Oneiric Imagination and Mystical Annihilation in Habad Hasidism

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Dream Vision and the Coincidentia Oppositorum

Scholarly depictions of mysticism, as varied as they have been, frequently include visions and dreams on the list of common characteristics. Literary and other material artifacts attest that communion with what is considered in a particular milieu to be the fount of inspiration can provoke revelatory experiences, and the history of Judaism is no exception to this rule. Dreams, in particular, have been portrayed as a significant channel of information from the transcendent power beyond the sensory realm. It goes without saying that the phenomenon of the dream is a matter far too variegated to be pursued here responsibly. One dimension of the dream, however, that I will highlight, is its allusive and elusive character. The dream, as others have noted, is a state of consciousness hovering between wakefulness and dormancy, darkness and light. From that angle of vision, we can think of dreams as a vehicle of dissimulation, comporting, as they do, an intent that is both hidden in and exposed through the shadow of image or sound.[1] Analogously, esotericism, which I have privileged as a delineating characteristic of mysticism, proffers the notion of mystery whose depth must be disclosed by proper interpretative decoding, though it, like the dream, is caught between concealment and disclosure, concealed in its disclosure, disclosed in its concealment.

The dream, moreover, bespeaks the excess of human imagination in a distinctive way, bearing a mythologic—a term that concurrently connotes the logos of mythos and the mythos of logos and therefore should not be construed as privileging either logical or mythical patterns of discourse, rendering one subordinate to the other—that extends beyond itself in the

1. I am aware of the fact that some would resist the ascription of intent to the dream, but I would not concur. I will elaborate on this issue in a monograph I am writing on dreams tentatively entitled *A Dream Interpreted Within a Dream: Oneiropoiesis and the Prism of Imagination.*

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indeterminate determining of the bounds of its unbinding, a mythopoiesis whose language is both private and shared, doggedly peculiar, yet eerily common. As the phenomenologist Edward S. Casey expressed the matter, "in dreaming, as in free-associating, there is a proliferation of types and modes of content—often to the point of surfeit and even of absurdity. In each case the imagery is of many different sorts, and what is conveyed to the mind seems kaleidoscopic in its diversity: we are as surprised at the multitude of things that show up in free-associating as we are at what appears in our nocturnal dreams."[2] Casey goes on to draw a more specific analogy between Freud's technique of free association and Husserl's method of free variation in the imagination. Without entering this matter, it is sufficient to underscore the hyperactive and fantastical role of the mental process, the brain activity, we refer to as imagination in the process of dreaming.

The imaginal surplus of the dream can be detected in the coexistence of contradictory sensibilities in a manner that might defy the common sense expectation that one thing is not the same as its opposite. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud linked this feature of the dream exegetically to the statement in Virgil's *Aeneid* (vii. 313), which also served as the epigraph of the book, "If Heaven I cannot bend, then Hell I will arouse" (*Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo*). It is not only the case that the dreamer can bend heaven and arouse hell concomitantly, but, even more profoundly, the bending of heaven is itself the arousing of hell. In Freud's thinking, the fusion of antinomies in the dream underscores the blurring of boundary between presumed psychological well-being, on one hand, and neurotic or psychotic states, on the other. Freud himself noted that the characteristic of a dream to express a sentiment through its opposite, such as exhibiting desire for solitude, which he relates to the issue of secrecy surrounding an impulse to masturbate, in the image of being in the presence of many strangers, is also discernible in states of paranoia.[3] Interestingly, in an early

2. Edward S. Casey, *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1976), 211.

3. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, translated by Joyce Crick, with an introduction and notes by Ritchie Robertson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 189. See also Freud's 1899 essay "Screen Memories," in *The Standard Edition or the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, translated from the German under the General Editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: Hogarth Press, 1962), 3:319–320.

work that marked his divergence from Freud, Jung properly gave credit to the latter for this key insight:

> Since the dream is unconcerned with the real condition of things, it brings the most heterogeneous matter together, and a world of impossibilities takes the place of realities. Freud finds progression characteristic of thinking when awake, that is to say, the advancement of the thought excitation from the system of the inner or outer perception through the endopsychic work of association, conscious and unconscious, to the motor end; that is to say, toward innervation. In the dream he finds the reverse, namely, regression of the thought excitation from the preconscious or unconscious to the system of perception, by means of which the dream receives its ordinary impression of sensuous distinctness, which can rise to an almost hallucinating clearness.[4]

The provocative and counter-intuitive locution "hallucinating clearness" is worthy of sustained reflection—that clarity is linked to hallucination suggests that a mindset judged by societal standards as anomalous may actually impart a greater degree of perceptual acuity and hence what is conventionally considered to be clarity is, in truth, obfuscation, a point that lamentably we see too often in political discourse—but the crucial point is that the Freudian enterprise does indeed rest on the assumption that dreams can teach us about the functionality of mental illness, an allegation that in no small measure relates precisely to the characteristic of the *coincidentia oppositorum*, a feature that Jung was to exploit in his own explorations of the self in relation to the collective unconscious and the alchemical nature of dream symbolism.[5]

In the brief treatise *Über den Traum*, written in 1901, one year after the publication of the first edition of his *magnum opus*, Freud turns this insight into a rule for dream interpretation:

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4. Carl G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious: A Study of the Transformations and Symbolisms of the Libido,* with a new foreword by Eugene Taylor (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 23–24.

5. Carl G. Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy,* translated by R. F. C. Hull, second edition [*Collective Works,* vol. 12] (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 33–34, 186, 346; idem, *Dream Analysis: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1928–1930,* edited by William McGuire (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 704. For a critical assessment of the oppositionalism implicit in the Jungian approach, see James Hilman, *The Dream and the Underworld* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1979), 74–85.

> . . . in analyzing a dream, if an uncertainty can be resolved into an 'either-or,' we must replace it for purposes of interpretation by an 'and,' and take each of the apparent alternatives as an independent starting point for a series of associations. If a common element of this kind between the dream thoughts is not present, the dream work sets about *creating* one, so that it may be possible for the thoughts to be given a common representation in the dream.[6]

Freud notes as well that one of the "most convenient ways" to bring together two seemingly disparate dream thoughts, and thereby reduce any sense of their opposition, is "to alter the verbal form of one of them, and thus bring it halfway to meet the other, which may be similarly clothed in a new form of words. A parallel process is involved in hammering out a rhyme, where a similar sound has to be sought for in the same way as a common element is in our present case."[7] It is significant that Freud draws an analogy between poetic composition and dreamwork in order to elucidate the tendency to thread together incongruent thought-images in varying verbal encasements, how we speak of what we have seen or heard. In a second passage, he elaborates:

> The alternative "*either-or*" is never expressed in dreams, both of the alternatives being inserted in the text of the dream as though they were equally valid. I have already mentioned that an "either-or" used in *recording* a dream is to be translated by "and." Ideas which are contraries are by preference expressed in dreams by one and the same element. ... Opposition between two thoughts, the relation of *reversal*, may be represented in dreams in a most remarkable way. It may be represented by some other piece of the dream content being turned into its opposite—as it were by an afterthought. We shall hear presently of a further method of expressing contradiction. ... The dream work makes use of such cases as a foundation for dream condensation, by bringing together everything that shows an agreement of this kind into a *new unity*.[8]

Doubtlessly influenced by Freud, Eric Fromm remarked: "Most of our dreams have one characteristic in common: they do not follow the laws of logic that govern our waking thought."[9] Fromm's language will surely strike

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6. Sigmund Freud, *On Dreams*, translated and edited by James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1952), 28–29 (emphasis in the original).
7. Ibid., 29.
8. Ibid., 42–43 (emphasis in the original).
9. Eric Fromm, *The Forgotten Language: An Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales and Myths* (New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Co., Inc., 1951), 4.

postmodern ears as a bit overreaching in its essentializing tone. But let us forgive him his rhetorical hyperbole, as one's style of speaking is likely to be contingent on the verbiage of the day, and let us focus on the main point behind his words: a recurrent facet of dreaming is a loosening of the knot of logic that reigns in our wakeful consciousness. There is another logic—or mythologic to be more precise—to which we have access in alternate ways, including through the dream. The way to a deeper layer of our cognizance of the world and of the self is through this imaginal corridor. As John R. Wiksein observed, "Dreams speak the language of imagination. They do so through images that do not obey the laws of noncontradiction, through metaphors which bring together and focus our emotional ambivalences."[10]

This insight calls to mind the observation of Gaston Bachelard that the value of the imagination lies in its polyvalence, which elicits a "psychological ambivalence," since every image is a "*poetic double* which allows endless transpositions." The imagination, therefore, displays a "manichaeism of reverie," an inherent duplicity that calls for a "*dual participation* of desire and fear, a participation of good and evil, a peaceful participation of black and white."[11] James Hilman reminded us that Bachelard's phrase "black and white" can be traced to Philostratus, who depicted the god of dreams as "wearing a white garment over a black one,"[12] an image that intimates that "the dream presents in the robes of duplicity, stating simply that an ambiguity of significance is its habitual presentation. If dreams are the teachers of the waking-ego, this *duplicity is the essential instruction they impart.*"[13] As Bachelard himself expressed the matter elsewhere, the dream exemplifies an "active participation in two opposite characteristics," a "double participation in one act" that "corresponds to a true Manicheism of motion. ... This metallic realism of good and evil provides a way of measuring the universality of images."[14] The reference to Manichaeism in

10. John R. Wikse, "Night Rule: Dreams as Social Intelligence," in *The Variety of Dream Experience: Expanding Our Ways of Working with Dreams,* edited by Montague Ullman and Claire Limmer, second edition (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 145.

