen. On the way out of the stadium, there were *Leonard Cohens* everywhere. Next to the shopping carts purloined from supermarkets by street sellers using them to sell hot bagels was a stall offering black fedora hats, Cohen’s trademark. It sold hundreds, and so Leonard Cohen has left a behind a different Israel to the one that greeted him. Today, you don’t have to be *Haredi* to wear a black hat.”

<sup>141</sup> See footnote 42.

<sup>142</sup> H. Bannerji “On the dark side of the nation: Politics of Multiculturalism and the State of Canada,” *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 31. 3(1996) : 103-128; Danielle Juteau, Marie McAndrew, and Linda Pietrantonio, “Multiculturalism à la Canadian and intégration à la Québécoise. Transcending their limits,” *Public Policy and Social Welfare*, 23 (1998): 95-110. On the influence of multiculturalism to “reinforce group loyalty and to provide an outlet for the energies of talented Jews to benefit the benefit of those individuals, of the Jewish community, and of the Canadian people at large,” see Michael Brown, “Canadian Jews and Multiculturalism: Myths and Realities,” *Jewish Political Studies Review* 19. 3-4 (2007). Accessed April 24, 2013. <http://jcpa.org/article/canadian-jews-and-multiculturalism-myths-and-realities/?print=1>.

