

Isaiah Horowitz's *Shenei Luhot  
Haberit (Shelah)*: A Vision of  
Jewish Pietism

Joseph Zechariah Francis Citron

UCL

PhD Hebrew and Jewish Studies

I, Joseph Zechariah Francis Citron, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.'

## Abstract

This thesis provides the first comprehensive analysis of Isaiah Horowitz's 1649 *magnum opus*, the *Shenei Luhot Haberit (Shelah)* and its contribution towards Jewish Thought. Horowitz's work is an 844-paged encyclopaedia which presents the mystical kabbalah as the authoritative philosophy of Judaism, explaining how it informs all other areas of Jewish Thought. In this manner, Horowitz reinterpreted classical Jewish beliefs along kabbalistic lines and developed a concept of Jewish Orthodoxy 200 years before the term became widespread. Horowitz's contribution towards Jewish mysticism is best understood as a reconfiguration of esoteric concepts into ordinary modes of behaviour: unlike his kabbalistic predecessors, Horowitz argued that mystical union with God is achieved through everyday activities and not exclusively through extraordinary meditative states. Furthermore, Horowitz broke with the time-honoured separation between the legal and mystical spheres by showing how kabbalah is necessary in order to decide matters of Jewish law. By inserting many kabbalistic customs into the *Shelah* and conferring texts such as the Zohar with authoritative legal status, Horowitz directed Ashkenazic Judaism along kabbalistic lines in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Horowitz also cultivated an ethos of pietism which emphasised world-affirmation and joy: two dominant themes in the *Shelah* are that every Jew can serve God through sanctifying the material world and that religious conduct is empty without passion and enthusiasm. This culminates in an eschatological vision where the messiah will arrive after the realm of evil has been purified through personal and national transformation. The *Shelah* was a highly influential work, and this study provides an important aid for scholars trying to understand the intellectual and religious development of diffuse Jewish movements

ranging from the Sabbateans in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Hasidism and their opponents in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the Orthodox in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Impact Statement

There are two trajectories where my research provides important contributions towards future academic and non-academic investigation: The first relates to the study of Judaism, and the second pertains to the broader understanding of religion in the Early Modern period and religious policy today. Firstly, my research provides important background information into the study of Hasidism, Sabbateanism and Orthodoxy. All these areas have been researched extensively, but little work has been done to trace the origins of some of their ideas, or consider how these movements reflected existing trends within Jewish society. My research also shows the need to consider the academic study of Judaism in terms of the interconnections between disciplines rather than dividing it into rigid areas such as law, mysticism and ethics. Although there is certainly a need to elucidate the vast canvas of rabbinic literature in terms of technical categories in order to make it comprehensible, this study demonstrates that existing demarcations often make the false dichotomy between the 'legal' and the 'mystical' in particular. There is a considerable body of research into 'Jewish mysticism' as a distinct category, but my thesis shows that it is historically misleading to analyse this topic without addressing the considerable overlap between the theoretical mystical ideas and their application in the fields of ethics and law. It is important to consider Jewish mysticism in terms of its broader function as a religious philosophy, something which has rarely been done as part of

scholarly analysis. My thesis also provides insight for understanding religion in general: Horowitz's work highlights the thin line separating heresy and piety amongst mystical groups. Mystical thought across the religious spectrum both enhances the importance of religious observance by giving it cosmic significance, and simultaneously diminishes it by universalising the specific demands of observance into hidden, fluid categories accessible through meditation and personal experience. My analysis shows the deep psychological undercurrents behind kabbalistic thought: in particular, the way it regards sin and evil as something to be transformed rather than vanquished entirely. By perceiving weakness and fallibility as something to be cultivated into a strength, the kabbalists recognised the human mind's ability to redeem and develop itself through incremental phases. In addition, my analysis offers an important insight into pedagogy and the aims of education during this period: Horowitz's educational vision focuses on the need to develop multiple aspects of the individual's personality in order to 'complete' the human being. The mystical, legal and interpersonal criteria in the *Shelah* corresponds closely to the spiritual, intellectual and social aspects of human character, offering a fascinating insight into the educational priorities of religious communities in the Early Modern period. This holistic conception of the human being, in line with Horowitz's presentation of religion as a complex mixture of belief, function, community and experience, provides an important insight into how to address questions of educational and religious policy in the Modern age.

## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	6
Part 1: Introduction .....	7
Chapter One: Generalities.....	7
Chapter Two: The 'Threefold Cord' - The <i>Shelah's</i> Structure and Methodology .....	38
Part 2: Kabbalah .....	70
Chapter Three: Kabbalah as the Philosophy of Judaism.....	70
Chapter Four: Kabbalistic Sources and Central Concepts .....	90
Chapter Five: Orthodoxy and Jewish Particularism.....	138
Chapter Six: Devekut .....	159
Part 3: Halakhah .....	176
Chapter Seven: Kabbalistic Halakhah i. Theory .....	176
Chapter Eight: Kabbalistic Halakhah ii Practice .....	188
Chapter Nine: The Pathway to Pietism.....	212
Chapter Ten: Stringency and Elitism.....	227
Part 4: Musar.....	249
Chapter Eleven: 'In all your ways acknowledge Him' – The Two Paths of the Righteous .....	249
Chapter Twelve: Enthusiasm and Emotion .....	277
Chapter Thirteen: Messianic Self-Transformation .....	293
Part 5: Conclusion .....	314
Epilogue .....	317
Texts .....	327
Bibliography .....	335

## **Part 1: Introduction**

### **Chapter One: Generalities**

Isaiah Horowitz (1565-1629) is a figure of great importance in the study of the history of Ashkenazic Jewry, particularly for his contribution towards the development of a mystical theology that came to dominate rabbinic thought in the Early Modern period. Horowitz's *magnum opus*, an encyclopaedic compendium entitled *Shenei Luhot Haberit* (from now onwards, *Shelah*) was completed in 1624 and published posthumously by his son Sheftel in 1649 in Amsterdam. Horowitz's work is a vast anthology which encompasses 844 pages (422 folio pages), incorporating halakhah, kabbalah, Biblical exegesis, homiletics, liturgy and ethical teachings into one lengthy volume.<sup>1</sup> Spanning 108 authors and 184 works – virtually the entire published rabbinic corpus of the time - the *Shelah* was one of the most influential works of rabbinic literature that emerged from the Ashkenazic communities in the 17th Century.<sup>2</sup> Published twice more in the 17th Century (Willhemsdorf, 1686, and Amsterdam, 1698), by the end of the 19th Century the *Shelah* had been republished

---

<sup>1</sup> For my thesis I have consulted both the 1649 and the 1698 editions. I have used the 1698 edition for citations due to its superior pagination (unlike the first edition, where there are regular page breaks and repeated page numbers) and clearer text, and because it is also the edition most frequently cited by other scholars such as Newman and Piekarz. The 1686 edition divides the *Shelah* into two distinct works and does not make the amendments necessary to improve upon the original publication, so I have not made use of it. Unless otherwise stated, translations are my own. It is also useful to consult the *Shelah ha-Shalem* edition (Jerusalem, 2008) due to its clear typesetting and useful citations.

<sup>2</sup> Eugene Newman, *Life & Teachings of Isaiah Horowitz*, (London: G.J. George and Co, 1972), 78-87. See Joseph Dan, *Sifrut Derush u Musar* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975), 41.

on 15 occasions.<sup>3</sup> It also spawned several abridgments which were read even more widely in the 17th and 18th centuries - its most popular abridgment, *Kitsur Shelah* (Yehiel Mihel Epstein, Furth, 1693) had been republished 36 times by the end of the 19th Century.<sup>4</sup>

Five other works authored by Horowitz have been published:

- Notes to his father's *Emek ha-Berakhah* (Krakow, 1597), which is also included in the *Shelah*.
- *Bigdei Yesha*, notes on Mordekhai b. Hillel's (1240-1298) 13th Century halakhic compendium (Amsterdam, 1757).
- *Sha'ar ha-Shamayim* (Amsterdam, 1717), a commentary on the daily prayer book which includes the mystical *kavvanot* of Isaac Luria (1534-1572).<sup>5</sup>
- Notes on the Zohar (Vilna, 1882).
- A letter of instruction to his son on the occasion of his bar mitsvah (Jerusalem, 1976).

The aim of this thesis is to present the thought of Isaiah Horowitz within the *Shelah* in a holistic manner, providing the first comprehensive overview of the entire work

---

<sup>3</sup> 'Shenei Luhot haberit' in Baruch Friedberg, *Bet 'Eked Sefarim: Leksikon Bibliografi Li-Yedi'at Ha-Sifrut Ha-'Ivrit*, (Tel Aviv, 1951), 1025.

<sup>4</sup> Zeev Gries, *Sifrut ha-Hanhagot* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1989), 55-59; *The Hebrew Book : An Outline of Its History* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 2015), 102. Gries records a number of abridgments of the *Shelah* produced in the 17th Century including: *Mar'eh Zedek* by R. Israel b. Moshe Mendels (Amsterdam, 1682) which serves as an introduction and index to the *Shelah*; *Me'il Shmuel* by R. Shmuel David Ottolenghi (Venice, 1705); *Sefer Hanhagot Adam* (Furth, 1691), a work based on *Shelah* by Judah b. Isaac Lipschuetz. A separate index to the *Shelah*, the *Tavlah shel Shayish* was published in 1677 in Frankfurt by Jeremiah b. Jacob of Berlin; see 'Kitsur Shenei Luhot Haberit' in *Bibliography of the Hebrew Book*; Epstein records all the customs found in the *Shelah* and its teachings which are contained under the bracket of 'musar'. The *Kitsur Shelah* was also translated into Yiddish, which made it more accessible for popular consumption.

<sup>5</sup> On *Kavvanot*, see Chapter Two, 59.



and analysing its significant contributions towards Jewish Thought. This thesis elucidates the *Shelah* in terms of its central themes and organisational structure. My primary focus is Jewish Thought and its development within the *Shelah* rather than a study of the *Shelah* as a work of literature, and my principal ambition has been to identify Horowitz's novel contributions towards Jewish philosophy and theology. Throughout, I consider the ideas Horowitz prioritises and where he departs from his kabbalistic and halakhic predecessors.

### Methodology and Thesis Organisation

In this thesis I have examined Horowitz's contribution towards the three main literary genres within the *Shelah*: kabbalah (mystical literature), halakhah (legal literature) and musar (moralistic /ethical literature). In addition, I have conducted my research along three general lines of investigation:

1. What features of the *Shelah* contributed towards the spread of kabbalistic ideas from Safed to Europe in the 17th Century?
2. Should the *Shelah* be primarily read as an eclectic anthology containing multiple topics or is there a unifying organisational principle which dictates its direction throughout? What is the relationship between these different topics?
3. What is the ethos which emerges from the work and how does it contribute towards the scholarly understanding of the historical trajectory of Jewish Thought in the 17th and 18th centuries?<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Ethos is here defined as the spirit of a culture, era, or community as manifested in its attitudes and aspirations.

I carried out my research by firstly reading the entire 1649 edition of the *Shelah* and a year later reading the entire 1698 edition. Alongside relevant primary and secondary literature, I considered how Horowitz approaches each of these listed topics, reading each part of the *Shelah* before cross-referencing to consider the development of the author's ideas. In addition, I consulted the few extant manuscripts of Horowitz's earlier writings written around the turn of the 17th Century so as to trace how Horowitz's methodology evolved throughout his life.<sup>7</sup> After reading the existing secondary literature on Horowitz and the *Shelah*, I found that the studies were too specialised to provide a clear understanding of the work in its entirety, and provided little clarification regarding the central question of its contribution to Jewish Thought. I surmised that the work's length and density meant that a study attempting elucidation required a clear thematic structure rather than a chronological summary of each section, as the latter would leave the reader unsure as to how each section interacted with all the others. Important themes which recur throughout the work such as joy, self-actualisation and the distinctive role of kabbalah would be underemphasised in atomised studies. Therefore, by focusing on the purpose, direction and unifying principles behind the entire *Shelah* I have endeavoured to analyse its internal structure and central themes. What has emerged from my research is Horowitz's distinctive vision of Jewish pietism across all topics, which created intellectual paradigms that significantly influenced Ashkenazic Jewry between the 17th and 19th centuries.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> 'Notebook of Isaiah Horowitz', *Bodleian Library* MS. Opp. 268, Neubauer catalogue no. 2248, approximately 50 pages.

<sup>8</sup> See Epilogue, 315-324.

To present this research, I have arranged my thesis into three main parts, corresponding to Horowitz's own division of his work into halakhic, kabbalistic and moralistic sections:

In this chapter, I have provided background information necessary to engage with Horowitz's work. In Chapter Two I have shown that there is an underlying structure behind the *Shelah's* organisation, which means that it should be primarily understood as a unit rather than as distinct individual sections. I have then divided my chapters so as to correspond with the three central topics within the *Shelah*: Part 2 (Chapters 3-6) examines the kabbalah and its manifestation in the *Shelah* as a philosophy of Judaism and model for behaviour, as well as an esoteric body of texts; Part 3 (Chapters 7-10) examines Horowitz's contribution towards halakhah and its development from a legalistic into a pietistic discipline; Part 4 (Chapters 11-13) analyses the direction of musar within the *Shelah*,<sup>9</sup> and identifies Horowitz's oscillation between promoting joy and world-affirmation in the service of God together with rigorous introspection and kabbalistic asceticism. This vision culminates in both individual and national self-transformation, heralding the arrival of the messiah. I have then considered the legacy of each of these parts in terms of wider historical influence, establishing a platform for topics of future study (Epilogue).

The overall contention of this thesis is that Horowitz was less concerned with spreading the kabbalah itself than with cultivating a pietistic lifestyle consistent with its values. The *Shelah's* scope reflects the many potential pathways contained within mystical thought: Both the Hasidim with their ethos of joy-infused worship and the anti-Hasidic pietists with their ascetic stringencies can claim to be Horowitz's spiritual

---

<sup>9</sup> On musar and its definition within this study, see below, 19-23.

disciples in the 18th century. Rigorous stringency, self-examination and particularism also characterises the ethos of the work. In analysing the *Shelah*, I have tried to emulate Isadore Twersky's methodology in his analysis of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* by treating the *Shelah* as a self-contained unit, respecting the author's stated intentions regarding the work's composition.<sup>10</sup>

### Biography

The Horowitz family was one of the most prestigious rabbinic families in Central Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, boasting many of the chief rabbis in Prague and Poland/Lithuania.<sup>11</sup> Isaiah's father, Abraham Horowitz (1550-1618), was one of the senior court judges in Prague and Lvov in the second half of the 16th Century,<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> See Isadore Twersky, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides (Mishneh Torah)*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 5. It is true that the *Shelah* was a posthumous publication which the author initially envisioned as an ethical will but then expanded, unlike *Mishneh Torah* where the author's hand can be seen through autographed manuscripts such as that found in the Bodleian library, Oxford Ms. 80. However, Horowitz cross-references himself sufficiently in the *Shelah* to indicate that his eventual intention was for the reader to frequently refer to the other sections within the work and treat it as a unit, see Chapter Two, 68.

<sup>11</sup> See Joseph Davis, *Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller : Portrait of a Seventeenth-Century Rabbi*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2004), 16,40. Davis comments that three or four of the six senior judges on the Prague rabbinical court were likely to be from the Horowitz family in the late 16th and early 17th Century. With 10,000 Jews, Prague contained the largest Jewish population in Europe at the turn of the 17th Century. On the Horowitz's stature, see Antony Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2010), 54. For further information on the Horowitz family, see Abraham Yaari, *Letters from the Land of Israel* (Hebrew), (Ramat-Gan: Masada, 1971), 210-21; Israel Halpern, *The Jews in Eastern Europe : From Ancient Times until the Partitions of Poland, 1772-1795*, (New York: Harper and Bros, 1960), 39-55; Yaari, *Letters from Jerusalem* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem, 1949), 61-65; Dan, *Sifrut*, 130-47. On Horowitz and his relationship with his family, see Dalia Krispel, 'The Concept of Man in R. Isaiah Horowitz's *Shnei Luhot Haberit*', (PHD diss., Ben Gurion University, 2004), 16-18; Newman, *Life and Teachings*, 1-15.

<sup>12</sup> Newman, *Life and Teachings*, 13.

responsible for the religious sanctions which upheld the community structure. Isaiah was born in Prague but was sent to Poland from the age of eight to study with some of the luminaries of Polish Jewry, including Meir b. Gedaliah ('Maharam Lublin', 1558-1615) and Solomon b. Judah (d. 1591).<sup>13</sup> Horowitz was rabbi of Dubno (1600-1602), and Ostroh (1602-1606) before becoming the senior rabbi of two of the largest Jewish communities in Europe, Frankfurt (1606-1614) and Prague (1614-1621). Horowitz left suddenly for the land of Israel in 1621, where he spent the rest of his life in Safed and Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup>

The period of Jewish history widely described as the Early Modern period (approximately 1500-1750) was characterised by several key factors such as increased transportation and migration patterns, the expansion of the printing press as a means of communication and the development of hybrid religious identities.<sup>15</sup> It was a period of increased economic prosperity and population growth, with the Jewish communities in the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (which had united as a commonwealth in 1569) increasing from a population of about 10-15,000 in 1500 to 150-170,000 by 1648.<sup>16</sup> Horowitz's life corresponded with a number of significant moments of intellectual creativity in Jewish history, bookended between the proliferation of kabbalah in Safed and North Africa in the 16th Century, the popularisation of the *Shulhan Arukh* as the authoritative code of

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 20-31.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 35-48.

<sup>15</sup> David Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry : A New Cultural History*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 1-26, 207-27.

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550-1750*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2014), 35-69.

Jewish law (and its accompanying commentaries) in the late 16th and early 17th centuries,<sup>17</sup> and the rise of Sabbateanism in the 1660s. His generation was blessed with some of the luminaries of Ashkenazic halakhah, such as Joshua Falk (1555-1614) of Lvov, Joel Sirkes of Lublin (1561-1640) and Mordekhai Jaffe of Krakow (1535-1612).

It was within this climate that Horowitz composed his opus, as a senior rabbi with considerable prestige whose reputation spread far beyond the boundaries of his own community.<sup>18</sup> Fifty years after his death, Isaiah Horowitz was considered a household name among the Ashkenazic communities of Europe, with Gluckel of Hameln's memoirs recalling her husband asking for Horowitz's works on his deathbed in Frankfurt in the mid-1670s.<sup>19</sup>

#### The *Shelah* in Secondary Literature

The need for a new, comprehensive study on the *Shelah* emerges from the insufficient state of the field to date. Scholarly interest has focused on the *Shelah*'s role in relation to the kabbalah in the 16th Century and to the Hasidic movement in the 18th Century, but has not addressed the work as a self-contained entity with specific topical and methodological concerns. There are particularly few studies in English, with no complete translations of the work: Miles Krassen translated the introductory section of the work, '*Toledot Adam*', for the *Classics of Western*

---

<sup>17</sup> See Menachem Elon, *Jewish Law : History, Sources, Principles*, (Philadelphia: JPS, 1994), vol. 3, 1368-422.

<sup>18</sup> Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis : Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, (New York: Schocken, 1971), 66-112; Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, 121-22, 28; Ruderman, *Early Modern*, 86.

<sup>19</sup> Gluckel, *The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln*, (New York: Schocken, 1977), 151.

*Spirituality* series, relying on the 1762 edition, and Horowitz's final section 'The Written Torah' has been translated by Eliyahu Munk.<sup>20</sup> For the sake of stylistic consistency (as these translations encompass less than a third of the total work), I have translated the relevant sections of the thesis myself from the Hebrew.<sup>21</sup> Krassen also wrote an introductory essay to his translation identifying central themes in Horowitz's introduction pertaining to the role of Man and his ability to transform his behaviour, heralding the messianic age.<sup>22</sup> Krassen's essay is important as it moves the analysis of the *Shelah* away from kabbalistic ideas alone, but is restricted by its limited scope and lack of detailed textual analysis (necessitated by its role as an

---

<sup>20</sup> Miles Krassen, *The Generations of Adam*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1996); Eliyahu Munk, *Shelah Ha-Kadosh: On the Written Torah*, 3 vols. (New York: Lambda, 1999). Munk's translation has been used by the *Sefaria* website online ([sefaria.org](http://sefaria.org)), with a note mentioning that obvious translation errors were corrected in accordance with the Hebrew source. Although this translation clarifies many points of confusion and is accessible to the reader, it treats 'The Written Torah' section of Horowitz's work (264a-388b) as a self-contained Torah commentary publication, without examining the regular references within it to other parts of the work, not acknowledging the fact that it was neither written nor published as a stand-alone work. For example, in his translation of 'The Introduction to the Written Torah' (See Text 5 at the end of this thesis) Munk inaccurately translates קונטרס זה הנני מחבר as a reference to the author submitting the text for publication. Similarly, when translating Horowitz's application of his 'threefold cord' principle in this section which I discuss extensively in Chapter Two, 50-70, he does not refer to the rest of the *Shelah* which is categorised in the same way:

ושלשה הדרכים האלה הם. נר מצוה. ותורה אור. ודרך חיים תוכחות מוסר (משלי ו, כג). אשר ע"ז  
(על זה) סובב והולך זה החיבור

Horowitz applies the same phrase referring to the entire work being categorised according to the 'threefold cord' principle in his introduction to his second section, see Chapter Two, 58.

<sup>21</sup> My translations appear from Chapter Two onwards, for example, translations of Horowitz's prefaces to each sections, see Chapter Two, 50-62, his analysis of the similarities between God and Man, Chapter Three, 80-81, his formulation of halakhah, Chapter Seven, 178-79, and his outline of the role of joy in the service of God, Chapter Twelve, 282-83.

<sup>22</sup> Krassen, *Generations*, 30-31.

introduction to a translation). Eugene Newman compiled a biography of Horowitz for his PHD thesis in 1972, including an important bibliographic index of Horowitz's sources in the *Shelah*, although he does not attempt to comprehensively analyse the work itself.

In Hebrew, scholarship has focused primarily on Horowitz's contributions towards the spread of kabbalah: S. A. Horodetsky devoted a sixty page section towards the *Shelah* in his *Mystics of Israel* series last published in 1951.<sup>23</sup> There, he argues that Horowitz's importance was his role in the dissemination of Lurianic kabbalah and promotion of an ethos of self-transformation.<sup>24</sup> In the 1990s, Elliot Wolfson and Bracha Sack both focused on the kabbalistic aspects of the *Shelah* in relation to earlier kabbalists, analysing the roles of Isaac Luria and Moses Cordovero (1522-1570) respectively in their studies. Sack argued that it was Cordovero rather than Luria who features most prominently within the *Shelah*, as Cordovero's ideas frame Horowitz's concept of Man and his metaphysical composition of the universe.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> S. A. Horodezky, *The Mystics of Israel* (Hebrew), (Tel Aviv: Shtibel, 1951), 66-112.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 70,101. It is important to establish that it is inaccurate to speak of a unified Lurianic doctrine because Luria did not leave behind any significant body of writings himself; his ideas were transcribed by his inner circle of students such as Hayyim Vital, Joseph ibn Tabul and Israel Sarug. See Joseph Avivi, *Kabbalat ha-Ari* (Hebrew) vol. 1, (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 2008), 468-86. According to Avivi, most of Horowitz's knowledge of Lurianic kabbalah came from the notebooks of Alexander Katz, which were spread in the 1590s. It was only upon his arrival in Palestine that he gained wider access to the writings of Vital. See also Werblowsky, 'O Felix Capula: A Cabbalistic Version', in *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History Presented to Alexander Altmann on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. S. Stein and R. Loewe, (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1979), 356-362.

<sup>25</sup> Bracha Sack, 'The Influence of Cordovero on Seventeenth Century Jewish Thought', in *Jewish Thought in the 16th Century*, ed. by Bernard Dov Cooperman



Wolfson suggested that to Horowitz, Luria's kabbalah was the 'holy of holies', reserved for an elite, whereas Cordovero's kabbalah is treated as one which should be disseminated to all.<sup>26</sup> In line with Sack's methodology, Sack's student Dalia Krispel wrote a comprehensive, unpublished thesis on the subject of Horowitz's conception of Man in the *Shelah*; focusing mainly on the introductory section, 'Toledot Adam', the study identifies the kabbalistic origins of the concept of Man within the *Shelah* and assesses his contribution within a kabbalistic frame of reference.<sup>27</sup> This scholarly emphasis on exclusively kabbalistic content is in line with the methodological priorities that have dominated Israeli scholarship on Jewish mysticism since the days of Gershom Scholem. Its perspective is considerably limited by its failure to adequately engage with a wider historical or rabbinical context.<sup>28</sup>

Other studies have considered the *Shelah* in terms of its relationship to the 18th Century Hasidic movement. In particular, Horowitz's originality has been understood

---

(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 366-70; *Shomer Ha-Pardes*, (Be'er-Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press, 2002), 20-26.

<sup>26</sup> Elliot Wolfson, 'The Influence of R. Isaac Luria on the Shelah ', in *Kabbalat Ha'Ari: International Conference for the Study of Jewish Mysticism 4*, ed. by R. Elior and Y. Liebes (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1992), 423-48. Wolfson differentiates between the *Shelah* and Horowitz's commentary on the prayer book, *Sha'ar ha Shamayim*, written entirely in Palestine, which is almost entirely Lurianic in content.

<sup>27</sup> The first six chapters of the thesis are concerned with kabbalistic conceptions largely found within the first chapter, see Krispel, 'Concept of Man', 46-157; in her conclusion, 268-69, she addresses the question of the worth of man exclusively in kabbalistic terms, framing Horowitz as an inheritor of Cordoveran concepts.

<sup>28</sup> On the limitations of the contemporary study of kabbalah, see Boaz Huss, 'Ask No Questions: Gershom Scholem and the Study of Contemporary Jewish Mysticism', *Modern Judaism*, 25, 2 (2005), 572; Roni Weinstein, *Shattering of the Vessels: Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity* (Hebrew), (Tel-Aviv: University of Tel-Aviv, 2011).

as the ability to translate esoteric concepts into spheres of daily behaviour, closely resembling the Hasidic writings.<sup>29</sup> For example, Mendel Piekarz has located the origins of some of the ideas found in Hasidic writings within the *Shelah*;<sup>30</sup> Jacob Elbaum studied concepts of repentance in the *Shelah* and showed that it contains a fluid conception of the nature of good and evil;<sup>31</sup> Jonathan Garb published an article arguing that the *Shelah* belongs to the 'Prague Circle', where together with Shabbatai Sheftel Horowitz (1565-1619) and Judah Loewe (1525-1609), Horowitz helped to bridge the gap between the esoteric writings of Safed and the popular mysticism of Hasidism.<sup>32</sup> Loewe (Maharal of Prague) was a leading figure among European Jewry in the late 16th Century, whose ideas closely resemble some of Horowitz's despite being cited only once in the *Shelah*.<sup>33</sup> Garb argues that like Hasidism, the *Shelah* is generally anthropocentric, and translates abstract kabbalistic concepts into personal and mystical-experiential modes of worship.<sup>34</sup> In this regard, Horowitz is associated with the popularisation of kabbalah, distilling kabbalistic

---

<sup>29</sup> Bracha Sack, *Be-Sha'arei Ha-Kabbalah shel R. Moshe Cordovero* (Hebrew) (Be'er-Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press, 1995), 83; Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 369; Gries, *Sifrut Ha-Hanhagot*, 198-202, 09, 15; Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976), 694.

<sup>30</sup> Mendel Piekarz, *Bimei Zemihat Ha-Hasidut* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1978), 17, 24, 209-18, 83-84.

<sup>31</sup> On the transformation of evil through repentance, and evil existing in potential see Jacob Elbaum, *Teshuvat Ha-Lev Ve Kabbalat Yisurim*, (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1992), 197.

<sup>32</sup> Jonathan Garb, 'The Prague Circle', *Kabbalah*, 14, (2006), 348-75.

<sup>33</sup> Krispel, 'Concept of Man', 14.

<sup>34</sup> Garb, 'The Prague Circle', 361. See also Esther Liebes, 'The Innovation in Hasidism According to R. Barukh of Kossov (Hebrew)', *Da'at*, 45, (2000), 75-90.

concepts into a philosophy with perspectives on God, Man and the status of the Jewish people.<sup>35</sup> Ze'ev Gries has provided extensive bibliographic studies on the publication of books in the 17th and 18th centuries, including the *Shelah* and its abridgments.<sup>36</sup> Moshe Hallamish has also identified the *Shelah* as an important work in the increasing popularity of the kabbalah within Europe through the spread of Lurianic customs.<sup>37</sup>

### Key Concepts

There are several important topics which require explanation in order to provide a background for understanding the *Shelah*. Below, I have listed seven important categories which are necessary to grasp before assessing Horowitz's contribution towards each of them.

### Musar Literature

The volume and range of sources within the *Shelah* means that it is a difficult work to categorise. Both Sack and Neuman have referred to the *Shelah* as an 'anthology' or

---

<sup>35</sup> See Sack, *Shomer*, 17, 20; Moshe Idel, *Hasidism : Between Ecstasy and Magic*, (Albany, 1995), 255, 270; Wolfson, *Influence of Luria*, 440. However, recent scholarship has cast aspersions regarding the widespread influence of kabbalah at the beginning of the 17th Century, see Zeev Gries, *The Book in the Jewish World : 1700-1900*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2007), 72; Boaz Huss, *Kezohar Ha-Rakia* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 2008), 227-28.

<sup>36</sup> Gries, *Sifrut Ha-Hanhagot*, 55-59, 198-202, 09, 15; *1700-1900*, 46-57, 102.

<sup>37</sup> Mosheh Hallamish, *Ha-Kabbalah: Ba-Tefillah, Ba-Halakhah U-Ve Minhag* (Hebrew), (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2000), 12; Jacob Elbaum, *Openness and Insularity* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990), 189-91.

'encyclopaedia',<sup>38</sup> incorporating multiple topics which can be examined separately.<sup>39</sup> However, as the entire *Shelah* is composed so as to develop the individual's journey of self-perfection it is more accurately categorised as 'musar literature' alongside other similar works of the Early Modern period.<sup>40</sup> It is here that I am indebted to the recent work of Patrick Koch on the development of musar literature in 16th Century Safed. Koch has argued that 'musar' is not accurately translated as Jewish ethics, but belongs to the category of 'spiritual-mystical' literature of an ethical bent, containing guidelines to help the individual transform by way of proper instruction on both a contemplative and practical level.<sup>41</sup> Musar is a self-contained path which contains first and foremost a pietistic lifestyle which is not only goal directed but serves as a means of structuring the individual's attainment of perfection. Like other works in the genre, the *Shelah* aims to regulate human behaviour according to certain assumptions about God, the human being and the goal of *imitatio dei*.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> The pre-modern encyclopaedias were works which aimed to present knowledge in a systematic way rather than a book or set of books containing information on many subjects or on many aspects of one subject. See Andrea Gondos, 'Kabbalah in Print: Literary Strategies of Popular Mysticism in Early Modernity', (PHD diss., Montreal, 2013), 83-91.

<sup>39</sup> Sack, *Shomer*, 20.

<sup>40</sup> See Elbaum, *Openness*, 193-94, 231-38; Gries, *1700-1900*, 46-56; Dan, *Sifrut*, 240-42; Joseph Dan, *Studies in Kaballah, Jewish Philosophy and Ethical Literature Presented to Isaiah Tishby* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986), 20-21; Wolfson, *Influence of Luria*, 423; Piekarz, *Bimej*, 355.

<sup>41</sup> Patrick Koch, *Human Self-Perfection : A Re-Assessment of Kabbalistic Musar-Literature of Sixteenth-Century Safed*, (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2015), ii-3, 44; Israel Abrahams, *Hebrew Ethical Wills.*, (Philadelphia: JPS, 1926), 1-26.

<sup>42</sup> See Elliot Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond : Law and Morality in Kabbalistic Mysticism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 196-232.

Works in the musar genre during the Middle-Ages include Bahya ibn Pakuda's (Spanish moral philosopher and scholar, 1050-1120) *Hovot ha-Levavot* (Venice, 1548),<sup>43</sup> the anonymous *Orhot Tsaddikim* (written c. late 15th Century, Amsterdam 1734) and Jonah of Gerona's (Spanish Talmudist, kabbalist and moralist, 1180-1263) *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (Fano, 1505). Although later works of musar such as *Reishit Hokhmah* (Venice, 1579) are presented within a kabbalistic framework, many of their central themes concerning asceticism and the Ladder of Ascent are common motifs of earlier musar literature.<sup>44</sup>

The goal of musar was to achieve perfection and cleave to God. Two important terms in this process are 'devekut' and '*shelemut*'. Literally translated as 'wholeness' or 'completeness', *shelemut* is a staple aspiration of musar literature and is best understood as completeness achieved by adaptation. To attain *shelemut*, the individual was required to undergo incremental steps of self-improvement to purify his character and become closer to the ultimate perfection that is God, moving away from the imperfections inherent in corporeality.<sup>45</sup> It is not a uniquely kabbalistic term and frequently appears within the literature of the 16th Century European

---

<sup>43</sup> Translated into Hebrew by Judah ibn Tibbon in 1161, *Hovot ha-Levavot* ('Duties of the Hearts') had a profound influence on all subsequent Jewish pietistic literature. It was held in the highest regard by Horowitz and the kabbalists, and Horowitz considered the work essential for the acquisition of piety, see *Shelah* 40a.

<sup>44</sup> The ladder concept has a long history in Jewish scholarship: for the concept in the medieval period, see Alexander Altmann, 'The Ladder of Ascension' in Altmann, *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism*, (London: Routledge, 1969), 67-75. For example, Maimonides and de Vidas carefully prescribe the need for incremental stages in spiritual development, see *Hakdamot le Peirush Ha Mishnah*, (Jerusalem: Mossad ha Rav Kook, 1961), 113-15; *Reishit Hokhmah* (Vilna: Yizhak Fun, 1907), vol 1. 65-6.

<sup>45</sup>Koch, *Human Self-Perfection*, ii.

(particularly Italian) rabbis.<sup>46</sup> In kabbalistic literature it is particularly linked to the idea of isomorphism. This concept, developed in Cordovero's *Tomer Devorah* (Venice, 1589), assumes that since human beings, God and the physical universe share the same essence, Man can influence the supernal structure through the sanctification of his deeds.<sup>47</sup> Koch summarises the ideal of *shelemut*:

If divine reality is multidimensional, and the Adamic creation is multidimensional then imitation must be multidimensional, too, and consequently performed on different levels.

Imitation is not mere aping but translation of a certain ideal into a different context... The transformative process of rectifying both the physical and spiritual elements of Adam leads eventually to an apotheosis of the kabbalist, who

---

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Davis, 'R. Yom Tov Lipman Heller, Joseph B. Isaac Ha-Levi and Rationalism in Ashkenazic Jewish Culture, 1550-1650', (PHD diss., Harvard, 1990), 156-66; Isadore Twersky, 'Talmudists, Kabbalists, Philosophers: The Quest for Spirituality', in *Jewish Thought in the 16th Century*, ed. by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), 436-43. Newman discusses the overall frustration of the rabbinate at the lack of widespread knowledge of basic Jewish texts such as the prophets, see Newman, *Life and Teachings*, 90-91. On the ideal of the Renaissance man in Jewish circles, see Hava Tirosh-Rothschild, *Between Worlds : The Life and Thought of Rabbi David b. Judah Messer Leon*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 15-19, 66-73, 133; Robert Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, (London: University of California Press, 1994), 120-21.

<sup>47</sup> The concept of emulating God's deeds as the optimum form of religious conduct can be found in *bShab*. 133b. Cordovero was the first coherent exponent of a clear isomorphic relationship between Man and God, and enumerates the ways Man can perfect each limb in imitation of the sefirot in his *Tomer Devorah*. Central to this concept is the idea that there is unity in the great chain of being, whereby the lower and upper world are connected like a body to a soul, and the exalted world of sefirot mirrors the world of primordial man, and therefore Man can easily make contact with God, see Koch, *Human Self-Perfection*, 78. On Cordovero's isomorphic structure see Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 186, 205-29; Tsippi Kauffman, *Be-Khol Derakhekha Da'ehu*, (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2009), 206-20; Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 116; R. Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo : Lawyer and Mystic*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 68. For comprehensive survey of the microcosm and macrocosm in Judaism, see Alexander Altmann, 'The Delphic Maxim in Islam and Judaism', in *Biblical and Other Studies*, ed. by Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, Mass: 1963), 196-232; Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, (Philadelphia: JPS, 1946), vol. 1, 49-50, vol. 5, 64-66.

elevates himself to such a level that the sefirotic structure becomes - figuratively speaking - a mirror of his own actions.<sup>48</sup>

For the kabbalist, the culmination of *shelemut* is the process of 'cleaving' to God, or *devekut* (lit. cleaving). *Devekut* is sometimes paralleled to the Christian mystical concept of mystical union or *unio mystica*.<sup>49</sup>

The concept of *devekut* is that through rigorous observance and avoidance of sin the individual can induce a state where he is capable of cleaving to God. The nature of this cleaving is somewhat contentious, and while its definition varied according to the different kabbalists, the idea of *devekut* demanding a religious life of intensive rigour, stringency and asceticism is one that was common to all kabbalists.<sup>50</sup> Through *devekut*, the kabbalist attaches himself to the continuum linking the human and the divine realms.

---

<sup>48</sup> Koch, *Human Self-Perfection*, 102.

<sup>49</sup> See Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 123; *The Messianic Idea in Judaism : And Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), 203-04; cf. Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah : New Perspectives*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 1-87. In most of his published works, Scholem describes this process of *devekut* as being a 'communion' rather than a 'union', that never fully involves the absorption of the individual self into God, whereas Idel suggests that this is an apologetic approach that ignores kabbalistic texts which describe a full mystical union with God that can be closely paralleled to Christian mysticism. Although I do not directly engage with this discussion in the thesis, there are several passages in the *Shelah* which seem to indicate that a full union is possible for the select few, see Chapter Six, 171. See also Steven Katz, *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 26-30.

<sup>50</sup> Mordechai Pachter, *Roots of Faith and Devekut: Studies in the History of Kabbalistic Ideas*, (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2004); Lawrence Fine, *Safed Spirituality : Rules of Mystical Piety, the Beginning of Wisdom*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1984). Fine's translations are based on the abridgment of *Reishit Hokhmah*, Jacob Poyetto's *Reishit Hokhmah ha-Katsar* (Satmar, 1937). I cite Fine's page numbers when referring to his translations of *Reishit Hokhmah*.

## Pietism

One of the characteristics of 16th Century kabbalistic musar literature is its pietistic nature - and pietism is an important feature of the *Shelah*. The term 'pietism' is borrowed from the terminology used to describe German Protestant groups formed in the late 17th Century who emphasised devotion and personal experience over formalism and intellectualism.<sup>51</sup> Nevertheless, it is a useful umbrella term which characterises a type of religious behaviour modelled on strictness of observance, an inward focus on self-improvement, and an emotionally impassioned relationship with God. Pietism demands sustained moral training and provides a programme for the vigilant disciplining of the soul. 'Piety', consisting of meticulous observance of the commandments (in a Jewish context) and the individual's openly expressed fear of God is not synonymous with pietism, which is a philosophy with far more rigorous demands, including an attitude towards the observance of halakhah that has been characterised as 'hypernomian' by Elliot Wolfson, emphasising the need to go beyond the letter of the law in the service of God.<sup>52</sup>

It is significant that historically, one of the universal characteristics of pietistic religious groups is the claim of restoring an original purity to a faith which had been corrupted (often by impious leadership or sinful congregants).<sup>53</sup> In response, these

---

<sup>51</sup> See Richard Gawthrop, *Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth-Century Prussia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 104-20.

<sup>52</sup> Haym Soloveitchik, 'Piety, Pietism and German Pietism: "Sefer Ḥasidim I" and the Influence of Ḥasidei Ashkenaz', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 92, 3/4 (2002), 455; Koch, *Human Self-Perfection*, 44-75; Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 232-41.

<sup>53</sup> Larry Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual : The Origins of Western Liberalism*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 286-88; Michael Satlow, *Creating*



groups tended to emphasise inward sincerity and passionate devotion as a prerequisite for their initiates. This 'inward turn' is an important characteristic of pietistic movements and has been used to characterise the attitude of the kabbalists in Safed, who differentiated between the 'externalities' of observance and the 'depth' of their inner experience and mystical understanding.<sup>54</sup>

In the *Shelah*, Horowitz directs the entire Jewish literary corpus in a pietistic direction, defining how the entirety of Jewish Thought should be understood. Unlike earlier works of pietism,<sup>55</sup> the *Shelah* is comprehensive, linking Jewish law, ethics and mysticism to guide the lifestyle of the individual. His entire vision of Jewish Thought is best understood as a specific manifestation of pietism.

### The Kabbalah

Kabbalah has a central role in the source material of the *Shelah*. The definition of kabbalah as 'Jewish mysticism' is one generally regarded as a compromised definition, but still useful for the purposes of classification.<sup>56</sup> Moshe Idel's introduction to kabbalah in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* comments that:

---

*Judaism : History, Tradition, Practice*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 108-11.

<sup>54</sup> Weinstein, *Shattering*, 210-11.

<sup>55</sup> Works such as *Reishit Hokhmah* and *Hovot ha-levavot* do not attempt to assess every element of Jewish life and thought in the manner of the *Shelah*. Rather, they focus on specific areas of conduct such as prayer or fear of God. In the *Shelah*, Horowitz's pietism is manifest from the most mundane region of halakhah to the loftiest conception of God.

<sup>56</sup> Scholem, *Major Trends*, 4; Jonathan Garb, *Yearnings of the Soul : Psychological Thought in Modern Kabbalah*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 4-5; cf. Moshe Idel, 'On the Theologisation of Kabbalah in Modern Scholarship', in

Kabbalah may be considered mysticism in so far as it seeks an apprehension of God and creation whose intrinsic elements are beyond the grasp of the intellect, although this is seldom explicitly belittled or rejected by the kabbalah.<sup>57</sup>

The kabbalistic texts that emerged from the 13th Century onwards are often divided by academic scholars into four basic categories that frequently overlap but are also useful for classification purposes: theosophical/speculative, theurgical, magical/practical and meditative/ecstatic.<sup>58</sup>

The study of the kabbalah was widely known in rabbinic circles as *Torat ha-Nistar*/the hidden Torah, which was only understood by a select few. The kabbalists emphasised the esoteric nature of the kabbalah both for utilitarian considerations such as the potential for heretical ideas to emerge from its symbolism, and the fact that by its very nature kabbalah was uncommunicable.<sup>59</sup>

Although the field 'kabbalah' encompasses many different texts, there is little doubt that its central work was the Zohar, and that 'kabbalah' and 'Zohar' are frequently

---

*Religious Apologetics--Philosophical Argumentation*, ed. by Yosef Schwartz, Volkhard Krech (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 123-74.

<sup>57</sup> 'Kabbalah', in *Encyclopaedia Kabbalah*, 11 (Detroit, Thomson Gale, 2007), 546.

<sup>58</sup> Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah in Italy, 1280-1510 : A Survey*, (London: Yale University Press, 2011), 3.

<sup>59</sup> On the importance of symbolism in kabbalah, see Moshe Hallamish, *Introduction to the Kabbalah*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 28; David Biale, *Gershom Scholem : Kabbalah and Counter-History*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982), 75. On the Hebrew language in particular and its importance, see 'Kabbalah', 576; Moshe Idel, 'The Reification of Language in Jewish Mysticism', in *Mysticism and Language*, ed. by Steven T. Katz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 44-45. 50. 55-58, 66-68. 90; Elliot Wolfson, 'The Body in the Text: A Kabbalistic Theory of Embodiment', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 95, 3 (2005), 479-500.

described synonymously.<sup>60</sup> While it was only published in its entirety as late as 1558, the Zohar's renown was such that by the 16th Century it was considered a canonical text of ancient provenance throughout most Jewish communities,<sup>61</sup> even among those who did not actually study it.<sup>62</sup> To the Safedian kabbalists its role was momentous, both as an object of study and as a symbol of the imminent messianic era. According to kabbalists like Meir ibn Gabbai (1480-c.1540) and Moses Cordovero, its arrival heralded an epoch which necessitated the widespread publicising of previously concealed teachings.<sup>63</sup> In contrast to the careful secrecy adopted by Nahmanides (1194-1270), Solomon b. Aderet (acronym Rashba, 1235-1310) and their students in the 13th Century,<sup>64</sup> many Safedian kabbalists believed that the time had arrived for the concealed teachings to be revealed.<sup>65</sup> To Isaac Luria and his circle, however, these teachings were to remain hidden, reserved exclusively

---

<sup>60</sup> The Zohar had become established among the kabbalists as the canonical work of Jewish mysticism by the end of the 16th Century; The Zohar was first published in Mantua in 1558 and 1560 and Cremona in 1559-60. See Huss, *Kezohar*, 4. Cf. Abrams' rejection of the Zohar as a distinct book, regarding it as a collection of works without a particular author dating back to the 13th Century, Daniel Abrams, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory : Methodologies of Textual Scholarship and Editorial Practice in the Study of Jewish Mysticism*, (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2010), 257.

<sup>61</sup> Huss, *Kezohar*, 4-5.

<sup>62</sup> Elbaum, *Openness*, 89, 181. Elbaum observes that the Zohar was considered one of the essential reads for scholars, even if they did not engage with it on a speculative level.

<sup>63</sup> Huss, *Kezohar*, 224.

<sup>64</sup> On the medieval kabbalists and their desire to restrict kabbalistic teachings to an exclusive elite see *ibid*, 80-81, 221.

<sup>65</sup> On the controversy elicited by the Zohar's publication, *ibid*, 227-28.

for an elite (who consisted of Luria and his students).<sup>66</sup> In the *Shelah*, Cordovero's call is generally heeded, although Horowitz considers some of Luria's teachings to be too deep and esoteric to be publicly expressed.<sup>67</sup>

### Kabbalah in Europe

Despite its considerable stature in Safed, it is important to understand that prior to the *Shelah*, kabbalah was regarded with a degree of ambivalence in Europe. In general, the Ashkenazic rabbinate treated the Zohar like an ancient Midrash: as a holy text but without legal authority. It held that Kabbalah was not to be studied by a lay audience.<sup>68</sup> Joseph Davis succinctly summarises the climate:

In the 16th Century, Kabbalah had a place in Ashkenazic culture alongside other disciplines and systems of thought, such as philosophy and Midrash, which were subservient to the central discipline, Talmudic study. As the 17th Century progressed, however, kabbalah displaced philosophy and through a process of reinterpretation swallowed Midrash whole. It became the dominant theology of Jewish pietism; it became, indeed, a force and a system of thought that could challenge Talmud for the pre-eminent place in Ashkenazi Judaism.<sup>69</sup>

Aristotelian philosophy became increasingly popular among Ashkenazic audiences in the 16th Century, facilitated by the printing of the philosophical works of medieval rabbis such as Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*. In the second half of the 16th Century there were several prominent rabbis who engaged in the study of philosophy from earlier Hebrew works such as Moses Isserles (acronym Rama, 1532-72) and

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 209-10.

<sup>67</sup> See Chapter Four, 102.

<sup>68</sup> See Jacob Katz, *Halakhah ve-Kabbalah* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984), 56-60; Hallamish, *Minhag*, 163-66.

<sup>69</sup> Davis, *Heller*, 40.

Isaiah's own father Abraham. The study of philosophy was only considered acceptable by these rabbinic authorities, however, if it originated from rabbinic sources and thus could be included within Jewish tradition.<sup>70</sup> Rabbinic attitudes varied widely regarding the value of rationalistic philosophy.<sup>71</sup> Horowitz, however, was part of a rabbinic contingent which sought to eliminate the study of non-Jewish philosophy entirely.<sup>72</sup> The *Shelah* played an important role in the delegitimisation of

---

<sup>70</sup> See Ibid, 40-53; Elbaum, *Openness*, 154-80; Lawrence Kaplan, 'Rationalism and Rabbinic Culture in Sixteenth-Century Eastern Europe : Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe's Levush Pinat Yikrat', (PHD diss., Harvard, 1975), 5; Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, 58-59. Kaplan describes Ashkenazic communities' attitudes towards non-Torah studies as being characterised by 'unoriginality, cultural conservatism, a general synthesising tendency and permeating all, a genuine, if uncritical, openness to and interest in the meta-halakhic sciences as they had developed and been transmitted within the stream of Jewish tradition, a stream not conceived of in narrow, purely halakhic terms'. For more examples of 16<sup>th</sup> Century rabbis such as Isaac Chajes and Joseph ha-Levi and their study of 'non-Jewish' subjects such as Astronomy, see Elbaum, *Openness*, 33-67; Davis, 'Rationalism in Ashkenaz', 181-200.

<sup>71</sup> For a summary of rabbinic approaches found among the Ashkenazic rabbinate towards the different genres of study see Marvin Heller, *The Seventeenth Century Hebrew Book : An Abridged Thesaurus*, (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 186; Ben-Sasson, *History of the Jews*, 710-18. An important discussion is found in Davis, *Heller*, 40; Kaplan, 'Rationalism', 35-41, 56-63; Mordechai Breuer, 'David Gans: Modernism and Traditionalism', in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), 52-55.

<sup>72</sup> This excluded any material which did not emerge from the classical Jewish corpus of the Bible, Talmud, Codes, Homiletical literature etc. and was particularly opposed to Aristotelian philosophy found in the medieval writings of e.g. Maimonides and Gersonides, following the attitudes of predecessors ibn Gabbai and Maharal. For ibn Gabbai and philosophy, see Moshe Idel, 'Differing Conceptions of Kabbalah in the Early 17th Century', in *Jewish Thought in the 17th Century*, ed. by Isadore Twersky (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987), 154. On the opponents of philosophy in Ashkenazic lands in the 16th Century and Maharal in particular see Elbaum, *Openness*, 281; Byron Sherwin, *Mystical Theology and Social Dissent*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2006), 60,68; Rivka Schatz, 'The Maharal's Conception of Law as an Antithesis to Natural Law', *Da'at*, 1 no.2/3 (1978), 147-61. On the controversy between Solomon Luria and Rama regarding the study of philosophy see Davis, 'Rationalism in Ashkenaz', 154-57; on the spectrum of rabbinic attitudes towards the study of philosophy during this period, 30-33, 54-81; André Neher,

the study of rationalistic philosophy within Ashkenazic Jewish communities in the 17th and 18th centuries.<sup>73</sup>

### Halakhah: definition and limitations

The *Shelah's* introduction of the kabbalah into the realm of halakhic decision-making is one of the work's most distinctive features.<sup>74</sup> It crossed the boundary between the legal and non-legal areas of Jewish practice which had previously been guarded jealously. The term 'halakhah' refers to Jewish law: specifically, it is a term applied to the legal sections of the Talmud, and the process of jurisdiction derived by rabbinic authorities from Talmudic principles. It also a term used to differentiate between laws that are observed by the Jewish community in legal practice and those that are rejected. Since the Gaonic period, 'halakhah' has been contrasted with the 'agaddah', or non-legal sections of the Talmud, and conferred with superior authority and stature.<sup>75</sup> Christine Hayes argues that halakhah is generally nominalist in

---

*Jewish Thought and the Scientific Revolution of the Sixteenth Century : David Gans (1541-1613) and His Times*, (Oxford Littman Library, 1986), 31-33; Elbaum, *Openness*, 301-18.

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter Five, 137-146.

<sup>74</sup> See Chapter Eight, 188-212.

<sup>75</sup> Barry Wimpfheimer, *Narrating the Law : A Poetics of Talmudic Legal Stories*, (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2011), 31-32. See Jacob Katz, 'Post-Zoharic Relations between Halakhah and the Kabbalah', in *Jewish Thought in the 16th Century*, ed. by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), 292.

outlook in that its decisions aren't conceived of as representing a mind-independent truth, but is a system constructed by its own legal categories and norms. Legal decisions are considered to possess formal truth, with the internal rationale of halakhah justifying the correctness of its adjudicators' rulings.<sup>76</sup>

During Horowitz's lifetime, the independence of the individual rabbi was especially emphasised by the Ashkenazic halakhic authorities.<sup>77</sup> Ashkenazic halakhic tradition was viewed as inherently oral in that each generation was given license to interpret and add to existing halakhic texts as they saw fit, and local custom frequently overrode literary tradition.<sup>78</sup> The substantive rule of '*hilkhata ke batra'i*' (the law is according to later halakhic scholars) emphasised the centrality of rabbinic authority and was a particularly important principle in Ashkenazic halakhah.<sup>79</sup> Although this principle was challenged somewhat by the emergence of the genre of code which standardised rulings into a universally accessible format,<sup>80</sup> the principle was

---

<sup>76</sup> Christine Hayes, *What's Divine About Divine Law? : Early Perspectives*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), 205, 22. Ibid, 78. See *bEruv*. 46b; *bBer*. 43b.

<sup>77</sup> See Haym Soloveitchik, *Collected Essays Vol. 1*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2013), 40, 258.

<sup>78</sup> Elchanan Reiner, 'The Ashkenazi Elite at the Beginning of the Modern Era: Manuscript Versus Printed Book', *Polin*, 10, (1997), 91.

<sup>79</sup> Israel Ta-Shma, 'The Law Is in Accordance with the Later Authority - "Hilkhata Kebatrai" : Historical Observations on a Legal Rule. ', in *Authority, Process and Method* ed. by Hanina b. Menahem (Boston: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998), 106-07.

<sup>80</sup> The most influential codes of Jewish law in the middle ages were Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* (written 1177), Jacob b. Asher's *Arbah Turim* (c. 1330) before the publication of Joseph Karo's *Shulhan Arukh* (Venice, 1575), which became the standard halakhic compendium in Jewish households in both Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities by the mid-17<sup>th</sup> Century, see Elon, *Jewish Law : History, Sources, Principles*, vol. 3, 1368-422.

emphasised by Rama and other Ashkenazic authorities as paramount in deciding halakhah.<sup>81</sup> Despite the 16th Century tendency towards codification in the manner of Joseph Karo's (1488-1575) *Shulhan Arukh*, most Ashkenazic authorities were reluctant to undermine the rabbi's independent authority and the local customs of each region.<sup>82</sup> At the end of the 16th Century, halakhah was considered by the rabbis to be sacrosanct as a method of jurisdiction, with its roots in the Bible and the Talmud. Horowitz's infusion of the mystical teachings of kabbalah into the halakhic sphere represented a significant step in the history of halakhic thinking.

### Halakhah and Kabbalah

Before the *Shelah's* publication in the 17th Century there was little sustained attempt among either the Ashkenazic or Sephardic communities to integrate the legalistic halakhah with the mystical kabbalah.<sup>83</sup> Each appeared to occupy a distinct realm: The halakhah was normative, with guidance on all aspects of daily conduct, whereas the kabbalah was an esoteric wisdom guarded by an elite.<sup>84</sup> Joseph Karo's inclusion

---

<sup>81</sup> Rama, SA, 'Hoshen Mishpat', 25:2. See also the statements of Israel, son of Shalom Shakhna, quoted in Rama, *Responsa*, no. 25. On the reception of the *Shulhan Arukh*, see Jacob Toledano, 'When and Where Was the Authority of the Shulhan Arukh Accepted? ', in *Rabbi Joseph Karo: Studies in the Teachings of the Author of the Sulhan Arukh*, ed. by Y. Rafael (Jerusalem: Mosad ha Rav Kook, 1969), 184-88; Joseph Davis, 'The Reception of the 'Shulhan Arukh' and the Formation of Ashkenazic Jewish Identity', *AJS Review*, 26, 2 (2002), 251-76.

<sup>82</sup> Wimpfheimer, *Narrating the Law*, 11-12; Reiner, 'Ashkenazi Elite', 86-88; Elon, *Jewish Law*, 1376-84.

<sup>83</sup> Katz, 283.

<sup>84</sup> Werblowsky, *Lawyer and Mystic*, 290. The seminal work on the relationship between Halakhah and kabbalah remains Jacob Katz's *Halakhah and Kabbalah*, see



of the Zohar as a halakhic text in his *Beit Yosef* was a significant moment in halakhic history as Karo esteemed the Zohar so highly that he would take its opinions into consideration even when it contradicted decisions reached by other *poskim*.<sup>85</sup> Karo introduced new customs and laws derived from the Zohar, including some laws of handwashing before a meal.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, Karo's relationship with the Zohar was not one of unconditional compliance and Hallamish characterises Karo's attitude towards the work as one of a *posek* discriminating between the parts he felt were unnecessary to include, the parts intended for mass consumption, and those meant for an elite.<sup>87</sup>

---

97-100 for the role of the *Shelah*; see also Meir Benayahu, 'Vikuah Ha-Kabbala Im Ha-Halakhah', *Da'at*, 6, (1980), 61-115. On the spread of kabbalistic ideas through prayer and custom, see Hallamish, *Minhag*, 161-80, 287-356, 383-436. On the relationship between Halakhah and kabbalah in Ashkenazic countries see Elbaum, *Openness*, 355-61, 69. On the importance of Halakhah for the legitimacy of the kabbalists, see Weinstein, *Shattering*, 222, 229, 233, 242. On the spread of Lurianic Kabbalah through halakhic works such as *Magen Avraham*, see Avivi, *Kabbalat ha-Ari* vol.1, 1-3. On kabbalah in responsa literature, see Meir Kodosh, 'Ha Pesikah Ha Kabbalit Be Sifrot Ha She'elot U Teshuvot', (PHD thes., Hebrew University, 2004), 228-60, 408-77, 565-95. On Nahmanides' attitude towards halakhah and kabbalah, see Moshe Idel, 'R. Moshe B. Nahman - Kabbalah, Halakhah U Manhigut Ruhanit', *Tarbiz*, 64, (1995), 561-80. For the geographical aspects of the process of halakhah and kabbalah's integration, see Robert Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy*, (London: Littman, 1993), 280-98; Ruderman, *Early Modern*, 101.

<sup>85</sup> *Poskim*/ *Posek* (sing.) is, a Hebrew term for scholars whose intellectual efforts were concentrated on determining the halakhah in practice in contrast to those commentators who applied themselves to study for its own sake.

<sup>86</sup> Katz, *Halakhah*, 60. See BY, OH, 31, 59, 141.

<sup>87</sup> Hallamish, *Minhag*, 163-66. Included in these omissions are times where Karo ignores his angelic visitor whose revelations formed the basis of his mystical diary. See Katz, *Halakhah*, 68, 129. Katz shows that although Karo used the Zohar more than any of his predecessors, he did not always rely on its decisions.

The primary differentiation between halakhah and kabbalah in the *Beit Yosef* is between the textual authority of the Babylonian Talmud and the Zohar. Karo's declaration that the halakhah followed the Talmud whenever there was a contradiction between the two was generally agreed upon by the main rabbinic authorities of the age. The Ashkenazic halakhic authorities were especially adamant that the Zohar did not have decisive authority in halakhic judgment.<sup>88</sup> Although the Zohar was accepted as belonging to ancient rabbinic literature, the halakhah did not follow its author, R. Shimon b. Yohai (Rashbi).<sup>89</sup> Some went further, arguing that the Zohar was a closed book and could not be used to decide matters of halakhah at all. Even those who argued that it was good to adhere to its stringencies did not try and make them obligatory for all, a position held by many prominent kabbalists in the 16th and 17th centuries like Menahem Azaria of Fano and Yissaschar Baer of Kremenetz.<sup>90</sup> A few of Horowitz's rabbinic contemporaries outwardly polemicized against the intrusion of kabbalistic customs into halakhic practice: Both Joel Sirkes and Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller vehemently rejected anything kabbalistic which distorted classical halakhic methodology, and Heller even opposed the personal

---

<sup>88</sup> e.g. Maharshal, *Responsa* no. 98; Rama, *Darkhei Moshe*, OH, 59:3; in the 18th Century this was proclaimed more emphatically by Jacob Emden, see *Responsa Ya'avetz* (Jerusalem, 2004), vol. 1 no. 47.

<sup>89</sup> e.g. *bHul.* 49a; see *B.Y.*, OH, 25; Maharshal, *Responsa* no. 157.

<sup>90</sup> Katz, *Halakhah*, 56. On Hayyim Vital and the relationship between Halakhah and kabbalah, see Rachel Elijor, 'Messianic Expectations and Spiritualisation of Religious Life in the Sixteenth Century', *Revue des Etudes Juives* 145, 1-2 (1986), 40-41; Weinstein, *Shattering*, 229.

adoption of the Zohar's stringencies.<sup>91</sup> This context is important for understanding how radically Horowitz reconfigured the relationship between these two disciplines.

### Translation and Transliteration

My method of translation is to attempt to determine the basic meanings of the words and sentences which Horowitz employs, at times sacrificing for the sake of clarity the translation of poetic stylistic features or the literal meaning of rabbinic idiom. The purpose of my translation is to accurately elucidate the author's intentions. I have therefore added punctuation to my translation of lengthy sentences and have occasionally added a word or two for clarity, inserted in round brackets. Whenever possible, I have tried to avoid run-on sentences and inserted my own grammatical pauses. At times I will translate only a small segment of text into English to prevent disjointedness in the main body of my chapters and leave the rest in Hebrew. In my Hebrew citations, I have endeavoured to remain faithful to the printed text of the 1698 edition of the *Shelah* and have only left pauses such as full-stops when they are included there. When a segment of text appears in large letters in the original, I have printed it in bold font. When quoting from different parts of a lengthy text with a break in the middle, I have left an ellipsis to signify that there is a gap in translation. I have used round brackets to spell out an acronym while leaving the original as it appears in the text. I have also used round brackets to refer the reader to the source

---

<sup>91</sup> Joel Sirkes, *Responsa Bach*, (Jerusalem, 1980), no. 80. in Hallamish, *Minhag*, 63; Davis, *Heller*, 60.

that Horowitz refers to. If an acronym is regularly employed and is uncontentious, I have left it in its original form after spelling out the first instance it appears. I have only edited the text myself without comment when the final letter of a word is missing, replaced by an apostrophe in the original, and it is clear what the word is intended to be. Otherwise I have left my interpretation in round brackets. I have also inserted my own explanatory additions to the translation in round brackets. Additionally, I have not attempted to correct scribal errors or insert punctuation into the Hebrew text as this is overly interpretive for the purpose of this study, as I believe it is important for the reader to understand that Horowitz's writing were not clearly edited by the author, written, as his son mentions, in 'a hurry', which affects how readers received and interpreted the text.<sup>92</sup> The density of the text is one of the interpretive challenges for the reader and scholar, and it is therefore misleading to overly annotate the Hebrew text when analysing the *Shelah* to ensure that future scholarship is able to contend with my own interpretations.

I have provided Hebrew textual citations to translated references and non-translated references in the *Shelah* which require further contextualisation. References to parts of the work which refer to a point of information (sometimes addressed over several pages) and do not require an in-depth analysis are to a page number alone. When a citation is excessively lengthy or relates to a specific topic of interest without being directly relevant to the argument within the thesis, I have placed the Hebrew text in my Texts at the end of the thesis. If I am citing a text outside the *Shelah*, I will reference a page number, author and edition without the Hebrew text.

---

<sup>92</sup> *Vavei Amudim*, see Text 6.

Transliteration rules follow the guidelines of the Encyclopaedia Judaica for General Hebrew. The exception to this rule is the *Tsaddi* and the *Het* which will not appear with a dot underneath, but rather as ‘ts’ and ‘h’ respectively. Uncommon Hebrew words and Hebrew acronyms are italicised. Translations from the Bible are provided by the JPS Sefaria translation (New York, 1984). All references to the Talmud refer to the standard printed edition of the Vilna Talmud (Vilna, 1883, including the commentaries of Rashi (1040-1105) and the Tosafists which appear on the page). In addition to classical rabbinic works and the Zohar, for standard edition reference works of rabbinic literature such as the *Shulhan Arukh* (Venice, 1575), along with Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah* (Venice, 1490) and *Guide of the Perplexed* (Venice, 1551), Jacob b. Asher’s (1270-1343) *Tur* (Venice, 1563) and Karo’s own *Beit Yosef* (Printed in *Tur*, Venice, 1563), I refer to them by their titles alone. Other frequently cited works such as *Reishit Hokhmah* will be first referenced by author and edition and then subsequently by title alone.

## **Chapter Two: The 'Threefold Cord' - The *Shelah*'s Structure and Methodology**

'The makeup of a book follows from its introduction. One should not try to understand the subject of a book before understanding the book's overall structure'.<sup>93</sup>

One of the challenges in ascertaining the scope of Horowitz's thought is that his ambitions for the *Shelah* changed over time. Horowitz began writing the *Shelah* as an ethical will for his descendants like his father's *Yesh Nohalin* (Prague, 1615) before expanding it considerably to produce an encyclopaedia that encompasses virtually the entirety of rabbinic literature. This chapter contends that there is a unifying organisational principle behind the entire completed work, which Horowitz consciously adopted while composing it. The principle, which I have termed the 'threefold cord', declares that the individual human being is central to the proper functioning of the universe, and is required to perfect himself by mastering the three

---

<sup>93</sup> Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto, *Derekh Tevunot*, (Amsterdam, 1743), 61-62.

areas of halakhah, kabbalah and musar.<sup>94</sup> These three areas are three pillars which must be incorporated into the education of every Jew. As Sheftel comments in his preface to the 1649 Amsterdam edition of the *Shelah* entitled *Vavei Amudim* - 'my father told me that his main intention in writing this work was to admonish and provide guidance to follow the correct path'.<sup>95</sup> This pedagogical priority is found throughout the work. The encyclopaedic format of the *Shelah* is part of a broader rabbinical trend which had begun to organise halakhic and kabbalistic writing into comprehensive, authoritative anthologies in the 16th Century.<sup>96</sup> Karo's code of law, the *Shulhan Arukh* (Venice, 1575) and Cordovero's kabbalistic encyclopaedia *Pardes Rimmonim* (Salonika, 1560) exemplified this trend.<sup>97</sup> According to Ruderman,

---

<sup>94</sup> The cosmogony of the kabbalists tended to emphasise the formation of an individual soul and Man's unique ability to affect the heavens and earth through his actions. For good general discussions on the individual in kabbalah see Garb, *Yearnings*, 208; 'The Psychological Turn in Sixteenth Century Kabbalah', in *Les mystiques juives, chrétiennes et musulmanes dans l'Égypte médiévale (12th -16th siècles) Interculturalités et contextes historiques*, (Cairo, 2010), 109-30; Hallamish, *Introduction*, 123; 'Kabbalah', 623.

<sup>95</sup> Sheftel Horowitz, *Vavei Amudim* printed at the very beginning of the *Shelah* (Amsterdam, 1698), on a single page. From now on, I refer to it by name alone. I have attached the copy of *Vavei Amudim* from the 1698 edition to Text 6.

<sup>96</sup> See Jacob Elbaum, 'Aspects of Ethical Literature in Sixteenth Century Poland', in *Jewish Thought in the 16th Century*, ed. by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), 148; Bernard Dov Cooperman, 'Organising Knowledge for the Jewish Market: An Editor/Printer in 16th Century Rome', in *Perspectives on the Hebraic Book*, ed. by Myron Weinstein (Washington D.C: Library of Congress, 2012), 79-129. On the reorganisation of knowledge arising from the demands of the printing press as the key factor behind the digests of kabbalistic material, see Gondos, 'Kabbalah in Print', 83-91. For a general overview of the role of the printing press in the popularisation of texts, see Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470-1600*, (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>97</sup> Although there are earlier examples of this phenomenon such as Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* and Jacob b. Asher's *Turim*, neither became accepted as authoritative codes in the manner of the *Shulhan Arukh*, see Isadore Twersky, 'The Shulhan 'Arukh: Enduring Code of Jewish Law', *Judaism*, 16, (1967), 141-59; Elon,

the encyclopaedic genre served an important function in Italy as a means of 'presenting multiple truths and multiples sources of knowledge without prioritising one over the other'.<sup>98</sup> In the *Shelah*, however, the opposite is true; the encyclopaedic format directs the reader towards the pathway of musar and cultivates a pietistic lifestyle by discriminating between alternative approaches. Horowitz's format also creates a distance between the author and his sources, which is particularly relevant when considering his lengthy kabbalistic citations presenting esoteric content from the perspective of a detached observer; it is Horowitz who explains how this content can be applied to invigorate everyday life by integrating the ideas found in the kabbalistic texts into the areas of halakhah and musar.

### Audience

A work of literature can be considered elitist if it consciously limits its intended audience to a worthy group of initiates. Maimonides' *Guide* can be categorised as such, as he frequently emphasised that only those who have reached an advanced intellectual stature should study the work, which is not accessible to everyone.<sup>99</sup>

Similarly, Isaac Luria's teachings were intended for an exclusive group of students

---

*Jewish Law : History, Sources, Principles*, vol. 3 1368-71, 420-22. The idea of a popular digest of halakhic material incorporating competing Ashkenazic and Sefardic traditions was also a phenomenon unique to the 16th Century, see Davis, 'Formation of Ashkenazic Jewish Identity', 251-76. On the kabbalistic encyclopaedia and its systemisation, see Ira Robinson, *Moses Cordovero's Introduction to Kabbalah* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1994), xxiv- xxxiii.

<sup>98</sup> Ruderman, *Early Modern*, 122.

<sup>99</sup> Moshe Halbertal, *Maimonides : Life and Thought*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014), 66.



and are often inscrutable to the reader.<sup>100</sup> Although Horowitz's primary intended audience was his family, who certainly belonged to Prague's rabbinic elite, he did not limit it to them alone:

Therefore, I will follow the footsteps of the early generations 'For learning wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of discernment',<sup>101</sup> for the Lord's blessed, my sons and daughters, my sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, my grandchildren and their children, and the children of their children, forever. May they be sustained by the blessing and may the Lord increase it a thousand fold. I shall compose a work of ethical rebuke for them, as a person would instruct his son.<sup>102</sup>

Included among Horowitz's 'children' are his students:

And consider that students are also called children,<sup>103</sup> and I have merited, with thanks to God, to have raised many students. Therefore I instruct you that for any student whose soul thirsts to access these booklets - do not withhold them from him (lit. the good from his owner).<sup>104</sup>

Horowitz states that as long as future students sincerely thirst to access his teachings, his children should not deprive them of the opportunity to learn from them. In *Vavei Amudim*, Sheftel confirms this impression in his presentation of his father's

---

<sup>100</sup> Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos : Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 186.

<sup>101</sup> Proverbs 1:2.

<sup>102</sup> *Shelah* 1b-2a.

ע"כ(על כן) אצא בעקבי הראשונים לדעת חכמה ומוסר להבין אמרי בינה (משלי א, ב), לברוכי ה' הבנים בניי ובנותיי וכלותיי ונכדיי וזרעם וזרע זרעם עד עולם כולם יעמדו על הברכה ויוסף ה' עליכם אלף פעמים ככה. ואחבר לכם תוכחת מוסר כאשר ייסר איש את בנו

<sup>103</sup> *bSan.* 19b.

<sup>104</sup> *Shelah*, 2a.

וען כי התלמידים נקראים גם כן בנים (סנהדרין יט ב), וזכיתי ת"ל (תהלה לאל) להעמיד תלמידים הרבה על כן הנני מצוה אתכם איזה תלמיד שחשקה נפשו להעתיק הקונטרסים ההם אל תמנעו הטוב מבעליו ואתם בניי שמעו מוסר אביכם ויהיה לזכרון בין עיניכם והתנחלתם אותם לבניכם כי היא חייכם ואורך ימיכם

reluctance to publish the work in terms of modesty rather than out of an active desire to conceal elite secrets from the unworthy:

Due to his righteousness and piety, he left his family home and came to the place where God has said that His presence dwells; before leaving the land of his birth, he began writing this great and awesome book to instruct his household, and out of humility he did not demand that his children publish it, but he 'sanctified us with his commandments and commanded us' to fulfil the request of one who wishes to print this book in order to learn from its piety...<sup>105</sup>

In addition, Horowitz's stated intention in composing the *Shelah* was to produce a work of ethical rebuke and correct misconceptions concerning the service of God, not to provide an esoteric body of obscure literature to the unlearned. Horowitz's intention was to provide a work of instruction for all his future generations, 'sons and daughters, my sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, my grandchildren and their children, and the children of their children, forever' and he doesn't distinguish between men, women and children in this regard (which might be expected if a certain degree of education was required before reading the work). This aim anticipates the section *Sh'ar Otiyot*, which emphasises the importance of pedagogy and how to develop the education of the unlearned.<sup>106</sup> In explaining his father's method in deciding which halakhic material to include in the *Shelah*, Sheftel writes:

He only wrote them to exhort and encourage, seeing that many had stumbled over these laws, or because they did not know and were hidden from them...

In these tractates he innovated over four hundred laws which are not mentioned among the rabbinical authorities, matters that he derived from the Talmud using his logic, and there you will surely see the strength of his glory and manifestations of his greatness.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> *Vavei Amudim*. See Text 6.

<sup>106</sup> In particular, *Shelah* 63b-64b.

<sup>107</sup> *Vavei Amudim*. See Text 6.

This is paralleled in the text of the *Shelah* itself in defining *Ner Mitsvah*, the halakhic sections of his work:

Sometimes it is for the manner that our sages said 'If a man committed a sin and repeated it, it becomes for him as though it is permitted'. And there are, due to our many sins, many who have deeply involved themselves with those who walk in darkness... The second reason is that sometimes, due to lack of knowledge, the concept of this commandment or that aspect (of a commandment) is not known to the masses or fluent in their mouths, so in these instances I am required to make it known (to them). There are also several novellae, rulings that I innovated, with the help of God, which were not mentioned in the words of the earlier sages. All this is included in *ner mitsvah*.<sup>108</sup>

Principally, the halakhic sections of the *Shelah* focus on what the author perceives to be the correction of ignorance, or in providing Horowitz's own understanding of the basic requirements of the law as it should be observed by every Jew.

However, the target audience of the *Shelah* should be categorised as 'rabbinic' as opposed to 'popular' due to the complex nature of the subject matter. Both Horowitz's sons, Sheftel and Jacob (d. 1643) were rabbis of considerable stature,<sup>109</sup> and the sheer volume of sources cited is impenetrable to all who are not familiar with a wide array of rabbinic texts. This complexity includes Horowitz's own exegeses, which frequently rely on wordplay which could not be understood by one unfamiliar with earlier rabbinic literature.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> *Shelah*, 2a.

והיא אחת משתי סיבות: א', לפעמים הוא ע"ד (על דרך) שארז"ל (שאמרו רבותינו) ז"ל (יומא פו ב) עבר אדם עבירה ושנה בה נעשית לו כהיתר, ויש בעוונותינו הרבים הרבה אשר נשתקעו בהם ההולכים חשכים ...

סיבה ב' לפעמים מחמת חסרון ידיעה שלא נודע לרבים ולא שגור בפיהם ענין מצוה זו ודבר זה על כן כגון דא צריך אני להודיע. וגם איזה מחודשים דינים אשר חדשתי בעזה"י (בעזרת ה' יתברך) שלא הוזכרו בדברי קדמונים וכל זה בנר מצוה

<sup>109</sup> Newman, *Life and Teachings*, 69-70.

<sup>110</sup> E.g. Chapter 5, 166, Chapter Eight, 201.

There are aspects of the work, however, which appear to be specifically elitist in intent. Sheftel admits, for example, that he was hesitant to publish the *Shelah* in its entirety without the instruction of his father due to the work's stringencies which were intended for Horowitz's family alone:

Because his intention was only for his children and descendants as mentioned in his introduction, which is why he was strict upon us with several stringencies, especially in 'The forbidden and permitted' (laws concerning dietary restrictions) for this was his way to be stringent upon himself and his household and to sanctify himself with that which was (strictly) permitted to him.<sup>111</sup>

Sheftel rationalises his decision to publish based on Horowitz's introductory passage cited above encouraging his children to share his teachings with all who sought them, explaining the fact that since practically the entire diaspora could be counted among his students and that all the major communities of Europe sought to hear his wisdom (including the communities of Frankfurt, Prague, Posen and Krakow – the 'crowns' of the Jewish communities), he felt justified in publishing his father's work in its entirety.<sup>112</sup>

Yet Sheftel's ambivalence raises an important dichotomy which emerges throughout the *Shelah*: In every topic found within the work there is an ordinary and elitist manifestation: The wisdom of kabbalah should be understood and studied by all, but the teachings of Isaac Luria should remain concealed to all but a select few;<sup>113</sup> the

---

<sup>111</sup> *Vavei Amudim*. See Text 6.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> See Chapter Four, 102.

entirety of halakhah must be infused with kabbalistic pietism but only the truly pious like his children should be 'stringent in all the stringencies';<sup>114</sup> God can be cleaved to through the material world and all are required to serve Him with enthusiasm,<sup>115</sup> but an elite will transcend physicality and pursue an ascetic lifestyle.<sup>116</sup> Overall, the notable feature of the *Shelah* in terms of Horowitz's intended audience is that he moves the boundaries of what is considered universally required of all Jews for religious observance. Horowitz demands a pietistic standard of behaviour of everyone, but there remains an elitist component which the average person cannot attain.

In considering Horowitz's audience, it is also important to ponder his stature and public position in the hearts of European Jewry. For most of his rabbinic life he presided over the most prominent European communities, and was revered as a beloved teacher and leader both during and beyond his lifetime.<sup>117</sup> On his gravestone it is inscribed:

May God remember the pure soul of the great light who enlightened confused of heart by the thousands and hundreds of thousands with the light of Torah in Pilpul, Mishnah, Gemarah, Tosefta and Poskim and besides that many books like sparks of lightning. The kabbalist, the esteemed chief of the rabbinic court, the wise one of our generation, wondrous elder and rabbi, our teacher, who led his people like Moses. A foundation stone in wisdom and understanding. His good name reaches from one end of the world to the other among all the diaspora of Israel.<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>114</sup> See Chapter Ten, 234-35.

<sup>115</sup> See Chapter Twelve, 281-289.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. 272-273.

<sup>117</sup> As attested by the fact that his works were the death-bed choice of Gluckel's pious husband, Gluckel, *Memoirs*, 151.

<sup>118</sup> Rachel Greenblatt, *To Tell Their Children : Jewish Communal Memory in Early Modern Prague*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 74.

According to Greenblatt, Horowitz was given the additional title of 'kabbalist' to signify his stature in the esoteric realms as well as the revealed. This was preceded, however, by his mastery in 'revealed' rabbinic scholarship, which reached the entire diaspora of Israel. Importantly, Horowitz was a teacher with many students and was aware of the wide reach of his teachings (and that many would be included in this group). By permitting his children to share his life's main work with his extensive group of students it seems fair to surmise that his intention was not to restrict his teachings – but to operate as a teacher to the entire Jewish people. It is a challenging work, certainly, but one which was intended to service the entire Jewish nation and guide them in the way of God.

### Composition

Horowitz began writing the *Shelah* at some point between the death of his wife in 1620 and his journey to the land of Israel in 1621, completing it in Jerusalem in 1624 before sending it to his children in Prague. According to Sheftel, it was completed two years after Horowitz's arrival in the land of Israel:

Since one who is on a journey will become confused of mind, he decided to bring his thoughts and light of his Torah to fruition in the 'land of life',<sup>119</sup> so he didn't complete the work in the diaspora, rather in Jerusalem two years after his arrival.<sup>120</sup>

The *Shelah* was initially written as an ethical will for Horowitz's family called *Derekh Hayyim*,<sup>121</sup> but was expanded by Horowitz upon his arrival in the land of Israel,

---

<sup>119</sup> A reference to the land of Israel.

<sup>120</sup> *Vavei Amudim*. See Text 6.

<sup>121</sup> *Shelah*, 2a.

culminating in the final two sections, 'The Written Torah' and 'The Oral Torah', written in Jerusalem.<sup>122</sup>

A significant challenge to the student attempting to study the *Shelah* is its length, density and lack of index to indicate where subject material can be found.<sup>123</sup> In 1680, Shabbatai Bass dedicated an entire two columns (far lengthier than most of his entries) of his bibliographic manual of Hebrew books *Siftei Yeshenim* to the *Shelah*, describing it as 'a very wondrous anthology, filled with fear of God, and since this book does not have an index or a table at its beginning or end I decided to expound upon it'.<sup>124</sup> Bass provides a brief index to the topics and compositional structure of the *Shelah*.

Here, I have summarised the organisation of the work: In the 1649 edition, the work is divided into two parts: *Derekh Hayyim*/'The way of life' and *Luhot Haberit*/'Tablets of the covenant'. *Derekh Hayyim* includes the introduction *Toledot Adam*/'The generations of Man',<sup>125</sup> followed by *Perek Asarah Ma'amarot* 'Chapter of ten sayings' (Addressing God's oneness, attributes and concepts such as love and fear of God required of human beings) and *Sha'ar Otiyot*/'Gate of letters' (arranged according to

---

ויותר מהמה בניי יצ"ו הזהרו בתוספות קדושה וטהרה ובדבקות כי כפליים לתושיה וכפלי כפליים יש  
יש יותר ממה שזכרתי בפרט כי בחפזון חברתי בעת צאתי לדרך המיומן לארץ הקדושה להדבק  
בארצות החיים אשר על כן אני קורא שם אלו קונטרסים דרך חיים

<sup>122</sup> Krassen, *Generations*, 12-13, 20.

<sup>123</sup> See Newman's summarised index, Newman, *Life and Teachings*, 88-89.

<sup>124</sup> Shabbatai Bass, *Siftei Yeshenim*, (Amsterdam, 1680), 79-80.

<sup>125</sup> I have translated as man, not Adam specifically, as the concept is broadened from the Biblical verse to encompass man as a whole.

the Hebrew alphabet on twenty-two topics, analysing halakhic and ethical principles associated with particular letters).

The main body of the work is the section *Asarah Diberot* 'Ten Utterances', which is categorised into ten Talmudic tractates corresponding to periods of the year, each subdivided into three sections:

1. *Ner Mitsvah* (the commandments pertaining to each period).<sup>126</sup>
2. *Torah Or* (the secret reasons for the commandments according to the kabbalah).
3. *Derekh Hayyim Tokhehot Musar* (good character traits and words of ethical rebuke connected to the commandments).

The second major section, *Luhot Haberit*, includes *Torah she-Bikhetav* 'The written Torah' (expositions on the weekly Torah portion spanning the entire Pentateuch, each portion divided into *Ner Mitsvah*, *Torah Or* and *Tokhehot Musar* sections, see below, 59-60); *Torah she-Ba'al Peh* 'The Oral Torah' (a short section discussing the rules and methodology of the Talmud and an analysis of Talmudic terminology); *Asarah Hillulim* 'chapter of ten praises' (a very brief chapter consisting of final words of rebuke).

The table below presents an overview of the *Shelah's* composition, which will be supplemented with more detailed tables of *Toledot Adam* and 'The Written Torah', below:

### The *Shelah*:

---

<sup>126</sup> Mitsvah is generally translated a commandment, precept, or religious duty. The term is derived from the Hebrew root צו which means 'to command' or 'to ordain'. In common usage, mitsvah has taken on the meaning of a good deed. I have translated it as 'commandment', although at times it is more appropriately understood as a good deed.



<i>Derekh Hayyim:</i> <i>Toledot Adam</i>	1a-38a.
<i>Asarah Ma'amarot</i>	38a-58a.
<i>Sha'ar Otiyot</i>	58b -110a.
<i>Luhot Haberit. Asarah</i> <i>Diberot</i>	110b -264a.
<i>Torah she-Bikhetav</i>	264a-388b.
<i>Torah she-Ba'al Peh</i>	389a-417a.
<i>Asarah Hillulim</i>	417b-422b.

Sheftel describes the arrangement of his father's work:

The first section is a precious and wondrous introduction, and its name is 'Generations of Man', and what emerges from it are the sayings that are called the 'Ten sayings'. The second section discusses that which is relevant to every individual in each season of the year, and he named them after Talmudic tractates...it is called 'Ten utterances'.

Since 'Tractate Shabbat' discusses the idea of reading the Torah twice with translation, the work addresses the Torah portions, and as there were many words to say on this matter he arranged them into a separate section (from the section on the tractates). The section 'Oral Torah' was related to 'Tractate Shavuot', which is where it should have been placed, but since it is a large booklet he placed it outside of its boundaries.<sup>127</sup>

According to Sheftel, the *Shelah* is an anthology which offers material for multiple audiences, with different genres which cater for individual specialisations and containing ethical rebuke, halakhah, kabbalah and sermons on the Torah:

<sup>127</sup> *Vavei Amudim*. See Text 6.

This book fulfils the desire of each man – the kabbalists, the literal exegetes and preachers - each man according to his speciality. And here I am standing and imploring everyone who reads from this book not to learn it like a man who reads a book to hasten sleep but to examine it deeply until he finishes it.<sup>128</sup>

From Sheftel's analysis, it is tempting to view the work as fragmented, restricting the analysis of 'kabbalah', 'halakhah' or 'musar' to the sections with the same title; for instance, analysis of musar would be reduced to the section 'Gate of letters' and the *Tokhehot Musar* sections of 'Ten Sayings' and 'The Written Torah'.

