**Individualism, Truth, and Anti-Magic for *Tzaddikim* Only:**

**Peshischa-Style Elements in the Philosophy of R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov**

In a passage in his work *Ramatayim Zofim*, R. Shmuel Shinover describes his first meeting with his revered rabbi, R. Simcha Bunem of Peshischa (1765-1827).[[1]](#footnote-1) R. Shmuel had been a hasid of the Galician Admor R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov (1768-1825),[[2]](#footnote-2) and he notes: “When I appeared before him [R. Simcha Bunem] for the first time during Passover, I mentioned to him that on the previous holiday I had visited the holy Rebbe, R. Mendele of Kosov *z”l.* [R. Simcha Bunem] said that his feet burned to go visit this Jew, and that he had never met this *tzaddik*.”[[3]](#footnote-3) From the context, the author clearly cites this incident as evidence of the ability of *tzaddikim* to know each other’s souls without ever meeting in person. But the passage inspires us to ask another question: what was the basis of R. Simcha Bunem’s admiration for R. Menachem Mendel?

To the best of our knowledge, R. Simcha Bunem was a Polish *tzaddik* who created an elitist, individualist, almost anarchic form of Hasidism, reducing the status of the *tzaddik* and reinforcing the importance of the individual and his personal responsibility. This Hasidism emphasized the inner aspect [*pnimi*]of divine worship, required the individual to be truthful to himself [*emet*], and decried the culture of miracle-working [*moftim*]. R. Simcha Bunem’s Hasidism also nurtured scholarship and demanded constant renewal [*hithadshut*] in worship. R. Menachem Mendel, by contrast, is usually considered a Galician-style *tzaddik*. His popular branch of Hasidism was replete with magic, and it glorified the position of the *tzaddik* at the expense of the individual. This form of Hasidism espoused a material form of *tzaddikut* that centered on the Rebbe’s miracles. Most followers of this doctrine lacked Torah education, and R. Menachem Mendel encouraged his hasidim to pursue simple worship without demanding that they seek to transcend everyday observance.

What, then, encouraged R. Bunem to want to “visit this Jew”? Of course, the simple answer to this question is that these are normal words of admiration expressed by one *tzaddik* for another. Hasidic literature is replete with such statements. Furthermore, admiration for an individual and his qualities does not necessary equal agreement with his practices. This answer can serve as an explanation, or at least part of one. However, a comprehensive analysis of R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov’s book *Ahavat Shalom* raises another possibility, as it reveals a certain affinity between the methods of Kosov and Peshischa on more significant issues. Alongside characteristic formulations of the materialist theory of the *tzaddik* who exerts his influence on the “lifespan, children, and livelihood” (*banei, chayei, mezonei*)of his hasidim, some statements in this book express support for individualism, truth, and even a measure of disapproval for the veneration of miracles. But these elements are colored by one important difference: while the Peshischa method imposed this doctrine on every *hasid*, Kosov made it the exclusive prerogative of the *tzaddik*. The exception to this rule is the solid attribute of renewal, which both methods imposed on everyone. The difference between a requirement for the public and one for *tzaddikim* is substantial. But this affinity with the values of Peshischa, while subordinate to such differences, rarely appears in other sources.

Could it be that R. Bunem heard that his Galician colleague followed this doctrine, and admired him for that reason? We cannot know for sure. Either way, considering the extensive interest that Peshischa has inspired both in the academic world and among spiritual seekers in non-academic circles, *Ahavat Shalom* deserves a proper reading, as it has yet to be subjected to rigorous academic analysis. In the following study, I will analyze the Peshischa-style elements that feature in the thought of R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov. Among these, the sole characteristic missing is the virtue of Torah scholarship; although R. Menachem Mendel himself had a scholarly background [*yada lilmod*],[[4]](#footnote-4) I did not find any evidence that he tried to foster a superior educated elite.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Before I begin, I should mention that the above-mentioned Peshischa-style characteristics – individualism, truth, renewal, and scholarship – are based on the accepted view of this method. This view often appears in sources published after R. Simcha Bunem’s lifetime, mainly hasidic but also works of maskilim. These sources were widely accepted by leading academic researchers.[[6]](#footnote-6) Later interpretations of Peshischa identified in it a message that approached the viewpoint of Haskalah (Zederbaum, Meises),[[7]](#footnote-7) as well as socialism (Raphael Mahler),[[8]](#footnote-8) existentialism (Martin Buber, Michael Rosen),[[9]](#footnote-9) and other quasi-modern theories. Recently, however, some researchers have questioned this portrayal. Uriel Gellman’s challenging work asserts that the popular conception of the Peshischa method is unfounded, biased, and therefore, misleading. This is true for portrayals of the Peshischa social-organizational system (such as the role of the *tzaddik*, attitudes toward miracles, social position, and scholarly elitism) as well as for descriptions of its philosophical layer “and for the basic distinctions that differentiate it as a unique vision in the history of Hasidism.”[[10]](#footnote-10) This approach attempts to deconstruct the “Peshischa myth,” placing this supposedly eccentric form of Hasidism on one plane with the other contemporary forms of Hasidism and to a significant extent, showing how it is more typical than unique.