11. Gaston Bachelard, *Water and Dreams: An Essay On the Imagination of Matter,* translated by Edith R. Farrell (Dallas: Pegasus Foundation, 1983), 11–12 (emphasis in the original).

12. Hilman, *Dream and the Underworld,* 127. The citation is from Philostratus, *Imagines* 1.27.

13. Hilman, *Dream and the Underworld,* 127 (emphasis in the original).

14. Gaston Bachelard, *Air and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Movement,* translated by Edith R. Farrell and C. Frederick Farrell (Dallas: Dallas Institute Publications, 2002), 263–

this passage and the aforecited one is understandable but it does not well serve Bachelard's true intention. The "dual destiny" of the dreams does not imply an unmitigated dualism as the Manichaean reference would warrant; on the contrary, the paradoxical identity of opposites best characterizes the poiesis of the dream imagination. It is this quality, moreover, that undergirds the property of the dream image to conceal what it reveals by revealing what it conceals. The "dreamer truly contemplates what is hidden," writes Bachelard, "making use of reality, he manufactures mystery."[15] Duplicity invariably occasions ambiguity and the latter a measure of mystery, inscrutable, evocative of eluding evocation, prompting the fabrication of secrecy, withdrawing by extending. The deportment of dreaming along these lines presents a striking affinity to the mystical sensibility. For those who identify this as a nondual state, pure or empty mindfulness, it goes without saying that a claim regarding the identity of opposites would be relevant, since there is no longer any epistemic basis, let alone ontological ground, for discrimination or differentiation. But even in a state of visionary consciousness that is still beholden to a binarian structure of intentionality, it is possible for antinomical images to coalesce. This hybridization, I propose, may be viewed as a form of phenomenological disorientation, seeing the world invertedly as the world, a destabilization of the temporal and spatial coordinates of the mundane apperception by deepening the temporal and spatial coordinates of the imaginal, which is accessed through the active imagination of the dreamer.[16]

Exile, Dream, and the Nocturnality of Mystical Annihilation

In this study, I shall examine this nexus of themes in the mystical ruminations of Shneur Zalman of Lyady (1745–1812), one of the prominent disciples of Dov Baer, the Maggid of Mezeritch (1704–1772), himself a follower

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15. Bachelard, *Water and Dreams*, 35.

16. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language, and the Cosmos*, translated by Daniel Russell (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 16, remarked that the "nocturnal dream can disorganize a soul and propagate, even during the day, the madness attempted during the night." I would not embrace Bachelard's language of madness, but I think the sense of disorganization he describes bears affinity to what I have called "phenomenological disorientation."

of Israel ben Eliezer (1698–1760), the *Ba'al Shem Ṭov*, "master of a good name," better known by the acronym of this title, the Besht, the man to whom credit is given for spearheading and inspiring a revivalist pietism that flowered in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries into a vibrant social phenomenon throughout East-European Jewish communities.[17] Shneur Zalman is notorious for being the progenitor of the hasidic dynasty known as Habad or Lubavitch. The former name is an acronym for *ḥokhmah*, *binah*, and *da'at*, "wisdom," "understanding," and "knowledge," a reference to the three upper aspects of the ten enumerated divine emanations[18] and their corresponding psychic faculties, *nefesh*, *ruaḥ*, and *neshamah*, which constitute the triadic nature of intellect (*sekhel*),[19] and the latter is the Yiddish version of Lyubavichi, the town in Russia where the headquarters of the movement were established by Dov Baer Schneersohn (1773–1827), son of and successor to Shneur Zalman. For the purposes of this analysis I will focus on one passage from *Torah Or*, the anthology of Shneur Zalman's discourses on Genesis and Exodus compiled by his grandson, Menachem Mendel (1789–1866), the third leader of the Habad/ Lubavitch sect and the namesake for the seventh.[20] It may strike the reader as somewhat arbitrary

17. The bibliography on the Besht is enormous, so here I will only refer to some of the more recent works where one can find ample reference to other relevant scholarship: Moshe Rosman, *Founder of Hasidism: A Quest for the Historical Ba'al Shem Tov* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Immanuel Etkes, *The Besht: Magician, Mystic, and Leader*, translated by Saadya Sternberg (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2005); Rachel Elior, *The Mystical Origins of Hasidism* (Oxford: Litman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2006), 59–71; Netanel Lederberg, *Sod ha-Da'at: Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, His Spiritual Character and Social Leadership* (Jerusaelm: Rubin Mass Ltd., 2007) (Hebrew).

18. Habad follows a perspective that can be traced back to some thirteenth-century kabbalists who began the counting of the ten *sefirot* with *Ḥokhmah* or *Maḥshavah*, adding *Da'at* in place of *Keter*. This is not to say that *Keter* does not figure prominently in the teaching of Habad. The topic merits a separate investigation, but briefly it can be said that *Keter* is described variously as the nothing (*ayin*), the incomposite will (*raṣon pashuṭ*), the infinite light (*or ein sof*) in which opposites coalesce.

19. The locus classicus for this terminology is Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Liqquṭei Amarim: Tanya* (Brooklyn: New York, 1984), pt. 1, ch. 3, 7a–b.

20. For a useful account of the seven masters, see Avrum M. Ehrlich, *Leadership in the HaBaD Movement: A Critical Evaluation of HaBaD Leadership, History, and Succession* (Northvale: Jason Aronson Inc., 2000), and for a detailed study of the seventh Rebbe, see idem, *The Messiah of Brooklyn: Understanding Lubavitch Hasidism Past and Present* (Jersey City: Ktav, 2004). In the last few years, there have been a number of important studies on Schneerson, many

or at the very least insufficient to make an argument based on one text. It is, however, characteristic of the rhetorical style of the Habad masters that any cross section of their dense and sweeping oral discourses and/or written treatises can serve as a prism through which to view the philosophic perspective they promulgated. With regard to this matter it can be said that their own texts hermeneutically reflect the (me)ontological presumption that one can see in every particularity a manifestation of the hidden essence, the mystery of the infinite revealed through being concealed in the veil of nature.[21] This is surely the case in the passage that will serve as the basis

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focusing on his messianic agenda and possible self-identification. For a representative list, see Menachem Friedman, "Habad as Messianic Fundamentalism: From Local Particularism to Universal Mission," in *The Fundamentalism Project*, edited by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, vol. 4 (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 328–357; Naftali Loewenthal, "The Neutralisation of Messianism and the Apocalypse," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 13 [*Rivkah Shatz-Uffenheimer Memorial Volume*] (1996): 59–73 (English section); Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism*, translated by Michael Swirsky and Jonathan Chipman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 181–206; idem, "The Messianism of Success in Contemporary Judaism," in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism, Volume 3: Apocalypticism in the Modern Period and the Contemporary Age*, edited by Stephen J. Stein (New York: Continuum, 1998), 204–229; Rachel Elior, "The Lubavitch Messianic Resurgence: The Historical and Mystical Background 1939–1996," in *Toward the Millennium: Messianic Expectations From the Bible to Waco*, edited by Peter Schäfer and Mark R. Cohen (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 383–408; David Berger, *The Rebbe, the Messiah, and the Scandal of Orthodox Indifference* (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001); Joel Marcus, "The Once and Future Messiah in Early Christianity and Chabad," *New Testament Studies* 47 (2001): 381–401; Yitzchak Kraus, "'Living with the Times': Reflection and Leadership, Theory and Practice in the World of the Rebbe of Lubavitch, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson," Ph.D. thesis, Bar Ilan University, 2001 (Hebrew), and the recently published revised version, idem, *The Seventh: Messianism in the Last Generation of Habad* (Tel Aviv: Yedioth Ahronoth, 2007) (Hebrew); Shelly Goldberg, "The Zaddik's Soul After His 'Histalkut' (Death): Continuity and Change in the Writings of 'Nesiey' (Presidents of) Habad," Ph.D. thesis, Bar-Ilan University, 2003 (Hebrew); Jan Feldman, *Lubavitchers As Citizens: A Paradox of Liberal Democracy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 33–37; Alon Dahan, "'Dira Batahtonim': The Messianic Doctrine of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (The Lubavitcher Rebbe)," Ph.D. thesis, Hebrew University, 2006 (Hebrew); Max Ariel Kohanzad, "The Messianic Doctrine of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902–1994)," Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 2006.