It is my intention to demonstrate, however, through Horowitz's own prefaces and conclusions to each section of the *Shelah* that the work contains a coherent vision relating to the necessary stages for Man to attain *shelemut*. By the end of the work, Horowitz intended for the individual to have mastered all specialisations and to have understood the role of each one in bringing about his perfection.<sup>129</sup>

### 'The Threefold Cord'

Horowitz introduces the *Shelah* by explaining that his work was composed to provide a 'threefold cord' to his children consisting of halakhah, kabbalah and musar.<sup>130</sup> This concept recurs throughout the *Shelah* and is an organisational principle rooted in the exposition of two Biblical verses:

---

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> I discuss the specifically kabbalistic nature of this vision in Chapter Three, under the subheading 'Organic universe', 79-89.

<sup>130</sup> *Shelah*, 2a.

The first is the verse in Proverbs, (which I will both transliterate and translate as the Hebrew terms *Ner Mitsvah*, *Torah Or* and *Tokhehot musar* are central categories within the work):

‘*Ki ner mitsvah ve Torah or ve derekh hayyim tokhehot musar*’ – for the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life’.<sup>131</sup>

The second is a verse from Ecclesiastes:

‘And if a man prevails against him that is alone, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken’.<sup>132</sup>

These three components form the pillars of the entire *Shelah*, and the accomplished individual will transform himself by way of proper instruction on both a contemplative and practical level in each of these three areas. The tripartite of *Ner Mitsvah*, *Torah Or* and *Tokhehot Musar* coalesce to form the ‘threefold cord not quickly broken’.

*Toledot Adam*

<i>Beit YHVH</i> / House of the Lord	3a-7b
<i>Beit Hokhmah</i> / House of Wisdom	7b-8a, 15a-18a
<i>Beit Yisra’el</i> /House of Israel	8a-10b, 18a-20

---

<sup>131</sup> Proverbs 6:23.

<sup>132</sup> Ecclesiastes 4:12.

<i>Bayit Ne'eman/</i> House of Faithfulness	10b -11b
<i>Beit ha Mikdash/</i> House of holiness	11b
<i>Bayit ha Aharon/</i> Last house	11b-15a
<i>Beit David/</i> The house of David	20a -27a
<i>Beit 'ir Homah/</i> The house of the walled city	27a-28a
<i>Beit ha Behirah/</i> House of choice	28a-29b
<i>Ha Bayit ha Gadol/</i> The Great house	29b-38a

Horowitz provides prefaces to each of his sections, which helps the reader understand its purpose and how it fits into his broader vision of the 'threefold cord'.

In his introduction to *Toledot Adam*, Horowitz explains how the 'threefold cord' interacts to form a Ladder of Ascent.<sup>133</sup> The individual must firstly be meticulous in observance (*Ner Mitsvah*), which leads to fear of sin. Once he fears sin and refines his character to remove himself from sin entirely (*Tokhehot Musar*), he can proceed to acquiring knowledge of the secrets of kabbalah, where he will merit to gaze upon the splendour of God (*Torah Or*):

---

<sup>133</sup> See Chapter One, 21.

He must firstly learn the 613 commandments,<sup>134</sup> and since study leads to action he will become fearful of sin. After reaching this level, the intellectual component of an action is a ladder which leads to deep thought, which is the secret knowledge, and he will merit to gaze upon the splendour of God. This is true wisdom - knowledge of the secrets of the commandments, which are Godly secrets, although it is necessary for fear of sin to precede this wisdom: 'behold, the fear of the Lord: that is wisdom'.<sup>135</sup> Then, his wisdom will be sustained, and the secrets of the Torah will be revealed to him, so that he may become a wise man who understands things from his own thought. We have seen and heard this idea from many pietists, who would inspect their deeds and confess their sins before engaging in the divine secrets, and adorn themselves with fear of God.<sup>136</sup>

Horowitz then expresses his desire in writing *Toledot Adam* to reveal both the great potential contained within man,<sup>137</sup> and the dangers awaiting he who neglects his responsibilities:

'Chapter One' is entitled 'The ten sayings', 'Chapter Two' is entitled 'The ten utterances', 'Chapter Three' is entitled 'the ten praises'... I named these three chapters with these names as they bring man, who is the purpose of creation, to his true potential...

I decided in my heart to firstly write an introduction, to make it known and reveal how awesome is Man and the matter of his creation, his form, image,

---

<sup>134</sup> As understood in rabbinic literature, there are 613 Biblical Commandments which are divided into 248 positive commandments and 365 prohibitions, see *bMak.* 23b.

<sup>135</sup> Job 25:25.

<sup>136</sup> *Shelah*, 1a.

רק צריך ללמוד תחלה תרי"ג מצות והתלמוד יביאנו לידי מעשה ויהיה ירא חטא אחר כך כשיבא למעלה זו אזי שכל המעשה הוא סולם לעלות לעיוני שהוא חלק הנסתר ויזכה לחזות בנועם ה' וזו היא החכמה האמיתית ידיעת סודות המצות שהם סודות אלהיות ולזו החכמה צריך שתקדים יראת חטא כמו שכתוב (איוב כח, כח) הן יראת אדני היא חכמה ואז חכמתו מתקיימת ויתגלו לו רזי תורה להיות היו חכם מבין מדעתו וזהו ענין שראינו ושמענו מהרבה חסידים קודם עסקם בסודות אלהיות מפשפשים במעשיהם ומתודים על חטאם ומתלבשים ביראת השם

<sup>137</sup> I consider the role of Man in greater detail in the next chapter. Krispel's thesis devotes considerable time to developing the kabbalistic concept of the greatness of Man, and his attachment to the divine. However, as I discuss in the next chapter, this must be significantly qualified by his potential for self-destruction. In a sense, the kabbalah magnifies existing notions of the role of Man, accentuating his potential for greatness and exacerbating his potential for destruction.

his appearance and his destiny. For everything is in the great heavens above and when the wise one realises that His Hand has dominion over all, and that he makes an imprint, he will rise to the highest heights to cleave to God; but if he does the opposite he will fall drastically God forbid; and so he should stir his heart to be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his ways and to cleave to him with cleaving, yearning and desire with a great and everlasting love, and internalise all the words of *Tokhehot Musar, Ner Mitsvah* and *Torah Or*, and more than this, 'the wise man should hear and increase wisdom', so I am calling this introduction 'Generations of Man'.<sup>138</sup>

Horowitz's analysis is based on a passage in the Zohar that analyses a Mishnah in tractate Rosh ha Shana concerning the correct order of the Shofar (Ram's horn) blasts, and the origins of the requirement for there to be at least thirty blasts, found in *bR.H.* 32a. The Mishnah states that there should be no less than ten blasts for the 'kingship' section. The Talmud inquires as to the origin of this ruling. Rabbi says that they correspond to the 'Ten praises' that David said in Psalms. R. Yosef says that they correspond to the 'Ten utterances' given to Moses at Sinai; R. Yohanan says that they correspond to the 'Ten sayings' that were used to create the world, as found in *mAvot* 5:1. The Zohar explains the link between the three sets of ten, which

---

<sup>138</sup> *Shelah*, 2a-b.

פרק א נקרא בשם עשרה מאמרות

פרק ב נקרא בשם עשרת הדברות

פרק ג נקרא בשם עשרה הילולים

...

ואלו שלשה פרקים מביאים את האדם שהוא תכלית הבריאה מביאים אותו לתכליתו האמיתית

...

ונתתי אל לבי לעשות מקודם הקדמה להודיע ולגלות מה נורא האדם וענין יצירתו וצלמו ודמותו תורתו ותוארו ואחריתו כי הכל בגבהי מרומים וכראות זה המשכיל כי ידו שולטת בכל ועושה רושם עולה במעלה נגד רום המעלות להדבק בו יתברך וההיפך בהיפך וירד פלאים חס ושלוש ואז יתלהב לבו להיות תמים עם ה' אלקינו וללכת בדרכיו ולהדבק בו בדביקה חשיקה חפיצה (ראה בראשית רבה פ"פ ס"ז) באהבה רבה ואהבת עולם ויכנסו בלבו כל דברי תוכחת מוסר ונר מצוה ותורה אור ויותר מהמה ישמע חכם ויוסף לקח והנני קורא שם להקדמה יקרה זו תולדות אדם

is where Horowitz derives the idea that these terms should be used to bring Man to his perfection.<sup>139</sup>

In his conclusion to *Toledot Adam*, Horowitz reiterates the importance of the 'threefold cord' and how it directs the rest of the work:

My dear children, you have seen the strength and the loftiness of Man when he desires it... The purpose of Man has been expounded - what he was with regards to his eternal nature, as I explained at length in this precious introduction, which I have called *Toledot Adam*, from which you will arouse yourselves to love God with all your hearts... Let my words in this lofty introduction be close to you and be placed as a reminder between your eyes, and thus *Ner Mitsvah, Torah Or, Derekh Hayyim* will not leave your mouths, for this introduction is the entrance and gateway to the knowledge of God, to learn his Torah and fulfil his commandments, to dress in beloved garments and with all the loftiest character traits - these are the things which I shall mention with God's help in the upcoming chapters.<sup>140</sup>

The ideal person, in summary, is one who has incorporated the 'threefold cord' to such an extent that each section 'will not leave your mouth'. The vision of the introduction is to provide a gateway that will lead the individual to the knowledge of God, an understanding of the deep significance of the commandments and an appreciation for the need to refine his character traits.<sup>141</sup>

---

<sup>139</sup> Zohar III: 11b.

<sup>140</sup> *Shelah*, 38a.

הבנים בני יצ"ו אתם ראיתם את כל תוקף התרוממות האדם לכשירצה ואיך הוא דבוק בו יתברך בסוד צלם ודמות ומקושר בו יתברך באמצעות התורה ועל ידי הבחירה הנתונה לו ומבואר תכלית האדם מה שהיה בענין נצחיותו כאשר הארכתי בהקדמה היקרה הזו אשר קראתיה בשם תולדות אדם אשר מזה יתלהבו לבבכם לאהבה את ה' בכל לבבכם ובכל נפשכם ובכל מאודכם בשמחה וטוב לבכם ויהיה דברי אלה בהקדמה המעולה הזו קרובים אליכם ולזכרון בין עיניכם ואז נ"ר מצו"ה ותור"ה או"ר ודר"ך חיי"ם לא ימושו מפיהם כי זו ההקדמה היא פתח ושער לכנס ממנה לידיעת הש"י וללימוד תורתו וקיום המצות ולהתלבש בחמודות ובכל מעלות המדות והן הדברים אשר אזכיר בעזהש"י בפרקים הבאים

<sup>141</sup> See Krassen, *Generations*, 1-59.

## Asarah Ma'amarot

Having described the lofty potential of Man and his position in the divine scheme,<sup>142</sup> the section *Asarah Ma'amarot* ('ten sayings') delineates ten components which are necessary for him to fulfil his potential. Horowitz presents these components as interconnected aspects of personal development rooted in the oneness of God Himself. In line with the 'threefold cord' principle, all aspects relate to one another:

We will identify the service of Man (who is the world) using ten sayings,<sup>143</sup> and they are all contained within one saying which is the true Oneness, (the one with no other oneness like His oneness may He be praised and exalted). Now I shall provide a hint of each of the ten sayings and how they are included in one saying, and then I will explain them as God's good hand favours me:

The first saying: God is one; the second - Israel is one nation; the third - inner fear and love; the fourth - servants of God, which means service for the sake of on high, for the sake of God. The fifth - eternal service, meaning in every measure that God (May He be praised) allocates. The sixth - the primary service in the heart. The seventh - the gate of character traits. The eighth - the cleaving of the heart, in all your ways you shall know him. The ninth - purity of the thoughts in the heart. The tenth - the *shekhinah* in the heart.<sup>144</sup> The explanation of these sayings, how they depend on one another like a chain, and are connected like a candelabrum in pieces.<sup>145</sup>

---

<sup>142</sup> This will be elaborated in the Chapter Four, 104-108.

<sup>143</sup> On microcosm and macrocosm, See Chapter One, 22.

<sup>144</sup> In rabbinic literature *shekhinah* refers to the divine presence, or the immediate manifestation of God in the world, e.g. *mAvot* 3:6, *bB.B* 10a. In kabbalistic writings, the *shekhinah* is the tenth and last in the hierarchy of the sefirot. In the divine world it represents the feminine principle, while *tiferet* (the sixth sefirah) and *yesod* (the ninth) represent the masculine principle. All the elements and characteristics of the other sefirot are represented within the *shekhinah*. Like the moon, she has no light of her own, but receives the divine light from the other sefirot.

<sup>145</sup> *Shelah*, 38b.

בעשרה מאמרות נברר עבודת האדם שהוא העולם והם כולם נכללים במאמר אחד הוא אחד האמיתי  
אחד ואין יחיד כיחודו יתברך ויתעלה ועתה ארמוז העשרה מאמרות ואיך הם כלולים במאמר אחד  
ואחר כך אבארם כיד ה' הטובה עלי



### Sha'ar Otiyot

The section *Sha'ar Otiyot* is connected to the section *Asarah Ma'amarot* through an aphorism linking the origin of the expression *Asarah Ma'amarot* (Ten sayings, which is described in Ethics of the fathers/ *Pirkei Avot* as being God's means of creating the world)<sup>146</sup> to the 'Book of Creation'/ *Sefer Yetsirah*, which describes the world being created using the letters of the Torah (pertaining to *Sha'ar Otiyot* as the Gate of letters).<sup>147</sup> After establishing the 'roots' in *Asarah Ma'amarot*, Horowitz chooses to focus on one of the 'branches' - the seventh saying, the gate of good character traits. This section is most devoted to the *Tokhehot Musar* element of the 'threefold cord', addressing the ethical and interpersonal aspects of human behaviour, although the 'Gate of Holiness' is expanded to include a comprehensive discussion of the laws of eating, drinking and sexual behaviour:<sup>148</sup>

To these great roots there are many branches, especially the gate of good character traits which is 'longer than a land measure'. Therefore I decided (lit. said in my heart) that there should be a substantial interruption in order to record a gate by itself to mention these branches even though they are extremely numerous and these are things 'for which there is no measure'. Nevertheless, I will assemble some of them, and I will mention some of them in this gate which is for God, the righteous shall pass through it, and it is called the gate of letters, assembled according to the alphabet...

---

מאמר ראשון ה' אחד. מאמר ב' ישראל גוי אחד. מאמר ג' יראה ואהבה פנימית. מאמר ד' עבדי ה' פירוש עבודה צורך גבוה לשם ה'. מאמר ה' עבודה נצחיית פירוש בכל מדה ומדה שמודד הש"י (השם יתברך). מאמר ו' עיקר העבודה בלב. מאמר ז' שער המדות. מאמר ח' דבקות הלב בכל דרכיך דעהו. מאמר ט' טהרת מחשבה שבלב. מאמר י' שכינה בלב.

ביאור המאמרים איך הם תלויים זה בזה כשלשלת ומקושרים כמנורה של פרקים

<sup>146</sup> *mAvot* 5:1.

<sup>147</sup> *Sefer Yetsirah* 2:2.

<sup>148</sup> In Chapter Nine, 'pathway to pietism', I discuss the significance of these halakhot being categorised under 'holiness'.

Truth and faithfulness; Health; Conversion; Praise; Self-effacement; alacrity; A good friend; Purity; The good inclination; Judging favourably; A good heart; Patience; Trustworthiness; Contentment; Humility; Productivity; Modesty; Holiness; Desire; Silence; Longing.<sup>149</sup>

Horowitz's prioritisation of the development of character traits accords with his practical ambitions for the *Shelah*. The theory and philosophy of Man expounded in *Toledot Adam* has little use without its actualisation through the details outlining how he must transform his character.

### *Asarah Diberot*

*Asarah Diberot* 'Ten Utterances' is a section heading which Horowitz named based on his explanation in *Toledot Adam*.<sup>150</sup> Having outlined both the importance of Man and a ladder of ascent through which he can achieve perfection in his previous sections, Horowitz enters the main section of the first part of his work and categorises the calendar year and associated festivals according to a Talmudic tractate. The title of the tractate is the subject of Horowitz's analysis, rather than the contents of the tractate; therefore, 'Tractate Shabbat' addresses laws of the Sabbath and 'Tractate Hullin' addresses matters to do with the profane or weekday activities, rather than the material contained within the so-called tractates in the Talmud.

---

<sup>149</sup> *Shelah*, 58a-b.

ולאלה שרשים הגדולים יש כמה וכמה ענפים ובפרט שער המדות ארוכה מארץ מדה ע"כ(על כן) אמרתי בלבי להיות הפסקה משמשת ולרשום שער בפני עצמו להזכיר הענפים אף כי הם רבים במאד ואלו דברים שאין להם שיעור מכל מקום אפס קצהו תראה ואזכיר קצתם בזה השער אשר לה' צדיקים יבואו בו ונקרא בשם **שער האותיות** מסודר ע"פ (על פי) אלפ"א בית"א

...

אמת ואמונה. בריות. גירות. דרך ארץ. הלל. ותרנות. זריזות. חבר טוב. טהרה. יצר טוב. כף זכות. לב טוב. מתון. נאמן רוח. סיפוק. ענוה. פריון. צניעות. קדושה. רצון. שתיקה. תשוקה

<sup>150</sup> See above, 52.

Horowitz adapts concepts which he considers essential for the individual to achieve *shelemut* such as repentance, faith and justice and categorises them into the most appropriate seasons. For instance, the section on repentance is placed within 'Tractate Yoma', which is a Talmudic tractate associated with Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement); this section also includes the repentance required of the individual on a regular weekday.

Each topic is then analysed in terms of the 'threefold cord', and Horowitz takes great care in assembling the categories of these chapters, explaining at length the deliberation that was required before choosing their names:

There are ten periods throughout the year which will be mentioned, and each chapter will be named after each period using the name of a 'tractate' that is appropriate for the season...in each tractate there will be three chapters, which will contain topics arranged according to the format that I started this work with - *Ner Mitsvah, Torah Or, Tokhehot Musar* – the central idea that this entire work revolves around, containing a portion on laws, a portion on their reasons, orientation and secrets,<sup>151</sup> a portion on good character traits – containing abstinent practices, extra precautions and the ways of ethical rebuke to increase holiness. From this a person will awaken with great self-arousal and achieve his potential, for there are many outcomes attained through the fulfilment of the commandments and acquiring knowledge of their reasons and secrets. The ten periods are: 1. The six days of creation 2. The Sabbath 3. Passover 4. Shavuot 5. The fast of the ninth of Av which includes

---

<sup>151</sup> I have transliterated *kavvanot* as it does not refer to the idea of directed intention that is its Talmudic usage. The term is used in rabbinic literature to denote a state of mental concentration and devotion at prayer and during the performance of mitzvot. Although the demand for *kavvanah* as an obligatory component of religious prayer and action is not explicitly mentioned in the Pentateuch, it is clearly referred to by the prophets, see Isaiah 29:13. The Talmud presents different definitions of the term in *bBer.* 32b, and Maimonides codifies it as a requirement for prayer in *MT*, 'Hilkhot Tefillah', 4:15, 16. In the Kabbalah *kavvanot* (the plural of *kavvanah*) denotes the special thoughts one should have at the recitation of key words in prayer. Very often these thoughts are divorced from the contextual meaning of the words and are of a mystical, esoteric nature. In the *Shelah* they are associated with specific theurgical intentions associated with Isaac Luria as explored in tractate Rosh ha Shana for the shofar blasts. For a detailed summary on *kavvanot* in the writings of Luria, see Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 236-76. I will discuss the role of *kavvanot* as theurgical prayer in Chapter Four, 121-122.

all the fasts 6. Rosh ha Shana 7. Yom Kippur 8. Sukkot 9. Hanukah 10. Purim...<sup>152</sup>

Two points emerge from this passage: firstly, considerable effort was expended on the part of the author to make the main section of the work consistent with the previous three, and secondly that the reader is aware that the 'threefold cord' is an organisational principle which he has adopted throughout the work and one which he wishes to continue applying.

As this section comprises over a hundred and fifty folio pages it is useful to view its organisation in tabular form:

Table 2: The Tractates

Hullin	110b -130b
Shabbat	130b-140a
Pesahim	140a-179a
Shavuot	179b-199b
Ta'anit	199b-213a

---

<sup>152</sup> *Shelah*, 110b.

והנה עשרה זמנים סובבים בכל שנה ושנה אשר יהיו בהם נזכרים ונעשים אלו עשרה ונקרא בשם כל זמן זמן בשם מסכתא אשר זה יהיה נאה לזמן ההוא. ובכל מסכתא יהיה מבואר דבור אחד דהיינו עמוד אחד מעשרה עמודים הנ"ל (הנזכרים לעיל) ובכל מסכתא שלשה פרקים והפרקים האלה יהיו עניינם ע"ד (על דרך) נר מצוה, ותורה אור, ודרך חיים תוכחות מוסר שהתחיל בו זה החיבור וסובב כל החיבור הזה על מרכז הזה. דהיינו חלק הדינין וחלק הטעמים והכוונות והסודות וחלק המדות דהיינו הפרישות והזהירות היתר אשר מדרכי המוסר להוסיף קדושה אשר מכח זה יתעורר להתעוררות גדול ולבא לידי תועלת כאשר הרבה תועליות יוצאות מקיום המצות ובידיעת טעמן וסודן. ועשרה זמנים הם. א' ששת ימי בראשית. ב' שבת. ג' פסח. ד' שבועות. ה' תענית תשעה באב ובכללו כל התעניתים. ו' ראש השנה. ז' יום כפורים. ח' סוכות. ט' חנוכה. י' פורים

Rosh ha-Shanah	213a-227a
Yoma	227a-244b
Sukkah	244b-249a
Tamid	249a-260b
Megillah	260b-264a

### Torah she-Bikhetav/ The Written Torah

*Torah she-Bikhetav* is an analysis of the five books of the Pentateuch. Horowitz presents this section as an addendum to an existing corpus. He refers to the fact that the composition addresses a deficiency in the *Derekh Hayyim* section of the work, which had not addressed the individual Torah portions. Until this point, the *Shelah* had 'revolved in its entirety around the threefold cord' and Horowitz again confirms that the new section will share the same organisational structure. The section is analysed in accordance with the basic organisational structure of Maimonides' *Sefer ha-Mitsvot*,<sup>153</sup> and Horowitz emphasises that in order to master the understanding of each Torah portion, the individual must strive for *shelemut* in Torah study, incorporating every element of the 'threefold cord'. The Talmudic sages had required the individual to read the weekly Torah portion twice alongside a translation.<sup>154</sup>

---

<sup>153</sup> Written around the same time as his *Commentary to the Mishnah* (c. 1165) Maimonides' introduction to his larger work *Mishneh Torah* involved summarising the Biblical and rabbinic commandments contained in each weekly portion and their explanation; see Halbertal, *Maimonides*, 106-07.

<sup>154</sup> The requirement to finish the Torah portion twice weekly alongside a *targum* (Aramaic translation) is found in *bBer.* 8a.

According to Horowitz, this requirement is only achieved once all three elements have been addressed:

You must become like an 'overflowing spring' to add in this way and that to wisdom, knowledge and understanding, for the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: the threefold cord shall not be broken. The understanding of each portion upon weekly completion depends on three things: Firstly, knowledge of the commandments; both the positive and the negative commandments that are mentioned (in the portion) - this is *Ner Mitsvah*. Secondly, the individual should dwell upon the reasons and secrets behind the commandments according to his intellectual capacity, both the positive and the negative commandments, and he should also dwell on the secrets of the other matters that aren't commandments which are included within the portion ... The third element is words of wisdom and retribution, good character traits and behavioural improvements and the benefits accrued from them - this is included in the phrase: 'the ways of life are words of rebuke'.<sup>155</sup>

Although Horowitz generally maintains the 'threefold cord' structure throughout this part of the work, there are some sub-groupings within the weekly portions. The portions *Mikets* and *Vayigash*, for instance, are grouped together as they describe the process of *tikkun* that Joseph achieved for his father.<sup>156</sup> The first eight portions of Exodus are also categorised together as these are the weeks that are auspicious for repentance and will bring the restoration of the 'light of the moon' in the future, referring to the spiritual lustre which pre-existed the creation of the world.<sup>157</sup>

### Torah she-Ba'al Peh/ The Oral Torah

The Oral Torah section of the *Shelah* is a digest of the methodology employed by the Talmud and guidelines for how a person should study it based on the writings of Horowitz's rabbinic predecessors. It is included as an extension of 'Tractate

---

<sup>155</sup> *Shelah*, 264a. See Text 5.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, 297a. On *tikkun* in Luria's writings, see Chapter Four, 99-100.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, 306b.

Shavuot', further developing the fundamental components of Torah study. Horowitz considered a clear understanding of the rules of the Talmud to be essential for its study,<sup>158</sup> prescribing a systematic methodology:

Above in 'Tractate Shavuot', where I grasped pure, good and complete stones of marble - the words of our sages in the holy Talmud - I revealed some of the concepts found in the sages' words and their insights; and since this is not a trivial matter, but also so as not to interrupt the topic (found over there) I knew that I needed to compile a booklet by itself on this issue.

Therefore, I have now arrived with the help of heaven to reveal a small portion of the rules of the Talmud, the methodology of the Talmud, its sections and its expressions, from the words of the scribes old and new (whose writings) I encountered here in Jerusalem the holy city (may it be built speedily in our days). I will explain some of what God privileged me to receive from my rabbis, and what I have added of my own.<sup>159</sup>

### Asarah Hillulim

In his final chapter, Horowitz compiles a very short section incorporating words of musar from 'holy works', largely based upon Bayha's *Hovot ha-Levavot*. He exhorts his readers to review Bahya's first chapter on a daily basis, which will lead them to

---

<sup>158</sup> See *Shelah* 181a-b in Text 3, and a discussion on Horowitz's pedagogy and emphasis on correct methodology in Newman, *Life and Teachings*, 90-113. Horowitz disapproves of the 'pilpul' dialectical approach towards Talmudic study. On the 'pilpul' school in the 16th century and its opponents, see Elchanan Reiner, 'Changes in the Academies of Poland and Ashkenaz in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and the Disputes about Pilpul' in *Studies in Jewish Culture in Honour of Chone Shmeruk* ed. Israel Bartal, (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Centre, 1993), 60-68.

<sup>159</sup> *Shelah*, 389a.

לעיל במסכת שבועות כשהגעתי לאבני שיש טהור אבנים טובות שלמות אמרי פי דברי רז"ל בתלמוד המקודש גליתי קצת ענין דברי חכמים וחידותם וכי לא דבר ריק הוא ושלא להפסיק הענין יעדתי לחבר קונטרס בפני עצמו על זה. והנה עתה באתי בסייעתא דשמיא לגלות קצת מהקצת מכללות התלמוד ודרכי התלמוד והסוגיות והלשונות מפי סופרים ומפי ספרים ישנים וגם חדשים אשר הקרה ה' לי פה ירושלים ע"ה (עיר הקודש) תוב"ב ומעט מזעיר ממה שחנני ה' ממה שקבלתי מרבתי וממה שהוספתי נופך משלי.

merit the World to Come.<sup>160</sup> In finishing his work by emphasising the importance of correct interpersonal conduct, Horowitz reiterates that his principal goal for the *Shelah* is a practical one. It is only when the individual has absorbed the lifestyle of musar that he can attach himself to God, completing the vision of the 'threefold cord'. Throughout the *Shelah*, therefore, the author consistently maintains the direction envisioned at the start. The importance of the 'threefold cord' is that each part is incomplete without the other two. There can be no kabbalah without halakhah and musar, no halakhah without kabbalah and musar, and no musar without halakhah and kabbalah: All three depend on one another to achieve *shelemut*.

### Methodology and Limitations

Although the 'threefold cord' is an organisational principle which appears in every aspect of the *Shelah*, the length and density of the work provides a significant challenge for the reader. According to Newman, Horowitz's 'general method is to state his view clearly and then quote appropriate sources in support of his view or quote other sources first and then sum up by stating his own view'.<sup>161</sup> These quotations are often lengthy, which according to Newman was probably a deliberate

---

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 417b.

פרק עשרות הלולים בעזרות עלית כל העלית של העליונים הקצר קצרה ידי בעזרת הש"י מספרי הקודש המיוסדים על תוכחת מוסר מור' חטאים בדרך וכללתי רוב דבריהם באלו התרוזות עם תוספות ורוב מניין ורוב בניין הם דברי קדוש מדבר הרב החסיד בעל חובת הלבבות ע"כ סדרתי ואחר סדר שער זה השער ליי' צדיקים יבאו בו ומי האיש החפץ חיים הנצחיים יקרא בלב ולשון שער א' מיום ביומו ויחזור חלילה עד עולם ואז יזכה

<sup>161</sup> Newman, *Life and Teachings*, 74-75.



means of making the original sources accessible to all.<sup>162</sup> However, the clear demarcations presented at the beginning of each section are frequently obscured by Horowitz's inclusion of large amounts of previously written material, including commentaries by the author himself. The sheer length of the work, furthermore, can obscure the author's intentions, and one of the difficulties in translating the work is that the sentences are frequently constructed without breaks, with paragraphs at times extending an entire page. Presenting an anthology of sources on numerous issues pertaining to Jewish Thought, there is considerable difficulty for the reader in ascertaining where Horowitz is acting as an editor or when he is citing a position without comment.<sup>163</sup>

The relatively concise citations from other authors in Horowitz's introductory section *Toledot Adam* are often replaced in the main body of the *Shelah* by much longer references. For instance, the *Shelah* includes the full insertion of Horowitz's father's halakhic work on dietary laws *Emek ha-Berakhah* alongside Horowitz's own editorial comments that had been written previously.<sup>164</sup> It is also cited extensively in 'Tractate Hullin' concerning the laws of handwashing.<sup>165</sup>

---

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. Newman bases this on a comment from Sheftel in *Vavei Amudim*, who states that Horowitz copied the entirety of his father Abraham's work into the *Shelah* as he couldn't find it available elsewhere. See *Shelah*, 73a (bottom of the page) where Horowitz emphasises the importance of accurate attributions when quoting from a teacher. This exhortation can also be found in Horowitz's letter to his son, Ms. Ox. Neubauer 1437, 105a.

<sup>163</sup> Citations are often separated by the acronym, עכ"ל (*Ad kan leshono* – until here are his words) which can be easily missed by the reader, particularly in the earlier editions of printing where they typeset is unclear.

<sup>164</sup> *Shelah*, 87a-97a.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 124b-129b.

Another extensive addition to the *Shelah* is Horowitz's insertion of previously delivered sermons. In *Asarah Diberot* these sermons tend to appear at the end of individual sections as supplements to the rest of his material, for example in Tractate Yoma:

And for you my children, in my youth I assembled several sermons, and they were filled with rebukes from repentance, prayer, charity and Torah study, built and founded on verses from the *Tanakh* and the *Midrashim* of our rabbis,<sup>166</sup> with words of truth and justice. I said that I would place them before you to help you to understand and guide you and future generations in the commandments of the Lord which are pure, and (to teach you) upright character traits, to increase in holiness and purity with remembrance and safeguarding. I saw that due to their (the sermons') length it would create a large break in this Tractate of Yoma, so I decided to assemble them at the end of the Tractate.<sup>167</sup>

These sermons are the author's recollections, probably derived from earlier manuscripts,<sup>168</sup> of those that he had delivered 'in his youth'. Horowitz admits that he

---

<sup>166</sup> Midrash refers to a genre of rabbinic literature containing anthologies and compilations of homilies, including both Biblical exegesis and sermons delivered in public.

<sup>167</sup> *Shelah*, 236a-b. 'Tractate Yoma' contains thirty-two pages on repentance and the last five pages of the *Torah Or* section include previously written sermons, 236a-238b.

ואתם בני יצ"ו הנה בילדותי סדרתי כמה דרושים והם מלאים מוסרים מתשובה ותפילה וצדקה ותלמוד תורה מיוסדים ובנויים על פסוקי תורה נביאים וכתובים ומדרשי רז"ל בדברי אמת וצדק אמרתי הנני אציגם לפניכם להועיל לכם להבין ולהורות לכם ולדורות במצוות ה' ברות ובמדות ישרות וישמע חכם ויוסיף לקח להוסיף קדושה וטהרה בזכירה ושמירה  
ויען כי ראה ראיתי כי לאריכות עניינם יהיו עושין הפסק גדול באמצע מסכתא זו דיומא גמרת  
בדעתי לסדרם בתשלום המסכתא בעזרת השם יתברך

<sup>168</sup> In the above footnote, the term 'I assembled several sermons' perhaps implies that Horowitz had written them up previously and had them in front of him, and below he implies that the sermons were 'learnt' when he was younger and then inserted into the overall work. If he was working from memory, it might be assumed that this distinction between old age and youth would be blurred. The fact that the later sections are considered by Horowitz to be written in a different style, with greater

will at times repeat similar concepts that have been addressed in the rest of his work. However, he differentiates between the richness of his writings in older age and the relative inexperience of his youth.<sup>169</sup> The volume of these sermons disrupts the structure of the *Shelah* in several significant locations. For instance, an entire seventy-six pages is devoted to recording sermons in 'Tractate Pesahim', which comprises a collection of six lengthy sermons delivered on 'The Great Sabbath' in previous years.<sup>170</sup> At the end of 'Tractate Shavuot', there are sixteen pages of sermons on the Biblical double portion of *Matot-Mas'ei* addressing themes of reward and punishment.<sup>171</sup> Other sermons from earlier in his life are interspersed into the 'Written Torah' section of the work, including a sermon for *Vayakhel-Pekudei*,<sup>172</sup> *Shemini*,<sup>173</sup> *Bamidbar*,<sup>174</sup> and *Re'eh*.<sup>175</sup>

---

clarity, indicates that although the concepts may be the same, the sermons are later insertions from pre-existing material.

<sup>169</sup> *Shelah*, 150a.

וידעתי כי לפעמים יבואו איזה דברים בכפל מה שנזכר בדרושים יהיה לפעמים איזה ענין גם כן מוזכר בחבור הזה זה לסיבה כי הדרושים למדתי בבחורתי והחבור הזה בזקנתי ובאו הדברים יותר בעשירות ובסגנון אחר ומשנה לא זה ממקומה

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*, 151a-179a. 'The Great Sabbath' refers to the Sabbath before Passover, where it was traditional for the rabbi to deliver a sermon about the rules of the festival.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, 203b-211a.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid*, 333a.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*, 340b.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, 347b.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*, 374b.

Finally, the booklets and writings attributed to Isaac Luria are inserted into the *Shelah* whenever the author can find them.<sup>176</sup> The *Ner Mitsvah* section of ‘Tractate Rosh ha-Shanah’, for example, contains two lengthy booklets from Luria’s students detailing Luria’s *kavvanot* which correspond to each shofar blast.<sup>177</sup> The ascetic customs of Malkiel of Hebron containing the rules of mortifications required before Yom Kippur are also included at the beginning of ‘Tractate Yoma’.<sup>178</sup>

Despite these structural challenges, the *Shelah* is consistently presented by Horowitz as work of musar involving a ‘threefold cord’ necessary to bring the human being to his perfection. Importantly, there is considerable cross-referencing on the part of the author, demonstrating a mastery of both his source material and an awareness of the role served by each section of the work.<sup>179</sup> The *Shelah* thus remains a unit throughout its many pages.

---

<sup>176</sup> I discuss this concept in more detail in Chapter Four, 99-100. See Avivi, *Kabbalat ha-Ari* vol. 1, 475-82.

<sup>177</sup> *Shelah*, 216a-222b.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid*, 227b. See Text 4.

<sup>179</sup> The introductory section *Toledot Adam* is particularly used as a reference point in later parts of the work. For example: *Shelah* 199a when discussing the concept of a plurality of truth; 236a on repentance where Horowitz refers to the introduction for more information; 264a where he refers to it for a comprehensive explanation of the need for the human being to sanctify each limb; 270b on evil being created to serve good, Horowitz mentions that it is worth the reader’s while to read the entire introduction even though it is long; 412a where the reader is sent to the introduction for a comprehensive explanation of the significance of the Hebrew letters. Other important examples of cross-referencing include: 244a, referring to the principles of kabbalah written in ‘Tractate Hullin’; 307a, where Horowitz mentions that he will not discuss the topic of the Exodus at length as the issue had been addressed earlier in ‘Tractate Pesahim’ and the sermons found there; 321a and 340a where Horowitz refers to his sermons in ‘Tractate Pesahim’ for a more extensive explanation of subject matter; 354a where he refers to *Letter Kuf: Kedushah in Sha’ar Otiyot* for a more comprehensive explanation of the presented topics and 370b, where Horowitz refers the reader to *Asarah Ma’amarot* addressing the topics of love and fear of God.

Horowitz viewed halakhah, kabbalah and musar as the pillars of *shelemut*. The *Shelah*'s encyclopaedic format distils and synthesises virtually the entirety of rabbinic literature into these categories and creates a comprehensive conception of Judaism which he presents as 'the basic reality of Jewish religiosity'.<sup>180</sup> By uniting the esoteric and exoteric dimensions, Horowitz systemised kabbalah into a philosophy that subsumed every aspect of the other two areas. No longer was it an esoteric discipline reserved for an elite. Accordingly, I have structured my own chapters to focus on each pillar of the 'threefold cord', analysing their content and role in the *Shelah*'s overall scheme.

---

Horowitz's other major work, *Sha'ar ha Shamayim*, is also referenced in 203a and in 259b for a more detailed explanation of prayer according to the Lurianic *kavvanot*. Horowitz completed this work on prayer two years after the completion of the *Shelah*.

<sup>180</sup> Krassen, *Generations*, xiv.

## **Part 2: Kabbalah**

### **Chapter Three: Kabbalah as the Philosophy of Judaism**

The relationship between the Ashkenazic rabbinate and the kabbalah witnessed a significant shift in the late 16th Century: from an esoteric discipline known and studied by an elite, widely venerated but treated with extreme caution - the mystical teachings emerging from centres in Safed, Jerusalem, North Africa and Turkey were transported to Europe and eventually came to dominate Jewish theology in its entirety. The *Shelah* was an important conduit in this transformation, in part due to its formulation: kabbalah is not presented as a distinct discipline, separated from the halakhah or the rest of Jewish teachings.<sup>181</sup> Rather, it provides the ideological framework for all other areas of Jewish Thought and becomes a *sine qua non* for advancing in religious development. The other two components of the 'threefold cord', halakhah and musar, are infused with kabbalistic teachings. In turn, the kabbalah is formalised and categorised, like a halakhic work, prioritising the aspects within it which might prove helpful in transforming personal conduct. Kabbalah as a distinct topic is subsumed within the rest of the Jewish literary corpus. The *Shelah's* presentation of kabbalah distinguishes between its ordinary and extraordinary manifestations: On the one hand, only the advanced kabbalist can understand the secret interaction between God, the universe, the Torah and Man. On the other hand, even the humblest of individuals is required to absorb the concepts found within kabbalah to optimally serve God. Throughout the work, Horowitz insists that to act in accordance with the kabbalah does not necessarily require the knowledge of a

---

<sup>181</sup> See Sack, *Shomer*, 20.

kabbalist, and the main function of the kabbalah within the *Shelah* is to accentuate all areas of religious observance by revealing that behind every action is a cosmically significant subtext.<sup>182</sup>

### The Essence of Judaism

The persistent message within the *Shelah* is that the kabbalah contains the essence of Judaism. Within it are the seeds of all other forms of human knowledge and the correct guidelines for life in the form of musar. Musar had long been a genre which its authors had linked to Moses' final speech to the Israelites in Deuteronomy,<sup>183</sup> and Horowitz also associates his work's ambitions with Moses' final words of rebuke, which in fact contained the secrets of kabbalah (understood only by 'he who has eyes to see'):

Know my sons that all the forms of rebuke mentioned in the words of our sages in the Talmud and Midrash, and all the words that the compilers of repentance manuals, good character traits and retribution expounded upon – even the words of those who speak by way of the concealed teachings and the secrets of devekut, like the holy Rashbi in the Zohar and the *tikkunim*, and those that follow the (leaders of) earlier and later generations – all these things are alluded to in the words of rebuke from Moses our teacher, and he who has eyes to see will see all of this with the clarity of his intellect.<sup>184</sup>

---

<sup>182</sup> See Bracha Sack, 'Mekorei *Shelemut*. Be Mahshava, Dibbur Ve Ma'aseh' (Hebrew), *Da'at*, 50-52, (2003), 239.

<sup>183</sup> Abrahams, *Hebrew Ethical Wills.*, 1-19; Elbaum, *Openness*, 233-36.

<sup>184</sup> *Shelah*, 1b.

ודעו בני יצ"ו שכל המוסרים שהוזכרו בדברי רז"ל בתלמוד ובמדרשים ומה שהאריכו אחר כך מחברי ספרי התשובה וספרי המדות והמוסר גם המדברים על פי הסוד מסוד הדבקות כמו הקדוש רשב"י

The specific role of kabbalah in the 'threefold cord' can first be identified in the opening passages of the *Shelah*, where Horowitz establishes that only those who have had intimate contact with the source of knowledge itself, the kabbalah, are able to claim true understanding about the nature of God's commandments:

No one can approach (an understanding of) the essence of one commandment in its depth and its deepest root except Rashbi and his companions who were not on the level of flesh and blood, and there is also great knowledge possessed by his students and their disciples who merited to benefit from his great light.<sup>185</sup>

This introduction signifies that knowledge of kabbalistic secrets is not extraneous to the knowledge of other parts of the Torah, but a deeper, more essential aspect of it.<sup>186</sup>

The most comprehensive section addressing the importance of the kabbalah in the *Shelah* is found at the beginning of *Asarah Ma'amarot*, at the end of the subsection 'God is one'. The section addresses the most fundamental belief, the belief in one

---

ע"ה בזוהר ובתיקונים והנמשכים אחריו דורות ראשונים ואחרונים דברי כולם מרומזים בדברי מוסר של מ"ר (משה רבינו) ע"ה למי שעינים לו לראות אז יראה הכל בעין השכל מבואר היטב

<sup>185</sup> Ibid, 2a.

ודעו בניי יצ"ו שלא יעלה במחשבתכם מה שאזכור בקונטרסים האלה מסודות המצוות והתפילות שירדתי לעומק הענין כי אינו אפילו כערך טיפה בערך הים הגדול כי לסודות ההם אין סוף ותכלית אדם אם יחיה אלף שנים פעמיים לא יעלה ויגיע לתכלית מצוה אחת עד עומקה ושורשה ושורש שורשה כי אם רבי שמעון בר יוחאי וחבריו די מדרהון עם בשרא לא הוה וגם ידיעה גדולה לתלמידיו ותלמידי תלמידיו הזוכים להנות מאורו הגדול

<sup>186</sup> Horowitz later uses access to the Zohar as a marker to differentiate between those who are considered halakhically authoritative and those who are not, see Chapter Eight, 192-198.



God. According to Horowitz, this belief can only be fulfilled properly by one who has studied the secrets of the kabbalah:

Here is another interpretation of the verse which says: 'Know the God of your father',<sup>187</sup> concerning the idea of His unity (blessed be He), the knowledge of His names and the secret of the emanations. Know that it says: ' I will keep him safe, for he knows my name'.<sup>188</sup> This refers to the secret of the study of the wisdom of kabbalah which makes the foolish wise, and one who has not seen the light of this wisdom has never encountered illumination in his life! For only then he will understand and comprehend the secret of His oneness (blessed be He), the secret of His providence and the attributes in the Torah hidden from the philosophers - happy is the eye which has seen all of this! Understand that many men have distanced themselves from this wisdom but all those who distance themselves from it distance themselves from eternal spiritual life.<sup>189</sup>

There are three important points which emerge from this passage:

- Knowledge of God, the nature of His providence and His Torah is only accessible to those who have studied the secrets of the kabbalah.
- The 'philosophers', i.e. those Jewish rabbinic authorities whose metaphysical ideas were derived from (largely Aristotelian) philosophical writings, are utterly incapable of discerning this truth through their speculations.
- Even those people who simply 'distance themselves' from studying kabbalah without actively rejecting it (a description which applied almost the entire

---

<sup>187</sup> Chronicles 28:9.

<sup>188</sup> Psalms 91:14.

<sup>189</sup> *Shelah*, 41a.

עוד פירוש הפסוק מ"ש (דברי הימים א כח, ט) דע את אלהי אביך בענין אחדותו יתברך וידיעת שמותיו וסוד האצילות אמר דע כמו שאמר הפסוק (תהלים צא, יד) אשגבהו כי ידע שמי הוא סוד לימוד חכמת הקבלה אשר מחכימת פתי ומי שלא ראה אור החכמה זו לא ראה מאורות מימיו כי אז יבין וישכיל סוד אחדותו ברוך הוא וסוד השגחתו ועניני התוארים הנזכרים בתורה הנעלמים מחכמי הפילוסופים אשרי עין ראתה כל אלה ויען כי הרבה בני אדם פורשים מזו החכמה וכל הפורש ממנה פורש מהחיים הנצחיים הרוחניים

Jewish population and included many rabbis),<sup>190</sup> are depriving themselves of eternal reward through their ignorance.

Over the course of two pages, Horowitz refers extensively to Cordovero's writings about belief in the truth of kabbalah being an article of faith. In his writings, Cordovero presents prolonged discussions about how the kabbalist is incomparably closer to God than the non-kabbalist, and that the acquisition of love and fear of God depends on kabbalistic knowledge.<sup>191</sup>

After citing Cordovero concerning the importance of studying kabbalah and how the revelation of the Zohar heralded the imminent arrival of the messiah, Horowitz encourages his readers to study Cordovero's writings on the subject:

From here you see that there is a great advantage (lit. 'ten hands'),<sup>192</sup> to those who study kabbalah over those who study the written law and the Mishnah, and even though that it is impossible to plumb its very depths owing to the greatness and loftiness of its teachings – for even the bare minimum of attainment in these lofty teachings is greater than great attainment in lowly teachings. And how happy are we, how great is our lot! For we have merited the book of the Zohar which our forbearers did not merit to see, they of whom even the smallest is weightier than our greatest – like Hai Gaon (939-1038), Sheshet Gaon (unknown), Eliezer of Worms (1176–1238), Nahmanides (1196-1270), Rashba (1235-1310), Rabad (1135-1198) – for these individuals are included among the kabbalists,<sup>193</sup> but they did not taste from its honey, for in their times it was not revealed! But do not be surprised at this, for it is certain that it was not revealed until the final generation which we find ourselves in today...

---

<sup>190</sup> See Twersky, 'Quest for Spirituality', 432-43.

<sup>191</sup> Robinson, *Introduction*, 39-51, 84-92.

<sup>192</sup> See Samuel ii 19:44.

<sup>193</sup> The term '*anshei hen*' or 'men of grace' was first used by Nahmanides to refer to the kabbalists and is frequently used as an allusion to kabbalistic teachings, see 'Kabbalah', 588.

The man of God, the Holy Moses Cordovero in the book *Or Ne'erav* brings these sayings and explains them with good reason and knowledge, adding here and there regarding the matter of learning this wisdom, so go and read it! The great genius of complete knowledge, our teacher Isaac de Letas (d. 1570) also expands on this matter, and he is printed in the introduction of the small Zohar (Cremona, 1558)<sup>194</sup> concerning the obligation to learn the wisdom of kabbalah.<sup>195</sup>

Horowitz then refers to Cordovero's denunciation of those who disassociate themselves from this wisdom. Although appearing to agree with the overall sentiment of Cordovero's writings, Horowitz moderates the message somewhat to ensure that his students understand that despite the kabbalah's fundamental importance, it should not come at the expense of Talmudic study. Horowitz notes that the individual should 'fill his stomach' with Talmudic and halakhic knowledge - an embellishment of Maimonides' injunction to only study the secrets of *pardes* after 'filling his stomach' with the study of the practical commandments.<sup>196</sup>

---

<sup>194</sup> This refers to the first publication of the Zohar in a one volume edition in Cremona in 1558.

<sup>195</sup> *Shelah*, 41b.

מכאן תראה כי יש עשר ידות למארי דקבלה על מארי דמקרא ומארי דמשנה ואע"פ שא"א (אי אפשר) לירד לעומקיה מצד גודל ורוממות דרושיה כי המעט המושג בדרושים הנשגבים יותר גדול התועלת והמעלה מהרב המושג בדרושי השפלים ואשרינו מה טוב חלקינו שזכינו לספר הזהר אשר לא זכו קדמונינו אשר קטנם עבה ממתנינו כמו רב האי גאון ורב ששת גאון והרב רבי אלעזר מגרמייזא והרמב"ן והרשב"א והראב"ד שכל אלו היו מכלל יודעי חן ולא טעמו מדבשו כי בזמנם לא נתגלה ואל תתמה מזה כי בודאי לא נתגלה עד דור האחרון אשר אנחנו בו היום

...

ואיש אלקים קדוש מהר"ם קורדוורא בספר אור נערב הביא אלו המאמרים ופירשם בטוב טעם ודעת ועוד הוסיף כהנה וכהנה שם בענין חיוב לימוד חכמה זו זיל קרי ביה גם האריך מאד הגאון חכם הכולל מהר"ר יצחק דלטאש בפסק שעשה והוא נדפס בהקדמת זהר הקטן החיוב המוטל בלימוד חכמת הקבלה

<sup>196</sup> See *MT*, 'Yesodei ha-Torah', 4:13. *Pardes*, translated as an orchard, is a reference to the secrets of the Torah relating to the Talmudic story of the four rabbis who attempted to master every level of the Torah's textual interpretation, see *bHag.* 14b. In Maimonides' writings, this refers primarily to the study of metaphysics, see *Guide* 1:32. Horowitz's extrapolation to make this phrase relate to kabbalah is fairly

And you my children, happy are you how good is your lot if you merit this wisdom, with holiness and purification and with excessive humility – after you fill your stomachs with Talmud and codes on a daily basis, then select for yourselves a good portion of the day, and cleave to this wisdom, adding holiness and great devekut to Him, may he be praised and exalted.<sup>197</sup>

The study of the kabbalah, Horowitz insists, must occur in its proper place in the 'threefold cord', after immersion in Talmudic studies and halakhic knowledge. To demonstrate that kabbalah is not disconnected from the other areas of observance, Horowitz adds that kabbalah requires further preparation in the form of the cultivation of additional holiness (which is acquired through the perfection of character traits) and must be 'cleaved to' rather than merely studied.<sup>198</sup>

Horowitz supports the idea of universal kabbalah study to the best of the individual's ability, particularly given the messianic expectations pregnant in his generation:

Rather the fact of the matter is that there is permission to dwell on this wisdom, although there are certain hidden matters that you do not have permission to engage in. As it says in the Zohar on the portion Yitro: 'Send away the mother and you shall surely take the children'.<sup>199</sup> This refers to the secrets of the upper world that you are not given permission to gaze upon, and you need to cast all questions and speculations about it aside...Like that which Rashbi has said that not every mind can endure the depth of this

---

typical of his approach, see my discussion below, 77, and my comment in Chapter Seven, 179. For instance, in *Shelah*, 360b, Horowitz harmonises the positions of Spanish philosopher and exegete Isaac Abarbanel (1437-1508) with Maimonides in accordance with kabbalistic principles, an example of how Horowitz assumed a shared frame of kabbalistic reference even among those who clearly did not have his approach.

<sup>197</sup> *Shelah*, 42a.

ואתם בניי יצ"ו אשריכם מה טוב חלקיכם אם תזכו לזאת החכמה בקדושה ובטהרה ובענוה יתירה  
לאחר שתמלאו כריסכם מתלמוד ופוסקים בכל יום ויום אזי אח"כ (אחר כך) תבררו חלק יפה מהיום  
ותדבקו בלימוד זז החכמה בתוספות קדושה ובדבקות גדול בו יתברך ויתעלה

<sup>198</sup> See Chapter Six, 169.

<sup>199</sup> Zohar II: 93a; Deuteronomy 22:7.

matter. For a broad intellect is required to attain this great knowledge and wisdom. But all that can be understood of this wisdom one should pursue with alacrity! So long as he sanctifies himself with extra holiness in both Torah study and his deeds, he will be able to climb the ladder that leads to the house of God and understand the glory of his God. Particularly in this final generation, (about which Elijah decreed) that the Zohar's revelation would be delayed until the final generation, and then the wisdom of the Zohar will be revealed so that from its merit Israel will be redeemed - just as Israel were not redeemed from Egypt until God required them to sanctify themselves with the paschal blood and the blood of circumcision, so too the future redemption will not be a redemption until we have merited this additional holiness, which is the will of God (may He be praised), and happy is he who merits it.<sup>200</sup>

If the kabbalah is studied under conditions of purity, this creates additional holiness within the universe, which in turn hastens the arrival of the messiah.<sup>201</sup>

Perfect action, furthermore, is only accessible to those who have studied the secret teachings of kabbalah. In the following passage which appears in 'Tractate Shavuot', dedicated to the importance of Torah study, Horowitz describes the relationship

---

<sup>200</sup> *Shelah*, 42a.

אלא הענין יש רשות להתבונן בחכמה זו מ"מ (מכל מקום) יש לך איזה ענינים נסתרות שאין רשות לעסוק כמו שאמרו בזהר פרשת יתרו (ח"ב דף צ"ג ע"א) שלח תשלח את האם ואת הבנים תקח לך (דברים כב, ז) רזא דעלמא עלאה דלא אתייהיב ביה רשו לאסתכלא ואצטריך לשלח מגו שאלתא ואסתכלותא ביה. ואת הבנים תקח לך דכתיב (שם ד, לב) כי שאל נא לימים ראשנים וגו' ולמקצה השמים ועד קצה השמים אבל לעילא מקצה השמים שלח תשלח מרעיוניך למשאל כו

...

וכה דאמר רשב"י על ענין עמוק בחכמה זו לאו כל מוחא סביל דא. ולזה צריך רוחב השכל וגודל חכמה ובינה. אבל ללמוד כל מה שביכולתו להבין ולהשיג בחכמה זו זריזין מקדימין. רק יקדש את עצמו בקדושה יתירה בתלמוד ובמעשה ואז יעלה בסולם העולה בית אל להבין בכבוד קונו. ובפרט בדור האחרון הזה אשר הגיד אליהו שיהיה כמוס הזהר עד הדור האחרון. ואז יתגלה חכמת הזהר כדי שבזכות זה יגאלו ישראל כשם שלא נגאלו ישראל ממצרים עד שהוצרך הקב"ה לקדשם בדם פסח ובדם מילה כן גאולה העתידה לא יהיה הגאולה עד שיזכו לתוספות הקדושה הזו והיא רצון האל ית' ואשרי הזוכה בה

<sup>201</sup> This topic is explored more extensively in Chapter Thirteen. On the messianic environment associated with the Zohar and its study, see Fine, *Safed Spirituality*, 7. On the idea of 'adding holiness' to the universe, see Idel, 'Ganz Andere and the Concept of Holiness in Jewish Mysticism', *Da'at*, 57-59, (2006), xxv- xxvi.

between the knowledge of kabbalistic secrets and the quality of divine service. The adherents of kabbalah possess knowledge of the secrets of the Torah, which confers a superior quality of service upon them and distinguishes them from those who are not initiated 'like darkness is different from light'.

After repeating the point made above that one who has 'never seen this wisdom has never encountered illumination in his life', Horowitz presents an analogy from Azaria of Lozano (d.1606):

I found written that just as there are merchants, one of whom only makes four or five *levenim* (form of currency) each day by weaving thick garments, and one who makes twenty or thirty *levenim* a day by weaving thin and high-quality garments. So too one who perforates jewels will profit a golden dinars worth a day but one who perforates a glass vessel will not make this in a week. And everyone is a worker. If so when it comes to the reward for the commandments, one who knows the secrets will profit greater in one day than what one who doesn't know the secrets will gain in a week. For example (a case study): Reuben, Simeon and Levi eat together; Gad, Naftali and Asher are also eating together. Levi, the kabbalist, made a *zimmin* and made the blessing for 'Grace after meals' with the cup of blessing in his hand,<sup>202</sup> and had intention for that which it is fitting to have intention for, with correct kabbalistic *kavvanot*. Dan, who is not a kabbalist, makes a *zimmin* with his group and makes the blessing for *birkat ha-mazon* with the cup of blessing in his hand and did not have intention for the secrets of the blessing for he didn't know them; both are doing one commandment but there is as great a discrepancy between Levi's reward over Dan's as there is a difference between light and darkness. And this is also the case for the other commandments, and this is obvious to the kabbalists. It is also true that just as the reward of one who knows the secrets is far greater than the reward of one who doesn't, so too the punishment is much greater if (the one who knows the secrets) sins or refrains from performing a commandment than one who doesn't know. But nevertheless a person is not able to exempt himself from this level and say: I don't want it or its reward, because this was the condition we accepted with the covenant with the Lord our God, and agreed to do everything He wants...<sup>203</sup>

---

<sup>202</sup> When a minimum of three men eat bread as part of a meal together they are obligated to form a *zimmin* (an 'invitation') with the addition of a few extra opening words whereby one man 'invites' the others to join him in *birkat ha-mazon*. See *bBer.* 45a-b.

<sup>203</sup> *Shelah*, 182b.

## The Organic Universe

In the *Shelah*, the kabbalah is never restricted to the theoretical realms of theosophy. It provides the organisational architecture which connects every aspect of the 'threefold cord'. The scope of kabbalah, therefore, is not limited to the ideas found within its classical texts, but is expanded to produce a mechanism which demonstrates the interconnected nature of the physical and spiritual realms. Any statement pertaining to Jewish Thought cannot be made without a frame of reference sourced in the kabbalah.<sup>204</sup> I have termed this concept the 'Organic universe' of kabbalah.<sup>205</sup>

---

ולאחר שמילא כריסו במקרא במשנה ותלמוד יתעסק באימה וביראה בקדושה ובטהרה בחכמת הקבלה בזהר ובתקונים ובמפרשי דבריהם וביתר ספרי הקודש השואבים ממי באר הזהר. וכבר נתחברו על זה פסקים הרבה בלימוד חכמת הקבלה. וכלל העולה שמחויב האדם לידע את שמו יתברך ומי שלא ראה זו החכמה לא ראה מאורות מימיו והכסיל בחושך הולך. וכבר הוזכרו עניינים אלו בארוכה למעלה בפרק עשרה מאמרות במאמר בביאור פסוק (דברי הימים - א כח, ט) דע את אלהי אביך

ומצאתי כתוב (בדרך חיים למהר"ם די לונזאנו, דפוס לבוב תרצ"א בדף נט) כמו שיש בסוחרים מי שאינו מרויח רק ארבעה או חמשה לבנים ליום להיותו תופר בגדים גסים ומי שהוא מרויח עשרים או שלשים לבנים ליום להיותו תופר בגדים דקים ומעולים וכן נוקב מרגליות ירויח דינר זהב ביום ונוקב כלי זכוכית לא ירויחנו בשבוע אחד והכל אומנים אם כן בשכר המצות יותר ישתכר ביום אחד מי שיודע סודם, ממה שישתכר בשבוע אחד הבלתי יודע סודם. המשל, ראובן שמעון לוי אכלו כאחד גד נפתלי דן אכלו כאחד. לוי המקובל זימן ובירך ברכת המזון וכוס של ברכה בידו וכיון למה שראוי לכיון. דן הבלתי מקובל זימן גם הוא בחבורתו ובירך ברכת המזון וכוס של ברכה בידו ולא כיוון לסודות הברכה כי לא ידע. הנה שניהם מצוה אחת עשו אך יש יתרון לשכר לוי משכר דן כיתרון האור מן החושך ועל זה הדרך שאר המצוות וזהו פשוט ליודעי חן. הן אמת שכמו ששכר היודע סודות המצות גדול מאוד משכר הבלתי יודע כך עונשו כשיעבור עבירה או יבטל מצוה גדול מאוד מעונש הבלתי יודע. ומכל מקום לא האדם בן חורין ליבטל הימנה ולומר לא היא ולא שכרה כי על מנת כן עברנו בברית ה' אלהינו ובאלתנו לעשות כל מה שהוא

<sup>204</sup> This includes all the statements found within the Talmud. Horowitz often interprets Talmudic texts in line with the assumption that they allude to kabbalistic matters and share a kabbalistic frame of reference. See, for instance, *Shelah*, 25a-b (analysed in Chapter Seven, 177), 58a (Chapter Thirteen, 297), 263b (Chapter Thirteen, 302), 353a (Chapter Eleven, 273).

<sup>205</sup> This term has been borrowed from a reference to the way Chinese science developed in the medieval period, viewing the universe as an interconnected, organic whole rather than the mechanical world view developed by Descartes, Bacon and the pioneers of the scientific revolution in the West. See Nathan Sivin,

Where this distinguishes Horowitz is in terms of the scope of his thought. One of the impacts of the kabbalistic commentaries on the Torah beginning in the 13th Century had been to enhance the significance of fulfilling the commandments, as each commandment was magnified by the hidden kabbalistic substructure. The principle behind this idea was that behind every religious action were myriad unseen processes understood only to the kabbalists.<sup>206</sup> However, a clear distinction generally existed between the basic layer of meaning of a holy text and the deeper allusions within it, as well as the straightforward observance of a specific commandment and the loftier, esoteric levels of worship.<sup>207</sup> In the *Shelah*, the distinction between the 'revealed' and the 'concealed' teachings is entirely rejected. In *Toledot Adam*, Horowitz argues that the human being must understand that the areas considered to be 'revealed' teachings, such as the Torah, Mishnah, Talmud and halakhic codes are not distinct from the teachings which are 'concealed', such as the Zohar and kabbalistic writings. He alludes to the fact that this position was not a widely accepted one (perhaps referring to contemporary European rabbis):

Before my explanation I will make known the saying of the author (ibn Gabbai): 'Concealed and revealed'. The author taught us that the concealed is revealed, that is – the revelation of the concealed and its emanation is the revealed, so it transpires that the revealed is the concealed. The same applies to matters of Torah – the revealed portion is not a self-contained matter, separate from the concealed – like that which the masses think that the concealed way stands alone and the revealed way stands alone – this is not

---

'Why the scientific revolution did not take place in China : or didn't it?' in Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 531-54.

<sup>206</sup> Katz, *Halakhah*, 16.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 25-35.



the case, but rather the concealed descends and is revealed. This is alluded to in the verse 'Apples of gold in silver settings'.<sup>208</sup>

The idea of the 'concealed' realm hidden within the 'revealed' realm is not restricted to holy texts. The physical world itself emerges directly from its spiritual root, as formulated in Cordovero's writings:

I will bring you an example of the first reward in the portion of *Behukotai*: 'I will bring you rains (*Geshem*), the word *Geshem* is the holy language, for those water droplets that descend are not called *Geshem* in essence, but only the power of divine flow which is in the highest heavens at its root is called *Geshem*, and afterwards it descends and feeds – in all the worlds it is called *Geshem* by way of symbolism and will descend incrementally until it fulfils: 'I will respond, says the Lord', 'I will respond to the heavens and they shall respond to the earth', and these droplets will come to nourish the earth...<sup>209</sup>

Horowitz expands this idea when presenting the position of ibn Gabbai's *Avodat ha-Kodesh*: The Torah received from Sinai is in fact comprised of the hidden names of God, and despite its physical, written form, is a diluted manifestation of God Himself,<sup>210</sup> containing commandments which, equally, are composite tools of a

---

<sup>208</sup> *Shelah*, 3a; see also 162a; Proverbs 25:11.

וקודם פירושי אודיע בכלל המאמר שאמר סתים וגליא. הודיע לנו בעל המאמר שהנגלה הוא הנסתר דהיינו גילוי ההסתר והתפשטותו הוא הנגלה נמצא הנגלה הוא הנסתר. וכן בענין התורה אין הנגלה ענין בפני עצמו מהנסתר כמו שמבינים ההמוניים דרך הנסתר לחוד ודרך הנגלה לחוד זה אינו רק הנסתר נשתלשל ונתגלה. וזה רמז הפסוק (משלי כה, יא) תפוחי זהב במשכיות כסף דבר דבר על אפניו

<sup>209</sup> *Shelah*, 14a.

ואז מבואר ג"כ החקירה למה לא נזכרו היעודים הרוחניים בתורה. כי הזכרו והוזכרו ואדרבה הם נזכרו בעצם ולא בשאלה. והוא זה. ואביא לך למשל היעוד הראשון בפ' בחקותי (ויקרא כו, ד) ונתתי גשמיכם הנה תיבת גשם הוא לשון קודש כי אלו הטפות המימיות היורדות אין שמם גשם בעצם רק כח ההשפעה שהיא למעלה למעלה בשרשה נקרא גשם ואחר כך יורד ונוקב ובכל העולמות נקרא גשם בשאלה אבל הוא ממדרגה למדרגה עד שמקויים נאם ה' אענה את השמים והם יענו את הארץ (הושע ב, כג) ונתהוו אלו הטפות המרות את הארץ והולידו והצמיחו וגורמים חיים לעולם והמדרגה שהיא למעלה מזה נקרא גם כן גשם והוא יותר חיים רוחניים עד למעלה ברום המעלות אשר שם שם גשם בעצם

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid*, 16a. See Chapter Four, 109.

spiritual nature. The entire Torah can be dissected into spiritual elements which Man must combine through his actions to produce physical outcomes, i.e. the physical performance of each of God's commandments. The material world and all within it is the product of atomised spiritual components. The outcome of this substructure where the 'concealed' emerges into the 'revealed' is that many classical distinctions and demarcations in rabbinic literature are substantially blurred.

For instance, the distinction between positive and negative commandments (what the individual is obligated to do as opposed to what he must avoid) is distorted:

And if one is to say, how can the positive and negative commandments correspond to one another, surely they are not the same number – one is 248 and the other is 365?! My sons I will make known to you what God has granted me in knowledge: Know that the 248 at their root are 365.<sup>211</sup>

In an extensive citation from Cordovero, whose metaphysical structure forms the basis of the kabbalistic cosmology within the *Shelah*,<sup>212</sup> Horowitz explains that every physical element is a coarsened manifestation of a spiritual force residing in the mind of God:

The *Pardes* expands upon this in the tenth chapter *Sha'ar hayekholot*, for everything is from four elements. The idea is that there are four supernal elements: *hesed* - the foundation of water, *gevurah* - the foundation of fire, *tif'eret* - The foundation of wind, *malkhut* - the foundation of earth. They are unique in the fulfilment of the divine unity. Through these four elements of faint emanation, the four foundations came into being through their order of emanation - *Beriah*, *Yetsirah* and *Asiyah*, one level after another, from one plain to another (from *Atsilut* to *Beriah*, from *Beriah* to *Yetsirah*, from *Yetsirah*

---

<sup>211</sup> Ibid, 17b.

ואם אמור יאמר האומר מ"ע ול"ת (מצות עשה ולא תעשה) הם זה לעומת זה כלולות הלא אינם שוים במספרם אלו הם רמ"ח ואלו הם שס"ה. בני יצ"ו אודיע אתכם ממה שחנני ה'. דעו כי רמ"ח מצות עשה עם שרשם הם שס"ה

<sup>212</sup> See Chapter Four, 103-106.

to *Asiyah*). And each one of these four levels are in each one of the other four levels...And from these four levels of emanation, all the worlds were formed from *Atsilut* to *Beriah*, from *Beriah* to the *heikhalot* (palaces), from the *heikhalot* to the *kelippot*,<sup>213</sup> from the *kelippot* to the existence of the firmaments which are the signs of the zodiac and from there to these elements (water, wind, fire, earth) that have mass and are composite - what emerges is that these four elements are the same four elements that were in the firmaments when they were in the sefirotic layer, and the four elements in *Yetsirah* and so forth until the supernal levels. And yet, due to the descent through emanation they coarsened and were sent to exile, due to their distance from the source. And according to this, there is nothing in the world which has not received divine flow and light from above, but this light has manifested itself differently according to its descent... until you cannot find anything in this world which does not have spirituality and some life, according to the worth of its body and matter, and according to the degree of its removal from the source.<sup>214</sup>

---

<sup>213</sup> The *kelippot* are generally associated with the power of evil and in Cordovero's formulation are a product of the sin of Man. These 'shells' surround the physical universe and must be overcome in order to perfect the universe.

<sup>214</sup> *Shelah*, 45b-46a.

והאריך בפרדס פ' עשירי משער היכלות כי כל דבר הוא מארבע יסודות. והענין כי ארבע יסודות עליונים הם חסד יסוד המים גבורה יסוד האש תפארת יסוד הרוח מלכות יסוד העפר והם מיוחדים תכלי' היחו' (מיוחדים בתכלית היחוד)

וע"י (על ידי) ארבע יסודות האלה הנאצלים הדקים נתהוו הארבע יסודות שבסדר אצילתן והבריאה היצירה והעשייה מדרגה אחר מדרגה מעילה לעלול מאצילות אל בריאה והבריאה אל יצירה ומיצירה אל עשייה וכל ארבע מדרגות האלה הם בכל א' וא' מהמדרגות בעצמם. באצילות יש אב"ע (אצילות בריאה יצירה עשייה) וכולם אצילות. ובבריאה יש אב"ע וכולם בריאה וכן ביצירה ועשייה משל אל צורף הכסף שיבדיל לכל מין ומין בעצמו לארבעה מינים כו', ע"ד (עוד דכתב?) עשייה שבאצילות ראש לאצילות שבבריאה ועשייה שבהבריאה ראש לאצילות שביצירה ועשייה שביצירה ראש לאצילות שבעשייה. ומארבע השתלשלות מדרגות אלו נשתלשלו כל העולמות מאצילות לבריאה ומבריאה להיכלות ומהיכלות לקליפות ומקליפות למציאות הרקיעים הם המזלות ומהם אל היסודות האלה העבים והמורכבים כו'... נמצא לפי זה כי ארבע יסודות אלה והם ארבע יסודות שברקיעים עם היותם ספיריים וארבע יסודות הרקיעים הם עצמם שביצירה וכן עד העליונים אמנם ההתעבות לפי ההשתלשלות כפי ריחוקם ממקורם ולפ"ז (ולפי זה) אין דבר בעולם שלא יושפע עליו מלמעלה שפע ואור אלא שהשפע הוא כפי רדתו מהאחורי' שהם פנים אליהם כו' עד שלא תמצא בעולם הזה דבר שלא יהיה בו רוחניות וחיות קצת כפי ערך גופו וחומרם לפי המדרגות שיתרחק מהמקור

The classical four elements of Greek natural science are rooted in God Himself, so that everything that emerges from them is a coarsened manifestation of God.<sup>215</sup>

The potentially radical, antinomian concept of the positive commandments of the Torah containing the same root as the transgressions of the Torah is explained in greater detail through a reference to Elijah de Vidas' *Reishit Hokhmah*. According to de Vidas, the rabbinic enumeration of the 613 commandments in fact reflects an infinitude of potential combinations, leading to the possibility of a commandment being 'fulfilled' without an actual physical act, as it is in essence a non-physical entity. The Zohar's assertion of the interconnectedness of the commandments means that the commandments exist within a framework understood only by the kabbalist, who can also determine what constitutes appropriate fulfilment:

This is found in the *Re'iah Mehemnah*,<sup>216</sup> these are his words: Anyone who fulfils one commandment as it is intended, it is as though he fulfilled all 248 positive commandments, for there is not one commandment that is not included from all 248. It transpires that within every commandment, in every limb, is included all of them, and what there is in one is in the other. For this reason, if one performs one commandment as is intended, makes a complete angel with all 248 of his spiritual limbs that are advocates for him, for every commandment is comprised of the 248.<sup>217</sup>

---

<sup>215</sup> Ibid, 162a.

וכן היה ענין בריאת העולמות הרוחניים והגשמיים דלכאורה הגשמיים אינם הרוחניים אבל באמת כולם אחוזים ומקודשים והם ענין אחד רק הולכים ומשתלשלים מענין לענין מאצילות לבריאה ומבריאה ליצירה ומיצירה לעשיה והם מתחלפים לאלפי אלפים ורבי רבבות מדרגות בלי מספר ובכל עת שמשתלשלים הם יותר מתעבים

<sup>216</sup> Zohar III:124a.

<sup>217</sup> *Shelah*, 67b-68a.

עוד יש בזה הענין סוד כבר נתבאר לעיל בהקדמת תולדות אדם כי שורש רמ"ח מ"ע ורוחניותם הוא סוד אדם העליון וברמ"ח מ"ע נכללים שס"ה גידים העשיים כוללים לא תעשיים והנה מצד שרשם שבאדם העליון שיעור קומה לא שייך ח"ו (חס ושלום) מספר ומנין רק דרך עילה ועלול כמבואר בארוכה בסוד מספר עשר באצילות שהם אחדות אחד במוחלט והמספר אינו אלא בדרך השתלשלות

An even more dramatic example of this concept is Horowitz's blurring of the lines between good and evil. Horowitz states that evil and good have the same source, and that evil is truly good as it was created to be transformed. Drawing first on Cordovero's and then Luria's writings, Horowitz develops a scheme which does not distinguish between good and evil in essence, as both originate from the same place in the mind of God.<sup>218</sup> The kabbalistic universe emanating from God made no firm distinction between the two.

The impact of the 'organic universe' on the practical aspects of observance is developed at length in the introduction to 'The Written Torah' which outlines Horowitz's philosophy of the commandments.<sup>219</sup> What is noteworthy is that his analysis both emphasises the importance of meticulous observance while simultaneously diminishes it by explaining how every action can theoretically be replaced by mystical intentions.<sup>220</sup> It is an important example of how the mystical

---

בעילה ועלול אבל הכל אחדות א וזה כלול מזה וזה כלול מזה וזה הענין שבכל מצוה כלולה כל המצוות וכן הוא ברעיא מהימנא (זהר ח"ג דף קכ"ד ע"א) וז"ל מאן דקיים פקודא חד כדקא יאות כאילו מקיים רמ"ח פקודין דעשה דלית פקודא דלאו איהו כלילא מכלהו רמ"ח נמצא שבכל מצוה ומצוה בכל אבר ואבר כלולים כולם ומה שיש בזה יש בזה ומה שבזה יש בזה ומפני כן העושה מצוה אחת כתיקונה עושה מלאך א שלם בכל רמ"ח אבריו הרוחניים שממליץ בעדו כי כל מצוה כלולה מרמ"ח

<sup>218</sup> Shelah 2b-3a; See also the entire analysis of evil and a synopsis of the opinions, 19a-22a, and further references in 67b, 86b, 106b-107a, 150b, 177a, 190a, 204a, 270b, 296a, 362b. See Chapter Thirteen.

הענין הטובות והרעות כולם באות ככוונה מהש"י ודלא כרלב"ג וסיעתו שחתפסו ואמרו כי הטובות נמשכות בעצם מהש"י והרעות במקרה מההכרח החומר לא כך רק הכל בכוונה מכוונת מאתו ית' כי הוא ית' עושה שלום ובורא רע ושכר מצוה בעצם מצד המצוה. ועונש עבירה בעצם מצד העבירה. אך הטובות מכוונות לעצמם והרעות לזולתם וכאשר נדקדק נמצא כי תכלית הרעות ותכלית הטובות שוה כי כל משברא הק"בה לא בראו אלא לכבודו ואלמלא הרעות לא היה ירא מהש"י

<sup>219</sup> Ibid, 264a-265b. See Text 6.

<sup>220</sup> For the potential heretical applications of this principle and its influences on the Sabbatean movement, see Epilogue, 316-317.

framework of Judaism can provide an inadvertent platform for digression from adherence to halakhah, although Horowitz would certainly object to this evaluation. I am dividing this lengthy passage into subsections and analysing the significance of each part:

You must know that the commandments are made up of one another, and every commandment from the 613 in terms of its spiritual components contains all the spirituality of the (entire) 613, for the commandments correspond to the sefirot.<sup>221</sup> Just as the sefirot include one another (as has been explained elsewhere), so too every commandment contains a general and a specific aspect, for in every commandment all the other commandments are contained. As soon as man was created,<sup>222</sup> God immediately gave him commandments, as it says 'And God stood over man'.<sup>223</sup> Our rabbis interpreted that all 613 commandments are included in the seven Noahide laws that God obligated all to fulfil.<sup>224</sup> These laws were obligatory and fulfilled by Adam, Methuselah, Hanokh, Noah, Shem, Ever, the forefathers, the tribes and the other righteous men of the world until the giving of the Torah when Israel were given the 613 commandments. For in order to become complete it was required of them to fulfil all 613, even though they (the seven Noahide laws) intrinsically contained all 613 it was necessary to release the general principles (which had been expressed in potentiality) into actuality.

---

<sup>221</sup> On the sefirot, see 'Kabbalah', 576-78, 641. The issue of God and the sefirot and whether there was any distinction between them was a controversial question among the kabbalists in the 14th Century. During this period, sefirot became regarded as more than emanations which manifested the attributes of the emanator but rather as the structural elements behind all beings, even seemingly of God Himself. In Chapter Four of *Pardes Rimmonim*, Cordovero argues that the sefirot are both identical with the essence of God but also separate from Him. Creation is the progressive manifestation of *Ein Sof* as articulated through the processes of emanation and creation in the sefirot. Cordovero tried to avoid the potential heretical implications of identifying God with the sefirot and Horowitz was emphatic on this point, see *Shelah* 33b; see Sack, *Shomer*, 95-101, 116.

<sup>222</sup> Zohar III:124a.

<sup>223</sup> Genesis 2:16.

<sup>224</sup> *bSan.* 56b.

The importance of fulfilling each individual commandment is undermined by the fact that it is a composite of all the other commandments, which contain spiritual 'generalities' and 'particularities'.<sup>225</sup> This means that, in theory, fewer commandments require observance if the appropriate spiritual conditions are met. It also explains why the generations before Mount Sinai did not need to fulfil all 613 commandments:

And if you ask, if this is so, then surely our forefathers and the great pious men of earlier generations did not release the generalities from potentiality to actuality?! Be aware that they surely released them through the power of their groundwork. I mean to say, that they cleaved with the true end of *devekut* with the creator (may he be blessed), and they rejoiced in doing the will of their creator in all that He commanded them, and were prepared for this with optimum joy and gladness of heart - this preparation was like the fulfilment of an action! I mean to say, that since in any case the commandments that they fulfilled included all 613 commandments and the only caveat was that there was no 'throne' below for these generalities of potential to rest upon (to actualise the potential), this throne below attests to the greatness of their preparation - which is like an action...and the groundwork of the earlier generations was so strong that it was as if they had fulfilled these commandments in practice - they included all 613, and by virtue of their preparation many generalities were released and they were a chariot to all 613.

Here, Horowitz takes an additional step in his analysis: Through cleaving to God in *devekut*, the physical fulfilment of a commandment can be replaced. As the commandments serve a specific purpose (illustrated by the fact that it is only post-

---

<sup>225</sup> On the Aristotelian concepts of actuality and potentiality, see Alan Code, 'Potentiality in Aristotle's Science and Metaphysics', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 76, 3-4 (1995), 405–18. On its application in Jewish texts, particularly in the writings of Maharal of Prague, see Sherwin, *Mystical Theology*, 131-35.

Sinai that they required the form of the 613), passionate joy and gladness of heart can replace the action.<sup>226</sup>

An example in the *Shelah* whereby thought and meditation can, at times, replace the 'action' behind the commandments is that of an individual who intends to live in the land of Israel but is prevented from doing so:

Even if what is 'foreseen' does not come to fruition, the reward is foreseen as though it was fulfilled in reality; similarly, commandments that are dependent on the land (of Israel) which your soul desires to fulfil and you are prevented from fulfilling them, your reward will be great – as though you have fulfilled them, since your intention was to fulfil them - this is service of the heart.<sup>227</sup>

This point concerning the obligation to dwell in the land of Israel being achieved through intention alone should not be understood as a mere metaphor for God not blaming the individual in this situation; rather, those commandments that the heart desires to fulfil can be considered to have been literally accomplished if the heart wills it sufficiently. This is explained at the end of *Sha'ar Otiyot*:

And one who did not merit to affix his dwelling place in the holy land, or if he was forcibly prevented from doing so, he has a way of repairing this (problem)! For example, through the building of a holy place, to make for himself a place of four ells of halakhah and private contemplation to meditate with his God.<sup>228</sup>

---

<sup>226</sup> Joy is an essential component of Horowitz's religious vision, which he considers as indispensable to the fulfilment of a commandment as the act itself, see Chapter Twelve, 281-289.

<sup>227</sup> *Shelah*, 54b.

אלא מאי אית לך למימר רב טוב הצפון שאף מה שהוא צפון שלא בא לידי מעשה השכר הוא צפון  
מכח שהמחשבה מצורף למעשה כן במצות התלויות בארץ שנפשך חשקה לקיים ואתה נאנס ולא  
תקיימנה שכרך הרבה כאילו קיימתם מאחר שמחשבתך היה לקיימם וזוהי עבודה שבלב ועל זה רמז  
(דברי הימים א כח, ט) ועבדהו בלב שלם ובנפש חפצה מאחר שלבך שלם ונפש חפצה היא עבודה  
שבלב

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid*, 106a.



This 'reparation' (where the failure to fulfil one action can be compensated for through thought) exemplifies the fluid nature of the commandments within the 'organic universe'. This principle is a kabbalistic expansion of the statement of R. Akiva that 'if a man fulfils one commandment, it is as though he has fulfilled them all'.<sup>229</sup> This idea is further elucidated in Horowitz's 'Introduction to the Written Torah'.<sup>230</sup>

The 'organic universe' conception of kabbalah helps the reader understand the true role of the 'threefold cord': Each element of the cord must not be regarded as mutually exclusive but as comprised of hidden spiritual potentialities which require actualisation. The basic performance of a commandment completes one part, but meditation on the kabbalistic secrets enables understanding of how each commandment is constructed so it can be observed to its maximal extent.<sup>231</sup> The musar standard of behaviour reflects the pietistic ethos of this kabbalistic configuration (as it is only the kabbalists who understand how interpersonal conduct should take place in a manner which pleases God).<sup>232</sup> All of these components are underscored by Horowitz's conception of kabbalah, which contains the essence of Judaism. The next chapter shows how central Jewish concepts are reconfigured in the *Shelah* to show how the 'revealed' is in fact a manifestation of the 'concealed',

---

ומי שלא זכה לקבוע דירתו באדמת קודש או הוא אנוס יש לו תקנה מדוגמת מקום קודש להיות לו מקום ארבע אמות של הלכה התבודדות להתבודד עם אלהיו

<sup>229</sup> *bSan.* 81a.

<sup>230</sup> See *Shelah* 265a, printed in Text 5.

<sup>231</sup> I develop this point in Chapter Nine.

<sup>232</sup> I develop this point in Part 3: Musar.

providing an enlarged platform for the kabbalists to determine correct practice according to their superior understanding.

## **Chapter Four: Kabbalistic Sources and Central Concepts**

### The Sources

In the *Shelah*, the kabbalah is summarised, abridged and reconfigured to produce a philosophy of Judaism. The sources Horowitz uses for his kabbalistic writings are extensive, but he identifies three authors as his main repositories of material: Isaac Luria, Moses Cordovero and Meir ibn Gabbai.<sup>233</sup> Cordovero was the first kabbalist to attempt a systematic exposition of kabbalistic thought and wrote the first commentary on the entire Zohar.<sup>234</sup> Luria constructed a system of kabbalah that

---

<sup>233</sup> I have calculated frequency of source material based on searching the Bar-Ilan responsa database using searches for authors, their works and variant spellings (including the definite article *Ha*). The database counts references in terms of location, so if one author appears multiple times in one section, it will be counted as one reference. The Zoharic writings appear most frequently as a source and citation in the *Shelah*, often as a citation within a citation, appearing 256 times, Cordovero appears 199 times, ibn Gabbai 106 times and Luria on 85 occasions. Of course, this does not account for how lengthy and extensive these citations are, with many of Luria's references relating to customs heard in his name or found in the books of his students. Yet it remains a useful tool in understanding how Horowitz read his sources, his degree of access to them, and the weighting of their importance.

<sup>234</sup> In addition to his two principal systematic books, *Pardes Rimmonim* (Salonika, 1560) and *Elimah Rabbati* (Lvov, 1881), other published works include *Or Ne'erav* (Venice, 1587); *Sefer Gerushin* (Venice, c. 1602); *Zivhei Shelamim* (Lublin, 1613), *Perush Seder Avodat Yom ha-Kippurim* (Venice, 1587); *Tomer Devorah* (Venice, 1589). In *Tomer Devorah*, Cordovero laid the foundations for kabbalistic musar. In its

came to subsume all other forms of kabbalah from the 17th Century onwards.<sup>235</sup> Ibn Gabbai authored the highly influential kabbalistic work, *Avodat ha-Kodesh*.<sup>236</sup>

In addition, there are long citations from kabbalistic works (or works with significant kabbalistic content) such as Menahem Recanati's (1223–1290) commentary on the Torah (Venice, 1523),<sup>237</sup> Elijah de Vidas' (1518–1587) *Reishit Hokhmah* (Venice,

---

short chapters he instructed every Jew in the right way to identify spiritually with each of the ten sefirot and purify their actions.

<sup>235</sup> For an English study about Luria's life see Fine, *Physician of the Soul*. On the origins of Luria's dominance among the kabbalists see Isaiah Tishby, 'The Conflict between Kabbalat ha-Ari and Ramak', *Zion*, 39, (1979), 8-85.