In my view, Zippi Kaufman has adopted a more balanced and convincing approach to this issue. In her careful analysis, and by granting differential weight to the sources available to us, she concludes that R. Simcha Bunem’s thought was indeed characterized by the aforementioned emphases, as well as by mystical aspects that were previously relegated to the sidelines.[[11]](#footnote-11) But the “anarchist” aspects that were ascribed to its proponents arose from members of the group’s extremist fringe, and were not representative of their Rebbe’s views. I accept Kaufman’s approach and adopt it as the underlying assumption of this article. It seems, therefore, that the above list of Peshischa characteristics (except for scholarship) may serve as a benchmark against which we can compare the philosophy of R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov.

**Individualism for Tzaddikim**

The individualism of Peshischa is expressed by the concept that every Jew has his own method of divine worship, which derives from the “root of his soul” [*shoresh nishmato*]. Thus, every Jew must aspire to perform his divine worship from the depths of his soul, and not imitate the worship of others. In the more hyperbolic formulations of this concept, R. Bunem of Peshischa states that the *tzaddik* does not demonstrate his own method of divine worship to the hasid, but rather assists him in finding his own method.[[12]](#footnote-12) One individual may worship God with love another with awe, one may place emphasis on one mitzvah and another on a different one – all of these methods are acceptable, as long as the person does it from his inner soul. Rosen views this stance as a call for “authenticity” in the existential sense of the word.[[13]](#footnote-13) A similar approach appears in several sayings of R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov. In his view, however, this religious pluralism is unique to the *tzaddikim*. In a homily delivered on Tu b’Av 5581, R. Menachem Mendel explains the following statement by R. Eleazar: “In the future, the Holy One, blessed be He, will dance with the *tzaddikim*, and He will sit among them in the Garden of Eden.”[[14]](#footnote-14)

Every *tzaddik* is constantly exerting himself on a certain characteristic or level in his divine worship that he wishes to achieve, or on an aspect of awe or love or repentance, according to his ability. Each one works to bring to fruition that characteristic which his heart wishes to attain. Each works on that specific feature for the Holy One, blessed be He. No two people in the world are alike: one exerts more effort in prayer, while another labors more on Torah, as appropriate. In the World to Come, the Holy One will dance with the *tzaddikim*, creating a circle that unites all facets of divine worship: awe and love, Torah, repentance, prayer. In truth, God Himself performs all of these methods: He prays, He dons *tefillin*. Everything is present in God, because He includes all that is good and holy.[[15]](#footnote-15)

In *Ahavat Shalom*, R. Menachem Mendel writes in a similar vein, commenting on the biblical verse:“And Jacob went on his way.”

“And Jacob went on his way, and angels of God met him [*va-yifge’u bo*]” (Gen. 32:2). This should be interpreted as follows. As we know, the essence of worship is to unite and connect the bride of youth with her beloved, and to unite them in complete communion, as appropriate. But several levels ascend from the bottom rung to the top level, as steps on top of steps. While each step represents the word of the Living God, and each one leads to the same place, the *tzaddik* must follow his own unique path and never stray from it. Although he knows that the path that his fellow pursues is also legitimate, still it is preferable that he not stray from the path that is unique to him, and avoid pursuing first one method and then another. One who does this will merit the angels searching to unite with him. This is the meaning of “And Jacob went on his way” – in other words, he followed his own unique path. “And angels of God met him,” this means they met him [on the path]. “And he lighted upon a certain place” (Gen. 28:11) – because of this, he merited the angels seeking to connect with him. There is no need for further explanation.[[16]](#footnote-16)

At the beginning of this statement, it seems that R. Menachem Mendel is attempting to define a hierarchy in the *tzaddikim*’smethod of worship (“But several levels ascend from the bottom rung to the top level, steps on top of steps”). But in the end, this message is relegated to the margin, and the commentary is a paean to pluralism and individualism in divine worship, and to consistent adherence to each of these methods. The emphasis on the *tzaddik* is less apparent here, but he does state clearly that “the *tzaddik* must follow his own unique path.”