21. I have elaborated on these dimensions of Habad in "Revisioning the Body Apophatically: Incarnation and the Acosmic Naturalism of Habad Hasidism," in *Apophatic Bodies: Infinity, Ethics, and Incarnation*, edited by Christopher Boesel and Catherine Keller (New York:

for this analysis of the complex nexus between imagination, dream vision, nocturnality, exile, redemption, and mystical annihilation.

The relevant text appears in the context of Shneur Zalman's attempt to explicate the celebrated dreams of Joseph.

> "A song of ascents. When the Lord restores [the fortunes of Zion]—we will be as dreamers" (Ps 126:1). The dream joins two opposites in one subject and it combines two contradictory matters as if they were one, for during sleep the brain of the intellect that makes distinctions [*moaḥ ha-sekhel ha-mavḥin*] is removed and all that remains is the imaginative faculty [*koaḥ ha-medammeh*], and the imaginative faculty can combine two contradictory matters [*yakhol leharkiv shenei inyanim hafkhayyim*] ... but when one is awake, the intellectual faculty is aroused and it rules over the imaginative faculty and it does not allow it to combine since one sees with the eye of one's intellect that these are separate things and they are not at all unified. Similarly in the matter of the exile, the divine spark that is in the human soul is in the aspect of sleep and the removal of consciousness [*bi-veḥinat sheinah we-histalqut ha-moḥin*], so it can combine two opposite things.[22]

The opening verse from Psalm 126 forges a connection between the hope for redemption, the restoration of Zion, and the act of dreaming. But, as we are quick to learn, the dream is aligned with exile, as the latter is depicted metaphorically as sleep, and the dream occurs during sleep when the intellectual faculty, which is marked by the facility to distinguish one thing from its opposite, retreats and the imagination, which is characterized by the tendency to combine one thing and its opposite, dominates; sleep, therefore, should be understood metaphorically as a topos for exilic dormancy, submergence of the soul in the darkness of matter.[23]

In the continuation of the passage, however, Shneur Zalman offers further clarification of the contradictory images that are combined in the dreamscape. Utilizing the symbolism of Lurianic kabbalah, the nature of

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Fordham University Press, 2008). A revised and expanded version will appear as the second chapter in my forthcoming monograph *Open Secret: A Postmodern Reading of Menachem Mendel Schneerson.*

22. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Torah Or* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1991), 28c–d.

23. For a negative assessment of the activity of the imagination conjuring dreams during sleep, a time that the intellect allegedly is not functioning, see Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, *Or ha-Torah: Bemidbar,* vol. 3 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1998), 1011; Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwa'aduyyot 5714,* vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1998), 69.

exile, the proverbial night in which all cows are black, is linked to the enclothing of the pneumatic spark in the garment of the body,[24] a fusion that impels the soul to carry on the gnostic drama of liberating through the act of purification (*berur*) the light that is entrapped in the physical world.[25] The overcoming of body, however, is achieved through transformation rather than obliteration of body. This basic tenet of Habad—a specific application of the doctrine of *avodah be-gashmiyyut*, "corporeal worship," often singled out as a distinctive element of the East-European pietism traced back to the Besht—is expressed by Shneur Zalman in his insistence that even when one is enwrapped in liturgical worship, love of God of necessity is realized through the love that one enacts with and in the body.[26] To appreciate the point, it should be borne in mind that Shneur Zalman distinguishes two kinds of worship: the first is the form of ecstasy (*hitpa'alut*), which is designated the "great love" (*ahavah rabbah*), that is so intense (*aṣumah*) that the heart cannot contain it and hence the soul yearns to leave the body; the second is a form of ecstasy that can be contained by the vessel of the heart and its primary purpose is to draw down the divine efflux from above into the material world.[27] The intent of this passage, as may be gathered from other texts that preserve Shneur Zalman's teaching,[28] is that worship consists of

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24. It is necessary to point out that in Habad thinking the term *adam* applies most specifically to the Jews, a theme that is well-attested in a plethora of kabbalistic texts, including the zoharic and Lurianic sources, which influenced the Lubavitch masters. On the ethnocentric casting of *adam*, see the extensive documentation and analysis in Elliot R. Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond—Law and Morality in Kabbalistic Mysticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 17–128. I will discuss the Habad perspective in the final chapter of *Open Secret*.

25. My use of the word "gnostic" does not necessarily imply any historical or even textual connection between the gnostics in Late Antiquity and the sixteenth-century Safedian kabbalists, though this cannot be ruled out categorically. I am persuaded, however, that the word "gnostic" is an appropriate way to characterize the worldview underlying the mystical theosophy expounded by Luria. See Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1954), 260; Isaiah Tishby, "Gnostic Doctrines in Sixteenth-Century Jewish Mysticism," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 6 (1955): 146–152; Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos: Isaac Luria and His Kabbalistic Fellowship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 144–149.

26. The point is made in a somewhat different terminological register in Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Liqquṭei Torah*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1996), Balaq, 71c.

27. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Torah Or*, 25b.

28. Ibid., 3b, 28c; idem, *Liqquṭei Torah*, vol. 2 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1998), Ha'azinu, 75d.

two phases, the self-annihilation that results from the conjunction (*devequt*) of the soul in the light of the Infinite, on the one hand, and the drawing down of that light through the fulfillment of Torah and ritual commandments to sustain the material world, on the other hand. From a chronological perspective, the latter is consequent to the former, as Shneur Zalman himself put the matter, "It is precisely the nullification of something into nothing that causes the drawing down of nothing into something" (*u-vittul ha-yesh le-ayin dawqa gorem hamshakhat ayin le-yesh*).[29] However, from the perspective of the incorporation (*hitkallelut*) of all things in the infinite essence,[30] and the corollary principle of the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the two must be viewed as expressions of a single phenomenon.[31] In metaphoric terms, the dual movement of worship may be depicted as the ascent and descent (*aliyyah wi-yeridah*) of the angels on the ladder envisaged by Jacob in his dream at Bethel (Gen 28:12) or as the running to and fro (*raṣo we-shov*) of the creatures seen by Ezekiel in his vision of the chariot by the Chebar Canal in Babylonia (Ezek 1:14). The ascent must be followed by descent, the running out by return, but one conjoined to the essence reaches the place of indifference where these opposites are viewed as identical in virtue of their opposition. On this account, the going up and coming down, the running hither and thither, are the same other and consequently other to the same. Worship may be compared to the dream, for it, too, partakes of the paradoxical collusion of opposites: the one completely divested of corporeality is in the position to serve as the agent to maintain the corporeal.

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29. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Torah Or*, 111a.

30. Moshe Idel, "Universalization and Integration: Two Conceptions of Mystical Union in Jewish Mysticism," in *Mystical Union and Monotheistic Faith: An Ecumenical Dialogue*, edited by Moshe Idel and Bernard McGinn (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 27–57, esp. 41–45; Rachel Elior, *The Paradoxical Ascent: The Kabbalistic Theosophy of Habad Hasidism*, translated by Jeffrey M. Green (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 44–45; Naftali Loewenthal, *Communicating the Infinite: The Emergence of the Habad School* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 153, 170.

31. Rachel Elior, "ḤaBaD: The Contemplative Ascent to God," in *Jewish Spirituality From the Sixteenth-Century Revival to the Present*, edited by Arthur Green (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 178–181. For a partial critique of Elior's dialectical approach and an alternative explanation based on positing two complimentary types of worship, see Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 123–124. The position I have staked seeks the middle ground between Elior and Idel.