<sup>236</sup> Ibn Gabbai wrote three books dealing with the principal problems of kabbalah: *Tola'at Ya'akov* (written in 1507 and first printed in Constantinople, 1560) addressing prayer – this is cited frequently in the *Shelah*, particularly in the sections addressing custom and prayer; *Derekh Emunah* (written in 1539 and first printed in Constantinople, 1560), which is an explanation of the doctrine of the sefirot in the form of questions and answers, based on *Sha'ar ha-Sho'el* by Azriel of Gerona and incorporating views of the Zohar; and *Avodat ha-Kodesh*, which was the most comprehensive and organized summary of the doctrine of the kabbalah prior to Cordovero's *Pardes*.

<sup>237</sup> Recanati appears 54 times in the *Shelah*; until the end of the 16th Century, the basic text of the Ashkenazic study of kabbalah had been Recanati's commentary on the Torah (In addition to Venice, 1523 it was republished in Venice in 1545 and Lublin, 1595). On Recanati see Idel, *Kabbalah in Italy, 1280-1510 : A Survey*, 106-38.

1579),<sup>238</sup> Azariah of Fano's (1548-1620) Lurianic compilation *Kanfei Yonah* (Korets, 1735) and *Kitsur Reishit Hokhmah* (Venice, 1601).<sup>239</sup>

In the 16th Century, Cordovero's *Pardes Rimmonim* and ibn Gabbai's *Avodat ha-Kodesh* were published on three occasions but were not republished in the 17th Century.<sup>240</sup> Horowitz publicised and paraphrased much of ibn Gabbai and Cordovero's material.<sup>241</sup> By categorising their works into topics pertaining to Man and the service of God, Horowitz made their writings (which are frequently obscure treatises on kabbalistic theosophy) more accessible to the layman and scholar alike.

In *Toledot Adam*, Horowitz presents himself as an editor rather than an author of kabbalistic ideas, modest about his own role within the work:

I have only come to reveal a very small portion of that which I have received from the mouths of scribes and the scholars who follow the Zohar, especially from the great men of the later generations, our rabbi and teacher Meir Gabbai and our Godly rabbi and teacher Cordovero and the last great man, the man of God, the

---

<sup>238</sup> De Vidas appears 86 times within the *Shelah*; considering how frequently he is cited in the *Shelah* it is surprising that he is not given the same prominence as the other three in Horowitz's introduction, although as a student of Cordovero's it is possible that his writings are considered Cordoveran. First published in Venice in 1579, *Reishit Hokhmah* was one of the earliest and most popular musar works to emerge from Safed. It was published twice in the 16th Century, (Krakow, 1593) only once in the 17th, (Vansbek, 1688) and subsequently seventeen times in the 18th Century.

<sup>239</sup> M. Azaria of Fano is cited on 27 occasions through his various works.

<sup>240</sup> Gries, *1700-1900*, 71. Cordovero's *Pardes Rimmonim* was first printed in Salonika in 1560 and reprinted in Venice (1586) and Krakow (1592). The next reprint was not until 1712 in Frankfurt and then 1780 in Korets. Ibn Gabbai's *Avodat ha-Kodesh* was first printed in Mantua (1545), reprinted in Venice (1567) and Krakow (1577) but not reprinted until 1827 in Slavuta.

<sup>241</sup> Krassen, *Generations*, 30-32.

holy Ari. I will add some of my own ideas to clarify and expound the explanation of their ideas.<sup>242</sup>

However, as Elbaum has observed regarding the works of aggadah and musar published during the late 16th Century that modestly purported to be commentaries or glosses, the author is incapable of escaping his own craftsmanship;<sup>243</sup> Horowitz applies the teachings of each of these kabbalists in the *Shelah* according to the needs of his work's vision of musar. The common conception of Cordoveran kabbalah as 'orthodoxy' in kabbalistic scholarship and Lurianic kabbalah as 'revolutionary' has been rejected by recent scholars due to its simplistic appraisal of the relationship between the two: Cordovero's ideas evolved between the publication of the *Pardes* and *Elimah* and Luria studied his writings intensively – therefore, many of their ideas overlap.<sup>244</sup> However, this distinction is useful for understanding how these kabbalists appear within the *Shelah* because Horowitz makes a qualitative

---

<sup>242</sup> *Shelah*, 2a.

לא באתי רק לגלות קצת מהקצת ממה שקבלתי מפי סופרים ומפי ספרים הנמשכים אחרי הזוהר ובפרט מגדולי האחרונים ספרי האלקי מהר"ר מאיר גבאי ז"ל והאלקי מהר"ם קורדוורא ז"ל וגדולי האחרון איש אלקים קדוש האר"י

<sup>243</sup> Elbaum, *Openness*, 233-36.

<sup>244</sup> Yehuda Liebes, 'New Directions in the Study of Kabbalah', *Pe'amim*, 50, (1992), 162, 165; Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar. : An Anthology of Texts*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 1991), 103-04, 385; Bracha Sack, 'R. Moses Cordovero and R. Isaac Luria', in *Kabbalat Ha'Ari: International Conference for the Study of Jewish Mysticism 4*, ed. by R. Elior and Y. Liebes (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1992), 311-40; Weinstein, *Shattering*, 27. I was fortunate to hear the discussion of the evolution of Cordovero's doctrine of divine configurations presented by Yoed Kadary at the European Association of Jewish Studies conference in Krakow, July 2018, entitled 'Cordoveran and Lurianic Kabbalah', *Mysticism 1, The Origins of Jewish Traditions* which he elaborates in his PHD thesis, See Yo'ed Kadary, 'The Angelology of R. Moses Cordovero', (PHD thes., Be'er-Sheva, 2014).

distinction between Luria and the rest: Cordovero and ibn Gabbai provide much of the kabbalistic reference material, but the Lurianic writings are prioritised in determining the *Shelah's* pietistic direction.<sup>245</sup>

Despite its role in disseminating kabbalistic ideas, the *Shelah* should not be considered a digest or popularisation of original works like Issachar Baer's *Yesh Sakhar* (Prague, 1609). It is a demanding work requiring advanced textual skills and does not attempt to dilute the kabbalistic material to make it more accessible. To introduce this chapter, I present the relationship between Horowitz and his three principle sources with a brief index to the pages in the *Shelah* where central topics appear. I then explore these topics and how they are configured authoritatively according to the secrets of the kabbalah.

### Moses Cordovero

- Kabbalistic metaphysics of the universe.<sup>246</sup>
- The connection between God, Man and the Torah.<sup>247</sup>
- The holiness of the Hebrew letters.<sup>248</sup>

---

<sup>245</sup> See Wolfson, *Influence of Luria*, 444; Krispel, 'Concept of Man', 268-69; Krassen, *Generations*, 25-32.

<sup>246</sup> *Shelah*, 3a-6b. I use the term metaphysics to describe how kabbalists explored fundamental questions, including the nature of concepts such as being, existence and reality. I do not use it in the specific sense as a branch of philosophical inquiry. For more details of Cordovero's analysis of the topic, see Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 117-18, 149.

<sup>247</sup> *Shelah*, 2a-3a, 8a, 14a, 45b-46a; see Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 103, 106-107, 109, 116, 144.

<sup>248</sup> *Shelah*, 13b, 38a, 58b, 272a-b; the fact that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are mystical units of existence contextualises much of Horowitz's understanding of

- Theodicy and the problem of evil.<sup>249</sup>
- Theurgical prayer.<sup>250</sup>
- *Shelemut* through isomorphism.<sup>251</sup>

In the *Shelah*, Cordovero's writings are primarily used as reference works to provide extensive information on important kabbalistic topics. In line with Horowitz's desire that people understand the secrets of the kabbalah, the reader is sent to study Cordovero's works in greater detail (this is significant in terms of establishing the target audience of the work as rabbinic as very few would find Cordovero's writings accessible). Horowitz comments on Cordovero's positions in an editorial manner, largely agreeing with the summarised material but supplementing it with his own opinions.

For instance, in *Toledot Adam*:

And concerning these matters of the entrance of the demonic *kelippah*, God forbid, and the concept of becoming menstrually impure, I have abbreviated their explanation, but they are well explained in the *Pardes* in the sixth chapter of *Sha'ar ha-temurot*, and one who looks there must dwell on it properly...<sup>252</sup>

---

the value of Torah study, which I will discuss below. See Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 70, 177-80.

<sup>249</sup> *Shelah*, 2b, 19b-21a, 67b; See Joseph Dan, 'No Evil Descends from Heaven: Sixteenth Century Concepts of Evil', in *Jewish Thought in the 16th Century*, ed. by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), 92-94; Sack, *Shomer*, 136-37, 156.

<sup>250</sup> *Shelah* 33a, 104b, 130b; See Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 200; Garb, 'The Prague Circle', 350.

<sup>251</sup> *Shelah* 18a, 101b; See Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 205-29.

<sup>252</sup> *Shelah*, 19b.

ודברים אלו של הכנסת הקליפה ח"ו (חס ושלום) וענין פירסה נדה הנה קצרתי בבאורם אבל מבואר  
היטב בפרדס בפרק ששי משער התמורות (שער כ"ה) וצריך המעיין להשכיל היטב כי מי שלח ידו  
בדברים כאלה ונקה

Horowitz also adopts positions at variance with Cordovero's approach, and occasionally clarifies Cordovero's statements, or implies that Cordovero had not understood an issue in its full depth. As part of his introduction to God's interaction with the universe, Horowitz describes the *Pardes'* vivid sexual imagery that corresponds to the unions of the sefirot emerging from God. Cordovero appears to suggest that God Himself can be changed by Man's actions, and Horowitz qualifies these representations by explaining that Man can only impact the lower levels of emanation, and not the higher ones which are attached to God Himself (which Cordovero's words seem to imply):

I came to help you understand his (Cordovero's) words, for his words on creation are not literal, rather they refer to the source of creation that emerges from *malkhut*,<sup>253</sup> which are still in the domain of *Atsilut* (the first level of emanation not God Himself), and from there the lowest level of the sefirot descend ten levels. However, the root is in *Atsilut*. Therefore, it makes sense that they are affected by the *tikkun* of Man made in God's image.<sup>254</sup>

Similarly, after a long reference to the *Pardes* on the Hebrew language being the root of creation, Horowitz confronts the issue of sexual imagery in Cordovero's writings:

In this way we can connect this matter to all the other matters that are said about the representation of the sefirot. For instance, the metaphor of the father and mother - the intention is not, God forbid that there is a mother and father over there – for this is heresy, God forbid! But the intention is that just as the reality of giving birth arrives through the union of male and female, and

---

<sup>253</sup> See below, 101-102.

<sup>254</sup> *Shelah*, 9b.

והנה באתי להבינכם את דבריו כי אין כוונתו על בריאה במקומה. אלא על מקורות הבריאה המתנוצצים במלכות והם עדיין במציאות אצילות ומהם ישוב הצל אחורנית עשר מעלות אמנם המקורות הם באצילות. על כן ניחא שהם בתיקון אדם הנעשה בצלם אלקים.



through this union this child comes into being, so too is the matter with the sefirot - through the union of *hokhmah* and *binah*, and the flow of *hokhmah* into *binah*, this is the explanation of all emanation.<sup>255</sup>

As if to reassure his audience that this has no resemblance to human sexual behaviour, Horowitz disconnects Cordovero's imagery from any literal erotic conception. Kabbalists had long embraced the use of sexual imagery to describe the unions at various levels of the sefirot. This caused problems in terms of harmonising the apparently erotic content of the writings with the holiness and modesty that the kabbalists consistently demanded.<sup>256</sup> Horowitz combines this question with the classical problem in medieval literature of why the World to Come is not mentioned in the Torah, and why the rewards contained therein appear to be physical and temporal.<sup>257</sup>

Horowitz references Cordovero's explanations but considers some of them insufficient:

I have copied all his words so you would know his thought regarding the attributes and all the strange expressions and how this Godly man explains them. However, according to his words, the idea of higher eyes, ears and hands etc. are not explained literally, but they allude to a hidden matter; with the help of the One who gives man knowledge I will add something of my own, and I will make use of some of the introductions from the *Pardes* and will explain the matter literally.<sup>258</sup>

---

<sup>255</sup> Ibid, 11b.

ועד"ז (על דרך זה) נקיש לכל שאר הדברים אשר נאמר בכנוי הספירות כמו המשל אב ואם אין הכוונה ח"ו (חס ושלום) שיהיו שם אב ואם כי זו כפירה חלילה וחלילה אלא הכוונה כי כמו שמציאות ההולדה במין על ידי חיבור זכר ונקבה ועל ידי החיבור ההוא נתהווה הולד ההוא כן הדבר בספירות על ידי חיבור חכמה ובינה והשפעת החכמה בבינה היה סיבת כל האצילות

<sup>256</sup> Fine, *Safed Spirituality*, 102.

<sup>257</sup> See *Shelah* 10b-11b.

<sup>258</sup> *Shelah*, 11b. See also *Shelah* 29b where Horowitz differentiates between what he thinks and what is written in the *Pardes*, and 44b where he considers Cordovero's answer to a question to be insufficient.

## Meir ibn Gabbai

Horowitz makes frequent use of Many of ibn Gabbai's ideas relating to central kabbalistic concepts. In particular, he applies ibn Gabbai's teachings in the following areas:

- The correspondence of the Jewish body to the divine form and its distinction from the gentile form.<sup>259</sup>
- The holiness of the Torah and the evils of non-Jewish philosophy.<sup>260</sup>
- The causal, mechanical nature of reward and punishment.<sup>261</sup>
- Good and evil containing the same source.<sup>262</sup>
- The cosmic role of the 'tsaddik'.<sup>263</sup>
- *Avodah le-tsorekh gavohah*, service for the sake of 'upon high'.<sup>264</sup>

---

והעתקתי כל לשונו למען ישכילו ויבינו דעתו בענין התוארים ובכל הלשונות הזרות איך החכם הזה האלהי מראה פנים מסבירות אמנם לפי דבריו אין מבואר בעצם למעלה ענין עין אזן יד כו' רק הרמז אל ענין נסתר ובעזרת חונן לאדם דעת אוסיף נופך משלי ואשתמש באיזה הקדמות מהפרדס ויתבאר הענין בעצם

<sup>259</sup> *Shelah*, 9a-10a, 16a, 39a, 44a. See Sherwin, *Mystical Theology*, 72-76.

<sup>260</sup> *Shelah*, 20b; See Idel, 'Differing conceptions', 154.

<sup>261</sup> *Shelah*, 12b-15a.

<sup>262</sup> *Shelah* 17a, 19b, 22a, 264b.

<sup>263</sup> *Shelah*, 18a, 31a; See Piekarcz, *Bimej*, 17, 283-84, 355.

<sup>264</sup> *Shelah* 30b-34a.

- Rabbinic authority equated with prophecy.<sup>265</sup>

As in the case of Cordovero, Horowitz does not always fully accept ibn Gabbai's analyses, and repudiates some of his more daring conceptions concerning the immediate connection between Man and God.<sup>266</sup> He also disagrees with ibn Gabbai's conclusion that the best way to live is by avoiding sin, preferring Luria's conception that Sin should be transformed in the service of God.<sup>267</sup>

### Isaac Luria

Luria's influence in the *Shelah* can primarily be found in the following areas:

- The requirement to serve God through transforming the material world.<sup>268</sup>
- The requirement to serve God with joy, enthusiasm and self-arousal.<sup>269</sup>
- The need to liberate evil and transform it to bring the messiah, including Luria's theory of *tikkun*.<sup>270</sup>

---

<sup>265</sup> Ibid, 25a.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid, 33b see below, 122.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid, 22a.

<sup>268</sup> *Shelah*, 80a-b, 338a. See Chapter Eleven, 260.

<sup>269</sup> *Shelah*, 49a-b, 109b. See Chapter Twelve, 282.

<sup>270</sup> *Shelah*, 67a, 74a-b, 80a, 203a, 338a, 354a; see Chapter Thirteen, 293-303; see Shaul Magid, *From Metaphysics to Midrash : Myth, History, and the Interpretation of Scripture in Lurianic Kabbala*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 70; Wolfson, *Influence of Luria*, 444-46. The process of the reparation and transformation of the physical world became far more conceptually complex in Luria's formulation of *tikkun*. Instead of a direct thread linking Man and God, central to the metaphysics emergent from Cordovero's writings which Horowitz generally adopts within the *Shelah* (see below, 101), Lurianic kabbalah created a chasm between the ineffable God, or *Ein Sof*, and the sefirotic world of emanation. The three terms most commonly associated with Lurianic kabbalah are: *tsimtsum* (contraction), *shevirat ha-kelim* (shattering of the vessels) and *tikkun* (reparation),

- The role of Luria's authority, customs and *tikkunim* as a means of introducing kabbalistic ideas into the halakhah.<sup>271</sup>

Although in quantitative terms, Horowitz cites both ibn Gabbai and Cordovero's works with greater frequency than Luria's, they are less authoritative than Luria.<sup>272</sup>

Luria's ideas are accepted unconditionally, conferred with greater holiness than the other kabbalists, and Horowitz thirstily pursues and promotes Luria's customs and

---

see 'Kabbalah', 588-607; Sack, *Shomer*, 119, 136-37; Avivi, *Kabbalat ha-Ari* vol.1, 89. A simplified idea of *tikkun* in Lurianic writings is that in the beginning there was a primordial catastrophe where God withdrew into Himself, or contracted. The remnants of the broken shards of being then re-formed into new structures. Although most of these structures repaired themselves independently of Mankind, it became Man's role to restore the universe to its original design in the mind of the creator, see 'Kabbalah', 614, 41-48. Literally, 'reparation', *tikkun* relates to the role of Mankind in reversing the rupture caused by God's withdrawal into Himself, leaving a physical remnant in a state of evil and disrepair. While the exact details of this process are a source of controversy among Luria's students, the idea of Mankind being able to achieve a reparation on behalf of a broken universe and for individuals who had sinned is found throughout all the literature. Evil is presented as a fundamental mythical substance. In a universe which was now immensely complex and disorganised, the role of Man was to complete the *tikkun*, which would be synonymous with the final redemption. *Tikkun* was achieved through both specific contemplative activity and the performance of the commandments, which would complete the 'inner' and 'outer' levels of *tikkun*. This idea expressed messianic hope, reflecting the belief that through the individual's actions the supernal world could be repaired and transformed. The entire physical world contained sparks of holiness which required liberating before the messiah could arrive. The task of Man, therefore, was to redeem these sparks from the midst of the evil husks (*berur*).

<sup>271</sup> *Shelah*, 139a, 217a, 232b; see Chapter Eight, 201-212; see Weinstein, *Shattering*, 242; Hallamish, *Minhag*, 200. The *tikkunim*, the kabbalistic prescriptions for 'repairing' a person's soul, were the most popular form of kabbalistic literature distributed in the early 17th Century and one of the main sources of Luria's reputation and popularity. Although related, this is not to be confused with the doctrine of *tikkun*.

<sup>272</sup> This is not to disqualify the reverence that Horowitz held for them. Cordovero is referred to on eighteen occasions by the epithet 'the Godly', an epithet reserved exclusively for Cordovero and Luria (referred to as such 21 times).

*tikkunim*. Horowitz's letters from Jerusalem reveal how excited he was to encounter the writings of the 'holy Ari', and Sheftel declares that the main purpose of his father's sudden departure to the land of Israel was to immerse himself in Luria's writings:

However, his desire was equally for the 'Torah of God', which is the secret portion of the Torah...and his soul desired it...and he only transmitted it to the hidden elite... he merited to see the hidden storehouses of the words of the kabbalists and the kabbalah of the man of God, (the complete wise man, the great rabbi our teacher) R. Isaac Luria, where he is buried, which was not shown to a single person until my father came to his collection and his house - there my father immersed himself in his home and learnt it (his writings) from beginning to end to understand its true meaning.<sup>273</sup>

In his letter from Jerusalem printed at the back of Newman's biography, Horowitz's first mention of the Safed community is accompanied by the noticeably enthusiastic phrase 'where they learn the Kabbalah of the Ari'.<sup>274</sup>

Although Horowitz had less extensive access to Lurianic writings during the composition of the *Shelah* than to the other kabbalistic writings, reliant as he was on scattered manuscripts and notebooks, Luria's name appears frequently.<sup>275</sup> These citations are usually less lengthy than those of Cordovero and ibn Gabbai, and are often references to traditions, customs or *tikkunim* found in works like *Kanfei Yonah*.

---

<sup>273</sup> *Vavei Amudim*. See Text 6.

<sup>274</sup> 'Letter from Jerusalem' printed in Newman, *Life and Teachings*, 202-07. The letter was first published in *Shomer Zion Ha-Ne'man* in 1857 and referenced in Franz Kobler, *Letters of Jews through the Ages, from Biblical Times to the Middle of the Eighteenth Century. Vol 2*, (London: East and West Library, 1953), 480-86. See Meir Benayahu, *Sefer Toldot ha-Ari*, (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1967), 45-66.

<sup>275</sup> There are 85 separate references to Luria within the *Shelah*.

Horowitz considered Luria's kabbalah to contain unique secrets which should not be communicated publicly. Luria's teachings are frequently alluded to and hinted at rather than publicly expounded in the *Shelah*.<sup>276</sup>

Luria's reputation is established through references to the elite nature of his kabbalah, for example in 'Tractate Pesahim':

All this I have understood from the booklet of the students of the *Arizal*,<sup>277</sup> and his words are deeper than the sea. I do not want to expound upon them according to his manner, for it is extremely deep! His way is not the way of the masses but the way of the unique individual, the elite kabbalists,<sup>278</sup> and this suffices as an explanation.<sup>279</sup>

Luria's writings which are referenced must be abridged, Horowitz claims, due to the inadequacy of the average person's capacity for understanding:

The *Arizal* delved very deeply into the secrets of Purim, the megillah and the accompanying feast. But since not every mind contains the intellect required to understand these words in their concealed form, I will only write down a very small amount of what his students wrote about the secrets of the feast.<sup>280</sup>

---

<sup>276</sup> For a comparison with the Zohar's secretive nature as a source of its popularity, see Huss, *Kezohar*, 6.

<sup>277</sup> Luria is referred to frequently as the *Ari* (The 'Lion') accompanied with the acronym *Z'L* (*zikhrono le berakhah*, may his memory be a blessing). I have rendered this phrasing as *Arizal*, an acronym frequently used to describe Luria.

<sup>278</sup> *Yehidei Segulah*, literally the 'individuals of merit', is another way of referring to the elite kabbalists.

<sup>279</sup> *Shelah*, 178b.

כל זה הבנתי מקונטרס דתלמידי האר"י ז"ל והדברים עמוקים מני ים ואיני רוצה להרחיבם לפי דרכי כי עמוק עמוק הוא ודרכו אינו דרך הרבים רק דרך היחיד רצה לומר ליחיד סגולה ודי בזה

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid*, 263b.

והאלהי האר"י ז"ל העמיק במאד בסודות פורים ומגילה והסעודה אך מאחר שלא כל מוחא ומוחא סביל דא כי אם להבאים בסודו על כן לא אעתיק מדבריו רק מעט מזעיר ממה שכתבו תלמידי בסוד הסעודה

The booklets of Luria's students are cherished above all others, pursued with the desperation of a sick patient for a doctor. Horowitz rejoices that his generation merited to have access to them, and provides an important testament to how Luria's writings were transmitted to the general public:

Now in our generation, we have merited the *tikkunim* of repentance from the mouth of the Godly *Arizal*, printed at the end of the *Kitsur Reishit Hokhmah*. Furthermore, many booklets have emerged from his students, where can be found the *tikkunim* of repentance. One who wants to repent must pursue these books like a sick person pursues an expert doctor!<sup>281</sup>

#### Central concepts: Creation

The metaphysical structure of the *Shelah* is almost entirely based upon Cordovero's writings, articulating his understanding of creation in the first six pages of the work. There, Horowitz explains Cordovero's doctrine of the sefirot. Cordovero distinguishes between *Ein Sof* - the deity of absolute simplicity who is beyond all comprehension but interacts with mankind, and the impersonal First Cause who is utterly inaccessible to man. He then lists the worlds that emanate from God, culminating in this world of creation: From *Ein Sof* emanates the world of *Atsilut* (lit. emanation), which is practically synonymous with *Ein Sof*. From *Atsilut* emanates *Beriah* (Creation), *Yetsirah* (formation) and *Asiyah* (Action – this world).<sup>282</sup>

---

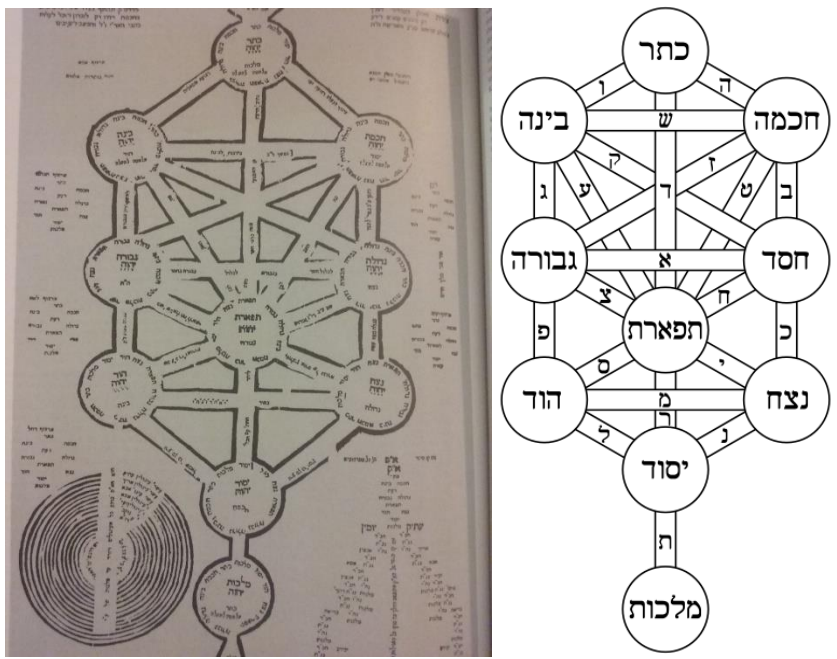
<sup>281</sup> Ibid, 232b.

ועתה בדורנו זה זכינו לתקוני תשובה מפי האלהי האר"י ז"ל והם נדפסו סוף ראשית החכמה הקצר (ע"י הרמ"ע מפאנו) ועוד נתפשטו הרבה קונטרסים מתלמידיו נמצאו בהם גם כן תקוני תשובה ומי שרוצה להיות בעל תשובה צריך להדר אחר הספרים האלה כמו שמהדר החולה אחר הרופא המומחה

<sup>282</sup> *Shelah*, 5a, 14a. See 'Kabbalah', 582-88.

This diagram illustrates the basic configuration and interrelation of the Sefirot:

Image of Sefirotic Configuration



283

The sefirot emerged from *Ein Sof* in downward but not necessarily linear movements, with internal movements and mystical unions linking each stage of

<sup>283</sup> From *Pa'amon ve-Rimmon* (Amsterdam, 1708) printed in 'Kabbalah', 491.



emanation. It is necessary to explain the first three as they feature in every model of activity associated with sefirot:

- *Keter* (crown) is the highest point of royalty and associated with God's will. It does not interact with the physical world, and is considered to be above the process of emanation which resulted in creation.
- The second sefirah is *hokhmah* (wisdom), which parallels the upper and most exalted part of the body, and is the sefirah present at the beginning of the process of emanation but is very limited in its activity, compared by the kabbalists to a droplet of semen.
- The third is *binah* (knowledge), which emerges from *hokhmah* as the droplet expands to form a circle. *Binah* is compared to the womb, and is the receptacle for the seminal drop found in *hokhmah*. *Hokhmah and binah* are the masculine and feminine elements of the sefirot and described vividly as lovers; *binah* then gives birth to the seven sefirot beneath them. *Hokhmah and binah* are also compared to the structure and materials of a house which are only fully developed later.<sup>284</sup>

In describing emanation, Horowitz raises the central question of medieval kabbalah of how physical existence emerged from an infinite God without compromising His absolute unity.<sup>285</sup> Any answer to this question must tread the fine line between the kabbalistic insistence upon the connection between Man and God, while ensuring

---

<sup>284</sup> *Shelah*, 3a- 4a. For a more detailed description of the process, see Hallamish, *Introduction*, 125.

<sup>285</sup> Scholem discusses the questions which concerned the medieval kabbalists in the opening chapter of *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, see Scholem, *Major Trends*, 1-39.

that God is absolutely free to choose what happens to His creations. The analogy presented from Cordovero's writings compares God's relationship with creation to a flame attached to a coal:

The secret of the world of emanation is that it is like a flame attached to a coal and there is nothing outside of it - for the flame is in the coal,<sup>286</sup> and by hovering upon the coal, the flame is revealed and attaches itself to it. So too the process of emanation, which are strands of flame from the coal, which were hidden in the Oneness and synonymous with the light of *Atsilut* - from the radiance of the heavens which cannot be comprehended - these radiances were revealed with the secret of 'And God said let there be light, and there was light'.<sup>287</sup>

The first strands of emanation were intimately attached to God Himself without being synonymous with Him. Cordovero's formulation of creation permeates the entire *Shelah*, providing a platform for Horowitz's analysis of the interconnected relationship between Man and God.

### Man, God and the Torah

Rabbinic literature contains several aphorisms indicating the importance of Mankind in creation, as long as they are loyal to God and His commandments.<sup>288</sup> In the medieval period, the Jewish philosophers adopted a more negative evaluation of

---

<sup>286</sup> Zohar III: 246b.

<sup>287</sup> *Shelah*, 6a; Genesis 1:3.

סוד עולם האצילות היא כשלהבת הקשורה בגחלת אינו דבר חוץ ממנו, כי השלהבת בגחלת וברחיפה בגחלת נתגלה השלהבת ואדוק ומקושר בו. כן האצילות שהן חוטי שלהבת מהגחלת והיו גנוזים באחדות ההשואה ואור האצילות שהוא מאורות העליונים בלתי מושגים אלו המאורות נתגלו בסוד ויאמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי אור

<sup>288</sup> *mAvot* 3:14; *Avot de-R.Natan*, 1:31; *bPes.* 104a.

Man, arguing that human beings are of a lower stature than angels, and that it was only through the purifying and development of the intellect that they could become God-like.<sup>289</sup> This position was criticised in the 16th Century by Maharal in particular, who was emphatic about the anthropocentrism inherent within the Jewish tradition.<sup>290</sup> From the 16th Century onwards, there emerged an increasing trend among rabbinic scholars to emphasise humanistic concepts concerning the value of Man - associated with Renaissance trends emerging from Italy and the centrality of Man presented in kabbalistic literature.<sup>291</sup>

The *Shelah* presents the kabbalistic conception of Man as a great and God-like being.<sup>292</sup> Horowitz dismisses the philosophical evaluation of Man, asserting that 'Man' refers specifically to the people of Israel, who are uniquely attached to God through their souls.<sup>293</sup> The Jew alone has the status of a divine being, created through God's act of free will so that the Jewish people could cleave to Him. God left room for the Jew to use his free will to perfect the corrupted universe, with his

---

<sup>289</sup> David Hartman, *Maimonides : Torah and Philosophic Quest*, (Philadelphia: JPS, 2009), 42-66; Joel Kraemer, *Perspectives on Maimonides : Philosophical and Historical Studies*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 1996), 158.

<sup>290</sup> Schatz, 'The Maharal's Conception of Law as an Antithesis to Natural Law', 147-57.

<sup>291</sup> For a background on the influence of humanistic thought among European rabbis of this period, see Pavel Sládek, 'Maharal's Anthropology: Towards Defining the Limits of His Humanism', *Judaica Bohemiae* 44, 2 (2009), 5-40; Abraham Melamed, 'Natural Law in Medieval and Renaissance Jewish Political Thought', *Da'at* 17, 49-66; Tamar Ross, 'Maharal on Miracles', *Da'at*, 17, (2006), 95.

<sup>292</sup> See Krispel, 'Concept of Man', 50-66.

<sup>293</sup> See *Shelah* 45b-46a for a rebuttal of ibn Ezra, discussed in Chapter Five, 143. On 'man' and 'Jew' being synonymous, see *Shelah* 9a, 37b, 277a, and the discussion in Chapter Five, 151-52.

actions unifying the sefirot *tif'eret* and *malkhut* through the lower sefirah *yesod*.<sup>294</sup>

The relationship between God and the Jew is symbiotic: the Jew was created for the glory of God, to reveal his creator and know Him through the Torah and the fulfilment of the commandments. God in turn required Man to reveal His glory within this world.<sup>295</sup>

Krispel differentiates between the greatness of Man as a kabbalistic concept and the ambivalence of Horowitz's conception of the human body, which contains the potential for redemption, but possesses an evil material core.<sup>296</sup> However, by dividing her analysis into separate examinations of 'Man', the 'body', and the 'sin of Man',<sup>297</sup> she creates the same body/soul dichotomy which she claims the kabbalists are departing from in their writings by differentiating between Man as an abstract concept and Man as a physical creature. In fact, Horowitz's entire formulation of the worth of Man is ambivalent – he is only holy to the extent that he cleaves to God and redeems his body through an application of the 'threefold cord', and there is no distinction between the different areas of his existence. In the *Shelah*, the theoretical ideal of Man, the material human body and the state of Man after the sin of Adam, are analysed as one concept, requiring the 'threefold cord' to achieve perfection.

---

<sup>294</sup> On geocentrism in medieval Jewish philosophy, see Dov Schwartz, *Emunah u-Tevunah* (Tel Aviv: Misrad ha Bitahon, 2001), 60-61, 98-99.

<sup>295</sup> See Krispel, 'Concept of Man', 48.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid, 62-63, 76, 88-89; see also Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, vol. 2, 86.

<sup>297</sup> Krispel, 'Concept of Man', 55-60, 61-67.

Based on the Zohar, ibn Gabbai and Cordovero, Horowitz presents Man as a holy creature directly attached to God and the Torah:

This is the language of the Zohar on the portion *Aharei Mot*.<sup>298</sup> We have been taught that there are three levels that are connected together: God, the Torah and Israel – and each one has a level that is concealed and revealed. God is in every level upon level concealed and revealed; the Torah is also concealed and revealed, and Israel are also multi-layered: The first level, as it is written: 'Tell his words to Jacob, his laws and statutes to Israel' – there are two levels, Jacob and Israel, one revealed and one concealed.<sup>299</sup>

Every individual is appointed specifically for his role on earth, rooted in the celestial spheres:

For every being created down below has a root above, for were this not the case how could the portions of this world be conjoined unless they have a foundational root above, and if creations did not have a root above, how could the flow and divine providence arrive from the master of all? This was a wondrous wisdom, for He understood the root and essence of each thing, and gave it that name which is its name in essence.<sup>300</sup>

---

<sup>298</sup> Zohar III:73a.

<sup>299</sup> *Shelah*, 3a.

וז"ל הזהר פרשת אחרי מות (ח"ג דף ע"ג ע"א) תנין תלת דרגין אינון אתקשרין דא בדא קב"ה אורייתא וישראל וכל חד דרגא ודרגא סתים וגליא. קב"ה דרגא על דרגא סתים וגליא אורייתא הנ"ל (הכי נמי) סתים וגליא ישראל הנ"ל (הכי נמי) דרגא על דרגא הה"ד (הדא הוא דכתיב) (תהלים קמז, יט) מגיד דברו ליעקב חקיו ומשפטיו לישראל. תרין דרגין אינון יעקב וישראל חד גליא וחד סתים כו' המאמר ארוך והעתקתי לפי המצטרך לענינינו

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid*, 14a.

כל נברא מטה יש לו שורש למעלה שאל"כ (שאם לא כן) איך מתקשרים חלקי העולם הזה אם אין ליסודות שורש למעלה ואם אין לנבראים שורש למעלה איך מתפשט ההשפעה וההשגחה מאדון הכל בהם וזאת היתה חכמה נפלאה כי השיג מקור ושורש כל דבר וכנהו בשם ההוא והוא שמו ודאי

Following Cordovero,<sup>301</sup> Horowitz explains the mechanism behind this connection: Man is comprised of 600,000 primordial souls originating at Mount Sinai. Each of these souls is attached to a letter of the Torah, whose letters number 600,000. Each letter of the Torah is a physical manifestation of God's sefirot, attached to God Himself.<sup>302</sup> Man is thus capable of ascending to great heights and cleaving to God and is the central agent within God's universe. But his greatness is qualified by his capability to wreak destruction:

To complete my intention for this introduction that I have named *Toledot Adam*, I must reveal the concept of the man of free will, who contains both the upper and lower beings – when he ascends, he ascends to the highest height and when he descends, he descends to the lowest depths, and example of which is written in Tractate Megillah, 'This nation is compared to stars and to dust'.<sup>303</sup>

### The Fall and Redemption of Man

The qualification of Man's greatness is illustrated by the concept of the 'fall of Man', one of the most challenging kabbalistic concepts from the perspective of rabbinic

---

<sup>301</sup> Cordovero, *Pardes*, 164a-b in Kauffman, *Be-Khol Derakhekha*, 211, fn. 110, 111.

<sup>302</sup> *Shelah*, 16a; see 8b, 18a, 44a, 171a, 356b; Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 116.

הרי מבואר כמו שהתורה בשרשה כולה שמותיו ית' בסוד לשון הקודש שפירשתי למעלה ונשתלשלה זה לעומת זה ונתגשמה כן מעשי המצות אשר יעשה אתם האדם וחי בהם (ויקרא יח, ה) חיי הנשמות ס' רבוא נשמות ישראל מ' ס' רבוא אותיות התורה. כי משפט אחד להתורה ולאדם המקיימה. כי התורה נתגשמה ובעילוי מעלות יותר ויותר היו התיבות מאירות כן האדם התיבות מאירות כן האדם אם לא רק שכלי מלאה הארץ דעה (ישעיה יא, ט) אף הארציות שבו

<sup>303</sup> *Shelah*, 19a; *bMeg.* 16a; see *Shelah* 18a for freedom of choice originating in Adam's sin.

ולהשלים כוונתי בזו ההקדמה שקראתיה תולדות אדם צריך אני להודיע ענין האדם הבחירי הכולל עליונים ותחתונים כשהוא עולה עד למעלה וכשהוא יורד עד למטה מטה מטה דוגמא למ"ש (מה שאמרו) במסכת מגילה (טז א) אומה זו נמשלו לכוכבים ומשולים לעפר כשהן עולין עולין כו

Judaism, in that it resembles the classical Christian narrative of lowly Man in need of a messiah. Adam's sin is rarely dwelt upon in the Bible, and while it is associated with reward and punishment, it is never applied as a central motif in the way Christians have applied it – the group most commonly associated with this concept.<sup>304</sup>

In kabbalistic writings, the catastrophe of Adam's sin was that he relinquished the opportunity to exist as pure spirit and became polluted by the poison of the serpent, causing the physical world to emerge.<sup>305</sup> As a result, he was condemned to wear 'cloaks of skin' rather than 'cloaks of light'. The significance of this cosmic disaster is mentioned in Cordovero's writings, but finds its central positioning in Luria's cosmology.<sup>306</sup> The concept of *tikkun* emerged from the context of this primordial catastrophe.<sup>307</sup>

Horowitz describes the sin of Adam in a lengthy passage:

Adam was created from the temple above and from the temple down below in a manner that would (enable him to be) entirely good. He would have lived eternally and his world would have been a world which was entirely good as I have explained. The additional things (in the garden) were the guardians of the fruit, lowly and inert, and therefore he was commanded not to awaken their powers - and so, just as his soul was of the highest level as I have

---

<sup>304</sup> See Ephraim Urbach, *The Sages : Their Concepts and Beliefs*, (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Magnes Press, 1975), 420-22.

<sup>305</sup> Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 91-102.

<sup>306</sup> Magid, *Metaphysics to Midrash*, 70-71; Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 69.

<sup>307</sup> See above, 97; On *tikkun* in Cordovero's writings, especially regarding how every soul of the original 600,000 requires a *tikkun* which can be accomplished by the select few who understand the requirements of each root, see Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 103-10; Mordechai Pachter, 'Homiletical and Ethical Writing in Safed in the Sixteenth Century', (PHD diss. Hebrew University, 1976), 103.

explained, so too the container of the soul - the garment of the body, was light - which is 'Cloaks of light'.<sup>308</sup>...But Adam 'Does not abide in honour',<sup>309</sup> from the aspect of the snake, 'A whisperer separates familiar friends' ... The punishment of death was not conventional but natural, for the 'reward of sin is sin' which is the sin in itself,<sup>310</sup> for he has cut himself off from the source of life. Afterwards this generated secondary effects, and these generated other effects, all emerging from a putrid drop, for the drop was made putrid from the aspect of the pollution of the snake. Had there not been pollution, the drop would have been holy, like a clay pit which does not lose a drop...<sup>311</sup> It was only through the power of the snake and *Sama'el* (Satan) that Adam and Eve were deceived and they released evil from potentiality to actuality; while Adam was supposed to have been true, meaning to say, eternal, now he is trapped by mortality.<sup>312</sup>

The sin of Adam was the archetypal event signifying the nature of punishment which emerged as a direct consequence of his actions, leaving Man with a permanent blemish.<sup>313</sup> Mortality and the remnant of a spiritual origin in the form of a soul was all that remained after Adam's calamitous decision to eat from the tree of life. From this disaster, Man was left as a dilution of an ethereal substance, whose redemption

---

<sup>308</sup> Gen. Rabba 20:12.

<sup>309</sup> Psalms 49:13.

<sup>310</sup> *mAvot* 4:2.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>312</sup> *Shelah*, 21a.

והאדם נברא ממקדש שלמטה וממקדש של מעלה באופן שיהיה כולו טוב ואז היה חי נצחי ועולמו היה עולם שכולו טוב בלי הפסק כדפירשתי ואלו המותרות היו שומרי הפרי נכנעים ובטלים ועל כן היה מצווה שלא לעורר כוחותם ואז כמו שנשמתו גבוה על גבוה כדפירשתי כן תיק הנשמה שהוא לבוש הגוף היה אור וזהו כתנות אור... אבל אדם ביקר בל ילין (תהלים מט, יג) מצד הנחש נרגן מפריד אלוף (משלי טז, כח) ... ועונש המיתה לא היה הסכמי רק בטבע כי שכר עברה עברה (אבות פ"ד מ"ב) היא העברה בעצמה כי פסק עצמו ממקור החיים. אח"כ הוליד תולדות והתולדות תולדות והכל מטפה רוחה כי נעשית הטפה סרוחה מצד זוהמת הנחש. ואילו לא היתה הזוהמא היתה הטפה קדושה כבור סיד שאינו מאבד טפה ... רק מכח הנחש וכח הסמאל נתפתו אדם וחיה והוציאו הרע מכח אל הפועל ומה שהיה האדם ראוי להיות אמת כלומר נצחיי עתה כרוך בו ההעדר

<sup>313</sup> See *Shelah* 52b, 375b, 379a; see Chapter Nine, 212-215.



could only be achieved through the purification of his soul, which contained the refined, loftier aspect of his being.<sup>314</sup> This narrative serves as a limitation to the descriptions of Man in the first section of *Toledot Adam*. Just as the kabbalah explored Man's pristine origins, it also analysed the source of his corruption.

### Self-Actualisation

Nevertheless, Adam's sin did not condemn mankind to endure permanent suffering. Horowitz explores Adam's redemption in a number of ways: Firstly, he refers to Cordovero's messianic vision of a spiritual future where all physicality is eliminated, and the condition of Man is elevated. Yet this does not satisfy Horowitz, and he moderates this negative appraisal of the human body that implies a dualistic conception of a pure soul and a defiled body.<sup>315</sup> Interpreting the Zohar, Horowitz suggests that the body too can be transformed into a vehicle for spirituality:

However it emerges from this, that the garment of the soul - which Adam possessed before he sinned - was a body clean and pure, disposed towards spirituality, which is what it will be in the future - about which it is said: 'For the land is filled with knowledge',<sup>316</sup> which means to say even his earthiness (which is the body) is entirely comprised of intellect and knowledge, just like Adam possessed before he sinned...<sup>317</sup>

---

<sup>314</sup> See *Shelah* 149a, comparing the sin of Adam to the leavening of bread over Passover, polluting its matter; for Horowitz describing Man's physicality as a state of corruption, see 208b; describing Adam's death as a blessing due to the eradication of his physical form, 221a; describing material existence as a curse, 343a.

<sup>315</sup> See Koch, *Human Self-Perfection*, 87.

<sup>316</sup> Isaiah 11:9.

<sup>317</sup> *Shelah*, 19a; Genesis 3:6.

אמנם מבואר מזה שלבוש של הנשמה שהיה לאדם קודם שחטא היה גוף קדוש זך ונקי נוטה לרוחניות וכן יהיה לעתיד שעליו נאמר (ישעיה יא, ט) כי מלאה הארץ דעה רצה לומר אף הארציות דהיינו הגוף הוא הכל שכל ודעה כמו שהיה לאדם קודם שחטא

The redemptive aspect of the human condition is emphasised throughout *Toledot Adam*, to the extent that the act of committing a sin can become a conduit for greater spiritual elevation:

The idea of 'choosing Israel' (in the present tense) is that he chooses more than he chose (past tense), which I mean to say, that had Adam remained in his cloaks of light as he was given in the beginning of creation, he would not have generated such illumination with such a great light as he illuminated when he nullified the cloaks of skin and returned them to light.<sup>318</sup>

Through the power of Man's choice, Horowitz argues, the broken universe can be reconfigured and elevated.<sup>319</sup> Man can choose to cleave to the highest heavens to positively impact the fate of the universe.<sup>320</sup> Before the sin, the central component of Adam's behaviour was obedience. After however, the focus is placed upon Man's ability to choose to do good or evil. Through improving his behaviour and purifying

---

<sup>318</sup> Ibid, 25a.

ענין בוחר ישראל הוא בוחר יותר ממה שבחר רצוני לומר אילו היה האדם נשאר בכתנות אור כמו שנבחר בתחילת הבריאה לא היה מאיר באור גדול כל כך כמו שיאיר בהתבטל כתנות עור ויוחזר לאור אז עין לא ראתה אלהים זולתך (ישעיה סד, ג) כמו שהארכתי בזה הענין למעלה. כי יתרון האור מהחשך הוא מכח התרבות החשך והגלגולים וההזדככות יתרבה לעתיד האור בהיר נמצא בוחר תמיד בישראל

<sup>319</sup> Ibid, 27a; see also 351a.

והבחירה ביד האדם לנטות לאיזה צד שירצה הבא לטהר מסייעין לו אם בא ליטמא פותחין לו (שבת קד א) והשכר והעונש הכל הוא בעצם ובטבע המעשה אשר עושה לא הסכמ"י כדרך מלך ב"ו (בשר ודם) הנותן שכר לעושי רצונו ומעניש לעוברי רצונו כפי מה שיסכים אבל היה יכול להעניש ולהשכיר בענין אחר. אמנם באזהרות וציווי השם הכל בעצם כי שכר מצוה היא המצוה עצמה אשר הוא ושם הוא דבקותו. ושכר עבירה היא העבירה בעצמה שמביא את עצמו לידי שורש העבירה שהוא הקליפה ב"מ (בר מינן) ושם חלקו וכבר הארכתי לעיל בענין הזה

<sup>320</sup> Ibid, 35a.

יהי מה מכל מה שנזכר עד כאן יהיה איך שיהיה על כל פנים נודע באמת כי האדם בבחירת מעשיו נוגע למעלה למעלה בגבהי מרומים ויש בעבודה צורך גבוה ושזהו תכלית העובד לעשות הכל לשמו יתברך נחת רוח ליוצרו לא לצורך עצמו לקבל שכר אלא למען שמו באהבה וסוף הכבוד לבוא כי בהתרבות השפע למעלה מכח התעוררות העובד אז יורד למטה ושלום בכל

his thoughts, the pollution created by Adam's sin will be destroyed, ultimately heralding the messianic age.<sup>321</sup>

This dual aspect of human greatness and fallibility finds eloquent expression in a comparison with angelic beings at the beginning of *Asarah Ma'amarot*: After Adam's sin, Man's divine roots were absorbed within the vessel of the body, and though body and soul are intertwined, the 'sublime body emerges in each generation to anyone who wishes to stir it'.<sup>322</sup> Man is superior to the angels not due to his substance, which is coarser than that of the angels, but due to his unique potential to cleave to God. The soul of an angel is mere light, and unchangeable. For man, a being with choice, however, there is no limit to his potential spiritual greatness, and his worth is defined by his ability to improve.<sup>323</sup>

---

<sup>321</sup> The ability to transform physical being and sin is the basis of Horowitz's ideas of self transformation discussed in Chapter Thirteen.

<sup>322</sup> *Shelah*, 44b.

אבל לא נתבטל כתנות אור רק נבלע בנרתיק. וזה אור הגוף הזך והדק הוא לישראל דוקא ונמשך להם מאדם הראשון על כן אתם קרוין אדם (יבמות סא א). ובעת מתן תורה שפסקה זוהמת הנחש היו הנשמות מלובשים כמו בכתנות אור ר"ל שהיו עומדים בלבוש זך ודק כעצם השמים לטוהר שהוא הכח של כתנות אור נמצא היו בגוף ונפש

...

וזו הגוף הזך והדק מתפשט בכל דור ודור, כל מי שרוצה לעורר אותו

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid*, 45b; see 4b on the difference between physical and spiritual beings reflected by the ability of physical beings to change and improve.

אמנם נראה לי יתיישב הענין בבירור על פי מה שכתב הפרדס (שער כ"ד שער היכלות פ"י) שהמלאכים זכים וברים בסוד קבוץ חלקיהם וקרבתם אל יסודות העליונים ובבחינה זו האדם רחוק מהם אבל בפנימיות דהיינו מצד הנשמה האדם למעלה מהן

It is therefore accurate to conclude that to Horowitz the bodies of Israel are not intrinsically holy, but do contain intrinsic *potential* holiness. The Jews are required to arouse the spiritual forces within themselves to actualise their holiness, which contextualises the emphasis of the 'threefold cord': To restore and transcend his Godly form before Adam's sin, Man must realign himself through the kabbalistic understanding of his duties on earth. If he does not, he is doomed to remain 'dust of the earth'.

### Providence and Divine Justice

In the *Shelah*, Man's ability to transform himself determines his merit in the eyes of God, and freedom of choice is at the centre of this transformation. God's response to Man's behaviour is instantaneous - as the two are intimately attached. Horowitz presents a concept of providence which diverges considerably from many classical conceptions of divine justice found within rabbinic literature which emphasised the ineffability of the ways of God.<sup>324</sup>

The belief in reward and punishment is listed as the eleventh principle of faith by Maimonides in his introduction to the Mishnah. In his *Guide*, however, Maimonides posited a more radical view which suggested that he agreed with Aristotle's concept of general but not particular providence (where God watches over a species but not the individuals within the species). Rejecting the belief in a providence over every physical occurrence on earth, Maimonides suggested that providence is dependent

---

<sup>324</sup> E.g. *mEdu.* 2:9; *yBik.* 2:1; *bM.K.* 28a; *bSan* 90b.

on the individual's intellectual ability to apprehend God.<sup>325</sup> This position was denounced fiercely by Maimonides' opponents in the Maimonidean controversies of the 13th Century.<sup>326</sup> In the Early Modern period, three attitudes towards providence were commonly held: The Calvinist approach, which emphasised predestination and no freedom of choice; an approach which saw human agency as critical to the attainment of divine grace; and a third approach which emphasised that ordinarily the world was governed by chance and accident.<sup>327</sup>

The nature of the kabbalistic formulation of the universe meant that God was perceived as immanent in creation. The Zohar's understanding of God, Man and the Torah as sharing the same essence created a concept of direct, unmediated causality between human activity and divine response. The interlinked nature of God and Man meant that providence and reward and punishment gave little scope for God's free will, although this problem was grappled with extensively.<sup>328</sup> Horowitz introduces ibn Gabbai's concept of providence in a discussion concerning the lack of spiritual reward mentioned in the Torah, and particularly the lack of reference to the World to Come. After presenting the opinions of Maimonides and Nahmanides regarding why the Torah does not mention spiritual reward, ibn Gabbai critiques Nahmanides for assuming that the relationship between human action and reward

---

<sup>325</sup> *Guide*, 3:18, 3:23-24, 3:51.

<sup>326</sup> Daniel Silver, *Maimonidean Criticism and the Maimonidean Controversy : 1180-1240*, (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 146-47.

<sup>327</sup> Davis, *Heller*, 110.

<sup>328</sup> See above, 103.

and punishment is miraculous and unknown. Ibn Gabbai asserts that it is axiomatic that providence is natural and follows causal laws:

It is already quite well known that the Rabbi is one of the great believers in and an outstanding authority on the kabbalah, the true wisdom. His belief that the promises of the Torah are miracles surprises me, considering that he is great in wisdom... Yet, we find the opposite view among his allusions to the secrets of the Torah, according to the kabbalah. Thus the students who learned kabbalah from him interpreted many of his secrets. This view is the true one. For the supernal entities are blessed by the arousal of the beings on earth through their service. From there, the blessing descends to the causes (the heavenly beings cause blessing to descend to earth). Those that understand the truth would not say that this is miraculous, but that the nature of the service necessitates it.<sup>329</sup>

The direct link between Man and God is embedded within nature, and therefore can be considered 'natural', which leads to a magical conception of the way that the universe operates, with the knowledgeable initiate able to manipulate the powers of the universe according to his will.<sup>330</sup> Ibn Gabbai also indicates that Nahmanides did not agree with this mechanical conception that appears to eliminate all possibility of God's agency and ability to perform miracles.

---

<sup>329</sup> *Shelah*, 12a.

וכבר נודע בשערים היות הרב גדול המאמינים רב מובהק לחכמים בחכמת הקבלה היא חכמת האמת וגם בעיני יפלא על האמינו כי יעודי התורה הם נסים עם היותו גדול בחכמה וכבר אמרו החכמים כי הנס הוא מציאות הדבר בעצם זולת סבותיו העצמיות והנה לדעתו ז"ל הטובות וההצלחות המיועדות בתורה לא ימשכו אחר המצות ולא יתחייבו מהם כלל ואין יחס בין עשיית המצות אל עליית האדים וירידת המטר בהיות הארץ צמאה ויבשה אין כל ובין התענית אל זיכור האויר המעופש הדבריי אבל מציאת כל זה אחר המצות יראה הרב ז"ל שהוא בדרך נס אין המצות סבתם כלל והנה מרמזיו בסתרי התורה כפי קבלתו נראה היפך מזה כפי מה שפירשו תלמידי המקובלים ממנו בהרבה מסודותיו והוא האמת וזה כי העליונים מתברכים בהתעוררות התחתונים בעבודתם ומשם מתפשטת הברכה אל הגורמים ואין לומר כי זה דרך נס למבין האמת אבל טבע העבודה יחייב כן

<sup>330</sup> For a comparison to medieval Christian magical beliefs, see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic : Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England*, (London: Penguin, 2012), 27-54.

Horowitz fully accepts ibn Gabbai's position and places great emphasis on its implications:

And you, my children, listen to me. Know my children that the 613 commandments that we were commanded to do in the world of action, 'today is to do them' and tomorrow is to receive their reward.<sup>331</sup> Reward and punishment are not conventional but they are of a natural spiritual order, causal in essence, like it says in the Mishnah: The reward for a good deed is a good deed, the reward for a transgression is a transgression, for the reward of the physical good deed that he performed is in essence its reward, that is - the spirituality of this positive commandment.<sup>332</sup>

Ben-Azzai's Talmudic statement that 'the reward for a good deed is a good deed' is configured kabbalistically:<sup>333</sup> A good deed on earth has a cosmic parallel in heaven, theurgically impacting the universe according to the kabbalistic laws of nature. This point is repeated throughout *Toledot Adam* in ibn Gabbai's name, emphasizing that the commandments are the essential 'gateways to all sources of goodness' and through the fulfilment of the commandments goodness 'extends from this gateway'.<sup>334</sup> Reward and punishment is not conventional like a king of flesh and

---

<sup>331</sup> Deuteronomy 7:11; *bEruv*. 22a.

<sup>332</sup> *Shelah*, 15a.

ואתם בני יצ"ו שמעו אלו דעו בני יצ"ו תרי"ג מצות אשר נצטוינו עליהם בעולם המעשה היום לעשותם (דברים ז, יא) ולמחר לקבל שכרם (עירובין כב א) אין השכר והעונש הסכמי רק הוא טבעי רוחני נמשך בעצם כהא דתנן (אבות פ"ד מ"ב) שכר מצוה מצוה ושכר עבירה עבירה כי שכר מצוה גשמית שפועל זהו בעצמו שכרו דהיינו רוחניות המצוה הזו כענין שכתבתי למעלה

<sup>333</sup> *mAvot* 4:2.

<sup>334</sup> *Shelah*, 22a.

הנמשך והמתחייב בהכרח מטבע העבודה ושכל הטובות וההצלחות נמשכות אחר המצות בטבע אלהי שהטביע בהם. ואין זה הטוב בא דרך יעוד כי הדבר הנמשך אשר מטבע איזה דבר להמשיכו והוא תלוי בו

blood rewarding one who does His will and punishing one who transgresses, but all causes and effects are the natural product of the mechanical structure of the kabbalistic universe.<sup>335</sup>

The concept of providence, which reward and punishment is contingent upon, is understood by Horowitz as a process of emanation. Although the realm of sefirot are distinguished from *Ein Sof* as explained above in terms of Cordovero's metaphysics,<sup>336</sup> God is interwoven into the very fabric of the material world, and all can be causally linked to Him, including man. God does not merely tinker with creation but renews it constantly:<sup>337</sup>

But the truth of faith appears to me that God constantly creates anew with his goodness the act of creation with deliberate intention, emanating his flow, and if he removed Himself for one moment everything would be as though it never happened and existence would stop.<sup>338</sup>

As God's existence is understood through the sefirot and their emanation to the world of Man, the kabbalistic conception of providence is an indispensable article of

---

<sup>335</sup> Ibid, 27a.

<sup>336</sup> See above, 107.

<sup>337</sup> See Psalms 104; 'Yotser Or' prayer in Siddur, 90-91; *bSan.* 95b; Recanati, *Commentary*, Genesis, 15:3.

<sup>338</sup> *Shelah*, 40b-41a.

עוד אודיעכם בניי יצ"ו מן המושג אצלי בענין אחדותו יתברך בהשגחתו. הנה סברת העולם היא בענין מערכת צבא השמים כך. הבורא ב"ה חידש הכל יש מאין המוחלט ע"כ (על כן) ביכלתו לעשות מה שרוצה לשנות ולשדד. בראשית נתן הקב"ה לצבא השמים כח ויכולת להנהיג העולם וכל כוכב ממונה על מינוי שלו. העולם כמנהגו נוהג. וכביכול זזה ידו מהם רק אם לעת מהעתים רוצה לשדד אותם וכל זמן שאינו משדד אז מנהיגם בכח שהושג להם בעת הבריאה. אמנם אמיתת האמונה הנראה בעיני הוא הש"י מחדש בטובו בכל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית בכוונה מכוונת שופע שפעו ואילו היה מונע רגע אחד היה הכל כלא היה בטל המציאות



faith, and at the beginning of *Sha'ar Otiyot*, Horowitz inserts it into the formulation of Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith as presented in the popular hymn 'Yigdal'.<sup>339</sup> He lists each of the principles before offering an explanation. In the eighth principle, reward and punishment, he establishes ibn Gabbai's formulation as an axiom of faith.<sup>340</sup> By doing so, he inserts the kabbalistic framework of causality into the basic fabric of Jewish belief. It is not a 'kabbalistic' conception, but a 'Jewish' conception, underscored by the kabbalah which contains Judaism's essence (as explored in the previous chapter). God and Man share the same root - so Man's actions directly impact the operation of the universe.

#### *Avodah le-tsorekh Gavohah*

The causal, theurgical nature of reward and punishment presented in the *Shelah* leads to a basic concept found in the writings of many kabbalists that all service (a reference to prayer and the fulfilment of the commandments) is for 'the sake of on high'.<sup>341</sup> All action, great or small, makes an imprint upon the upper spheres, so the purpose of the individual's actions should be for the sake of the theurgical unification of God's sefirot.<sup>342</sup>

---

<sup>339</sup> Its authorship is attributed to Daniel b. Judah, a judge in Rome in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid, 59a.

העיקר האחד עשר שכר ועונש ואמר כמפעלו וכרשתו מורה למה שהארכתי למעלה בהקדמת  
תולדות אדם כי השכר והעונש אינן הסכמיים רק טבעיים כי שכר מצוה היא המצוה בעצמה ושכר  
העבירה היא העבירה בעצמה

<sup>341</sup> See *Shelah* 46a, 52b.

<sup>342</sup> Hallamish, *Introduction*, 135. See *Shelah*, 237b.

The kabbalists particularly emphasised the importance of *Avodah le-tsorekh gavohah* in prayer. The need for focus/*kavvanah* in prayer is well documented in medieval literature,<sup>343</sup> and the authorities explained that prayer required the worshipper to understand the meaning and purpose of the prayer, and avoid distracting thoughts.<sup>344</sup> Maimonides, for example, was adamant that prayer without concentration did not constitute prayer at all as its essence was the close relationship between Man and God.<sup>345</sup> Yet the kabbalists demanded something entirely different: In kabbalistic literature, the idea of not losing focus on prayer gained new significance with concepts of *tikkun* and the need to remain in a state of *devekut* to prevent a rupture in the Godhead.<sup>346</sup> In Safed, the priority of theurgical prayer became paramount: Solomon Alkabetz, Cordovero's teacher and colleague in Safed, formulated the idea that all Man's actions make an imprint above as a fundamental of faith.<sup>347</sup>

Because of the direct correspondence between human action and divine response, Cordovero compares non-kabbalistic prayer to that of a child with no knowledge, as the uninitiated did not know how to manipulate the upper spheres.<sup>348</sup> Cordovero

---

<sup>343</sup> See the sources in Hallamish, *Minhag*, 69. In particular, *Hovot ha-Levavot* 3:9; *M.T.*, 'Hilkhot Tefillah', 4:16.

<sup>344</sup> Hallamish, *Minhag*, 72. See *mBer.* 2:1; *bBer.* 13a, R. Hannanel ad. Loc. *MT*, 'Hilkhot Tefillah', 4:15,16; *SA, OH*, 1:4, 98:1.

<sup>345</sup> *MT*, 'Hilkhot Tefillah', 14:5.

<sup>346</sup> Joseph Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, 3b-4a.

<sup>347</sup> See Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 194-95.

<sup>348</sup> Robinson, *Introduction*, 92.

describes how prayer rises in incremental theurgical levels, unifying different each level of the divine structure. The best prayer is for God alone, not disturbing Him with requests but experiencing the travails of the *shekhinah* in exile.<sup>349</sup> *Reishit Hokhmah* extensively discusses the importance of *kavvanah* being directed for the sake of God alone and the unity of God and His glory, and not for personal needs.<sup>350</sup> In the writings of Luria and his disciples, the idea of service for the sake of ‘upon high’ becomes a rigorous contemplative exercise, involving the visualisation of the many stages of unifications in vivid detail and re-enacting their movements, prioritising the unification of God’s name above all else.<sup>351</sup> The concept of prayer for the sake of ‘upon high’ was not necessarily admired outside of kabbalistic circles, however, with rabbis such as Sirkes and Heller considering the idea that somehow God could be affected by prayer to be a dangerous theological concept.<sup>352</sup>

In keeping with his ‘threefold cord’, Horowitz emphasises that fulfilling the commandments and praying ‘for the sake of upon high’ is not a kabbalistic innovation but reflects the authentic position of Jewish tradition:

Your eyes see the universal consensus, that service is for the sake of upon high, for through this the great name achieves *tikkun*, and the righteous man makes his form resemble his creator’s...

This matter we have spoken of, that service is for the sake of on upon high is expressed in the Biblical verses, written in the Torah, repeated in the Prophets, a third time in the Writings, Mishnah, Talmud and Midrash, and the last which is most beloved, the Zohar.<sup>353</sup>

---

<sup>349</sup> Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 202.

<sup>350</sup> See *Reishit Hokhmah* vol 1. 141b. Zohar III:183 and see the footnotes in Hallamish, *Minhag*, 77.

<sup>351</sup> Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 247-57, 276.

<sup>352</sup> Davis, *Heller*, 262.

<sup>353</sup> *Shelah*, 30a.

Throughout the *Shelah*, prayer is expanded kabbalistically to include cosmic possibilities for the worshipper to reconfigure the state of the universe.<sup>354</sup>

Although most kabbalists were determined to avoid the literal interpretations which implied that God Himself could be affected by the actions of Man, ibn Gabbai made the radical claim that the highest realms of sefirot were affected by Man's actions.

Horowitz acknowledges this position but disassociates himself from it:

However in the book *Avodat ha-Kodesh* in his introduction, he explains this saying of 'And he gives a pleasant aroma to his creator'. These are his words: The intention of 'And he descended' being translated as 'pleasantness',<sup>355</sup> is the secret of the descent of the will and divine spirit from the heads of the highest beings, and from there emerges a pleasant aroma, desire and blessing to the creator, which is all achieved through toil in Torah and the fulfilment of the commandments for their own sake. And the position of the author of the *Avodat ha-Kodesh* in his entire work, in several places is known for his explanation that service has actual impact in the essence of *Atsilut*, and adds power to it and repairs and unifies the name - the opposite is true, God forbid! We lean towards the words of R. Hayyat...<sup>356</sup>

Horowitz does not want to consider the radical implications of a change in God, irrespective of the fact that this is a position that many kabbalists had been venturing towards. To him such an approach transgresses acceptable religious boundaries.

---

**ודבר זה שדברנו העבודה צורך גבוה מבואר במקרא כתוב בתורה שנוי בנביאים משולש  
בכתובים ובמשנה ובתלמוד ובמדרשים ואחרון חביב בזוהר**

<sup>354</sup> See *ibid* 130a-b, 249b.

<sup>355</sup> Leviticus 9:22.

<sup>356</sup> *Shelah*, 33b.

אמנם בספר עבודת הקודש בהקדמתו פירש זה המאמר של ועושה נחת רוח ליוצרו וז"ל הכוונה כי יורד (ויקרא ט, כב) מתרגמינן ונחת והוא סוד הורדת הרצון ורוח הקודש על הראשים העליונים ומשם נחת רוח ורצון אל היוצר וכל זה בקיום התורה והמצוות לשמן עכ"ל. ושיטת בעל עבודת הקודש בכל ספרו בכמה מקומות נודע כי הוא מבאר שהעבודה צורך גבוה ממש בעצם באצילות ומוסיף כח ומתקן ומיחד השם. וההיפך בהיפך חס ושלום. נוטה לדעת הרב החייט

God needed to maintain a degree of separateness from His creations, despite the intimacy of the concepts of providence and Man articulated above.

Where Horowitz departs from a purely kabbalistic conception of 'service upon high' is his lack of emphasis on meditations, or on the mechanisms which connect human action to divine response.<sup>357</sup> To Horowitz, theurgy was a spiritual fact but not necessarily a priority of emphasis. Two examples are indicative of this mindset: In 'Tractate Hullin', Horowitz requests that the individual remembers that his soul is 'a portion of God above' in line with the ideas expressed above but does not enter into detail describing this process but rather refers to the general concept of the 'light of this commandment'.

It is also written: regarding the intentions for the blessing of wrapping the *tsitsit*, it is fitting to have in mind that the soul is being wrapped by the light of the commandment, both below and above, for the root of the soul which is above is also being wrapped in the light of the commandment in manners that will be explained. This rule applies to every commandment that an individual performs, that he needs to focus that his soul is a portion of God above, fixed and illuminated by the light of this commandment, and so too with *tefillin*.<sup>358</sup>

The Jew's soul belongs to God and the commandment he performs illuminates the holy aspect of his soul. In the next three pages, Horowitz describes different levels of *kavvanah* required when performing the commandments, some of which are overtly theurgically focused, and others which are not, for instance:

The secret of the *mezuzah*: Recanati writes: The reason for this commandment according to its simple meaning is known – in order to

---

<sup>357</sup> An exception includes the pages devoted to the *kavvanot* behind the shofar blasts, see *ibid*, 216a-222b.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid*, 115b.

וכתב עוד וז"ל ובענין כוונת הברכה להתעטף בציצית ראוי לכוין שהנשמה היא המתעטפת באור מצוה בין למטה בין למעלה ששורש הנשמה שהיא למעלה ג"כ תתעטף באור מצוה זו בבחינות שיתבאר וכלל זה לכל מצוה ומצוה שיעשה האדם צריך לכוין כי נשמתו שהיא חלק אלוה ממעל מתקנת ומאירה באור מצוה זו וכן לענין תפילין

remember his creator when he comes and goes. But in the 'way of truth', the mezuzah hints to *keneset yisra'el* above, whose place is at the doorways like our sages have said.<sup>359</sup>

Horowitz cites both the simple meaning behind a commandment, and the reason that corresponds to theurgical, kabbalistic knowledge.

In the *Shelah*, God, Man, heaven and earth are inextricably linked, and all human service operates for the sake of 'upon high', affecting the upper spheres and determining God's blessing to His creations. An important aspect of his 'organic universe' of kabbalah is that the hidden dimension exists in the background of every action, regardless of whether it is acknowledged through *kavvanot*. Therefore, all human action ascends 'upon high', and some may embark upon this ascent through theurgical prayer, but others may ascend to similar heights through devotion and righteous action.<sup>360</sup>

### Torah Study

Torah study is the most important example of the 'concealed' underscoring the 'revealed' in the *Shelah* - without necessarily changing the content of the revealed. The importance of Torah study is a central tenet found throughout Mishnaic and Talmudic literature.<sup>361</sup> Its study was an important means of maintaining observance,

---

<sup>359</sup> Ibid, 116b.

טוד מזוזה כתב הרק"נט טעם מצוה זו לפי פשוטה ידועה כדי שיזכור את בוראו בבואו ובצאתו ואמנם על דרך האמת המזוזה רמז לכנסת ישראל של מעלה וקביעותה הוא בפתחי שערים כמו שאמרו רז"ל (זהר ח"ג דף רס"ג ע"ב)

<sup>360</sup> See Chapter Six, 164-170, where I elaborate on how Horowitz's conception of *devekut* differs from that of the other kabbalists, cf. Krispel, 'Concept of Man', 272.

<sup>361</sup> E.g. *mAvot* 1:2; *mPe'ah* 1:1; *bPes.* 68b; *bNed.* 32a; *bA.Z.* 3b.

and a striking passage in the Palestinian Talmud warns that 'If one studies Torah without intention to observe it, it had been better for him if his placenta had turned over on his face and he had not emerged into the world'.<sup>362</sup>

Maimonides codified the supremacy of Torah study over other commandments in his *Mishneh Torah*.<sup>363</sup> He and the other medieval Spanish philosophers also emphasised that the study of Torah had social and political effects, refining human nature and providing the constitution for an ideal state.<sup>364</sup> In terms of study, the primary concern of the medieval rabbis in France and Germany was the elucidation of the Talmud, focusing on the dialectical methods pioneered by the Tosafists, and the comprehensive commentary provided by Rashi. This tradition remained paramount among the Ashkenazic communities in the 16th Century and the only debate was whether it could be accompanied or supplemented by other disciplines like Astronomy, Mathematics or Philosophy.<sup>365</sup>

From the 13th Century onwards, the kabbalistic understanding of the Torah's importance diverged considerably from the philosophical and Talmudic interpretations. The kabbalists taught that the Torah is a living organism, identified with several sefirot in the divine configuration, and some even claimed that the Torah is God Himself.<sup>366</sup> This identification of the Torah as God was understood to refer to

---

<sup>362</sup> *yBer.* 1:5; *Ex. Rabba* 11:1.

<sup>363</sup> *MT*, 'Hilkhot Talmud Torah' 3:3.

<sup>364</sup> See Menahem Kellner, *Maimonides' Confrontation with Mysticism*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2007), 288. *Guide*, 2:39-40, 3:29-34.

<sup>365</sup> Katz, *Halakhah* 80-81.

<sup>366</sup> Recanati, *Ta'amei ha-Mitsvot*, 3a; *Zohar* II: 60a.

the Torah in its true primordial essence, and not to its manifestation in the world of creation. To these kabbalists, the Torah did not mean anything specific, but articulated a universe of being on multiple levels. Each letter within it contained infinite significance.<sup>367</sup>

In a manner similar to prayer, the kabbalists reconfigured the individual's basic religious obligation of Torah study; the Safedian kabbalists emphasised that Torah study should focus on the unification of the *shekhinah* and not the attainment of knowledge. Torah study was a means of remaining in a state of permanent *devekut*: Hayyim Vital commented that Luria would only learn the revealed sections of Torah with reluctance, as though he was 'paying a debt', and that the true purpose of Torah study was for the unifications it produced.<sup>368</sup>

This new concept is reflected in citations from Cordovero's *Pardes in Toledot Adam*, which focus on the intrinsic worth of meditating upon the Hebrew letters, chastising those who think that Torah is only about an understanding of its subject matter. In this extract, the study of Torah is notable for being as much about toil and effort than about content. Cordovero berates the 'philosophers' who only see purpose in studying if they can gain intellectual and moral benefit from it:

This is also their thoughts in matters of Torah, that its intention is an inner understanding leading to the *shelemut* of the soul, and one who does not know the ideas of its expounders will not attain a purpose in its learning (God forbid). This is an attitude to be avoided, for certainly the words of Torah 'restores the soul'.<sup>369</sup> ... But when a man comes to study Torah, his intention

---

<sup>367</sup> See 'Kabbalah', 621; Robinson, *Introduction*, 47.

<sup>368</sup> Katz, *Halakhah*, 93-95. On the different requirements for concealed and revealed study in Hayyim Vital, see Hallamish, *Introduction*, 34; Fine, *Safed Spirituality*, 135; *Physician of the Soul*, 212, 76.

<sup>369</sup> Psalms 19:8.



should be when he learns these matters that these are divine words whose inner essence is hidden from him, and in this matter he will succeed in all the Torah that leaves his mouth before God from the 'ox', even if he only understands the simple meaning of the story.<sup>370</sup>

The value of Torah study is acquired from reciting its words (thereby absorbing its holiness) rather than through the mastery of any specific content.

The letters of the Torah contain the basic units of existence which have emanated from God Himself,<sup>371</sup> and the Hebrew letters are unlike those of any other language in that they are intrinsically holy:

Therefore our language is called 'The holy language', for all the names and letters exist above in their roots in the holy divine place, and afterwards they descend and emanate from this holy place, and this emanation is named this (language) as a metaphor.<sup>372</sup>

The letters of the Torah are differentiated from those of the other nations:

For our holy letters are not conventional like the letters of the nations which are only symbols, but they themselves are holy and formed from above, which is

---

<sup>370</sup> *Shelah*, 13b; The Hebrew translates: 'and in this matter the vapour of Torah that leaves his mouth will be preferable to God than a (sacrificial) ox', see Psalms 69:32.

...

וכן דעתם בעניני התורה, שהכונה גילוי הפנימיות וההנהגה אל שלמות הנפש ומי שלא ידע עניני דרושיה לא יגיענו תועלת בלימודה חס ושלום. וזה מן הנמנע כי ודאי דברי תורה הם משיבת נפש

אבל כאשר יבוא האדם ללמוד בתורה צריך שיהיה כוונתו שהוא לומד הענין שהוא במה שהם דברים אלהיים שנעלם ממנו עוצם פנימיותם ובדבר הזה ייטב בכל התורה היוצא מפיו לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא משור פר ועם היות שהוא לא ישכיל בה כי אם פשטיות הסיפור

<sup>371</sup> See above, 107.

<sup>372</sup> *Shelah*, 13b.

ועל כן נקרא לשוננו לשון קודש כי כל השמות והתיבות הם למעלה בשרשם במקום קודש העליון ואחר כך כשיורד ומשתלשל ממקום קודש הזה נקרא זה השתלשלות בשם הזה בהשאלה

what our sages inferred (when they praised) those engrossed with the basic meaning of the text.<sup>373</sup>

Since the Torah is the closest thing to God Himself, its study brings the most blessing into the world, and is the 'source for all the goodness in this life':

This matter is repeated in the Midrash of Rashbi in many places, and the intention of all this is to implant in us what we have repeated many times, that is, that engrossment in Torah and the fulfilment of its commandments draws the light and the influx of blessing from the source of being to the upper and lower realms – this is the reason for all the goodness in this life, for it occurs out of necessity - as the Torah is the great name in essence...<sup>374</sup>

Horowitz emphasises the primacy of the study of the letters and words found in the Pentateuch. Most Torah study consisted of the study of Talmud throughout the Ashkenazic world. However, to the kabbalists, the very text of the Torah contains all within it, and it is only due to the sinfulness of Man that the Oral Torah was required. In Horowitz's summary of ibn Gabbai, he explains that the words of the Torah themselves contain all possible knowledge, a concept which Nahmanides had also suggested in less esoteric terms at the beginning of his commentary to Genesis.<sup>375</sup>

---

<sup>373</sup> Ibid, 161b; see 237b for the story of the holy *tsaddik* and the letters on his forehead.

כי האותיות הקדושות שלנו אינם הסכמיות כאותיות האומות שהם סימנים בעלמא רק הם עצמיות קדושות נחצבות מלמעלה וזהו שדקדקו רז"ל אפילו בעלי פשט כו

<sup>374</sup> Ibid, 15b.

וענין זה נכפל במדרשו של רשב"י ע"ה בהרבה מקומות והכונה בכל זה להשרישנו במה שכבר כפלנוהו הרבה פעמים והוא כי עסק התורה וקיום מצותיה ימשיכו האור ושפע הברכה ממקור ההויה אל עליונים ותחתונים וזה סבת כל הטובות באלה החיים כי טבעם יחייב זה כי התורה הוא השם הגדול ממש

<sup>375</sup> Ibid, 16b.

ולכא מידי דלא יהיה רמוז בתורה באר היטב רק שנתחשך השכל מה שהיה ראוי להיות ומלאה הארץ דעה (ישעיה יא, ט) אינו רק הלב לדעתה ואינה מובנת תורה שבכתב רק אחר היגיעה הגדולה

The text of the Torah contains all the ideas expounded in the Talmud, it is only man who cannot comprehend its depths. The 'cloaks of light' were hidden from man after Adam's sin so he must toil to overcome the spiritual distance from God caused by the diminishing stature of each generation post-Adam.<sup>376</sup> The Babylonian Talmud is portrayed as being an unfortunate consequence of the sin of Adam. As the generations continue to grow further away from Adam, their intellect weakens and they require more elucidation, provided by the Talmud. Similarly, the text of the Talmud includes the secrets of the kabbalah. The multi-dimensional aspect of each text means that it is truly all 'one Torah'.<sup>377</sup>

The implication of this unity in the *Shelah* is that rather than accentuating the importance of learning the kabbalah itself, Horowitz instead promotes the idea that the revealed text of the Torah contains great secrets even if the secrets themselves are hidden from human understanding. Simply by reading the words of the

---

וכמ"ש (כמו שכתב) רז"ל (ברכות סג ב) אין ד"ת (דברי תורה) מתקיימין אלא במי שממית עליה שנאמר (במדבר יט, יד) וזאת התורה אדם כי ימות באהל. ולזה צריכה תורה שבכתב ביאור ופירוש דהיינו התלמוד שאלולי כן היתה מבואר בעצמה. כמו שעיינו רואות בדור אחר דור של הקדמונים שהיה להם שכל בהיר היו מבינים דבר עמוק בלי פירוש. אח"כ (אחר כך) לא היו מבינים בלתי פירוש ואחר כך פירוש על פירוש הכל לפי חשכת השכל.

<sup>376</sup> The concept of the decline of the generations is first found in the Talmud, *bSan.* 94b regarding the pristine religious state of the generation of King Hezekiah. It was only fully articulated as a metaphysical doctrine by the kabbalists.

<sup>377</sup> *Shelah*, 35b.

ובאמת הכל תורה אחת כי כל תורה שבעל פה רמוזה בתורה שבכתב כגון כל מנלן ומנא הני מילי וליכא מידי דלא יהיה רמוז בתורה היטב רק שנתחשך השכל ואור השכל נתמעט בסבת חטא אדם שנגזר כתנות אור ונתלבש ב'עור' בעי"ן

apparently superfluous sections of the Bible, such as the repetition of the daily sacrifices brought by the princes of each tribe, the holiness of each day is aroused:

It seems to me that it is a good custom to read daily the portion of the prince of that day, for every prince knew great secrets,<sup>378</sup> and each drew (and continues to draw) the spiritual flow for his tribe forever. It is not for nothing that the Torah wrote each individual tribe and specified the sacrifice, even though each one was the same.<sup>379</sup> It would have been fitting to say it in an abridged manner such as 'this is what this prince sacrificed etc.' but each one had specific secrets - this is the way of many *Midrashim*, to explain reasons for each prince differently. And so the superfluous words are wondrous secrets attainable to one who God gives a portion of the true wisdom. In the reading of the portion, he stirs the holiness of the day, as the Sephardim have a custom to say in each time period songs pertaining to the relevant topics of the period – I found in the holy writings of the *Arizal* (and we have found them) that the Red sea was divided into twelve portions, as it says 'To him that divided the Red sea in sunder', to each tribe by itself.<sup>380</sup>

Ultimately, the Torah is beneficial for the welfare of mankind even if those who study it don't understand why. Horowitz makes a fascinating comment in his third Passover sermon that the Torah is good for the Jewish people 'even though they have

---

<sup>378</sup> This refers to the lengthy passages in the Bible describing the identical sacrifices brought by the princes of each tribe in Numbers 7:12 after the consecration of the tabernacle.

<sup>379</sup> Numbers 7:12.

<sup>380</sup> *Shelah*, 140b.

נלע"ד מנהג טוב לקרות בכל יום ויום פרשת הנשיא של זה היום כי כל נשיא ונשיא היה לו סודות גדולות אשר המשיכו שפע הרוחניות כל אחד לשבטו כל ימי עולם ולא לחנם כתבה התורה (במדבר ז, יב - פג) כל שבט ושבט ופרטה הקרבן אע"פ שכולם היו שוות והיה מהראוי לומר בדרך קצרה וכן זה הנשיא הקריב וכן זה הנשיא הקריב כן אלא לכל אחד היה לו סודות מיוחדות ובזה הדרך דרך מדרש רבות לבאר טעמים לכל נשיא ונשיא טעם אחר וגם דברי הרבות הם סודות מופלגות מושגות למי שחלק לו השם מהחכמה האמיתית ובקריאת הפרשה הוא מעורר קדושת היום וכאשר נהגו הספרדיים לומר בכל זמן וזמן מזמורים מעניינים של יום ומצאתי כתוב בכתבי הקודש דהאר"י ז"ל וכן מצינו היום נקרע ליי"ב קרעים כמו שכתוב (תהלים קלו, יג) לגזר ים סוף לגזרים לכל שבט ושבט בפני עצמו

received many punishments for it and according to the knowledge of men it can appear bad'. The Torah is good because it is intrinsically good, 'hard-wired' into the universe as an indispensable mechanism for the welfare of the Jewish people.<sup>381</sup>

What is significant about the ideas developed in the *Shelah* relating to the value of Torah study, is that unlike the kabbalists he does not appear to change the conventional approaches towards it, nor does he specifically prioritise kabbalistic meditations or theurgical practices. If *Toledot Adam* is read in isolation, the reader might think that the optimum form of study is a kabbalistic one. But the rest of the work indicates that, on the contrary, great value is attributed to both to the 'Torah of Man' and the 'Torah of the Lord'. The following extract from 'Tractate Pesahim' illuminates Sheftel's remark that Horowitz only taught kabbalah to an exclusive coterie of students, seemingly contradicting his willingness to spread kabbalistic teachings to all who sought them.<sup>382</sup> It provides important evidence that his intent in writing the *Shelah* was to 'kabbalise' the ordinary text of the Torah by revealing its context, but not necessarily to disclose the secrets themselves. The hidden light is reserved for the elite, but the revealed sections are still 'concealed' and have profound impact upon the heavens and the earth:

The Torah in its nature is concealed and revealed, and this can be apportioned into three sections, two sections are contained in the Torah of Man, which is the stories in the Written Torah and Oral Torah, which teach

---

<sup>381</sup> Ibid, 176b.