**“Truth” for Tzaddikim**

The Pshischa concept of *emet* (“truth”) means more than the basic requirement to say things as they are and to eschew lies. It denotes the need for an individual to know himself as he truly is, not deceive himself, and be faithful to himself (here the concept of truth encounters “authenticity,” or Peshischa individualism). The attribute of truth of the first and simple type appears frequently in other forms of Hasidism, particularly in Karlin.[[17]](#footnote-17) But this Pshischa-style, seemingly “existential” conception of truth is not characteristic of most other branches of Hasidism, at least not in any prominent way. This demand for self-knowledge requires the individual to reflect on the inner workings of his soul and subject himself to piercing, even agonizing, self-judgment. In the Peshischa method, and afterwards in the Kotsk method as well, *tzaddikim* insisted on the difficulty of achieving authentic self-knowledge of this type. We find similar expressions in R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov’s writings:

In the usual practice of this world, a person may ask his fellow to reveal something to him. If his fellow does not want to fulfill his request right away and fully, he says, “I’ll tell you the truth of the matter.” However, he does not tell him the whole truth – he only gives an approximation. When his fellow senses that he has not revealed the whole truth, he begs him to reveal the truth in its entirety. Then his fellow replies: “Now I will reveal to you the whole truth.” But still he does not reveal the entire truth; instead he only reveals more than previously. He repeats this several times, until he reveals the essence of the whole truth.

We thus conclude that before his fellow revealed the whole truth, even though it was truth – it was not the whole truth, but only a semblance of it. Similarly, a person may think that he has found the whole truth, but when he finally reaches a higher level, he feels and sees that previously he was not on the level of the whole truth. If he falls from his level, Heaven forbid, he understands that when he was on that level, it was not the level of truth – for true speech will last forever.[[18]](#footnote-18)

From the context, it is clear that the requirement is not simply to eschew falsehood, but rather to approach “truth” by knowing oneself. The process of attaining this truth is convoluted and arduous. The need to subject oneself to this emotional turmoil is a consequence of the fact that our world is tainted with lies which emanate from the “the sin of Adam, the pollution of the primeval serpent.” But “in the future, with God’s help, speedily in our days [...] the whole truth will appear, immediately and in absolute completeness.”[[19]](#footnote-19) We can see that according to this text, an individual may attain truth in this world as well as in the World to Come; he is, therefore, *required* to attain it. The question is only to what extent he must pass through the pitfalls of error.

In another passage attributed to R. Menachem Mendel, he adopts a more pessimistic tone:

As the holy *tzaddik* R. Mendele of Kosov *z”l* said, there is no one in the world who has attained the attribute of truth in its entirety. Rather, one may merely be more distant from falsehood, and another even farther. But the real truth in its perfect wholeness – this world is not deserving or in the proper state for receiving the real truth in its entirety. This will not be until the fulfillment of the verse in Daniel 12[:11], “And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.” [*aleph resh tzadik*]. This is [equal to the gematriya of] *hishlich emet artza* [“cast truth to the ground” – *aleph resh tzadik*], and this is also [equal to the gematriya of] *ta’ale emet min ha’aretz* [“raise truth from the ground” [*aleph resh tzadik*].[[20]](#footnote-20)

In contrast to the previous passage, it is unclear whether the Rebbe is referring to truth in the sense of an individual’s self-knowledge. We may, however, assume that this is what he has in mind.

The requirement to know oneself well is supposed to lead the individual to humility. In almost all forms of Hasidism, we find repeated demands for recognition of the Creator’s greatness and humanity’s inferiority, and particularly for the individual’s recognition of his own lowliness.[[21]](#footnote-21) Often, teachers of late Hasidism use the terms “nullification of being” and “transforming the ‘I’ [*ani*] into ‘nothingness’ [*ayin*]” In early Hasidism, these terms expressed ecstatic states of self-negation,[[22]](#footnote-22) emphasizing the requirement to completely nullify the value of the individual, or extreme adherence to the quality of humility.[[23]](#footnote-23)