I will cite an extensive portion of Shneur Zalman's articulation of this point:

> But, in truth, the root of the aspect of the dream is above and its foundation is in the mountains of the supernal holiness. ... Exile is the aspect of sleep and the removal of consciousness [*histalqut ha-moḥin*] ... and then his soul draws life from above and there it is in the aspect of circles, which have no above or below but rather everything is in one equanimity [*ha-kol be-hashwwa'ah aḥat*], the containment [*hitkallelut*] and unification [*hitaḥdut*] of all the matters without any separation or division, as the dictum of the rabbis, blessed be their memory,[32] "these and those are the words of the living God," is known. When it is drawn forth by way of the lines, then there is division ... which is not the case with the aspect of the circles wherein there is no division at all, and there all the things that are separated below are joined and comprised together and there does not appear to be any separation or division amongst them. However, for this aspect to be revealed below, it is only by means of the aspect of sleep and the removal of consciousness in exile. Concerning this it says "I will clothe the heavens in blackness" (Isa 50:3). The heavens are the aspect of the circles and they are garbed in the aspect of blackness and darkness, which is the concealment and hiddenness [*he'lem we-hester*], for then it shines and radiates from the supernal world above, which is the aspect of the circles in the aspect of the dream, the faculty of the imagination to combine two opposites in one subject [*leḥaber shenei hafakhim be-nose eḥad*] as if they were actually one, since in truth they are conjoined and unified in their source in the supernal world, for there is the aspect of circles, as was mentioned above. Only below is there a division of the lines [*hitḥalqut ha-qawin*] by means of *Ḥokhmah* and *Da'at*, so that one line will be like this and the other like that, and then will the opposite be seen and be revealed, for the one is the opposite of the other, and consequently they are separate and distant from one another. Therefore it is impossible for there to be a revelation of the aspect of integration [*gilluy beḥinat ha-hitkallelut*] in the aspect of the disclosure of *Ḥokhmah*, which is the beginning of the division of the lines, but in the aspect of sleep and the removal of consciousness in exile, then the supernal light shines and radiates. It is hidden and concealed in the aspect of blackness and darkness, that is, in the aspect of the garbing of the concealment [*hitlabshut ha-he'lem*] and not in the aspect of disclosure, for the disclosure is the aspect of *Ḥokhmah* and *Da'at*, which is according to the lines.[33]

A positive valence is accorded exile and sleep as it is only through the removal of consciousness (*histalqut ha-moḥin*), which is associated with

32. Palestinian Talmud, Berakhot 1:3, 3b; Babylonian Talmud, Eruvin 13b; Gittin 6b.
33. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Torah Or*, 28d.

them, that the mind can reach the level beyond duality.[34] The root of the dream, therefore, is in the "mountains of the supernal holiness," that is, the aspect of the light of the Infinite (*or ein sof*) positioned in the interiority of *Keter*,[35] the "incomposite will that is above intellect and comprehension" (*raṣon pashuṭ she-lema'alah me-ha-sekhel we-hassagah*),[36] the "essential concealment" (*he'lem aṣmi*)[37] that is the "actual nothing" (*ayin mammash*).[38] The matter is expressed as well in the depiction of the source of the dream as a circle (*iggul*), the geometric figure that symbolizes the property of equanimity (*hashwwa'ah*),[39] the integration (*hitkallelut*) and unification (*hitaḥdut*) of all things in a nondifferentiated unity. By contrast, the line (*qaw*), which begins with the attributes of *Ḥokhmah* and *Da'at*, demarcates

34. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Liqquṭei Torah,* vol. 2, Ki Tavo, 42d.

35. Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Perush ha-Millot* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1993), 55d.

36. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Torah Or,* 98a.

37. Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Sha'arei Orah* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1979), 111a, 134a; idem, *Torat Ḥayyim: Bereshit* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1993), 161b; idem, *Torat Ḥayyim: Shemot* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2003), 96b, 229b, 298b; idem, *Perush ha-Millot,* 26c, 69d, 103d; idem, *Derushei Ḥatunah,* vol. 2 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1991), 476; Shmuel Schneersohn, *Liqquṭei Torah: Torat Shmu'el 5627* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2000), 412; idem, *Liqquṭei Torah: Torat Shmu'el 5632,* vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1999), 136, 137; idem, *Liqquṭei Torah: Torat Shmu'el 5633,* vol. 2 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1994), 510; Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, *Be-Sha'ah she-Hiqdimu—5672* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1991), 82, 404, 417, 420, 421, 460, 461, 474, 482, 586, 644, 663. 900, 905, 906, 1270, 1271, 1276, 1277, 1287, 1298, 1299; Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-Ma'amarim* 5689 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1990), 64; Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwa'aduyyot 5712,* vol. 2 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1997), 179; idem, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwa'aduyyot 5713,* vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1997), 129; idem, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwa'aduyyot 5713,* vol. 2 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1997), 113; idem, *Torat Menaḥem: Sefer ha-Ma'amarim 5714* (Brooklyn: Vaad Hanochos BLahak, 2006), 9, 41–42.

38. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Torah Or,* 22d, 90a, 90b, 90c, 92b, 109a, 109d, 114d; idem, *Liqquṭei Torah,* vol. 1, Behar, 42b, 42d, Bemidbar, 12a, 12d; Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Sha'arei Orah,* 35b, 39a, 54b, 55a, 56a, 79b, 124b; idem, *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (Brooklyn: New York, 1995), 56d.

39. On this technical term in earlier kabbalistic literature, see Gershom Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah,* edited by R. J. W. Werblowsky and translated by Allan Arkush (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 312 and 439 n. 174, and discussion in Elliot R. Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 99–105. For discussion of the term in Habad speculation, see Rachel Elior, *The Theory of Divinity of Hasidut Habad: Second Generation* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982), 37–48, 69–73, 106–107 (Hebrew); idem, *Paradoxical Ascent,* 25–31, 63–72.

the division of the divine pleroma into the right, left, and center columns.[40] In the circle there is a coincidence of opposites and thus the dream, which arises as a result of the imagination's ability to combine disparate things, is assigned supreme value as the channel through which one can reach this supernal light (*or ha-elyon*) beyond discrimination, a light so luminous that it is described as "blackness" (*qadrut*) and "darkness" (*ḥoshekh*),[41] the luminescence that is the garbing of concealment (*hitlabshut ha-he'lem*), the hiding of the hiddenness,[42] a disclosure (*gilluy*) that is appropriate for the circular indifference of the infinite essence as opposed to the linear division into dichotomies.[43] By means of the dream, therefore, one can attain the mystical state of (dis)integration (*hitkallelut*)[44] in which all sense of difference is overcome and the semblance of existence independent of the essence, the nothing-that-is-everything, is annihilated. The propensity of the dreaming imagination to combine opposites is the psychological analogue to the dialectical principle of the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the "great mystery" that is encapsulated in the cliché "two opposites in one subject" (*shenei hafakhim be-nose eḥad*).[45] To cite Shneur Zalman again:

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40. Shneur Zalman's distinction between the circle and the line is based on Lurianic kabbalistic sources where these geometric shapes were employed to delineate the two principal configurations of the divine emanations. Regarding this symbolism, see Ronit Meroz, "Redemption in the Lurianic Teaching," Ph.D. thesis, Hebrew University, 1988, 232–234, 239–242 (Hebrew); Mordecai Pachter, *Roots of Faith and Devequt: Studies in the History of Kabbalistic Ideas* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2004), 131–184.

41. Compare Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Liqquṭei Torah*, vol. 2, Shir ha-Shirim, 20a, where the garbing of darkness related to the dream is compared to the world of chaos in which there was a withdrawal of light that induced the breaking of the vessels and the scattering of the shards below.

42. See parallel in Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Ma'amerei Admur ha-Zaqen 5565*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1980), 186: "As it is written 'I will clothe the heavens in blackness' (Isa 50:3), that is, the 'heavens' refers to the aspect of the perimeters above and they will be garbed in other garments, to be hidden and to be concealed in them in a great concealment and hiddenness."

43. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Liqquṭei Torah*, vol. 1, Shelaḥ, 37d.

44. The term *hitkallelut* is usually translated as "integration," as it denotes the reincorporation of the differentiated self into the nondifferentiated oneness of the Infinite (see above n. 30). I have rendered the term as "(dis)integration" to capture the sense that the integration into the One is at the same time a disintegration of the individual.

45. Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Torat Ḥayyim: Shemot*, 192a. The expression *shenei hafakhim be-nose eḥad* recurs often in Habad sources to mark the paradoxical confluence of opposites. See, for example, Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Liqquṭei Torah*, vol. 2, Neṣavim, 49a; Yitzhak Aizak

> For the one who sees in a dream it is possible that two opposites will be in one subject actually ... By way of comparison, the community of Israel in the time of exile are called "dreamer," as it appears that opposite things in contrast to one another in the extreme are united, and the one is not a contradiction to its opposite, as all the effort of Israel in commerce and matters of this mundane world, which is the opposite and conflicting greatly in relation to the aspect of the nullification of holiness that is found in Israel during the time of prayer when the saying of the Shema is recited with intention, "Hear O Israel [the Lord, our God] the Lord is one" (Deut 6:4), and "there is no other apart from him" (ibid., 4:35). Since there is none apart from him, how it is possible afterward to be involved in mundane matters, in the needs of this world, issues of material sustenance with which one toils greatly in heart and soul? And if it is said that since one's engagement is with matters of this world all day, it is necessary that one does not pray with intention, and one should not direct one's heart in truth, this, too, is not the truth, for even so, one must direct one's heart in truth through prayer, and this is not contradictory, for even though this is a matter and its opposite in actuality, it is like the dream in which one dreams of a thing and its opposite in one substance ... The root of the dream is in the aspect of the supernal perimeter [*ha-maqif elyon*] that comprises all the opposites in one union [*ha-kollel kol hafakhim be-ḥibbur eḥad*], for it encompasses from every side in an equanimity without a linear division at all [*she-maqif mi-kol ṣad be-hashwwa'ah aḥat beli hitḥalqut qawin kelal*]. Before him the darkness and light are equal, everything is considered as equal, and he renders equal the small and the big, all things are esteemed as one in the aspect of nullification before him ... he surrounds and encompasses all the worlds equally and he is entirely removed from the category of division. Therefore, he comprises all the opposites together in one unity.[46]

The dream is enrooted in the "supernal perimeter" (*maqif elyon*), the aspect of the Godhead that precedes the division into binaries, the place of equanimity where opposites coincide. As Shneur Zalman put it in another context, "the root of the dream is from the world of chaos" (*olam ha-tohu*),[47] that is, the

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Epstein, *Ma'amar ha-Shiflut we-ha-Simḥah* (Jerusalem, 1996), 187; Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Torat Ḥayyim: Bereshit,* 88d, 192d, 221d, 244d; idem, *Ner Miṣwah we-Torah Or* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1995), 70a, 84b; idem, *Sha'arei Teshuvah,* 14c; Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, *Ma'amerei Admur ha-Ṣemaḥ Ṣedeq 5614–5615* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1997), 79–80, 87; Shalom Dovber Schneersohn, *Be-Sha'ah she-Hiqdimu—5672,* 728; Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Sefer ha-Ma'amarim 5734–35* (Brooklyn: Wa'ad Kitvei Qodesh, 1989), 74; idem, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5743,* vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1990), 293; Elior, *Paradoxical Ascent,* 69, 97–100.

46. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Ma'amerei Admur ha-Zaqen 5565,* vol. 1, 184–185.

47. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Liqquṭei Torah,* vol. 1, Hosafot, 51b. In that context, the nature of the dream to combine contradictory images is linked to the part of the prayer concerning

amorphous plenum before there is a separation into discrete beings. In the Lurianic lexicon, whence this terminology is derived, the world of chaos (linked exegetically to the description of the earth as *tohu wa-vohu* in Gen 1:2) has a decidedly negative connotation as it came to be applied to the world of punctiform lights (referred to both as *olam ha-neqqudot* and *olam ha-neqqudim*) in the divine economy wherein the breaking of the vessels (*shevirat ha-kelim*) occurred, a cataclysmic event (also referred to on the basis of the scriptural language as the death of the Edomite kings or in accord with the rabbinic legend as the destruction of the primordial worlds[48]) that brought about disorder that had to be ameliorated by a rebalancing of the forces in the "world of rectification" (*olam ha-tiqqun*).[49] Needless to say, it lies beyond the parameters of this study to enter into the intricate details of this cosmological myth. What I have noted, however, is sufficient to make the main point. Habad sources retain this older conception, but there is also a positive nuance accredited to the world of chaos insofar as the light contained there was in abundance and therefore above the delimitation associated with the emanation of the *sefirot* through the agency of the line-of-measure (*qaw ha-middah*), a zoharic elocution that denotes the attribute of judgment by means of which the limitless light is delimited in the configuration of the divine gradations.[50] By locating the source of the dream in the world of chaos, Shneur Zalman is implying that the imagination during sleep draws from this excess of light that overflows any boundary—indeed it is even too

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dreams preserved in the Talmud and later affixed liturgically to the priestly blessing, "Just as you changed the curse of Balaam from curse to blessing, so may you change all my dreams to good" (Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 55b).

48. Scholem, *Major Trends*, 266–267; Isaiah Tishby, *The Doctrine of Evil and the 'Kelippah' in Lurianic Kabbalism* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1942), 28–34 (Hebrew); idem, *The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, translated by David Goldstein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 276–277, 289, 333 n. 263; idem, *Paths of Faith and Heresy: Essays in Kabbalah and Sabbateanism* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982), 23–29 (Hebrew); Joseph Ben-Shlomo, *The Mystical Theology of Moses Cordovero* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1965), 230–238 (Hebrew); Yehuda Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, translated by Arnold Schwartz, Stephanie Nakache, Penina Peli (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 65–67; Meroz, "Redemption," 128–142, 203–208, 239–245; Pinchas Giller, *Reading the Zohar: The Sacred Text of the Kabbalah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 95–98; Fine, *Physician*, 135–138

49. Tishby, *Doctrine of Evil*, 32 n. 5; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 265.

50. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Torah Or*, 39c, 49b, 61b, 97b; idem, *Liqquṭei Torah*, vol. 1, Shemini, 18d; Ki Tazr'ia; Emor, 23d, 34c, 37d, 39c; Beha'alotkha, 31c.

constricting to speak of this light as light, since in the world of chaos the dark and light are not yet distinguished—and that is, consequently, above comprehensible knowledge (*da'at ha-mussag*).[51]

I surmise, moreover, that the depiction of the dream as combining opposites is based on a passage in the *Zohar*, the medieval repository of kabbalistic lore, "There is no dream within which there is not mixed false matters, as they have established, and hence some of them are true and some of them are false, and there is no dream that is not both from this side and from that side."[52] The zoharic text, as its author indicates by referring to an earlier source, is an adaptation of the talmudic dictum attributed to R. Simeon ben Yoḥai and transmitted in the name of R. Yoḥanan, "Just as wheat cannot be without straw, so there can be no dream without nonsense."[53] One can detect two distinct interpretations of this dictum in the textual landscape of the *Zohar*, one that emphasizes that some dreams are true and others are false,[54] and the other that suggests that there is no dream that is not an

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51. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Liqquṭei Torah*, vol. 1, Ṣaw, 13d.

52. Zohar 1:183a. See also ibid., 199b where a contrast is made between dreams that are entirely true and dreams that are an admixture of truth and falsehood. This passage is cited by Solomon Almoli, *Pitron Ḥalomot* (Warsaw, 1902), 6b, to support his claim that prophetic dreams, in contrast to ordinary dreams, do not contain anything false or nonsensical.

53. Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 55a.

54. Zohar 1:150b; 3:25a, 156b. In several zoharic contexts (1:83a, 130a; 2:130a, 267a), the defiled soul is said to receive "deceptive words" from demonic beings during sleep. This theme may be based on the distinction in Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 55b, between the prophetic dream conveyed by an angel (*mal'akh*) and a false dream conveyed by a demon (*shed*). See Zohar 3:234b (*Ra'aya Meheimna*). Another possible source, which combines both talmudic dicta, is the passage cited in *Midrash Tanḥuma*, edited by Solomon Buber (Vilna, 1885), Introduction, 125–126. According to that text, a distinction is made between prophetic vision (*ḥezyon*) and a dream (*ḥalom*) based on the fact that the latter always contains "nonsensical matters" (*devarim beṭelim*). The sentiment expressed in the relevant zoharic passages can also be compared to the Islamic *ḥadīth*, "the true dream (*ru'ya*) is from God, the bad dream (*ḥulm*) is from Satan," cited in Jonathan G. Katz, *Dreams, Sufism and Sainthood: The Visionary Career of Muhammad Al-Zawâwî* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 209 n. 12, and see Menahem J. Kister, "The Interpretation of Dreams: An Unknown Manuscript of Ibn Qutayba's 'Ibârât al-Ru'yâ,'" *Israel Oriental Studies* 4 (1974): 72 n. 26. The division of dreams into false and truthful, which can be traced to the ancient Greeks, is known from the oneiric classification attested in other Muslim and Christian sources in the Middle Ages. See Gustav E. von Grunebaum, "Introduction: The Cultural Function of the Dream as Illustrated by Classical Islam," in *The Dream and Human Societies*, edited by Gustav E. von Grunebaum and Roger Caillois (Berkeley: University of