וזהו תכלית הבריאה כי מאחר שהבריאה היתה לטובת הנבראים זהו עיקר טובתם שיקבלו התורה ואף שקשה עליהם הדבר ומקבלים הרבה עונשים על זה והוא רע במקרה לפי דעת בני אדם מ"מ טוב הוא בעצם למען הטיב להם באחרית כי כן דעת הרצון והנדבה מאתו יתברך נותן מאחר שעלה לפניו להיטיב לנבראיו עלתה לפניו להיטיב להם בטוב האמת

<sup>382</sup> See Chapter Three, 76-77.

several upright character traits – this is the revealed portion of the Torah of Man. The concealed portion from the Torah of Man is the depth of the Talmud and *pilpul*, and the thirteen ways that the Torah is expounded. The third section, which is the Torah of the Lord, that the Torah in its entirety is the names of God. It is all concealed with a hidden light that reveals itself to men of great stature, who benefit from its light each man according to his level, and all three sections mentioned are the Torah of truth.<sup>383</sup>

Those who read the Torah unthinkingly ignore the fact that hundreds and thousands of spiritual worlds hang from each letter and word, even those words which refer to idolatrous gods.<sup>384</sup> The student may not understand how or why this is the case, but it is sufficient for him to comprehend the fact that it is so. In his introduction to 'The Written Torah', Horowitz reiterates that there is no difference between the fundamental verse of faith '*Shema Yisra'el*' and the apparently superfluous descriptions of Esau's concubine Timnah as both allude to hidden spiritual roots.<sup>385</sup>

---

<sup>383</sup> Ibid, 178b.

והתורה בכללה נגלה ונסתר וזה יתחלק לשלשה חלקים שני חלקים הם נכללים בתורת האדם דהיינו הסיפורים שבתורה שבכתב ושבתורה שבע"פ המלמדים כמה מדות ישרות זה חלק הנגלה מתורת האדם חלק הנסתר מתורת האדם הוא עומק התלמוד והפלפול ושלוש עשרה מדות שהתורה נדרשת חלק השלישי על כולו הוא תורת ידו"ד דהיינו שהתורה כולה שמותיו יתברך (זהר ח"ב דף קכ"ד ע"א) וכולה נסתר אור הגנוז המאיר לבני עליה ונהנים לאורה איש איש כפי מדרגתו וכל השלשה חלקים הנזכרים כולם תורת אמת

<sup>384</sup> Ibid, 191b.

עוד מוסר אחד צריך אני להודיע אותן שאומרים במרוצה דברי התורה מכח ששגור בפייהם כגון י"ב פרשיות של י"ב נשיאים מאחר שהדברים כפולים ומכופלים קורין אחר כך במהירות עבירה גדולה היא בידם כי כל אות ואות תלויין בו רבבי רבבות עולמות רוחניות ולא לחנם נכפלו הדברים ואשרי המדבק עצמו בהבל פיו וראיית עיניו באותיות התורה

עוד בכלל אותיות מחכימות והם קדושות הוא אפילו שמות של אלהים אחרים שנראה לכאורה שאין בהם קדושה אך תדע שגם בזה יש קדושה כי אפילו סטרא אחרא סטרא דמסאבא מכל מקום בשרשה יש קדושה ויש לה אחיזה למעלה בראשה

<sup>385</sup> Ibid, 264b.

השני יתבונן בטעם ובסודות המצות כפי עומק שכלו וכן יתבונן בסודות שאר העניינים שאין מצות הכתובים בפרשה כי כל התורה היא כן מדבר מלמטה ורומז למעלה ואין בין פסוק ותמנע היתה פלגש

In his concluding section to the *Shelah*, the Oral Torah, Horowitz repeats this point regarding the question of chronology in the Torah. All contained within it is in the correct order, not only in terms of the mystical names of God but in terms of actual letters, events and words which may not operate according to human perceptions.<sup>386</sup>

The mystical perfection of the Written Torah and the efficacy of its study is extended to the Oral Torah. Although in the initial divine plan the Oral law served a secondary role, the fact that it was eventually required means that it is also the product of divine revelation, an emissary needed to explain the secrets of the written law. Now it too is perfect, containing nothing superfluous. The debates of the Talmud which appear to be adding glosses and inserting new information to the Mishnah are mere tools to assist the latter generations who lack the pristine knowledge of the Tannaitic sages:

And when the matter has no meaning for us, we must alter and embellish its plain sense. But it is truly a great wisdom, concealed so that the matter is according to its simple meaning without distortion. And so I believe that even the Mishnayot where the Talmud claims 'it is missing etc'. - this is according to the extent of our understanding. But our holy Rabbi compiled the Mishnayot with divine spirit, with specifically chosen words, and the greatest depths are alluded to within it. Had it been understood it would not have been necessary to claim it lacking, and therefore the words of the Mishnah do not depart from their place. This is the

---

(בראשית לו, יב) לפסוק שמע ישראל (דברים ו, ד) כי הכל רומזים לדברים גבוהים וגבוה מעל גבוה עד אין סוף ומה שהזכירו רז"ל בפסוק ותמנע זה רמוז בראשי תיבות תורת ה' תמימה משיבת נפש עדות (תהלים יט, ח) ראשי תיבות תמנע ותורת ה' תמימה כלומר כולה מתחילתה עד סופה היא משיבת נפש למעלה למקום גבוה ומי שחלק לו ה' מהחכמה ישכיל וידע עד מקום שמדרגת שכלו מגעת בחכמה ותבונה ודעת

<sup>386</sup> Ibid, 402b; see *bPes.* 6b.

אלא הענין היא בסדר נכון לא מבעיא על פי הסוד שהתורה כולה שמותיו (זהר ח"ב דף פ"ז ע"א) פשיטא ופשיטא שהיא כסדר השמות אלא אפילו בנגלה שלה יש טעמים ועניינים כפי הסדר שהם מסודרים ולא דבר רק (דברים לב, מז) ואם רק הוא מכם (ירושלמי פאה פ"א ה"א). וזה ענין אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה כלומר לא תימא שיש קידום ואיחור כי היה ראוי להקדים זה ולאחר זה כי זה אינו רק הכל בכוונה מכוונת. ואז הוא הכל לפי סדר הנכון

concept 'The verse does not depart from its simple meaning',<sup>387</sup> for all the words are exactly like their simple meaning for one who understands them and not an empty matter, they are only empty for us and we therefore need to distort them.<sup>388</sup>

This act of Torah study does not require any deeper understanding of the kabbalistic mechanisms behind it, and Horowitz prioritises a precise, methodical approach towards Torah study rather than an esoteric one.<sup>389</sup>

For the kabbalists who influenced Horowitz, the details of observance are regularly subsumed into the details of mystical unifications and meditations. The practical aspects of daily life are of far less interest to them than the mystical structures behind them. But the *Shelah* effectively combines the classical rabbinic ethos with the kabbalistic one, explaining how behind the revealed is the concealed - but never subordinating the revealed to the concealed. An observation might also be made that in *Toledot Adam*, which is a more theoretical introduction to the kabbalistic understanding of central concepts, Horowitz is more expansive in the realm of the concealed. But when the later chapters are written, he emphasises the *fact* of the concealed while promoting the revealed as its primary manifestation.

Each of the concepts described in this chapter assume a central place in Jewish Thought: God and creation; Man; providence; prayer; the Torah. In rabbinic

---

<sup>387</sup> *bShab.* 63a.

<sup>388</sup> *Shelah*, 192a.

ומכח שהדבר רק ממנו צריכין אנחנו לסרס או להפוך וכיוצא בזה אבל חכמה גדולה היא נסתר שהדבר הוא כפשוטו בלא סירוס וכן אני מאמין אפילו במשניות שאומר בגמרא חסורי מחסרא כו' זה לפי ערך הבנתינו אבל רבינו הקדוש חיבר המשניות ברוח הקודש ובמליצות לשון מובחר ועמוק עמוק הרמוז בו ואילו היה מובן אז לא צריכין לחסר על כן לשון המשנה לא זזה ממקומה וזהו ענין אין מקרא יוצא מידי פשוטו (שבת סג א) שכל הדברים הם כפשוטן ממש מי שמבינם ולא דבר ריק רק ממנו

<sup>389</sup> *Shelah*, 181a-183b (see Text 3), 389a-416a.



literature, each concept contains a wealth of debate concerning their parameters and details. What Horowitz achieves is a complete 'kabbalising' of each concept, framing them in terms of a reference point understood by the kabbalist. Kabbalah, as shown in the previous chapter, is the *sine qua non* of Judaism in the *Shelah*. Nevertheless, kabbalah *per se* never assumes absolute priority: God is immanent in creation but never undermines Man's free will. The theurgical mechanism of the universe is a fundamental of faith but theurgy should not necessarily be the focus of prayer and Torah study. While kabbalah can define the parameters of Man's role on earth, it never overwhelms the other areas of the 'threefold cord'.

## **Chapter Five: Orthodoxy and Jewish Particularism**

Since all matters of faith are contextualised by the kabbalah in the *Shelah*, two broad intellectual trends emerge from Horowitz's work: orthodoxy and particularism. As I began exploring in the previous chapter, Horowitz's interpretation of his sources reconfigured the fundamental tenets of Jewish belief. By insisting that the kabbalah alone had authority in determining correct and incorrect doctrines, Horowitz conceived of Jewish Thought in terms of a system, insisting on orthodoxy in matters of belief. In the *Shelah*, he achieves this in two ways: Firstly, by distinguishing between the purity of kabbalistic tradition and the falsehood of the rationalistic philosophy beloved of the medieval Spanish Jews; secondly, by considering those who did not adopt kabbalistic beliefs to be foolish or heretical. As explored in Chapter Three, kabbalah contained the essence of Judaism itself. A second important trend associated with orthodoxy is particularism. Built on the foundations of kabbalah, Horowitz considered the religious responsibilities of the Jew to be inexorably tied to his essence. In line with concepts found in ibn Gabbai's writings, Horowitz conferred the Jewish people with a unique role in creation, entirely distinct from the non-Jew. The orthodoxy demanded by Horowitz's philosophy crystallised the status of the Jew as existing in perpetual 'Otherness' to the non-Jew.

## Orthodoxy

The delegitimisation of non-kabbalistic beliefs helped Horowitz develop his vision of Judaism as an ideological system.<sup>390</sup> The concept of Jewish 'orthodoxy', the framing of Jewish faith in terms of adherence to correct ideological or theological propositions is frequently presented in scholarly literature as the product of the socio-political conditions of the 19th Century.<sup>391</sup> Orthodoxy - adherence to a tradition as part of a conscious, self-reflexive, conservative ideology - is portrayed as a traditionalism which evolved in response to modernity.<sup>392</sup> Although the idea of fundamentals of faith had been around since the medieval period, formulated most prominently by Maimonides,<sup>393</sup> it had never become a Jewish catechism like its Christian or Islamic equivalents, nor been used to identify the 'true believers' as opposed to the heretics.<sup>394</sup>

---

<sup>390</sup> See Eliezer Segal, *Introducing Judaism*, (London: Routledge, 2009), x. Scholars have recognised the problem of describing Jewish Thought and belief in terms of an 'ism', which is a suffix used to designate an ideological system. This categorisation has historically rarely been used by Jews themselves.

<sup>391</sup> Jacob Katz, 'Orthodoxy in a Historical Perspective', in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, ed. by Peter Yehuda Medding (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1986), 3-17; Satlow, *Creating Judaism*, 252, 69-70; Moshe Samet, 'The Beginnings of Orthodoxy', *Modern Judaism*, 8, 3 (1988).

<sup>392</sup> Michael Silber, 'The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy', in *The Uses of Tradition : Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era*, ed. by Jack Wertheimer (New York: Harvard University Press, 1999), 26.

<sup>393</sup> *Commentary on Mishnah*, ed. and tr. by Y. Kafah (1965), 195–217.

<sup>394</sup> Marc Shapiro, *The Limits of Orthodox Theology : Maimonides' Thirteen Principles Reappraised*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2004), 2-3, 188; Menahem Kellner, *Dogma*

Throughout the *Shelah*, however, the question of orthodoxy is regularly addressed: Horowitz considers any assumption about God, Man or creation which does not adhere to the framework of kabbalah to be false and heretical. He expends considerable effort in ensuring that his readers are left in little doubt as to the contrast between the ‘men of truth’ or the kabbalists, and those who ‘walk in darkness’, the adherents of philosophy. Judaism requires a faith in the principles of kabbalah, without which it is groundless. Horowitz’s persistent attacks on the views of the group he dubs ‘the philosophers’ primarily reflects the desire to enshrine kabbalistic belief as the only legitimate interpretation of Jewish texts.

Early in *Toledot Adam*, Horowitz establishes a dichotomy between the ‘men of truth’,<sup>395</sup> who are the kabbalists, and the philosophers, who ‘walk in darkness’ by contrasting the views of those who believe ‘in nature’ and the ‘true believers’. Horowitz’s emphasis on the truth and faithfulness of the kabbalistic position as opposed to the darkness and falsehood of the philosophical conceptions indicates that he considers these conceptions to be outside the boundaries of acceptable Jewish belief:

All these creations existed for one purpose, which was man. The ‘men of truth’ have already dwelt on this matter at length and attacked the position of the philosophers, who walk in darkness with no light...

And certainly the ‘wise men of nature’ walk in darkness, for devekut with God is above nature, and the desire of God is that the devekut of Man should be eternal, for the matter of necessity is in accordance with nature, and this is according to the believers of earlier generations that all is out of necessity. But

---

*in Medieval Jewish Thought : From Maimonides to Abravanel*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2004), 1-4, 25. See Satlow, *Creating Judaism*, 220-22.

<sup>395</sup> While this term can be used purely as a synonym for kabbalists, Horowitz uses many other terms to describe kabbalists in general, and appears to reserve the term ‘truth’ to formulate a clear distinction between the kabbalists and philosophers.

we true believers believe that all emerged from the will of God, and His will was for Man to be eternal if he remained in *devekut*.<sup>396</sup>

The idea of philosophy being extraneous to the Jewish tradition and the Torah is understood in terms of its rejection of *kabbalah*, which encompasses all other areas of knowledge and derives from God Himself. Horowitz decries the philosophical methodology which relies on rational proofs, demonstrations and 'natural causality' (whereby effects can be traced to their First Causes in accordance with Aristotle's theory of causation). These deductions are incorrect as they ignore the agency of God's will as expressed in *kabbalah*:

There are also from among the wise men of our nation those who have philosophised a lot, and they said what they have said, and their words are empty, for all their speculations come from the perspective of natural causality. But according to the truth, that God created His world with His good will, the will desires what it desires, and there is no necessity.<sup>397</sup>

As explored in Chapter Four, Horowitz also frequently emphasises that the universe operates in a causal manner, in line with the *kabbalistic* understanding of the mechanics of *theurgy*.<sup>398</sup> The difference between the two is that philosophical causality operates independently of revealed tradition through human reasoning, whereas *kabbalistic* causality is understood to emerge from God Himself. The

---

<sup>396</sup> *Shelah*, 8a.

אלא כל המעשים הם כולם לתכלית אחת שהוא האדם וכבר האריכו בזה חכמי האמת והכו על קדקדם של הפילוסופים הולכים חשכים ואין נוגה להם

<sup>397</sup> *Shelah*, 18b.

גם מחכמי עמנו חקרו ענין זה והתפלספו הרבה ואמרו מה שאמרו ודבריהם הבל כי כל חקירתם הוא מצד חיוב הטבע. אבל לפי האמת שהבורא יתברך שמו ברא את עולמו ברצונו הטוב והרצון רוצה מה שרוצה ואין בו ענין חיוב

<sup>398</sup> See Chapter Four, 117-119.

concept of a nature which exists outside of the kabbalistic framework undermines the closely linked structure of the kabbalistic universe and the nature of God Himself.

Horowitz thus denigrates the 'wise men' who had been seduced into a naturalistic understanding of the world and its operation:

Know that those who made themselves wise in nature have said that death is natural to man, and the reason for it is that all existence dies, and since man exists and is composed of four elements, out of necessity he dies. All the wise men were drawn to this perspective, those who thirsted for 'Greek wisdom' from among our nation, who upend to nothingness the laws of our Torah and its (true) interpretations. But our sages of blessed memory - the men of Torah, men of true faith, truly wise men, believed that death was not natural and they said: Had Adam not sinned he would never have died.<sup>399</sup> The wise man of truth who believed the truth, our great rabbi Nahmanides writes on the portion of Genesis using the following expression: Know that rotting does not teach about deterioration (i.e. it is not evidence for death being natural), only to those of little faith, who think that creation is out of necessity, but from the perspective of the men of faith, who say that the world emerged from nothing with the simple will of God, this will be sustained as long as God wills it, and this is clear truth.<sup>400</sup>

Again, Horowitz contrasts those seduced by what the Talmud referred to as 'Greek wisdom' with the 'men of Torah' and 'men of true faith'.<sup>401</sup> The men of faith are the

---

<sup>399</sup> Lev. Rabba 17:4.

<sup>400</sup> *Shelah*, 20b.

דע כי המתחכמים בטבע אמרו כי המיתה טבעית לאדם והטעם כי כל הווה נפסד והאדם הווה ומורכב מארבע יסודות וא"כ (ואם כן) הכרח הוא שיפסד ואל זה הדעת נמשכו כל החכמים חשוקי החכמה יוונית מבני עמנו ההופכים ללענה משפט התורה וכוונתה. אבל אנשי התורה בעלי האמונה האמיתית החכמים האמיתיים רז"ל יאמינו כי אין המיתה טבעית ואמרו (ויקרא רבה פכ"ז ס"ד) אלמלא שחטא לא מת לעולם והחכם באמת המאמין האמיתי רבנו הגדול הרמב"ן ז"ל אמר בפרשת בראשית (ב, יז) בזה הלשון ודע, כי אין הרכבה מורה על ההפסד אלא לדעת קטני אמנה החושבים כי הבריאה בחיוב אבל על דעת אנשי האמונה האומרים כי העולם מחודש בחפץ אלוה פשוט גם הקיום יהיה בו לעד כל ימי החפץ וזה אמת ברור ע"כ ובודאי חכמי הטבעים בחשכה יתהלכו כי הדבקות בו יתברך הוא למעלה מהטבע ורצונו ברוך הוא הוא דבקותו של אדם שיהיה נצחיי כי ענין החיוב הוא מצד הטבע וזה נוטה למאמיני הקדמות שהיה הכל בחיוב אבל אנחנו מאמיני האמת שהכל היה ברצונו ברוך הוא ורצונו הוא להיות האדם נצחיי אם ישאר בדבקות

<sup>401</sup> See *bSotah* 49b; *bYoma* 19a.

descendants of the sages whose views (according to Horowitz) corresponded to the kabbalistic view of providence,<sup>402</sup> i.e. that there is no natural cause and effect beyond the will of God. Adam's theoretical immortality is as fundamental a belief as the belief in God Himself - for in the kabbalistic universe the two are interlinked.

There is one example in the *Shelah* where Horowitz presents an explicit statement that the denial of kabbalah is as egregious as the denial of the Oral Torah: as part of a section at the beginning of *Asarah Ma'amarot* describing the indispensability of kabbalah in acquiring knowledge of God, Horowitz presents Cordovero's analysis followed by supplements from earlier authorities:

But the one who has had the idea of the sefirot and their existence revealed to him and denies them due to his poverty of understanding by virtue of his familiarity with foreign wisdoms and has drunk from the produce of gentiles is called a heretic, like one who denies and contradicts the Oral law.<sup>403</sup>

The denial of the sefirot is explained by exposure to 'foreign wisdoms' and attributed to those who have 'drunk from the produce of gentiles'. Like the 'Greek wisdom' explored above, the authenticity of kabbalah in Jewish tradition is contrasted with the non-Jewish, or foreign elements. Horowitz supplements Cordovero's words with the earlier kabbalist Shem tov ibn Shem Tov's (Spanish kabbalist 1390 – c. 1440)

---

<sup>402</sup> According to Urbach, this view is exceptional within the Talmud and he provides numerous examples in both the Talmud and the Sifra which contradict this view of providence, e.g. Genesis Rabba 9: 5; Leviticus Rabba 17:4; *bSan.* 90b. See Urbach, *Sages*, 255-80.

<sup>403</sup> *Shelah*, 42a.

אמנם אותו אשר יתגלה אליו ענין הספירות ומציאותם וכחישם מפני רוע תכונתו כי הורגל בחכמות  
חזוניות ובילדי הנכרים ישפיק יקרא כופר כמו הכופר ומכחיש בתורה שבע"פ. ומלבד אשר אלה לו  
עוד יסיף על חטאתו פשע כי מהכחשת הספירות ימשך אל הכפירה

likening of philosophical interpretation to idolatry.<sup>404</sup> This comparison is not simply hyperbolic but expresses the seductive appeal of foreign gods. But as in the Bible, it is only the God of Israel who may be worshipped; here too, the foreignness of philosophy is contrasted with the legitimacy of the Torah and the kabbalah.

In Horowitz's view, the authenticity of an idea does not preclude creative attempts at interpretation in Torah study; yet he is still concerned by the apparent implications of medieval kabbalist Menahem Recanati's statement, which encouraged innovative kabbalistic interpretations even if they had not been heard from the student's rabbi or teacher.<sup>405</sup> Horowitz therefore emphasises that what Recanati must mean is that while the exact words of the teacher were not necessarily imitated by the student, the roots of the student's novel idea certainly originated from Moses at Sinai, transmitted via the teacher. There is a clear and important distinction between the traditions of the men of true wisdom, the kabbalists, and the twisted reasoning skills of the philosophers:

---

<sup>404</sup> Ibid, 42a- b.

אבל המפרש פסוק או מאמר או טעם מצוה ע"פ (על פי) סברות בדויות וכזבות שהמציאו הפילוסופים ואינם מפי משה מפי הגבורה זה האיש עובר על לא תעשה לך פסל (שמות כ, ד) כדאיתא בזהר

...

וכתב בתולעת יעקב (בהקדמה ד"ה והנה הרב) בשם המקובל הרב רבי שם טוב בן שם טוב על זה המאמר, וזה לשונו תן עיניך בדברי אבות העולם קדושי עליון רואי פני המלך וראה איך השוו דרך הטעות והשיקול אל הפסילים והתמונות והטעם אחד כי בעלי התמונות כוונתם לעשות התמונות ההם, כדי לקבל מן הכחות ההם, ולהיות מכוונים כנגדם לאות ולזכרון

...

עכ"ל הרב רבי שם טוב. אמנם החוזר תורה נביאים וכתובים ודברי רז"ל על פי חכמת האמת אשריו מה טוב חלקו

<sup>405</sup> Recanati's position is one basis of some recent arguments about the role of the Zohar as a democratising text which allowed creative license for interpretation, as opposed to the conservative schools of Nahmanides and Rashba. See Abrams, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts*, 257.



And regarding that which he wrote 'even though you have not received the reason' (from your rabbi), he means to say that you didn't receive the reason explicitly, but the essence of the matter in its secret and root he did receive. That is, when he explained a particular verse or saying, or he attributed a reason to a commandment through the secrets he received from his teacher, and his teacher from his teacher leading back to Moses on Sinai, or through branches of the secrets from the aspect 'understand in wisdom' mentioned above. But one who explains a verse, saying or reason for a commandment through twisted reasoning and deceitful ideas which were invented by the philosophers, not in accordance with Moses and tradition, this man transgresses 'do not make for yourself an idol'.<sup>406</sup>

Again, the truth associated with Moses and tradition is contrasted with the 'twisted reasoning' of the philosophers. The authentic bearers of Jewish tradition are to be found only among the kabbalists, whereas the philosophers represent an extraneous idol whose views contaminate the purity of this transmission. 'Truth', according to Horowitz, is the opposite of 'speculation':

Yet it is explained in the words of our true rabbis, they are true and their words are true, that men are more glorious than angels, and not from those (words of those) who constantly speculate like the words of ibn Ezra (medieval Spanish philosopher, 1089-1167)...<sup>407</sup>

The truth/falsehood dichotomy is found throughout the *Shelah*, and is repeated in 'The Written Torah':

---

<sup>406</sup> *Shelah*, 42a.

ומה שכתב אע"פ שלא קבלת אותו הטעם כו' ר"ל(רצונו לומר) שלא קיבל אותו הטעם בפירוש אבל אמיתת ענין של זה הטעם בסודו ושרשו קיבל. דהיינו שמפרש איזה פסוק או מאמר או אומר טעם למצוה על פי הסודות שקבל מרבו ורבו עד למשה מסיני או על פי ענפי הסודות בבחינת הבן בחכמה הנזכר

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid*, 45a.

אמנם מבואר בדברי רבותינו האמיתיים הם אמת ודבריהם אמת מבואר בדבריהם שבני אדם נכבדים ממלאכי השרת ולא מאותם המתחדשים בכל רגע כדברי הרב אבן עזרא ז"ל

The philosophers discussed at length ideas concerning the physical appearance of God which they reject and do not take literally, as I have cited some of their words, but the truth is that which has been received by the 'men of truth', passed on mouth to mouth from Moses our teacher from God.<sup>408</sup>

The appeal that Horowitz makes is always to the kabbalists' faithfulness to tradition and to the extraneous nature of the foreign wisdom that is philosophy.

### Heresy without Heretics

Nevertheless, Horowitz's attitude towards non-Torah based subject matter (and even philosophy) is not unqualifiedly negative. Nor does he discredit the individual rabbis whom he perceives to be seduced by the foreign wisdom of philosophy, even if he considers their views heretical. This is an important qualification, as Horowitz's priority in the *Shelah* is simply to prevent those views which he perceives as contradicting the premises of the kabbalah from being accepted as legitimate, rather than to discredit all study that is 'non-Jewish' in that it did not derive from classical Jewish sources (this includes the writings of Jews influenced by non-Jewish philosophy, which would still constitute non-Jewish subject matter as they were not grounded in the Talmud, Bible or Midrashic sources). As long as these subjects remained within the boundaries of kabbalistic orthodoxy, they could be pursued. Horowitz was the product of elite rabbinic 16th Century culture, and like many Ashkenazic rabbis of his day who had absorbed philosophical terms into their

---

<sup>408</sup> *Shelah*, 256b.

חכמי פילוסופים האריכו מאד בענייני תוארים מצד עצמו יתברך שהם שוללים ולא חיובים וכמו שהעתקתי קצת מדבריהם אכן האמת המקובל בחכמי האמת איש מפי איש עד משה רבינו ע"ה מפי הגבורה שענייני תואריו יתברך ושבתו וקימתו והליכתו ודבורו ועין ואוזן ורגל ויד וכיוצא בזה הם דברים פנימיים רוחניים

vocabulary, Horowitz makes liberal use of Aristotelian terms such as ‘potentiality and actuality’ and ‘form and matter’.<sup>409</sup> Like many of his contemporaries, Horowitz’s opposition to the study of non-Torah subjects emphasised the use of these subjects to distort the Torah or distract the individual from valuable Torah learning time. It was not generally regarded as something intrinsically bad, and most were willing to accept the importance of a certain degree of non-Jewish learning, especially in the realm of natural sciences (which could easily be attributed to the wisdom of God).<sup>410</sup> Even Maharshal, who condemned Rama’s use of Aristotle in a responsum, is described by his interlocutor as ‘familiar with the paths of the heavens’.<sup>411</sup> It is specifically regarding matters of belief that Horowitz condemns the philosophical adherents for having departed from the true tradition. He does not deny that the philosophers possess a degree of wisdom – but limits it to wisdom of the earth and ‘the world of action’ in contrast to the kabbalists, who possess wisdom of the heavens:

---

<sup>409</sup> On potentiality/actuality, see *Shelah* 18a, 21b, 25a-25b, 29a, 57a, 119a, 264b; on matter and form 16a, 198a, 269a, 366a. On the complex relationship between kabbalah and philosophy in the medieval period, see Moshe Idel, 'Maimonides and Kabbalah' in Moshe Idel, 'Maimonides and Kabbalah', in *Studies in Maimonides*, ed. by Isadore Twersky (London: Harvard University Press, 1990), 36,67; Moshe Idel, 'Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed and the Kabbalah', *Jewish History*, 18, 2/3 (2004), 199; Idel, *Kabbalah in Italy, 1280-1510 : A Survey*, 3, 23; Elliot Wolfson, 'Jewish Mysticism' in Daniel Frank and Oliver ed. Leaman, *History of Jewish Philosophy*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 391.

<sup>410</sup> See Elbaum, *Openness*, 33-67.

<sup>411</sup> On the controversy between the two giants of central European Jewry which started from a responsum of Isserles’ *Responsa Rama* no. 6 and 7, see Elbaum, *Openness*, 156-57. This phrase refers to a description of the Amora Shmuel in *yHag.* 2:9 describing himself as extremely knowledgeable in the natural sciences. For contrasting depictions of the role of philosophy in Jewish life see *Guide*, 1:32; Rashba, *Responsa*, vol. 1 no. 415; Radbaz, *OH*, 191.

Know that everything that the medieval philosophers speculated, and divided creation into three parts – lowly earth, the world of spheres and the angelic sphere – this is all included in the words of the men of truth in the 'world of action', and they did not merit with their intellects to understand more.<sup>412</sup>

In a long passage summarising the medieval authorities who warned against philosophical study at the end of 'Tractate Shavuot', Horowitz cites Bahya b. Asher arguing that philosophical study will lead to confusion and false equivalence with the wisdom of the Torah; he also refers to the author of *Shevilei Emunah* (Meir ibn Aldabi, 14th Century Spanish kabbalist) that philosophical study leads to neglect of the commandments and prayer: Those who believe it are separated from the community of Israel.<sup>413</sup>

What is repeatedly emphasised in this excerpt is the power of philosophy to lead to religious deviation. Despite this, many Jewish philosophical works appear in the *Shelah*. While some of their positions are critiqued or disparaged, others are cited

---

<sup>412</sup> *Shelah*, 48b.

ודע כל מה שחקרו הפילוסופים הראשונים וחלקו מציאות ההשתלשלות לשלשה חלקים דהיינו עולם השפל ועולם הגלגלים ועולם המלאכים כל זה נכלל בדברי חכמי האמת לקרוא בשם עולם העשיה ולא זכו בשכליהם להשיג ביותר

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid*, 183a.

ואמר החכם (משלי ב, יט) כל באיה לא ישובון ר"ל כל הבא ונכנס מתחלה בחכמה זו לא יוכל לצאת ממנה להכנס בלבו חכמת התורה כי לא יוכל לשוב מחכמה טבעית ולא ישיג לעמוד על חכמת התורה שהיא אורחות החיים כי יהיה לבו תמיד על חכמת הטבע ותעלה ברוחו להשוות שתי החכמות יחד ולהביא ראייה מזו לזו ויעוות משפט כי שני הפכים הם צרות זו לזו ולא ישכבו במקום אחד עכ"ל ועיין שם כי קצרתיו

בעל שבילי אמונה נכד הרא"ש היה כמו שכתב פעמים בספרו דף ק' הוא כתב בנתיב הח' וזה לשונו ראיתי תועי רוח שחשבו עשיית המצות שאב"י ור"ב נושאים ונותנים בהן דבר קטן שלא עלה ביד המתעסק בהן רק שכר עשייתן שאין בעשייתן רק שקיים מצות השם יתברך כו' עד... ומזה יצא להם ביטול העשייה בכלל המצות כתפלה ותפילין ואיסור והיתר ואין נותנים דעתן רק בחכמת הפילוסופיא וחושבין שזהו מעשה מרכבה וזה באמת אבדון ומות והמאמינים כן נבדלים מקהל ישראל וכו

without comment or with approval when they support kabbalistic ideas or are helpful pedagogical tools. Importantly, the stature of the rabbi was not undermined by his false philosophy: Maimonides is an excellent case in point and reflects a willingness on Horowitz's part to dichotomise between Maimonides the man and Maimonides' philosophy.<sup>414</sup> Maimonides is cited extensively with respect to the importance of developing physical health;<sup>415</sup> he is also treated with great deference as a scholar, with Horowitz expressing his humility in terms of his unworthiness in relation to the lowliest of Maimonides' students.<sup>416</sup> Additionally, Horowitz fiercely defends Maimonides' categorisation of the commandments against its detractors.<sup>417</sup> Yet Maimonides' philosophy is also negatively contrasted with the wisdom of the 'men of truth'.<sup>418</sup> This is also imitated in Horowitz's evaluation of the philosophers in general: He cites approvingly their analysis of the 'good inclination', accepts the premises of Aristotelian metaphysics in describing this world, and is happy to spend a page citing Maimonides' description of the acquisition of the active intellect.<sup>419</sup> This appears to be typical of the accommodating Ashkenazic attitude towards non-Jewish subject matter: When it could enhance or explain the physical world in a way which did not

---

<sup>414</sup> In total, I have counted 101 citations of Maimonides in the *Shelah*.

<sup>415</sup> *Shelah*, 56b.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid*, 73b.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid*, 266a-b.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid*, 24b, 44b-45a, 175a.

<sup>419</sup> See *Shelah*, 67a where Horowitz cites the description of the 'good inclination' of the philosophers with approval; 48b and 359b where he accepts the premises of Aristotelian metaphysics as the 'revealed truth'; 410b-411a where Maimonides is cited for an entire page describing the acquisition of the active intellect, including a reference to Ptolemy's 2nd century mathematical and astronomical treatise, the *Almagest*.

undermine God or His Torah, it was a useful tool. When it undermined it, it had to be rejected. Where Horowitz went beyond his predecessors is in extending the boundaries of what was considered beyond the pale of acceptable belief, and in doing so he constructed an orthodoxy with clear boundaries. Only when the beliefs of the philosophers contradicted kabbalah were they considered non-Jewish views, outside the realm of tradition. It is then more accurate to speak of Horowitz's opposition to the non-Jewish component of philosophy which undermined the specifically Jewish elements articulated in the kabbalah. In designing a self-contained and interlinked structure of acceptable Jewish beliefs, the *Shelah* delineates precise boundaries for what constitutes true Judaism.

### Particularism

The distinction between the Jewish and non-Jewish domain is a tenet found throughout the *Shelah*. Much as kabbalah and the Torah can be categorised under the bracket of 'Jewish' and philosophy as 'non-Jewish', the physical forms of the Jews and the nations differ fundamentally, reflecting contrasting roles on earth. Building on his kabbalistic sources, Horowitz develops a pronounced ethos of particularism.

Biblical and Rabbinic literature does not easily fall into categories commonly defined as 'Particularistic' or 'Universalistic'.<sup>420</sup> The children of Israel are described as

---

<sup>420</sup> Particularism refers to an exclusive attachment to one's own group or nation or the theological doctrine that some but not all people are elected and redeemed. Universalism is loyalty to and concern for others without regard to national or other allegiances or that salvation/redemption does not depend upon specific religious

'chosen' and are elected in the desert to be a nation of priests and a holy nation.<sup>421</sup> One Midrash discusses the concept that Israel pre-existed the Torah in God's mind. Other passages suggest that this chosenness was contingent on the acceptance of the Torah itself, and otherwise the Jewish people would not be any different to all the idolatrous nations.<sup>422</sup> Some rabbinic literature evinces a concern to explain this election as something other than arbitrary and to find in the character or behaviour of Israel (or of the Patriarchs) some motive for the divine choice, such as exceptional holiness, humility, loyalty, or obedience.<sup>423</sup> The concept of the chosenness of the Jewish people is also found within the Jewish liturgy.<sup>424</sup>

Hayes presents the case that although the rabbis tried to prevent interaction with gentiles which could lead to the violation of halakhah, the gentile was not regarded as ontologically different or unworthy of emulation. Gentiles did not possess an intrinsic impurity by virtue of their status among the rabbis (unlike among the Qumran communities).<sup>425</sup> The rabbis did not go out of their way to prevent

---

allegiances. See Menahem Kellner, 'On Universalism and Particularism in Judaism', *Daat*, 36 (1996), 10-19.

<sup>421</sup> Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2.

<sup>422</sup> E.g. Numbers 14:10; Gen. Rabba 1:4; Ex. Rabba 47:3; Mekhilta, Yitro, 5; Sifrei, Deut. 343; *bShab* 88b; *bA.Z* 3a.

<sup>423</sup> *bBeits*. 32b; *bYev*. 79a.

<sup>424</sup> Festivals *Amidah*, in Koren Siddur (Jerusalem, 2009), 774-776; *Kiddush* for Festivals, 761; *Aleinu* prayer, 181. See Beth Berkowitz, *Defining Jewish Difference : From Antiquity to the Present*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 25-158.

<sup>425</sup> Hayes, 'The Other in Rabbinic Literature' in Charlotte Fonrobert, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 248-49, 53; cf. Mira Balberg, *Purity, Body, and Self in Early Rabbinic Literature*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 138.

interactions between Jew and gentile, and in fact facilitated interaction between them by creating acceptable boundaries.<sup>426</sup> Therefore, Hayes argues, rabbinic literature does not overly emphasise Jewish particularism.

Menahem Kellner devotes an entire study to presenting a dichotomy between the writings of Maimonides and Judah Ha-Levi. According to Kellner, Ha-Levi was the prototype for the mystical particularism associated with the Zohar that would emerge later in the 13th Century. He held that Jews possessed ontological holiness in that they were intrinsically holy from birth by virtue of God choosing them.<sup>427</sup> Maimonides, Kellner argues, promoted a Universalist philosophy, attributing significance to the Jewish people only to the extent that they perfected their intellects through the Torah. The difference between Jew and non-Jew was a function of halakhah not ontology, the law demanding specific standards from the Jewish people but not conferring them with superior holiness.

From the 13th Century onwards, kabbalists tended to attribute a specific metaphysical significance to the Jewish people, distinguishing them from the more universalistic Jewish Aristotelians who considered individual worth to be a function of the perfection of the intellect.<sup>428</sup> Much of this thinking can be found in the Zohar. As

---

<sup>426</sup> Christine Hayes, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities : Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 142. See Berkowitz, *Jewish Difference*, 1-24, 159-90.

<sup>427</sup> Kellner, *Maimonides and Mysticism*, 216. See Judah ha-Levi, *Ha-Kuzari*, (Tel Aviv: P Shalom, 1969), 1.11-1.115.

<sup>428</sup> Sherwin, *Mystical Theology*, 124-27.



shown in the previous chapter, the Zohar inextricably linked God, the Torah and Israel.<sup>429</sup> The emphasis on the individual soul and its unique role also encouraged a distinctly particularistic outlook.

It is to this particularistic tradition that Horowitz belongs, and particularism remains a topic of sustained focus throughout the *Shelah*. He is more emphatic than his contemporaries or predecessors in emphasising the implications of the Zohar's position. Horowitz's presentation of the role of the Jew in relation to the non-Jew relies heavily on the writings of ibn Gabbai. Firstly, he explains that he will present the words of ibn Gabbai to provide evidence for the holiness of the body. Ibn Gabbai examines a passage from the Talmud which refers to the fact that the Hebrew *Adam* or 'Man' refers only to the Jewish people. It is only they who merit the title 'Man', for this title only refers to the 'form' but not the 'matter'. The gentile's soul emerges from impurity unlike the Jew's soul which emerges from holiness.<sup>430</sup> The purpose of creation relates to the 'form', which is Israel. Israel are a 'holy nation chosen to be precious to God' and therefore they possess intrinsic holiness as each soul is rooted in the inner core of the sefirot, closest to God. The nations, however, who were formed from the residue of the descent of the spiritual worlds, are impure and contaminated:

---

<sup>429</sup> *Zohar* III: 73a.

<sup>430</sup> In Chapter Nine I will examine how the kabbalists considered impurity to be synonymous with defilement and sin, a comparison generally rejected throughout the Talmud, considering impurity to have no relationship with sin.

*Shelah*, 9a.

כי שם אדם נופל על הצורה לא על החומר ועל כן אין הגוים קרוין אדם כי נשמתם מרוח הטומאה  
אמנם ישראל נשמתם מרוח קדשו

There are souls that emanate from the inner core of the sefirot, souls that emanate from the boundaries, souls from the branches, souls which are in essence from the good side and souls from the evil side. Behold, the holy nation who are chosen to be precious to God - their souls are from the aspect of holiness and purity, although they themselves have a hierarchy (for the soul of the righteous is not like the soul of the wicked, and even among these categories there are distinctions) but the souls of the non-Jews are from the aspect of impurity and they are contaminated.<sup>431</sup>

Horowitz then adds to this analysis through a citation from a 13th Century kabbalistic work *Sefer ha-Temunah* (attributed to Tannaim of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE) which suggests that the profane 'body' of human beings belongs to the nations alone, and the holy souls of the Jewish people only reside there due to Adam's sin. The Jew should have been an entirely different being to the non-Jew but became mixed up in a body after Adam's sin.<sup>432</sup> As part of his explanation for analysing the greatness of Man, Horowitz emphasises this fundamental distinction between Jew and non-Jew. To the Jew is the Godly, to the non-Jew is the profane.

---

<sup>431</sup> Ibid, 9b-10a.

ויש נפש שנאצלה מפנימיות הספירות ויש מהחיצונות ויש מהכנפים ויש שעיקרו מהטוב ויש מהרע והנה עם הקדש הנבחרים לסגולתו של הקב"ה נפשם מצד הקדושה והטהרה עם שיש בהם עצמם חילוק כי אין נפש הצדיק כנפש הרשע וגם בין אלה חלוק בנפשותם כפי מדרגות אבל נפשות הגוים מצד הטומאה והם טמאים וראיתי בספר היחוד לבעל התמונה בזה ענין נפלא אמר שם בזה הלשון וצורת ישראל היה ראוי להיותם משונות ומובדלות ממין האדם כשאר הכחות ונפשם אבל חק השמיטה וקושיה להיות הכחות מתערבות ומגולגלות ומתגלגלות בגופות בגופים רבים משונים וכולם ישובו למקומם ע"י (על ידי) הקרבנות הנקרבים על המזבח לרצון מהבהמות עכ"ד (עד כאן דבריו). פירוש לכן היה צריך שצורת של ישראל שתהיה משונה משאר הבריות כמו שנפשם וכחם הם משונות ומובדלות מהם כך היה ראוי שיהיו הגופים אבל סדר השמטה וקושיה אין נותן הדרך הזה בעבור כי הכחות והנשמות בעונות הגופים מתעררים ומתגלגלים זה בזה ר"ל (רצונו לומר) שנפשם של ישראל מתערבות בגופי הגוים ואותן המתערבות בגופי הבהמות נפדו על ידי הקרבן הנקרב לרצון מן הבהמה, אבל גופי הגוים אינו יכול שיפדה הנפש ממנו עד שיתגייר

<sup>432</sup> Ibid.

The idea of a 'Jewish body' containing intrinsically superior components to the non-Jewish is elaborated in *Asarah Ma'amarot*. Firstly, Horowitz explains that God's covenant with Israel was not simply with the physical people who were present at the time, but is embedded into the fabric of the universe.<sup>433</sup> Expanding this point, Horowitz analyses the question of Isaac Arama (c.1420-1494, author of the encyclopaedic philosophical commentary *Akeidat Yitzhak*), regarding how post-Sinaitic generations could be obligated in the commandments of the Torah despite the fact that they were not physically there.<sup>434</sup> Horowitz comments:

Know my children, that just as the souls of every generation were there at Sinai, so too was the essence of their bodies. This is a subtle matter and I will explain it in two ways...The secret of the body is that it is rooted in hidden realms: There is no doubt that this idea relates specifically to the souls of Israel who are a portion of God, 'The spirit of Man is the land of the Lord',<sup>435</sup> an emanation from the primordial Adam. Just as six hundred thousand souls emanated from the soul from the primordial Adam, so did the bodies mentioned above. Therefore Israel is called 'Man',<sup>436</sup> for we are truly the primordial Adam in essence in soul and body, unlike the nations, and the souls stood with the bodies at Sinai upon receiving the Torah under oath and covenant. Since the root of the body is in this sublime body, all generations made this oath with spiritual body and soul!<sup>437</sup>

---

<sup>433</sup> Ibid, 43b.

האמנה כי לדעתי אין דבר השבועה הזאת כמו שחשבו רבים ואין קיום ונצחיות ברית הש"י ואהבתו עם האומה הזאת תלויים בחומריתה אבל הוא קיום ודבוק טבעי הכרחי גדול וחזק ממנו לא ישוער בטולו בשום צד וענין בעולם

<sup>434</sup> See *bKet.* 11a.

<sup>435</sup> Proverbs 20:27.

<sup>436</sup> *bYev.* 61a.

<sup>437</sup> *Shelah*, 44a.

ודבר הגופות של והפנימיות המרכז שם היה כך שם היו הדורות כל של שהנשמות שכמו ו"צ בניי דעו פנים בשני ואבארהו דק ענין הוא זה

As the body of Israel is made of a uniquely ethereal substance, both the body and soul of Israel accepted and received the Torah. Applying the logic of the 'organic universe' relating to the interconnectedness of the spiritual and the physical realm, Horowitz declares that the Jewish body in all its future manifestations was present at Mount Sinai, emanating directly from Adam, unlike the non-Jewish bodies.

The need for separation between Jew and non-Jew is also declared to be axiomatic to the proper functioning of the universe. They are not merely separate terms of spiritual essence, but must maintain this separation in the physical world. The case of separation from gentile wine, explained in terms of the need for Jew and gentile to occupy separate domains, is a case in point.<sup>438</sup> Horowitz also cites his father's ethical will *Yesh Nohalin*, which specifically exhorts his children to avoid drinking mead and alcoholic beverages with gentiles.<sup>439</sup>

The revulsion towards the non-Jewish body is expressed by the need to separate from them. This requirement of differentiation is described in 'Tractate Hullin' as 'the secret of *Havdalah* (the ceremony consecrating the end of the Sabbath by

---

שהם ישראל בנפשות דוקא הוא הזה ענין כי ספק ואין. הגוף שורש כן גם בנעלם בה הגויה סוד הרי שנתפשט וכשם הראשון אדם התפשטות והוא (כז, כ משלי) אדם נשמת אלהים נר ממעל אלוה חלק נתפשט ג"כ (גם כן) ענין הגויה הנזכרת כן ישראל של נשמות רבוא ששים הראשון אדם מנשמת ולכן ישראל קרוין אדם ('יבמות סא א) כי אנחנו כולנו באמת אדם הראשון בנשמה וגויה לא כן האומות

...

על כן ישראל קרוין בעצם אדם והנשמות עם הגויות עמדו בהר סיני בשעת קבלת התורה בשבועה ובאלה ובברית. ומאחר ששורש ודקות הגוף הוא בגויה זו הרי נשבעו כל הדורות בנשמה ובגוף רוחני

<sup>438</sup> *Shelah* 76b-77a (Text 2), see Chapter Eight, 191-93 for a more detailed analysis of this passage.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*

differentiating between the sacred Sabbath and the profane weekday). The holy Jew must separate from the profane gentile.<sup>440</sup>

A final important passage for understanding how Horowitz constructs his vision of Jewish particularism is his presentation of the gentile as the *kelippah* and the Jew as the *peri*. Literally understood, this refers to the 'shell' or 'peel' and the 'fruit' which sprang from the emergence of the physical world, the bitter shell concealing the pure fruit within.<sup>441</sup> The ultimate function of the nations of the world is to eventually give way to reveal the pure fruit within, and their role in the world is entirely subordinate to that of the Jewish people.<sup>442</sup>

Horowitz's stark emphasis on the uniqueness of the Jew and his dismissal of the non-Jew leads to the historical question of whether there was anything specific which prompted these attitudes beyond theoretical considerations, such as persecution or the fear of assimilation. It is beyond the scope of this study to speculate regarding wider contextual issues potentially affecting the attitudes of rabbis such as Horowitz, but it is worth pointing to Ruderman's thesis concerning an increasingly anxious

---

<sup>440</sup> Ibid, 139b; see also 149a.

וזהו סוד ההבדלה המבדיל בין קודש לחול המאורות העליונים בגדי קודש והתחתונים חול ובין אור לחושך סוד המאורות העליונים שהם האור הנעלם והחושך שהם הקליפות ובין ישראל לעמים ישראל נטלו נוף האילן מקום קדוש, והגוים טמאים דבוקים במקום טמא והם הקליפות הנזכרות וצריך להבדיל ביניהם ובין יום השביעי שהוא קודש לששת ימי המעשה הנזכרים שהם חול והמבדיל ביניהם הוא העושה הטוב בעיני השם עכ"ל

<sup>441</sup> See Chapter Three, 83, Chapter Four, 112.

<sup>442</sup> *Shelah*, 176b.

כי בריאת העולם היתה בשביל ישראל (ויקרא רבה פל"ו ס"ד) והם הפרי ושאר האומות הקליפות להם נמצא שבאמת אין שום עם אלא ישראל ושאר האומות הם קליפות להם לכך היו מלכים לאומות קודם מלוך מלך ישראל כי כן הקליפה קודם להפרי

rabbinate in the 17th Century regarding their own authority and position.<sup>443</sup> From a perusal of Horowitz's comments regarding the actions of the communities he presided over, there does seem to be a persistent concern to emphasise the inferiority of the gentile and a need for the Jew to distance himself from interactions with them.<sup>444</sup> It is also possible that this attitude is related to fears of increasing religious laxity – for instance, Horowitz spends a page condemning the widespread practice of betrothed couples engaging in sexual contact before marriage.<sup>445</sup>

---

<sup>443</sup> Particularism helps to enhance the prestige and stature of the Jewish nation and the rabbinate, see Ruderman, *Early Modern*, 146-50.

<sup>444</sup> On positive intent counting for Jews and not gentiles which Horowitz extends to an appraisal of the overall lack of trustworthiness of the gentile, *Shelah* 57a; on wife beating described as 'the ways of the gentiles', 64b; on kabbalistic symbolism portraying Jews as the purpose of creation and non-Jews as secondary, 176b; for a description of the 'ways of the gentile' including gatherings for the purpose of lewdness, 346a.

<sup>445</sup> See *Shelah*, 104a.

## **Chapter Six: Devekut**

‘You, who held fast to the LORD your God, are all alive today’.<sup>446</sup>

Horowitz’s expansion of the sphere of kabbalah in line with the ‘threefold cord’ principle is particularly significant in terms of his promotion of a pietistic ethos for human behaviour. The religious individual in the *Shelah* is one capable of infusing every facet of life with impassioned love of God rather than the meticulously observant, the great scholar or even the wise mystic. Devekut, the greatest ambition of the mystic, became attainable in every walk of life. Although Horowitz acknowledged a hierarchy within the levels of devekut, by expanding its terminology to encompass ordinary spheres of behaviour he constructed an emotionally infused religious ethos accessible to every individual. Devekut as a term came to encompass every action which fulfilled the will of God, from interpersonal good behaviour to the loftiest understanding of the secrets of the Torah. In Part 4 of this study, this concept is expanded to the realm of sanctifying the mundane in the form of eating, drinking and sexual relations (even though there remains scope for the abstinent practices encouraged in pietistic circles).

---

<sup>446</sup> Deuteronomy 4:4.

## Background

The words ‘*shelemut*’ and ‘*devekut*’ have been used frequently within this study as both are staples of musar and kabbalistic terminology, broadly referring to the human being’s ability to perfect himself and cleave to God.<sup>447</sup> The purpose of the *Shelah* is to lead the individual to *shelemut* via the ‘threefold cord’.

Devekut has Biblical and Midrashic roots which refer to cleaving to God, normally corresponding to the observance of the commandments, prayer and Torah study, although at times the term ‘cleaving’ is applied literally, including the graphic representation of the love of God paralleled to the lust felt by Shekhem for Dina when he raped her.<sup>448</sup> Love of God coupled with awe engendered this form of devekut.

Although associated with the kabbalists, the concept of a mystical union with God preceded the kabbalists by several hundred years. Bahya was one of the progenitors of what Koch has characterised as ‘Musar mysticism’, whereby the individual undertakes a regimen of self-improvement that culminates in a union with God,<sup>449</sup> a process which he argues is distinct from the kabbalistic ascent as it did not

---

<sup>447</sup> See Chapter One, 21-22.

<sup>448</sup> Pslams 102:6; Job 19:20; Lamentations 4:4; Numbers Rabba 22:1; *bSan.* 64a; *bKet.* 111b, see Sherwin, *Mystical Theology*, 124, 222 ff. On Dina, see Genesis Rabba 80:6-7, which is the source of the three phrases of love, *devekah*, *hashikah* and *hafitsah*, ‘cleaving’, ‘yearning’ and ‘desire’, the basis of the model found in *Reishit Hokhmah*.

<sup>449</sup> *Hovot ha-Levavot*, ch. 5.



incorporate theurgical unifications.<sup>450</sup> Maimonides describes the contemplative bliss associated with Aristotelian writings as passionate cleaving to God.<sup>451</sup>

Devekut became a central focus of medieval kabbalistic literature.<sup>452</sup> For Isaac the Blind and his students in the 14th Century, prayer and observance of the commandments were viewed as subordinate to the overall goal of devekut.<sup>453</sup> The term itself became widespread in the 16th Century, and became associated with ecstatic Torah study: The kabbalists Solomon Alkabetz, Elisha Gallico and Moshe Alshekh discuss devekut in association with the rapture of Torah study, contrasting it with the study of rationalist philosophy that had become widespread in Safed in the early 16th Century.<sup>454</sup>

---

<sup>450</sup> Koch, *Human Self-Perfection*, 3.

<sup>451</sup> MT, 'Hilkhot Yesodei ha Torah', 2:2; *Guide* 3:51; David Blumenthal, *Philosophic Mysticism : Studies in Rational Religion*, (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2006), 128-51.

<sup>452</sup> On Torah as an object of devekut, see Michael Fishbane, 'The Book of the Zohar and Exegetical Spirituality', in *Mysticism and Sacred Scripture*, ed. by Steven Katz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Pachter, 'Ethical Writing', 175; Lawrence Fine, 'The Study of Torah as a Rite of Theurgical Contemplation in Lurianic Kabbalah', in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times Vol. 3*, ed. by David Blumenthal (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 30-40.

<sup>453</sup> Gershom Scholem, *Reishit Ha-Kabbalah (1150-1250)*, (Tel Aviv, 1948), 115-22.

<sup>454</sup> Pachter, 'Ethical Writing', 172-92. According to Alkabetz, Man achieves union with God only through his study of the Torah. Alshekh depicts the process of devekut using erotic imagery, with the four stages of Man's devekut with the Torah compared to four stages in a lover's relationship with his beloved, leading to everlasting rapture and being ravished continually by beloved, see Alkabetz, *Rav Peninim* (Constantinople, 1765), 36b-37a. According to Gallico, in devekut man gains comprehension of secret matters, and Man's comprehension of the Torah and its secrets will correspond directly to their level of devekut.

Joseph Karo and Eliezer Azikiri had a far more ascetic understanding of the requirements of *devekut*. In *Maggid Meisharim*, Karo treats *devekut* as a state of being rather than a specific mystical aspiration, whereby the individual remains in *devekut* as long as he is engrossed in devoted worship of God. Karo viewed Torah study as the main fulfilment of *devekut*, accompanied by mortifications and ascetic practices to remove physical temptations.<sup>455</sup> For Azikiri, *devekut* was closely linked to repentance: In *Sefer Hareidim* he writes that knowledge of God is the basis of all the commandments, but repentance is their purpose. He also encouraged the cultivation of ecstatic states leading to mystical activity involving incessant unifications. To facilitate this state, solitude was essential as it enabled the individual to seek his creator without boundaries.<sup>456</sup>

To Cordovero, the Torah's essential kinship with the human soul assured the possibility of *devekut* and the bridging of the gap between God and Man.<sup>457</sup> *Reishit Hokhmah* describes the systematic development of *devekut* as a withdrawal from all worldly things, followed by a three-tiered path to God containing 'Cleaving' 'Longing' and 'Desiring'.<sup>458</sup> It focuses on the passionate, ecstatic quality of *devekut*, which is the true love of God, consisting of a person attaching himself with his soul to the *shekhinah* and concentrating all his attentions upon her unification with *tiferet* as

---

<sup>455</sup> Pachter, 'Ethical Writing', 196.

<sup>456</sup> Eliezer Azikiri, *Sefer Hareidim* (Venice, 1601), 3a-b, in Werblowsky, *Lawyer and Mystic*, 59-61.

<sup>457</sup> Louis Jacobs, *Seeker of Unity*, (London: Vallentine, 1966), 87-115; Ross, 'Maharal on Miracles', 81-96; Sherwin, *Mystical Theology*, 113.

<sup>458</sup> Fine, *Safed Spirituality*, 14; Pachter, *Roots of Faith*, 288-89. De Vidas' analyses of love and fear of God are widely and approvingly cited, see *Shelah* 49b-51a, 67b.

well as separating her from the demonic *kelippah*. The focus must be absolute, compared to a husband focusing exclusively on his wife at the expense of all other women.<sup>459</sup> Devekut thus entails a desire inherent in the love of God and a complete withdrawal of the soul from all material things. Two parts of Man are envisioned in *Reishit Hokhmah*, one which is attached to the earth and the other which is attached to God. Devekut is maintained by fulfilling every commandment with longing, heartfelt enthusiasm and yearning.<sup>460</sup>

In the Lurianic writings of Hayyim Vital,<sup>461</sup> the nature of devekut becomes far more intricately connected with a meditative process associated with kabbalistic theosophy. Pachter describes it as ‘not as an end but only a jumping off point from which man ventures on to his real purpose’.<sup>462</sup> The cleaving to God requires the unification of all his sefirot, and eventually leads to prophecy and the acquisition of the Holy Spirit, which is the supreme religious ideal.<sup>463</sup> Vital’s writings on prayer in *Peri Ets Hayyim* explore the complex journey from the individual’s mind to each

---

<sup>459</sup> In the work, love of God is both a metaphysical principle and psychological state, depicted as an energy that flows from the supreme source of all existence and passes through chain of cause and effect, based on mutuality with mankind. See Koch, *Human Self-Perfection*, 211-13. Love of God should focus on the divine presence, the *shekhinah* (the lowest of the kabbalistic sefirot) and lift it to *tiferet* (the level above the *shekhinah*), unifying the two. The ultimate love of Man towards the *shekhinah* is depicted in erotic terms as an intimate copulation, see Moses Cordovero, *The Palm Tree of Deborah* (Trans. Louis Jacobs), (London: Vallentine, 1960), 119-20.

<sup>460</sup> Koch, *Human Self-Perfection*, 220-24; Fine, *Safed Spirituality*, 143.

<sup>461</sup> Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 354.

<sup>462</sup> Pachter, *Roots of Faith*, 315.

<sup>463</sup> Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 225; Koch, *Human Self-Perfection*, 72; Pachter, *Roots of Faith*, 314; On the secondary role of devekut in the writings of Hayyim Vital see Idel, *Hasidism : Between Ecstasy and Magic*, 10, 31, 90.

aspect of the sefirot.<sup>464</sup> Also found in Vital's writings is the idea that every action either brings the individual further or closer to God, rendering *devekut* a process as well as a goal.<sup>465</sup>

What unites the 16th Century portrayals of *devekut* is that when properly accomplished, it demands an extraordinary state: Either of devotion to Torah study, ascetic renunciation of worldly things, deep passion or contemplative unifications. Most of these writings were initially restricted to pious ascetic fellowships and not widespread, and only later communicated to a wider audience.<sup>466</sup> Only the truly exceptional individual could ever achieve the rigours demanded of *devekut*.

### Devekut in the *Shelah*

In *Asarah Ma'amarot*, Horowitz presents a model of *devekut* based on that of *Reishit Hokhmah*. *Devekah* represents service of God but is a low level, where the human being remains in a struggle with the evil inclination; *hashikah* is the service performed with burning enthusiasm and overcoming the evil inclination, and *hafitsah* is eternal love, whereby the individual is constantly driven to do the will of God.<sup>467</sup> In Krispel's thesis, she carefully explores this section in terms of the *Shelah's* analysis of the different levels of fear and love of God, leading to the highest level of the

---

<sup>464</sup> Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 236-76; Werblowsky, *Lawyer and Mystic*, 68.

<sup>465</sup> Hayyim Vital, *Sha'arei Kedushah*, (Jerusalem: Eshkol, 1985), 5-13.

<sup>466</sup> Pachter, *Roots of Faith*, 192.

<sup>467</sup> Moshe Hallamish, 'Ahavah', in *Midot U Regashot*, ed. by Aharon Namdar (Ramat Gan: Hoshen le-mishpat, 1994), 140.

hasid, who acts entirely for the sake of 'upon high', culminating in the level of Abraham and Moses.<sup>468</sup>

However, while this description is a faithful depiction of the model presented in *Asarah Ma'amarot*, it doesn't consider the expressions of devekut throughout the *Shelah* - which prioritise ordinary, lower levels of cleaving during mundane activity, and only rarely demands the extraordinary model derived from de Vidas' formulation. In practice, devekut differs considerably throughout the *Shelah* from the ideal formulation found in the writings of the earlier kabbalists. When the use of devekut is considered in the entire work, it emerges that the formulation in *Asarah Ma'amarot* is an outline of the ideal form of devekut rather than its minimal requirements – a crucial distinction, as the goal of devekut refers as much to the process of cleaving to God (attainable through ordinary means) as it does to the end goal of mystical union. It is therefore important to distinguish between Horowitz's 'extraordinary' and 'ordinary' use of the term throughout the *Shelah*.<sup>469</sup>

### The Ladder of Devekut

In the *Shelah*, Horowitz attributes devekut to actions that are unremarkable in that they don't require strenuous effort, asceticism or ecstatic trances. While citing many of the models presented above, particularly those of Azikiri and de Vidas, Horowitz adopts a two-tiered definition whereby devekut is both 'normal' in the manner associated with halakhic observance and 'supernal', requiring strenuous effort.

---

<sup>468</sup> Krispel, 'Concept of Man', 161-63, 69-70, 78, 85.

<sup>469</sup> These analyses are based primarily on *Shelah* 49b-51a, which will be explored below. See *Shelah* 153a for a similar description.

The term *devekut* in the *Shelah* describes both an ultimate state of being and an incremental process. The process of *devekut* is conditioned by the ideal of *shelemut*. The 'threefold cord' model is a fundamental paradigm within the work, and human beings must absorb each of the three aspects to reach *shelemut*. In study, this requires an understanding of the halakhic, kabbalistic and moral-ethical sections of the Torah. In practice, this requires meticulous observance in line with kabbalistic understandings and impeccable interpersonal conduct. *Devekut* is achieved by joining this ladder of ascent, beginning with the revealed teachings of the Torah and culminating in the secret teachings and mystical knowledge of God. Therefore, any activity which is conducive to *shelemut* also achieves *devekut*; from there, the individual climbs the rungs to achieve the ultimate state of *devekut*.

This process is explained in the introduction to *Toledot Adam*. The cleaving to God indicated by the root D'V'K is achieved on a basic level through the observance of the commandments. Degrees of cleaving then proceed incrementally, culminating in mystical knowledge of God.<sup>470</sup> The great ascent to God demands the secrets known only by those who are immersed in the kabbalah.<sup>471</sup> The term *devekut* here refers to *devekut* in its ideal form discussed by Krispel and Hallamish in reference to the technical term *hashikah* (which originates in *Reishit Hokhmah*). For example, Horowitz writes that simply by refining his character traits the individual is able to achieve *devekut* with God through 'walking in His ways and adopting His traits'.<sup>472</sup>

---

<sup>470</sup> *Shelah*, 1a. See Chapter Two, 53-54.

<sup>471</sup> Although not explicit in this passage, the fact that the secrets are only known to the kabbalists, or followers of Rashbi, is explicitly emphasised by Horowitz in the opening pages of the *Shelah*, see Chapter Three, 72.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid*, 1b.

However, this is insufficient to achieve complete *devekut*, which requires the addition of *Ner Mitsvah* (Halakhah) and *Torah Or* (Kabbalah).<sup>473</sup> Upon acquiring the knowledge of kabbalah, he will be able to attach himself to the highest rungs of *devekut*.<sup>474</sup>

This is repeated in *Toledot Adam* when Horowitz describes how the activity of the human being 'cleaving above' amounts to 'walking in His ways':

If he cleaves above and resembles God by walking in His ways his name is called in essence: 'Adam' from the root 'Ground for the heavens' (lit. I resemble the high);<sup>475</sup> 'upon this semblance of a throne, there was the semblance of a human form'. - But if he separates himself from the *devekut*,<sup>476</sup> he is called 'Adam' - after the ground from where he was taken.<sup>477</sup>

---

וכן משה רבינו ע"ה עשה גם שניהם לאחר שלמד התורה והמצות עם כל ישראל כשבא לילך בדרכי החיים הנצחיים סמוך למותו קיים תוכחת מוסר אלה הדברים דברי תוכחות הוכיחם על העבר מה שחטאו מעת צאתם ממצרים וללמדם מוסר על העתיד הן בקיום התורה ומצותיה תלמוד ומעשה הן מהתלבשות המדות באופן לבא אל הדבקות יתברך ולילך בדרכיו יתברך ובמדותיו

<sup>473</sup> Ibid, 2a.

כי מאחר שכוונתי להועיל לכם בניי יצ"ו עם הנלווים אליכם יצ"ו לזכותכם לעולם הבא התבוננתי כי אי אפשר לבא לתכלית הדבקות אם לא ב נר מצוה ותורה אור רצוני לומר לעורר אתכם על מעשה המצות ולהזהיר על איזה עניינים לא תעשיים ועשיים שהרבה אינם נזהרים

<sup>474</sup> Ibid.

ותורה אור יקיים בידיעת טעמי מצות וסודיהן אשר על זה נאמר אשר יעשה אתם האדם וחי בהם במה שכתב אשר יעשה היא עשיית המצוה בפועל ומה שכתב וחי בהם רצה לומר דבקות רמיזות המצוה שהוא החיות הרוחנית מהמצוה אשר מצד זה הרוחנית שהיא מחשבה יש לו דבקות בשמו יתברך כי כוונת המצות סוד שמו יתברך ולולא זה אין דבקות מגשמיות הפעולה להרוחניות שהיא תכלית הרוחניות הוא יתברך שמו

<sup>475</sup> Isaiah 14:14.

<sup>476</sup> Ezekiel 1:26.

<sup>477</sup> *Shelah*, 3a.

זהו פי' על תולדת אדם וסופו אם דבוק הוא למעלה ומתדמה לו ית' לילך בדרכיו נקרא שמו בעצם אדם מלשון אדמה לעליון (ישעיה יד, יד) ועל כסא דמות אדם (יחזקאל א, כו) ואם הוא מפריד את

What is fascinating about Horowitz's exegesis in this passage is that to Isaiah and Ezekiel, the idea of God as a human form is heretical and shocking. In Horowitz's rendering, however, it is cited with approval – the human form and the divine form resemble one another, and they *should* resemble one another. Horowitz maintains the original meaning of the verse in Isaiah, that the prophet will 'resemble the high', while also interpreting it according to the play on words, 'ground for the heavens'. The human being must resemble God and possesses the raw material which can be transformed in the service of God. Devekut thus entails becoming one with God. Maintaining devekut requires remaining in a state of emulating God's ways, a matter discussed in the Talmud regarding adopting traits such as kindness, mercy and patience.<sup>478</sup> It is also clear from the way that the term is used that it describes varying degrees of connection to God:

Together, the body and soul would be perfect, going from devekut to devekut, from attainment to attainment until he arrives at the point of 'collecting' like Hanokh,<sup>479</sup> and Elijah,<sup>480</sup> and a thousand levels above this in a way that he would constantly live eternal life to kindle from light to light.<sup>481</sup>

---

עצמו מהדבקות אז נקרא אדם על שם האדמה אשר לוקח ממנה ועפר הוא ולעפר ישוב אמנם שם אדם המורה על אדמה לעליון זה עיקר התכלית כי הרע לא נברא רק בעבור הטוב כדפרשתי על כן שם אדם בעצם שכן עולה במספר כשמו הגדול במילואו י"ד ה"א וא"ו ה"א

<sup>478</sup> *bShab.* 133b.

<sup>479</sup> Genesis 5:24.

<sup>480</sup> Kings II, 2:10.

<sup>481</sup> *Shelah*, 21a.

ויחדיו יהיו תמים הגוף והנפש והיה הולך מדבקות לדבקות מהשגה להשגה עד שהיה בא לכלל לקיחה כמו חנוך (בראשית ה, כד) ואליהו (מלכים - ב ב, י) ואלף מעלות יותר מזה באופן שהיה תמיד חיות נצחי להאיר מאור לאור



This leads to the 'idea of it all, the devekut of Man when he is in a state of *shelemut* - this devekut is with the name of the LORD'.<sup>482</sup>

At the end of *Toledot Adam*, Horowitz concludes that to 'walk in his ways', Man must make himself holy and adopt the lifestyle advocated in the earlier works of musar like *Hovot ha-Levavot* and more recent works like *Reishit Hokhmah*. Tellingly, Horowitz notes that 'in following their ways, he fulfils the injunction 'and you who cleave to the LORD your God',<sup>483</sup> the act of devekut to God being achieved through undertaking a particular path or lifestyle and not restricted to an ultimate experience.

Then, in describing the requirements for the study of kabbalah at the beginning of *Asarah Ma'amarot*, Horowitz employs the term 'devekut' to refer to the passion required in approaching the subject. The individual must 'cleave to this wisdom with additional holiness and great devekut to God'. Here the term is used to describe a passionate connection to God. The holy kabbalah must be cleaved to through self-purification and intense devotion to God, not merely studied.<sup>484</sup>

The usage of the term devekut to indicate the appropriate fulfilment of 'walking in His ways' is also applied to the purification of the human body, including the maintenance of personal hygiene. As the body is not considered something

---

<sup>482</sup> Ibid, 14a; see 22a-22b.

וענין הכל, כי דבקות אדם כשהוא בשלמותו דבקותו בשם ידו"ד

<sup>483</sup> Ibid, 39b; Deuteronomy 4:4.

וקדושת אברים חיצוניים ופנימיים אשר חכמים יגידום בספריהם והאריכו למעניתם כמו חובת הלבבות והנמשכים אחריו דור דור ודורשיו דור דור ומנהיגיו ואחרון חביב בעל ראשית חכמה וכל חבורתא קדישתא. וההולך בדרכיהם הוא ההולך אחרי ה' ומקיים בהם ואתם הדבקים בה' אלהיכם חיים (דברים ד, ד).

<sup>484</sup> Ibid, 42a.

altogether separate from the soul,<sup>485</sup> it requires care and purification. Cleanliness of body and general decorum leads to cleanliness of soul, which culminates in the removal of the animalistic tendencies that impede man in his service of God. In this passage, Horowitz makes an elitist spiritual distinction between the 'Am ha-Arets' (lit. people of the land but colloquially refers to an ignoramus) and those who have refined themselves to cleave to God. Importantly, Horowitz emphasise that Man's ability to cleave to God is natural and not contingent on the Torah in the sense that if it did not exist man would still be able to cleave to God. The degree of devekut that can be achieved directly depends on Man's ability to remove himself from his animalistic nature. If he does so, he can reach the level of an angel and 'cleave to God by assuming His characteristics to the extent that he is able to resemble his creator'.<sup>486</sup>

### Extraordinary Devekut

There is a second a type of devekut which is reserved exclusively for elite individuals in the manner expressed by the kabbalists, culminating in the state described by Krispel. This is presented most vividly at the beginning of *Asarah Ma'amarot* with a mystical vision of complete immersion into the divine:

---

<sup>485</sup> See Chapter Four, 113-114.

<sup>486</sup> *Shelah*, 63a.

כי עם הארץ הוא חומר בהמה כבהמה שאוכל ובהמה יש לה לטעון מה חזית דדמך סומק טפי מדמי  
אבל אדם השכלי האוכל ב"ח (בעל חי) אז ב"ח זכה למעלה להיות בשר אדם אחר כך עולה מעלת  
האדם מצד השכל והנשמה שנתן בו השם יתברך עולה למדרגת מלאך עד שמתדבק בהש"י בתפוס  
מדותיו של הקדוש ברוך הוא במה שאפשר לו להתדמות לבוראו ואף אם לא נתנה התורה ח"ו היה  
כל מדרך ארץ ר"ל מדרכי המוסר והנהגה ישרה דהיינו שבכל עתיו ורגעיו יהי מורא שמים עליו ויאהוב  
אתו ויתדבק בו

Behold when man becomes perfect in his limbs and form, he has the ability to perfect and glorify supernal Adam, and when he achieves this *tikkun* he becomes the same form that he perfected, and becomes considered one and the same species as it;<sup>487</sup> when He finds himself awake God rests upon him for there is no barrier on his part, for he has completed what needs completing. This is when he aligns his actions according to the Torah and the uprightness of his intention, the purity of his thoughts, the holiness of his soul and his *devekut* above with the powers contained in the great name. Then, his thoughts will constantly be immersed there to unify Him in his glory – in this way he has reconciled the form with its maker.<sup>488</sup>

After perfecting himself in all the ways that have been described, Man can achieve a state where his mind can be constantly immersed in God and unify Him in the manner prescribed by the kabbalists. Through this final act of cleaving, Man can truly immerse in God and become one with Him:

Happy are we, how good is our lot that God has chosen us and given us His Torah. Through this every heart should be aroused to holiness and purity, and serve God with all His heart and literally cleave to Him if he wants! For there is no difference between us and Him, as long as he removes sin as it says 'But your iniquities have been a barrier between you and your God'.<sup>489</sup> And you my children, cleave to the Lord your God by adding holiness every hour of every day and then you will merit to see the splendour of God...<sup>490</sup>

---

<sup>487</sup> See *bMen.* 23a.

<sup>488</sup> *Shelah*, 39a.

הנה כי להיות האדם מתוקן באבריו וצורתו לתיקון האדם העליון יש כח בידו לתקנו ולפארו וכשמשלים ועושה זה התיקון הנה הוא בדמות ההוא עצמו שתיקן והוא מין במינו וכשמצאו נעור ובא אליו ושורה עליו כי אין שם חציצה ולא מונע מצדו שהרי השלים מה שהיה צריך להשלימו. וזה כי בכשרון מעשיו כפי התורה ויושר כוונתו וטוהר רעיוניו וקדושת נפשו ודבקותו למעלה בכחות הנכללים בשם הגדול ותמיד מחשבתו משוטטת שם ליחדו בכבודו הנה הוא דימה הצורה ליוצרה

<sup>489</sup> Isaiah 59:2.

<sup>490</sup> *Shelah*, 46b.

ואשרינו מה טוב חלקינו אשר בחר בנו ונתן לנו את תורתו ע"י (על ידי) זה יתלהב כל לב ויעורר לקדושה ולטהרה ולעבוד את הש"י בכל לבו ולהיות דבק בו ממש אם ירצה כי לא יש הבדל בינו יתברך לבינו כי אם העון הוא מבדיל כמ"ש (כמו שכתוב) (ישעיה נט, ב) כי אם עונתיכם הבדילו ביני

In the previous chapters the conception of Man as a literal extension of God has been explored. If he only removes the trappings of the physical, Man can become Godlike and cleave to Him in full union.<sup>491</sup>

After describing the role of serving God through love and fear and emphasizing the importance of joy in the service of God, Horowitz describes the highest, theurgical level of service. For this individual:

It is not enough that he practices, fulfils and serves God with all that He commanded with joy and gladness of heart, but in addition he becomes a chariot and causes his service to extend for the sake of heaven for the name of God to be repaired, that he should unify the king in his honour...for this is the purpose of service, for the sake of upon high, for there is certainly this power in the hands of the complete Man to achieve this *tikkun*. Therefore when he cleaves and conjoins with God with cleaving, yearning and desire he reaches the point of restoring the name.<sup>492</sup>

This exact sentiment is repeated by Horowitz in a sermon cited in 'Tractate Pesahim', describing how for most people the highest level of service is the joyful love of God, but for the elites it is an entirely theurgical exercise in the manner found in *Reishit Hokhmah*.<sup>493</sup>

---

ובינכם. ואתם בניי יצ"ו תהיו דבקים בה' אלקיכם להוסיף קדושה בכל יום ויום ובכל עת ובכל שעה אז תזכו לחזות בנועם ה' נעימות בימינו נצח

<sup>491</sup> As will be explored in Chapter Eleven, this does not necessarily imply asceticism. See *Shelah*, 341a for a description of this level of union being achieved by the sons of Aaron, Nadav and Avihu.

<sup>492</sup> *Shelah*, 50b.

ומזה נמשך העבודה זורך גבוה שלא די שעושה ומקיים ועובד את השם יתברך בכל אשר ציווהו בשמחה ובטוב לבב נוסף הוא להיות מרכבה ולגרום שמעבודה ימשך צורך גבוה להיות השם מתוקן שיתיחד המלך בכבודו

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid*, 153a.

The duality between the optimal and the ordinary *devekut* is then acknowledged in

'Utterance ten' in *Asarah Ma'amarot*:

'Know the God of your fathers and serve Him with a complete heart and a desiring soul'...He warned him (David to Solomon) about service that it should be with a complete heart and a desiring soul, and that the *devekut* and knowledge of God should never be departed from, either from the aspect of a 'completely righteous person', where the *shekhinah* is above his head, or from the aspect of repairing sin – God should be placed in front of Him with arousal of the heart from the aspect of 'I am ever mindful of the LORD's presence'.<sup>494</sup> The knowledge and connection to God should not be broken for one instant, like the verse says 'while you, who held fast to the LORD your God, are all alive today'.<sup>495</sup>

Importantly, this passage indicates that the term is not limited to descriptions of mystical union, but reflects any state of connection to God. It also implies that even for the elite, the ultimate state of *devekut* will not be one that can be constantly maintained, whereas the ordinary state can be constantly pursued. In 'Tractate

---

המדרגה השלישית היא נוסף על מה שמקיים כל התורה הוא מתאהב ומתלהב ועובד את ה' בשמחה ובטוב לבב ואוהב אותו בכל לבבו ובבחינה זו נקרא בן לה' והיא מעלה העליונה ברוב האדם אמנם בני עליה ומשה עלה על כולם היא היראה לפני ולפנים ולהיות מרכבה אליו לעשות נחת רוח לקונו ואף הפרס שמקבל הפרס בעצמו הוא להתקרב אליו ליראה אותו ולעבדו דהיינו השררה הנתנת לו עבדות הוא להיות נושא הכסא ומרכבה ואין לו מנוחה לעולם הבא כי השררה עבדות ובחינה זו עבד מלך

<sup>494</sup> Psalms 16:8.

<sup>495</sup> *Shelah*, 58a.

על זה בא רמז הפסוק שלנו דע את אלהי אביך ועבדהו בלב שלם ובנפש חפצה אמר דוד לשלמה בנו אלהי אביך כי דוד היה מקיים כל הנ"ל והזהירו על העבודה שתהיה בלב שלם ונפש חפצה ותמיד לא יסור הדבקות והידיעה בהשם הן בבחינת צדיק גמור שכינה למעלה מראשו והן בתיקון העון ישים ה' נגדו תמיד כי כל לבבות דורש ה' הן יהיה הדבקות בהתעוררות דליבא בבחינה זו שכינה למעלה מראשו או בהתעוררות דליבא בבחינת שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד (תהלים טז, ח) רק הידיעה והחיבור בהשם יתברך לא יפסוק רגע אחד וכמ"ש הפסוק (דברים ד, ד) ואתם הדבקים בה' אלהיכם חיים כלכם

Pesahim', Horowitz describes how a state of devekut is maintained through the narration of the story of the Exodus:

Through telling the tales of His wondrousness devekut is created between us and Him, removing the darkness, and the cloud that separates us, and this will be the final redemption for then will be revealed to us, He will be to us as a God and we to Him as a nation.<sup>496</sup>

In 'The Written Torah', devekut is portrayed as the sole product of fulfilling and studying the Torah:

The concept of devekut and attachment is attained by means of the Torah, as the entire Torah is His names,<sup>497</sup> and the Torah is the revelation of Godliness and when Israel fulfil the Torah and arouse the spirituality of the Torah which is the secret of his names – then they are conjoined!<sup>498</sup>

Through the Torah the individual achieves devekut. All that is included in the framework of Torah constitutes devekut, and all which is not is a departure from devekut. It is important to point out that, of course, the earlier kabbalists did not deny the incremental nature of knowledge leading to kabbalistic study. Kabbalah was only ever the purview of the elite, and required discipline, piety and purity according to all.

---

<sup>496</sup> Ibid, 157a; see 363b for a similar description of the natural devekut between God and Israel.

וכלל הענין הוא כי מצד סיפור נפלאותיו אז נעשה דביקות בינו יתברך לבינינו ומסתלק החשך והענן המפסיקים ומבדילים בינו לבינינו זהו הגאולה האמיתית כי אז יתגלה לנו הוא לנו לאלהים ואנחנו לו לעם

<sup>497</sup> Zohar II:87a.

<sup>498</sup> *Shelah*, 298b; see 29b, 35a, 70a, 370a for similar depictions of this concept of devekut, whereby the individual remains in a state of devekut as long as he is engrossed in Torah, good deeds or focused on God Himself.

וענין הדבקות והקישור הוא באמצעות התורה כי התורה כולה שמותיו (זהר ח"ב דף פ"ז ע"א) והתורה היא גילוי אלהותו יתברך וישראל מקיימין את התורה ומעוררים רוחניות התורה שהוא סוד שמותיו ואז הם מדובקין

However, devekut remained something exceptional to all but the most pious. In adopting the nomenclature of devekut to describe the ordinary deeds of observance, Horowitz highlights that even mundane acts contain extraordinary consequences in terms of the intimacy of the relationship between Man and God. The prosaic requirements of the lower rungs of musar meant that the vast void between Man and God could be bridged with relative ease. Although the exceptional individuals could attain transcendental levels of devekut, they were no longer performing a wholly 'Other' activity, but simply a more advanced form of what the ordinary men could perform.<sup>499</sup> As will be shown in Part 4, this is also reflected in the sources Horowitz uses, where Maimonides features as much as Luria or Cordovero in the descriptions of how the individual is able to sanctify the mundane realm and cleave to God in all his ways.

---

<sup>499</sup> See Idel, 'Ganz Andere', xxv- xxvi

### **Part 3: Halakhah**

#### **Chapter Seven: Kabbalistic Halakhah i. Theory**

##### Halakhah as Prophecy

The framework of halakhah from the Talmudic period onwards meant that rabbinic legal decisions could be reached in accordance with strict, rational law.<sup>500</sup> Even Talmudic references to individuals acting *lifnim mi shurat ha-din* (which in the medieval period came to indicate supererogatory behaviour, ‘above the letter of the law’) did not in its Talmudic context refer to acts of piety supplanting the law itself or a supra-legal standard of behaviour.<sup>501</sup>

Legalistic rather than prophetic authority was what determined the halakhah among the Talmudic and medieval authorities: The Second Temple period was considered the end of the age of prophecy by the Talmudic sages, and henceforth prophecy was assigned no part in determining halakhah.<sup>502</sup> Maimonides declared in his introduction to the Mishnah that historically prophecy had never held an advantage over scholarship when it came to the interpretation of laws, and that a prophet who claimed divine instruction concerning halakhic legislation was to be branded a false prophet and was liable to receive the death penalty.<sup>503</sup> Scholarship and

---

<sup>500</sup> Hayes, *Divine Law*, 178.

<sup>501</sup> See Tzvi Novick, *What Is Good, and What God Demands : Normative Structures in Tannaitic Literature*, (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 398-401.

<sup>502</sup> E.g. Ex. Rabba 28:6; *bBer.* 5a; *bB.B.* 12a; *bTem.* 16a; *bB.M.* 59b - The story of the ‘Oven of Ahnai’ is often used as the paradigm for the idea of halakhah not being in heaven, as despite R. Eliezer’s miracles and support from a heavenly voice, he was overruled by the court and the aggadah comments that God accepted their decision. On the superiority of the words of scholars and scribes to prophets in the second temple era see *mSot.* 13:3; *bTem.* 16a; *bSanh.* 11a; *yTa’an.* 2:10; *yA.Z.* 2:4.

<sup>503</sup> *MT*, ‘Yesodei ha-Torah’, 1–4, 9:4.



argumentation triumphed in halakhic discourse rather than appeals to what Weber classified as 'charismatic' authority derived from the personal magnetism of a leader. Furthermore, the rabbis drew a distinction between that which derives from the authority of the Torah and that which does not.<sup>504</sup> Torah law enjoyed a primary and supreme legal status. By contrast, rabbinic law (a term used to describe all post-Torah law) possessed a lower level of authority and could not in theory overturn provisions of Torah law.<sup>505</sup> The limits to both the scope and authority of rabbinic jurisdiction meant that there was much room for leniencies in adjudication and constraints to the power of the individual rabbi.<sup>506</sup>

Horowitz's most important contribution towards the theory of halakhah was that he reinstated the prophetic aspect of legal judgment by conferring charismatic authority to the kabbalist over the individual halakhic jurist. In doing so, he reconfigured halakhah into a prophetic conduit for pietism. To Horowitz there was no distinction between rabbinic and Biblical law or between legal and prophetic authority – all rabbinic edicts reflected the will of God being communicated through the mechanism of the kabbalah.

As has been explored in the previous chapters, the principle of 'the concealed emerging into the revealed' is an axiom of the *Shelah* - there is nothing within the

---

<sup>504</sup> Elon, *Jewish Law : History, Sources, Principles*, 477-78.

<sup>505</sup> Hayes, *Gentile Impurities*, 108.

<sup>506</sup> On the difference between rabbinic and Biblical law, see *bPes.* 10a; *bSuk.* 44a; *Sifra*, Behukotai 8:112; on leniencies in cases of rabbinic law, See *mTahor.* 4:11; *bShab.* 34a; *bEruv.* 45b; see 'First root' in Maimonides' *Sefer haMitsvot*, (Jerusalem, 1995) and Nahmanides ad. loc, 13-50; see also R. Nissim, *Derashot Ha Ran* (New York, 1995), no. 325.