admixture of truth and falsehood.[55] In the aforecited extract, there is an echo of both explanations, but the predominant drift of that homily seems to be to emphasize that every dream is a hybrid of the veridical and the devious, which appears to be the intent of the original dictum. An even more arresting formulation of this idea is found in another passage where the evil spirit Sarṭiya and the myriad of beings beneath him in the second of the seven palaces of the demonic other side—the shadowy counterparts to the seven palaces of the side of holiness, the seven compartments of the supernal Garden of Eden, one of the standard symbolic prisms for the *Shekhinah*, which correspond to the seven palaces of the Garden of Eden below and to the seven sefirotic emanations above[56]—are said to communicate to the soul through a dream in which words of deception (*millin kedivin*) are mixed in words of truth (*mit'arvei be-millei qeshoṭ*), since a lie can only be sustained if it is expressed in such a way.[57] From this one may adduce that the dream issuing from the satanic powers dissembles its truth in the guise of deceit. As I have noted, however, in at least some zoharic passages, the matter is removed from this taxonomic classification and the dream more generically is characterized as a mélange of what is true and what is untrue. This, I suppose, is the kabbalistic underpinning of the emphasis in Shneur Zalman on the confabulatory power of the dream to combine discrete images. Support for my conjecture is forthcoming from the following comment of the sixth Rebbe, Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn (1880–1950): "In the time of sleep one dreams a dream, for in the dream two opposites come together

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California Press, 1966), 7–9; Steven F. Kruger, *Dreaming in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 83–122; Katz, *Dreams*, 208–210; John C. Lamoreaux, *The Early Muslim Tradition of Dream Interpretation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 35, 61–62, 65–66; Maria Mavroudi, *A Byzantine Book on Dream Interpretation: The Oneirocriticon of Achmet and Its Arabic Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 160 and 166. For the rejection of the view that demons are responsible for divination, see the evidence adduced by Howard Kreisel, *Prophecy: The History of an Idea in Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 341. In spite of the irrefutable historical evidence that systems of dream interpretation have been based on distinguishing true and false dreams, the philosophical import of this distinction is a complex matter that lies beyond the scope of this study.

55. Zohar 1:199b: "Some dreams are entirely true and in some of them there is truth and falsehood."

56. Tishby, *Wisdom*, 468, 591–594.

57. Zohar 2:264a.

in one subject in actuality to the point that it is possible that the foundation of the matter or of the edifice that he sees is a true foundation and upon it the matter is constructed or the opposite matter entirely, for this is the matter of the dream, the combining of two opposite matters, one truth and the other falsehood, and both of them appear as one, and from this example worship at the time of prayer [*avodah de-vi-she'at ha-tefillah*] can be comprehended."[58]

Prima facie, the final assertion is startling, as it implies that prayer, like the dream, is a compound of truth and deceit. But how can this be? To grasp the secret implied here, we must recall, as I noted above, that for Habad masters, the highest rank of worship is the complete eradication that ensues from the worshipper being bound to the light of the Infinite, a nullification so absolute that not only worshipper but worship and worshipped, too, are annihilated in the total (dis)integration of all being and nonbeing into the void that is the essence. Yet, even this form of veneration requires verbal gesticulations and bodily gestures of an incarnate nature. From the ritual obligation to recite the words of the statutory prayers, the contemplative, who has been absorbed in the radiance that is beyond linguistic and/or conceptual demarcation, is compelled to bear in mind that the multiple worlds in the ontic chain come to be through the agency of the supernal word (*hithawwut ha-olamot hu al yedei dibbur ha-elyon*) and thus "the entire concatenation is merely an illumination" (*kelalut ha-hishtalshelut he'arah bilevad*) of this word, which is ineffable name YHWH.[59] Just as the truthful elements of the dream are enmeshed in what is patently false, so too in the matter of worship in the exilic state, one's continued sense of autonomy as an embodied being in a delimited universe seemingly independent of divinity is the dissimilitude—the deceit that appears as truth (*sheqer nidmeh le-emet*) as opposed to the deceit that covers truth (*sheqer mekhasseh al ha-emet*)[60]—that is necessary for one to see through the veil of concealment

58. Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-Ma'amarim 5689*, 244.

59. Ibid.

60. On this distinction, see Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-Ma'amarim 5711* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1986), 159. Moses Ḥayyim Ephraim of Sudlikov, *Degel Maḥaneh Efrayim* (Jerusalem, 1995), 38, similarly notes in his exposition of Ps 126:1 that the comparison of exile to a dream is based on the fact that the dreamer imagines false things to be true. Redemption, by contrast, will consist of seeing the "complete truth" as it is without any semblance of deceit. See also Zadok ha-Kohen of Lublin, *Dover Ṣedeq* (Benei Beraq, 1973), 41c: "Thus all of this world is

(*he'lem*) that is the world (*ha-olam*), according to the wordplay that appears repeatedly in Habad teaching, and in so doing discard the concealment of the veil by carrying out the purification of the light in all the matters of the mundane sphere. "This is [the intent of] 'we will be as dreamers,' to combine two opposites as one, for if his worship in prayer was veritable, then all day long [he will fulfill] 'In all your ways know him' (Prov 3:6), for the trace of the prayer will remain with him and he will be mindful of divinity constantly in all affairs and activities."[61] Beyond this insight, the very prospect of mystical annihilation is inconceivable but from the perspective of the imagination, as the possibility of something becoming nothing, which underlies the pietistic ideal, rests on the comingling of two ostensibly disparate things in a fashion that defies the law of noncontradiction. How can something be incorporated into nothing to which something cannot be attributed, the nothing that is so utterly nothing that to say it is nothing is already to ascribe too much something to it? As I have suggested elsewhere,[62] to comprehend this meontological perspective, it is beneficial to adopt a logic akin to the *madhyamaka*, the middle way, in the Mahāyāna tradition, a logic that posits the identity of opposites in the opposition of their identity, a reclaiming of the middle excluded by the law of the excluded middle. Betraying an affinity to the Buddhist wisdom, Habad speculation on the nature of being and nonbeing posits an emptiness—the void (*efes*) that is above the nothing (*ayin*)—in which all things become empty, even of their own emptiness. Insofar as the void exhibits the coincidence of opposites, the comportment of the dream to combine antinomical images provides a mechanism by which one can reach the abyssal indifference of the essence

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called a 'world of deceit and imagination' [*alma de-shiqra we-dimyon*] as it written 'When [the Lord restores the fortunes of Zion] we will be as dreamers' (Ps 126:1). But in this world it appears as truth [*nidmeh le-emet*]." See idem, *Liqquṭei Ma'amarim* (Benei Beraq, 1973), 104a: "It is known that this world is called the 'world of deceit,' that is, in truth, all that is seen by the eye is deceitful and imaginary, for what is momentarily is called 'deceit,' but in the future there will be the resurrection of the dead and it will become clear that death is imaginary, as it is written 'we will be as dreamers,' and what is in a dream is not true at all." See also idem, *Maḥshavot Ḥaruṣ* (Benei Beraq, 1967), 6b, 50a; idem, *Resisei Laylah* (Jerusalem, 2003), 195–196.

61. Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-Ma'amarim 5689*, 245.

62. Wolfson, "Revisioning the Body."

of the Infinite (*aṣmut ein sof*). The imagination, accordingly, is allocated a prominent role on the mystical path.

The implications of Shneur Zalman's text are made explicit by his son, Dov Baer, who thus commented that the root of dreams

> is extremely high in the aspect of the circles and the perimeters of the aspect of the chaos [*bi-veḥinat iggulim u-maqifin di-veḥinat ha-tohu*] ... for in the dream there are two opposites, as when he dreams that he is very uplifted and then he immediately dreams that he is greatly downtrodden, a thing and its opposite are as one like life and death are as one. Analogously, with regard to the disclosure of divinity in the soul of Israel in exile, which is called "sleep," there are two opposites, the submission of self [*mesirat nefesh*] in reciting the Shema and then, immediately, one is engaged [in loving God] with all one's heart, through commerce [*be-massa u-mattan*], but this is not a thing and its opposite at all as in the dream, for each is a true matter unto itself, and their coming together as one is from the aspect of dreams that join together two opposites. That they come as two opposites, mercy, which is a true matter unto itself, and judgment, which is a true matter unto itself, instructs about the aspect of chaos. In the aspect of the circles of chaos [*ha-iggulim de-tohu*], everything comes together as one without any division at all [*ba'im ha-kol ke-eḥad beli hitḥalqut kelal*], and it is comparable to the time of sleep when all the faculties of the intellect [*koḥot ha-sekhel*] and the properties of the essence of the soul [*middot be-eṣem ha-nefesh*] in the aspect of *yeḥidah* withdraw in elevation after elevation, and there remains only the aspect of the faculty of the imagination in the mind. Even though the aspect of the imagination of dreams is very low, its source is in the supernal perimeter [*be-maqif ha-elyon*] of *yeḥidah* to which all the intelligibles [*sikhliyyim*] and desires [*reṣonot*] ascend, the source of all the intelligible desires in the supreme elevation of the integration as one precisely [*maqor kol ha-reṣonot sikhliyyim be-illuy muflag be-hitkallelut ke-eḥad dawqa*] ... Thus the potency of dreaming that is in the imagination is in *yeḥidah*, for there everything comes as one without division of the will and intellect ... like a circle in which there is no division at all.[63]

Although the withdrawal of intellect during sleep and the exclusive role accorded the imagination places the dream at the lowest end of the gnoseological spectrum, its root is implanted in the highest level, which has both a theosophical and a pneumatic correlate,[64] the encompassing

63. Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Torat Ḥayyim: Bereshit,* 243c–d. See idem, *Torat Ḥayyim: Shemot,* 37d–39a.