Jewish tradition which exists independently of the kabbalah.<sup>507</sup> This idea reaches its apex in Horowitz's analysis of the halakhah. The nominalist, legalistic foundations of halakhah are rejected within the *Shelah* on the basis that everything is at its source based on the kabbalah, and every legal ruling emanates directly from the mouth of God. Horowitz's conception of halakhah can be understood as something I have branded 'kabbalistic realism' - halakhah merely reflects a metaphysical reality which is understood in its depth by the kabbalist, and there is no distinction between halakhic and non-halakhic spheres. According to Horowitz, all halakhic decision-making past, present and future is only superficially based on argumentation, but in its truest sense is a prophecy received by those of considerable spiritual stature; rabbinic and Biblical law are the products of the same process of emanation from the mouth of God. This culminates in an ethos where according to Horowitz stringency should always be pursued whenever possible. What is particularly radical about this conception is that it broke significantly with the halakhic attitudes found among the Ashkenazic authorities, who emphasised rabbinic autonomy as well as the sanctity of their medieval customs. To Horowitz this was superseded by the kabbalists and their unique access to the will of God.

In an important passage in *Toledot Adam*, Horowitz articulates the philosophy of halakhah which frames the entire work. It is a lengthy piece which demands elucidation to reveal the radical features of its philosophy and how the kabbalah provides a mechanism to drastically change the application of halakhic thinking:

And so the sages continued to arouse the supernal power and actualise (the correct ruling) in its correct season, not (God forbid) that they innovated from their own knowledge, but they connected their minds with the divine mind, and their souls received this knowledge... the matter was completed and received

---

<sup>507</sup> See Chapter Three, 79-81.

from the mouth of revelation. An allusion to this matter – ‘from the rabbis’ is the numerical equivalent of ‘from the mouth of the Almighty’...

It was not the prophets alone who received their prophecy from Sinai, but even the sages who arise in each generation, each one received his knowledge from Sinai. And so it says: ‘All these matters God spoke to all your congregation with a great voice that did not end’.<sup>508</sup> The explanation of everything that the sages innovated in every generation they received from Sinai from this voice, and not according to their intellect and analysis. This being the truth, we have been commanded in His Torah through the faithful prophet of His house ‘By the word of the Torah which he will teach you and the statute that he tells you to do, you shall not depart from the matter that he tells you right or left’.<sup>509</sup> And one who does not listen to them (the rabbis) is liable to the death penalty.<sup>510</sup> According to their worth is the great voice that does not end. It says ‘The man that does flagrantly not to listen to the priest... or to the judge and this man dies’.<sup>511</sup> In the Palestinian Talmud in *Pe’ah* they have said: ‘even what a young student will teach in the future to his rabbi was also said at Sinai from Moses’.<sup>512</sup> From this is explained, that all the words of the sages in every generation, and what they innovate, and all their dialectical reasoning, is from Sinai, and not the intellect of Man but divine intellect, they have only released it from potentiality to actuality.<sup>513</sup>

---

<sup>508</sup> Deuteronomy 17:11.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid, 17:12.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> *Pe’ah* 2:6.

<sup>513</sup> *Shelah*, 25a- b.

כי היה הדבר תלוי לפי התעוררות התחתונים ולפי מהותם ואיכותם ולפי מדרגות הנשמות שבכל דור ודור ואז הוסיפו החכמים להתעורר הכח העליון ויצא לפועל בזמנו ובעתו לא ח"ו שחדשו חכמים מדעתם רק כוונת דעת עליון ונשמתם שעמדו בהר סיני כי היו במעמד ההוא כל הנשמות קבלו כן שמצד בחינת נשמתם ודורם אז הדבר ההוא מתוקן ומקובל והוא מפי הגבורה. רמז לדבר מדרבנן עולה מפי גבורה

....

ולא כל הנביאים בלבד קבלו מסיני נבואתם אלא אף החכמים העומדים בכל דור ודור כל אחד ואחד קבל את שלו מסיני. וכן הוא אומר (דברים ה, יט) את כל הדברים האלה דבר ה' אל כל קהלכם קול גדול ולא יסף

...

There are several important points which emerge from this passage:

- Horowitz provides a kabbalistic mechanism which precisely equates the revelation at Sinai to all subsequent developments in rabbinic literature. This is expressed in terms of 'potentiality' and 'actuality' - rabbinic edicts, stringencies and fences existed at Sinai in potential before being released later on.<sup>514</sup> The only difference between, for example, eating pork and the Zoharic stringency of not eating meat after milk is that the former reached actualisation before the latter - it is not a qualitative difference.
- The sages received this knowledge in *exactly* the same manner as the prophets, not from their own innovations or reasoning, 'God forbid!', but from the mouth of the Almighty. This is a powerful statement as the reasoning abilities of the rabbis was the pride of halakhic decision making. Creating a similar dichotomy to the one he applies when rejecting philosophy as a valid method of understanding the world, Horowitz considers rabbinic knowledge to reflect the pure will of God as opposed to the corrupt will of Man.
- Having elevated the rabbi to the role of prophet, he has the same legal status. Just as one who ignores a prophet is liable to receive the death penalty so too

---

הנה ביארו כל מה שחדשו החכמים בכל הדורות קבלו מסיני מן הקול ההוא ולא היה כפי שכלם וחקירתם. ולהיות כן האמת צונו בתורתנו על ידי נביאו נאמן ביתו (דברים יז, יא) על פי התורה אשר יורוך ועל המשפט אשר יאמרו לך תעשה לא תסור מן הדבר אשר יגידו לך ימין ושמאל. וחייב מיתה למי שלא ישמע אליהם (שם שם, יב) לפי שקולם הוא הקול הגדול ההוא אשר לא יסף. ואמר (שם שם, יב) והאיש אשר יעשה בזדון לבלתי שמוע אל הכהן וגו' או אל השופט ומת האיש ההוא. ובירושלמי דפאה (פ"ב ה"ו) אמרו אפילו מה שתלמיד ותיק עתיד להורות לפני רבו נאמר למשה מסיני. מזה מבואר שכל דברי חכמים שבכל דור ודור ומה שמחדשים וכל פלפולם הוא מסיני ולא שכל אנושי רק שכל אלהי רק שהם הוציאו מכח אל הפועל

<sup>514</sup> This concept is another borrowed term from Aristotelian writings, used in kabbalistic literature to describe the emergence of the sefirot and in the writings of Maharal. See 'Kabbalah', 576-88; Sherwin, *Mystical Theology*, 131-35.

one who ignores a rabbi. This elevates the stature, prestige and authority of the rabbi considerably.

- The ability to receive this revelation corresponds to the rabbi's spiritual stature rather than his reasoning skills. This leaves space for the teachings of the kabbalists to be absorbed wholeheartedly into the sphere of halakhah.
- Horowitz 'kabbalises' the Midrashic text in the Palestinian Talmud linking all future innovation to Moses at Sinai, absorbing it into the 'organic universe' framework.<sup>515</sup>
- This conception of halakhah is also found in 'Tractate Shavuot', where Horowitz relates that every innovation, every rabbinic ordinance, fence or custom emerges from the same voice that Moses heard at Sinai.<sup>516</sup> As part of God's plan for the universe, each rabbinic ordinance or decree is released 'in its correct time'.<sup>517</sup> Halakhah is understood to reflect the prophetic reception of the will of God.

---

<sup>515</sup> To a halakhist this passage would be interpreted as an analogy for the faithfulness of tradition - because if taken literally this would mean that every dissenting view and opinion would be considered equally valid, leading to an impossibility of judgment. It would also contradict every other Talmudic passage listed above concerning the non-prophetic nature of halakhic adjudication, an established position in Talmudic and halakhic literature. Only through a kabbalistic lens can this passage reflect a state whereby all the words of the sages are manifestations of the divine intellect.

<sup>516</sup> *Shelah*, 193a.

שני להיפך לא פסק ושניהם אמת כי לא הוסיף באותו פעם לגלות ממה שגילה אבל לא פסק כי כל נבואות הנביאים וכל חידושי הסופרים דור ודור וחכמיו כ' וכל מה שתלמיד מחדש הכל היה בכח בקול ההוא ובעת הגיע זמנו לפי הדור יצא לאור נמצא כל דברי רבנן ותקנות וסייגים ומנהגים הכל מסיני ועיין לעיל באורך והכל שייך לכאן

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid*, 196b.

## Charismatic Authority

In *Toledot Adam*, Horowitz expands the idea that the source of halakhic authority is derived from the spiritual stature of the rabbi rather than his power of reasoning. This creates an opportunity for him to later introduce kabbalistic practices and customs into the halakhic sections of the *Shelah*. After a long citation from Cordovero in *Toledot Adam*, Horowitz comments: 'Our own eyes show us that the Torah does not have a single clear meaning, but is explained according to the will of those who understand her, who cleave to her'.<sup>518</sup> As the senior rabbi of Frankfurt and Prague, Horowitz was required to be a halakhist *par excellence*. What is apparent after his analysis of the nature of rabbinic knowledge is that he is aware of the problems his conception poses, addressing the following three questions: Firstly, if all rabbinic thinking is prophetic, and prophecy is authoritative as the word of God, how can there be arguments among the rabbis? More pressingly, how is halakhah ever decided if every opinion is equally correct? Thirdly, does this model not contradict the dictum that 'it is not in heaven'?

To the first two questions, Horowitz answers that in reality there are a number of 'true' paths, none of which is more correct than the others. However, human beings require a path to follow in order to act. Hayes describes this as 'theoretical pluralism',

---

הכלל העולה מעלת ישראל ונתינת התורה על ידם כי הם כוללים רום עליון ותחת מצד נשמתם וגופם ורוחניות התורה היא נשמותיהן על כן כל נבואות הנביאים וחידושי החכמים הכל קבלו מסיני ובשעתו יצא מהכמוס לאור

<sup>518</sup> Ibid, 19a.

וביאור אלו המאמרים אין כאן מקומן רק לקמן אם יחיינו הבורא. מכל מקום עינינו הרואות שהתורה אינה מוכרחת בהחלט בפנים אחת רק רצוניים כפי רצון משיגיה הדבוקים בה

which she considers to apply to much of rabbinic literature.<sup>519</sup> Yet where Horowitz introduces considerable innovation is in declaring that this process corresponds exactly to the *devekut* of the halakhist. While ostensibly halakhah is decided by ordinary halakhic frameworks such as majority opinion, this in fact reflects a quantifiable superiority of *devekut* in favour of the accepted opinion:

The physical commandment down below corresponds with the *devekut* from above, and it is true that the only reason that the commandment becomes physicalised is that man has caused *devekut* above. However, there are multiple roots in this process. Therefore, if one person says that this is the correct halakhah to follow regarding this commandment according to his *devekut* above, and another says a differing opinion according to his *devekut*, the halakhah is decided according to the majority,<sup>520</sup> for once the majority think like this, their *devekut* is also in the majority, and according to the *devekut* of the majority is the divine flow in *malkhut*, for there it is rooted. Even though the words of the individual are extremely great, if this is the consensus of the majority then this is the halakhah, for even though the individual created the flow in *malkhut* on a great and awesome level, the halakhah is nevertheless according to the awakening of the lower world, and these are both the words of the living God.<sup>521</sup>

---

<sup>519</sup> Hayes, *Divine Law*, 174-75. See *bHag.* 3a.

<sup>520</sup> *bBer.* 9b.

<sup>521</sup> *Shelah*, 26a.

נלע"ד (נראה לעניות דעתי) בירור הענין על דרך הא דאיתא בפרק הזהב (בבא מציעא נט ב) במחלוקת רבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע לא בשמים היא כו'. הנה כבר הארכתי לעיל שכל מצוה ומצוה יש לה למעלה שורש ושורש מעל שורש עד שרשי השרשים. ולפי הדבקות למעלה כן למטה המצוה הגשמית ואיך שנעשית המצוה למטה הנה יתאמת כן כי כן יש דבקות למעלה. אמנם יש מעלות זו על גב זו ואחת נכנסת ודבקה למעלה יותר מאחר. על כן זה אומר דין המצוה כך לפי דבקותו למעלה וזה אומר כך לפי דבקותו וההלכה נפסקת כרבים (ברכות ט א) כי מאחר שרבים ס"ל (סבירא להו) הכי נמצא שדבקותם כך וכפי הדבקות של רבים כן ההשפעה במלכות כי שם הנטיה. ואע"פ שדברי היחיד הם גבוה על גבוה בודאי אילו היתה הסכמת הרבים כן היתה ההלכה כי כן היתה ההשפעה במלכות במעלה גבוהה ורמה רק שההלכה היא כפי ההתעוררות התחתונה ואלו דברי אלהים חיים ואביא למשל בענין תפילין מחלוקת רש"י ורבינו תם (מנחות לד ב תוד"ה והקורא) ותפילין של מר פסולין למר. וכי ס"ד (סלקא דעתך) שאחד מהו ח"ו לא קיים מצות תפילין כל ימיו. אלא הענין לכל דעה דבקות למעלה בפני עצמה והלכה שהיא מלכות אחרי רבים להטות

This explanation is important for understanding the nature of halakhah and halakhic debate. While appearing to be discussing the process of halakhic decision making, the halakhists are truly concerned with the attainment of higher levels of *devekut*, and their words are entirely true in the sense that they create a degree of *devekut*, regardless of whether they are followed in practice. The entire process of halakhic decision making, which relies on argumentation and consensus, is underscored by a kabbalistic system of divine flow and emanation. Horowitz thereby develops the idea that halakhic decisions are reached by applying a method of prophecy. Legalism is replaced by spiritual stature. This sentiment is repeated more emphatically in 'The Written Torah', in a sermon about the obligation to remember what the Amalekites did to the children of Israel, where Horowitz comments that it is ludicrous to suppose that either one of R. Tam (Tosafist, 1100-1171) or Rashi would not have fulfilled the requirements of *tefillin* according to the other – they both simply achieved *devekut* in different ways.<sup>522</sup>

To the third question, Horowitz provides an answer which characterises the sentiment behind the 'kabbalah' part of this study: 'It is not in heaven' means it is not in the highest reaches of heaven, which is where R. Eliezer's stature was, whose ability to arouse the heavens was individually superior to everyone else's, attaining

---

<sup>522</sup> *Shelah*, 335a.

הענין לכל קיום מצוה יש סוד ומעלה של דבקות למעלה והאחד יותר נכנס ודבק למעלה מן האחר ואלו ואלו דברי אלהים חיים רק מה שנפסק הלכה כך היא כי אחרי רבים וכפי דבקות ישראל כך נפסק ענין המצות והיחיד החולק אומר כפי דבקותו ואילו היו כל ישראל כמותו היתה ההלכה כך למשל רש"י ורבינו תם חולקים בתפילין ואלו פסולים למר ואלו פסולים למר וכי סלקא דעתך שחם ושולם אחד מהן לא הניח תפילין כל ימיו אלא כדפירשתי וזהו לא בשמים היא רק בהכרעת חכמים כי הבחירה בידי אדם והבן והנה דעת רבי אליעזר בפרשת פרה היה גדול ונורא מאוד כי כן היה הזדככותו כולל עליונים ותחתונים ועם כל זה הלכה כחכמים כי אין הדורות ראויים לכך רק לכך



higher levels of emanation in the sefirah of *malkhut*. However, collectively, it was the *devekut* achieved by the majority which created the imprint on earth - the halakhah. The rejected opinion is not less correct than the accepted one, it simply didn't achieve the same degree of theurgical efficacy needed to arrive at a decision. 'Heaven' as understood in a kabbalistic framework does not refer to something which is not on earth, or beyond rational understanding. Rather, it refers to a particularly exalted level within the kabbalistic framework itself. In accordance with Horowitz's exegetical method of kabbalising non-kabbalistic literature, the statement in the Talmud which relates to the triumph of human legal decision making over divine inspiration is reconfigured to allude to different layers of the kabbalistic universe, as the Talmudists were all steeped in kabbalah. When the Talmud declares 'it is not in heaven' it does not mean that decisions do not emerge from prophetic inspiration but rather that they do not emerge from the highest levels of a framework which already accepts prophecy as normative. The decisions, debates and decrees made by the rabbinic scholars over the generations are simply physical manifestations of the will of God.<sup>523</sup>

In the *Shelah*, the philosophy of halakhah creates an opening which enables kabbalistic teachings to infuse an area which had previously remained self-referential and autonomous. Simply, if all halakhic decision making is the product of prophetic revelation and all prophetic revelation can only be understood through a kabbalistic

---

<sup>523</sup> I speculate that it is partly for this reason that Horowitz became such an opponent of the dialectical method of Torah study by the end of his life as he saw it having no end purpose other than sharpening the mind. Such an endeavour was not true Torah study as it did not attempt to find the true word of God. He thus prescribes a proper programme of study that avoids dialectics for its own sake, but which focuses on understanding the clear meaning of the text. See *Shelah*, 181a-b in Text 3.

framework, then kabbalistic additions are a necessity. Rabbis decide far more than matters of halakhah. They determine and reflect the will of God on earth.

When placed in the context of the Ashkenazic debate surrounding the role of codes versus individual judges, Horowitz adds a third possibility: The holy man who cleaves to God. If halakhah is decided according to the manifestation of *deveikut*, *deveikut* becomes the purpose of halakhah, as the more the halakhah can be fulfilled with *deveikut*, the better it is. While the halakhists themselves are seen to automatically have acquired *deveikut* in entering this decision process, the more stringency, purity and holiness is added to the performance of the commandment the better the commandment is – and the decision which best reflects that is also the most correct. Halakhah, as such, is less about establishing correct decisions about appropriate practice than it is about providing an avenue for spiritual advancement, a necessary means of acquiring *deveikut* with God. The charismatic authority of the holy man is enhanced significantly, granting him a role which was virtually unprecedented in Jewish Thought and was to become an important paradigm in the 18th Century.<sup>524</sup> The mechanism and function of the kabbalah articulated in the Part 2 of this study which has been bracketed under the heading ‘Kabbalah’, when applied to the halakhic sphere, creates three important consequences which will be analysed in the upcoming three chapters:

- Halakhah requires the incorporation of kabbalistic ideas and customs to be fulfilled properly.
- The ethos of halakhah changes from legalism to pietism.

---

<sup>524</sup> Ruderman, *Early Modern*, 141-44.

- The adoption of stringency becomes incumbent upon the elite to ascend the ladder of devekut.

In the *Shelah*, what would have once been the exclusive behaviour of exceptional groups of pietists becomes the ordinary framework for those who wish to be religious.

## **Chapter Eight: Kabbalistic Halakhah ii Practice**

### **Ordinary and Elitist applications of the halakhah**

Horowitz spends a significant portion of the *Shelah* addressing the first of the 'threefold cord'- halakhah. There are frequent discussions and references from the leading medieval halakhic authorities in the *Shelah* from Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities.<sup>525</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter, to Horowitz halakhah was not a self-referential legal system: Its purpose in the *Shelah* is to lead the individual to devekut. As a result, the interplay between halakhah and kabbalah in Horowitz's thought is of paramount importance in determining the direction of halakhah itself, resulting in a symbiosis which created an entirely novel conception of religious practice. As with all forms of devekut in the *Shelah*, there is an ordinary and extraordinary manifestation. All halakhah is infused with kabbalistic customs and the additions of the Zohar, which became an intrinsic part of the halakhic process, and for those who seek the highest levels of devekut, additional stringencies and pietistic practices are demanded. Unlike his contemporaries and predecessors in the senior rabbinic positions in the Ashkenazic communities, Horowitz was not willing to ignore kabbalistic positions in matters of halakhah.<sup>526</sup>

Hallamish and Weinstein have identified in their studies that in the 17th and 18th centuries the halakhah became an important conduit for kabbalistic ideals through the introduction of new customs.<sup>527</sup> Ben-Sasson and Katz have specifically noted

---

<sup>525</sup> For example, the *Tur* is referenced on 105 occasions, the *Beit Yosef* 63 times, *Shulhan Arukh* 17 times and Rama on 25 occasions.

<sup>526</sup> See Chapter One, 34.

<sup>527</sup> Hallamish, *Minhag*, 187; Weinstein, *Shattering*, 222.

that the *Shelah* generally leans towards halakhic stringency in his rulings in accordance with the kabbalah.<sup>528</sup> What I will demonstrate in the upcoming chapters is that this was not simply a question of adding kabbalistic teachings to an existing halakhic corpus but an entire reconfiguration of halakhah itself in accordance with the philosophy of kabbalah. The pivotal aspect of the *Shelah's* contribution towards halakhah is its negation of the difference between the two disciplines, a commitment which expresses itself in Horowitz's methodology that 'the concealed emerges into the revealed', which promoted the importance of halakhic rigour within a kabbalistic framework.

#### Kabbalah and Halakhah in the *Shelah*

In the *Shelah*, halakhic and kabbalistic sources are interwoven to produce a symbiosis that can be described as 'mystical halakhah'. The kabbalah and its sources are used to adjudicate in halakhic arguments and define the boundaries of halakhah.

There are three principle examples which appear in the section *Sha'ar Otiyot*, letter *Kuf*, (which stands for *kedushah*/holiness):

The first example of using the kabbalah to determine halakhic practice is the case of the prohibition of *setam yeinam* (ordinary wine), or wine owned by non-Jews. There is also a prohibition on wine owned by Jews with which non-Jews have come into contact (which could be through production and bottling).<sup>529</sup> The prohibition included

---

<sup>528</sup> Ben-Sasson, *Hagot ve-Hanhagah* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1987), 19-22; Katz, *Halakhah* 99-101.

<sup>529</sup> *bA.Z* 36b, 55a-56a.

drinking and benefiting from such wine.<sup>530</sup> Reasons for the prohibition included the need to avoid the suspicion that it may be idolatrous wine/ *yein nesekh*, and then in the 12th Century the additional reason was provided of averting intermarriage with non-Jews resulting from excessive social interaction.<sup>531</sup>

However, by the 16th Century increasingly lenient attitudes had emerged among the Ashkenazic rabbinic authorities towards this prohibition for economic reasons including the fact that bartending was a common profession for the Jews in Poland and the blanket prohibition on trade with gentile wine affected their income.

Furthermore, the prohibition was widely ignored.<sup>532</sup> Rama argued that the wine of a non-Jew who does not serve idols is forbidden as far as drinking is concerned (because of the fear of intermarriage), but the Jew may trade in it since there is no fear of idolatry. If a non-Jew touches the wine by accident, it is permitted, even for consumption. Rama maintained that according to many authorities, since non-Jews

---

<sup>530</sup> SA, YD, 133:5–6.

<sup>531</sup> *bSan.* 106a; *bA.Z.* 36b, Rashi, ad loc. See Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance : Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times*, (NJ: Behrman House, 1980), 46-47.

<sup>532</sup> Jacob Katz, *The "Shabbes Goy" : A Study in Halakhic Flexibility*, (Philadelphia: JPS, 1992), 96; Marc Shapiro, *Changing the Immutable : How Orthodox Judaism Rewrites Its History*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2015), 96-97; Katz, *Tradition and Crisis : Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, 19-26. It is true that lenient attitudes had long predated the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, although the French and German rabbis of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries were emphatic on maintaining the prohibition on the consumption of non-Jewish wine even if they were less stringent about other forms of benefit, see Haym Soloveitchik, *Yeinam* (Hebrew), (Tel Aviv: Alma, 2003), 68-90.

have ceased to be idolaters, their touch should always be considered accidental and the wine thus fit for consumption.<sup>533</sup>

Some authorities responded vociferously to these lenient practices and threatened those who violated the prohibition with excommunication.<sup>534</sup> Maharal wrote an edict of excommunication for the communities of the kingdom of Bohemia and implored that the rabbis of Moravia follow suit, accusing them of denying the divine nature of the commandments by allowing the practice to continue.<sup>535</sup> What is significant about Maharal's rationale in condemning the practice is that it is based upon the Zoharic mystical conceptions of the essential differences between Israel and the other nations. This might well also reflect what Soloveitchik has described as a deeply entrenched rabbinic feeling of 'taboo' towards wine touched by gentiles in the middle ages.<sup>536</sup>

Horowitz, too, vehemently opposed any leniencies concerning the consumption of gentile wine. As explained in the previous chapter, Horowitz was adamant that Israel and the nations occupied separate spheres in the universe.<sup>537</sup> His justification for opposing the leniencies towards wine consumption emerged entirely from kabbalistic

---

<sup>533</sup> See Rama's glosses to S.A, YD, 123:1,132:1,133:1; *Responsa*, no. 124. On the controversy, see Katz, *Exclusiveness*, 23.

<sup>534</sup> Shapiro, *Changing the Immutable*, 98. See Maharam Lublin, (1558-1616 and rabbi of Krakow between 1586-95), *Responsa* (NY 1976), no. 50; Shakh in SA, YD, 124:71; Sirkes, *Reponsa*, no.29-30; Elijah Schochet, *Rabbi Joel Sirkes : His Life, Works, and Times*, (Jerusalem Feldheim, 1971), 124, 28.

<sup>535</sup> Sherwin, *Mystical Theology*, 94.

<sup>536</sup> Soloveitchik, *Yeinam (Hebrew)*, 16, 59, 61, 63, 74-75, 113-15.

<sup>537</sup> See Chapter Six, 157.

literature. The spiritual disaster caused by the consumption of gentile wine overcame any potential halakhic loopholes:

Now I have come to speak and caution with great warnings about the consumption of wine. You my sons, be very careful not to drink wine in unsupervised (lit. unspecified) locations, even if it is owned by a Jew, unless you can substantiate unequivocally that the wine was made in kosher ways and with great protection from the touch of the gentile. For this stumbling block has caused many of our nation to be lenient in this extra protection, and the great blemish that is caused from contact with the prohibition of *setam yeinam* of the gentile, (which also applies to their contact with our wine) is truly great and awesome! These are the words of the Zohar on the portion Shemini...The wine of the Israelite is derived from the Israel configuration above, called the tree of life, the tree from the place that is called life, and from there the wine emerges, which is why we bless the Almighty with wine. The wine of terrestrial Israel is of the same configuration. One who serves idols, (he is hated and one who interacts with him is hated) – when he touches the wine of Israel, it becomes hated and forbidden, all the more so the wine that he makes. And not only this, but everything that Israel does on earth makes an imprint above, how much more so wine which resides in a lofty place and is an imprint of the guarded wine...and one who drinks this wine, his spirit is despised, he is despised, and he has no place in the World to Come... One who drinks from the touch of a gentile, is called “disgusting”, “Impure! Impure!” and does not merit the World to Come. The Zohar writes - this is not exclusively reserved for wine but also applies to any forbidden foods he contaminates himself with, although the wine is a level above them all. And who is he who dares not to heed the advice of these words and be as careful as possible to sanctify himself with the ten holinesses!<sup>538</sup>

The citation of this passage from the Zohar is illustrative of Horowitz’s refusal to dichotomise between halakhic and kabbalistic source material. As a proof text, the Zohar has decided that the person who has had contact with non-Jewish wine has no place in the World to Come. Within this context there is little room for manoeuvre for the halakhists – as the source of this information has come from the highest source, and has been established as a universal principle. It is the drastic consequences incurred by this act that cause Horowitz to exclaim that no stringency

---

<sup>538</sup> *Shelah*, 76b-77a. See Text 2.



is too extreme in this area of halakhah.<sup>539</sup> What would be considered as excessive from a halakhic point of view is meritorious from the perspective of the Zohar. As the source for many of the kabbalistic ideas which underscore all rabbinic literature in Horowitz's mind, the Zohar is equally axiomatic for halakhic knowledge. The mechanism that is adopted is also significant; Horowitz's position may well have reflected a deeply felt rabbinic aversion towards excessive interaction with non-Jews in a social setting - but by describing it in terms of its kabbalistic mechanism he establishes the prohibition as timeless and inviolable.

This is further highlighted by the second example from *Sha'ar Otiyot*, concerning the practice of *mayim aharonim* (lit. the latter waters), the laws of washing hands after a meal. The reasons presented for this practice in the Talmud largely emphasised hygiene and the potential dangers of the salt of Sodom, which was said to cause blindness if it went into a person's eyes.<sup>540</sup> As a result, several medieval Ashkenazic authorities had ruled that it was no longer a necessity, owing to the absence of this type of salt in the present day.<sup>541</sup> However, the Zohar declared that it was an obligation and the Talmud's statement that *mayim aharonim* is an obligation is cited verbatim by Karo in the *Shulkhan Arukh*.<sup>542</sup>

---

<sup>539</sup> Ibid.

<sup>540</sup> *bBer.* 53b.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid, Tosafot ad. Loc. *Rosh* ad. Loc. 8:6, Mordekhai end of chapter *Elu Devarim* (laws of berakhot 8:207).

<sup>542</sup> *S.A., OH*, 181:1.

In addressing this issue, Horowitz cites ibn Gabbai's *Tola'at Ya'akov* explaining the kabbalistic reasons for the practice of washing the hands after the meal and concludes:

And you my children, take care with *mayim aharonim*. Even though the Tosafot and the Rosh and the Mordekhai wrote at the end of the chapter *Elu devarim* that the world no longer adopts this practice, do not listen to their words, for had they seen the Zohar in this matter they wouldn't have written what they wrote.<sup>543</sup>

Not only is this an affirmation that the Zohar has authority to make decisive halakhic decisions, but by suggesting that the earlier authorities would have decided differently if exposed to the Zohar, Horowitz contends that a lack of kabbalistic knowledge is fundamentally disadvantageous to the halakhist. Horowitz's interdependent conception of halakhah and kabbalah meant that kabbalistic practices were introduced as halakhah even if it opposed the views of halakhic authorities. Horowitz claims that the reason for the failure of certain authorities to acknowledge the positions of the Zohar was ignorance alone, which led to a failure of halakhic reasoning. According to Horowitz, the abandonment of this practice among the general public was only accepted by these authorities as they were unaware of the mystical significance behind *mayim aharonim* (rendering the practice eternally relevant). It is also worth noting that Horowitz phrases this conclusion as a final decision being made by a halakhic authority, rather than a stringency for those

---

<sup>543</sup> *Shelah*, 81a.

ואתם בני יצ"ו הזהרו במים אחרונים ואף שכתבו התוספות (ברכות נג ב ד"ה והייתם) והרא"ש (שם פ"ח סי' ו') והמרדכי בסוף פרק אלו דברים (ברכות פ"ח סי' ר"ז) שהאידינא אין העולם נוהגין בהם כו' אל תשגיח בדבריהם בזה כי אילו ראו את הזהר בענין זה לא כתבו מה שכתבו

who would like to adopt it.<sup>544</sup> Not only is it *permissible* to add Zoharic decisions into halakhic practice, it is also necessary.<sup>545</sup> This position is particularly significant when considering the figures Horowitz is disagreeing with; to his Ashkenazic predecessors such as Rama and Joseph Colon, the authority of Ashkenazic custom was intimately linked with authoritative ancestry. The Tosafists and Mordekhai b. Hillel were two of the most important sources of authority for the Ashkenazic communities in Central and Eastern Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries. By displacing them with the Zohar, Horowitz was making an important statement about the relative importance of the sources of authority.<sup>546</sup>

Similarly, the requirements of the Kiddush ceremony are carefully stipulated along kabbalistic lines. The cup that is used for wine should be held in a precisely defined manner, with bent fingers of the right hand exclusively (without the left), based on axioms derived from the secret teachings of the Zohar. This caused divine blessing to extend to the righteous.<sup>547</sup> The bread that is used on the Sabbath, the *hallah*, has

---

<sup>544</sup> This is probably Karo's position, since he cites Mordekhai b. Hillel and Tosafot later in the chapter, and is more equivocal in the *Beit Yosef*, encouraging it as a stringency. I will present two examples of the difference in approach between Horowitz and Karo at the end of this chapter.

<sup>545</sup> Cf. Introduction, 34. Horowitz clearly differs from Sirkes and Heller in this regard.

<sup>546</sup> Davis, 'Formation of Ashkenazic Jewish Identity', 260-62; cf. Jeffrey Woolf, 'The Authority of Custom in the Responsa of R. Joseph Colon (Maharik)', *Dinei Israel* 19, 1997-1998 (1998), 243-93.

<sup>547</sup> *Shelah*, 83a.

והכוס אוחד בימין קבלתי להניח הכוס על כף הימין והאצבעות זקופות וסימן ואתן את הכוס על כף פרעה (בראשית מ, יא). ולא כאותן שנוהגין לאחוז הכוס בימין דהיינו שאצבעות מקיפות את הכוס ויש קצת הוכחה לזה בזהר (ח"א דף א' ע"א)

equally specific requirements: Precisely ten fingers must be used, relating to the unifications of the ten supernal limbs.<sup>548</sup>

The precision demanded by these kabbalistic requirements marks a significant step in the theory of halakhah. The details of daily practice were normally decided according to halakhic authorities and discussions based on the principles of the Talmud or local custom. However, by introducing additional levels of minutia to existing rules, the kabbalistic ideas became intertwined with practical decision making. Behind these additional details is the implicit assumption that there is an essential, unifying cause behind the commandments understood only by the kabbalists. This conferred the authority for kabbalists to make legal adjustments and add stringencies. Although some of these changes appear very minimal, they reflected a powerful position that the role of the kabbalist extended beyond the realm of theory and that he should have a say even in the most obscure of halakhic details.

A further case of kabbalistic intervention superseding halakhic discussion in *Sha'ar Otiyot* is found in the case of the permissibility of sexual relations by candlelight. According to the *Shulhan Arukh* it is forbidden to have sexual relations by

---

וכל זמן שמברך אז אוחז הכוס בימין והשמאל לא תסייע וכן על זה סובב סוד ברכת המזון על פי הסוד לפי המתבאר בזהר (ח"ב דף קס"ח ע"ב) אמר המזון נשפע מצד הימין אל הצדיק והצדיק משפיע לצדק

<sup>548</sup> Ibid, 81a.

ועל דרך האמת צריך לאחוז הככר בעשר אצבעות כי כן הלחם העליון הנקרא לחם אבירים כל העשר משתתפים ומתייחדים בו וכולם נזונים ממנו. ואז יברך המוציא לחם מן הארץ סוד ארץ החיים ארץ ממנה יצא לחם שממנה נזונים עליונים ותחתונים וזהו סוד המוציא ולא מוציא עכ"ל (תולעת יעקב)

candlelight.<sup>549</sup> Rama comments on this that if a sheet was placed over the couple to block out the light it is permitted.

Horowitz comments:

But in the booklets of the students of the Godly *Arizal*, they wrote in his name that it is forbidden when the light is lit, and he objected profusely to this position, since it is a great danger to children even when not at the time of conception - if he has sexual relations with the light on it is a great danger for his children.<sup>550</sup>

The danger posed to future children determined by the kabbalistic authority of Isaac Luria overrides the halakhic provisions provided by Rama, who rules that since the light is being blocked the prohibition does not apply. The metaphysical context behind a prohibition determines the extent of flexibility with leniency. In this case, the fact that a sheet covers the couple is irrelevant as the sexual act by candlelight causes intrinsic spiritual damage.

In the *Shelah* the authority of the kabbalah and the kabbalist not only have the power of arbitration in halakhic decisions but also can determine the boundaries of halakhot. Concerning the Talmud's requirement of *shnayim mikrah*, a Talmudic requirement of reading the weekly Torah portion twice with Aramaic *Targum* by the

---

<sup>549</sup> S.A, *OH*, 240:11, Rama ad. loc.

<sup>550</sup> *Shelah*, 103b.

אסור לשמש מטתו לאור הנר (שו"ע או"ח סי' ר"מ סי"א) ורמ"א כתב ואם עושה מחיצה בסדין אף שאור הנר מאיר דרך הסדין שרי אבל בקונטרסים של תלמידי האלהי האר"י ז"ל (ספר הכונות ו. ; פע"ח שער ק"ש שעה"מ פי"א) כתבו בשמו שאסור כשהנר מאיר והפליג מאד וכי הוא סכנה גדולה לבנים אף בלא עת העיבור אם משמש והאור מאיר הוא סכנה גדולה להם בר מינן

end of the week,<sup>551</sup> Horowitz cites Luria's writings that the reading should be performed on Friday after midday as that is the proper time for its fulfilment. This is required despite the fact that the Ashkenazic medieval authorities had stated that it could be fulfilled from the previous Sunday onwards.<sup>552</sup> Horowitz explains that on Friday, the demonic *kelippah* is detached from holiness, which allows the holiness of the Sabbath to be revealed in all its radiance.<sup>553</sup> The performance of the commandment will therefore be more efficacious during this period. This shifting of halakhic boundaries would be a necessary requirement for those who wished to be counted among the righteous. Horowitz thereby distinguishes between the ordinary 'law' as stipulated by the medieval authorities and the 'ideal' as pronounced by Luria. In 'Tractate Shavuot', Horowitz again discriminates between the halakhists who had seen the Zohar and those who had not. As explored in Chapter Five, Horowitz insisted on a separation between Jews and non-Jews. He presents the position of the halakhic authorities regarding the question of teaching Torah to non-Jews. Firstly, he presents Maharshah's strict opinion regarding the sinfulness of those who study with gentiles, referring specifically to the 'land of the Ishmaelite and those

---

<sup>551</sup> See Chapter Two, 61.

<sup>552</sup> *Shelah*, 131a.

ולא יקרא הפרשה רק ביום הששי אחר חצות אע"פ שלענין דינא כתבו התוספות (ברכות ח ב ד"ה ישלים) והרא"ש (שם פרק א' סימן ח') דמיום ראשון ואילך חשוב משלים עם הצבור מ"מ למצוה מן המובחר לא יקרא רק ביום ששי אחר חצות וכן כתב בקודש דהאר"י ז"ל (ספר הכוונות ו' ע"א) משום שאז נפרדת הקליפה מהקדושה ואחר כך בכונת הטבילה משפיעין הארת קדושת שבת

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid*, 138b.

עוד מצאתי בכתבי הקודש דהאר"י ז"ל (פרי עץ חיים דף צ' ע"ד) מצוה בזמנה של קריאת הפרשה הוא יום ששי אחר חצות.

found in the provinces of Spain'.<sup>554</sup> Horowitz then shows that according to the Tosafists and one of the Talmudic sources, it is permitted to study the seven Noahide laws with gentiles. However, the Zohar does not differentiate between the two and Horowitz then cites the full text of ibn Gabbai's *Tola'at Ya'akov* explaining why any study with the gentiles is prohibited.<sup>555</sup> Although Horowitz does not explicitly resolve this issue, the order of the paragraph is revealing. The strict opinions, Maharshal and ibn Gabbai, are quoted in full. The lenient opinions are presented in one line and then rejoined with the phrase 'But the Zohar', which implies - as with *mayim aharonim*, that the ignorance of the Zohar has undermined the credibility of these opinions. Again, the halakhic heroes of Ashkenaz are displaced by the Zohar and the kabbalists.

There is one more explicit reference in the *Shelah* to the priority of the kabbalists in halakhic decision-making: In 'Tractate Sukkah' in the section *Asarah Diberot*,

---

<sup>554</sup> *Shelah*, 185a.

כבוד התורה נתנה לישראל, ואיסור גדול עושים במקצת ארצות, במקצת בני אדם שלומדים תורה עם גוים וז"ל רש"ל

...

ואוי להם לאותם שנמצאו במדינת ספרד ולועז וארץ ישמעאלים הלומדים תורת ה' עם האומות בעבור הנאתן ותשלומי שכרן הם המילדים בנים לעבודה זרה כי אחר כך הם מהפכים למינות כאשר שמענו וראינו בעוונותינו הרבים

<sup>555</sup> *Ibid.*

כל המלמדו רק בשבע מצות בני נח שרי ללמדו במסכת חגיגה (יג א) ובתוספות (שם ד"ה אין מוסרין) אבל בזהר מחמיר מאוד ולא חילק ובזהר פרשת אחרי מות (ח"ג דף ע"ג ע"א) החמיר במאוד בעון זה הלומד לגוי אות אחת מהתורה וזה לשון תולעת יעקב בסוד המילה (חלק השלישי סתרי ברכות) כל מי שאינו חתום בחותם הקדוש הזה אין לו חלק באלהי ישראל ולא זכרון בתורתו טמא הוא וטמא יקרא ולא קדוש ולטעם זה אין מלמדין אותו אפילו אל"ף בי"ת וכל המלמדו תורה משקר בשם הגדול כי כל התורה שמותיו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שהרי אין נכנסין לברית הלשון היא התורה הקדושה אם לא בברית הבשר... וכשיזכה לברית בשר שהוא השער, מכניסין אותו לברית הלשון שהיא התורה והוא הנקרא גר צדק עכ"ל

Horowitz differentiates between the authority of the kabbalist who has 'seen the Zohar' and the halakhist who has not. This authority is used to establish a conclusive decision regarding the requirement of shaking of the *lulav* (myrtle branch) during the festival of Sukkot. After comparing the opinions of Abudraham (halakhist who wrote a commentary on the prayer book, 14th Century), ibn Shuaib (student of Rashba who wrote a collection of sermons, c 1280 – c.1340) and ibn Gabbai, Horowitz concludes:

Since the rabbi, the author of the *Tola'at Ya'akov* (ibn Gabbai) was a great rabbi in the wisdom of kabbalah, and all his words follow the Zohar, it is proper to go in accordance with him.<sup>556</sup>

As a kabbalist, ibn Gabbai's opinions carry greater weight than his non-kabbalistic predecessors, as all his words follow the Zohar. The kabbalah confers superior status on its disciples in the area of halakhah, meaning they are better equipped to arrive at the correct decisions.

---

<sup>556</sup> Ibid, 245b.

כתוב בכתבי הקודש של תלמידי האר"י ז"ל (פע"ח שער הלולב פ"ב) לכל ששה קצוות שתנענע  
הלולב תכוון להמשיך ולהביא את סוף הלולב וההדסים והערבות והאתרוג במקום הזה שלך  
והסוד עמוק עמוק אשרי להבא בסודותיו ומכיר אותם. ויהי רצון שאתם בניי יצ"ו תזכו לראות את  
כל דבריו ולהבין אותם

...

ומאחר שהרב בעל תולעת יעקב היה רב גדול בחכמת הקבלה, וכל דבריו על פי הזהר ראוי  
לנהוג כוותיה



## Minhag

Nowhere is the new synthesis of halakhah and kabbalah more clearly apparent in the *Shelah* than in the introduction of new kabbalistic customs or *minhagim* (sing. *minhag*), many originating from Isaac Luria. One of Horowitz's most significant roles in the realm of halakhah was the promotion of Luria's kabbalistic practices, which sometimes drastically altered existing halakhic practice or overruled local custom.<sup>557</sup> Elbaum describes the *Shelah* as the most influential work in the spread of Luria's customs to Europe.<sup>558</sup> The term *minhag* has wide application in classical Jewish sources. It has two primary uses: A 'custom', a communal practice that normally falls within the boundary of the halakhah, or a custom in the normative sense of 'accustomed to ruling in a certain way'.<sup>559</sup> The power of *minhag* is such that at times it can overrule halakhah.<sup>560</sup> There is, however, a formal difference between halakhah and *minhag* as legal sources: legislation functions demonstratively and directly, at the direction of the competent authority, such as the halakhic scholars or the leaders of the people and of the community; custom, on the other hand, functions without preconceived intent and anonymously. The Ashkenazic communities had particular

---

<sup>557</sup> Avivi, *Kabbalat ha-Ari* vol.1, 468-86; Dan, *Sifrut*, 241.

<sup>558</sup> Elbaum, *Openness*, 63.

<sup>559</sup> Ephraim Urbach, *The Halakhah, Its Sources and Development*, (Tel Aviv: Modan, 1996), 33-43. *tNid.* 9:17. This distinction is developed in other legal systems too, and in English law *minhag* of the first kind is termed 'legal custom' or simply 'custom', and *minhag* of the second kind or is termed 'usage'. In Hebrew the latter is customarily termed *nohag*.

<sup>560</sup> E.g. *bPes.* 50b-51a; *yYev.* 12:1; *yPes.* 4:3; *tTer.* 3:12; *Magen Avraham* on *SA, OH*, 690:22.

reverence for the customs of their ancestors and one of the principle objections to the *Shulhan Arukh's* attempt to codify the entirety of Jewish law was that it failed to take local custom into account.<sup>561</sup>

Ordinarily, particularly in the context of 16th Century Ashkenazic Jewry, *minhag* referred to the practices specific to geographical location, or an illustrious ancestral legacy from former communal locations.<sup>562</sup> By the 17th Century, the term 'Ashkenaz' had come to encompass the lands of Poland, Lithuania, Bohemia, Moravia, Russia and even Germany. There appears to have been little consensus regarding what conferred the source of a *minhag's* authority. According to Isaiah's father, it was the principle of '*hilkhata ke batra'i*' - the fact that Rama had considered Ashkenazic customs to be homogenous - which gave them legal authority. Joshua Falk of Lublin suggested that the shared language of Yiddish was the reason why Ashkenazic practice followed Rashi and the Tosafists.<sup>563</sup> Horowitz himself cites Isserles' acceptance among Ashkenazic communities as the reason for his supremacy, despite Maharshal being the latter authority.<sup>564</sup>

The use of the English word 'custom' to describe Luria's kabbalistic practices is something of a misnomer as Luria innovated or popularised many of these practices

---

<sup>561</sup> Urbach, *Sources and Development*, 40. See Israel Ta-Shma, 'Halakhah, Minhag u Masoret bi-Yahadut Ashkenazit be Me'ah ha Yud Aleph ve Yud Bet', *Sidra*, 3, (1987), 85-167.

<sup>562</sup> Davis, 'Formation of Ashkenazic Jewish Identity', 255-62.

<sup>563</sup> *Ibid*, 264.

<sup>564</sup> See Chapter Ten, 236-237.

(so they did not reflect established practice).<sup>565</sup> The very fact that the 'holy *Ari*' practiced specific actions gave them authority. Luria's authority derived from his status as the most holy of the kabbalists, rather than his halakhic reasoning skills.<sup>566</sup> His *minhagim* were absorbed by a wide audience over a hundred and fifty years before his ideas were published in a systematic manner.<sup>567</sup>

In the *Shelah*, it is indicative to examine how Horowitz differentiates between the traditional *minhag* as received from Tosafists and Ashkenazic authorities and the new *minhagim* of Isaac Luria and the kabbalists. A close examination of Horowitz's language demonstrates that Luria's practices have far greater authority than ordinary *minhag*, and are best understood as binding laws based on their spiritual prowess. Luria, surely the kabbalist who achieved the most *devekut*, is uniquely disposed to address questions of halakhah. What is especially interesting about Horowitz's attitude towards Ashkenazic *minhagim* is his relative lack of reverence towards them. A few examples are indicative of how they are diminished in comparison with the *minhagim* of Luria and the kabbalists:

Concerning a *minhag* that was prevalent among 'the masses' to be lenient in certain areas of *niddah* (female menstrual purity), Horowitz castigates them with a play on

---

<sup>565</sup> Hallamish, *Minhag*, 294; Weinstein, *Shattering*, 257.

<sup>566</sup> Hallamish, *Minhag*, 160-182; according to Joseph Ergas (Italian rabbi and kabbalist, 1685-1730), from the day the *Ari's* works were revealed to the world, no one argued with him as it was known that his writings were inspired by the divine spirit.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid, 185, 289-91; see also Daniel Sperber, *The Jewish Life Cycle : Custom, Lore and Iconography : Jewish Customs from the Cradle to the Grave*, (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2008), 86-102.

words regarding not following the rule of majority towards sin.<sup>568</sup> Despite Rama's endorsement, 'it is a great prohibition to listen to him'.<sup>569</sup> Horowitz notes dubious but widely held practices among his congregations such as the *minhag* to combine the afternoon and evening prayer while it is still daylight, grudgingly acknowledging that it is not without a source although he does not appear to support it in the first instance.<sup>570</sup> Noting the *minhag* that many congregations had to wear leather shoes after midday on the fast of Av (wearing leather shoes is prohibited on Yom Kippur and the fast of Av), Horowitz exhorts his children not to walk in their ways, and that leniency can only be found in areas 'which are only customs and not found in the Talmud'.<sup>571</sup> The authority of *minhag* in Horowitz's eyes does not seem to carry weight simply because it had become widely adopted (presumably, this does not

---

<sup>568</sup> Ex. 23:2; the Hebrew *Aharei rabim lehatot* (ruling according to the will of the majority), which is the scriptural source for the rule of majority is reconfigured *Aharei rabim lera'ot* (following the majority to sin), which is the original context of the verse, which warns the children of Israel not to follow the majority to sin. However, it is also the scriptural source in the Talmud for following the rule of majority, *bHul.* 11a; *bB.M.* 49b. Horowitz uses this application of the verse to castigate those who follow the majority in error.

<sup>569</sup> *Shelah* 101a.

ומי הוא זה ואיזה הוא שירים ראשו נגד גאוני עולם וראשי הפוסקים קדמאי ובתראי ואף שהמנהג כן בין ההמוניים אל תהיו אחרי רבים לרעות ואף שרמ"א בשולחן ערוך (יו"ד סי' קצ"ה סי"ד) הביא המנהג איסור גדול להשגיח בו

<sup>570</sup> *Ibid*, 122a.

אל יקל בעיניך מה שקורא קריאת שמע ומתפלל עם הצבור, כי יש סמך למנהגם שהתירו בשעת הדחק אף שמקדימין הרבה

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid*, 199b.

רבים מעמי הארץ ומכח ההרגל נכשלים גם כן קצת מהלומדים ואינם נזהרים בחליצת נעל ולובשים מנעליהם לאחר חצות וראיתי מנהג זה בהרבה קהילות בני אל תלכו בדרך אתם. כי כל מה שאסרו חכמים הכל אסור עד הלילה כמו אכילה ושתייה אלא דברים שאינם אלא מנהגא שלא מוזכר בתלמוד כמו ישיבה על הקרקע בזה יש נוהגין להקל אחר חצות

amount to increased *devekut* in this instance). Its authority derives from its source – if it originates from a rabbi of stature, it is considered a form of revelation and worthy of adoption. There is a distinctive lack of Ashkenazic parochialism in Horowitz's attitude towards *minhag*, and he appears willing to adopt practices that he considers to be appropriate rather than those which originate from his ancestors. After condemning those who speak during the Torah reading, he praises the Sephardic *minhag* of reciting the blessing over the Torah reading out loud.<sup>572</sup> As elaborated below, Horowitz was willing to adopt Sephardic prayer *minhagim* when he considered them to be correct.

Lurianic *minhagim*, however, are treated with the greatest reverence. Horowitz declares the *minhagim* he had observed in the name of Luria to be 'correct', in the sense of deciding a halakhic opinion:

Therefore, the *minhag* that I saw among the congregations of the land of Israel is correct in my eyes, that when the *gabbai* (beadle) collects charity in the synagogue he should go after 'and David blessed' (a prayer said at the end of the *Pesukei de-Zimra* part of the morning service) - they said that they received this tradition in the name of the holy *Ari*.<sup>573</sup>

---

<sup>572</sup> Ibid, 256a.

ומנהג הספרדיים שאומר המברך ברוך ה' המבורך כו' בקול רם ולא בלחש ומנהג יפה הוא ואחר כך חוזר ומברך אשר בחר בנו

<sup>573</sup> Ibid, 36b.

וכן בדברי הימים תמצא בהתנדבות דוד למקדש הוא והשרים נדבות גדולות ובשמחה ואז ויברך דוד את ה' לעיני כל הקהל כו' כאשר מבואר בספר דברי הימים (א כט, י) על כן נכון בעיני המנהג שראיתי בקהילות ארץ ישראל כשהגבאי הולך לגבות צדקה בבית הכנסת הולך לאחר ויברך דוד ואומרים שכך מקובלים בשם אלהי האר"י ז"ל

Compare this, for example, to a *minhag* which he cites in the name of Jacob b. Asher (author of the *Tur*), which he describes as a 'beautiful *minhag*, and I follow it accordingly'.<sup>574</sup>

If a *minhag* is deemed to have the proper kabbalistic support, in this instance the approval of Luria himself, it is considered a *correct* practice. Concerning the blessing over the new moon, a new and 'correct' introductory passage was added in accordance with kabbalistic practice:

A beautiful *minhag* which we are accustomed to practice here in Jerusalem the holy city is to say a psalm after the end of the blessing, and say the psalm of the ten praises...<sup>575</sup>. And this is very correct, to stir the light of the supernal moon, which is the kingdom of David, about which we say 'David the king of Israel is alive and endures'.<sup>576</sup>

Again, Horowitz describes the *minhag* both as 'beautiful', but perhaps more importantly, as 'correct'. Similarly, noting the practice derived from *Reishit Hokhmah* which had been accepted among 'most congregations', Horowitz emphasises that it is not appropriate to deviate from this *minhag*. The kabbalistic rationale behind it seems to confer it with a far more authoritative status than an ordinary *minhag* that

---

<sup>574</sup> Ibid, 141a.

כתב הטור סוף סימן תנ"ח ואני ראיתי בברצלונו מהמדקדקין שהמה אופין כל מה שצריכין למועד  
מקודם המועד שאם יתערב עמו משהו מחמץ יתבטל קודם זמן איסורו עכ"ל ומנהג יפה הוא וכן  
אני נוהג

<sup>575</sup> Psalms 150.

<sup>576</sup> *Shelah*, 74a.

ומנהג יפה, אנחנו נוהגים פה ירושלים עיר הקודש תוב"ב, לומר מזמור אחר סיום הברכה, ואומרים  
מזמור של עשרה הלולים (תהלים ק"נ), 'הללויה הללו אל בקדשו' כו'. ונכון הוא מאד, להתעורר אור  
הלבנה שלמעלה, היא מלכות בית דוד, שעליה רומזים 'דוד מלך ישראל חי וקים'

had become widely accepted (note above how the fact that many congregations were acting in a certain way did not stop Horowitz from condemning them):

The strap that we tie around the finger is the ring of engagement which the male gives to the woman. And from here my father my teacher said that it is not appropriate to tie the strap on the finger until the *tefillin* of the head has been placed, which is secret of the male, for if the man hasn't arrived, where will the engagement come from? This is the *minhag* of most of Israel and it is not fitting to change the *minhag*.<sup>577</sup>

In 'Tractate Shabbat', Horowitz writes approvingly of Luria's personal changes to the formulation of the Kiddush blessing in accordance with kabbalistic principles, that he then adopted himself.<sup>578</sup>

Lurianic *minhag* was particularly sought after in the area of repentance, as Luria was seen to possess the unique ability to effect *tikkunim* for the sins of the people. As presented above as an example of Lurianic superiority over all other kabbalists, Horowitz describes the pursuit of his *tikkunim* as comparable to a patient seeking an expert doctor.<sup>579</sup>

---

<sup>577</sup> Ibid, 112b.

וזה לשון ראשית חכמה (שער הקדושה פ"ו אות פא - פב) הרי מבואר במאמר הזה מעלת המניח תפילין שהוא דומה ליוצרו ומבואר במאמר קצת כוונת התפילין ויתבאר עוד ב"ה ואגב מבואר שהרצועה שאנו כורכין באצבע היא טבעת הקידושין שהזכר נותן לה ומכאן היה אומר מורי ע"ה שאין ראוי לכרוך הרצועה על האצבע עד שיניח תפלה של ראש שהוא סוד הזכר שאם עדיין לא בא הזכר קידושין מהיכן וכן מנהג רוב ישראל ואין ראוי לשנות המנהג

<sup>578</sup> Ibid, 139a.

וכתב בספר לקט שכחה ופאה וכן כתב האר"י ז"ל (שער הכוונות דף ע"א ע"ב) כי טעות גדול לומר כי בנו בחרת ולא יהיה רק שבעים תיבות ביחד וכן האריך בזה תולעת יעקב (סוד שבת, אות י') שלא יהיה בנוסח הקידוש רק ל"ה תיבות ועם ויכלו הם שבעים תיבות והאריך בסוד הדבר

<sup>579</sup> See Chapter Four, 102.

The sections in *Asarah Diberot* which address repentance (primarily 'Tractate Rosh ha Shana' and 'Tractate Yoma') are replete with new additions:

I found in sweet booklets, and the eye has seen no God but you whose light was concealed until the man of God, the rabbi, the Ashkenazi, the *Ari* arrived, and revealed the secret of God to those who fear Him. Then he made a decree about the *minhag* to blow a hundred shofar blasts...even though there are different *minhagim*...nevertheless God merited me to imbibe this sweet knowledge.<sup>580</sup>

Luria's *minhagim* are 'sweet knowledge', and not merely popular practice, but 'a light that was concealed' and a 'revealed secret'. Like the use of the Zohar in deciding halakhah, Luria's *minhagim* came from a deeper wellspring of truth.

Distributed in booklets and pamphlets across Europe, Horowitz came across many Lurianic practices that were to become commonplace throughout Europe in the next few centuries, such as the practice of slaughtering a white chicken on the eve of Yom Kippur:

I found in the booklets of the students of the *Arizal*, the *minhag* of my teacher to slaughter a white chicken on the eve of Yom Kippur on the night after *selihot* (prayers of atonement recited between Rosh ha Shana and Yom Kippur), and it should be according to the calculation of the members of the household, male for men and female for women...<sup>581</sup>

---

<sup>580</sup> Ibid, 217a.

אחר כך זכני הש"י ומצאתי קונטריסים נחמדים עין לא ראתה אלהים זולתך והיה האור גנוז עד בא איש האלהים הרב האשכנזי האר"י ז"ל וגילה סוד ה' ליראיו והם נתקנו על מנהג לתקוע מאה קולות דהיינו שלשים קולות בישיבה ושלשים קולות בתפלת לחש ושלשים קולות על הסדר בחזרת שליח צבור התפילה ועשרה קולות לאחר גמר התפילה תתקבל. ואף שיש בזה מנהגים מחולפים נהרא נהרא ופשטיה מ"מ זכני הש"י להגהות נחמדות שממנו ילמדו כל מקום הכוונה לפי מנהגו

<sup>581</sup> Ibid.

בענין כפרות, מצאתי בקונטרס דתלמידי האר"י ז"ל (פרי עץ חיים, שער יום הכפורים פרק א') מנהג מורי זלה"ה לשחוט תרנגול לבן בערב יום כפור באשמורת אחר הסליחות ויהיה כפי חשבון בני אדם שבבית זכר לזכר ונקבה לנקבה. ואפילו ואם האשה מעוברת שוחט עליה



Perhaps the most dramatic example of Luria's authority in the area of *minhag* was in prayer formulation. Horowitz changed his own prayer *nusakh* (the text of prayer observed by a particular community) in accordance with the *nusakh Sefard* (the *nusakh* of the Sephardic community, which was adopted by Luria) which he regarded as superior, leading the way for other kabbalists to follow suit.<sup>582</sup>

Horowitz records that he decided to change his personal *minhag* in accordance with Luria's deep secrets, encouraging his students to follow suit:

This is how they practice in most of the locales of Israel, wherever the Sephardim and those who are drawn to them dwell. Similarly regarding 'Amen' in *Ga'al Yisra'el*, I withdrew from the *minhagim* of the Ashkenazim and went in accordance with them not to answer. This is what the Godly *Arizal* wrote in accordance with deep secrets and one should not differ.<sup>583</sup>

This was no small matter for one who had spent most of his life as a senior rabbi of Ashkenazic communities who held their customs in the highest regard, fiercely resisting attempts to change them.<sup>584</sup> *Minhag* in the traditional sense does not seem

---

שלשה אחד עבודה ושניים עבור הולד אחד זכר ואחד נקבה מספק אם הוא זכר אם היא נקבה

<sup>582</sup> Avivi, *Kabbalat ha-Ari* vol. 1, 475. This was the custom of the Kloiz (fraternity of pietists) of Brody in the early 18th Century, see Sharon Flatto, *The Kabbalistic Culture of Eighteenth-Century Prague : Ezekiel Landau and His Contemporaries*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2010), 102-03.

<sup>583</sup> *Shelah*, 253a.

וכן נוהגין ברוב תפוצות ישראל בכל מקומות מושבותם של ספרדיים והנלויים אליהם וכן בענין אמן של גאל ישראל חזרתי ממנהג אשכנזים ונוהג כמנהגם שלא לענות וכן כתב האלהי האר"י ז"ל על פי סודות עמוקות ואין לשנות

<sup>584</sup> See above, 200.

to have mattered a great deal to Horowitz. The authority of the holy Isaac Luria translated into the acceptance of *minhagim* which derived from his authority. His unique knowledge was best disposed towards directing the halakhic practices of the Jewish people. As Horowitz comments regarding his success in spreading Luria's practice of blowing the hundred blasts on Rosh ha-Shana 'Thank God that we merited to affix this *minhag* here in the holy city of Jerusalem, among the Ashkenazic communities, to blow a hundred blasts!'. Although Horowitz acknowledges that each community can do as they please, those who are wise will understand the correct and 'most upright' path.<sup>585</sup> One of the ironies of Horowitz's adoption and widespread proliferation of Luria's new *minhagim* was that Luria himself appears to have advocated that each community remain with their ancestral custom as each community was required to complete a different aspect of *tikkun*.<sup>586</sup> This is an indication that Luria did not view his personal conduct as belonging to the category of '*minhag*'.

---

<sup>585</sup> *Shelah*, 220b.

ולפי חלוקי המנהגים של קהילות המשכילים יבינו איך להמציא הכוונות על הדרך הזה אמנם המנהג שהוא הדרך הישר והיותר ברור הוא לתקוע מאה קולות בארבעה חלוקי זמנים וכדלעיל וברוך השם שזיכני לזה לקבוע המנהג פה בירושלים עיר הקודש תוב"ב בין קהילה קדושה האשכנזים לתקוע מאה קולות

<sup>586</sup> *Ibid*, 305a; see 352a.

והאלהי האר"י ז"ל הוא היה אומר בשרשי המנהגים שיש חלוקים רבים בין אשכנז וספרד וקטלוניא ואיטליא וכיוצא בהם שהם מנהג קדמונים שלהם בסידורי התפילות שהם מחולקים בשרשי התפילות לפי הדין והיה אומר שהם י"ב שערים ברקיע כנגד שנים עשר שבטים וכל אחד עולה דרך שער אחר ...

ולכן כל אחד צריך להתחזק כמנהג תפלתו כי מי יודע אם הוא משבט ההוא ואין תפלתו עולה אלא על הסדר ההוא אך מה שהוא דינים מפורשים בגמרא זה שוה לכל השבטים עכ"ל האר"י ז"ל

The legal sections of the *Shelah* are replete with kabbalistic material, required to perfect the halakhah by actualising its spiritual components that had lain dormant until the revelation of the Zohar. The new *minhagim* and laws extended existing commandments and redrew their parameters in accordance with kabbalistic understandings. Having drawn from the wellspring of the deepest truth, these practices reshaped halakhah in the direction of a kabbalistic vision of purity and stringency.

## **Chapter Nine: The Pathway to Pietism**

### **Incomplete Halakhah**

Apart from the introduction of kabbalah into areas of jurisdiction, an important second element of the kabbalistic influence on halakhah in the *Shelah* is Horowitz's reconfiguration of halakhah into a pietistic discipline, which helped to move kabbalah from the periphery of Jewish Thought to its centre. For Horowitz, observance of halakhah according to the guidelines found in codes such as the *Shulhan Arukh* represented not an ideal but a springboard towards a life of greater holiness. It is true that even among halakhists there was not a false dichotomy between 'law' and 'spirit', and that halakhah was meant to promote a life lived in accordance with a spirit of moral and ethical values as well as mere obedience to its precepts.<sup>587</sup> However, the emphasis on intensive piety within his halakhic sections differentiates the *Shelah* from classical works of halakhah and other anthologies addressing multiple areas of thought such as Mordekhai Jaffe's *Levush Pinat Yikrat*. I speculate that the infusion of kabbalistic pietism into Horowitz's halakhic discourse was something he developed later in his life (perhaps after his exposure to the writings of Luria). In his copybook which is located in the Bodleian Library (which Avivi estimates to have been written over a fifteen year period, c. 1606-1620),<sup>588</sup> Horowitz outlines the halakhic sections of the Tur which were to become priorities in the *Shelah*, followed by the Lurianic material pertaining to the songs of the Sabbath, and

---

<sup>587</sup> An example of this is Moses of Coucy's (13<sup>th</sup> Century) *Sefer Mitsvot Gadol* (*Se-MaG*; first published in 1480 (Rome), and subsequently published three times by 1547, in Italy). *SeMag* combines halakhic jurisdiction on each of the 613 commandments with moral and ethical teachings.

<sup>588</sup> See Avivi. *Kabbalat ha-Ari*, vol. 1, 482.

the appropriate *kavvanot* for prayer.<sup>589</sup> In the *Shelah* there is no distinction between the two domains, the halakhah being infused with a kabbalistic spirit of pietism. At the heart of this conception is the idea of sin as defilement. As the act of sin creates a permanent blemish on the individual's soul, the halakhah should seek to avoid this contamination at all costs, and is therefore directed towards the attainment of holiness and self-purification. The *Shelah's* association of sin with defilement characterises the kabbalistic approach towards halakhah and presents a marked innovation in the history of halakhic jurisprudence.

#### Impurity, holiness and purification

Academic scholarship on the Biblical and early rabbinic periods has generally differentiated between the concept of ritual and moral impurity found in the Torah. Priestly or ritual impurity is something distinct from the defilement caused by the act of sin, despite the similar terminology they share. Biblical scholars have distinguished between the language of impurity in Leviticus Chapter 15, which is juxtaposed with *taharah*, a neutral state of being pure, and the language of impurity in Leviticus 18, which is juxtaposed with *kedushah*, or holiness.<sup>590</sup> The relationship between moral and ritual impurity is debated in ancient literature: the communities in Qumran required a process of purification after sinning but the Tannaim considered

---

<sup>589</sup> 'Notebook of Isaiah Horowitz', *Bodleian Library Ms. Opp. 268*, Neubauer catalogue number 2248, 48 pages. The Halakhic material is found on pages 1-17, followed by the kabbalistic expositions of Israel Sarug, Vital and Alexander Katz, 21-42. See Avivi, *Kabbalat ha-Ari* vol. 1, 470-482.

<sup>590</sup> Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 10, 14-17.

ritual impurity and sin to be separate issues: sin had no halakhic ramifications in the realm of impurity. Or more accurately, as Klawans suggests, the implications were 'aggadic' rather than halakhic.<sup>591</sup> The technical term *Tumah* which signified ritual and cultic impurity, did not have connotations of sinfulness or defilement, but was rather something natural and at times unavoidable. Ritual impurity affected the ritual status of persons stricken by it. It led to the defilement of people and objects, limiting their interaction with those things defined as sacred. Moral impurity, on the other hand, led to the defilement not only of the sinner, but also of the sanctuary and the land, and, eventually, to the departing of the divine presence and exile. In the Talmudic literature, there are times where the Biblical terms to signify purity and impurity are conflated with sin and sinfulness although generally the distinction is maintained.<sup>592</sup> Mira Balberg has argued that contrary to the common assumption that the laws of purity and impurity were no longer preserved in the post-temple period, for the Tannaim, the observance of ritual impurity and purification constituted an essential part of their halakhic piety.<sup>593</sup> The Mishnah demands a quest for everyone to attain purity involving mental dedication and unrelenting attention.<sup>594</sup>

Yet it is clear that the halakhah as it developed in the medieval period did not prioritise questions of purity and impurity, with many of its most prominent exponents

---

<sup>591</sup> Ibid, 108-09, 34.

<sup>592</sup> Michael Rosenberg, 'The Conflation of Purity and Prohibition', *Harvard Theological Review*, 107, 4 (2014), 465-66.

<sup>593</sup> Balberg, *Purity, Body, and Self in Early Rabbinic Literature*, 28.

<sup>594</sup> Ibid, 151. This argument is not necessarily straightforward and the general assumption that the laws of purity mostly applied to priests may well be an accurate reflection, see David Kraemer's review in the *American Historical Review*, (2015, vol. 120 2), 689-90.

such as Isaac Alfasi (Halakhist and Talmudist, 1013-1103), Asher b. Yehiel (1250-1327) and Karo leaving out the sections pertaining to questions of the temple and ritual impurity (generally associated with the *Kodashim* and *Tahorot* sections of the Talmud) in their halakhic compendia. Sin was certainly not conceived in these terms. It is useful to consider Horowitz's use of the terminology of purity/impurity as synonymous with holiness/sinfulness. Horowitz propagates the attitude of the kabbalists which assumes a dichotomy between the holy and the impure. The emergence and descent of the physical world from God Himself created a stark contrast between the two realms.<sup>595</sup> In the *Shelah*, purity and holiness are often described either synonymously or as part of the same process leading to *devekut*, intimately attached to the requirements of the halakhically observant individual. Sin is equated with impurity, sharing the characteristics of ritual impurity; holiness is equated with purity, and the demands it entailed helped to limit the damage incurred by sin. Horowitz's conception reimagines halakhah as a pietistic rather than a purely legalistic enterprise. It reflects not the correctly applied norms of Talmudic law, but the spiritual reality understood only by the kabbalists.

The effects of sin are described by Horowitz in 'The Written Torah' through a reference from *Reishit Hokhmah*: Sin defiles and leaves a blemish of impurity which cannot be easily removed. On earth what appears to be a 'small matter' is 'impurity without limits, as according to the spirituality rises the positive commandment, so too is the measure of defilement correspondent to the descent of impurity'.<sup>596</sup> Sin is

---

<sup>595</sup> See Chapter Three, 82-83, and Chapter Thirteen, 297-300.

<sup>596</sup> *Shelah*, 348a.

explicitly associated with impurity and defilement, and righteousness with holiness and purity. This is used to explain why the non-Jews can consume non-kosher fish. Impurity only affects the holy people who have a pure soul, who will be quickly affected by its defilement, and its damage will be noticed. The non-Jews, however, who are accustomed to eating impurity, are rendered immune like one who eats poison regularly becomes immunised from its damage.<sup>597</sup> Sin inflicts physical damage upon the Jew in the form of impurity.

The means of countering the poisonous effects of sin is through the pursuit of holiness. Horowitz states in the opening page of his introduction to *Toledot Adam* that when one hallows himself slightly on earth then in heaven he is hallowed far more greatly: 'Know that holiness is an overflowing wellspring', for when man sanctifies himself slightly on earth (lit. down below) he is sanctified greatly from heaven.<sup>598</sup> Developing a concept found in the Bible and the Talmud that God helps

---

ומכל מקום יש מלאך אחד שבו עיקר אור המצוה ותחתיו כמה אלפים מקבלים שאר ניצוצות האור ומזה נבוא להבין ענין הטומאה כי בעבור אדם על מצוה אחת מתורתנו הקדושה כאכילת חלב ודם וכיוצא הרי הדבר הזה למטה הוא גשמי ונראה לעובר עליו דבר מועט אמנם למעלה היא טומאה בלי שיעור כי כפי רוחניות עליית המצוה כן הוא שיעור ירידת הטומאה בכמה מלאכי חבלה עכ"ל

<sup>597</sup> Ibid, 344a.

והטומאה יזיק לעם קדוש יען הנשמה טהורה ותתפעל מהר מהטומאה ומהעכירות והזיקו ניכר משא"כ לגוים האוכלים אותם לפי שמורגלים בטומאה להכי אין הזיקם ניכר שמי שרגיל לאכול סם המות לא יזיקנו

<sup>598</sup> *Shelah*, 1a; the concept of small amounts of holiness on earth being magnified exponentially in heaven is repeated throughout the *Shelah*, e.g. 2a, 35a, 140a, 162a, 333b.



those who seek purity to become pure (which in its Talmudic application refers to repentance),<sup>599</sup> Horowitz explains that when man sanctifies his actions, thought and speech God will shower blessing upon him and those he encounters. Corresponding to his model of *deveikut*, Horowitz presents holiness as possessing two manifestations: the ordinary and extraordinary. On the portion of *Kedoshim* (where the verse in Leviticus 19:2 'you shall be holy for I the LORD your God am holy' is located), Horowitz cites from one of his youthful compositions:

To Israel there are two types of holiness: One type are those who do the commands of the Almighty and the second are those who add ordinances and fences, as it says: And you shall make a fence (for the Torah)...<sup>600</sup>This is what it means 'you shall be holy': cause yourself to be holy through strictures and boundaries and then you will have two holinesses.<sup>601</sup>

Observance of the commandments alone creates one level of holiness, and a second is added upon the adoption of further stringencies by making a fence for the Torah. By understanding sin in terms of defilement and contamination, he who stays furthest from the source of contamination is also the holiest. Without the addition of boundaries and fences, *halakhah* is incomplete as a conduit for holiness.

---

ונודע, כי הקדושה מעיין המתגבר, אדם מקדש את עצמו מלמטה מעט, מקדשין אותו הרבה מלמעלה (יומא לט א) ויחוננו הקדוש ברוך הוא חכמה ובינה ודעת

<sup>599</sup> Leviticus 11:44; *bYoma* 39a.

<sup>600</sup> *mAvot* 1:41.

<sup>601</sup> *Shelah*, 341b.

לישראל שתי קדושות אחת עושי דברו יתברך אשר צוה שניה מה שמוסיפין תקנות וסייגות כהא דתנן (אבות פ"א מ"א) ועשו סייג ... וזהו סוד עשו משמרת למשמרת (מועד קטן ה א) ר"ל בשביל משמרת ומשמרת השני פירושו כמו תולין המשמרת (שבת קלז ב) שהוא להסיג וזהו קדשים תהיו ר"ל תגרמו להיות קדושים דהיינו על ידי הסייג ואז יהיו שתי קדושות

This concept is clearly explained in 'Tractate Shavuot' in terms of the limitations inherent in ordinary halakhic observance:

True *shelemut* requires action. But know that there is no *shelemut* of action without upright intention, for the commandments require intention for the action to be truly complete - and this action must be comprised of speech and thought. The speech should be that the individual should say: I am doing that which my creator has commanded me to unify the Holy one blessed be He and His *shekhinah* and the thought is the intention behind the commandment and its secrets.<sup>602</sup>

For the action of a commandment to be considered 'complete' it must be infused by extra thoughts and speech which complete its sanctity. The action itself requires additional holiness to achieve this perfection.

The concept of a limitation within ordinary halakhah helps to explain Horowitz's attitude when recounting a conversation that took place between himself and his teacher, Solomon b. Judah of Lublin (d. c.1591) in '*Letter Kuf in Sha'ar Otiyot*:

In my youth I learnt Torah with the great rabbi, the renowned genius, our teacher Rabbi Solomon Z'L,<sup>603</sup> and when I departed from him to go to my wedding, I said to him: Rebbe, bless me. He instructed me with these words: Sanctify yourself in these two areas – sanctity of eating, and sanctity of sexual relations, and be very careful to distance yourself a thousand cubits from that which pertains to the transgressions, and sanctify yourself with this holiness, for the other commandments of the Torah do not make a physical imprint, but these two matters do, for food sustains the body, and sexual relations arouses the body. This imprint lasts forever. (These are the words of his holy mouth Z'L). Therefore, I decided to mention these matters last: After the holiness of the individual limbs, I will mention these two things which are aspects of the

---

<sup>602</sup> *Shelah*, 184b.

כלל העולה שלימות המעלה הוא המעשה אבל דע כי אין שלימות המעשה אלא עם כוונה ישרה כי מצות צריכות כוונה (ברכות יג א) להיות המעשה נשלם בשלימותו האמיתי וצריך להיות המעשה כלול מדיבור ומחשבה הדיבור שיאמר זה אני אעשה אשר ציווני בוראי לשם יחוד קודשא בריך הוא ושכינתיה והמחשבה היא כוונת המצוה וסודה

<sup>603</sup> Solomon b. Judah (d. 1591), see Newman, *Life and Teachings*, 27.

body, using the name of 'laws of forbidden and permitted foods', and 'laws of forbidden and permitted sexual relationships'.<sup>604</sup>

The injunction of 'sanctify yourself' involves the individual distancing himself 'a thousand cubits' from any transgression, thereby making himself holy. The reason this is necessary is due to the permanent defilement wrought by sexual impropriety and forbidden foods, leaving an imprint which 'lasts forever'. Note that the distancing must be substantial (a thousand cubits) to attain holiness. Horowitz then comments that in his organisational scheme he adopted the titles (found in Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*) 'laws of forbidden and permitted foods' and 'laws of forbidden and sexual relationships' to narrate this concept of holiness. This preface is important as ostensibly much of the section '*Letter Kuf*' is a discussion of the various halakhot pertaining to food and sexual relations. But by locating this section under the subheading '*Kedushah*', Horowitz ensures that the halakhah is specifically applied in a manner which promotes sanctity. Although Horowitz did not necessarily innovate the halakhic outcomes pertaining to the laws of food and sexual relations, he directs them in a manner whereby the kabbalistic ethos of purity and holiness is prioritised, demanded of all who wish to fulfil the halakhah in its optimal form.

For instance, after discussing the laws of purity and impurity pertaining to the consumption of food by the priests in the temple, Horowitz explains that food should

---

<sup>604</sup> *Shelah*, 73b.

ואני בבחרותי למדתי תורה אצל הרב הגדול הגאון המופלג החסיד מה"ר (מורנו הרב רבי) שלמה ז"ל כשנפטרתי ממנו לילך לנשואין שלי אמרתי לו רבי ברכני וצוה עלי מה לעשות אמר לי בזה הלשון קדש עצמך בשני עינים אלו בקדושת מאכל ובקדושת הביאה והוי זהיר במאד להרחיק אלף אמה ממה שנגע לאיסור והתקדש במאד בקדושתם כי שאר מצות התורה אינם עושים רושם גופני אבל אלו שני הדברים האכילה מקיים הגוף והביאה מהווה הגוף והרושם הזה עומד תמיד ע"כ היה לשון פה קדוש זל"ה ע"כ (על כן) בחרתי להזכירם באחרונה אחר קדושת פרטי האברים אזכיר אלו השנים שהם כללי הגוף ואזכיר אותם בשם הלכות מאכלות אסורות ומותרות והלכות ביאה אסורה ומותרת

be consumed by all in a state of ritual purity even though not even the priests were obligated to do so after the destruction of the temple:<sup>605</sup>

Now has come the time for the matter which should be like profane food produced in a state of purity.<sup>606</sup> Not for nothing did the Torah mention the language of holiness regarding eating, 'and you shall make yourselves holy and become holy'.<sup>607</sup>

Like the language of the Bible itself (which juxtaposes holiness with the consumption of food in Leviticus 11:44), Horowitz locates the laws of eating and drinking within a context of purity. Although Horowitz does not innovate this concept, with the idea of the table resembling the altar found in the Talmud, he directs the law towards ideals found primarily within kabbalistic literature and largely ignored among halakhic sources. Prominent halakhists such as Maimonides had denied the need for food to be consumed in ritual purity after the temple and Karo's *Shulhan Arukh* does not mention it either.<sup>608</sup> Horowitz adapts the Talmudic statement that the 'dinner table is the altar' and extrapolates it so that every aspect of conduct at a meal should mimic the service in the temple. One who eats from the dinner table is a surrogate priest eating a sacrifice.<sup>609</sup> It is notable that Horowitz refers to the later citation of his

---

<sup>605</sup> See Hayim Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality: The Ritual Purity System and Its Place in Judaism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 175.

<sup>606</sup> It became a stringency adopted by the priests in the temple to consume all food in a state of purity not only that which required purity for the temple service, *bHul. 2a*; *bPes. 33b*.

<sup>607</sup> *Shelah*, 80a; Leviticus 11:44.

עתה הגיע עת לדבר שיהיה ע"ד (על דרך) חולין שנעשו על טהרת הקודש ולא לחנם הזכירה התורה לשון קדושה אצל אכילה והתקדשתם והייתם קדושים (ויקרא יא, מד)

<sup>608</sup> *MT*, 'Hilkhhot Ma'akhalot Asurot', 15:8; *SA, OH*, 166-180.

<sup>609</sup> *Shelah*, 82a-83a.

וצריך לסלק הסכין מעל השלחן בשעת ברכה משום שהשלחן הוא מזבח (חגיגה כז א) וכתוב (שמות כ, כב) לא תבנה אתהן גזית

father's *Emek ha-Berakhah* alongside his own comments as a 'completion of the matter' of the holiness of food and drink. This work (which is a compilation of his father's halakhic writings on the topic of dietary laws) is considered a supplement to the overall goal of holiness – needed to complete the topic, but certainly not the topic in its entirety. Analysing the thoughts of kabbalists ibn Gabbai and Joseph Jabez (Spanish theologian and mystic d.1507), Horowitz concludes that in contemporary times the dinner table is the parallel of the altar in its ability to achieve atonement for the penitent.<sup>610</sup> This prefaces his father's laws of eating and drinking, contextualising them with a call to holiness - which is the purpose of halakhic observance.

### The Mikveh

Evidence of the close correlation between sinfulness and impurity in the *Shelah* and kabbalistic literature in general can be seen through the reinstatement of the *mikveh* as a requirement for the purification of men who have experienced a seminal emission.<sup>611</sup> The Talmud had ruled that purity achieved through immersion was no

---

.....

הייתי מאריך בשלחן וגלגלתי בדברים ובאתי מענין לענין ואחזור לענין הראשון שהשלחן במקום מזבח והאוכל במקום כהן והמאכל במקום קרבן ודבר זה אינו כי אם בקדושת האכילה ולא הזכרתי רק מעט ולהשלים הענין הנה מקום אתי פה להעתיק דברי קדושת אדוני אבי מורי זלה"ה שדיבר מזה בספר עמק ברכה עם הגהות שחברתי ולבסוף הגה"ה גדולה קונטרס שחברתי בילדותי על פי הסוד מהענינים הנזכרים שם

<sup>610</sup> Ibid, 86a.

והנראה לנו כפי הנכלל מדברי אלו שני המפרשים הנזכרים הרב יוסף יעב"ץ ותולעת יעקב ששניהם לדבר אחד נתכוונו להודיע לנו איך שלחנו של אדם מזבח כפרה בזמן הזה.

<sup>611</sup> See Krispel, 'Concept of Man', 218-20.

longer required for men, and that a state of impurity no longer prevented Torah study.<sup>612</sup> In the 16th Century, the kabbalists of Safed reintroduced the requirement for men to purify themselves after seminal discharges. Booklets of the customs of Safed as well as the students of Luria emphasised that the individual required the *mikveh* to achieve purity, and that the divine presence did not rest upon the impure. As discussed above, purity was closely aligned with holiness in kabbalistic literature, and impurity with sin and defilement.<sup>613</sup>

Horowitz acknowledges that the halakhic consensus was that immersion is no longer required for Torah study or prayer. Nevertheless, due to his unconditional acceptance of the kabbalistic framework, he also maintains that a state of purity is indispensable for the soul of the penitent, and necessary for atonement.<sup>614</sup> After explaining the severity of sins involving sexual relationships with women and the fasts prescribed by Luria for atonement,<sup>615</sup> Horowitz explains that through the *mikveh*

---

<sup>612</sup> *bBer.* 32b; *tBer.* 2:13; *BY, OH.* 88 and *S.A, OH,* 88:1. Karo adopts the position that the original institution was totally repealed, and no purification is required for one who has had a seminal emission to perform the commandments or learn Torah. Traditionally, one of the differences between the communities in the land of Israel and Babylonian communities was the requirement of immersion before and after Torah study. The communities in the land of Israel were strict in adopting this practice but the Babylonians did not consider it necessary. In the medieval period, although some Spanish communities retained the practice of immersion in conjunction with their Muslim counterparts, the Jews living in Christian lands did not, see Mordechai Margalioth, *Ha-Hilukim she-bein Anshei Mizrah u-Benei Erez Yisrae'l* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1938), 78, 108 ff.

<sup>613</sup> Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 262; *Safed Spirituality*, 70.

<sup>614</sup> *Shelah*, 69a, 252a.

<sup>615</sup> *Ibid*, 99a-100a.

God provided the Jewish people with an antidote for the contamination wrought by the nations of the world.<sup>616</sup>

It is explained in the Zohar, that the consequence of immersion is the restoration of the soul to its place, for one who is impure has no soul. In particular, one who desecrates the 'covenant' (a literal reference to a circumcised penis but also a broader reference to masturbation or sexual impropriety), his soul is removed. And every man requires immersion on the eve of the Sabbath as explained in the Zohar *Vayakhel*, in order to remove the spirit of the week from upon him and to adorn himself in the spirit of the holiness of the Sabbath.<sup>617</sup>

As the Zohar states, 'one who is impure has no soul'. This conflation of impurity with sinfulness means that without the prescriptions of the kabbalists, the individual is incapable of escaping the clutches of sin. Horowitz also explains how the kabbalah delineates the context of the soul's natural corruption into the realm of impurity during the week. The role of the *mikveh* is to restore the soul to its purity. This is the framework in which the halakhot of purity operate. Once the Zohar has established the *mikveh*'s indispensable nature, its requirements can be quantified as halakhic

---

<sup>616</sup> Ibid, 100b.