64. The attempt on the part of Scholem, *Major Trends,* 340–341, to separate the theosophical and psychological in the case of Habad (which is proffered as a specific example of a phenomenon he thought to be symptomatic of Beshtian hasidism more generally) is not

circle (*maqif*) of the world of chaos that precedes the dichotomization of the indivisible essence and the dimension of the human soul that is called *yeḥidah*, as it denotes its indissoluble unity and consubstantiality with God.[65] Given the status of the source of the dream, we can well understand the contention that it exhibits the quality of combining oppositional and conflictual images.[66] Worship may be compared profitably to the dream, since it, too, imbibes this paradox.[67] The paradigmatic illustration of the point is the recitation of the Shema, the traditional confession of Israel's monotheistic faith. Transposed esoterically, the avowal of God's oneness is an expression of the mystical truth that the divine essence is the sole reality. For the enlightened adept, then, to proclaim that God is one means to gives witness to the insight that all existence, including one's own self, is rendered as nothing vis-à-vis the light of the Infinite. The nullification is so thorough that one has no feeling of oneself at all, not even the sense of being nullified—the ultimate annihilation perforce is an annihilation of the annihilation.[68] And yet, the mandate of the Shema is to express the love of God with one's full embodied presence in the mundane sphere, a point

satisfactory. Scholem's statement that "the secrets of the divine realm are presented in the guise of mystical psychology" fails to appreciate the extent to which these are two mirrors that reflect one another through the difference of their identity. If we are to adopt the language of the secrets of the divine being presented in the guise of the secrets of the soul, then we must equally posit that the secrets of the soul are presented in the guise of the secrets of the divine. I would say this is the case for the history of kabbalah, but it has a particular resonance in the mystical pietism of Habad.

65. To be precise, in the Habad teaching, the aspect of soul called *yeḥidah* is unique to the Jewish people and hence their conception of the consubstantiality of divine and human is limited ethnocentrically.

66. See, however, Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Torat Ḥayyim: Shemot*, 38b–c, where the dreams of prophets, who are completely removed from their carnal bodies, are said to be free of any lie or devious image. See the view of Almoli cited above, n. 52.

67. See Shmuel Schneersohn, *Liqquṭei Torah: Torat Shmu'el 5632*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1999), 257: "This is [the import] of what is written 'we were as dreamers' (Ps 126:1), just as in the time of the dream one can combine two opposites together ... so too in the exile one can combine two opposites, as a person's longing can be for the divine and also have a desire for matters of this world. And it is also possible to act against his will, blessed be he, for this is the matter of the dream."

68. Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Torat Ḥayyim: Bereshit*, 49c, 219c; idem, *Torat Ḥayyim: Shemot*, 292a.

epitomized by the reference to the business transactions with which one must be engaged to fulfill the needs of the physical body.[69]

Along similar lines, Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902–1994), the seventh and hitherto last Rebbe of Lubavitch, remarked that the "principle of worship" (*kelalut ha-avodah*) involves the descent of the soul and its "engagement with the external in the manner of garbing" (*hit'asqut im ha-huṣah be-ofen shel hitlabshut*), the technical term used by Habad masters to denote the incarnation of the spiritual in the physical, the "matter of the amalgamation of two opposites" (*inyan shel ḥibbur shenei hafakhim*). The sensory example (*dugma muḥashit*) that illustrates this truth is the dream, which comes about as a result of the imagination's ability to combine opposites,[70] "the garbing of the expansive consciousness in the diminished consciousness" (*hitlabshut moḥin de-gadlut be-moḥin de-qaṭnut*),[71] that is, the pairing of mercy and judgment, the power to expand, which is engendered as male, and the capacity to restrict, which is engendered as female. By this account, divine worship is manifest in this world in the form of dissimilitude, an idea conveyed by the seemingly bizarre expression, *biṭṭul idyoṭ* (ביטול אידיאט). To comprehend this expression, we must recount the story that is the original setting whence it appears.[72] A group of ḥasidim were engaged in a discussion on the matter of nullification, and as they were walking home late at night still preoccupied with the topic, a Russian officer called out to them *kto idyot* (кто идёт), "Who goes?," and one of the ḥasidim responded *biṭṭul idyoṭ*.[73] According to Schneerson's interpretation, this expression underscores that annihilation is a matter that must be manifest

69. Dov Baer elaborates the point in *Torat Ḥayyim: Shemot*, 38a–b.

70. Compare Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5713*, vol. 1, 200, where the dream is classified as a weakened form of vision (*re'iyah be-ḥalishut*) by means of which "it is possible to see two opposite things."

71. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5743*, vol. 2 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1993), 1060.

72. A version of the story is related in a talk from Simḥat Torah 5698 (1937) given by Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-Siḥot 5696–Ḥoref 5700* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1989), 251.

73. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5742*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1990), 330. The moral of story, according to Schneerson, is that the ḥasid must respond to the non-Jew even though the latter has no conception of the matter of annihilation. The form of the response, therefore, was "not normal," but the one who offered it was able to conceal the matter without lying overtly. See also Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5711*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1994), 274 n. 42.

in the mundane realm—the one that goes about in the world is precisely the one who experiences somatically[74] the utter eradication of existence (*bittul bi-meṣi'ut*)[75] to the point of not feeling any ontological separation from God[76]—so that the divinity will be fully revealed in every corner of the universe,[77] even the place most remote from holiness, a bridging of the sacred and profane that is signified by the combination of Russian and Hebrew in the phrase *bittul idyot*.[78] Alternatively expressed, the nullification that is attained through devotion and sacrifice is not a disincarnate state; the stripping away of corporeality is itself an incarnality of being, an embodiment that is realized through the idiocy of the unfettered imagination, the psychic faculty that juxtaposes what apparently does not belong together, that is, the material something rendered as nothing essential through its integration into the essential nothing that is the immaterial something, the ultimate concealment that must be concealed from being what it is concealed not to be. It is in this sense that the quietistic ideal of abnegation, which is linked to the pietistic virtue of love, betrays "the image of the dream that blends two opposites."

In combining opposites, the dream instantiates that which must be judged by reason as "most impossible" (*nimna ha-nimna'ot*), the manifestation of

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74. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5746*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1990), 75.

75. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5742*, vol. 3 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1990), 1648. See also idem, *Sefer ha-Ma'amarim 5732–33* (Brooklyn: Wa'ad Kitvei Qodesh, 1989), 366.

76. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5748*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1990), 65–66.

77. The story is interpreted in this way in Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5712*, vol. 1 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1995), 247. In that context, the Rebbe used the expression *ḥasid idyot*.

78. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5751*, vol. 3 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1993), 405. It is worth pondering if a double entendre is not implied by the expression *idyot*, the Russian идёт conveying the sense of "going" and the Yiddish homonym אידיאט, as its English equivalent, "idiot." If for the sake of argument we accept this premise, then the intent of the story is that the ḥasid responded to the guard in a way that was ostensibly respectful but actually derogatory. Speaking out of both sides of his mouth, as it were, the ḥasid was saying "Idiot, no one is going about," that is, the one who has become nothing through *bittul* is the one you have addressed. The response *bittul idyot*, accordingly, is duplicitous, communicating truth through a veneer of untruth. This hypothesis requires a more careful analysis of all the passages where the crucial phrase appears.

the essence (*gilluy ha-aṣmut*) that is essentially beyond manifestation, the intermingling of corporeality and spirituality (*ḥibbur bein gashmiyyut we-ruḥaniyyut*),[79] and hence it anticipates the messianic future[80] in which there will be a disclosure of the divine quiddity (signified linguistically in Habad thought by the terms *aṣmut*, "essence," and *mahut*, "substance") without any obstacle, an idea that is anchored exegetically in the eschatological predictions "and your master will no longer be covered and your eyes will see your master," *we-lo yekkanef od moreikha we-hayu eineikha ro'ot et moreikha* (Isa 30:20), and "for every eye shall behold the Lord's return to Zion," *ki ayin be-ayin yir'u be-shuv yhwh ṣiyyon* (ibid., 52:8). The seeing without a garment is the mystical import as well of the verse "on that day the Lord shall be one and his name shall be one" (Zech 14:9), "for he will not be garbed and covered in an encasement, and he will be called as he is written,"[81] that is, the name YHWH will no longer be pronounced through

79. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwa'aduyyot 5713*, vol. 3 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1998), 91. According to this passage, the manifestation of the essence as it is (*gilluy ha-aṣmut kemo she-hu*) occurs most specifically in the Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem Temple, the "gate of heaven," *sha'ar ha-shamayim* (Gen 28:17) on earth, the place that is above place. See also Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwwa'aduyyot 5743*, vol. 1, 293. On the depiction of the Holy of Holies as the place that is beyond place and the time that is beyond time, see Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Liqquṭei Sihot*, vol. 2 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2004), 407–408; idem, *Torat Menaḥem: Hitwa'aduyot 5712*, vol. 3 (Brooklyn: Lahak Hanochos, 1996), 186–188.

80. It is of interest to note that Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Perush ha-Millot*, 54d, associates Joseph, the interpreter of dreams, with Hadar, the eighth of the Edomite kings, "the root of the rectification of the purifications" (*shoresh ha-tiqqun shel ha-berurim*). The portrayal of Hadar as the beginning of the *tiqqun* can be traced to zoharic literature, especially the Idrot strata (1:223b; 3:135a–b, 142a, 292a), an idea related to the fact that he is the only one of the kings of Edom whose wife, Meheṭabel, is mentioned (Gen 36:39), an exegetical point exploited especially in Lurianic kabbalah. See references cited above, n. 48, and see also Elliot R. Wolfson, "Divine Suffering and the Hermeneutics of Reading: Philosophical Reflections on Lurianic Mythology," in *Suffering Religion*, edited by Robert Gibbs and Elliot R. Wolfson (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 130–131; idem, *Language*, 311 and 387. Significantly, in the passage from Dov Baer, the redemptive activity is linked to dream interpretation. Needless to say, the soteriological role assigned to Joseph also relates to his symbolic relationship to *Yesod*, the phallic potency, which is connected as well to the number eight. The messianic implications of this divine attribute are attested in older kabbalistic sources, notably prominent in the Castilian kabbalah from the period of the emergence of the *Zohar*. See Liebes, *Studies*, 12–19.

81. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Torah Or*, 28d.

the epithet Adonai but it will be vocalized as it is inscripted. This, too, is the import of the opening verse of Shneur Zalman's discourse, "When the Lord restores the fortunes of Zion—we will be as dreamers" (Ps 126:1): "this gradation and aspect of the dream will be revealed to the point that everyone will discern, know, and comprehend the vitality [*ḥiyyut*] that emanates upon them in the time of exile, which is the aspect of the dream. Therefore, it says 'we will be as dreamers'."[82]

The dream is a prolepsis of redemption, which is depicted as a seeing of the essence without any garment (*beli levush*),[83] beholding the real, one might say, beyond the veil of metaphor. But Shneur Zalman, and those who followed his path, appropriated and elaborated the dialectic of disclosure and concealment enunciated by previous kabbalists, especially conspicuous in the sixteenth century: there can be no disclosure of the divine that is not concomitantly a concealment insofar as what is revealed is the essence that cannot be essentialized and hence must always remain concealed.[84] Utilizing conventional apophatic modes of discourse, it can be said of this essence that there "is no comprehension with respect to it" (*ki ein bo shum tefisah*),[85] that it is the "negation of thought" (*afisat ha-ra'ayon*),[86] the silence that is

82. Ibid.

83. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Liqquṭei Amarim: Tanya*, pt. 1, ch. 36, 46a–b; idem, *Seder Tefillot mi-kol ha-Shanah* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1986), 132a; Dov Baer Schneersohn, *Sha'arei Teshuvah*, 142d; Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Liqquṭei Siḥot*, vol. 9 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 2000), 63–64.

84. Ben-Shlomo, *Mystical Theology*, 95–100; Bracha Sack, *The Kabbalah of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1995), 57, 67–68, 192, 256 (Hebrew); Meroz, "Redemption," 105–106, 165; Wolfson, "Divine Suffering," 110–115; idem, *Language*, 27. For the impact of the dialectic of disclosure and concealment on Habad, see Elior, *Theory of Divinity*, 67–71; idem, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 116–117, 121–122.

85. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Torah Or*, 114c.

86. Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Or ha-Torah: Devarim*, vol. 6 (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1984), 2204; Shmuel Schneersohn, *Liqquṭei Torah: Torat Shmu'el 5627*, 413. The expression *afisat ha-ra'ayon* as a designation of *Keter* is found in Moses Cordovero, *Pardes Rimmonim* (Jerusalem, 1962), 23:1, 7c, 23:8, 18c; idem, *Or Ne'erav* (Jerusalem, 1974), 57. But the source cited by both Menachem Mendel and his son Shmuel is Meir Poppers, *Me'orot Natan* (Frankfurt am Main, 1709), 10b: "*Efes* [is the name by which] the Infinite is called, for there is no comprehension of it [*ki ein bo tefisah*], and in it is the negation of thought [*u-vo afisat ha-ra'ayon*]." The work of Poppers is referred to as *Me'orei Or*. The passage is mentioned as well in the addenda to Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Torah Or*, 114c.

the "complete nullification of essence" (*bitṭul ha-aṣmut mi-kol we-khol*),[87] the void (*efes*) that is "more than nothing" (*mer eyder nisht*),[88] the "essential concealment that is not in existence at all as it is also concealed to itself" (*he'lem ha-aṣmi she-eino be-meṣi'ut kelal we-hu he'lem gam le-aṣmo*).[89] The essence, in a word, can be spoken only to the extent that it is unspoken. The oneiric imagination is privileged, as the way to reach the unknowable and unnameable is through the mental faculty that combines opposites and thus points to the mystery of equanimity, the state of indifference wherein opposites are identical in their opposition.[90] Restoration to the Infinite to the point of the absolute annihilation of all but divinity—the mystical import of the traditional notion of repentance, *teshuvah*, which is etymologically from a root that means to return—is predicated on the removal of consciousness, which is indicative of exile, but also on the illumination of the supernal light in the garb of concealment (*hitlabshut ha-he'lem*), as it is only by being concealed that the concealment can be revealed. Through the dream, therefore, the very distinction between sleep and wakefulness, exile and redemption, is itself transcended in the luminal darkness where the contrast between dark and light is no longer operative. Esoterically rendered, one shall awaken to the dream no longer dreamt as a dream, the vision of truth imagined to be true.

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87. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Liqquṭei Torah*, vol. 1, Naso, 20c. On the depiction of silence as the nullification of existence (*bitṭul bi-meṣi'ut*), see Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Torah Or*, 113b; Dov Baer Schneerson, *Torat Ḥayyim: Shemot*, 349d, 450c–d. And see idem, *Torat Ḥayyim: Bereshit*, 141a, where silence is linked to the "essential nullification" (*bitṭul ha-aṣmi*).

88. Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, *Or ha-Torah: Siddur Tefillah* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1984), 364.

89. Yosef Yitzhak Schneersohn, *Sefer ha-Ma'amarim 5689*, 64. The expression *he'lem ha-aṣmi* is used frequently by exponents of Habad philosophy. See above, n. 37.

90. On the quietistic ideal of negation that ensues from being conjoined to the Infinite, see the characteristic formulation of Aaron Halevi Horowitz of Staroselye, *Sha'arei ha-Yiḥud we-ha-Emunah* (Shklov, 1820), pt. 2, 46b: "To give one's soul in the unification, that is, to nullify and to be bound to the Infinite, blessed be he, in his essence, in the manner of nullifying all the worlds, one's body, and one's soul to the essence of the Infinite, blessed be he, in the way that all the worlds are nullified entirely, and everything is considered as having no worth at all in relation to his essence." On the role of mystical annihilation (*bitṭul*) and sacrifice of self (*mesirat nefesh*) in Habad, see Elior, "ḤaBaD," 181–191; idem, *Paradoxical Ascent*, 143–157; Loewenthal, *Communicating*, 188–194.