ולפי שברבות התאוות ובהתמעט הדעות והיו כ"כ (כל כך) שטופין העמים בזימה, עד שנשכחה מלבם רעה זאת באתה תורתינו הקדושה לקדש את ישראל ולהבדילם מן האומות ולהרחיקם מהם ולשמרם מן הנזק הגדול הזה ושיולידו זרעם בקדושה וע"כ (על כן) בדעת זאת התולדות והנזק והתקון והטומאה והטוהר ציוותה תורה לשמור ימי נדה וימי זבה שהם יותר חמורים מימי הנדה להצריך שבעה ימים נקיים וימי יולדות ואחר כך טבילה בארבעים סאה וברוך יודע כל נסתרות שהיה חסדו להיות רופא ישראל שסדרו בחכמתו כפי הצורך הידוע לו

<sup>617</sup> Ibid, 104b.

מתבאר מהזהר (תקוני זהר, תיקון י"ט, דף ל"ט ע"א) כי סגולת הטבילה היא להחזיר הנשמה למקומה כי מי שהוא טמא אין לו נשמה ובפרט הפוגם הברית נשמתו מסתלקת. וכל אדם צריך טבילה בכל ערב שבת כמבואר בזהר ויקהל (ח"ב דף ר"ד ע"א) כדי לפשוט רוח חול וללבוש רוח קדושת שבת שהוא רוח חשוב מעתיקא וכולי האי ואולי שישרה עליו רוח הקודש

rulings. As halakhah is merely the practical aspect of the attainment of *shelemut*, once the situation has been analysed, the kabbalist must decide on the appropriate course of action. Citing *Kanfei Yonah*, Horowitz explains that daily repentance demands fourteen immersions,<sup>618</sup> and later states that on the eve of the Sabbath at least three immersions are required.<sup>619</sup> In Horowitz's final analysis, because impurity and sinfulness amount to the same thing, immersions are as indispensable to the attainment of repentance as the confession, avoidance and regret of sin.<sup>620</sup>

The case study of the *mikveh* is an excellent example of the interchangeability between halakhic rulings and kabbalistic requirements of holiness. Although the *mikveh* had not been included as a requirement of repentance among Ashkenazic halakhists like Rama beyond references to the custom before the high holy days,<sup>621</sup>

---

<sup>618</sup> Ibid.

הרי בכל ערב שבת שלש טבילות

ומי שטובל לשם תשובה באיזה יום מהימים, צריך ארבע עשרה טבילות, וטעמם מבוארים בכתבי הקודש של האר"י ז"ל, מפוזרים במקומות

והא לכם מה שהועתק מדברי הקדוש בתיקון שבת (בתחילת הספר). ואם המצא תמצא מי שיוכל לטבול, הרי זה משובח ומהולל ברוב התשבחות, כי אין צדיק בארץ אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא, ויהיה אהוב למטה ונחמד למעלה, כמנהג הנהוג בארץ הקדושה ארץ ישראל עוד היום, שטובלין בכל ערב שבת, כי שם שער השמים. ומקבלים עליהם מלקות קודם, כמו שמבואר בתיקוני התשובה

<sup>619</sup> Ibid, 138a.

בענין הטבילה צריך לטבול שלש פעמים טבילה ראשונה להעביר זוהמת עונות אחר כך שתי טבילות כנגד נעשה ונשמע (שמות כד, ז)

<sup>620</sup> Ibid, 105a; see *MT*, 'Hilkhhot Teshuva' 1:1-8.

וכשהאדם מפשפש במעשיו ומודה ועוזב ועוסק בתשובה וטובל ומכוין לענינים הגדולים הנ"ל יקויים בו לפני ה' תטהרו (ויקרא טז, ל).... נשלם קדושת הגוף בכלל ובפרט, דהיינו קדושת אברי קומה וקדושת כלל קומ"ה בסוד מקו"ה ואז נקרא בן קדושים כי יהיה ענף נמשך מקדושת האבות

<sup>621</sup> *Darkhei Moshe*, *OH*, 606:3.



Horowitz's understanding of repentance meant that it could not be compartmentalised into 'halakhic' and 'kabbalistic' categories as the halakhah operated within a context established by the kabbalah. The kabbalistic refusal to dichotomise between impurity and sinfulness, and the presentation of sin as a physical blemish meant that the demands of purity and holiness were infused into ordinary conduct, cultivating an ethos of pietism within the *Shelah*.

### Pietistic Aphorisms

The idea of halakhic observance alone being insufficient to acquire holiness in the eyes of God is further expressed in the *Shelah* through the addition of certain aphorisms and short prefaces reinforcing sacred conduct. To present a few examples:

- In speech, the individual is encouraged to say 'If God is willing' regarding any matter that is imminent, no matter how near in proximity.<sup>622</sup>
- Additional prayers are added to the start of every journey to show trust in God's hand.<sup>623</sup>

---

<sup>622</sup> *Shelah*, 60b.

בכלל דביקות האמונה שיאמר על כל פעולה שרוצה לעשות אפילו לזמן קרוב יאמר אעשה זה אם ירצה השם הן שיהיה דבר גדול או דבר קטן וסימנך עצת ה' היא תקום (משלי יט, כא) היא ראשי תיבות אם ירצה השם

<sup>623</sup> *Ibid.*

וכן כשהולך לעשות איזה עסק יאמר אני הולך לעשות זה ברשות הש"י ולמען שמו ויתפלל תפלה קצרה זו נוסחה רבונו של עולם בדברי קדשך כתוב לאמר (תהלים לב, י) והבוטח בה חסד יסובבנו וכתוב (נחמיה ט, ו) ואתה מחיה את כלם חלוק לי מחסדך ליתן ברכה במעשה ידי בפעולה זו

- The phrase beginning 'Behold I am ready and prepared to fulfil the positive commandment of Grace after meals for the sake of the unification of God's name' is added as a preface to the actual blessing, to remind the individual about the ultimate purpose of the commandments.<sup>624</sup>
- Men are encouraged to wash the place of their *tefillin* as an act of purity before applying them.<sup>625</sup>
- Everything that the individual buys for the Sabbath must be articulated as specifically being for the honour of the day as this will enable holiness to flow from the food.<sup>626</sup>
- A person on the verge of death should be surrounded with all matters of holiness so that his soul can depart in holiness, such as being spoken to in the holy language of Hebrew.<sup>627</sup>

---

<sup>624</sup> *Shelah*, 82a. The *le shem yihud* prayer was first formulated in *Reishit Hokhmah* 'Sha'ar Ha Ahavah' 9:38, vol. 1, 567.

לאחר מים אחרונים כשירצה לברך ברכת המזון יאמר הריני מוכן ומזומן לקיים מצות עשה של ברכת המזון שנאמר (דברים ח, י) ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' אלהיך על הארץ הטבה אשר נתן לך לשם יחוד קודשא בריך הוא ושכינתיה ע"י (על ידי) ההוא טמיר ונעלם

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid*, 112a.

כתב אבא מורי ז"ל בעמק ברכה וטוב ליקח מים ולרחוץ מקום הנחת תפילין קודם הנחתן לפי שהן דבר שבקדושה צריך אתה לקדש את עצמך

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid*, 133a.

וכל מה שקונה ומכין ומבשל לשבת יאמר דבר זה אני קונה או מבשל לכבוד השבת ואז מתפשט הקדושה בזה התבשיל וריחו נודף מעין רוחני והכל לפי מה שהוא אדם וכפי שיעור מעשיו ומחשבתו ודביקותו

<sup>627</sup> *Ibid*, 146a.

## **Chapter Ten: Stringency and Elitism**

### **Stringency and Leniency in Halakhah**

---

ואם העומדים אצל הגוסס סיימו כל הסדר הזה ועדיין גוסס יעסקו בדברי תורה ובענייני מצוות  
ודברים שבקדושה כדי שתצא נפשו בקדושה גם החולה שנוטה למות והמדברים עמו ראוי שידברו  
הכל בלשון הקודש ולא בלשון חול כי קדושה גדולה בלשון הקודש

An important manifestation of Horowitz's halakhic pietism is his encouragement of stringency. As noted in the previous chapter, the defilement wrought by sin means that Horowitz encourages all means of separation from any semblance of sin. Yet the holiness this creates is not merely a consequence of additional caution, but has positive religious value: To be stringent in Horowitz's eyes is to destroy the contamination wrought by the primordial serpent who had tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden. Horowitz builds his vision of halakhah around an edifice which culminates in elitist behaviour involving stringency being adopted in virtually all of its manifestations. The positive encouragement of stringency as intrinsically meritorious marks Horowitz's approach as distinctive among his contemporaries.

The term *humra* is a legal term in Talmudic and halakhic literature applied to the stricter of two possible rulings in doubtful cases of ritual law and observance. The opposite of *humra* is *kulla*, meaning the more lenient and permissive approach. *Humra* also referred to the restrictions that pious individuals voluntarily imposed upon themselves in ritual observance that was beyond the requirements strictly required by law. As noted above, the distinction between those who kept 'above the letter of the law' did not refer in Talmudic times to an elite group of pietists.<sup>628</sup> The question of stringency arose from uncertainty about a halakhic decision, and in general the Talmudic and medieval authorities encouraged leniency when there was doubt regarding rabbinic law and stringency in the matter of Biblical law.<sup>629</sup>

---

<sup>628</sup> Hayes, *Divine Law*, 177. Novick, *What Is Good*, 391, 398-402.

<sup>629</sup> E.g. *bA.Z* 7a; *bM.K.* 19b; *bNid.* 63b; *bEruv.* 21b; *bPes.* 9b Rashi ad. loc. See Rashba, *Hidushei Rashba* on *bA.Z.* 75b.

Halakhah by its very nature engaged with real-world issues and its purpose was not to overly burden its adherents. The Talmudic maxim of Rava 'You are not content with what the Torah has forbidden you, but you seek to augment the things prohibited to you?!',<sup>630</sup> could be applied to the rabbinic authorities of the middle-ages, who were reluctant to demand that their communities adopt stringent practices even if they had misgivings about their lenient approaches. They did not consider the stringent to be a religious elite.<sup>631</sup>

As discussed in my introduction,<sup>632</sup> Karo's introduction of the Zohar into the realm of adjudication marked a significant moment in the history of halakhah and kabbalah. Much of the Zoharic halakhic material concerns the adoption of stringencies in line with kabbalistic understandings of the secrets behind the commandments. Karo does not endorse Zoharic stringencies wholeheartedly; his attitude demonstrates the tension between halakhic reticence to publicly encourage stringency and the kabbalistic insistence on personal piety. Karo certainly did not include every Zoharic stringency in the *Beit Yosef*, such as not walking four cubits without handwashing after waking in the morning.<sup>633</sup> In the *Beit Yosef*, Karo encourages the stringency of not eating meat after cheese found in the Zohar, including after chicken, but does not mention this strict opinion in the *Shulkhan Arukh*, intended for a wider audience.<sup>634</sup>

---

<sup>630</sup> *yNed.* 9:1.

<sup>631</sup> Katz, *The "Shabbes Goy" : A Study in Halakhic Flexibility*, 88-127, 215, 61, 68-69. Haym Soloveitchik, *Collected Essays*, (Oxford, 2013), 358-62. See Maharshal, *Yam shel Shlomo* on *b.B.K.* (Prague 1616-1618) 8:9.

<sup>632</sup> See Chapter One, 32-33.

<sup>633</sup> *SA, OH*, 25:12.

<sup>634</sup> *BY, OH*, 173; See *SA, YD*, 89:2. See Reiner, 'Ashkenazi Elite', 96. In Karo's introduction to *Shulhan Arukh* he outlines that the work was intended for laymen and

Similarly, in the *Shulhan Arukh* he does not mention the stringency in the Zohar of not having benefit from the forbidden parts of an animal. With other kabbalistic texts such as *Sefer Pe'iah*, Karo is even more ambivalent about which parts to include in halakhic literature, sometimes agreeing with its stringencies and sometimes disagreeing.<sup>635</sup>

The consciously stringent nature of the *Shelah's* approach to halakhah was noted in Shabbatai Bass' 1680 index, where he lists the areas where Horowitz chose to be specifically stringent.<sup>636</sup> In the *Shelah*, Horowitz adopts a qualifiedly elitist attitude towards halakhah in that he encourages his descendants to embrace stringency as a form of elite personal practice leading them closer to God while simultaneously discouraging them from ruling too strictly in practical judgment.<sup>637</sup>

This attitude has several manifestations: As has been explored in Chapter Seven, Horowitz refuses to differentiate between rabbinic and Biblical law and as a result does not consider the lenient opinion to be preferable even in a situation of rabbinic doubt. Rabbinic stringency, like an accepted halakhah, is a decision reached through prophetic means and therefore carries great weight. For the righteous individual it is not *above* the letter of the law to be stringent, it is the letter of the law itself. As the observance of the halakhah is primarily about increasing degrees of *devekut* with God, its requirements change according to the individual. Again, Horowitz creates a

---

the less learned students, so he decided to compile teachings in abbreviated fashion so that students could memorise 'the Lord's perfect Torah'.

<sup>635</sup> Hallamish, *Minhag*, 175-79.

<sup>636</sup> *Sifte'ei Yeshenim*, 79-80.

<sup>637</sup> See *Shelah*, 183b.

two-tiered system, at times requiring the elite to remove themselves from the practices of the wider community.

### Stringency as the Antidote for the Serpent

As explained in Chapter Seven, Horowitz considered rabbinic stringency to emerge directly from the mouth of revelation. Stringency constituted a spiritual necessity decreed by God Himself:

I will further explain the matter in its essence, for we see in each generation new stringencies emerging. In the days of Moses our teacher the only things that were forbidden were those received explicitly from Sinai, yet he added several ordinances for the needs that he saw fit, and so too afterwards the prophets and the Tannaim did the same in each generation according to its expounders. And the idea is that the more that the serpent's pollution spreads, the greater the need for boundaries – 'and whoever breaks through a fence, a serpent shall bite him'.<sup>638</sup> God commanded 365 prohibitions in order not to awaken the contamination of the serpent, and through the spreading of the contamination throughout the generations, more prohibitions require promulgation – and had this been the case in the time of the giving of the Torah (they would have been instituted). But this is (in fact) included in what the Torah prohibited, for all is one matter. Therefore, God commanded us to 'make a boundary to a boundary';<sup>639</sup> that is to say, all according to the relevant matter. It logically follows that in each generation, when it is appropriate to add stringencies, (one should) do so with the sanction of Biblical authority, for after the spread of the serpent's contamination (what was required was) the release of potentiality to actuality – for God created the evil inclination and he also created the antidote.<sup>640</sup> For now we require a divine awakening to extend the prohibitions from potentiality to actuality, until in the future we cleave to the divine source.<sup>641</sup>

---

<sup>638</sup> Ecclesiastes 10:9.

<sup>639</sup> *bM.K.* 5a.

<sup>640</sup> *bKid.* 30b.

<sup>641</sup> *Shelah*, 25b.

החכמים חדשו דברים או (אלו) מכח פלפולם אבל הכל היה בכח הקול הנזכר והגיעה העת שהם הוציאו מכח אל הפועל בהתבוננותם. ואמנם גדול אדנינו ורב כח לתבונתו אין מספר (תהלים קמז, ה)

In Horowitz's model, stringency emerges as an antidote to the spiritual decline of the generations and the spread of the serpent's contamination. In a world increasingly entrapped by evil forces, the only appropriate response is for Man to erect fences to prevent further destructiveness at the hands of sin. Like the encouragement of the *mikveh* as a prerequisite of atonement, Horowitz's formulation of the serpent's pollution of the world directly impacts the halakhah. The function of the *humra* is to become an active force that repels evil and every individual is entreated to adopt all measures necessary to avoid sin.

Stringency is closely associated with the concept of fearing God. Drawing heavily from Cordovero's writings, Horowitz examines its lowest level, which is fear of punishment, and explores the difference between selfish fear of God and a loftier fear that involves absolute self-nullification.<sup>642</sup> The greatest level of fear is the fear that sin might blemish God Himself (creating the need to add stringencies). Horowitz

---

כי בבחינת הכח לא פוסק כי אין מספר ואין לו סוף ותכלית לפי ההתחדשות ומקור נשמות בכל דור ולפי ענין כח התחתונים שמעוררים כח העליון. נמצא הקדוש ברוך הוא נתן התורה והוא נתן התורה בכל עת ובכל שעה. המעין הנובע אינו פוסק ומה שנותן הוא בכח מה שנתן

עוד אבאר הענין בעצם הנה אנחנו רואים בכל דור ודור החומרות מתפשטות. בימי משה רבינו ע"ה לא נאסר רק מה שקיבלו בהדיא בסיני אמנם הוסיף איזה תקנות לאיזה צורך שראה וכן אחר כך הנביאים והתנאים בכל דור ודור ודורשיו. והענין ביותר שיש התפשטות זוהמת הנחש צריך ביותר לגדרים ופרץ גדר ישכנו נחש (קהלת י, ח). והקב"ה צוה שס"ה לא תעשה שלא לעורר זוהמת הנחש ובהתפשט זוהמת הדור צריך להתפשטות יותר איסורים ואילו היה כן בזמן מתן תורה היה כתוב כן בתורה. אבל זה נכלל במה שאסרה התורה כי הכל ענין אחד ו"ע"כ צוה הש"י עשו משמרת למשמרת כלומר הכל לפי הענין. ממילא בכל דור ודור כשראו להוסיף חומרות אז הכל הוא מדאורייתא כי מאחר שמתפשטת זוהמת הנחש ויוצא יותר מכח אל הפועל. הנה הקב"ה ברא יצר הרע ברא תבלין (קדושין ל ב) כי אז צריכים אנחנו להתעוררות עליון להמשיך האסורין מכח אל הפועל עד לעתיד נמדבק במקור העליון. ודי בזה למשכיל ולמבין

<sup>642</sup> Ibid, 47a-b.



compares this to a rich man protecting his wealth from highwaymen by erecting multiple fences. This necessitates moving beyond what the basic halakhah requires:

Therefore, he should create additional protection concerning care over sin, and progressively add holiness by increasing his involvement in performing the commandments, acts of lovingkindness and charity, far beyond what he is obligated to do, in order to unify the king in His glory.<sup>643</sup>

Holiness needs to be added to halakhah in order to 'unify the king in his glory'. For the God-fearing, this is considered a necessity and not 'above the letter of the law'.<sup>644</sup> The requirements of halakhah adapt according to the level of each individual, with the elite required to adopt a far more stringent standard of behaviour than the common man.

In '*Letter Kuf*', after explaining the need to be strict in matters of food and sexuality, Horowitz makes the distinction between what his sons should do and what the rest of

---

<sup>643</sup> Ibid, 50b.

הרי יראה גדולה הנוגעת בכבוד צרכי גבוה בעצמו כביכול שלא יפגום וזהו פירושו של יראת חטא ע"ד (על דרך) משל כמו שהאדם אשר יש לו עושר ירא מהשודדים ומהגנבים ועושר גדר אבנים סביב לביתו ומשמרת למשמרת כן יהיה ירא מהחטא שלא יבא לידי חטא מאחר שנוגע בהחטא בבבת עינו כביכול פוגם ואז יעשה גדר וסייגים ומשמרת למשמרת נוסף על מה שמוזהר ועל מה שמצווה וביראה זו שהיא לפני ולפנים ירא תמיד אולי תפסיק האהבה ח"ו דהיינו האהבה שלמעלה סוד ייחוד השם סוד הזיווג הנזכר לעיל. על כן יעשה משמרת למשמרת לענין אזהרת החטא, ויוסיף קדושה על קדושה להרבות בעסק המצות וחסד וצדקה, הרבה יותר ממה שחויב כדי לייחד המלך בכבודו

<sup>644</sup> Ibid, 55b.

אבל הלפני משורת הדין הוא דין כי מאחר שצותה התורה לעשות לפני משורת הדין ממילא הוא דין  
....

ובזה הדבר לא שייך לומר לפני משורת הדין אלא בדבר שאנו אומרים אם היה כל טבע בני אדם כך  
היה דין תורה כן

the Jewish community does. He differentiates between the rulings of Maharshal and Rama in a seminal passage for understanding Horowitz's halakhic approach:

How far does the holiness of food extend! Behold I have seen men of valour and they are few, perhaps there are not two in a generation – these men do not eat from something which has a disputed status (in terms of *kashrut*), even though the world has decided to adopt a lenient position. Nevertheless, my children, I will write for you several matters to exhort you to be stringent about that which the world is not stringent about, and do not follow the majority to do evil, since this is the law, as I will explain. I will also tell you that we have had great rabbis in recent generations: the genius, our teacher Maharshal and our great teacher Rama. Each one of them composed and assembled a work concerning that which is prohibited and that which is allowed (in dietary laws), and they disagree on several occasions; it has already been established that it is Rama who should be followed. Certainly, it is divine decree that he merited this, much like the halakhah is according to the school of Hillel even though the house of Shammai possessed more intellectual acuity.<sup>645</sup> However, I have come to reveal in this matter that the genius Maharshal came later in the assemblage of his work than Rama's *Torat Hatat* (Rama's halakhic work). For this is what occurred: the students of Maharshal wrote down his *Isur ve-Heter* (Maharshal's halakhic work) and brought it to Rama when he wrote his *Torat Hatat*, who read through it and made objections to it, and then *Torat Hatat* came to Maharshal, and Maharshal wrote in his *Isur ve-Heter* (the following phrase) 'what he wrote', transpiring that Maharshal came afterwards. But I have already said that it has already spread in the congregations of Israel outside the kingdom of Poland and their surrounding lands that the Ashkenazic communities adjudicate according to Rama, but nevertheless it is appropriate for each Man to be the master of his household, to make himself holy and be stringent and forbid for himself both what this one prohibits and what the other prohibits, and even if he is lenient to others according to their custom, he should be strict on himself. And how much more so that he should not be lenient on himself and strict to others!<sup>646</sup>

---

<sup>645</sup> *bYev.* 14a.

<sup>646</sup> *Shelah*, 74b.

עד היכן קדושת המאכל והנה ראיתי בני עליה והנם מועטים אפשר אפילו שנים בדור אינם שלא לאכול מדבר שיש בו מחלוקות אף דנהג עלמא ופסקו כהמתיר מכל מקום הבנים בניי יצ"ו ארשום לכם איזה ענינים להזהיר אתכם להחמיר במה שאין העולם נזהרים ואל תהיו אחרי רבים לרעות מאחר שהוא מצד דינא כמו שאפרש עוד הנני מודיע אתכם הנה רבותינו גדולי האחרונים הגאון מהר"ש (מורנו הרב שלמה) לוריא ז"ל והגאון מהר"ם (מורנו הרב משה) איסרלש ז"ל כל אחד מהם חיבר וסידר איסור והיתר וכמה פעמים הם מחולקים וכבר יצא טבעו של הגאון מהרמ"א ז"ל לילך אחריו ולפסוק כמוהו ובודאי מן השמים זכה לזה כמו שנפסק הלכתא כבית הלל אע"ג דב"ש (בית

There are four points which emerge from this analysis:

- Horowitz exhorts his descendants to never adopt leniencies in a matter of dispute, even if they are widely followed in the community.
- He accepts that Rama has been adopted by the Ashkenazic communities as the authoritative *posek*.
- He suggests that Maharshal should have merited this status based on *halakhah ke-batrai* but doesn't challenge Rama's role.
- He tells his descendants that they should 'be the master of their own household' and add holiness and stringencies even when as a *posek* he is lenient on others. However, he qualifies this point by adding that this should not lead to hypocrisy, and that stringencies should firstly be pursued by the individual before being spread to others. Nevertheless, it is apparent that theoretically it would be best for everyone to adopt stringent positions, as this would 'make himself holy'.

Horowitz prefers Maharshal's approach to Rama's. Subsequently, he lists the areas where Maharshal is strict and Rama is lenient:

Now I will recount some of the differences between the latter day geniuses, Maharshal and Rama and I will not write the places where Maharshal permits and Rama forbids, as there is no practical lesson to be learnt from this as in this generation we follow Rama, and who is he who would be so brazen that

---

שמאי) היו חריפי (יבמות יד א) רק כגון דא צריך אני להודיע כי הגאון מהרש"ל ז"ל הוא בתראי בסדר חיבור איסור והיתר שלו לאחר שחיבר מהרמ"א ז"ל תורת חטאת שלו כי כן היה המעשה תלמידים של הגאון מהרש"ל ז"ל העתיקו איסור והיתר שלו והביאו אותו ליד הרמ"א ז"ל כשחיבר התורת חטאת ע"כ הביא כמה פעמים איסור והיתר של הגאון מהרש"ל ז"ל ומשיג עליו ואח"כ בא התורת חטאת ליד הגאון מהרש"ל ז"ל וכתב מהרש"ל ז"ל באיסור והיתר שלו מ"ש (מה שכתב) נמצא שזה הגאון מהרש"ל ז"ל הוא בתראי אבל כבר אמרתי שכבר נתפשט בתפוצת ישראל שבחוצה לארץ במלכות פולנייא ופיהם ומעהרין ואשכנז לפסוק כהגאון מהרמ"א ז"ל אבל מ"מ ראוי להיות כל איש שורר בביתו להתקדש ולהחמיר לאסור לעצמו הן מה שאוסר זה והן מה שאוסר זה אף שמיקל לאחרני בהוראה לפי המנהג יחמיר לעצמו. ומכ"ש (ומכל שכן) שלא יקל לעצמו ויחמיר לאחרני

he would be stringent on others and be lenient on himself? However, I will note a few of the places where Maharshal is stringent, and even if one is lenient on others and decides like the Rama, nevertheless it is fitting that he should be stringent on himself like Maharshal, for in the most part he has the most fitting rationales and reasons.<sup>647</sup>

Here Horowitz argues that there is nothing to be gained by mentioning Maharshal's leniencies, which are not followed. Unlike stringencies, which always have merit, it would be a travesty to adopt a minority lenient view. He also adds that the reason to adopt Maharshal's stringencies is not only a question of stringency for its own sake, but for reasons of internal persuasive rationale. But this motivation towards stringency is undoubtedly also the product of an ethos which fears transgression and is a product of Horowitz's positive attitude towards stringencies in general, as expressed in *Toledot Adam* and *Asarah Ma'amarot*.

After recording Maharshal's stringencies, Horowitz repeats his elitist ethos that his children should ignore halakhic consensus in favour of personal protection from sin. This can be understood in terms of the devastation wrought by the contamination of sin. The nominalist nature of halakhic adjudication means that, in theory, once a decision has been judged to be correct or incorrect, it has the force of law. Kabbalistic realism, however, dictates that an incorrect decision can cause spiritual devastation within the individual regardless of whether it is the accepted position or

---

<sup>647</sup> Ibid, 75a.

ענה ארשום קצת מהחילוקים שבין הגאונים בתראי מהרש"ל ז"ל ומהרמ"א ז"ל ולא ארשום במקום שרש"ל מתיר ורמ"א אוסר דלא יש נפקותא מזה אחר דפסקינן בדור הזה אחר רמ"א ומי יקל ראש ומי הוא זה שיחמיר לאחריני ויקיל לעצמו אך ארשום קצת מקומות שרש"ל מחמיר ואף המיקל לאחריני ופוסק כרמ"א מכל מקום ראוי שיחמיר לעצמו כרש"ל כי על הרוב טעמו ונימוקו עמו

not. The knives of the slaughterers, for example, should be personally checked even if they are trusted by the elders of the community:

Even in the great city (Jerusalem) which is the great mother of Israel, it is appropriate for every fearful and trembling individual to check with the head of the court, to inquire about the state of the knife used, even if he is God fearing, for in addition to fear of heaven he requires extra skill.<sup>648</sup>

The issue of knife checking bothered the Polish rabbis considerably, and Joshua Falk of Lvov wrote pamphlets at the beginning of the 17th Century warning about the importance of knife checking.<sup>649</sup>

Horowitz mentions that the earlier authorities had ruled leniently that most new grain is planted before the Omer period (rendering it permissible for instant use) and could be purchased outside of Palestine. However, he considers this ruling to be based on flawed knowledge and distinguishes between the climate in medieval Spain and contemporary Poland, Russia and Lithuania, where crops are planted after the Omer period. Even though this ruling could incur significant financial loss, the truth of the matter is more important.<sup>650</sup>

---

<sup>648</sup> Ibid, 74b.

ואף בעיר גדולה שהיא עיר ואם בישראל ראוי לכל ירא וחרד לדבר על לב האב בית דין לחקור ולדרוש איך הוא הסכין של השוחט דמתא אף אם הוא ירא שמים כי נוסף על יראת שמים צריך אמנות יתירה

...

ולא לחנם היה המנהג של חכמי התלמוד לבדוק הסכין דוקא הם בעצמם ובכבודם ולא להאמין לשום טבח אף שהוא ירא שמים כי הרבה צריך ישוב הדעת ויראת שמים לבדיקות הסכין והנה כשזיכני השם יתברך לבוא לירושלים ע"ה (עיר הקודש) תוב"ב ראה ראיתי הנהגת בדיקת הסכין בכאן באימה יתירה ובהראותו לחכמי העיר וכן המנהג בכל המלכות הזה ראו עיני ושמח לבי

<sup>649</sup> Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, 27, 32-33.

<sup>650</sup> *Shelah*, 77a.

דעו בניי יצ"ו כי זכני ה' להיות מרביץ תורה כמעט בכל המדינות ועיני ראו שחילוק גדול יש בארצות באלו הארצות שהיה הרא"ש וכן המרדכי שהביא את דברי הראב"ה כמובא בבית יוסף בסימן הנזכר

'One who is stringent will merit blessing'

It is worth comparing the way that Horowitz and Karo relate to the Zohar as an indication of their respective attitudes towards kabbalistic stringency. In the *Beit Yosef*, Karo records the stringency of waiting six hours between eating meat and milk. There is a significant difference between the way that the *Shelah* cites Karo's *Beit Yosef* on this issue and the way that Karo describes it in the original. Karo assesses the issue by prefacing his summary with the phrase 'there are those that are stringent', before quoting a Zoharic passage in Aramaic without comment (which when translated implies that one who eats meat after cheese will have a cursed child within forty days of the violation), then supporting its legitimacy to add this stringency with the backing of Mordechai b. Hillel, a great 13th Century Ashkenazic authority who had not seen the Zohar, concluding that 'for we, who have merited to see the Zohar, it is good and proper to be stringent'.<sup>651</sup>

---

לעיל הם היו דרים בארצות החום ושם באמת רוב נשרש קודם לעומר. אבל בארץ פולין ומכל שכן ארץ רוסי"א וואליין ליט"א שם על הרוב ורוב דרוב נשרש אחר העומר

<sup>651</sup> *BY, OH, 173.*

ויש מחמירין על עצמם שלא לאכול בשר אחר גבינה בסעודה אחת מפני שכתוב בספר הזוהר פרשת משפטים (קכה.) וז"ל אשכחן דכל מאן דאכיל האי מיכלא כחדא או בשעתא חדא או בסעודתא חדא ארבעין יומין אתחזיא גדיא מקלסא בקלפוי לגבי אינון דלעילא וסייעתא מסאבא מתקרבין בהדיא וגרים לאתערא דינין בעלמא דינין דלא קדישין ואי אוליד בר באינון יומין אוזפין ליה נשמתא מסטרא אחרא דלא איהי קדישא עכ"ל וכבר כתב המרדכי (חולין סי' תרפז) שמהר"מ (תשובות דפוס פראג סי' תרטו) היה נוהג שלא לאכול בשר בהמה וחיה אחר גבינה לפי שפעם אחת מסעודה לסעודה מצא גבינה בין שיניו גזר להחמיר על עצמו ואין זה כחולק על התלמוד ולא כמוסיף שהוא גורע דהא חזינא פרק כל הבשר אנא להא מילתא כחלא בר חמרא וכו' וכל חד מצי לאחמורי אנפשיה לעשות משמרת ובעוף אני מיקל כיון דגבינה ועוף נאכלין באפיקורן ע"כ. והא ודאי שהוא ז"ל לא ראה ספר הזוהר ואפילו הכי היה מחמיר על עצמו משום מעשה שהיה ואע"פ שהיה מיקל בעוף היינו לפי שלא ראה ספר הזוהר אבל אנו שזכינו לראותו טוב ונכון להחמיר אפילו בבשר עוף

The *Shelah* cites this passage in the *Beit Yosef*, but places far more emphasis on the translation of the Zohar, exhorting his students that 'one who wishes to guard his soul should distance himself from things that are permitted according to the letter of the law' and he 'will be blessed' by adopting the stringency.<sup>652</sup> Horowitz feels no need to include other justifications for this practice. The individual who is stringent in halakhah is described as 'fearing heaven'.<sup>653</sup>

Generally, Karo's use of the Zohar only appears once the Babylonian Talmud has not made itself clear on the matter, and he often provides further support for his position from another Talmudic source, as if aware that the Zohar alone does not merit its position through its stature.<sup>654</sup> To Horowitz, once the Zohar has been cited,

---

<sup>652</sup> *Shelah*, 76b; see *bYev.* 20a.

ובית יוסף כתב ב א"ח ס' קע"ג בשם הזהר (ח"ב דף קכ"ה ע"א) דיש להחמיר בבשר אחר גבינה  
אפילו בשר עוף כמו בגבינה אחר בשר ואמר שם בזהר מי שאינו נזהר, שורה עליו רוח הטומאה  
ארבעים יום ואם מוליד בן באינן ארבעים יום נותנין לו נשמה מסטרא אחרא דלאו איהי קדישא בר  
מינן  
ע"כ (על כן) שומר נפשו ירחק ויקדש עצמו אפילו במותר לו מצד הדין מכל מקום המחמיר תבא עליו  
ברכה

<sup>653</sup> *Ibid*, 76b.

אבל בדבר לח חתיכה עצמה נעשית נבילה כבשר בחלב לכולי עלמא ולדידן אף בשאר איסורין ואין  
חילוק בין נודע התערובות בנתיים או לא נודע וגם רמ"א כתב דטוב להחמיר ולנהוג לחקור אחר זה  
על כן כל ירא שמים יזכור בזה ולא ישכח

<sup>654</sup> E.g. *BY, OH*, 141. See Chapter One, 32-33.

וכיון דלדברי הזוהר אסור לקרות אלא אחד לבד ועכשיו שנהגו ששליח ציבור הוא הקורא העולה אסור  
לקרות אע"פ שלדברי הפוסקים צריך לקרות ואם לא יקרא כתבו דהוי ברכה לבטלה מאחר שלא נזכר  
זה בתלמוד בהדיא לא שבקינן דברי הזוהר מפני דברי הפוסקים ועוד דהא איכא למימר דכל שהעולה  
שומע מה ששליח ציבור קורא ומוכין לבו לדבריו הרי הוא כקורא דשומע כעונה (סוכה לח):

its authority is supreme and pious individuals should adopt all of its stringencies, even if according to the letter of the law they are not required.

Throughout the *Shelah*, the adoption of stringencies confers a superior status on the practitioner, earning epithets such as 'he who fears heaven will be stringent' or 'he who is stringent will merit blessing'.

For example, non-Jewish wine should be avoided at all costs, as discussed in Chapter Eight, and Horowitz ends his exhortation to avoid it by mentioning that the holy individual is strict in all stringencies:

And do not be surprised about the extensive application of the stringency, for one who guards himself from it merits wine 'protected in its grapes', since he has gladdened God and Man with blessings. And I am shocked about those who are lenient in the lands of the gentiles etc. Taste and see the great need to sanctify yourself in this area. Therefore, be holy! *Be stringent in all the stringencies*, as it is said: sanctify yourself with that which is permitted to you.<sup>655</sup>

One who 'guards his soul', Horowitz adds, should distance himself from doubt and sanctify himself even in those things that have been permitted by the later authorities but were prohibited in the Talmud due to fear of safety.<sup>656</sup> This especially applies to

---

<sup>655</sup> Ibid, 77a.

ואל תתמה על דקדוק החומרא בכל שהוא שהנשמר ממנו זוכה ליין המשומר בענביו אחר שמשמרו אלהים ואנשים בברכות ותמה אני על המקילים בארצות הערלים כו' טעמו וראו הצורך הגדול להתקדש בזה על כן קדושים תהיו ולהחמיר בכל החומרות וע"ז נאמר (יבמות כ א) קדש עצמך במותר לך

<sup>656</sup> Ibid, 79b. This case relates to waters left uncovered overnight, which the Mishnah prohibits from consumption on safety grounds in case a serpent poisoned it, see *mTerumot* 8:4.

ובאמת אפילו שכתב הטור והאידינא נהגו להקל אפילו בודאין מגולין... מ"ם שומר נפשו ירחק מהם וקדוש יאמרו לו והנהגין להקל עליהם נאמר שומר פתאים



the restrictions associated with menstrual impurity, where Horowitz exhorts his sons to go far beyond the stringencies found in the Talmud.<sup>657</sup> Citing the Biblical commentary of Recanati, Horowitz recommends that it is best to avoid sitting in the same area as menstruating women of all kinds, even if according to the law this restriction only applies to a man's wife.<sup>658</sup> Stringency is a positive means of constructing a life of holiness. In genuine cases of halakhic uncertainty, it is better to adopt both opinions in accordance with the ways of the pious:

There is a dispute about the blessing over immersion, whether a woman should make a blessing before immersion or afterwards. I have seen a pious man from 'men of deeds' who guided his wife as follows: After she immersed her entire body once, she made a blessing, and after she made the blessing she immersed a second time, and through this merited extra holiness, and *also fulfilled the two opinions*.<sup>659</sup>

According to Horowitz's outlook, it is a positive thing that two opinions have been fulfilled, even if they are contradictory from a halakhic perspective. The fact that the

---

<sup>657</sup> Ibid, 100b.

בכלל סור מרע בקדושת ברית המעור היא השמירה יתירה באשתו נדה שהזכירו רז"ל (נזיר כג א) צדיקים ילכו בם ופושעים יכשלו ע"כ (על כן) ראשית חכמה יראת ה' (תהלים קיא, י) יהיה נזהר בכל מה שמוזכר בתלמוד ובפוסקים ויותר מהמה בניי הזהרו ובאתי לרשום איזה דברים הכרחיים וחידושים

<sup>658</sup> Ibid, 101a.

טוב ליזהר מטומאת משכב ומושב של נדה אף בזמן הזה ולא מאשתו לבד אלא מכל נדה

<sup>659</sup> Ibid.

בברכת הטבילה יש מחלוקת (ראה בטור יו"ד סי' ר') אם האשה תברך קודם הטבילה או לאחר שתעלה מהטבילה וראיתי לחסיד מאנשי מעשה שהנהיג את אשתו כך לאחר שתטבול כל גופה פעם אחת תעשה הברכה ולאחר שתברך תטבול פעם שנית ובזה תעשה קדושה יתירה ותהיה יוצאת גם כן לשני הדעות

halakhic issue was left undecided is viewed by a pietist as an opportunity to achieve more *devekut* with God.

### Ner Mitsvah as Pietism

A further means of identifying Horowitz's pietistic vision of stringent halakhah is through an evaluation of the content of his halakhic sections entitled '*Ner Mitsvah*' in the section *Asarah Diberot* (The main body of the *Shelah*). *Ner Mitsvah* purports to provide guidance in areas which are commonly neglected and is distinguished by Horowitz as a separate category from the *Torah Or* and *Tokhehot Musar* sections of the *Shelah*. Yet within each of these sections addressing the halakhic aspects of the calendar year, the ethos of pietism emerges encouraging additional holiness, stringencies, repentance and introspection in line with the 'incomplete halakhah' concept discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>660</sup>

The laws of the Sabbath, for instance, are filled with details of *mikveh*, purity and repentance:

- The individual is exhorted to prepare himself through repentance and attend to his deficiencies before the day begins. Immersion on Friday afternoon is encouraged as it provides greater holiness than during a weekday.<sup>661</sup>

---

<sup>660</sup> See Chapter Nine, 212-221.

<sup>661</sup> *Shelah*, 131a.

על כן יפשפש במעשיו, ויתעורר בתשובה, ויתקן כל קלקול...

ולענין טבילה בכל ערב שבת, היא קדושה גדולה וטהרת הקודש כמו שיתבאר וסוד המקוה וענין טבילה של ערב שבת נתבאר לעיל בארוכה

...

- As part of holiness and separation from impurity, additional stringencies are also encouraged for all who are 'conscious of their soul' for the practices associated with the Sabbath and the festivals. <sup>662</sup>
- On the Sabbath the individual should remove himself from even the slightest semblance of doubt in his conduct. <sup>663</sup>
- It is a trait of the pious and those who desire additional holiness to have completed heavy labours by midday on Friday for the sake of the Sabbath, and from midday onwards all activity should be directed towards the holiness of the Sabbath. <sup>664</sup>

The laws of the festivals are filled with similar exhortations:

- The laws of the beginning of the new month demand that the individual strives for additional holiness and undertakes repentance, comparing the eve of the

---

ומקודם הטבילה, יקרא הפרשה שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום. ודבר זה יתבאר לקמן על פי הסוד

<sup>662</sup> Ibid, 132a-133a.

<sup>663</sup> Ibid, 139b-140a.

על כן צריך אדם להיות יותר מדקדק במעשיו ויותר ירא וחרד שלא חוצה מדביקות הש"י גם ביותר מחמיר בספיקא לספיקא דספיקא

...

שמע מינה דאפילו עם הארץ ירא וחרד יותר ביום השבת משאר ימים ויקדשהו קל וחומר למי שחננו ה' דעה ובינה המבין מקדושת שבת ומסוד נשמה יתירה ומכין עצמו לקדושה אז מתקשר נפש ורוח ונשמה

<sup>664</sup> Ibid, 133a.

ומדת חסידות וקדושה יתירה היא, להיות מוכנים לצורך שבת במלאכות כבידות בחצות ומחצות ואילך יהיה העסק הכל בקדושת שבת שכולו שבת דהיינו בהתעוררות תשובה ובתיקוני מעשים ובלימוד התורה ככה יעשו כל בני ביתו עד זמן הדלקת נרות

new month to a miniature Yom Kippur. He should fast, accept mortifications and do complete repentance.<sup>665</sup>

- On Passover, the individual should not rely on his household's standards but ensure that everything is done to the strictest standards.<sup>666</sup>
- Thoughts of repentance should not leave him throughout the entire festival of Sukkot.<sup>667</sup>
- The laws of Shavuot include additional fasting for the entire household and exhortations for meticulous adherence to all the laws concerning the domestic sphere.<sup>668</sup>
- In the sections addressing the laws of the high holy days, repentance demands deeply ascetic practices, including additional fasts in the month of

---

<sup>665</sup> Ibid, 140a.

ראש חודש זמן כפרה הוא וראוי לאדם שיפשפש במעשיו ויהרהר בתשובה ונוסף על זה מה שערב ראש חודש הוא כמו יום כפור קטן שראוי להתענות וללקות ולעשות במעשה תשובה גמורה כמבואר לעיל במסכת חולין

<sup>666</sup> Ibid, 140b.

הלכות פסח רבות במאד יותר משאר איסורין על כן ידקדק אדם במאד ואל יסמוך על אנשי ביתו רק בעיניו יראה הן בהגעה הן בכל ביעורי חמץ ומכל שכן בעשיית המצות לראות שיהיו עשויין בזריזות בלי שהיית רגע כמימרא

<sup>667</sup> Ibid, 248b.

ענין ארבעה ימים שבין יום הכפורים לסוכות אשר כתבתי בפרק ראשון שמכח עסק שעוסק במצות סוכה ולולב יהיה לו לזכרון להתקדש בהם ולא יזוז מלבו הרהורי התשובה ואחר כך ימי החג הם בעצמם קדושים שבהם מקיימין המצות של סוכה ולולב ובאלו הארבעה ימים מכינים המצוות

<sup>668</sup> Ibid, 258a.

ולבי אומר שעת רצון לתפילה זו בערב ר"ח סיון הוא החודש שבו נתנה התורה ואז נקראים בנים לה' אלהינו וראוי לישיב בתענית ביום ההוא הוא ואשתו ויתעוררו בתשובה ויתקנו כל ענייני הבית איסור והיתר וטומאה וטהרה וכל העניינים ויתנו צדקה לעניים הגונים

Ellul and a detailed explanation of the *mikveh* requirements for Rosh ha-Shana. Horowitz states that praiseworthy is he who fasts (not consecutively but as much as feasible) from the 17th of Tamuz until Rosh ha-Shana (a period of two and a half months corresponding to the time period between Moses' shattering of the first tablets of stone and receiving the second set of tablets from God).<sup>669</sup>

Horowitz's portrayal of the two-tiered nature of halakhah directs the pious individual towards adopting stringencies as a necessary requirement of the God-fearing. Unless the basic layer of halakhah is infused with additional stringencies, it is incomplete, and the individual will never attain true *shelemut*.

Horowitz makes a fascinating remark regarding the difference between ordinary and elitist behaviour in a passage describing the requirements for the fast days.

Ordinarily, only the ninth of Av and Yom Kippur contain prohibitions pertaining to wearing shoes and washing. Horowitz notes, however, that theoretically all fasts should contain these additional prohibitions, but the sages did not institute decrees that 'the people couldn't keep'. However, he refers to Cordovero's comment that the individual can choose to be stringent on himself and this is praiseworthy as long as he does not appear arrogant while doing so. A blessing will come upon him if he

---

<sup>669</sup> Ibid, 213a-b.

ולי נראה דיתחיל להתענות מי"ז בתמוז ואילך כי אז נשתברו הלוחות (תענית פ"ד מ"ו) והותחל התיקון מראש חודש ואילך שאמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא עלה אלי (שמות כד, יב), וירד ביום כפורים עם הלוחות. ומה שאמרתי להתחיל משבעה עשר בתמוז אין כוונתי שיתענה יום יום בהימים שמתענים רק כוונתי שישלים באלו הימים משבעה עשר בתמוז ואילך מה שחסר מאלול ואילך ראש חודש ושבטות וימים טובים שלא יוכל להתענות בהם אלו החסרים ישלים משבעה עשר בתמוז ואילך עד ראש חודש אלול במפוזרין

conducts himself in this manner.<sup>670</sup> Even though this is beyond the parameters of accepted halakhah, it is nevertheless praiseworthy to be stringent and adopt something not considered in ordinary halakhah, as the interconnected nature of all fast days means that the same kabbalistic mechanisms are at work if the individual adopts these actions. The stringency is still effective in counteracting the contamination of the serpent.

The operation of the 'threefold cord' as understood through a kabbalistic mechanism leads to a novel conception of halakhah in the *Shelah*. When kabbalistic customs and stringencies began to enter the European Jewish communities in the 16th and 17th centuries, prominent halakhists such as Karo, Isserles and Sirkes were reluctant to overly emphasise the need to adopt them, frequently discouraging their intrusion into halakhic realms. Even among those who held the kabbalistic tradition in the highest regard, most wanted to keep the kabbalah restricted to the domain of philosophy and belief.<sup>671</sup>

Horowitz thus carves a distinctive path in the *Shelah* in three ways:

---

<sup>670</sup> Ibid, 199b.

מן הראוי היה להחמיר בשלשה צומות צום גדליה ועשרה בטבת ושבעה עשר בתמוז כמו בתשעה באב שכולם הם משום החורבן אבל אין גוזרין גזירה על הצבור אלא אם כן יכולין לעמוד בה (בבא קמא עט ב) על כן לא החמירו אלא בתשעה באב בעצמו ומבואר מדברי הפרדס שנתחבר בשם רש"י ז"ל שעל כן איזה יחיד שמרגיש בעצמו שיוכל לעמוד בזה טוב לו בכל ארבעה צומות שיחמיר על עצמו לפסוק האכילה מבעוד יום עד כאן. ונראה בעיני דדוקא באכילה ושתיה להפסיק מבעוד יום יחמיר כדי שיהיה תענית שלם יום וילילו אבל בשאר דברים אין צריך להחמיר מכל מקום אם מחמיר בהן גם כן בינו לבין עצמו שלא יהא נראה כיוהרא תבא עליו ברכה

<sup>671</sup> See Chapter One, 33.

- Kabbalistic customs and halakhic positions are added without qualification. The customs of Isaac Luria are thirstily pursued and included in the halakhic sections of the *Shelah*, prioritised over ordinary communal customs. These customs contain kabbalistic secrets that increase the holiness of the practitioner and benefit the world around him through theurgical mechanisms.
- Pietism becomes a requirement for the God-fearing Jew, as without it halakhah is incomplete. The ethos of purity and holiness is infused into every area of conduct, and particularly into the realms pertaining to food and sexual relationships. Purity becomes synonymous with righteousness, and impurity becomes synonymous with sin, creating new demands which extended the halakhic boundaries: The *mikveh* becomes a sine qua non of repentance, the dinner table becomes an imitation of the altar and additions to daily conduct such as saying 'If God is willing' before any action to be undertaken serves the explicit purpose of increasing holiness. Halakhah is envisioned as a conduit to a life of holiness, which leads to *devekut*.
- As part of the ethos of pietism, the concept of stringency in observance is transformed into a positive requirement, without discriminating between the letter of the law and what extends beyond it.

Horowitz thus develops a scheme within the *Shelah* where halakhah is the conduit, or handmaiden to the cultivation of holiness. With its roots in prophecy only understood in its depths by the kabbalist, Horowitz's halakhah required infusion with the insights of the kabbalah for it to be complete, paving the pathway towards Jewish pietism in the 17th and 18th centuries.<sup>672</sup> For the masses, it was necessary to

---

<sup>672</sup> David Biale, *Hasidism : A New History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 49-50.

incorporate holiness and kabbalistic practices into their conduct to the best of their ability. For the elite, the constant pursuit of stringencies was demanded to enable them to cleave to God.



## Part 4: Musar

### Chapter Eleven: 'In all your ways acknowledge Him' – The Two Paths of the Righteous

'In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths'.<sup>673</sup>

Although it is clear throughout the *Shelah* that Horowitz envisaged the halakhah to be a conduit for a life of holiness and purity, it is less clear what the 'holy man' should look like. While the pietistic direction of halakhah seems to point towards an ascetic model of conduct by emphasising the need to pile stringency upon stringency, this is frequently contradicted by Horowitz's own statements that downplay the significance of ascetic behaviour. As with *devekut*, there are two pathways which can be pursued by the righteous: the ascetic and the world-affirming. Horowitz oscillates between these models throughout the *Shelah*, fluctuating between the elitism of the kabbalists and a more world-embracing, emotionally-infused conduct, which foreshadowed the Hasidic movement of the 18th Century. As with halakhah, what Horowitz achieves in the *Shelah* is the movement of religious boundaries along pietistic lines. What emerges is that asceticism is not the ideal of the man of the God in the *Shelah*. The purpose of asceticism is to remove sin, but the ideal for mankind is that they sanctify every aspect of their physical being in the service of God.

---

<sup>673</sup> Proverbs 3:6.

## Asceticism and the Ideal of Righteousness

Horowitz's ambivalence in presenting the ideal path of the righteous is echoed in earlier sources pertaining to human conduct. Rabbinic literature contains numerous stories about pious men, often ascetically inclined, known as '*hasidim*' or as 'men of deeds', who possessed an intimate relationship with God and could work miracles. They are frequently characterised by their personal charisma and devotion rather than by their scholarship. The rabbis show both an admiration for their piety and a reluctance to admit the effectiveness of their actions. Folk characters such as Honi the circle maker are rabbinised in later rabbinic retellings by attributing halakhic formulae to previously simple requests, and learned rabbis are recast as holy men.<sup>674</sup> Several rabbinic sources indicate that the scholar and ascetic pietist are not necessarily compatible paradigms.<sup>675</sup> Importantly, the pietists were not necessarily promoted by the rabbis as model exemplars of behaviour.

Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* discourages asceticism, and emphasises the importance of maintaining balance in all areas of behaviour in accordance with the principle of the 'Golden mean',<sup>676</sup> tracing this ideal to Moses and Abraham.<sup>677</sup> In his

---

<sup>674</sup> Hayes, 'The Other in Rabbinic Literature' in Fonrobert, *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*, 258-60.

<sup>675</sup> E.g. *mBer.* 2:8; *mSot.* 9:15 *bBer.* 17b, 32b Rashi ad, loc; Gen. Rabba 60.

<sup>676</sup> *MT*, 'Hilkhhot De'ot' 1:4-5, 'Hilkhhot Teshuvah' 3:1-2. Maimonides defines the righteous man as the man with more good deeds to his credit than bad. The same assessment is made by God of a country and of the world as a whole. It is not the mere quantity of the deeds which counts in this assessment. A good deed can be of such quality that it can succeed in outweighing many bad deeds, and the converse is also true.

<sup>677</sup> *MT*, 'De'ot' 3:1.

*Guide*, Maimonides adopts a more pro-ascetic stance and hints that extreme asceticism is the goal of such perfect persons as the prophets; he accepts Aristotle's view that the sense of touch is the most repugnant of all the external senses, and accordingly regards sexual relations negatively.<sup>678</sup> At the end of the *Guide*, however, Maimonides states that Man should endeavour to serve God in all his ways, even when engaged in secular activities (i.e. in those activities not directly associated with God, religion and holiness such as prayer, Torah study and observance of the commandments).<sup>679</sup>

The German pietists were the first group to articulate a systematic programme of mortifications as a form of penance.<sup>680</sup> The environment of Safed in the 16th Century encouraged ascetic behaviour to facilitate devekut in line with the models in Chapter Six, as well as the ethos of pietism which characterised all kabbalistic practice.<sup>681</sup>

The marked shift from isolated forms worship associated with Jewish-Sufi groups in

---

<sup>678</sup> *Guide* 3:33, 49; see Fred Rosner, *Sex Ethics in the Writings of Moses Maimonides*, (New Jersey: Aronson, 1994).

<sup>679</sup> *Guide* 3:51. See Nahmanides (attributed), *Iggeret ha-Kodesh* (Jerusalem, 1971); Leviticus 19:2, Nahmanides ad loc.

<sup>680</sup> Scholem, *Major Trends*, 102-06; Soloveitchik, 'Piety and Pietism', 466. On penance, See Elbaum, *Teshuvat Ha-Lev Ve Kabbalat Yisurim*; Talya Fishman, 'The Penitential System of Hasidei Ashkenaz and the Problem of Cultural Boundaries', *Journal of Jewish thought and philosophy*, 8, 2 (1999), 201-27.

<sup>681</sup> See Chapter Six, 159-175, and Chapter Nine, 176-227; see Werblowsky, *Lawyer and Mystic*, 14; Weinstein, *Shattering*, 572; Fine, *Safed Spirituality*, 14. For examples of extreme asceticism as *tikkun* in the practices of Abraham Berukhim (1515-93) and Abraham Galante (d. 1560) see *ibid*, 37.

Spain into mystical fellowships helped to develop this climate, which gained wide traction within the Jewish community.<sup>682</sup>

Cordovero suggested that although the body possessed in a lowly status, it could be used as a tool in the service of God.<sup>683</sup> Overall, however, Cordovero's aspiration for the human being was that he should escape the trappings of physicality, spiritualising the body to the greatest extent possible. In Cordovero's commentary on the Zohar, he understands the verse in Proverbs 'in all your ways acknowledge Him' to refer to the carnal knowledge between the masculine and feminine components of God.<sup>684</sup> The Zohar discusses the idea that even in physical realms Man should have in mind the upper unions, and Cordovero interprets this to mean that every action has symbolic and therefore cosmic effect upon the lower worlds, in line with his metaphysical principles outlined in Chapter Four.<sup>685</sup>

Much of *Reishit Hokhmah* is devoted to the question of ascetic behaviour.

Abstinence is presented as essential both for cultivating restraint from gluttony as well as destroying the demonic *kelippot* and protecting the practitioner's thought from them.<sup>686</sup> De Vidas states that the *shekhinah* will not attach itself to one who is devoted to worldly matters. The penitent must scorn the needs of the body in this

---

<sup>682</sup> Garb, 'The Psychological Turn', 116; see Chapter Six, 162.

<sup>683</sup> Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 102, 216.

<sup>684</sup> Zohar III: 176b-178a; *Or Yakar*, 14:51 (Jerusalem, 1986) in Kauffman, *Be-Khol Derakhekha*, 206.

<sup>685</sup> *Ibid*, 208.

<sup>686</sup> *Reishit Hokhmah* vol. 1, 630-31.

world, which is governed by the six weekdays, and divest himself of love for this world which is clothed in the skin of the serpent and instead clothe himself with the love of the world where the supernal souls reside. Solitude and departure from social conduct is necessary to truly cleave to God.<sup>687</sup> According to de Vidas, a life of holiness required desisting from 'worldly vanities' and material concerns.<sup>688</sup> Like a jealous wife, God does not attach Himself to one who is preoccupied with worldly matters.<sup>689</sup> Like Cordovero, de Vidas interprets the verse about acknowledging God in 'all you ways' theurgically.<sup>690</sup> Although they certainly encouraged asceticism, Koch has characterised the relationship between most 16th Century Safedian kabbalists and the use of mortifications for penance as one of ambivalence, encouraging them when necessary but not prioritising them.<sup>691</sup>

The Lurianic corpus appears to discourage excessive asceticism. Rather, every physical action can provide a *tikkun* for the universe if performed correctly.<sup>692</sup>

Horowitz prioritises Luria's writings when outlining his vision of the value of the human body and material world in the *Shelah*. Although Horowitz uses the theurgical models of the earlier kabbalists to explain the concept of serving God in 'all your ways',<sup>693</sup> he mostly departs from these models, basing himself on Lurianic writings

---

<sup>687</sup> Fine, *Safed Spirituality*, 136.

<sup>688</sup> Ibid, 102.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid, 143.

<sup>690</sup> *Reishit Hokhmah* vol. 1, 347.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid, vol.2, 623; *Sefer Haredim*, (Jerusalem: Y Katz, 1966), 226 ; Koch, *Human Self-Perfection*, 156-58, 62.

<sup>692</sup> Kauffman, *Be-Khol Derakhekha*, 214; Hallamish, *Minhag*, 187.

<sup>693</sup> For instance, *Shelah* 30b.

and emphasising the sanctification of the material world rather than a rejection of it in favour of meditative unifications. While Horowitz does not disavow asceticism, he does not consider it necessary for the service of God.

### Between Heaven and Earth: The Tsaddik

In the *Shelah*, Horowitz envisions the perfect individual to be one who acts as a mediator between heaven and earth, who ascends to the highest theurgical levels but also draws divine blessing into the material world. This individual combines the mundane sanctification found in Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* with the elitist asceticism of the kabbalists. This ideal imitates the ambivalence found in the *Shelah* between the worldly-focus encouraged in certain sections, and the asceticism espoused in others. The righteous individual is unique in that by performing good deeds he both strengthens his divine form and increases blessing within the world:

For with every good deed that a righteous man performs, he illuminates and strengthens the light at its root, at the conception of his soul. In that commandment itself the spiritual light from above which corresponds to it stirs the divine light of the supernal commandment to cast its light upon the lower worlds, as is explained in the Zohar 'with the arousal of the lower worlds the service of above is aroused',<sup>694</sup> which means to say, man of the lower worlds, who from the aspect of his soul is part of God above, with his form corresponding to the image of God... the light flows to the lower worlds due to the merit of the righteous man who illuminates and strengthens the light above from its lofty root, a place where neither thought nor imagination can gather. For the righteous individual who causes this (after his death when his

---

במשנה (אבות פ"ב מי"ב) תנן וכל מעשיך יהיו לשם שמים. דהיינו ליחד שם שהוא מלכות כנודע. לשמים שהוא תפארת כנודע. ועוד שנו החכמים בלשון המשנה פרק רבי מאיר אומר בשלהי הפרק (פ"ו מי"א) אמר כל מה שברא הקב"ה בעולמו לא בראו אלא לכבודו ר"ל להיות עובד את השם לכבוד השם להגביר כח שלמעלה לייחד השם הגדול בכבודו

<sup>694</sup> Zohar I:70b.

soul ascends to heaven), his soul will be adorned in the place of light that he opened.<sup>695</sup>

In a world governed entirely by spiritual forces, the human being who is most righteous is also the most important for the prosperity of Mankind:

As lower man includes everything that is in supernal man, for in him is everything, he is called by the name 'all'. For the supernal righteous man is the life of the world and repairs and sustains his world above, is called 'all' as everything is in him. The righteous man down below, too, by repairing and sustaining this world with the secret of 'But the righteous is the 'foundation of the world' (lit. an everlasting foundation),<sup>696</sup> is called 'all' in his name ... Through his hands he unifies God in His glory and for this his limbs achieve a great purpose to resemble the limbs of the chariot, for when he purifies and sanctifies his limbs below, this *tikkun* rises above and repairs the image which corresponds to him.<sup>697</sup>

---

<sup>695</sup> *Shelah*, 18a.

כי כל מצוה שהצדיק הוא עושה הוא מאיר ומגביר אור בשרשו במקום חציבת נשמתו באותה המצוה בעצמה האור הרוחני של מעלה שכנגדה מעורר אור המצוה העליונה להשפיע מאורה לכל העולמות התחתונים כמבואר בזהר (ח"א דף ע' ע"ב) באתערותא דלתתא אתער עובדהא דלעילא ר"ל כי האדם התחתון מצד שנשמתו היא חלק אלוה ממעל בדמותו וצלמו בצלם אלהים תרי"ג של אדם התחתון כנגד תרי"ג של אדם העליון ב"ה (ברוך הוא). הנה מצד זה ומטעם זה כשהוא מתעורר למטה במעשיו הטובות מעשה צדיקים ישרים והגונים הנכללים בתרי"ג מצות מתעורר למעלה כנגדו בשרשו ומקום מחצבו להאיר בשרשן של מצות האורות העליונים ולהשפיע מאורות העליונים אור שפע שבע רצון לכל העולמות התחתונים כמו ששכר מצוה מצוה (אבות פ"ד מ"ב) שפירשנו למעלה שהמצוה בעצמה שהיא כנגד אותה מצוה שעושה הצדיק למטה אותה מצוה בעצמה שהיא בסוד האורות העליונים היא נותנת לצדיק שכרו ומשפעת מאורה לעולמות של מטה בזכות הצדיק שהאיר והגביר אורה למעלה ממקורה הנעלה מקום שאין מחשבה ורעיון תופסת. וזה הצדיק שגרם זה אז לאחר מותו שתעלה נשמתו למעלה תתלבש נשמתו במקום האור שפתח ודבר זה יתבאר לקמן בארוכה

<sup>696</sup> Proverbs 10:25.

<sup>697</sup> *Shelah*, 38b.

ול להיות האדם התחתון כלול מכל מה שבאדם העליון כי בו הכל נקרא בשם כל. כי הנה צדיק חי עולמים מתקן ומעמיד עולמו למעלה נקרא כל (הקדמת תקוני זהר, דף ט"ז ע"ב) להיות הכל בו גם צדיק שלמטה בהיותו מתקן ומעמיד העולם ההוא בסוד (משלי י', כה) וצדיק יסוד עולם נקרא כל בשמו כי הואיל ועוסק בבנין העולם העליון למטה כדמות הצדיק שלמעלה ראוי אם כן שיקרא בשמו וזהו סוד כל הנקרא בשמי

By sanctifying his limbs, Man not only achieves personal devekut but brings about the spiritual completion of the universe. The more righteous people there are, the more blessing flows into the world, and thus the function of the righteous individual is to provide a bridge between heaven and earth.<sup>698</sup> This influence is not caused only by theurgical unifications or ascetic purity but also by helping his fellow man; in 'Tractate Ta'anit', Horowitz describes a situation where after dying the righteous man descends into the depths of hell to redeem the sinners and rescue them.<sup>699</sup> He is also entrusted with bringing people back to the way of God.<sup>700</sup> The great individual dwells both in the heavens and on the earth.

---

<sup>698</sup> Ibid, 31a.

מכל זה יתבאר כי הצדיקים בעבודתם ובמעשיהם הטובים מוסיפים כח בגבורה של מעלה ... והצדיק של מעלה מתגבר כשיש צדיקים למטה שמאמצים כחו בסוד תנו עז לאלהים (תהלים סח, לה)

ובמדרשו של רבי נחוניא בן הקנה (ספר הבהיר, אות קב) תאנא עמוד אחד מן הארץ לרקיע וצדיק שמו על שם הצדיקים וכשיש צדיקים בעולם מתגבר ואם לאו מתחלש והוא סובל כל העולם דכתיב (משלי י, כה) וצדיק יסוד עולם ואם חלש לא יוכל העולם להתקיים הלכך אפילו אין בעולם אלא צדיק אחד מעמיד העולם עד כאן. העמוד הזה הוא שאמרו עליו בחגיגה פרק אין דורשין (יב ב) רבי אלעזר בן שמוע אומר על עמוד אחד עומדת וצדיק שמו שנאמר (משלי שם) וצדיק יסוד עולם והוא מן הארץ סוד ארץ החיים עד לרקיע העומד באמצע ועליו נאמר (דברי הימים - א כט, יא) כי כל בשמים ובארץ והוא המיחד שמים וארץ ומחברם להיות אחד ונקרא צדיק על שם הצדיקים. וכשיש צדיקים בעולם המעוררים אותו במעשיהם הטובים המאמצים כחו מתגבר כי עושים בו חיל וממשיכים אליו האור והשפע ממקור הכל ואז מריק בלויה שלו והוא סובל כל העולם סוד מלכות בית דוד והיפך בהיפך והכל מהתעוררות התחתונים

<sup>699</sup> Ibid, 210b. I analyse this topic in Chapter Thirteen, 300.

<sup>700</sup> See Chapter Thirteen, 303.



## Sanctification of the Body

Horowitz's move away from asceticism can be identified throughout the *Shelah*: In *Toledot Adam*, Horowitz argues that the body is not composed of a physical body and spiritual soul, but that the body too is made of a spiritual substance which can be transformed.<sup>701</sup> Man is required to redeem the body and release the potential spirituality trapped within its confines. *Toledot Adam* concludes with a striking image of a man as a ladder standing on the earth with his head reaching the heavens (a play on the Biblical verse, Gen. 28:12 describing Jacob's ladder, which reads 'He had a dream; a stairway was set on the ground and its top reached to the sky, and angels of God were going up and down on it):

This means to say that in creating man God took the earth, from the place of the altar of earth in order to make it holy.<sup>702</sup> His head, meaning the soul, is from the highest heights, and we the Jewish nation are called 'man'.<sup>703</sup>

The human body derives from the 'earth', but also from the 'earthen altar'. It is a raw material that is designated for holy use. Man's head, which is the soul, is from the upper regions of heaven. This theme is continued in the introduction to *Asarah Ma'amarot* before being developed in *Sha'ar Otiyot*:

The sanctification of the heart in all its ways, not only in areas of purity but even 'Secular matter consumed in a state of purity' (i.e. in the realm of secular

---

<sup>701</sup> See Chapter Four, 113-116.

<sup>702</sup> Gen. Rabba 14:5.

<sup>703</sup> *Shelah* 37a; *bYev.* 61a.

והנה, האדם הוא סלם מוצב ארצה וראשו מגיע השמימה ר"ל גוף האדם לקח הקב"ה האדמה ממקום  
מזבח האדמה (בראשית רבה פי"ד ס"ח) כדי שיתקדש. וראשו דהיינו הנשמה היא מרום המעלות  
ואנחנו אומה ישראלית נקראים אדם

activity), like Maimonides wrote on the verse 'In all your ways acknowledge Him'.<sup>704</sup>

In the eighth of the 'Ten sayings', Horowitz presents a position referring to the 'cleaving of the heart' which is derived almost entirely from Maimonides' conclusion to the *Guide*. The basic contention is that the entirety of human existence can be dedicated to the service of God. It is a position which departs significantly from the kabbalistic sympathy towards asceticism as an ideal ethos:

The eighth saying is 'cleaving of the heart', that in all his actions he should use the entirety of his soul's power for divine service, and make the end purpose of all these actions the knowledge of God alone. He should not do any action great or small, nor should he speak a word unless this specific action or word leads to heaven (lit. 'above'), or leads to that which leads to heaven. He should consider every action and endeavour and deliberate beforehand whether it brings him to this end or not. This is what God commanded regarding the need to focus upon Him, when He said 'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul and all your might',<sup>705</sup> which means to say that you should make the love of God the sole purpose of all your actions, with every aspect of your soul.<sup>706</sup>

---

<sup>704</sup> *Shelah*, 39b; *MT*, 'Hilkhot De'ot', 3:3, Proverbs 3:6.

ואז קדושת הלב בכל הדרכים לא מבעיא בטהרת הקודש אלא אף חולין נעשין על טהרת הקודש  
כענין שכתב הרמב"ם (שמונה פרקים פ"ה; הלכות דעות פ"ג ה"ג) על פסוק (משלי ג, ו) בכל דרכיך  
דעהו זה מאמר השמיני

<sup>705</sup> Deutoronomy 6:5.

<sup>706</sup> *Shelah*, 56b.

ישמש כוחות נפשו כלם וישים תכלית ידיעת הש"י לבד ולא יעשה מעשה קטן או גדול ולא ידבר  
דבר אלא שהפועל ההוא או הדבר ההוא מביא למעלה או למה שמביא אל מעלה והוא יחשוב ויסתכל  
בכל פועל ותנועה ויראה אם יביא אל התכלית ההוא או לא יביא ואז יעשהו וזהו אשר ביקש ממנו  
יתברך שנכין אליו באמרו (דברים ו, ה) ואהבת את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך ר"ל  
בכל חלקי נפשך שתעשה תכלית כל חלק ממנה תכלית אחת והוא לאהבה את הש"י

The entirety of a person's being should be used to serve God. Every action, great or small, should be devoted towards the love of God. This is not limited to the specifics of Torah study and the fulfilment of the commandments, but 'God focus' is the basic ethos which is required of the religious individual, incorporated into all actions irrespective of their ostensibly religious content. After citing from Maimonides, Horowitz concludes this point a few paragraphs later:

The principle which emerges from this is that all your actions should be for the sake of heaven. Not only the actions of fulfilling the Torah and the commandments but that all actions should be done for the sake of heaven, I mean to say that no external inclination should infect the good action, such as fear of sin or love of reward or any particular matter, but from beginning until end it should be entirely consecrated to God, which is what our sages said 'May all your actions be for the sake of heaven',<sup>707</sup> even in secular matters, that is in his business dealings, in his eating and drinking and commerce and similar activities – they should all be done for the sake of heaven and become 'Profane food which is produced in purity' – what then transpires is that all his actions throughout his life will be done for the sake of heaven.<sup>708</sup>

All human activity can be directed heavenward, and not in the theurgical sense emphasised in *Reishit Hokhmah* and Cordovero's writings. Notably, it is to Maimonides that Horowitz turns to when explaining this issue. As discussed above, although Maimonides' use of Greek philosophy was often decried by the kabbalists,

---

<sup>707</sup> *mAvot* 4:2.

<sup>708</sup> *Shelah*, 57a.

כלל העולה כל מעשיך יהיו לשם שמים לא מבעיא במעשה קיום התורה והמצות שיהיה כל המעשה לשם שמים רצוני לומר שלא יתערב במעשה הטוב שום נטייה לחיצוניים דהיינו ליראת העונש ואהבת השכר או איזה ענין שיהיה רק יהיה מתחילה ועד סוף הכל קודש לה' וזה"ש (וזהו שאמרו) (אבות פ"ד מ"ב) כל מעשיך יהיו לשם שמים אלא אף זו בעובדא דחול דהיינו בעסקיו דהיינו במאכלו ומשתהו ומשגל והרבה כמוהם יהיו לשם שמים ויהיו חולין שנעשו על טהרת הקודש. נמצאו כל מעשיו שעושה כל ימיו הם לשם שמים

his stature as a rabbinic giant was never questioned and he is cited with admiration and awe in the *Shelah* even though his philosophy is derided as false.<sup>709</sup>

The body itself therefore needs proper maintenance and care, as it is indispensable in maintaining *devekut* with God. Human beings are distinct from animals in their ability to achieve holiness through cleanliness of body and purity of soul, being rooted in God. As such, it is of fundamental importance that the body is properly treated. This manifests itself both in terms of general hygiene and in terms of pedagogy. The intellect must be nurtured and developed to facilitate the higher stages of connection with God:<sup>710</sup>

In nature, cleanliness of body leads to self-awakening facilitating the cleanliness of the soul, and when he isn't clean he is compared to an animal and behaves like an animal...the proper way of the intellect is that one should not make himself cleverer than his capability and the steps of his wisdom...rather he should increase his intellect incrementally, adding something daily to his wisdom and knowledge.<sup>711</sup>

Like Maimonides, Horowitz explains that a child must be educated with incentives such as sweet food and honour until he is prepared to study Torah for its own sake.<sup>712</sup> Good pedagogy is an important priority of Horowitz's throughout the *Shelah*

---

<sup>709</sup> See Chapter Five, 148-150; see also Idel, 'Guide and the Kabbalah', 33-76, ff 51.

<sup>710</sup> This, too, is derived from Maimonides' writings, see *Hakdamot*, 113-115.

<sup>711</sup> *Shelah*, 63b.

וזולת זה הטעם היא בטבע נקיות הגוף מביא לידי התעוררות נקיות הנשמה וכשאינו נקי נמשל  
כבהמה ועושה מעשה הבהמה

...

הרי נתבאר מקצת דרך ארץ משלמותו בשלמות הגוף ולפרט כל הענינים של דרך ארץ אי אפשר  
וישמע חכם ויוסף לקח (משלי א, ה). ומזה הדרך ארץ הוא דרך ומבוא לבוא לידי שלמות הנפש שהיא  
הנשמה שראוי לאדם להגדילה ולהמליכה כנזכר לעיל בהגברת השכל

<sup>712</sup> *Ibid*, 64a.

and this is partially explained by the fact that to be able to serve God in 'all your ways' there must be harmony between physical and spiritual health.<sup>713</sup>

In the section *Letter Kuf* in *Sha'ar Otiyot*, Horowitz provides the mechanism which underscores this principle, developing the ideas found in the writings of Isaac Luria to explain the detailed link between the physical and spiritual worlds. Using Luria's principle of physical beings containing trapped spiritual light, Horowitz explains how the mundane can be sanctified:

As our sages have said now the table of Man atones and it is in the place of a sacrifice.<sup>714</sup> The idea is that food has a physical and spiritual aspect, as I have written above in the name of the holy *Ari* who explained the verse 'From everything that emerges from the mouth of God man shall live',<sup>715</sup> which means the combination of the soul with the body through food. The spirituality of the food strengthens the power of the soul, and the physicality of the food strengthens the power of the body, and the two join together as the hidden soul is concealed within the body. Through this he sanctifies the body and attaches it to the soul...and in this manner he is commanded to eat, for all his eating is an altar of atonement as will be explained later...the purpose of the creation of Man being made in the form and image of God was to make the form resemble the maker as if to resemble Him in all His ways, as it says 'You are Godlike beings',<sup>716</sup> and the food that you eat should be with the secret of the sacrifice....

A man who is righteous and eats from that which is permitted for him – in this manner makes the food replace a sacrifice, for the righteous makes the form

---

ויוליכנו בדרך המוסר לספות לו כתורא, וגם בדרך פיוס לפי הבנתו... ויפייסנו בענינים שאוהב התינוק ומתאוה להם כדי שילך בסבר פנים יפות ללמוד וכשיגדיל וימאס במתנות הקטנות הראשונות יתן לו אחרות כפי תאותו ואם יגדל וימאס בכל זה יאמר לו למוד תורה ואשיאך אשה חשובה. ואחר כך כשיתגדל ביותר יאמר למד תורה ואז תהיה ראש ורבי יתקרי לך ואחר כך כשיתגדל ביותר יאמר לו בזכות התורה תזכה לגן עדן אחר כך כשיתחכם ידריכו שילמוד תורה לשמה ולא בשביל שום ענין בעולם ועל זה נאמר (פסחים נ ב) שמתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה

<sup>713</sup> Newman, *Life and Teachings*, 90-114.

<sup>714</sup> *bHag. 27a*.

<sup>715</sup> Deutoronomy 8:3.

<sup>716</sup> Psalms 82:6.

resemble the maker (as if), and thus his food is sanctified like a sacrifice, for he only eats in order for his soul to remain cleaving in body to the service of his creator. But one who distances himself from God, who blemished his soul, then he needs to make a sacrifice of himself...and this is the fast, where he sacrifices himself, for he is the animal itself for as he has distanced himself he resembles an animal.<sup>717</sup>

In this passage, Horowitz articulates both the radical embrace of the physical world and the limitations to this possibility. The entirety of existence contains a mixture of spirit and matter which cannot be separated. Food, containing both these aspects, benefits the body in both domains. The human being, in turn, must transform this sustenance into a sacrifice for God, which is the telos of eating in the post-temple period. In doing so, he achieves isomorphic sanctification and resembles God. But if

---

<sup>717</sup> *Shelah*, 80a-b.

כמ"ש רז"ל ז"ל (חגיגה כז א) עכשיו השלחן של אדם מכפר והוא במקום קרבן

הענין כי האכילה יש בה גופני ורוחני כמ"ש לעיל בשם האלהי האר"י ז"ל פירוש הפסוק (דברים ח, ג) על כל מוצא פי ה' יחיה האדם אשר על כן חיבור הנפש עם הגוף על ידי המאכל רוחניות המאכל מחזיק כח הנפש וגופניות המאכל מחזיק כח הגוף ושניהם מחוברים כמו הנפש הנעלמת בהגוף ובזה מקדש הגוף ומדבקו לנשמה והגוף שהיא נרתק ותיק הנשמה אז מתחבר תיק הספר עם הספר וזהו בתנאי צדיק אכל לשבע נפשו (משלי יג, כה) ר"ל שמדקדק באכילה שהוא מן המותר בפיו שאין שום ספק וחשש איסור בו ואינו אוכל אלא כדי חייו ותכליתו בה חיים כדי לעבוד את בוראו לעסוק בתורה ובמצוות וגם מלחמו נותן לדל כאשר יתבאר לקמן בארוכה אז נקרא סעודת מצוה ועל בחינה זו נצטוו לאכול כי כל אכילתו הוא מזבח כפרה קרבן כדלקמן אבל לדעת טוב ורע סוד כי תאוה הוא לאכול כו לא תאכל (בראשית ג, ו) אבל תכלית בריאת האדם שנעשה בדמות וצלם היתה לדמות צורה ליוצרה כביכול להתדמות לו בכל דבריו כמו שכתוב (תהלים פב, ו) אלהים אתם והאכילה אשר יאכל יהיה בסוד קרבן ונתקדש אכילתו

...

הכלל העולה אדם שהוא צדיק ואוכל מן המותר לו אז האכילה במקום קרבן כי הצדיק מדמה צורה ליוצרה כביכול ואז אכילתו מקודשת כאכילת מזבח כי אינו אוכל רק בשביל נפשו שתשארה דביקה בגוף לעבודת בוראו אבל הנתרחק מהקדוש ברוך הוא שפגם בנשמתו אז צריך הוא לעשות קרבן לעצמו לקיים שלום לרחוק שנעשה קרוב (סנהדרין צט א) וזהו התענית שמקריב את עצמו כי הוא (הבהמה בעצמו מאחר שנתרחק נמשל כבהמות נדמו) (תהלים מט, יג) וזהו סוד אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה מן הבהמה מן הבקר ומן הצאן תקריבו את קרבנכם (ויקרא א, ב) הרמז אדם שנתרחק צריך להקריב את עצמו וזהו יקריב מכם אבל מי שהוא קרוב ודבק בידו"ד אז כביכול שם ידו"ד עליו ואז מן הבהמה וגו' תקריבו את קרבנכם ר"ל מה שאוכלים אתם זהו קרבן זהו קרבנכם

he fails to elevate his actions, he must make a sacrifice of his flesh through fasting and mortifications, for he has now 'blemished his soul'.

This passage is an eloquent summary of the attitude towards ascetic behaviour in the *Shelah*. In terms of core components, all the physical world consists of 'physical' and 'spiritual' aspects, as from the concealed emerges the revealed. Since food contains spirituality, if it is used 'like a sacrifice', whereby 'he only eats for his body to cleave to God', then it has provided a like for like replacement of the sacrifices in the temple. But if he blemishes the spiritual component of the food, either through misusing it through gluttony or by eating forbidden foods, he is required to sacrifice himself in the form of fasting. For his body, if left unsanctified, becomes no different from an animal carcass. The only way of avoiding ascetic practices is to ensure that holiness is constantly found in all aspects of mundane existence, a task which may be beyond ordinary individuals. Being framed in kabbalistic terms, this passage is more demanding than Maimonides' analysis above, requiring the transformation of food into a sacrifice followed by an explanation of the theurgical mechanism behind it, but as we have seen regarding *devekut*, these are two points on the same scale in Horowitz' scheme. Certainly, Luria's *kavvanot* are the ideal form of transforming the sanctity of food, but they are not the only means of doing so. Horowitz's *tsaddik* operates both in heaven and earth.

The vision of bodily sanctification coupled with dire warnings of its potential descent into sin characterises the ambivalent attitude of the *Shelah*, oscillating between approval and disapproval of engagement in the secular sphere.

At the end of *Letter Kuf*, for instance, Horowitz repeats the idea that constant devekut to God requires the purification of all aspects of behaviour, not merely the areas associated with holiness:

Not only during Torah study or prayer should he have pure thoughts and upright intentions, but both through revealed and concealed means according to the attainment of his intellect, while performing a commandment (for commandments require intention),<sup>718</sup> and to perform it with arousal of the heart and concentration on its meanings and secrets, but even when he is involved in physical matters – he should do everything for the sake of heaven and his thoughts should cleave to God and not detach from this devekut for one instant.<sup>719</sup>

However, at no point does this amount to an embrace of secular activity; in ‘Tractate Hullin’, Horowitz demands that the householder should not prioritise his means of earning a living over spiritual pursuits such as Torah study, despite his simultaneous advocacy of serving God ‘in all your ways’:

Even though honest buying and selling is a great deed, nevertheless he shouldn’t waste his time on this. Not only the scholar, who obviously needs to make sure that his Torah is fixed and his work is temporary, but even the householders with fear of God in their hearts should be aware of their mortality and properly fulfil the injunction ‘Torah is good with the way of the land’ and divide his time into three... however in those eight hours where he is engrossed in Torah and prayer, he should have much greater joy in them with spiritual joy and devekut to God, for those eight hours are consecrated to God.<sup>720</sup>

---

<sup>718</sup> *bR.H.* 28a.

<sup>719</sup> *Shelah*, 104a.

ולא מיבעיא בעת עסקו בתורה או בעת שמתפלל שיהיה לו מחשבה טהורה וכוונה הגונה הן על דרך הנגלה הן על דרך הנסתר כפי השגת שכלו או בעת עשיית מצוה כי מצות צריכות כוונה (ראש השנה כח א) ויעשנה בהתעוררות הלב ובכוונת טעמיה וסודותיה אלא אף בעסקו בעיני הגשמיים יעשה הכל לשם שמים ויהיה במחשבתו דבוק בהשם יתברך לא יפרד מהדבקות הזה רגע כמימריה

<sup>720</sup> *Ibid*, 114b.



Nevertheless, Horowitz subsequently explains that there is no distinction between the 'holiness' of the Sabbath and the 'profanity' of the weekday. It all depends on the individual's ability to arouse holiness:

I will now explain the secret of the six working days. Even though they are six secular days, nevertheless they originated from a holy place, and one who sanctifies himself transforms them into profane matter consumed in purity.<sup>721</sup>

The holiness of the Sabbath can be transferred to the weekday if the individual is able to arouse himself in the service of God, blurring the distinction between the sacred and the secular.

The dichotomy of the sanctification of the mundane coupled with a reluctance to embrace it can be explained in terms of priority. The focus of Man should be his self-sanctification, and this can and must be achieved in all walks of life, even the secular realm. However, the secular realm should not be regarded as an intrinsic good, rather an imperfect forum which must be sanctified, even if this results in an eventually superior state. Work and income should not be the focus of daily pursuits,

---

ואף שמשא ומתן באמונה הוא מצוה גדולה מ"מ אל יאבד זמנו בזה לא מיבעיא תלמיד חכם פשיטא צריך לראות שתהא תורתו קבע ומלאכתו עראי אלא אפילו בעלי בתים אשר יראת אלקים בלבם

...

ישכילו ויבינו לאחריתם ויקיימו טוב תורה עם דרך ארץ אמנם באלו שמונה שעות שעוסק בתורה ובתפלה ישיש וישמח בהם ביותר שמחה רוחניות דביקות בהשם יתברך כי אלו השמונה שעות הם קודש לה'

...

וכשהולך למשא ומתן יאמר לשם יחוד קודשא בריך הוא ושכינתיה אני הולך בעסק זה ואני בטוח שהשם יתברך ישלח לי פרנסה וריוח מזה העסק והעסק הזה הוא סיבה שעל ידו ישלח ה' ברכה בכל מעשי ידי

<sup>721</sup> Ibid, 117a.

ענה אפרש סוד ששת ימי המעשה אף שהם ששה ימי החול מכל מקום ממקום קודש באו והמקדש את עצמו אז הם חולין שנעשו על טהרת הקודש

and the individual shouldn't earn more than he needs for a given day as he does not know whether this will be his last.<sup>722</sup> His priority should be spiritual pursuits and only work in the physical world with reluctance.<sup>723</sup>

In an interpretation establishing the non-literal nature of kabbalistic Talmudic analysis in line with the principles of the 'organic universe', Horowitz suggests that the many references in the Talmud to rabbis engaged in financial pursuits are in fact reflecting a spiritual state where God ensures that work is done by itself if the individual is worthy. The Talmud discusses the early group of pietists who would prepare for prayer for an hour before commencing, and *Reishit Hokhmah* explains in detail how they possessed a superior spiritual quality to the Tannaim and Amoraim due to their ascetic behaviour and inability to live within the world. Horowitz accepts this premise but refuses to accept that this elite course of conduct was not adopted by the latter sages. The only difference between the earlier and latter groups, he explains, was that of extent. The early pietists focused exclusively on God, 'cleaving above', whereas the latter sages did not:

In my eyes it appears, that what he considered to be actions of the second instance was in fact at the level of the original pietists, and there was no

---

<sup>722</sup> Ibid, 119b.

ושכל יום יחשוב שהוא שבת שמא באותו יום יזדמן לעולם שכולו שבת כמו שאמרו (אבות פ"ב מ"י) ושוב יום אחד לפני מיתתך ולכן לא יעשה מלאכה יותר מכדי פרנסתו ליומו כמזדמן לדרך כי שמא אין לו חיים אלא אותו יום בלבד ואין ראוי שיטרח וידאג על עולם שאינו שלו

<sup>723</sup> Ibid, 130a.

ואם אח"כ עוסק במשא ומתן יהיה באמונה כמבואר לעיל ותהיה מלאכתו ארעי ותורתו קבע ואם חוזר ללימודו בעת שפנוי זה נקרא תורתו אומנותו וכשרוצה לאכול יהיה בקדושה ובטהרה ככל המוזכר למעלה

essential difference between the earlier pietists and the other sages, just a question of extent. The original pietists had their thoughts cleaving entirely above, and their work was not taken into consideration at all, it was done as if without thought...in any case a person should purify himself daily for four hours in Godly devekut from the holiness of Shabbat.<sup>724</sup>

This attitude echoes the dichotomy found throughout Horowitz's writings. He accepts that mundane existence can be sanctified but also maintains that the extraordinary levels of the pious ascetics transcend this vision. In an ideal world, no work would need doing at all. Realising that this doesn't reflect reality, he concedes the possibility of merely (!) spending four hours a day basking in the light of the holy Sabbath refracted throughout the week.

In 'Tractate Sukkah', Horowitz presents an anti-ascetic position from the writings of his father:

There are those that deprive themselves and don't wish to benefit from bodily things and separate themselves from them absolutely. But this is not the upright way for this is not the intention of God, because 'he created it not to be empty and chaotic, He established it to be settled and inhabited'...<sup>725</sup> It appears from our holy Torah and from the words of our sages (that it is correct) to walk in the middle path. God gave the holy spiritual soul into the lowly body, that they should love together and that each man should give his portion to each of them. To the portion of the soul in the service of God, to go to pray and to hear words of Torah and to fulfil the commandments. A portion to the body, eating and drinking from that which is permitted to the mouth, and

---

<sup>724</sup> *Shelah*, 120a.

ובעיני נראה מה שעשה בבחינה השניה זה היה מעלת חסידים הראשונים ולא היה חילוק בין חסידים הראשונים לשאר חכמים רק בפחות ויתר וחסידים הראשונים היתה מחשבתם דבוקה לגמרי למעלה ולא היתה מלאכתם נחשבת כלל רק כמתעסק כי הנה לפי דברי הראשית חכמה היתה מלאכת החסידים מעשה ניסים שעשו מקצת מלאכה ואחר כך נעשית כל המלאכה מאליה וזה אין מעלה לחסידים להנות ממעשה ניסים

..ועל כל פנים, יתקדש אדם בכל יום ארבע שעות בדבקות אלהי מקדושת שבת

<sup>725</sup> Isaiah 45:18.

other things that the body benefits from. One who doesn't walk in this way abrogates the intention of creation.<sup>726</sup>

From the position found in the Talmud regarding the obligation to divide the festival days into two and spend half of each day 'for yourselves' and half 'for God',<sup>727</sup> Abraham Horowitz encourages eating and drinking as important aspects of the service of God, a position found throughout halakhic literature. In the first instance, food and worldly pleasures should be embraced in the service of God. However, Horowitz himself, functioning as editor, cautions against excessive demonstrations of joy on the festivals.<sup>728</sup>

The 'Written Torah' part of the *Shelah* presents a positive attitude in its evaluation of the sanctity of the material world:

---

<sup>726</sup> *Shelah*, 246a.

אבל הנראה מתורתינו הקדושה ומדברי חכמינו ז"ל הוא ללכת בדרכי המיצוע כי הש"י הרכיב הנשמה העליונה רוחנית בגוף אופל ועכור שיחיו שניהם יחדיו ויש לכל אדם לתת חלקו לכל אחד ואחד חלק לנשמה בעבודת האל לבא להתפלל ולשמוע דברי התורה ולקיים המצוות וחלק לגוף אכילה ושתייה מן המותר בפיהו ושאר דברים שהגוף נהנה מהם ומי שאינו הולך בדרך זה מבטל כוונת הבריאה.

<sup>727</sup> See *bBeits*. 15b.

<sup>728</sup> *Shelah*, 246b.

כי בודאי לא היו עושים החסידים האלקיים משום שמחת שחוק חס ושלום אלא משום שמחת מצוה כמו שאמרו במשנה דלעיל שהיו אומרים לפנייהם דברי שירות ותשבחות ברכות והודאות בקול נגינות ובקול שמחה ובודאי שמחה כזו שהיא שמחת הבורא היא מצוה גדולה משום פרסומי ניסא ולפיכך לא היה זריקת אבוקות אלא על ידי גדולים וחסידים כאמור שלא יראה כקלות ראש וכשמחת בחורים

In the portion of *Vayikra*, Horowitz cites Luria again as saying that there is nothing in this world which does not contain holiness, it only requires sanctification.<sup>729</sup>

In the *Tokhehot Musar* section of the Torah portion *Va'ethanan*, Horowitz explains how the individual can use his physical needs to remain in a state of *devekut* with God. Tellingly, the outcome of focusing on God is not theurgical or meditative, but rather that 'I should have profit' and 'through this I will fulfil a commandment and sustain myself, my wife and children so that they should live to serve God'. The body does not only serve as a springboard for complex theurgical meditations, but also for mundane good deeds. Through this, too, Horowitz states man will remain in a state of 'eternal *devekut* with God'. It does not require extraordinary acts of asceticism or mystical unifications but an elevation of bodily function:

About this is said 'You who cleave to God, you are all alive on this day'.<sup>730</sup> This verse includes the entire Torah, the commandments, the traits and ways of Man - which they should all be in a state of cleaving to God – everything for the sake of his name. Even when he involves himself in physical needs that are necessary he should not depart from the *devekut*; when he is involved in buying and selling he should think: behold I am engrossed in this activity and I hope that I should have profit for God may He be blessed is the giver, and through this I will do a commandment and sustain myself, my wife and children so that they should live to serve God, and earn money for charity, for Torah study and matters like these. So too when he eats or goes to sleep, he should have the intention that it is so that his body should be strong to engage in Torah study and the like...What emerges is that all the days of his life he is constantly cleaving to God if he follows this path, and through this he will merit eternal *devekut* with God.<sup>731</sup>

---

<sup>729</sup> Ibid, 338a; Vital, *Likkutei Torah* (Vilna, 1879), 199-201.

ביאר יפה האלהי האר"י ז"ל (ספר לקוטי תורה, עקב) והענין הוא כי אין לך שום דבר שאין בו קדושה וכמו שאמרו רבותינו ז"ל (בראשית רבה פ"י ס"ו) אין לך כל עשב מלמטה שאין לו מזל מלמעלה ואומר לו גדל היא ההשפעה הנשפע בו ומכה אותו לילך לפועל וזה ההשפעה שהיא דבר רוחני שורה בו

<sup>730</sup> Deuteronomy 4:4.

<sup>731</sup> *Shelah*, 370a; see Chapter Six, 171.

The holiness of the body and the sanctity of eating is one objection Horowitz has to Maimonides' claim in *Mishneh Torah* that in the future the resurrection of the dead will not occur to physical bodies.<sup>732</sup> Maimonides had commented incredulously regarding the need for bodies after death, considering the lack of food or drink, but Horowitz explains that he did not properly understand the concept, for there will be food but not physical food. The very notion of food, Horowitz explains (in accordance with Luria's position), provides an answer to the problem of material man cleaving to an infinite God and His divine Torah. Although his body is used for lowly things which could not possibly achieve *devekut*, God specifically sanctified food so that it could be used in place of a sacrifice. In his final analysis, 'the righteous man eats from that which is permitted to him, for his sustenance, so that he can engross himself in Torah and to serve God – then his food becomes a substitute for a sacrifice'.<sup>733</sup>

---

ועל זה אמר ואתם הדבקים בה אלהיכם חיים כלכם. זה הפסוק כולל כל התורה והמעשים והמדות והנהגות בן אדם שיהיה בדבקות השם יתברך הכל למען שמו. ואפילו כשעוסק בצרכי גופניים ההכרחים לא יזוז מהדבקות כשעוסק במשא ומתן יחשוב הנני עוסק בעסק זה ואקוה בהשם יתברך שיהיה לי ריווח כי הוא יתברך הוא הנותן ובזה אעשה מצוה אפרנס אותי ואת אשתי ובניי כדי שיחיו לעבודת השם יתברך ואוציא מעות לצדקה ולתלמוד תורה וכיוצא בזה וכן כשאוכל או הולך לישן יכוון בזה כדי שיהיה גופו חזק לעסוק בתורה ולעשות מצות וכן כל כיוצא בזה. וכבר הארכתי בענין הזה במקום אחר. נמצא כל ימי חיי האדם הוא דבוק תמיד בהשם יתברך אם הוא הולך בדרך הזה, ואז זוכה לדבקות הנצחיית בו יתברך

<sup>732</sup> See *MT*, 'Laws of Repentance', 8:2.

<sup>733</sup> *Shelah*, 385a.

וסוד האכילה היא ההתעוררות התחתון העולה מלמטה למעלה לריח ניחוח וכן אכילת הצדיקים תהיה אכילה רוחניית נהנין מזיו שכינה וניזונין מזיו שכינה וכלי הגוף שהם כלי האכילה יהיו מזדככים ומאירים ויהיו מוכנים לקבל האכילה הרוחניית הזו. והרמב"ם (הלכות תשובה פ"ח ה"ב) שמיאן להאמין בשכר הנצחיי לאחר תחיית המתים שיהיה בגוף ונפש רק בנפש לבד כי היה קשה בעיניו מאחר שאין בעולם הבא אכילה ושתייה (ברכות יז א) אם כן כלי האכילה יהיו בחנם אבל לא שת לבו לדבר זה כי תמיד לא יחסר האכילה ויהיה הגוף מקבל מזון אבל לא מזון גופני רק ניזון מזיו שכינה וכלי האכילה גם כן יתקדשו ויזדככו מוכנים לאכילה זו

## Penance and Mortification

It is true that the portrayal of the *Shelah* as 'world-affirming' is an oversimplification; there are many examples of both ascetic behaviour and even mortifications in the *Shelah*. Yet they are presented as precautionary, not an ideal. In the sections of the *Shelah* addressing repentance, Horowitz praises the more extreme versions of penance only if they are conducive towards achieving repentance.

Horowitz cites Azaria of Fano at the beginning of 'Tractate Ta'anit' explaining the efficacy of fasting in the Lurianic terms explored above concerning food:

These are the words of R. M Azariah of Fano – fasting is the primary form of *tikkun*, whose secret is the elevation of the sparks from the *kelippot* which the one who is fasting is associated with, and one must worry lest he came across food whose sparks were concealed within them and ate them in an inappropriate manner.<sup>734</sup>

Expiatory repentance itself is achieved through the loss of fat in the body, imitating the sacrifices, and through crying and a broken heart.<sup>735</sup>

---

...  
הכלל העולה אדם צדיק יאכל מהמותר לו בשביל שיחיה כדי לעסוק בתורה ולעבוד את הש"י ואז  
האכילה במקום קרבן וכתבתי כל זה בארוכה באות ק' בקדושת המאכל . ותכלית האכילה להיות חי  
וידמה הצורה ליוצרה ואז הולך בדרכי הש"י

<sup>734</sup> Ibid, 211b.

וזה לשון הרמ"ע ואולם התענית שהיא ראשית התקונים סודה להעלות מן הקליפות נצוצות נשמות  
שיש למתענה יחס עמהן ויש לחוש שמא נזדמנו לו מיני מאכל שנצוצות אלו גנוזים בהם ואכל אותם  
שלא כהוגן

<sup>735</sup> Ibid, 212b.

על כן אין לנו תקנה אלא להיותנו סור מרע ועשה טוב ולהיותנו נכנעים שחים עד לעפר ולקדש את  
עצמנו בכל מה דאפשר שיהיה גופנו בלי מוכן לקבל קדושה בל יחסרו ממנו הקרבנות הן בגופנו סוד  
התענית הן בדבורינו...הן במחשבותינו

At the end of 'Tractate Ta'anit', Horowitz praises fasting through a long citation from *Reishit Hokhmah*, exploring how the author merited to see Elijah after fasting for 120 days, and that he was able to thereby atone for all his sins. A summary of de Vidas' vision of repentance includes 'thinking in his heart that every hour the King will come and take account of his sins, and not eat meat...nor drink wine and sit in fasting engrossing himself in Torah night and day'.<sup>736</sup>

In 'Tractate Rosh-ha-Shana', however, while endorsing the mortifications found in the *Roke'ah*, Horowitz cautions against their overuse:

If he sinned once and used the mortifications written in the *Roke'ah* ...and repeated this penance, including the four types of repentance listed above with all its harsh penances and mortifications written there, it is not good to God for him to do this for a number of reasons: Firstly it is not right to make himself suffer and beat his body unnecessarily, since the soul was refined upon the first mortification and he was forgiven for that sin, why should he do more?<sup>737</sup>

Here, the emphasis is that the body should not be harmed unnecessarily, and as mentioned above in his father's writings, this is not an 'upright way'. The function of the suffering is described in halakhic terms, and once the punishment has been

---

<sup>736</sup> Ibid, 213a.

ז"ל ואומר לך בני הרוצה לשוב בתשובה יתיאש מן העולם הזה ולא ישא ולא יתן בשום עסק של זה העולם ויחשוב בלבו כי בכל שעה יבא המלך לקחת חשבון עוונותיו ולא יאכל בשר ולא שום דבר אשר נשמה באפו וגם לא ישתה יין וישב בתענית ויעסוק בתורה יומם ולילה ויעשה מלחמה עם השינה שלא לאנוס אותו לישן כל הלילה וימשוך כל מחשבתו אל הש"י ויתחרט על מה שעשה ואם תבא עבירה לידי ידחנה וירחיקנה מעליו ועיקר אכילתו פת במשקל די חיותו

<sup>737</sup> Ibid, 223b.

תשיעית יש לדעת שאם לא חטא באשה כ"א(כי אם) פעם אחת וע"ז(על זה) עשה תשובה שלמה בכל מיני עינויים וסיגופים הכתובים בספר הרוקח וזמן שקצב הרוקח. ואחר זמן הקצוב חזר ועשה תשובה זו בעצמה דהיינו ארבעה מיני תשובות דלעיל בכל תוקף וחומר עינוי וסיגוף הכתובים בה לא ניחא למריה יתברך לעביד הכי מכמה טעמים. חדא כי אין נכון לענות נפשו ולסגף גופו שלא לצורך הואיל ובסיגוף הראשון נזדככה הנפש ונמחל לו על אותו עון מה לו לעשות עוד



meted out it is unnecessary to prolong the suffering as the sin has been forgiven. Perhaps this can be also be considered in terms of Horowitz's role as rabbinic judge and as a kabbalist. He also suggests that the pain may be too much for this generation to tolerate, as even the Talmudic sages only administered punishment according to what could be endured.<sup>738</sup>

Nevertheless, there are times of the year where Horowitz encourages mortifications, and he records the ascetic practices of the Hebron community before Yom Kippur in full, praising those who adhere to them. Yom Kippur, as the Day of Atonement, is excluded from the general caution against excessively ascetic activity:

This is the custom of the holy community of Hebron, according to the great and wise rabbi, the pious and humble Malkiel Ashkenazi:

Firstly, he should beat the man according to his will, three or four lashes and release his belt, and while he is still naked they should dress him from ankle to waste in sackcloth, throw him in the ground and three or four youths should roll him backward and forward, and the sage should exhort his community and announce: This is what should be done to the man who angers his creator! This is what should be done to the man who has rebelled against his creator - woe to us from the Day of Judgment, woe to us from the day of retribution. The nation sees this and cries out, and will do so all the more upon seeing one who is beaten and cries out in bitter lament ...according to the punishment called out, should you recreate the death penalties... This is the order of proceedings presented to me from the holy community of Hebron,

---

<sup>738</sup> Ibid.

ובכלל מאשר חטא על הנפש הוא גם כן מי שציער עצמו בעינוי תשובה ללא צורך. כי לפעמים יש תשובה הקשה כמות כגון שצריך הבעל תשובה לישב בקרח או בשלג ובימות החמה ישב לפני הזבובים או נמלים או לפני דבורים כמו שנמצא כתוב בספר הרוקח (הלכות תשובה סימן י"א) ובשאר עינוי נפש הכתובים שם וא"כ מה לו לצרה הזאת לסבול יסורין הקשין לו כמות ללא צורך הואיל וכבר עשה מה שהיה לו לעשות ועוכר שארו חנם אכזרי. כי בודאי התשובה שכתב בעל הרוקח לכל עון ולכל חטאת הם דברי קבלה שקולים כנגד דיני בית דין

...

ואם בימיהם היו חשו לחולשה קל וחומר בזמננו זה שראוי שניחוש על חולשתינו ועל תשות כחנו כי מה אנו ומה כחנו לסבול יסורים יותר מן הראוי

and the God fearing man will fulfil both opinions and the more one does the more one is praiseworthy.<sup>739</sup>

Another significant qualification in the *Shelah* regarding Horowitz's attitude towards asceticism is found in the *Tokhehot Musar* section of the Torah portion of *Nasso*. It illustrates how Horowitz read the Talmud in line with the 'organic universe', with every aspect of Jewish literature infused with kabbalistic meanings, creating the pietistic ideal which he sought to promote. The Amora Shmuel, who discouraged mortifications as a form of penance, is interpreted to refer only to those who are already perfect, 'a pure saint who has never had a taste of sin'. The Mishnah, which upon a straightforward reading appears only to exonerate one who self-wounds and certainly not to encourage it,<sup>740</sup> is understood to firstly be referring to fasting rather than self-wounding, and secondly, is considered a positive act if done for the sake of repentance. The Amoraic discussion, ostensibly about the permissibility of adopting additional ascetic practices, becomes a quantification of the greatness of one who willingly adopts them:

And I say with fear, trepidation and perspiration in opposition to the glory of the Tosafot, that their words are forced in this matter. It appears to me that even though Shmuel agrees that one who has become blemished in a particular sin, stringent or lenient, certainly needs to flagellate himself, and is allowed to be stringent and fast until he knows for sure that he has no blemish and remnant remaining... Shmuel's words were only said about he who is a pure saint and holy and has never tasted sin. A man like this should not fast - but one who has become blemished should repeatedly fast! And through this Shmuel is upholding the Mishnah that a man is permitted to wound himself, which is fasting, not that it is only permitted to fast, but it is even a positive commandment to cleanse.... that which it said 'permitted' where it implies that he is absolved from punishment alone, this was written for the second half of

---

<sup>739</sup> *Shelah*, 227b. See Text 4.

<sup>740</sup> *mB.K.* 8:9; *bB.K.* 91b.

the Mishnah ...And Rabbi Eliezer who disagrees with Shmuel holds that even if he is pure and clean of sin and wishes to fast for additional holiness to sanctify his matter, he is called holy upon afflicting himself. Reish Lakish holds that he is called a saint. And one who sees a *Sotah* in her disgrace, it might be the case that Shmuel would agree that he should refrain from wine, even a saintly and holy man, to make a boundary from what he has seen...<sup>741</sup>

Horowitz's exegesis assumes that the Amoraim are operating within a kabbalistic framework which encourages asceticism when required. The tension between encouraging ascetic practices as a form of pietism, and discouraging them in favour of a world-affirming pietism is one which is echoed across the spectrum of Jewish pietisms in Eastern Europe up to and including Hasidism in the 18th Century.<sup>742</sup>

---

<sup>741</sup> *Shelah*, 353a.

ואני אומר באימה וביראה וברתת זזיע נגד כבוד התוספות כי דבריהם דחוק בענין הזה אך נראה בעיני אף שמואל מודה מי שפגם באיזה עבירה קלה או חמורה בודאי צריך לסגף עצמו ורשאי להחמיר להתענות עד שידע בבירור שאין בו סיג ורושם וכתם

...

ודברי שמואל לא נאמרו אלא במי שהוא חסיד טהור וקדוש ולא טעם טעם חטא איש כזה לא יתענה אבל מי שנפגם יתענה ויתענה ועל זה מוקי שמואל המשנה (בבא - קמא צ ב) שאדם רשאי לחבול בעצמו דהיינו בתענית כי לא זו שמותר לו להתענות אלא אף מצוה קא עביד לכבס הכתם והא דאמר רשאי דמשמע פטור בעלמא זה תני בשביל הסיפא אבל אחרים שחבלו בו חייבים וענין אשר חטא על הנפש (במדבר ו, יא) הוא כך זה שקיבל עליו נזירות בודאי היה משער על עצמו כמה זמן צריך להיות נזיר כדי שיזדכך את עצמו ובזה עשה מצוה שהזיר את עצמו ואחר כלות זה הזמן שקיבל אזי לא יוסיף לענות נפשו בכדי מאחר שנטהר והנה כשנטמא במת ואז הדין הוא ימים הראשנים יפלו נמצא גורם לעצמו עינוי וצער יותר ממה שהיה משוער שמחויב לסבול נמצא בזה המותר ציער עצמו בכדי וחטא על הנפש ורבי אלעזר החולק על שמואל סבירא ליה אפילו מי שהוא טהור ונקי בלא חטא ורוצה להתענות בשביל תוספות קדושה לקדש חומרו נקרא קדוש במצי לצעורי נפשיה וריש לקיש סבירא ליה נקרא חסיד

והרואה סוטה בקלקולה אפשר שאף שמואל מודה שיזיר עצמו מן היין אפילו איש חסיד וקדוש בשביל לעשות גדר על מה שראה מצוה הוא להזיר במצי לצעורי נפשיה ורבי אלעזר וריש לקיש סבירא להו דהעושה כן תמיד במצי לצעורי נפשיה נקרא קדוש או חסיד אבל בלא מצי צעורי נפשיה והוא טהור ונקי מכל חטא

<sup>742</sup> See Epilogue, 319-324.

In this chapter, it has been established that in the *Shelah*, devekut is an ideal to be pursued through every means, 'in all your ways', departing from the proudly ascetic ethos found in many kabbalistic writings, achieved during times of mundane activity through sanctification of the body through thought, speech and action. Yet if the body is not used for sanctity, it must bear the burden of physical punishment and mortification. If the individual is incapable of achieving sanctity through his body, it is meritorious for him to achieve it through asceticism.

## **Chapter Twelve: Enthusiasm and Emotion**

He hurried to begin composing a work for his family and subsequent generations so that they could possess an all-encompassing chronicle of the fulfilment of the commandments, their particulars and the *kavvanot* acquired through knowledge of their secrets – for his matter leads to the arousal of the heart to serve God with joy and gladness, with readiness, eagerness and love.<sup>743</sup>

There are two aspects of the vision of musar in the *Shelah* which have so far been identified: Firstly, that the ladder of devekut contains both an ordinary and extraordinary element, and secondly, that the material world and the human body should be sanctified in the service of God. In this chapter a third, more experiential aspect of musar is presented from the *Shelah*: The requirement of enthusiasm and emotional arousal in the service of God. The need for the individual to awaken himself and serve God with joy is established as an axiom of divine service. In the citation from Sheftel above, it appears that this principle was one which Horowitz prioritised in the education of his descendants.

As expressed in the third section of this study, observance of the halakhah is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a relationship with God. As well as requiring the spirit of holiness, kabbalistic additions and stringencies, Horowitz discounts deeds which are not performed with ‘self-arousal’, or what Louis Jacobs translated as ‘burning enthusiasm’ (*hitlahavut*).<sup>744</sup> By elevating enthusiasm to the forefront of

---

<sup>743</sup> *Vavei Amudim*. See Text 6.

<sup>744</sup> Louis Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer*, (London Littman Library, 1993), 3.

religious consciousness in accordance with his interpretation of the kabbalistic mechanisms of divine service, Horowitz establishes a platform for an emotionally-infused Judaism and the cultivation of pietistic fellowships.

### Background

The Bible contains two commonly quoted passages pertaining to the enthusiastic worship of God:

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your might.<sup>745</sup>

(In the context of punishments) Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things.<sup>746</sup>

Both the Bible and sections of the Talmud emphasise that joy is a desirable state of mind when observing the commandments and when engrossed in prayer.<sup>747</sup>

In his *Mishneh Torah*, Maimonides demands passion in the specific area of loving God. Maimonides notes that the individual who loves God 'as is fitting' adopts a state whereby his 'soul is bound with love of God, and yearns for it constantly as if love sick for a woman, constantly thinking of her'. King Solomon's Song of Songs is described as a passionate allegory for the relationship between God and the Jewish people.<sup>748</sup> However, Maimonides appears to qualify this uninhibited passion by

---

<sup>745</sup> Deuteronomy 4:5.

<sup>746</sup> Ibid 28:47.

<sup>747</sup> E.g. Leviticus 23:40; Samuel I 2:1; Psalms 122:1; Joel 2:21. See *bSuk.* 51a, 53a. *bBer.* 13a, 31a, 54a, 61b; *bShab.* 30b; *bR.H.* 28-29a.

<sup>748</sup> *MT*, 'Hilkhot Teshuvah', 10:3.

defining love in terms of philosophical attainment: 'he cannot love God except through the knowledge by which he knows Him by'.<sup>749</sup> The same duality of passionate love and advanced philosophical understanding is found at the end of the *Guide*. To Maimonides, love of God meant knowledge of Him, although this knowledge, in turn, contained deeply passionate aspects.<sup>750</sup>

As kabbalah continued to further develop in the 13th and 14th centuries, descriptions of God's emanations in the form of sefirot adopted a distinctly erotic nature. In the *Zohar*, the sexual passion between man and wife is presented as the model of reintegration of the presently fragmented divine unity.<sup>751</sup> The deeply emotional and experiential aspect of prayer is also emphasised in Zoharic writings.<sup>752</sup> In a rare example of autobiographical passion in rabbinic literature, Azikiri's *Sefer Hareidim* describes his own passionate love of God, where he would arise at the night out of the desire for an intimate connection with God.<sup>753</sup> Azikiri emphasised that although man is given a wife of flesh and blood, his true passion should be for the *shekhinah*.<sup>754</sup>

---

<sup>749</sup> Ibid, 10:4.

<sup>750</sup> *Guide*, 3:51, 1:39, 3:33; see Gideon Freudenthal, 'The Philosophical Mysticism of Maimonides and Maimon', in *Maimonides and His Heritage*, ed. by Idit; Lenn Goodman Dobbs-Weinstein (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009), 114-47; Philip Merlan, *Monopsychism Mysticism Metaconsciousness : Problems of the Soul in the Neoplatonist and Neoplatonic Tradition*, (Springer: Dordrecht, 1970), 20.

<sup>751</sup> *Zohar* I:49b–50a.

<sup>752</sup> Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2: 293-306.

<sup>753</sup> Werblowsky, *Lawyer and Mystic*, 61.

<sup>754</sup> Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 11.

The shift in thinking towards more theurgical models of worship in Safed directed the focus of religious enthusiasm towards the unification of God's name. Cordovero emphasised that all emotional energy should be focused on God's unification, for 'the sake of on high'.<sup>755</sup>

*Reishit Hokhmah* demands that the passion for the Torah and the commandments should be with the erotic passion of a man for his wife.<sup>756</sup> Unifications, too, must be performed with joy, devoid of drunken sensuality or light-headedness.<sup>757</sup>

In the writings of Hayyim Vital and the disciples of Isaac Luria, the personal love of God, awe and reverence which characterises the descriptions in earlier rabbinic literature are replaced with the language of myth and theurgy.<sup>758</sup> Attempting to imitate the theosophical unifications of the divine configurations, the Lurianic disciple underwent an intensive process of meditations of re-enacting the cosmic processes set in motion through his thoughts.<sup>759</sup> Here, too, joy and passion are directed towards the upper realms. Thus, kabbalistic joy was restricted to an advanced coterie and the simple joy found in earlier rabbinic literature was replaced by intensive contemplative or ecstatic exercises.

---

<sup>755</sup> Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 200.

<sup>756</sup> Fine, *Safed Spirituality*, 143.

<sup>757</sup> *Reishit Hokhmah* vol. 1, 144.

<sup>758</sup> Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 256.

<sup>759</sup> Hayyim Vital, *Peri Es Hayyim*, (Korets: Yohn Anton Kriger, 1785), 350.



### Joy and Enthusiasm in the *Shelah*

The novelty of Horowitz's attitude in the *Shelah* towards religious behaviour is that he considers it an obligation for every individual to struggle with temptation, overcome it and passionately serve his creator with joy. This requirement is listed as one of Horowitz's 'Ten sayings',<sup>760</sup> and is consciously used to differentiate between his own attitude towards the service of God and that of *Reishit Hokhmah*.<sup>761</sup>

Self-awakening, and specifically the terminology of 'self-arousal'/*hit'orerut* and burning passion/*hitlahavut* is essential to the service of God and the proper fulfilment of halakhah in the *Shelah*. The internal, psychological experience of an individual's service is elevated to premier importance. This differentiates Horowitz's attitude considerably from the theurgical emphasis of the kabbalists, and the ancillary role of joy described in halakhic and Talmudic sources. Firstly, in terms of terminology, the process of self-transformation and ascent of *devekut* is described in terms of 'self-arousal':

A man should arouse his heart to become one who 'desists from evil and does good' and sanctify himself. For it was for this purpose he was created, and to this end was the creation for the sake of Man...

Hear what man is in essence and what he symbolises in his form! This being the case, who would be so brazen to not arouse himself to sanctify himself through speech, thought and action?<sup>762</sup>

---

<sup>760</sup> *Shelah*, 39b.

<sup>761</sup> *Ibid*, 49b.

<sup>762</sup> *Shelah*, 8a-9a.

The need for self-arousal is also demanded by the spiritual makeup of the commandments, whereby every commandment requires arousal to be properly fulfilled. Enthusiasm is necessary for the performance of a commandment to rise to the highest rungs of *devekut*:

Every commandment that man performs needs to be with the arousal of the heart, not 'a commandment of men learned by rote',<sup>763</sup> but rather that it should be like a new decree and he should do it for the sake of heaven, even though his material nature deters him, and it is against the desires of the body – he should destroy his desires and fulfil the commandment with haste and alacrity! A man should think in his heart when an opportunity to fulfil a positive commandment arrives: From the perspective of my material nature and desires I would not do this matter but I am doing it because this is what God has instructed me... We have found written concerning the negative commandments: It was taught that R. Shimon b. Gamliel said that a man shouldn't say I do not want the flesh of swine but he should say that I do want it but what can I do, for my father in heaven has imposed a decree upon me!<sup>764</sup>

---

ואף דמות גופו רשום ומסומן משם ידו"ד. ובזה יבואר ענין הצלם והדמות שנברא ונעשה האדם ודבר זה צריך ביאור רחב. ואז יתלהב לב האדם להיות סור מרע ועשה טוב ולקדש עצמו. כי לתכלית זה נברא ולתכלית זה היתה הבריאה בשביל האדם

....

ואתם בניי יצ"ו, שום תשימו לנגד עיניכם במה שאראה לכם ענין האדם מהו בפנימיותו ומה הוא רומז בדמותו ואז מי הוא זה שלא יתעורר לקדש את עצמו בדיבור במחשבה ובמעשה

<sup>763</sup> Isaiah 29:13.

<sup>764</sup> *Shelah*, 17b; *Sifra Kedoshim* 9:12.

והנני אבאר סוד זה הענין כללות העשין מל"ת והל"ת מעשין. העשין מלא תעשין כיצד. כל מצוה ומצוה שמקיים אותה האדם צריך להיות בהתעוררות הלב לא מצות אנשים מלמדה (ישעיה כט, יג) רק כפרוטגמא חדשה ויעשה אותה לשם שמים אף שהחומר מנגדו והוא נגד תאות הגוף ישבור תאותו ויקיים המצוה בזהירות ובזריזות ויחשוב האדם בלבו בבוא מ"ע לידו הנה מצד חומרי ותאותי לא נמצא גם לא תעשה הוא בעשה דהיינו .... הייתי עושה דבר זה רק אני עושה כי ככה ציוני הש"י

...

In a refrain which is repeated on several occasions in the *Shelah*,<sup>765</sup> the basic principle of worship should be the deliberate triumph over natural barriers, overcoming the material urges which desire to sin. In the above extract, Horowitz presents the concept of the interchangeability between positive and negative commandments, explained in the 'organic universe' in Chapter Three.<sup>766</sup> Negative commandments, like positive ones, require actualisation which corresponds to mental effort. Through desiring sin and overcoming this temptation, the negative commandment has been 'fulfilled'. Similarly, although the positive commandment is certainly considered as fulfilled if done in accordance with the letter of the law, without joy and enthusiasm it is of an incomparably lower calibre.

Emotional passion is categorised as fundamental to religious behaviour in the *Shelah*: The priority of 'inner love' is stressed by being listed as the third of the 'Ten sayings' which leads a person to perfection, behind 'God is one' and 'Israel is one nation'.<sup>767</sup> An important aspect of understanding the emphasis Horowitz places on joy is that it emerges within the broader context of *devekut* with God, and the specific kabbalistic mechanism which joy necessitates. Rather than being an ideal or advanced level of observance, joy is positioned as indispensable to the ascent of

---

וכענין שמצינו בלא תעשה היפך מזה (ספרא, קדושים ט, יב) תניא רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר לא יאמר אדם אי אפשי בבשר חזיר אבל יאמר אפשי ומה אעשה ואבי שבשמים גזר עלי.

<sup>765</sup> See *Shelah* 177b, 265a, 384a.

<sup>766</sup> See Chapter Three, 79-89.

<sup>767</sup> *Shelah*, 38b.

devekut. Burning passion enables us 'to grasp Him' in a manner which is 'entirely spiritual', enabling an 'elevation of devekut':

Therefore, it is impossible for us to have a grasp of Him in our service unless it is a service which is entirely spiritual, and through this spirituality the devekut will ascend. On this the verse has written 'As you did not serve God with gladness and joyfulness of heart'.<sup>768</sup> The explanation is that even if you have served God, if the service was not done with the arousal of the heart and the burning passion of joy to serve Him, how can this service cleave to him? There are several aspects to this matter: To serve with joy, and for every matter to be like a new decree....<sup>769</sup>

God cannot be accessed without enthusiasm as the mechanism connecting Man to God requires joy to overcome the distance between them. Every commandment must therefore be embraced as though it was only decreed today.

The role of joy is most pronounced in fulfilling the commandment to love God. Incorporating the erotic element of the kabbalists, Horowitz places pronounced focus on the joyful nature of this relationship. He recounts that the reason for Luria's unique status and access to the divine spirit was his joy when serving God. Unlike the theosophical minutiae found in the writings of Luria's circle of students, the image of Luria in the *Shelah* is one who served God primarily with pure and simple joy:

But we who are a portion of God, his nation, we are children to God and He is our father – how can we not love him with the love of our souls with all our hearts and souls and die for the sanctification of his name? And all the duration of our lives, that our love of him should be lodged in our hearts, to do

---

<sup>768</sup> Deuteronomy 28:47.

<sup>769</sup> *Shelah*, 39b.

על כן אי אפשר להיות לנו אחיזה בו בעבודתנו, כי אם בעבודה שהיא כולה [רוחנית], על ידי הרוחניות הזו יעלה הדבקות. ועל זה אמר הכתוב (דברים כח, מז) 'תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלהיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב'. הביאור, גם כי עבדת את ה', אם לא היתה העבודה בהתעוררות הלב, ובהתלהבות השמחה לעבדו, במה תדבק העבודה. ולענין זה יש כמה פנים, לעבוד בשמחה, ולהיות כל ענין כפרוטגמא חדשה.

his will with a complete heart, with great joy and arousal of the heart, for this is the idea of love – a greater level than fear!... The 'Fear' is to fear and be ashamed in His presence, that we should not depart God forbid from anything that He commanded of us, whether positive or negative (commandments), whether Biblical or rabbinic. And 'Love' means that all should be with the arousal of the heart, and to serve Him with joy, and not to fear any damage or pain which may arise from His service, and that all the money in the world – even his body and soul – all should be as nothing in service of the love of His service. Consider and dwell on the love of a woman: when a man has relations with her, at the climax of his pleasure he would not depart from her even if he knew he would incur great financial loss – how much more so out of love of God! And the Godly *Ari* explained that your service should be with such joy etc. greater than you would otherwise rejoice over anything which came your way. The students of this Godly man mentioned above attested that he said that the reason he merited the divine spirit was because he was extremely joyful when performing the commandments....<sup>770</sup>

The components of love are articulated as being joyful and erotic, with joy an intrinsic component of love. Importantly, Horowitz states that the arousal which is demanded is not limited to the enjoyment of positive commandments, but is a state of fervour which must be induced even when avoiding sin and when not actively engaged in the fulfilment of a commandment. Serving God with pure joy is a state above serving Him through struggle and overcoming temptation, and is the greatest form of self-arousal:

Even though he overcomes it, he doesn't do the deed with burning passion and joy, for the burning passion of joy causes greater care and alacrity in every detail (of the commandment), and the optimal form of performance of the commandment.<sup>771</sup>

---

<sup>770</sup> *Shelah*, 49a. See Text 1.

<sup>771</sup> *Ibid*, 49b.

דרך ראשון דביקה היא התעוררות האדם לעבודת הש"י הבא לו מצד יצה"ט (יצר הטוב) אבל הוא כאשר ידבק האיש את האזור שלפעמים מתיר האזור דהיינו שלוחם עמו היצה"ר (היצר הרע) ועושה לו הענין ההוא בכבידות ואף על פי שהוא מנצחו מ"מ אינו עושה הדבר בהתלהבות השמחה כי התלהבות השמחה גורם ביותר הזהירות והזריזות בכלל ופרט ובדקדוק ובהידור מצוה וכיוצא בזה

After establishing joy to be the optimum state of worship, in the *Sha'ar Otiyot* section listing the essential character traits, Horowitz highlights the importance of cultivating enthusiasm, alacrity and thirst for God:

In '*Letter Zayin*', alacrity is demanded both when avoiding sin and when pursuing the fulfilment of the positive commandments:

...In *Ma'alot ha-Middot* it is written as follows:<sup>772</sup> Know my son, that the trait of alacrity is an important trait, for at the beginning of Man's creation he was only created to be enthusiastic in his actions and ways, as the verse says 'And Man became a living being',<sup>773</sup> what is 'living'? Alacrity.<sup>774</sup>

The point is then repeated that the need to stimulate oneself in the service of God is not restricted to actions alone, but must be a constant state of mind:

Even when we refer to 'The good inclination', this too demands arousal, so that the inclination of Man is good even when not performing a deed. For when he is performing a deed it is obvious that if a sin arrives he should remove it with haste and if a positive commandment arrives he should immediately do it with speed. But even when he is not in an active state, he should think in his heart and desire the good and hate the evil, I mean to say that he should arouse in himself the pursuit of the positive commandment and not sin. His inclination, meaning his desires, should always be for good, even in a matter which is not in his power to fulfil – he should think in his heart if it had been in my power to do so I would have done it. God then considers this thought to be an action...<sup>775</sup>

---

<sup>772</sup> See *Ma'alot ha-Middot* (Jerusalem: Eshkol, 1978), 255. The ethical work was written c. 1287 by Yehiel b. Yekutiel b. Benjamin ha-Rofe.

<sup>773</sup> Genesis 2:7.

<sup>774</sup> *Shelah*, 66a.

ובמעלות המדות כתב וזה לשונו דעו בני כי מעלת הזריזות היא מדה חשובה לפי שמתחילת ברייתו של אדם לא נברא אלא להיות זריז במעשיו ובדרכיו כמ"ש (בראשית ב, ז) ויהי האדם לנפש חיה מאי חיה זריזותא

<sup>775</sup> *Ibid*, 68a.

The quest to cleave to God should never cease, irrespective of the situation. The need for self-arousal and the refusal to remain static characterises the mind-set of the righteous, and due to the organic nature of the universe, God will consider this thought to have been fulfilled in action.<sup>776</sup>

Moreover, in '*Letter Lamed*', Horowitz introduces the concept of the 'good heart' by stating that 'The divine flow to all creations extends according to the arousal of the heart'.<sup>777</sup> The significant addition in these extracts is the focus on maintaining enthusiasm even 'when he is not in a position to fulfil the commandment'. The individual must be enthused throughout life to cleave to God, and this desire alone constitutes a fulfilment of the action in question. The *Shelah* proposes that simply through expressing enthusiasm and joy at the prospect of fulfilling commandments, the individual achieves greater levels of *devekut*, joy infusing each commandment with additional spiritual power.

---

גם באמרי יצר טוב יש בזה התעוררות שיהיה יצר של אדם טוב תמיד אף שלא בשעת מעשה  
דבשעת מעשה פשיטא כשתבוא עבירה לידו שידחנה חיש מהר וכשתבוא מצוה לידו תיכף יעשנה  
בזריזות אלא אף בעת שהוא בטל מזה יחשוב בלבו ויתאוה לדבר טוב וימאוס ברע רצוני לומר  
שיהרהר אחר רדיפת מצוה ואל יהרהר בעבירה ותמיד יהיה יצרו כלומר תאוותו לטוב ואף בדבר שאין  
ביכולתו לעשות יחשוב בלבו אם היה ביכולתי לעשות הייתי עושה כך והקדוש ברוך הוא מצרף  
מחשבה זו למעשה

<sup>776</sup> See Chapter Four, 115, concerning the differences between Man and angels – the two concepts are linked as Man's superiority over angels is based on his ability to change.

<sup>777</sup> *Shelah*, 69a.

ועשו לי מקדש ושכנתי בתוכם לא אמר בתוכו אלא בתוכם (סדר עולם פרק ו') דהיינו בקודש קדשים  
שהוא הלב כי כפי התעוררות הלב בא התפשטות לכל המדות והנהגות

In 'Letter Tav', 'Teshukah' (yearning) for God, Horowitz describes how the value of a commandment is directly proportionate to the amount of joy invested. After citing Azikiri's *Sefer Hareidim* describing his passionate infatuation with God, Horowitz focuses on a distinctive aspect of the role of joy, which is to magnify the spiritual value of each individual action.<sup>778</sup>

In 'Tractate Pesahim', the place of joy and enthusiasm is identified as essential to each of the three aspects contained within each commandment. For a commandment to have been fulfilled with *shelemut*, it requires joy and self-arousal:

There is no commandment that cannot be cleaved to with action, speech and thought. This means, at the time of performing the commandment he can speak and say: I am doing this commandment whose laws are x and y, and I will do it with self-arousal and joy, for the sake of unifying God and his *shekhinah* ...and this is how to perform the commandment in *shelemut*.<sup>779</sup>

As discussed in Chapter Nine, each individual commandment can be dissected into 'thought', 'speech' and 'action' components and each aspect must be perfected and refined so that it can be fulfilled in its entirety.<sup>780</sup> Joy is an indispensable part of the

---

<sup>778</sup> Ibid, 109b.

והוא החשק והאהבה להש"י ולתורתו הקדושה ולמצותיה ולשמור ולעשות ולקיים את הכל בשמחה גדולה שישמח שזוכה לעבוד את הש"י ולהיות דבק בו וז"ל ספר החרדים (הקדמה למצוות, סימן ד'): מתנאי קיום המצוה השמחה הגדולה במצוה דכל מצוה ומצוה שתזדמן לו דורנא דשדר ליההש"י ולפי רוב השמחה יגדל שכרו וכן גילה הרב החסיד המקובל מורנו הרב יצחק אשכנזי זצ"ל לאיש סודו שכל מה שהשיג שנפתחו לו שערי חכמה ורוח הקודש בשכר שהיה שמח בעשיית כל מצוה שמחה גדולה לאין תכלית

<sup>779</sup> Ibid, 140a.

ואין לך דבר מצוה שלא יתדבק במעשה בדיבור ובמחשבה

דהיינו בעת עשיית המצוה, ידבר ויאמר: הנני אעשה המצוה הזאת אשר דינה כך וכך, אעשה בהתעוררות ובשמחה, לשם יחוד קודשא בריך הוא ושכינתיה על ידי ההוא טמיר ונעלם... ואז נשלם דיבור ומחשבה ומעשה ונתקיים 'בפיך ובלבבך לעשתו' (דברים ל, יד)

<sup>780</sup> See Chapter Nine, 212-221.



'thought' component of the commandment. This explains why it is praiseworthy for the 'men of great stature' to act with great passion towards the commandments such as eating *matsah*. Horowitz notes that these men would kiss the *matsah* and *maror* during Passover, kiss the sukkah upon entering and leaving as well as kiss each of the four species.<sup>781</sup> Even though the action of kissing has nothing to do with the performance of the commandment, it demonstrates a passion which is essential for the 'thought' aspect of the commandment.

A demarcation can again be made here between the use of joy to transcend physical being as found in the writings of the kabbalists and Horowitz's consideration of joy to be an intrinsic part of halakhic observance itself. The former can only be achieved by an exclusive group, whereas the latter can be accessed by all even if its more lofty manifestations remain exclusive.

### Prayer and Joy

In Chapter Four I presented the case that to Horowitz, prayer ascends 'upon high' in line with the ideas found in the kabbalah, but he does not necessarily demand that each prayer incorporate the *kavvanot* found in the kabbalists' writings.<sup>782</sup> In the *Shelah*, prayer is in its own distinct category of commandment in that its proper fulfilment is entirely the result of self-arousal and passionate feeling.

---

<sup>781</sup> *Shelah*, 142b.

וראיתי מבני עליה המחבבים מצוות היו מנשקין המצות והמרור וכל המצוות בעת מצוותן וכן הסוכה בכניסתם וביציאתם וכן ארבעה מינים שבלולב והכל לחבב המצוות ויש ללמוד זה ממה שכתב רמ"א (או"ח) בסימן כ"ד יש נוהגין לנשק הציצית בשעה שרואה בהם והכל משום חיבוב מצוה ואשרי מי שעובד את ה' בשמחה ובטוב לבב ובדביקה וחשיקה וחפיצה

<sup>782</sup> See Chapter Four, 123-126.

In his section analysing prayer, Horowitz explains that the value of the temple sacrifices was measured entirely according to the individual's ability to cleave to God, unlike the other commandments which are 'external to him' in that they require a physical action such as *lulav* or *tefillin*.<sup>783</sup>

Prayer, which one opinion in the Talmud records as being the post-temple equivalent of the sacrifice,<sup>784</sup> is also entirely contingent on mental effort, and if one aspect of concentration is out of place, the entire prayer is invalidated (like the offering of a sacrifice of sacrifices):

When the prayer is complete in speech, thought and action then it literally resembles a sacrifice, and if it doesn't it is an invalid prayer like an invalid sacrifice. In *Tikkunei Zohar* it is said that an invalid prayer is compared to a dog, fulfilling the verse 'you shall cast it to the dogs'.<sup>785</sup>

Self-arousal is a necessary precondition of prayer. Unlike the other commandments, prayer demands the perfection of all three aspects of thought, speech and action for it to be considered legitimate at all. For other commandments, imperfect performance is adequate to have achieved a minimal level of fulfilment, synonymous with a lower level of *devekut*. In these commandments, although not directly affecting

---

<sup>783</sup> *Shelah*, 211b; Exodus 22:30.

יש ליתן טעם למה המעשה הזה של הקרבן נקרא ביותר עבודה מכל מעשי המצוות כגון עשיית סוכה וכל עבודת המצוות ונראה שכל מעשי המצוות הם בחוץ ממנו. אמנם מעשה הקרבן העיקר הוא עבודת עצמו רצה לומר ההתעוררות שמתעורר בעצמו להיות עבד נאמן להשם יתברך ומיניה וביה הוא העבדות

<sup>784</sup> See *bBer.* 26b.

<sup>785</sup> *Shelah*, 250b.

וכשהתפילה היא שלמה בדיבור במחשבה ובמעשה אז היא ממש במקום קרבן ואם לאו היא תפילה פסולה כמו קרבן פסול ובתקוני זהר (תקון כ"א, דף מ"ה ע"א) אמרו שהתפילה פסולה נמסרת לכלב, ונתקיים בה לכלב תשליכון אותו (שמות כב, ל)

the performance of the commandment itself, the enthusiasm and love shown towards it is of distinct merit in fulfilling the 'thought' aspect of the commandment. Prayer, however, is not regarded as having taken place until there is an arousal of the spirit. This moves far beyond the minimum requirements of concentration demanded in the medieval halakhic sources.<sup>786</sup>

In his concluding section on prayer, Horowitz focuses on teaching his descendants not to serve God 'by rote'. He quotes his brother's notes on his father's *Yesh Nohalin* concerning the need to build up love of God incrementally and sincerely.<sup>787</sup> In his final analysis at the end of the work, the summary of the duties of the individual is that he must serve God constantly with joyous thought, speech, action, self-arousal and burning passion. Sinful desires should not be ignored but embraced and overcome out of submission to divine will. This, after all, is the purpose of Man.<sup>788</sup> Emotional sincerity, passion and enthusiasm are intrinsic characteristics of the God-fearing Jew, and it is this, rather than his ability to manipulate the upper spheres, that is prioritised throughout the *Shelah*.

---

<sup>786</sup> See Chapter Four, 121-122.

<sup>787</sup> *Shelah*, 260a.

לשון אחי הגדול החסיד מה"ר יעקב סג"ל בהגהות יש נוחלין מי שמשים על לבו פירוש וכוונת העניינים והשבחים הנפלאים והתוארים הנכבדים בודאי יתעורר בעצמו ויכנס בלבו במעט מעט יום אחר יום לסדר שבחו של מקום ברוך הוא בפנימיות הלב ובלב נכנע

<sup>788</sup> *Ibid*, 418a.

ביום ובלילה בכל עת ובכל שעה ובכל רגע וזמן במעשה בדיבור ובמחשבה במטמון הלב ובנצפן בהתעוררות בפרוטגמא חדשה בהתלהבות הלב ולא כמת נמנם רק גיבור כארי להיות חפץ במצותיו לשמן אף בלא פעלך עולה בהשמר מצות ל"ת תהיה נפשך חשקה לומר אפשי ומה אעשה

...

In summary, joy in the *Shelah* is an essential state when approaching the activities of religious life rather than a supplementary or ideal state. Horowitz places emotion at the forefront of the proper service of God. The very act of joy elevates the individual commandment to a higher plane, and the simple feeling of joy in God's presence constitutes an active fulfilment of the commandment to love God. Self-arousal and passion can be constantly induced, allowing the individual to constantly cleave to God, firstly by overcoming the temptations of sin and then through the embrace of God with joy. Although passion does not replace the requirements of physical action, it is elevated to equal status in that it becomes an intrinsic component rather than a mere ancillary aspect. The details of the commandment must still be fulfilled as found in halakhic literature, but without joy or passion the service is soulless.

As explained in Chapter Nine, by applying the 'threefold cord' the *Shelah* dissects each commandment and then reconstructs it in its optimal form. Horowitz's concept of *devekut* identifies a process whereby the individual can cleave to God through ordinary actions, using the material world. The means of achieving this ascent is achieved through joy, passion and enthusiasm.

## **Chapter Thirteen: Messianic Self-Transformation**

The 'threefold cord' culminates in the transformation of the individual. One of the central ideas behind the proliferation of musar literature in the 16th Century was that through self-transformation the individual transforms the universe and hastens the arrival of the messiah.<sup>789</sup> In the 20th Century, Scholem and Idel differed regarding how extensively the climate leading up to the Sabbatean movement could be considered 'pregnant with messianic expectation'.<sup>790</sup> On the whole, scholars have accepted Idel's position that Luria's writings were still not widely accessible or disseminated by the mid-17th Century, Lurianic material is not overly messianic and Luria was not the dominant kabbalistic influence of the early 17th Century. This suggests that Scholem's thesis for Lurianically saturated messianism is misplaced.<sup>791</sup> In this chapter I am going to argue that the *Shelah* is an important example of how messianic ideals can be saturated within a work despite not being easily categorised as 'messianic' or 'Lurianic'. The ethos which distinguished Luria from Cordovero can be understood from the musar literature which emerged under the influence of their writings.

Luria understood every aspect of existence to contain a mixture of good and evil, which shared the same origin. His contemplations focused on raising the holy

---

<sup>789</sup> See Chapter One, 27; Scholem, *Messianic Idea*, 76.

<sup>790</sup> See Moshe Idel, "'One from a Town, Two from a Clan": The Diffusion of Lurianic Kabbala and Sabbateanism: A Re-Examination', *Jewish History*, 7, 2 (1993), 79-104; Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi: Mystical Messiah*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1973), 1-101.

<sup>791</sup> E.g. Gries, *1700-1900*, 72; Huss, *Kezohar*, 4-5.

aspects of the world from the bed of evil.<sup>792</sup> For him, the messianic age heralded a complete transformation of the realm of evil to good. Although Cordovero's positions adapted over the course of his life, in the works cited frequently in the *Shelah*, *Pardes* and *Or Yakar*, evil is seen as something which emerged as an accidental consequence of emanation, without any real purpose. Cordovero's messianic future, as cited in the *Shelah*, is entirely spiritual.<sup>793</sup> There is little sense, however, of how and when the messiah will arrive, and a gap remains between human actions and divine response, a position Garb has termed quietistic.<sup>794</sup>

This distinction has implications for the vision of pietism found in the *Shelah*: As discussed in Chapter Four the section on 'Man', Horowitz regarded the role of Man as a transformative, redemptive one rather than a suppressive conquest of his instincts. From Luria's writings emerges a requirement of complete self-transformation, requiring the elevation of the sparks of holiness contained within the physical world, whereas the Cordoveran approach tends towards self-conquest and asceticism. The paradox of Lurianic *tikkun* was that it necessitated exposure to the realms of impurity in order to liberate the holy sparks, while insisting that the individual remain in a state of absolute purity.<sup>795</sup> Repentance, necessarily involving the performance of a sin, contained the outgrowth of sin required to convert wilful

---

<sup>792</sup> Dan, 92-103; Sack, *Be Sha'arei*, 92, 118, 200, 229; Weinstein, *Shattering*, 216.

<sup>793</sup> *Shelah*, 59a.

כן לעתיד שיחזור העולם תפשוט התורה גשמיותה ויתקיימו מצוותיה כפי המובן בעת ההיא וקל להבין אבל הכל היא זו התורה בעצמה רק אורה יאיר ביותר כמו שהאדם יאיר גם כן וקל להבין

<sup>794</sup> Garb, 'The Prague Circle', 375.

<sup>795</sup> Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 248.

sins into merits.<sup>796</sup> It was a singularly important activity as it could transform the *kelippot* to holiness and perfect the world, and it features especially prominently in the Lurianic writings.<sup>797</sup> Taken to its logical extremes, sin itself could be regarded as a positive action as it could be transformed to bring the world to its perfected state.

In the *Shelah*, there are two paths which are developed in line with Luria's approach that form the ultimate messianic goal of musar: individual transformation of evil through repentance, and national transformation through the endurance of suffering. Horowitz regards the universe as a broken vessel which can achieve a greater level of perfection than the primordial universe of Adam, by virtue of, and not despite, its state of corruption. With particular reference to the 'Written Torah' section of the *Shelah*, Horowitz develops a distinct vision of messianism.

### The Transformation of Evil

The ideal of self-mastery and self-transformation has its roots in Talmudic literature. The Talmud introduces the concept of the good and evil inclination, arguing that Man must struggle to conquer his evil inclination. Repentance is lauded as something of extraordinary power, and one who has managed to achieve repentance is considered so great that even the purely righteous cannot compare to him.<sup>798</sup>

---

<sup>796</sup> Piekarz, *Bime'i*, 175.

<sup>797</sup> Weinstein, *Shattering*, 470-77, on the comparative climate in Christian Europe, 26.

<sup>798</sup> *bBer.* 34b. See Jacob Petuchowski, 'The Concept of 'Teshuvah' in the Bible and the Talmud', *Judaism*, 17, (1968), 175-85; Moshe Beer, 'On Penances and Penitents in the Literature of Hazal', *Zion*, 46, (1981), 159-81.

In kabbalistic sources, the concept of evil was embodied in the form of the demonic *kelippah*. All manifestations of evil within the world reflects the presence of these demonic shells. As discussed in Chapter Four, in Lurianic writings, evil and good are considered to have the same origins and what appears to be evil on earth is in fact a concealed aspect of God's benevolence.

In *Toledot Adam*, Horowitz articulates the central point expressed in the writings of Cordovero that evil can be destroyed, not merely 'nullified' - that man 'conquer it, suppress it, and purify it' – but prefers the approach found within Lurianic writings that Man must transform evil.<sup>799</sup> Evil is not accidental, but a deliberate part of creation which God desires Man to transform.<sup>800</sup>

In *Asarah Ma'amarot*, after explaining that the human body contains holiness which is rooted in God Himself,<sup>801</sup> Horowitz explains how willful sins can be converted to merits through repentance. This idea forms the basis of Luria's philosophy as it is

---

<sup>799</sup> *Shelah*, 22a.

אבל אני אומר כי יש עוד רמז ביפשפש וימשמש כי ירמוז למש"כ (למה שכתבתי) לא די שמבטל את הרע אלא כובשו ואוחזו תחת ידיו ומטהרו

...

מאחר שיש שני דרכים לטובה דהיינו אם ישאר בכתנות אור יתמלא הכל אורה ואם יהיה כתנות עור מכל מקום הבחיר והמסולת אף כי הוא המעט יהיה בתוספת אור כי יהיו כת צדיקים גם כן שיגבירו האור מן החשך

...

וה"ק (והכי קאמר) וטוב משניהם יהיו הבריאות החדשות אשר קדושתם נמשכת מצד השבתת הקליפות ואז יתקרב גם כן לזה מעשי הצדיקים הכובשים את יצרם ויוחזר העולם במהרה בימינו לאור ויהיה האור יותר גדול

<sup>800</sup> See Chapter Three, 82-83.

<sup>801</sup> See Chapter Four, 108-109.



applied within the *Shelah*. The Talmud expresses the idea of Man being able to transform even his willful sins into merits through repentance, and when placed under a kabbalistic lens this is understood mechanistically, in terms of good and evil containing the same source but emerging differently due to the choice of the individual. In choosing to repent, man causes the evil power generated by sin to be converted into holiness:

You should not say that repentance is good for the holy portion in man, but even the evil portion within him is sweetened according to this measure. Know that Cain was evil, born of the serpent, and about him was said 'If you do well will it not be lifted up?'<sup>802</sup> – do not think from the perspective that since you are from evil that you have no hope, this is false! 'If you do well' and root yourself in the secret of repentance, you 'will be lifted up', and you will leave there with the secret of the good that is rooted there, for all the bitterness above has a sweet root, and he can enter there via its root and make himself good. For this, the actions themselves improve a man, and his willing sins become to him like merits. For those actions that he did were adversaries from the left side, and when he achieves complete repentance he inserts and reconfigures those actions above. All those adversaries are not nullified, but they improve themselves and instead root themselves in holiness, like the amelioration of Cain. If only Cain had repented and become restored, then the willing sin of Adam, who bore Cain with hateful jealousy, would have been regarded as a merit for him, with the secret of the 'son attaining merit for the father'.<sup>803</sup> However, he did not want to repent, so the entire left side extended from that side, but all its branches will in the future be sweetened. This is exactly in accordance with the reasons I have explained, that Adam rooted himself in the secret of evil and sweetened it and caused it to enter the good, thereby rooting himself in the supernal holiness. This is the greatness of repentance, and a person should engage in it daily....<sup>804</sup>

---

<sup>802</sup> Genesis 4:7.

<sup>803</sup> *bSan.* 104a.

<sup>804</sup> *Shelah*, 56a.

שלא תאמר שהתשובה טובה לחלק הקדושה שבאדם אלא גם לחלק הרע שבו מתמתק כעין המדה תדע שהרי קין רע היה ומנחש היה ונאמר לו (שם ד, ז) הלוא אם תיטיב שאת אל תחשוב מצד הלוא אם תיטיב ותשריש עצמך בסוד התשובה שאת שאתה מן הרע שאין לך תקנה זה שקר תסתלק שם בסוד הטוב המושרש שם שכל מר עליון שרשו מתוק ויכול ליכנס דרך שרשו ולהטיב עצמו. ולזה הפעולות עצמן מטיב האדם וזדונות נעשית לו כזכיות כי הנה אותם הפעולות שעשה היו מקטרגות מסטרא דשמאלא שב בתשובה שלמה הרי מכניס ומשריש אותן הפעולות למעלה וכל אותם המקטריגים אינם מתבטלים אלא מטיבים עצמן ומשרשים בקדושה כעין הטבת קין והרי אם

Using the example of Cain, known for his murder of his brother in the Bible, Horowitz explains the great power of repentance. Even Cain's act of evil was not irredeemable. Rather, he required repentance to move evil's destructive properties from the left/evil side to the right/good side. The fluidity of the 'organic universe' is revealed to demonstrate potentially radical consequences of the kabbalistic framework. Although sin inflicts instant damage upon the universe, it has traceable effects which are fluid and can be transformed into goodness.<sup>805</sup> Individuals who perform the greatest sins are capable of redemption if they repent, and be considered righteous through their iniquity, regardless of its severity. Good and evil contain the same essence and therefore it is only Cain's lack of repentance which holds him accountable, not the act itself.<sup>806</sup>

The radical nature of this position leads to the conclusion that there are times where committing a sin is a superior course of action to avoiding it, as by transforming the sin, the sinner is raised to a higher spiritual level than he would achieve by merely avoiding it. In addressing the Talmudic argument of whether the penitent is superior to the saintly individual who has never sinned, Horowitz makes the distinction between one who repents out of love and one who repents out of fear, citing the Talmud.<sup>807</sup> When repentance is out of fear, then willing sins are simply downgraded

---

קין שב בתשובה ונתקן הנה זדון אדם הראשון שבו הוליד את קין קינא דמסאבותא היה נחשב לו זכות בסוד ברא מזכה אבא (סנהדרין קד א) אמנם לא רצה לשוב ולכן כל סטרא דשמאלא נמשך משם וכל ענפיו עתידים להתמתק והם שבים ומתקנים והיינו ממש מן הטעם שפירשתי שהאדם משריש בעצמו סוד הרע וממתיקו ומכניסו אל הטוב לפיכך האדם מטהר יצר הרע ומכניסו אל הטוב והוא משתמש בקדושה שלמעלה וזוהי מעלת התשובה

<sup>805</sup> See Chapter Three, 82-89.

<sup>806</sup> See Magid, *Metaphysics to Midrash*, 71.

<sup>807</sup> *bBer.* 34b.

to involuntary sins and the saint is superior, but when it is done out of love then willing sins are elevated to the status of positive commandments. What appears in the Talmud as an approbation of repentance with sincerity and devotion over fear is made into a metaphysical principle with clear laws in accordance with kabbalistic teachings. The love, self-arousal and joy discussed in the previous chapter have the capability of fundamentally realigning the raw matter created by the act of sinning.<sup>808</sup>

Repentance is therefore an activity which should be the object of daily attention, and throughout the section *Sha'ar Otiyot*, Horowitz repeatedly returns to the message of engaging in constant remorse.<sup>809</sup>

In this light, Horowitz removes the sin of spilling seed from its uniquely fatalistic status. Masturbation was widely considered the worst sin of all among the kabbalists and medieval pietists.<sup>810</sup> Although Horowitz does not deny the severity of the statement of

---

<sup>808</sup> *Shelah*, 58a.

וי"ל כי הענין הוא ע"ד המחלוקות שיש בין חכמי ישראל אם צדיק גמור עדיף אם בעל תשובה עדיף (ברכות לד ב) והאמת, הלכה כדברי שניהם. כי יש חילוק בין תשובה לתשובה כמו שחילקו רבותינו ז"ל במסכת יומא (פו ב) בין תשובה מיראה לתשובה מאהבה כי תשובה מיראה הזדונות נעשות כשגגות ותשובה מאהבה זדונות נעשית כזכיות ודברים אלו צריכים ביאור רחב ויתבארו לקמן בעזרת הש"י בחלק התשובה ובעונותינו הרבים רוב תשובות בני אדם היא מיראה ובבחינה זה צדיק גמור עדיף. וראיתי בני עליה בתשובה המעולה הנם מועטים ועל אלו אמרו בעל תשובה עדיף

<sup>809</sup> Horowitz emphasises the importance of daily repentance and introspection, including arranging a nightly gathering for the entire family to examine their deeds and repent, see *Shelah* 69a (cited below), 110a, 122a, 146b. The *Shelah's* portrayal of the Jewish family is an important topic for future research to understand how Jews perceived the operation of the family; On daily repentance as a theme in musar literature and ethical wills, see Abrahams, *Hebrew Ethical Wills.* , 1-19.

על כן מה טוב ומה נעים שתמיד יזכור אדם במעשיו והנהגתו העבר וישבר לבו ויאנח ויתחרט ויהיה מודה ועוזב ויטהר את לבו מעתה והלאה

<sup>810</sup> See *bNid.* 13a; Vital, *Peri Es Hayyim*, vol 1. 490; Shilo Pachter, 'Shemirat Ha-Berit', (PHD diss., Hebrew University, 2006); Weinstein, *Shattering*, 233.

the Zohar claiming that there is 'no repentance' for one who sins in this way, he claims that the statement 'cannot be taken literally' – incidentally, this is not a claim he makes frequently about the Zohar, taking its halakhic stringencies very literally:

See how the Zohar was more stringent regarding this sin than all the other sins in the Torah! One who stumbles in this sin like Er and Onan (Biblical characters who died prematurely according to the Talmud due to this transgression) ...woe to him that he was created! I will initially come to save one who reads this section from eternal death, as there is no repentance for one who commits this sin, which will make the sinner despair and declare: 'as I have fallen I fall' and will do whatever his heart desires. But I have come to awaken the sinner that he should arise with alacrity and stir himself in repentance! Do not delay one instant! For we are forced to say that we cannot take this statement literally, that 'Repentance does not work' for there is nothing in the world that cannot be repaired by repentance, even one who has denied a fundamental tenet of faith.<sup>811</sup>

Even though the demands usually made for repentance were of the utmost severity, including the penances, fasts and mortifications discussed in the previous chapter,<sup>812</sup> Horowitz moderates this requirement by claiming that if the sinner merely intended to repent sincerely and died without performing the required actions, God considers it as though he performed them:

---

<sup>811</sup> *Shelah*, 98a.

ראה איך החמיר הזהר בעון הזה יותר מכל העוונות של כל התורה ומי שנכשל בעון הזה כער ואונן  
יבכה ויתאונן...אוי לו שנברא

...

מתחילה אבוא להציל ממיתה נצחיית את הקורא המאמר הזה שאין תשובה למי שחטא חטא זה ואז  
החוטא יתייאש ויאמר כאשר אבדתי אבדתי ויעשה משאלות לבו ויאמר נואש אלא באתי לעורר  
החוטא שיקום בזריזות לעורר תשובה ואל יתמהמה רגע אחד כי ע"כ (על כרחך) אין דברי המאמר  
הזה כפשוטו שלא יועיל תשובה כי אין דבר בעולם שלא יתוקן בתשובה

<sup>812</sup> See Chapter Eleven, 271-277.

One who comes to be purified, even if he repeats the sin on countless occasions 'without number', he can find a resolution! For it is already known that God equates good thoughts to action,<sup>813</sup> and if he possessed a good intention to perform an action and died and did not complete it, God would consider his good thought as if he did it in action.<sup>814</sup>

Repentance is placed within a framework of *tikkun*, rectifying the universe as well as the individual himself. In 'Tractate Pesahim', Horowitz recalls the need for human beings to elevate and transform the entirety of existence, even the evil parts, restoring them to their pristine nature in the mind of God.<sup>815</sup>

The most daring expression of the liberation of evil and its transformation into good is found in the form of the intercession of the righteous on behalf of the sinners after their deaths.<sup>816</sup> In 'Tractate Ta'anit', Horowitz echoes a notion found in scattered Lurianic writings that the righteous descend into hell in order to save those who are trapped there:<sup>817</sup>

---

<sup>813</sup> *bKid. 40a.*

<sup>814</sup> *Shelah, 99b.*

והבא לטהר אף כי עשה זו העבירה כמה וכמה פעמים למאות בלי מספר אמצא לו תקנה כי כבר נודע הקדוש ברוך הוא מצרף מחשבה טובה למעשה (קידושין מ א) אם היה לו מחשבה טובה לעשות כך וכך ומת ולא נגמר המעשה הקב"ה מצרף המחשבה כאילו היתה נעשית בפועל.

<sup>815</sup> *Ibid, 184b.*

זזה סוד הכשר ותיקון הרע והמעוות לתקנו שיהיה כולו טוב וישר והוא שורש האהבה שנצטוינו עליה באמרו (דברים ו, ה) ואהבת את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך ושנינו במשנה פרק הרואה (ברכות נד א) בשני יצריך ביצר טוב וביצר הרע כי מוטל עלינו חובת תיקון כל הדברים לישרם ולהמתיקם כמו שהיו במחשבה העליונה קודם הבדלם משם כי בהיותם שם טובים וישרים היו ולזה נתחייבנו באהבה גם ביצר הרע והוא התייחדו ביצר טוב והיו לאחדים שלא יהיה זה חלוק על זה

<sup>816</sup> See Jonathan Garb, *Shamanic Trance in Modern Kabbalah*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 1-19.

<sup>817</sup> Fine, *Physician of the Soul*, 143-47.

The idea is according to what I have seen written, that there are two kinds of righteous people: Those who are entirely righteous, extraordinary people, who do not see the face of Gehinnom (Hell) at all.<sup>818</sup> There are also righteous men who are not on their level, who see the face of Gehinnom, but God forbid Gehinnom doesn't touch them so that they feel a single punishment, but rather they walk to their blissful rest via Gehinnom, in order to use their power to save many wicked people who cling on to them, and they depart from Gehinnom. This is the idea that R. Yohanan b. Zakkai wrote to his students before his death... He knew that he would go to the Garden of Eden immediately without delay, but there are two ways for the righteous. One way is straight to heaven. The second way is that he goes to the Garden of Eden, but on the way he goes via Gehinnom, where he would save several wicked from damnation. Even though these righteous people will not sustain any damage, nevertheless they are fearful to go via there!<sup>819</sup>

---

<sup>818</sup> Gehinnom, at a place called Topheth, was the site of a cult which involved the burning of children see Kings II 23:10; Jer. 7:31. It is used as a term synonymous with hell, as a place of torment reserved for the wicked after death.

<sup>819</sup> *Shelah*, 210b.

הענין הוא כפי מה שמצאתי כתוב כי יש שני מיני צדיקים. הצדיקים הגמורים המופלגים אינם רואים פני גיהנם כלל וכלל. ויש צדיקים שאינם במעלה כמוהם רואים פני גיהנם. אבל ח"ו אין גיהנם תופש בהם שיהיו מרגישים שום עונש. רק הם הולכים למנוחתם דרך גיהנם כדי שמכחם ינצלו הרבה רשעים שאוחזים בהם ונפטרים מהגיהנם. וזהו ענין שאמר רבן יוחנן בן זכאי (ברכות כח ב) לתלמידיו קודם מותו והיה בוכה ואומר כי יש שתי דרכים אחת לגיהנם ואחת לג"ע (גן עדן) ואיני יודע באיזו דרך מוליכין אותי וכי ח"ו היה מסופק רבן יוחנן בן זכאי אם יבא לגיהנם הלא אמרו על רבן יוחנן בן זכאי (סוכה כח א) שלא הניח דבר גדול ודבר קטן כו' והפליגו מאד בשבחו ואיך ח"ו יהיה הוה אמינא לחוש מחמת גיהנם אלא הענין היה כך יודע היה שיכנס לגן עדן תיכף ומיד רק יש שתי דרכים לצדיקים. דרך אחת שהוא פשוט לגן עדן ודרך השני שהולך לגן עדן אבל המעבר הוא עובר דרך הגיהנם ואז מציל כמה רשעים מגיהנם. ואף שלא מגיע לאלו הצדיקים שום היזק מ"מ הם מתפחדים לעבור דרך שם. ע"ד משל בעה"ז (בעולם הזה) אדם מתפחד לילך דרך אשר שם אנשי חיל בעלי מלחמה. אף שיש לו בטחון שלא יהיה ניזק. וע"ז התפלל דהמע"ה (דוד המלך) נפשי ישובב ינחני במעגלי צדק (תהלים כג, ג). תפילתו היתה לילך במעגלי צדק שהיא הדרך הפשוטה לג"ע וזה יעשה לשמו ואמר אעפ"י שאיני יודע אף כי אלך דרך גיא צלמות לא אירא רע כי אתה עמדי (שם שם, ד) מ"מ אני מתפלל ינחני במעגלי צדק. וע"ז אמר ריב"ז איני יודע באיזו דרך מוליכין אותי לגן"ע והנה אלו הספדנים שאמרו שלהבת וחכה ואבידה הוא כנראה שאינם כצדיקים המופלגים. רק כאלו הצדיקים שמתהפך כרעייהו כלומר שאינם הולכים במעגלי צדק רק דרך העקום. על כן מדה כנגד מדה אתהפך כרעייהו ואשרי תמימי דרך

Although Horowitz presents the descent as an alternative path to heaven, rather than a preferred path, based on his previous statements about transformation involving struggle it can be surmised that this second way is superior. Redeemed sin is superior to the avoidance of sin and the righteous who liberate the souls of sinners are superior to those who go straight to heaven.

Transformation also exists on an interpersonal level, as does the liberation of others. Despite Adam's sin, the original purpose of 'working and serving it' (the Garden of Eden) has not been abrogated and should be fulfilled through facilitating the good deeds of others:

Just as the servant is entrusted to serve his master the king with all his heart, to fight and expand his boundaries and subordinate nations under him, so a man should merit and cause merit in others, for the purpose of creation was to serve Him, as it writes 'God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to serve it and guard it' – the purpose was to serve it (masc. can also mean 'him').<sup>820</sup> Afterwards when he was expelled from the Garden of Eden, this purpose was nonetheless not abrogated ... When he sinned and became physical, and 'Adam' became 'Adamah' (earth, referring to lowering of his spiritual status), his only means of resolution was through expulsion, where he was scattered in all directions to benefit others and to return them to the service of God.<sup>821</sup>

This is a further example of how Horowitz translates every topic into the 'threefold cord' mechanism. Through bringing people back to the way of God, the universe is

---

<sup>820</sup> Genesis 2:15.

<sup>821</sup> *Shelah*, 212b.

וכמו שהעבד הנאמן עובד את אדונו המלך בכל לבבו ונפשו ומאודו ולוחם ומרחיב את גבולו לכבוש עמים תחתיו כן יהיה האדם זוכה ומזכה אחרים כי תכלית הבריאה היתה לעובדו יתברך כמ"ש (בראשית ב, טו) ויקח ה' אלהים את האדם וינחהו בגן עדן לעבדה ולשמרה הרי התכלית היא לעבודה ואחר כך כשגורש מגן עדן מ"מ לא נתבטל התכלית הזו

...

וכשחטא ונתגשם ומן האדם נעשה אדמה אז תקנתו היא הגירוש שיתפזר אנה ואנה לזכות אנשים ולהחזירם לעבודת השם יתברך וזהו סוד לעבוד את האדמה

redeemed. There is an ordinary, mundane expression of the transformation of sin and an extraordinary manifestation, involving Lurianic *kavvanot* and spiritual intercession.

The distinctive Lurianic notion of the redeemed spark within evil, paralleled to the notion found regarding food,<sup>822</sup> is further expressed within the Purim story and the role of inebriation:

Regarding what they (the sages) said that you need wine to become inebriated until you don't know the difference etc.<sup>823</sup> the meaning of this is that always within the *kelippah* there is a spark of holiness, which is lit within it and illuminates it, therefore it is necessary to say 'blessed is Haman', to also extend the light to this spark, and therefore it is necessary to say it without intention, since he is inebriated and already left his mind, for if it was with intention God forbid, he would also illuminate the *kelippah*...<sup>824</sup>

Interpreting the words of the Talmudic sages through the lens of kabbalah, Horowitz suggests that the choice of blessing Haman when drunk reflects a desire to deliberately elevate the holy portion of the evil man without elevating the evil part – only attainable through drunkenness! Haman (or Haman's spirit encapsulated in his name) contains a holy element, although he is largely made of the *kelippah*.

In parallel to the individual's journey of self-transformation, the idea of a curse being transformed into a blessing is the story of the Jew in exile. The Jew as a corporate

---

<sup>822</sup> See Chapter Eleven, 261.

<sup>823</sup> *bMeg. 7b*.

<sup>824</sup> *Shelah, 263b*.

ומה שאמרו (מגילה ז ב) שצריך יין כדי שישתכר עד שלא ידע וכו' הכוונה היא שלעולם בתוך הקליפה יש ניצוץ של קדושה המאיר בתוכה ומאיר אותה ולכן צריך לומר ברוך המן להמשיך אור גם אל הניצוץ ההוא ולכן צריך לאומרו שלא בכוונה אחר שהוא שיכור וכבר יצא מדעתו שאם יהיה בכוונה חס וחלילה יאיר גם לקליפה



entity must suffer to cleanse the nation of the serpent's pollution. When the messiah arrives, the curse of the destruction of the temple will also become a blessing, when the divine mechanism behind it is revealed.<sup>825</sup> That which characterises the individual also characterises the nation, and this vision culminates in the messiah's arrival.

### Tikkun

In the 'Written Torah', the Lurianic scheme of history is outlined in the form of the Biblical characters and their role in repairing the universe.<sup>826</sup> The history of the Jewish people has three central stages: Creation, the sin of Adam and the coming of the messiah. Everything in between is an attempt to rectify the broken state of creation. An important aspect of this process is the concept of *gilgul* (reincarnation). The Biblical figures are presented typologically as archetypes who enacted the drama of attempting to rectify the disaster of the broken universe - but did not complete their mission.<sup>827</sup> Subsequently, their souls transmigrated into other Biblical

---

<sup>825</sup> Ibid, 364a-b. On suffering of the righteous compensating for the sins of each generation, see Ibid 50b; on national suffering causing the future redemption, 157a; on suffering as necessary to reveal the concealed light of God and lead to *tikkun*, 171b; on suffering destroying the kelippot, 203a-b; on the need to embrace suffering and death with joy, 273a; on the long-term good provided by suffering, 308a; The topic of suffering in the *Shelah* and other works of musar in the 17<sup>th</sup> century would be a worthy project for future research.

אחר כך הלך בלעם כו' עד תום כל הסיפור ויהפוך ה' את הקללה לברכה... וכמו שכתבתי לעיל בענין מה טבו אהליך יעקב משכנתיך ישראל (במדבר כד, ה) מה טבו אהליך בישובן משכנתיך בחורבן כי הקללה שהוא החורבן הוא לברכה כדי שיזכנו ואז יהיה יתרון אור מה מקודם

<sup>826</sup> See Magid, *Metaphysics to Midrash*, 38-39.

<sup>827</sup> On typologies in rabbinic literature, see Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 99-103.

figures and then into the rest of history to rectify the cosmic disaster wrought by creation.<sup>828</sup>

Horowitz comments in his *Torah Or* section of Genesis that he relies heavily on Luria's scheme, explaining how the Torah reflects the struggle to turn darkness to light: destruction followed by rebuilding, and a series of reincarnations which will culminate in the coming of the messiah. Throughout the section, there is a pronounced focus on the fate of the Jewish people post-Adam's sin and the reincarnation of souls as a means of bringing about *tikkun*. This analysis frames the entirety of his 'Written Torah' section, comprising 248 pages.

The story of Man, as explained in *Toledot Adam*, is one of greatness followed by the fall.<sup>829</sup> This narrative forms the structure of 'The Written Law', as does the idea of the future transformation of evil:

The general rule of this homily concerns the greatness of Man - 'But man does not abide in honour',<sup>830</sup> his garment of light was removed from him, and he was dressed in cloaks of skin and flesh, and in the future the hidden light will be renewed which is the intention of creation – then there will be light there, therefore this homily will be called 'new light'.<sup>831</sup>

---

<sup>828</sup> 'Kabbalah', 604-05.

<sup>829</sup> See Chapter Four, 110-111.

<sup>830</sup> Genesis 49:13.

<sup>831</sup> *Shelah*, 268b.

כלל הדרוש הזה יהיה ממעלת האדם ואדם ביקר בל ילין (שם מט, יג) ונסתלק ממנו לבוש אור ונתלבש בכתנות עור ובשר ולעתידי אור הגנוז יתחדש וזהו כוונת הבריאה ואז יהיה שם אור על כן זה שם הדרוש אשר יקראו לו אור חדש

The universe became a permanent mixture of good and evil following Adam's sin, and from them emerged the tension between *kelippah* (which is both translated as the 'peel' or 'skin' of a fruit, and also as the demonic shells of evil referenced in Chapter Two) and *Peri* (fruit, expressing the inner core of goodness). The struggle between the two is embodied in the generations succeeding Adam, as was the fact that the latter was inevitably the product of the former:

For even with children we have found this - that Cain was born before Abel, for Abel is the fruit and Cain who preceded him was the peel; there is a textual allusion for this: 'Am I my brother's keeper?'<sup>832</sup> 'Keeper' refers to the language of our rabbis, 'the keeper of the fruit,'<sup>833</sup> which is the peel. This 'keeper' is a statement (i.e. I am my brother's keeper rather than: Am I my brother's keeper implied by the form of the sentence), meaning that since the *kelippah* caused this matter to occur just as we confess that the evil inclination within us causes us to sin...this is the meaning of the land which did not release the flavour of the tree like the flavour of the fruit since this thing in itself caused Adam and Eve to sin as I have found in the booklet of the *Ari* with my own additions.<sup>834</sup>

This narrative consists of the gradual refining and purification of the world over the generations until eventually the world will return to, and eventually surpass its pristine origins. This process is found throughout the Torah, both through its events and its protagonists:

---

<sup>832</sup> Genesis 4:9.

<sup>833</sup> *bBer.* 36b.

<sup>834</sup> *Shelah*, 269a.

ואפילו בבני אדם מצינו כן שנולד קין קודם הבל כי הבל הוא פרי וקדמו קין שהוא הקליפה שעל זה בא הרמז השמר אחי אנכי (שם ד, ט) שומר הוא מלשון רבותינו ז"ל (ברכות לו ב) שומר הפרי שהוא הקליפה והאי השמר היא תמיהה מתקיימת כלומר מאחר שהוא הקליפה גרם לו זה הענין כענין שאנחנו מתודים כי יצר הרע שבקרבו מחטיא אותנו נחזור לענין זהו כוונת הארץ שלא הוציאה טעם העץ כטעם הפרי ומה שנענשה הארץ על זה הוא מחמת שהדבר זה בעצמו גרם לאדם וחיה שחטאו והוא כפי מה שמצאתי בקונטרס האר"י ז"ל (ספר הכונות דף נח ע"ב) עם תוספת נופך משלי

Noah effected a *tikkun* on food:

Because of the *tikkun* of the food, the level of Noah became greater than that of Adam as he was permitted to eat meat,<sup>835</sup> and there his sons merited the cloak of righteousness which is *tsitsit*.<sup>836</sup>

As part of the spiritual and timeless nature of the condition of the Jewish people, the vision of *tikkun* was known to the forefathers, and God provided avenues for continuous opportunities for *tikkun* through the destruction of the temple and the travails of exile, eventually paving the way for the messiah.<sup>837</sup>

The Biblical heroes and villains are cast as typologies of good and evil:

The idea of Isaac is the extension of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which is that Jacob and Esau were born twins. For evil too can be atoned for as our rabbis have said: The head of Esau rests on the shoulders of Isaac the secret of evil returning to good,<sup>838</sup> the secret of the swine returning to purity in the future.<sup>839</sup>

---

<sup>835</sup> *bSan.* 59b.

<sup>836</sup> *Shelah*, 276b; Genesis Rabba 36:6.

ומחמת תיקון האכילה נתרומם מעלת נח על אדם שהותר לו לאכול בשר (סנהדרין נט ב) ושם זכו בניו לטלית של מצוה שהן הציצית (בראשית רבה פל"ו ס"ו) שהותר בהם כלאים צמר רחלים ופשתים יחד (יבמות ד ב)

<sup>837</sup> *Ibid*, 277a.

ומה לו להזכיר בעת בנין העולם חורבן הגליות וכן בעת בשורה לאברהם ענין ארבע גליות אלא הענין בשניהם בשוה כי ראה הקב"ה קלקול האדם ובזה לא נשלם כוונת הבריאה כי נתרבה הקליפה ועשה תיקון סותר על מנת לבנות כי סיבות גלות מאלו מלכיות בא הזדככות כי יכלה הפשע ויקוים תם עונך בת ציון (איכה ד, כב) ואז יזדכך העולם להיותו ככוונת הבריאה ורוח אלהים ירחף זהו רוחו של משיח

<sup>838</sup> Targum Jonathan, Genesis 50:13.

<sup>839</sup> *Shelah*, 284b.

The story of the Jewish people is one of attempted and failed *tikkun* and the process is expressed through reincarnation, which will repeat itself until the messiah arrives:

The rule of the matter is that the forefathers were the purpose of the world, and they were the secret of creation. The purpose of the world was for Adam, and Abraham was the 'Great Adam'...<sup>840</sup> afterwards it was concealed and became dark, and at the time of the giving of the Torah the pollution of the serpent stopped,<sup>841</sup> and it should have returned to the cloaks of light...had they not sinned with the golden calf and adorned themselves with Torah then they would have ascended from level to level and the concealed light would have been revealed...and now due to our many sins neither this nor this will take place until our righteous messiah arrives and a new light dawns over Zion.<sup>842</sup>

The characters who appear in the Bible as distinct individual figures are in fact transmigrated souls, developed according to the teachings of Luria:

Know according to what had been received from the *Arizal* that Aaron the high priest came from the soul of Malkitsedek, which explains why Malkitsedek is described as the 'Priest of the God most high',<sup>843</sup> and Samuel the prophet was a Levite, from the soul of Aaron.<sup>844</sup>

---

וענין יצחק תיקון התפשטות עץ הדעת טוב ורע הם יעקב ועשו נולדו תאומים כי גם הרע יתוקן כמ"ש רז"ל (תרגום יונתן בראשית נ, יג) רישא דעשו מונח בעטפיה דיצחק סוד החזרת הרע למוטב בסוד עתיד חזיר ליטהר

<sup>840</sup> Genesis Rabba 14:6.

<sup>841</sup> *bShab.* 146a.

<sup>842</sup> *Shelah*, 286a.

כלל הענין האבות הם שכלול העולם והם סוד הבריאה והעולם תכליתו בשביל אדם הראשון ואברהם הוא האדם ... אחר כך נגנז ונתחשך ובשעת מתן תורה פסקה זוהמת הנחש (שבת קמו א) והיה ראוי לחזור כתנות אור... אחר כך כשחטאו בעגל קלקלו גם זה ונתקטנה הכ"ף ומצאו תיקון בקצת בבנין בית המקדש שהיה גבוה מאה אמה זהו בת ק' כבת ר' לחטא כי קרבנות היו מכפרים... ועתה בעונותינו הרבים לא זה ולא זה עד יבא משיח צדקינו ואור חדש על ציון יאיר

<sup>843</sup> Genesis 14:18.

<sup>844</sup> *Shelah*, 286b.

ומה שכתבתי שנתנו למלכי צדק התרומות והמעשרות הלא המעשרות לא שייכים רק ללויים דע כי מלכי צדק היה בכח כהן ובכח כה היה לוי לפי מה שקבלנו מהאר"י ז"ל שאהרן הכהן הוא מנשמת מלכי צדק על כן מלכי צדק כהן לאל עליון (בראשית יד, יח) ושמואל הנביא שהיה לוי הוא מנשמת אהרן

Interspersed with the analysis of *tikkun* are references to the messianic age, where the impure will again become purified:

And the evil angel will answer 'Amen', for in the future the swine will become pure, Sama'el the adversary will be subverted to become an advocate like on Yom Kippur.<sup>845</sup>

The *kelippot*, offspring of holiness despite their current evil state, will be redeemed by those who conquer, suppress and transform them.<sup>846</sup> Each historical figure was responsible for completing an aspect of *tikkun* that had not been accomplished by his forbears.

Joseph continued where Jacob could not, tempted by the sexual allures of Potiphar's wife and overcoming this desire.<sup>847</sup> This responsibility applied not only to the Biblical heroes but even to rabbinic figures like R. Akiva, who was a reincarnation of Joseph.<sup>848</sup> The entire course of history can be explained in terms of the pollution of

---

<sup>845</sup> Ibid, 287b.

ומלאך רע יענה אמן כי עתיד חזיר ליטהר סמאל הקטיגור יתהפך לסניגור כמו ביום כיפור

<sup>846</sup> Ibid, 288b.

כבר כתבתי בפרשת חיי שרה ענין בכל מכל כל מאברהם יצא קליפת ישמעאל ובן בנו הוא עשו ומיצחק יצא קליפת עשו וענין יציאת הקליפות מאבות הקדושים הוא כמו קדימת הקליפה לפרי שאי אפשר לפרי בלא הקדמת קליפה שהוא הנץ והפרח ויעקב הוא הפרי אבל יש סוד בדבר כי הקליפה יש לה אחיזה בקדושה ובשרשה למעלה נדבקת בקדושה והטומאה היא בהתפשטותא ולעתיד תחזור ותטהר על ידי הצדיקים הקדושים המכניעים אותה

<sup>847</sup> Ibid, 297b.

ויעקב אבינו שהוא משופריה דאדם התחיל לתקן דהיינו שמטתו שלמה זרע קודש מצבתה ומעולם לא ראה קרי... ובאמת יוסף הוא יעקב כי יוסף שומר הברית במאוד כמפורסם במעשה דאשת פוטיפרע וכנודע כי הוא צדיק יסוד עולם ויסוד הוא ברית העליון כנודע לחכמי האמת (זהר ח"א דף כ"ה ע"א ועוד) והוא משך התפארת שהוא יעקב

<sup>848</sup> Ibid.

the serpent and the attempt to rectify this state. Then, the first of two messiahs will arrive – the Messiah descended from Joseph,<sup>849</sup> who will have to die, paving the way for the final arrival of the messiah descended from David.<sup>850</sup>

Reincarnation will continue until this final messianic era, which will take place in stages, when the pollution of the serpent will be uprooted entirely.<sup>851</sup>

Through reincarnation, the sin of Adam and its attempted rectification played out throughout history. Afterwards came the crucible of Egypt which served the purpose of purifying Israel from the pollution of the serpent through toil and labour. In this way, the *kelippah* was cleansed through suffering, and suffering remains the most effective means of heralding the final redemption.<sup>852</sup> Further building on Luria's

---

ושמעתי מקצת המקובלים (עיין ספר הגלגולים פרק מ"א) כי רבי עקיבא היה הגלגול של יוסף ולכך נקרא עקיבא בן יוסף

<sup>849</sup> e.g. *bSuk.* 52a. According to the Talmud, this messiah will die in combat with the enemies of God and Israel, and is seen as the symbolic embodiment of the reunification with the ten tribes of Israel lost after the division of the kingdoms.

<sup>850</sup> *Shelah*, 298b.

ולא יתוקן עד לעתיד ואז יחזור ויקדים מלכות בית יוסף למלכות בית דוד כי מתחלה יבא משיח בן יוסף ואחר כך משיח בן דוד ואז יתוקן בית יוסף מה שקלקלו בהתחלקות מלכות בית דוד כי לא יבא משיח בן יוסף לצורך עצמו רק יבא בשביל משיח בן דוד כי הוא ימסור נפשו והערה נפשו למות

<sup>851</sup> *Ibid*, 302b.

הענין כשהביא אדם וחווה זוהמת הנחש מחמת חטאם בא הנחש על חווה והטיל בה זוהמא וממנה יצא קין ... אבל הבל נתקדש הוא גלגול שת ואחר כך משה רבינו ע"ה ... ומכל מקום נתפשטה הזוהמא והיצר הרע בכל הדורות רק שעיקר הזוהמא היתה בקין ובזרעו אחר כך נתפשטה עיקר הזוהמא בעשו ויעקב זך ונקי מ"מ נגע בו סמא"ל ... והוצרך כל ירך יעקב לירד מצרימה להזדכך והיה על ידי יוסף גם לעתיד יבוא משיח בן יוסף ויהיה שטנו של עשו ויעקור הזוהמא לגמרי

<sup>852</sup> *Ibid*, 308a.

writings, Horowitz explains that these sufferings were not purposeless, but in accordance with the principle that God provides the antidote before the illness.<sup>853</sup>

Even objects such as the tabernacle serve as accessories to *tikkun*.<sup>854</sup>

Self-transformation is the final element of Horowitz's vision of musar, and throughout 'The Written Torah', Horowitz provides a messianic framework for how characters from the Bible and beyond facilitate the final *tikkun* through transforming their characters.<sup>855</sup> The individual Jew, having sanctified himself through the practices

---

וכדי לטהר את ישראל מזהמת הנחש היו צריכין לזיכוך ולמירוק על ידי עבודת פרך כי מאד היה התפשטות הקליפה מצד הנחש הוצרכו למירוק יסורים כי אילו לא בא חטא לעולם אז וחי לעולם ועתה המיתה והיסורין ממרקין וכן הגליות

...

אבל צדיק ה' בכל דרכיו אדרבה אלו תוספות היסורין היה ע"ד (על דרך) סותר ע"מ לבנות

<sup>853</sup> Ibid.

ובקונטרס האר"י ז"ל (ספר הכונות דף נא) מצאתי שכתב וז"ל הכוונה כי הלא הקדוש ברוך הוא היה משלח את משה בשתי שליחיות אחת לטובה והיא גאולת ישראל, והשניה לרעה והוא שעל ידי שליחות

...

אלא הענין השם יתברך מקדים רפואה למכה (מגילה יג ב) ואין לך מכה כמו צרה המוזכר בפסוק (תהלים צא, טו) עמו אנכי בצרה

<sup>854</sup> Ibid, 327b.

כבר בארתי בארוכה בפרשת תרומה כי המשכן הוא כבריאת שמים וארץ וצבאיהם מעלה ומטה והמשכן הוא תיקון... כי יצאו מכלל זרות להיותם קדושים משרתי עליון והזרות בא לאדם הראשון מכח זוהמת הנחש וצריך לתיקון

<sup>855</sup> For further examples in the *Shelah*, e.g. Moses and the children of Israel, see *ibid*, 324a; on female menstrual purity as a *tikkun* for Eve's sin and priestly defilement by dead bodies as a *tikkun* for Adam bringing death to the world, 339a-b; on the sacrifices of the twelve princes corresponding to the descent of the worlds of emanation, 350b; on Korah as the embodiment the serpent's pollution due to his jealousy of Moses' leadership, 358a; on Solomon's non-Jewish wives also



advocated by the kabbalists, enhanced his ordinary observance of halakhah through kabbalistic strictures and built his personality incrementally through the path of musar, begins the process of redemption. The Jewish people hasten the arrival of the messiah through enduring the travails of exile and purify the pollution of the serpent through their suffering. This completes the 'threefold cord'; after incorporating the kabbalah into every other aspect of religious life, developing a particularistic conception of the Jewish nation, and infusing halakhah with an ethos of pietism, Horowitz demands that the individual redeems the evil within himself and reinvents himself through joyful, emotionally infused devotion.

---

embodying the pollution of the serpent, 377b; for a summary of the doctrine of *gilgul* and some of its other manifestations in the Torah, 381b-382a.

## **Part 5: Conclusion**

In the *Shelah*, Horowitz develops a distinctive vision of Jewish pietism which was to profoundly affect the way that Jews thought about God, Man and his role on earth for generations to come. Each of my sections has been subdivided into categories which reflects each significant shift, highlighting the pietistic element which now infused all areas of Jewish Thought:

- Firstly, the structure of the *Shelah* communicates the centrality of Man in the universe, and the completeness he must achieve in his character to be considered a man of God. Horowitz then demonstrates how each component of his 'threefold cord' (kabbalah, halakhah and musar) interacts to develop this perfection.
- The kabbalah departs from its status as an esoteric mystical text and emerges as the basic philosophy of Judaism, the secret wisdom which underscores the entirety of Jewish literature. Only one who knows kabbalah can serve God adequately, and the kabbalist is elevated to a level far above one who is a Talmudic or halakhic scholar due to his superior spiritual stature. The kabbalah is condensed to present positions on God, Man and the Torah which are incontestable due to their divine authority; the reflections of the medieval philosophers discussing central tenets of Judaism are dismissed as ignorant aberrations belonging to an unworthy generation. Similarly, the structure of kabbalah permanently configures the status of the Jew as being in binary opposition to that of the non-Jew, and Jewish teachings the antithesis of non-Jewish thought.

- Halakhah departs from its status as a normative, rabbinic interpretation of the Talmud and becomes a prophetic, mystical act of revelation, encompassing stringencies, customs and all other aspects of rabbinic thought. It is here that the 16th Century kabbalah and halakhah converge, as each is required to understand the other, and each is contained within the other. Horowitz applies the Zohar to areas of halakhah such as eating and drinking, menstrual purity and festival laws to establish the ideal way of conduct for his sons and future generations. Halakhah reflects what can be categorised as kabbalistic realism. It is the revealed manifestation of an esoteric reality within the universe. In its ideal form, therefore, halakhah should be infused with the holiness of the kabbalists, replete with stringencies and additional acts of piety. It is this pietistic vision of halakhah that Horowitz develops within the *Shelah*.
- The fourth area of innovation in the *Shelah* is Horowitz's vision of musar: With the kabbalistic framework magnifying every action on earth to a cosmic significance, the path of musar points towards a Jewish vision of pietism, with infinite avenues of opportunity for all to cleave to God through the Torah, the fulfilment of the commandments, and pious interpersonal behaviour. Devekut can be achieved through the most basic acts of kindness; the material world contains sparks of holiness which can be liberated and sanctified; joy and the impassioned service of God is prioritised over asceticism and solemnity. Without it, the individual cannot be considered a servant of God. Horowitz's emphasis on joy and the sanctification of the body characterises the *Shelah's* pietism.

- The *Shelah's* pietistic vision of musar culminates in messianic self-transformation in line with Isaac Luria's teachings: Every individual can and must undergo a process of complete self-transformation, liberating and purifying the evil within himself. This must be a constant throughout every individual's life. When this is accomplished on a national level, the messiah will arrive, which is the theme that predominates the entirety of the 'Written Torah' section.

The entirety of the *Shelah* should be understood as Horowitz's attempt to express the practical aim of kabbalah to his descendants and students in the form of pietism. As expressed in Chapter Nine, Jewish law is incomplete without the addition of holiness, stringency and piety. Although kabbalah infuses every aspect of Horowitz's thought, it often remains concealed behind the ideas it inspires. In Horowitz's mind, the study of kabbalah itself should remain limited to a select few; but its role as the definitive philosophy of Judaism and pietistic guide for life manifest in halakhah and interpersonal conduct created a unique synthesis and vision of Jewish pietism. Horowitz uses kabbalah to tie together the loose threads of the Jewish tradition, connecting all the other parts, making them indispensable to one another, and closing them off from outside intrusion. By creating an encyclopaedia of Jewish teachings and establishing kabbalah as the organising principle behind it, the *Shelah* in effect established its contents as the 'ism' behind Judaism, much like the *Shulhan Arukh* had done as a code of halakhah.

## Epilogue

The *Shelah's* importance can be understood from the fact that it mapped the trajectory of Jewish pietism between the 17th and 19th centuries. Contained within the *Shelah* are the contradictions and divergent streams of thought which were to characterise the tensions between the 'old' and 'new' Hasidim of the 18th Century, the rabbinic elites of Central and Eastern Europe, and even the different schools of Hasidism itself.<sup>856</sup> At times, the work rejects the asceticism of the earlier kabbalists and pietists in favour of a world-affirming philosophy based on the writings of Isaac Luria; at other times, the ascetic lifestyle is encouraged. The work exemplifies the double-edged sword of mystical theology, both magnifying and diminishing the importance of halakhic observance depending on its application.<sup>857</sup> There are many future projects which emerge from this study: The *Shelah's* specific influence is best initially considered through an examination of the writings of Horowitz's descendants, particularly Sheftel's writings in the 1650s, as well as an analysis of the abridgments of the *Shelah*. In terms of specific intellectual trends, however, I sketch three trajectories which bear the hallmarks of the *Shelah's* influence: Heresy, Orthodoxy and Pietism.

---

<sup>856</sup> Biale, *Hasidism*, 174-81, 226.

<sup>857</sup> See Magid, *Metaphysics to Midrash*, 227.

## Heresy

The publication of the *Shelah* preceded the Sabbatean movement by only sixteen years. There are two important areas where the *Shelah* promotes concepts which bear resemblance to Sabbatean theology: Firstly, Horowitz's understanding of the fluid nature of the commandments and the interchangeable nature of good and evil opens the possibility for the observance of the commandments to be replaced by alternative mystical or devotional practices.<sup>858</sup> Secondly, the *Shelah* contains many of the more radical concepts promoted by the Sabbateans such as holy sin and the ability to transform and liberate evil.

It is certainly contentious to suggest that there is a clear linear development leading from deeply pious texts like the *Shelah* to Sabbateanism, as Scholem does.<sup>859</sup> It is also unclear whether the *Shelah* is one of several central works which comprise a general 'radicalisation of the age', as proposed by Piekarz.<sup>860</sup> But irrespective of whether Shabbatai Tsevi or Nathan of Gaza were directly influenced by the *Shelah* or not, the climate produced by it and similar works can be seen from the fact that Nathan was able to convince the rabbis of Izmir, Egypt and Constantinople that Shabbatai Tsevi's strange, heretical actions reflected the paradoxical *tikkun* required of the messiah.<sup>861</sup> Such a line of argument appears to show that the concept of holy sin did not create a new theology but probably reflected views which had existed

---

<sup>858</sup> See Chapter Three, 82-89.

<sup>859</sup> Scholem, *Major Trends*, 327; Rivka Schatz Uffenheimer, *Hasidism as Mysticism* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1968), 51 ff.

<sup>860</sup> Piekarz, *Bime'i*, 114, 76, 83-203, 04, 18-19; cf. Kauffman, *Be-Khol Derakhekha*, 570.

<sup>861</sup> See Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 330-491.

within Jewish sermons and ethical manuals since the beginning of the 17th Century.<sup>862</sup> Repentance and its ability to herald the messiah, a central theme within the *Shelah*, was one of Nathan's main pronouncements to the diaspora communities in 1666. The *Shelah* is evidence that messianic themes featured prominently in 17th Century rabbinic literature. More recently, some scholars have argued that many Sabbatean followers of the late 17th Century were neither religiously deviant nor easily distinguishable from other groups of pietists.<sup>863</sup> Instead of viewing the Sabbateans as marking a significant break from traditional Jewish belief, the fluid conception of the commandments found in the *Shelah* is an important paradigm in understanding how a mystical religious climate emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries which facilitated both the radicalism of the Sabbateans and the conservatism of the pietists of the Brody Kloiz.

### Orthodoxy

Another point of consideration which emerges from this historical inquiry regarding the influence of the *Shelah* is the question of Orthodoxy. David Ruderman has suggested that the lines of Orthodoxy had begun to be drawn by the 17th Century, most notably in the writings of Maharal of Prague, and then in the form of a declining rabbinate desperate to consolidate its own position by the mid-18th Century.<sup>864</sup>

---

<sup>862</sup> See Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 695.

<sup>863</sup> Elisheva Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy : Rabbi Moses Hagiz and the Sabbatian Controversies*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 14-17.

<sup>864</sup> Ruderman, *Early Modern*, 149-51; David Sorotzkin, 'Kehillat Ha-Al Zeman Be-Dian Ha Temurot: Kavim Le-Hithavutan shel Tefisot Ha Zeman ', (PHD diss., Hebrew University, 2007). See Polonsky, *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, 40-67.

Elisheva Carlebach also argues that the organised resistance to heretical movements in the early 18th Century was an antecedent of Orthodoxy.<sup>865</sup>

The influence of the *Shelah* is an important addition to this discussion and I suggest that considering the lack of Maharal's impact before a few references in early Hasidic writings,<sup>866</sup> it is the *Shelah* which should be considered the first clear formulation of a religious attitude that attempted to differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate Jewish beliefs. In a position of considerable authority in Europe, Horowitz developed a distinctive position whereby 'Judaism' was formulated as a system of belief in line with emergent kabbalistic principles two hundred years before the Reform movement with several notable components:

- There is a distinction between 'true' Judaism and 'false' Judaism.<sup>867</sup>
- Judaism depends on its adherents possessing legitimate beliefs based on an authoritative framework i.e. the principles of kabbalah.<sup>868</sup>
- Jews and non-Jews are fundamentally different and cannot share ideas or cultures.<sup>869</sup>
- The words of the rabbis, in halakhic and non-halakhic matters, have authority derived from prophecy.<sup>870</sup>

---

<sup>865</sup> Carlebach, *Pursuit of Heresy*, 277-78.

<sup>866</sup> Biale, *Hasidism*, 150.

<sup>867</sup> See Chapter Five, 139-146.

<sup>868</sup> See Chapter Three, 70-79.

<sup>869</sup> See Chapter Five, 150-158.

<sup>870</sup> See Chapter Seven, 176-182.



Horowitz's influence can be detected in the writings of the major rabbinic figures of 18th Century Jewry such as Ezekiel Landau of Prague who battled against growing trends of assimilation.<sup>871</sup> Moses Sofer's declaration in his 1839 ethical will concerning the immutability of every law and accepted custom would not be considered a novelty from the perspective of one who had read the *Shelah* or immersed himself in a climate reflected by the work.<sup>872</sup> The concept of a centralised Judaism, consisting of carefully defined boundaries, is one which begins in the 16th Century with the kabbalistic essentialising of matters of faith and doctrine, and finds its first comprehensive expression in the publication of the *Shelah*. The Orthodoxy which was to emerge in Central and Eastern Europe can be considered as an intellectual synthesis between traditional observance and pietism. Although rejecting the excessively pietistic implications of the kabbalah, it is worth considering the ways that Orthodoxy guaranteed the immutability of tradition through structures rooted in kabbalistic thought.

### Hasidism and Pietism

The potential social manifestations of a community devoted to a pietistic path are anticipated in one extract in the *Shelah*. This group of pietists had even established 'a new covenant', which Horowitz acknowledges to be strange (and potentially

---

<sup>871</sup> See Flatto, *Kabbalistic Culture*, 145, 58, 65, 67, 70.

<sup>872</sup> See 'Letter of the Hatam Sofer' in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World : A Documentary History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 196-99.

heretical due to its Christian undertones), but he emphasises that the group was simply reaffirming what was already contained in the Torah:

I heard that there was a situation with a group of saintly individuals who gathered together in perfection and in holy piety, ten together, a community of God, a complete community, adding more holiness without limit every day and night in Torah, the commandments and piety. And they gathered together to form a new covenant with God to serve Him with complete heart, to learn, teach, guard and fulfil the Written and Oral Torah, the boundaries and stringencies, in all that is mentioned in all the earlier and latter day *poskim*. Afterwards they would undertake ways of holiness and asceticism and purity without limit. They made a covenant of faith with God on this. Do not be surprised about this – what is this new covenant?! For we were already under oath from Mount Sinai, also the covenant at Sinai, in Joshua, and similar things in the Kings of the house of David, the pietists with King Hezekiah, and Josiah. You will also find a similar thing among the men of the great assembly when they came from Babylon as written in the book of Ezra, Nehemiah, 'Praise be the nation ...'. Also today, if they wished to do so and gather together in oneness to make a covenant of loyalty to a good dwelling, they will succeed and make others succeed and the *shekhinah* will dwell between them.<sup>873</sup>

Although Horowitz himself belonged to the rabbinate, he appears to encourage conditional separation from the community if it causes the *shekhinah* to dwell among the worshiper, as every individual should aspire to live like the pietists. The above description corresponds closely to the portrayal of the groups of 'old Hasidim' in 18th

---

<sup>873</sup> Ibid, 242b.

ושמעתי מעשה היה בחבורת חסידים שנתחברו יחד בתמימות ובחסידות קדושה והיו עשרה ביחד עדת ה' עדה שלימה והוסיפו בכל יום ובכל לילה קדושה בלי שיעור בתורה ובמצוות ובחסידות. ונצטרפו יחד לכרות ברית חדשה עם ה' אלהינו לעבדו בלבב שלם וללמוד וללמד לשמור ולעשות ולקיים תורה שבכתב ותורה שבעל פה והסייגות והחומרות מכל מה שהוזכר בכל הפוסקים ראשונים ואחרונים ואחר כך נהגו דרכי קדושה ופרישות וטהרה בלי ערך ושיעור וכרתו ברית אמונה נגד הש"י על זה ואל תתמה על זה מהו לכרות ברית חדשה כי כבר מושבעים אנו מהר סיני וגם כריתת ברית האמור בתורה (שמות לד, י'; דברים ה, ב), ובספר יהושע (ט, ו) הלא מצינו גם כן כזה במלכי בית דוד החסידים בחזקיהו המלך (דברי הימים - ב כט, י) וביאשיהו המלך (מלכים - ב כג, ג) וגם תמצא כן באנשי כנסת הגדולה בעלותם מבבל ככתוב בספר עזרא (י, ג), ובספר נחמיה (י, א) אשרי העם שככה לו אשרי העם שה' אלהיו (תהלים קמד, טו) ועוד היום אם יהיו מתנדבים לעשות כן להתחבר ביחד באחדות אחד ויעשו ברית אמונה לשוכן מעונה זוכים ומזכים וביניהם שרויה שכינה

Century literature.<sup>874</sup> Ultimately, Horowitz believed that the individual's quest for piety eclipses loyalty to the wider community, even if it means proposing a 'new covenant'. Perhaps here Horowitz concedes that there can never be complete harmony between the religious elite and the general population.

The influence of the *Shelah* is most pronounced in the development of Jewish pietism in the 18th Century, which reached its heightened social expression in the Hasidic movement. Both the ascetic, 'old Hasidim' and the more world-affirming 'new Hasidim' of the mid-to late 18th Century can claim to be the legitimate heirs of the *Shelah's* pietism.<sup>875</sup> First generation Hasidism introduced concepts which are found throughout the *Shelah* such as the necessity to serve God through transforming the evil inclination.<sup>876</sup> In Habad Hasidism in particular, the idea of struggle and constant development being central to the service of God is one which is a pronounced theme throughout the *Shelah*.<sup>877</sup> The central role of the spiritual holy man, or the *tsaddik*, including the ability of a particular individual to intercede on behalf of his followers, is one which is developed in the *Shelah* and reconfigured to become a central tenet of the theology of several Hasidic groups.<sup>878</sup> In the *Shelah*, Horowitz explicitly states that the righteous man acts as an intermediary between 'heaven and earth', with the

---

<sup>874</sup> Biale, *Hasidism*, 38-39.

<sup>875</sup> Ibid, 38-39, 49-50.

<sup>876</sup> Piekarz, *Bimej*, 204-09, 19. Kauffman, *Be-Khol Derakhekha*, 173-220.

<sup>877</sup> See Chapter Eleven, 281-289; cf. *Tanya*, (NY 2013), 40 (Chapter 15).

<sup>878</sup> See Chapter Eleven, 254-256; cf. Rahel Elijor, 'Origins of Hasidism', *Scripta Journa Cracoviensa*, 10, 2 (2012), 85-109; Piekarz, *Bimej*, 17, 283-84, 355; Sack, *Shomer*, 49; Garb, 'The Prague Circle', 360.

capacity of enabling his followers to cleave to God by virtue of his merit.<sup>879</sup> The concept of the followers of the righteous receiving merit by virtue of the leader is also found. Similarly, the *Shelah* frequently promotes the ideal of cleaving to God through the material world, a topic of controversy among the Hasidic groups.<sup>880</sup> There is some debate among scholars regarding whether early Hasidism was primarily an elitist or popular movement, and whether most Hasidic groups believed that God could be adequately served through the elevation of the material world.<sup>881</sup> This debate mirrors the different aspects of pietism found within the *Shelah*, oscillating between world rejection and world-affirmation. Certain Hasidic groups also differentiated between ordinary and extraordinary *deveikut*.<sup>882</sup> Additionally, the pronounced emphasis on emotion which was to characterise Hasidism is promoted throughout the *Shelah*, as is the emphasis on prayer requiring a significant amount of time and sincere concentration.<sup>883</sup>

---

<sup>879</sup> *Shelah*, 23a.

ובפרק המוכר את הספינה (בבא בתרא עה ב) אמר רבה ב"ב (בר בר) חנה א"ר יוחנן עתידים צדיקים שיקראו על שמו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שנאמר (ישעיה מג, ז) כל הנקרא בשמי ולכבודי בראתיו יצרתיו אף עשיתיו צדיק יסוד עולם (משלי י, כה) נקרא כל (תקוני זהר, תקון י"ד דף ל' ע"א ועוד) בסוד כי כל בשמים ובארץ (דברי הימים - א כט, יא) הוא הקושר השמים עם הארץ והדבקים בו נקראו צדיקים על שמו כי הם הקושרים ומיחדים השמים עם הארץ

<sup>880</sup> See Chapter Eleven, 249-277; see Piekarz, *Bimei*, 24; Kauffman, *Be-Khol Derakhekha*, 249-391.

<sup>881</sup> Ada Rappaport, 'God and the Zaddik as the Two Focal Points of Hasidic Worship', *History of Religions*, 18, 4 (1979), 305-07; cf. Scholem, *Messianic Idea*, 203-27.

<sup>882</sup> See Biale, *Hasidism*, 163.

<sup>883</sup> See Chapter Twelve, 289-293.

The ambiguity of the *Shelah's* pietism is reflected in the fact that the anti-Hasidic world of the mitnagdim, too, can claim to be Horowitz's spiritual descendants. As Jacob Katz has pointed out, there are resemblances between Horowitz's kabbalistic vision of Torah study and that espoused by Hayyim of Volozhin.<sup>884</sup> In the 19th Century, Hayyim of Volozhin developed a theology of Torah study (especially Talmudic study) as the supreme religious act, the sole priority of the Jew and the exclusive means of communing with God. It downplayed mystical intention and emphasised the hidden importance of Talmud study for the welfare of Mankind.<sup>885</sup> The *Shelah*, too, emphasises that the very act of Torah study opens mystical worlds, regardless of the intention behind it.<sup>886</sup> It also emphasises that the very act of Torah study, rather than the content of study, is the source of all blessing on earth.<sup>887</sup>

In terms of Jewish intellectual and religious history, Hasidism was one manifestation of the pietistic fellowships which became increasingly popular from the 17th Century onwards.<sup>888</sup> If one section of the *Shelah* is prioritised, the ascetic Talmudist pietism of the 18th Century emerges; if another is emphasised, the radicalism of the Sabbatean movement is implied. What all these groups share is the *Shelah's* basic assumption: From the concealed emerges the revealed, which is the *Shelah's* most enduring contribution to the spiritual climate of European Jewry.

---

<sup>884</sup> Katz, *Halakhah*, 100-02.

<sup>885</sup> Hayyim Volozhin, *Nefesh Ha-Hayyim*, (Jerusalem: Mosad Le-'idud limud ha-Torah, 1996), ch. 4.

<sup>886</sup> See Chapter Four, 128-139.

<sup>887</sup> See *ibid*, 128-32.

<sup>888</sup> See Moshe Rosman, *Founder of Hasidism : A Quest for the Historical Ba'al Shem Tov*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2013), 1-46.

From the *Shelah* and its abridgments, the kabbalah emerged as the root of all Ashkenazic Jewish Thought, whether on a popular level of mystical enthusiasm, religious radicalism, exclusivist pietism or halakhic stringency. This assumption was to permanently change the way Jews thought about God, Man and religion from the 17th Century onwards.

## Texts

### Text 1: Love of God

*Shelah*, 49a-b.

ובפרט אנחנו אומה ישראלית אשר בחר בנו מכל עם וקדשנו ולא שם חלקינו כגויי הארצות אשר הם תחת יד שרים של מעלה רק אנחנו חלק ה' עמו בנים לה' אלהינו והוא אבינו איך לא נאהבה אהבת נפש בכל לבבנו ונפשנו ולמות על קדושת שמו יתברך. וכל זמן חיינו להיות אהבתו תקועה בלבנו לעשות רצונו בלבב שלם ובשמחה גדולה ובהתעוררות הלב כי זה ענין אהבה מעלה נוספת על היראה. היראה היא לירא ולבוש מפניו שלא נסור ח"ו מכל מה שצוה הן עשין הן לא תעשין דאורייתא ודרבנן והאהבה היא שיהיה הכל בהתלהבות הלב ולעבוד אותו בשמחה ולא יחוש לשום כאב ולשום נזק שיקרה לו מחמת עבודתו וכל ממון שבעולם ואף גופו ונפשו הכל יהיה כאין בשביל אהבת עבודתו ראה והתבונן באהבת אשה כשהאדם מזדווג עמה בעת תוקף הנאתו לא היה פורש ממנה אפילו היה יודע הפסד גדול ק"ו מפני אהבת הקב"ה יהיה זהיר וזריז בעבודתו לא יתן שינה לעיניו ולא שום מנוחה רק הכל לעבדו יתברך ועז"א הפסוק (דברים כח, מז) תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלהיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב מרב כל ופירש האלהי האר"י ז"ל (שער רוח הקודש דף י' ע"ב, ובשער הכוונות בהקדמה דף א' ע"ב) עבודתך תהיה כל כך בשמחה כו' יותר ממה שהיית שמח על רוב כל שהזדמן לך והעידו תלמידי האלהי הנ"ל שאמר מה שזכה לרוח הקודש היה בשביל שהיה שמח מאד שמחה גדולה בקיום המצות

ועל ענין אהבה זו אמרו רבותינו ז"ל במדרש רבה (בראשית רבה פ"פ ס"ז) אמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש בשלשה לשונות של חיבה חבב הקדוש ברוך הוא את ישראל בדביקה בחשיקה בחפיצה בדביקה מנין שנאמר (דברים ד ד) ואתם הדבקים בה' אלהיכם בחשיקה מנין שנאמר (שם ז ז) חשק ה' בכם בחפיצה מנין שנאמר (מלאכי ג יב) ואשרו אתכם כל הגוים כי תהיו אתם ארץ חפץ ואנו למדין מפרשתו של אותו הרשע בדביקה ותדבק נפשו בדינה בת יעקב (בראשית לד ג) בחשיקה כתיב (שם שם, ח) שכם בני חשקה נפשו בבתכם בחפיצה כי חפץ בבת יעקב (שם שם, יט). רבי אבא בן אלישע מוסיף עוד תרין באהבה ובדיבור באהבה אהבתי אתכם אמר ה' (מלאכי א, ב) בדיבור דברו על לב ירושלם (ישעיה מ, ב) ואנו למדין מפרשתו של אותו רשע באהבה ויאהב את הנערה (בראשית לד, ג) בדיבור וידבר על לב הנערה (שם) דברים שהם מנחמים את הלב עכ"ל (המדרש)

כבר הארכתי לעיל בהקדמת תולדות אדם כי העשין כלולים מלא תעשין ולא תעשין מעשין דהיינו כשבא מצות עשה לידו יחשוב מצדי ומצד רצוני לא הייתי עושה דבר זה כי לטורח הוא בגופי או בממוני וכיוצא בזה אבל אני עושה דבר זה בזריזות בשביל קוני שציווני לעשות כן וכן בל"ת יחשוב ויאמר כמה היה חשקי לאכול בשר חזיר כו' וכיוצא בזה אבל מה אעשה ואבי שבשמים גזר עלי וזהו (דברים ו, ה) בכל לבבך בשני יצריך (ברכות נד א) דהיינו במצות עשה אז היצר הרע בלא תעשה והוא כובש אותו נמצא המצוה בכפל קיים העשה בעצת יצר טוב וכובש את היצר הרע שהוא בל"ת ובל"ת הוא להיפך שעצת יצר טוב הוא הל"ת וכובש את היצר הרע שהוא בעשה

## Text 2: Non-Jewish Wine

*Shelah, 76b-77a.*

עתה באתי לדבר ולהזהיר באזהרות גדולות מחמת שתיית יין אתם בני יצ"ו הוּו זהירין במאד שלא לשתות יין בכל מקום ומקום אף אצל ישראל אלא אם כן יהיה קים לכו בגוויה שהיין נעשה בהכשר ובשמירה גדולה ממגע גוי כי המכשלה הזאת תחת יד רבים מעמינו להקל בשמירה יתירה והפגם הגדול המגיע מאיסור סתם יינם של גוי וה"ה למגעם ביין שלנו רב ועצום הוא מאד וז"ל הזהר פרשת שמיני (ח"ג דף מ' ע"א) תא חזי ישראל קדישין כל חיי עלמין דירתין כלא תליין בההוא עלמא דאתי בגין דאיהו חייין דכלא לעילא ותתא והוא אתר דיין דמנטרא שארי ואקרי יין ומתמן נפקין חייין וקדושא לכלא ויין דישאל בגין יין דישאל אחרא ודא בדא תליא דהא ישראל לעילא ביה נטיל חייין ובג"כ (ובגין כך) אקרי עץ חיים עץ מההוא אתר דאקרי חיים ונפיק חייין ועל דא מברכין ליה להקב"ה ביין ויין דישאל לתתא כהאי גוונא ע"כ (עובד עבודת כוכבים) דאיהו מסאב ומאן דקריב בהדיה יסתאב כד יקרב ביין דישאל הוא אסתאב ואסור כ"ש מההוא יין דאיהו עביד וע"ד (ועל דא) לא תימא דדא הוא בלחודי אלא כל מה דעבדי ישראל לתתא כלא הוא כעין דוגמא דלעילא כל שכן יין דקאי באתר עלאה דוגמא דיין דמנטרא

בגין כך ישראל שתיין יין דישאל דאתעביד כדקא חזי בקדושה כגוונא דישאל לעילא דשתי ואשתרשא ואתברכא בההוא יין עלאה קדישא ולא שתאן יין דאתעביד במסאבותא ומסטרא דמסאבותא דהא ביה שריא רוחא דמסאבותא ולא הוא מסטרא דישאל ומאן דשתי בהדיהו אסתאב רוחיה ואסתאב איהו ולית ליה חולקא בעלמא דאתי. דהא ההוא עלמא דאתי יין דמנטרא איהו. ועל דא ישראל קדישין בעיין לנטרא דא על כלא בגין דאתקשרו באתר דעלמא דאתי ובגין כך ביין אתבריך קב"ה

ספירת בינה שהיא עולם הבא שם היין המשומר ממגע גוי ששם בבינה הששה קצוות של מעלה נעלמים ואין שם אחיזה לקליפה. רק בהתפשטות ששה קצוות במקומה שהוא עולם הזה וזהו שאמרו רז"ל (ברכות לד ב) על עולם הבא שאמר הפסוק (ישעיה סד, ג) עין לא ראתה אלהים זולתיך שהוא יין המשומר מששת ימי בראשית כלומר כי שם סוד ששת ימי בראשית משומרים. ובחטא חוה שסחטה אשכול ענבים (בראשית רבה פי"ט ס"ה) נתגברו כח הקליפות ושם יין המשכר. אבל אנחנו ישראל שנשמתינו מצד הקדושה אז כל מגמתינו לעולם הבא כהא דתנן (סנהדרין צ א) כל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם הבא ואנחנו ישראל למטה מכוונים נגד ישראל שלמעלה סוד תפארת ישראל שהוא העץ מחיי עלמא הנזכר לעיל וכשישראל קדושים ומקדשים עצמם למטה לשתות ביין המשומר ממגע גוי מתעורר יין המשומר בבינה להשפיע על ידי ישראל שלמעלה על כן מברכין ומקדשין על היין ומי ששותה ממגע גוי נסתאב וטמא טמא יקרא ואינו זוכה לחיי עולם הבא. ואמר הזהר (שם) לא ביין בלבד כך אלא בכל מאכלות אסורות הוא מטמא את עצמו אלא שביין הוא מדרגה על כולם. ומי הוא זה ואיזה הוא שלא ישים את לבו לדברים ההם להיות נזהר בתכלית הזהירות ולקדש עצמו בעשר קדושות



### Text 3: Talmudic methodology and Pilpul

*Shelah*, 181a-b.

והנה יש כת משוגעים האומרים החילוק מחדד. האומר כן ראוי לנזיפה חדא אף אם היה כן וכי אומרים לאדם חטא כדי שיזכה חבירו (שבת ד א) ק"ו חטא גדול ונורא כזה: ועוד כשנעשה מחודד מה עושה בחידודו הלא אין חידודו אלא שמבלה ימיו בדבר הזה ומדבר סרה על תורת אמת. ועוד איך נעשו ר"ת ור"י וכל בעלי תוספות מחודדים רק ע"י לימוד תורת אמת ובקיאות מסכתות והתמדה וחוזרים תמיד. וזמן ובין הזמנים שוים

רק דבר זה הוא מצוה ובו ידבקון ויהיה ג"כ חידוד דהיינו לתרץ בדרכים אמיתיים כל אויש ברענגר וכל נ"רן בערג"ר וכל רעגי"ר שפורג"ר וכן בתוספות לקשר כל וא"ת או תימה שהוא בלא זאת. דברים כאלה הם בכלל תורת אמת והם גם כן חידוד

בודאי מי שלומד דבר יום ביומו זמן ובין הזמנים גמרא פירוש תוספות עם כל הדקדוקים ובפרט דקדוקי רש"י כי בכל דיבור ודיבור של רש"י יש בו נסתרים עניינים מופלאים כי חיבר החיבור שלו ברוח הקודש. צאו וראו ברש"י על התורה שהקורא סובר שהוא קל ראו במזרחי ובכל מפרשי דבריו ותמצאו נפלאות ורש"י על הגמרא ג"כ הוא כולם מרועה אחד נתנו. ואחר כך יעיין בגמרא פירוש תוספות בקושיות ותירוצים ואחר כך לתרץ כנזכר לעיל בדרכים אמיתיים ודבר זה יהיה נוהג זמן ובין הזמנים ולא יזכר ולא יפקד שם בין הזמנים ויעקר מן העולם. אז תהיה תורתנו תורת ה' תמימה

חבל על דאבדין מה שהוצאתי רוב ימי בחילוקים גדולים ונפלאים חטאתי עויתי פשעתי על כן באתי להזהיר הדורות הבאים ובזה יתהפכו זדונותי לזכיות. יאמרו נא יראי ה' ויפרסמו כל הנ"ל בקרב כל ישראל לזכות את הרבים. והא דמשמע בדברי רז"ל שנוסף על לימוד התלמוד צריך להיות מפולפל כדאיתא בחגיגה (יד א) כל משען לחם (ישעיה ג, א) אלו בעלי תלמוד איש מלחמה (שם שם, ב) זה היודע לישא וליתן במלחמות של תורה הרי הפלפול נוסף על התלמוד וכן איתא בב"ב פרק מי שמת (קמה ב) עתיר נכסים עתיר פומבי זה בעל אגדות עתיר סלעים עתיר תקוע זהו בעל הפלפול עתיר משח עתיר כמוס זהו בעל שמועות הכל צריכים למארי חטיא ומאי ניהו גמרא ופירש רש"י סוגיית התלמוד ותירוץ המשניות וברייתא והוא עיקר התלמוד. וממילא פלפול ענין אחר הוא והוא החידוד שתלמידי חכמים מחדדים זה את זה כדאיתא בפרק קמא דתענית (ז א) מאי דכתיב (משלי כז, יז) ברזל ברזל יחד לומר לך מה ברזל זה אחד מחדד את חבירו אף שני תלמידי חכמים מחדדים זה את זה. ואיתא נמי התם למה נמשלו ד"ת (דברי תורה) כעץ שנאמר (שם ג, יח) עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה לומר לך מה העץ קטן מדליק את הגדול אף תלמידי חכמים קטנים מחדדים את הגדולים ואמר רבי חנינא הרבה למדתי מרבתי ומחבירי יותר מרבתי ומתלמידי יותר מכולם וכבר אפליגו בזה רבן שמעון בן גמליאל ורבנן (הוריות יד א) חד אמר סיני עדיף וחד אמר עוקר הרים עדיף ופירש רש"י עוקר הרים, הוא חריף ומפולפל

גם בן עזאי היה משתבח עצמו בחריפות ובפלפול כדאיתא בפרק בתרא דבכורות (נח א) תניא בן עזאי אומר כל חכמי ישראל דומים עלי כקליפת השום חוץ מן הקרח הזה ומצאתי כתוב (דרש משה, קראקא שמ"ט דף ע:): למה דימה חכמי ישראל לקליפת השום ולא לקליפת פרי אחר כגון קליפי אגוזים וכדומה וא"ל (ואין לומר) משום דקליפת השום היא יותר גרועה מכל שאר קליפות הפירות כי אין השכל נותן דכולי האי לאין דומין כל חכמי ישראל קמיה ושיכוין הוא להגדיל כבודו ולמעט בכבודם כ"כ אלא נראה דהטעם הוא מפני חריפות שהיה בו יותר מכולם והם היו כמו הקליפה דעם היות שאין בקליפה אותו החריפות כמו בפרי הרי היא מעמדת הפרי ומקיימת אותו ככה הם היו בקיאים וחכמים בתורה ומעמידים חריפותו ולכך

כתוב כל חכמי ישראל דומים עלי שהיה שם אותם עליו לומר שלפי האמת הם עליו בחכמה  
אלא שהוא היה חריף יותר מהם שהוא השום והם הקליפה שעליו המקיימת ומעמדת השום  
ע"כ

אמת הדבר טבא פלפלא חריפתא (מגילה ז א) ובפרק ב"מ (במה מדליקים) (שבת 181b)  
לא א) אמר רבא בשעה שמכניסין אדם לדין שואלין אותו נשאת ונתת באמונה פלפלת  
בחכמה כו' אבל כל זה נאמר על פלפול של אמת ויכול אדם לחדש פלאי פלאות בכל הלכה  
והלכה מכח קושיות ותירוצים ולפלפל עליהם ולמצוא דרכים איזו דרך הפשט האמת הן  
בתלמוד הן ברש"י ותוספות וכמו שמפלפלים התוספות עם רש"י כן נוכל להוסיף בפלפול לעיין  
ולתרץ הקושיות שהתוספות מקשים על רש"י וכן שאר קושיות שהתוספות מקשים בסוגיא  
דשמעתא התורה ניתנה לכל ישראל כי כתר תורה מונח לכל ואל יחשוב מה אני ומי אני הוא  
לעיין ולילך בגדולות ובנפלאות כי הלומד לשם שמים ומייגע את עצמו בהלימוד אז יגעת  
ומצאתי תאמין (מגילה ו ב) וכל אלה הפלפולים אשר אורייתא הוא דמרתח ביה הם מרכבה  
למדת המלכות שנקראת תורה שבעל פה שהוא מדת הדין ודוקא בפלפול של אמת אבל  
בפלפול של שקר דבר שקרים לא יכון(תהלים קא)

Text 4: The Mortifications of Malkiel of Hebron

*Shelah*, 227b.

**והא לך המנהג דקהילה קדושה חברון תוב"ב שנה שנה מפי הרב הגדול החכם השלם החסיד העניו מהר"ר מלכיאל אשכנזי זלה"ה**  
**מתחלה** היה מלקה האיש כפי רצונו ג' או ד' מלקיות או פחות או יותר ומתירין אסורו(אזורו).  
ואח"כ בעודו ערום מלבישין אותו מכף רגלו ועד קדקדו שם (שק) ומשכיבין אותו בקרקע וסוחבין וגוררין אותו הולכה והבאה שלשה או ארבעה בחורים והחכם או השליח צבור מהלך ומכריז ככה יעשה לאיש אשר הכעיס את בוראו ככה יעשה לאיש אשר הכעיס את בוראו או לנו מיום הדין או לנו מיום התוכחה והעם רואים ובוכים וכ"ש הנסחב שהוא צועק בקול מר וחמרמר. ואומר ש"ץ (שליח ציבור) אם אתה חייב הרג לפני המקום יהי רצון שתחשב זאת הגרירה כאילו נהרגת בבית דין הגדול שבלשכת הגזית. הרי הרג שהיא קלה שבכולם לדעת רבי שמעון (סנהדרין מט ב) אח"כ חונקין אותו בין שניהן באזור אחד על גרונו או הוא עצמו בשתי ידיו וכבר הוא יושב על ברכיו ואומר החכם או שליח צבור אם אתה חייב חנק למקום יהי רצון שיחשב זה כאילו נחנקת בב"ד הגדול שבלשכת הגזית. הרי חנק שהיא קלה שבכולן לדעת הת"ק (תנא קמא) (שם) דהלכתא כותיה. אח"כ היה מצווה וסוקלין אותו בשתים או בשלש אבנים קטנות וגם המתייסר נוטל בידו אבן גדולה מעט כמלא אגרוף או מעט יותר ומכה בה על לבו והחכם או השליח צבור אומר אם אתה חייב סקילה לפני המקום יהי רצון שיחשב זה כאילו נסקלת בב"ד הגדול שבלשכת הגזית. אח"כ היו מדליקין נר של שעוה ומטיפין על גביו מתחת השק ג' או ד' טפות עד שרואין אותו שהוא נרתע והחכם או שליח צבור אומר אם אתה חייב שריפה לפני המקום יהי רצון שיחשב זה כאילו נשרפת בבית דין הגדול שבלשכת הגזית. או אם היה רוצה היה מתחיל מלמטה למעלה חנק הרג שריפה וסקילה. הכל כדעת התנא קמא דהלכתא כותיה בריש פרק ארבע מיתות (שם). אי נמי מלמעלה למטה כדתנן התם סקילה שריפה הרג וחנק. אח"כ אומרים לו בעוד השק על גופו שאם הוא חייב חרם או נידוי למקום שיקבל על עצמו ובודלים ממנו העדה לכל הפחות ד' אמות והוא יושב מרחוק בקרן זווית מעוטף בשק ראשו בין ברכיו ואח"כ מעמידין אותו ומתירין לו כל הדיינים את נידויו ולובש בגדיו וסר עונו וחטאתו תכופר. והחכם העושה הסדר מקבל כל היסורין הללו בגופו קודם הכל משום התקוששו וקושו (בבא מציעא קז ב) וממנו יראו וכן יעשו זה הסדר נכתב אלי מק"ק (קהילה קדושה) חברון תוב"ב. וירא שמים יוצא ידי שניהם וכל המרבה הרי זה משובח

Text 5: Horowitz's introduction to 'The Written Torah'

*Shelah*, 264a-265a.

קונטרס זה הנני מחבר בעזרת הש"י מוצא שפתי אשמור שתי הבטחות שהבטחתי לחבר. אחד במסכת שבת בענין גודל המצוה שציוו רבותינו ז"ל (ברכות ח א) להשלים פרשיותיו שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום ובודאי הכוונה הוא ללמוד וללמד לשמור ולעשות ולקיים ע"כ צריך האדם לידע ולהתבונן בכל פרשה ופרשה ולהבין ענין המצות הכתובים בזאת הפרשה הן מצות עשה הן מל"ת עד תשלום כל התרי"ג. אף שהרבה פרשיות הן שלא נמצא שם איזה מצוה ואף שאינה מצוה פרטית מתרי"ג מ"מ היא מצוה רבה והיא ענף ממצוה שהיא נמנית בתרי"ג. ואחר כך נבאר טעם המצות וסודיהן כפי השגת שכלי. ואח"כ מדות ומוסרים היוצאים מפרשה כאשר אבאר. וחל חיוב ביאור על כל אחד ואחד לבאר עד מקום שיד שכלו מגעת. ושלושה הדרכים האלה הם. נר מצוה. ותורה אור. ודרך חיים תוכחות מוסר (משלי ו, כג). אשר ע"ז (על זה) סובב והולך זה החיבור. דרך חיים. ומנין המצות דבכל פרשה. זהו נר מצוה. והטעמים והסודות. זהו תורה אור. או"ר בגימטריא ר"ז והמוסרים והמדות הוא דרך חיים תוכחות מוסר. אתם בני יצ"ו בכך באתי לגלות קצת כטיפה מן הים בכל פרשה ופרשה... של שבע ואתם תהיו כמעין המתגבר להוסיף כהנה וכהנה. בחכמה ובדעת ובתבונה

264b

דע כי התורה רושם האלהות והעולם שהוא האדם דהיינו ישראל שנקרא אדם (יבמות סא א) הם רושם התורה ומתדבקין זה בזה דהיינו האדם הגופני הוא רמ"ח אברים ושס"ה גידים וכן בנשמה יש רמ"ח אברים ושס"ה גידים רוחניים נעלמים שהם תרי"ג מצות התורה שס"ה ל"ת הם מצד הדין הם דוגמת שס"ה גידים אדומים הרומזים על מדת הדין ורמ"ח מ"ע הם ממדת הרחמים דוגמת רמ"ח אברים לבנים המורים על [מדת] הרחמים ואלו מסתעפים מסוד רמ"ח ושס"ה נעלמים והנסתרים בסוד אדם העליון היושב על הכסא בסוד שמו כמו שאמרו בזהר (ח"א דף כ"ד ע"א; ח"ג דף רכ"ח ע"ב) בפסוק (שמות ג, טו) זה שמי וזה זכרי י"ה עם שמ"י שס"ה וה' עם זכרי רמ"ח. ולתכלית זה נברא האדם לקיים אלו התרי"ג מצות המסתעפים כי ראשית המחשבה סוף המעשה דהיינו להביא התרי"ג לפועל וזהו ע"י אדם המקיימן באמצעות נשמתו שהיא מלמעלה המתפשטת בו ותכלית הכל הוא המעשה בפועל ובזה מתלבשת הנשמה והיא שבה אל בית אביה אחר כך מלובשת במלבושי כבוד וזהו כבוד... יוצרינו והוא צורך גבוה

264b-265a

צריך שתדע כי המצות כלולות זו מזו וכל מצוה מתרי"ג מצות ברוחניותה כוללים כל רוחניות התרי"ג כי המצות תלויות בספירות וכמו שהספירות כלולות זו בזו כנודע במקום אחר. הרי כל מצוה ומצוה היא כלל ופרט כי בכל מצוה נכללים כל המצות (זהר ח"ג דף קכ"ד ע"א) והנה מיד שנברא האדם תכף ומיד נתן לו הש"י מצות כמו שנאמר (בראשית ב, טז) ויצו ה' אלהים את האדם ופירשו רז"ל (סנהדרין נו ב) על שבע מצות אשר חייבו השם יתברך לעשות אלו בפועל ובהם נכללים וכמוסים כל התרי"ג ואלו היו מחוייבים והיו מקיימין אותן אדם ומתושלח וחנוך ונח ושם ועבר והאבות והשבטים ושאר חסידי עולם עד מתן תורה שנצטוו ישראל בתרי"ג מצות כי כדי שיהיו שלמים לא די להם כי אם בכל התרי"ג כי אף שכל אחת כלולה מכל התרי"ג מ"מ צורך להוציא הכללות שהם בכח לפועל

ואם תקשה אם כן האבות וחסידי עולם הראשונים לא הוציאו הכללות מן הכח אל הפועל. דע שהוציאו והוציאו בכח הכנתם רצוני לומר שהיו דבוקים בתכלית הדבקות בבורא יתברך והיו ששים ושמים לעשות רצון קונם בכל מה שיצוו והיו מוכנים לזה בתכלית ההכנה בשמחה ובטוב לבב וההכנה זו הוא כמעשה בפועל. רצוני לומר כי על כל פנים במצות שעשו היו כל התרי"ג כלולים בהם רק לא היה כסא למטה בפועל על מה שישרו אלו הכלולים שהם בכח הנה הכסא למטה הוא גודל ההכנה שלהם שהוא כמעשה ומצינו רמז לזה הדין של הכנה שאמר רבה שהכנה בעלמא אסור משבת לחול וכן מיום טוב לחול וכו' (ביצה ב ב) ובא

בלשון התלמוד (שם ד א) הכנה דרבה. כי באמת רב הוא סוד ההכנה לעניינינו והיתה ההכנה של הראשונים כל כך חזקה שהיה די להם באלו המצות שיקיימו בפועל ובהם כלולים כל התרי"ג ומכח הכנתם הרבה הוציאו הכללות והיו מרכבה לכל תרי"ג וכבר כתבתי פירוש לשמה הוא שעוסק בתורה ללמוד ולקיים כל ציווי שימצא בתורה שיוכל לקיים יקיים אזי הוא כאילו קיים אף מה שאי אפשר לו לקיים מאחר שהכין עצמו לכל אשר ימצא כתוב ואין המניעה מצידו זהו שאמר זוכה לדברים הרבה כלומר זוכה לדברים הרבה שלא עשאו שיהיו כאילו עשאו. וכבר הארכתי בענין זה במאוד בפרק בעשרה מאמרות... במאמר ענין תחזינה מישרים שם

כי המצוה הזאת אשר אנכי מצוך היום לא נפלאה היא ממך ולא רחקה היא לא בשמים היא וגו' ולא מעבר לים היא וגו' כי קרוב הדבר מאד בפירך ובלבבך לעשותו. הנה הפסוקים מגלים כל מה שכתבתי כי מחויב כל אחד לקיים כל התרי"ג ואף מה שאי אפשר לו לקיים יש המצאות שיהיה נחשב כאילו קיים והנה כבר כתבתי שיש ארבעה עניינים המונעים א' מצות שהם לו בחלק הנמנע מופלאים ומכוסים ממנו בלי אפשרות לקיימם כמו תורת כהנים ולוי ולישראל וכו' ועל זה אמר לא נפלאה לא תאמר כן שהיא נפלאה ונעלמת ממך. השני שהוא באפשרי אבל בסיבה רחוקה כמו מצות יבום ומחזיר גרושתו משנשאת כו' על זה אמר לא תאמר שהיא רחוקה. השלישי שהיא קרובה אבל על כל פנים בהמנע הסיבה אז המצוה בטלה כגון שאין סיפק בידו לבנות בית הצריך למזוזה והוא יושב אוהל ואין לו בגד להטיל בו ציצית כי דבר זה אין בידו רק הכל בידי שמים הכל נגזר מאתו יתברך העשירות והעניות (נדה טז ב). ע"ז אמר לא תאמר בשמים הוא כו'. הרביעי מצות הנוהגות בארץ ישראל שהיא מעבר לירדן והוא בחוץ לארץ אין נוהגין ע"ז אמר לא תאמר מעבר לים הוא כי כל המניעות אינם מניעות כי יש תקנה לדבר וזהו שסיים ואמר כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד בפירך ובלבבך לעשותו הם הם הדברים שזכרתי לעיל כל מה שאפשר לו לעשות יעשה וזה נכלל בתיבת לעשותו ומה שאי אפשר לו לעשות בעצמו יש תקנה בפירך היינו לימוד המצוה והעוסק בלימודה כאילו קיימה מאחר שעושה במצוה זו כל מה דאפשר לו לעשות בה. גם נכלל בתיבת בפירך ללמד את המצוה לאחרים שיכולים לקיימם ויזרזם ויעזרם גם בלבבך היא הכנת המצוה לידע סודה איש איש לפי שכלו כמו שכתבתי אז כשתעשה כך לא נפלאה ולא רחוקה וכו' והוא כאילו קיים בפועל כל התרי"ג



## Bibliography

### Manuscripts

Isaiah Horowitz, 'Letter to his son', Bodleian Ox. Ms. Neubauer 1437.

\_\_\_\_\_, 'Notebook of Isaiah Horowitz', Bodleian Ox. Ms. Neubauer 2248.

### Primary and Secondary Literature

Abrahams, Israel, ed., *Hebrew Ethical Wills*. . ed. by I. Abrahams (Philadelphia: JPS, 1926).

Abrams, Daniel, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory : Methodologies of Textual Scholarship and Editorial Practice in the Study of Jewish Mysticism*, (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2010).

Aderet, Solomon, *Responsa Rashba*, (Jerusalem: Mekhon Yerushalayim, 1997).

\_\_\_\_\_, *Hidushei Ha-Rashba*, (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook, 1981).

Alkabetz, Solomon, *Rav Peninim* (Constantinople: 1765).

Altmann, Alexander, 'The Delphic Maxim in Islam and Judaism', in *Biblical and Other Studies*, ed. by Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, Mass: 1963).

\_\_\_\_\_, *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism*, (London: Routledge, 1969).

*Sefer Yetsirah*, (Jerusalem: 1988).

Avivi, Joseph, *Kabbalat ha-Ari* (Hebrew, 3 Vols.), (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 2008).

Azikiri, Eliezer, *Sefer Haredim*, (Jerusalem: Y Katz, 1966).

Balberg, Mira, *Purity, Body, and Self in Early Rabbinic Literature*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

Bass, Shabbatai, *Siftei Yeshenim*, (Amsterdam: 1680).

Beer, Moshe, 'On Penances and Penitents in the Literature of Hazal (Hebrew)', *Zion*, 46 (1981), 159-81.

Ben-Sasson, Haim Hillel, *A History of the Jewish People*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976).

\_\_\_\_\_, *Hagut-ve Hanhagah*, (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1986).

- Benayahu, Meir, *Sefer Toldot Ha-Ari* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi institute, 1967).  
 ———, 'Vikuah Ha-Kabbala Im Ha-Halakhah (Hebrew)', *Da'at*, 6 (1980), 61-115.
- Berkowitz, Beth, *Defining Jewish Difference : From Antiquity to the Present*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- Biale, David, *Gershom Scholem : Kabbalah and Counter-History*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982).
- , ed., *Hasidism : A New History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).
- Blumenthal, David, *Philosophic Mysticism : Studies in Rational Religion*, (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2006).
- Bonfil, Robert, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, (London: University of California Press, 1994).
- , *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy*, (London: Littman, 1993).
- Breuer, Mordechai, 'David Gans: Modernism and Traditionalism', in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), 49-88.
- Carlebach, Elisheva, *The Pursuit of Heresy : Rabbi Moses Hagiz and the Sabbatian Controversies*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).
- Code, Alan, 'Potentiality in Aristotle's Science and Metaphysics', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 76 3-4 (1995), 405–18.
- Cooperman, Bernard Dov, 'Organising Knowledge for the Jewish Market: An Editor/Printer in 16th Century Rome', in *Perspectives on the Hebraic Book*, ed. by Myron Weinstein (Washington D.C: Library of Congress, 2012), 79-129.
- Cordovero, Moses, *The Palm Tree of Deborah* (Trans. Louis Jacobs), (London: Vallentine, 1960).  
 ———, *Or Yakar* (Jerusalem, 1986).  
 ———, *Pardes Rimmonim* (Krakow, 1592).
- Dan, Joseph, 'No Evil Descends from Heaven: Sixteenth Century Concepts of Evil', in *Jewish Thought in the 16th Century*, ed. by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), 89-105.  
 ———, *Sifrut Derush u Musar* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975).  
 ———, ed., *Studies in Kaballah, Jewish Philosophy and Ethical Literature Presented to Isaiah Tishby* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986).
- Davis, Joseph, 'R. Yom Tov Lipman Heller, Joseph B. Isaac Ha-Levi and Rationalism in Ashkenazic Jewish Culture, 1550-1650', (PHD diss., Harvard, 1990).  
 ———, 'The Reception of the 'Shulhan Arukh' and the Formation of Ashkenazic Jewish Identity', *AJS Review*, 26 2 (2002), 251-76.



- , *Yom-Tov Lipmann Heller : Portrait of a Seventeenth-Century Rabbi*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2004).
- Elbaum, Jacob, 'Aspects of Ethical Literature in Sixteenth Century Poland', in *Jewish Thought in the 16th Century*, ed. by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), 146-66.
- , *Openness and Insularity* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990).
- , *Teshuvat Ha-Lev Ve Kabbalat Yisurim* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1992).
- Elior, Rachel, 'Messianic Expectations and Spiritualisation of Religious Life in the Sixteenth Century', *Revue des Etudes Juives* 145 1-2 (1986), 35-49.
- , 'Origins of Hasidism', *Scripta Journal Cracoviensis*, 10 2 (2012), 85-109.
- Elon, Menachem, *Jewish Law : History, Sources, Principles*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: JPS, 1994).
- Fine, Lawrence, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos : Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).
- , *Safed Spirituality : Rules of Mystical Piety, the Beginning of Wisdom*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1984).
- , 'The Study of Torah as a Rite of Theurgical Contemplation in Lurianic Kabbalah', in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times Vol. 3*, ed. by David Blumenthal (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 29-40.
- Fishbane, Michael, 'The Book of the Zohar and Exegetical Spirituality', in *Mysticism and Sacred Scripture*, ed. by Steven Katz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 101-18.
- Fishman, Talya, 'The Penitential System of Hasidei Ashkenaz and the Problem of Cultural Boundaries', *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, 8 2 (1999), 201-27.
- Flatto, Sharon, *The Kabbalistic Culture of Eighteenth-Century Prague : Ezekiel Landau and His Contemporaries*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2010).
- Fonrobert, Charlotte ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- Frank, Daniel, and Oliver Leaman ed., *History of Jewish Philosophy*, (New York: Routledge, 2013).
- Freudenthal, Gideon, 'The Philosophical Mysticism of Maimonides and Maimon', in *Maimonides and His Heritage*, ed. by Idit Dobbs-Weinstein, Lenn Goodman (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009).
- Friedberg, Baruch, *Bet 'Eked Sefarim: Leksikon Bibliografi Li-Yedi'at Ha-Sifrut Ha-Ivrit* (Hebrew), (Tel Aviv: 1951).

- Funkenstein, Amos, *Perceptions of Jewish History*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
- Gabbai, Meir ibn, *Avodat ha-Kodesh*, (Krakow, 1576).
- Garb, Jonathan, 'The Prague Circle', *Kabbalah*, 14 (2006), 348-75.  
 ———, 'The Psychological Turn in Sixteenth Century Kabbalah', in *Les mystiques juives, chrétiennes et musulmanes dans l' Égypte médiévale (12th -16th siècles) Interculturalités et contextes historiques*, (Cairo, 2010), 109-30.  
 ———, *Shamanic Trance in Modern Kabbalah*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).  
 ———, *Yearnings of the Soul : Psychological Thought in Modern Kabbalah*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).
- Gawthrop, Richard, *Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth-Century Prussia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
- Gikatilla, Joseph, *Sha'arei Orah*, (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994).
- Ginzberg, Louis, *The Legends of the Jews*, (Philadelphia: JPS, 1946).
- Gluckel, *The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln*, (New York: Schocken, 1977).
- Gondos, Andrea, 'Kabbalah in Print: Literary Strategies of Popular Mysticism in Early Modernity', (PHD diss., Montreal, 2013).
- Greenblatt, Rachel, *To Tell Their Children : Jewish Communal Memory in Early Modern Prague*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).
- Gries, Zeev, *The Book in the Jewish World : 1700-1900*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2007).  
 ———, *The Hebrew Book : An Outline of Its History* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 2015).  
 ———, *Sifrut Ha-Hanhagot* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1989).
- Ha-Levi, Judah, *Ha-Kuzari*, (Tel Aviv: P Shalom, 1969).
- Halbertal, Moshe, *Maimonides : Life and Thought*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014).
- Hallamish, Moshe, 'Ahavah', in *Midot u Regashot* (Hebrew), ed. by Aharon Namdar (Ramat Gan: Hoshen le-mishpat, 1994), 135-51.  
 ———, *Introduction to the Kabbalah*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).  
 ———, *Ha-Kabbalah: ba-Tefillah, ba-Halakhah u-ve Minhag* (Hebrew), (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2000).
- Halpern, Israel, *The Jews in Eastern Europe : From Ancient Times until the Partitions of Poland, 1772-1795*, (New York: Harper and Bros, 1960).

- Hartman, David, *Maimonides : Torah and Philosophic Quest*, (Philadelphia: JPS, 2009).
- Hayes, Christine, *Gentile Impurities and Jewish Identities : Intermarriage and Conversion from the Bible to the Talmud*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- , *What's Divine About Divine Law? : Early Perspectives*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015).
- Heller, Marvin, *The Seventeenth Century Hebrew Book : An Abridged Thesaurus*, (Leiden: Brill, 2010).
- Horodezky, S. A., *The Mystics of Israel* (Hebrew), (Tel Aviv: Shtibel, 1951), 66-112
- Horowitz, Isaiah, *Shenei Luhot Haberit (Shelah)*, (Amsterdam: 1698).
- Horowitz, Sheftel, *Vavei Amudim*, (Amsterdam: 1649 (printed at the back of the *Shelah*)).
- Huss, Boaz, 'Ask No Questions: Gershom Scholem and the Study of Contemporary Jewish Mysticism', *Modern Judaism*, 25 2 (2005), 141-58.
- , *Kezohar Ha-Rakia* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 2008).
- Idel, Moshe, 'Differing Conceptions of Kabbalah in the Early 17th Century', in *Jewish Thought in the 17th Century*, ed. by Isadore Twersky (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987), 137-200.
- , 'Ganz Andere and the Concept of Holiness in Jewish Mysticism', *Da'at*, 57-59 (2006), v-xliv.
- , *Hasidism : Between Ecstasy and Magic*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).
- , *Kabbalah : New Perspectives*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).
- , *Kabbalah in Italy, 1280-1510 : A Survey*, (London: Yale University Press, 2011).
- , 'Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed and the Kabbalah', *Jewish History*, 18 2/3 (2004), 197-226.
- , 'Maimonides and Kabbalah', in *Studies in Maimonides*, ed. by Isadore Twersky (London: Harvard University Press, 1990), 31-79.
- , 'On the Theologisation of Kabbalah in Modern Scholarship', in *Religious Apologetics - Philosophical Argumentation*, ed. by Yosef Schwartz, Volkhard Krech (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 123-74.
- , '"One from a Town, Two from a Clan": The Diffusion of Lurianic Kabbalah and Sabbateanism: A Re-examination', *Jewish History*, 7 2 (1993), 79-104.
- , 'R. Moshe b. Nahman - Kabbalah, Halakhah u Manhigut Ruhanit (Hebrew)', *Tarbiz*, 64 (1995 ), 535-78.
- , 'The Reification of Language in Jewish Mysticism', in *Mysticism and Language*, ed. by Steven T. Katz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- Israel, Jonathan, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550-1750*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2014).

- Isserles, Moses, *Responsa Rama*, (Jerusalem: Yerid ha-Sefarim, 2004).
- Jacobs, Louis, *Hasidic Prayer*, (London Littman Library, 1993).  
 ———, *Seeker of Unity*, (London: Vallentine, 1966).
- Kadary, Yo'ed, 'The Angelology of R. Moses Cordovero' (Hebrew), (PHD thes., Be'er-Sheva, 2014).
- Kaplan, Lawrence, 'Rationalism and Rabbinic Culture in Sixteenth-Century Eastern Europe : Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe's Levush Pinat Yikrat', (PHD diss., Harvard, 1975).
- Karo, Joseph, *Beit Yosef* (Venice, 1563).  
 ——— *Shulhan Arukh*, (Vilna, 1880).
- Katz, Jacob, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance : Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times*, (NJ: Behrman House, 1980).  
 ———, *Halakhah Ve-Kabbalah* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984).  
 ———, 'Orthodoxy in a Historical Perspective', in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, ed. by Peter Yehuda Medding (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1986).  
 ———, 'Post-Zoharic Relations between Halakhah and the Kabbalah', in *Jewish Thought in the 16th Century*, ed. by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), 266-82.  
 ———, *The "Shabbes Goy" : A Study in Halakhic Flexibility*, (Philadelphia: JPS, 1992).  
 ———, *Tradition and Crisis : Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, (New York: Schocken, 1971).
- 'Kabbalah', in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. vol.11 (Detroit, Thomson Gale, 2007), 586-692
- Katz, Steven, *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).
- Kauffman, Tsippi, *Be-Khol Derakhekha Da'ehu* (Hebrew), (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2009).
- Kellner, Menahem, *Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought : From Maimonides to Abravanel*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2004).  
 ———, *Maimonides' Confrontation with Mysticism*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2007).  
 ———, 'On Universalism and Particularism in Judaism', *Daat*, 36 (1996), 10-19.
- Klawans, Jonathan, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Kobler, Franz, *Letters of Jews through the Ages, from Biblical Times to the Middle of the Eighteenth Century. Vol 2*, (London: East and West Library, 1953).

- Koch, Patrick, *Human Self-Perfection : A Re-Assessment of Kabbalistic Musar-Literature of Sixteenth-Century Safed*, (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2015).
- Kodesh, Meir, 'Ha Pesikah ha Kabbalit be Sifrot ha She'elot u Teshuvot' (Hebrew), (PHD thes., Hebrew University, 2004).
- Kraemer, Joel, *Perspectives on Maimonides : Philosophical and Historical Studies*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 1996).
- Krassen, Miles, *The Generations of Adam*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1996).
- Krispel, Dalia, 'The Concept of Man in R. Isaiah Horowitz's *Shnei Lufot Haberit* (Hebrew)', (PHD diss., Ben Gurion University, 2004).
- Liady, Shneur Zalman Of, *Tanya*, (NY: "Kehot" Publication Society, 2013).
- Liebes, Esther, 'The Innovation in Hasidism According to R. Barukh of Kossov (Hebrew)', *Da'at*, 45 (2000), 75-90.
- Liebes, Yehuda, 'New Directions in the Study of Kabbalah (Hebrew)', *Pe'amim*, 50 (1992), 150-70.
- Lublin, Meir b. Gedaliah, *Responsa Maharam Lublin*, (New York: Ch. Reich, 1994).
- Luria, Solomon, *Responsa Maharshal*, (New York: Renaissance Hebraica, 1994).  
———, *Yam shel Shelomo*, (New York: Goldman, 1952).
- Luzzatto, Moshe Hayyim, *Derekh Tevunot*, (Amsterdam, 1743).
- Maccoby, Hayim, *Ritual and Morality : The Ritual Purity System and Its Place in Judaism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- Magid, Shaul, *From Metaphysics to Midrash : Myth, History, and the Interpretation of Scripture in Lurianic Kabbala*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).
- Maimonides, Moses, *Hakdamot Le Peirush Ha Mishnah Kafah* ed., (Jerusalem: Mossad ha Rav Kook, 1961).  
———, *Mishneh Torah*, (Jerusalem and Benei Berak: S. Frankel, 1975-2007).  
———, *Moreh Nevukhim*, (Warsaw: 1872).  
———, *Sefer haMitsvot*, (Jerusalem, 1995).
- Margalioth, Mordekhai, *Ha-Hilukim she-bein Anshei Mizrah u-Benei Erez Yisrae'l* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Press, 1938).
- Melamed, Abraham, 'Natural Law in Medieval and Renaissance Jewish Political Thought (Hebrew)', *Da'at* 17, 49-66.
- Mendes-Flohr, Paul, and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World : A Documentary History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

- Merlan, Philip, *Monopsychism Mysticism Metaconsciousness : Problems of the Soul in the Neoaristotelian and Neoplatonic Tradition*, (Springer: Dordrecht, 1970).  
Modena, Leon, *Letters*, (Tel Aviv: 1984).
- Munk, Eliyahu, *Shelah Ha-Kadosh: On the Written Torah* 3 vols., (New York: Lambda, 1999).
- Needham, Joseph, *Science and Civilisation in China*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- Neher, André, *Jewish Thought and the Scientific Revolution of the Sixteenth Century : David Gans (1541-1613) and His Times*, (Oxford Littman Library, 1986).
- Newman, Eugene, *Life & Teachings of Isaiah Horowitz*, (London: G.J. George and Co, 1972).
- Novick, Tzvi, *What Is Good, and What God Demands: Normative Structures in Tannaitic Literature*, (Leiden: Brill, 2010).
- Pachter, Mordechai, 'Homiletical and Ethical Writing in Safed in the Sixteenth Century (Hebrew)', (PHD diss., Hebrew University, 1976).  
———, *Roots of Faith and Devekut: Studies in the History of Kabbalistic Ideas*, (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2004).
- Pachter, Shilo, 'Shemirat Ha-Berit (Hebrew)', (PHD diss., Hebrew University, 2006).
- Pakuda, Bahya Ibn, *Hovot ha-Levavot*, (Tel-Aviv: Ha-Menorah, 1984).
- Petuchowski, Jacob, 'The Concept of 'Teshuvah' in the Bible and the Talmud', *Judaism*, 17 (1968), 175-85.
- Piekarz, Mendel, *Bimei Zemihat Ha-Hasidut* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1978).
- Polonsky, Antony, *The Jews in Poland and Russia*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2010).
- Rappaport, Ada, 'God and the Zaddik as the Two Focal Points of Hasidic Worship', *History of Religions*, 18 4 (1979), 305-07.
- Recanati, Menahem, *Sefer Ta'amei Ha-Mitzvot*, (Basili'ah: 1581).
- Reiner, Elchanan, 'The Ashkenazi Elite at the Beginning of the Modern Era: Manuscript Versus Printed Book', *Polin*, 10 (1997), 85-98.  
———, 'Changes in the Academies of Poland and Ashkenaz in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and the Disputes about Pilpul' in *Studies in Jewish Culture in Honour of Chone Shmeruk* ed. Israel Bartal, (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Centre, 1993).
- Richardson, Brian, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy : The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470-1600*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

- Robinson, Ira, *Moses Cordovero's Introduction to Kabbalah* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1994).
- Rosenberg, Michael, 'The Conflation of Purity and Prohibition', *Harvard Theological Review*, 107 4 (2014), 447-69.
- Rosman, Moshe, *Founder of Hasidism : A Quest for the Historical Ba'al Shem Tov*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2013).
- Rosner, Fred, *Sex Ethics in the Writings of Moses Maimonides*, (New Jersey: Aronson, 1994).
- Ross, Tamar, 'Maharal on Miracles', *Da'at*, 17 (2006), 81-96.
- Ruderman, David, *Early Modern Jewry : A New Cultural History*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011).
- Sack, Bracha, *Be-Sha'arei Ha-Kabbalah shel R. Moshe Cordovero* (Hebrew) (Be'er-Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press, 1995).
- , 'The Influence of Cordovero on Seventeenth Century Jewish Thought', in *Jewish Thought in the 16th Century*, ed. by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 365-79.
- , 'Mekorei Shelemut. Be Mahshava, Dibbur ve Ma'aseh (Hebrew)', *Da'at*, 50-52 (2003), 221-41.
- , 'R. Moses Cordovero and R. Isaac Luria (Hebrew)', in *Kabbalat Ha'Ari: International Conference for the Study of Jewish Mysticism 4*, ed. by R. Elior and Y. Liebes (Jerusalem, 1992), 311-40.
- , *Shomer Ha-Pardes* (Hebrew), (Be'er-Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press, 2002).
- Samet, Moshe, 'The Beginnings of Orthodoxy', *Modern Judaism*, 8 3 (1988), 249-69.
- Satlow, Michael, *Creating Judaism : History, Tradition, Practice*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).
- Schatz- Uffenheimer, Rivka, 'The Maharal's Conception of Law as an Antithesis to Natural Law', *Da'at*, 1 no.2/3 (1978), 147-57.
- , *Hasidism as Mysticism* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1968).
- Schochet, Elijah, *Rabbi Joel Sirkes : His Life, Works, and Times*, (Jerusalem Feldheim, 1971).
- Scholem, Gershom, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1995).
- , *The Messianic Idea in Judaism : And Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1974).
- , *Reishit Ha-Kabbalah (1150-1250)* (Hebrew), (Tel Aviv: 1948).
- , *Sabbatai Sevi: Mystical Messiah*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1973).

- Schwartz, Dov, *Emunah U-Tevunah* (Tel Aviv: Misrad ha Bitahon, 2001)
- Segal, Eliezer, *Introducing Judaism*, (London: Routledge, 2009).
- Shapiro, Marc, *Changing the Immutable : How Orthodox Judaism Rewrites Its History*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2015).
- , *The Limits of Orthodox Theology : Maimonides' Thirteen Principles Reappraised*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2004).
- Sherwin, Byron, *Mystical Theology and Social Dissent*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2006).
- Siedentop, Larry, *Inventing the Individual : The Origins of Western Liberalism*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017).
- Silber, Michael, 'The Emergence of Ultra-Orthodoxy', in *The Uses of Tradition : Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era*, ed. by Jack Wertheimer (New York: Harvard University Press, 1999), 1-26.
- Silver, Daniel, *Maimonidean Criticism and the Maimonidean Controversy : 1180-1240*, (Leiden: Brill, 1965).
- Sirkes, Joel, *Responsa Bach*, (Jerusalem: 1980).
- Sládek, Pavel, 'Maharal's Anthropology: Towards Defining the Limits of His Humanism', *Judaica Bohemiae* 44 2 (2009), 5-40.
- Soloveitchik, Haym, *Collected Essays*, (Oxford: 2013).
- , *Collected Essays Vol. 1*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 2013).
- , 'Piety, Pietism and German Pietism: "Sefer Ḥasidim I" and the Influence of Hasidei Ashkenaz', *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 92 3/4 (2002), 455-93.
- , *Yeinam* (Hebrew), (Tel Aviv: Alma, 2003).
- Sorotzkin, David, 'Kehillat ha-Al Zeman be-Dian ha-Temurot: Kavim Le-Hithavutan shel Tefisot Ha Zeman (Hebrew)', (PHD diss., Hebrew University, 2007).
- Sperber, Daniel, *The Jewish Life Cycle : Custom, Lore and Iconography : Jewish Customs from the Cradle to the Grave*, (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2008).
- Ta-Shma, Israel, 'Halakhah, Minhag u Masoret bi-Yahadut Ashkenazit be Me'ah ha Yud Aleph ve Yud Bet' (Hebrew), *Sidra*, 3 (1987), 85-161.
- , 'The Law Is in Accordance with the Later Authority - "Hilkhata Kebatrai" : Historical Observations on a Legal Rule. ', in *Authority, Process and Method* ed. by Hanina b. Menahem (Boston: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998), 101-28.
- Thomas, Keith, *Religion and the Decline of Magic : Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England*, (London: Penguin, 2012).



- Tirosh-Rothschild, Hava, *Between Worlds : The Life and Thought of Rabbi David b. Judah Messer Leon*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014).
- Tishby, Isaiah, 'The Conflict between Kabbalah ha-Ari and Ramak', *Zion*, 39 (1979).  
 ———, *The Wisdom of the Zohar. : An Anthology of Texts*, (Oxford: Littman Library, 1991).
- Toledano, Jacob, 'When and Where Was the Authority of the Shulhan Arukh Accepted? ', in *Rabbi Joseph Karo: Studies in the Teachings of the Author of the Sulhan Arukh*, ed. by Y. Rafael (Jerusalem: Mosad ha Rav Kook, 1969), 184-88.
- Twersky, Isadore, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides (Mishneh Torah)*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).  
 ———, 'The Shulhan 'Arukh: Enduring Code of Jewish Law ', *Judaism*, 16 (1967), 141-58.  
 ———, 'Talmudists, Kabbalists, Philosophers: The Quest for Spirituality', in *Jewish Thought in the 16th Century*, ed. by Bernard Dov Cooperman (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), 431-59.
- Urbach, Ephraim, *The Halakhah, its Sources and Development*, (Tel Aviv: Modan, 1996).  
 ———, *The Sages : Their Concepts and Beliefs*, (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Magnes Press, 1975).
- Vidas, Elijah de, *Reishit Hokhmah* (Vilna: Yizhak Fun, 1907).
- Vital, Hayyim, *Likkutei Torah*, (Vilna, 1879).  
 ———, *Peri Es Hayyim*, (Korets: Yohn Anton Kriger, 1785).  
 ———, *Sha'arei Kedushah*, (Jerusalem: Eshkol, 1985).
- Volozhin, Hayyim, *Nefesh Ha-Hayyim*, (Jerusalem: Mosad Le-'idud limud ha-Torah, 1996).
- Weinstein, Roni, *Shattering of the Vessels: Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity* (Hebrew), (Tel-Aviv: University of Tel-Aviv, 2011).
- Werblowsky, R., *Joseph Karo : Lawyer and Mystic*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).  
 ———, 'O Felix Capula: A Cabbalistic Version', in *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History Presented to Alexander Altmann on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. S. Stein and R. Loewe, (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1979).
- Wimpfheimer, Barry, *Narrating the Law : A Poetics of Talmudic Legal Stories*, (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2011).
- Wolfson, Elliot, 'The Body in the Text: A Kabbalistic Theory of Embodiment', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 95 3 (2005), 479-500.

———, 'The Influence of R. Isaac Luria on the Shelah ', in *Kabbalat Ha'Ari: International Conference for the Study of Jewish Mysticism 4*, ed. by R. Elijor and Y. Liebes (Jerusalem, 1992), 423-48.

———, *Venturing Beyond : Law and Morality in Kabbalistic Mysticism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Woolf, Jeffrey, 'The Authority of Custom in the Responsa of R. Joseph Colon (Maharik)', *Dinei Israel* 19 1997-1998 (1998), 43-93.

Yaari, Abraham, *Letters from Jerusalem* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Jerusalem, 1949).

———, *Letters from the Land of Israel* (Hebrew), (Ramat-Gan: Masada, 1971).

*The Zohar*, (Lublin: 1882).