On this issue, R. Menachem Mendel is no different from his colleagues, and he even coined several pithy phrases on the topic. However, alongside these extreme demands, in the writings of many hasidic masters we find a willingness to permit the individual to sometimes recognize his own greatness, when this will help him to escape despair and reinforce his worship of God. This “permission” is mostly supported by the verse “And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord” (II Chronicles 17:6), but sometimes other sources are invoked. Naturally, the hasidic thinkers do not (and cannot) give precise criteria for selecting one approach over the other. Most of hasidic literature simply presents the conflicting demands. But in Peshischa thought, we can see a tendency to use this dualistic tension to emphasize the of pursuing the truth, and perhaps also its evasiveness. Kaufman calls this “the dialectic of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs,” where Ecclesiastes represents the concept of the individual’s *shfelut* (baseness), while the Song of Songs represents the appreciation of the individual’s positive qualities, both physical and spiritual.[[24]](#footnote-24)

R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov articulates this tension, but his writings mainly address the *tzaddik*’s need to distance himself from a base mind-set so that he can stand before God and pray. Without recognition of his own value, the *tzaddik* cannot “pray to God on behalf of the Jewish people that He fulfill their needs in abundance, even when confident that he is deserving of this.” With this awareness, the *tzaddik* feels that he embodies *behinat kol* (the attribute of “All”). This is the same feeling of greatness that was expressed by Hillel the Elder when he said, “If I am here, everyone is here” (Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 53a).[[25]](#footnote-25) However, because the *tzaddik*’s tends to be fundamentally humble, sometimes he attempts to adopt the feeling of the attribute of “All,” not from the depths of his soul, but rather in an attempt to imitate *tzaddikim* who have already achieved this quality. R. Menachem Mendel disqualifies this aspiration:

Sometimes, a person examines himself and finds that he has not yet achieved this quality, *behinat* *kol*, and he desires intensely to attain it. However, this desire does not stem from the attribute of truth alone, but rather its essence is one person’s jealousy for his fellow. When he observes this quality in another, out of the intensity of jealousy he also desires this quality. Therefore, our holy Torah warns a person against desiring all that belongs to your fellow, meaning that one should not desire it because he sees that quality in another. Rather, it is appropriate to yearn for this quality, the attribute of “All,” out of truth, so that he can pray before the Holy One, and speak to God and pray on behalf of the entire Jewish people and grant them divine abundance, but not out of jealousy.[[26]](#footnote-26)

Here as well, similarly to typical Peshischa texts, the quality of truth is coupled with the requirement of individualism. But for R. Menachem Mendel, the need to attain the truth derives from internal dilemmas in the soul of the *tzaddik*. It is specific to the *tzaddik* as it is he, and no one else, who must perform his acts by supplicating before God.

The term *behinat kol* is key to R. Menachem Mendel’s philosophy; it appears dozens of times in his work *Ahavat Shalom*. But as we might expect from the non-methodical philosophies of the great hasidic masters, the this term can mean different things in different contexts. In many places in *Ahavat Shalom*, we find that the attribute of “All” is “the quality of Jacob,” in other words, that quality of the *tzaddik* that combines the attribute of *Hessed* – kindness (associated with Abraham) with the attribute of *Din –* judgment (associated with Isaac).[[27]](#footnote-27) Thus judgment becomes integrated with compassion, and abundant blessing emanates into the world.[[28]](#footnote-28) The attribute of “All” is also associated with Joseph, who embodies the quality of *Yesod* or foundation, which channels the divine light and transforms it into abundance that emanates into the world.[[29]](#footnote-29) In some places he relates this quality to Shabbat, which combines the totality of all blessings;[[30]](#footnote-30) to the Land of Israel, “which has no worldly deficiency;”[[31]](#footnote-31) or to manna, which “contained all tastes.”[[32]](#footnote-32) In other locations he defines “All” as unity, stating that “You should have only one heart [...], and this is called the blessing of ‘All,’ in the sense of being included in one another, [...] the attribute of unity and love.”[[33]](#footnote-33)

As for our topic, R. Menachem Mendel’s statements are conflicting. As we have seen, the attribute of “All” represents the *tzaddik*’s sense of distinction and eminence. Elsewhere he notes that this is characteristic of an individual who is not troubled by his negative qualities, but rather “happy with his lot, both materially and spiritually.” In that source he connects this quality to Jacob, who said, “I have everything [*kol*]” (Gen. 33:11).[[34]](#footnote-34) However, in at least one place, he speaks of the aspect of *kol* as the quality of *shfelut* – baseness,[[35]](#footnote-35) and teaches that “every intelligent individual must realize and work to attain the quality of the holy Shabbat, the quality of the Land of Israel, the quality of ‘All,’ for there he will achieve true baseness.”[[36]](#footnote-36) Unexpectedly, in this homily, Jacob is also connected with the quality of baseness, as “Jacob means heel, the quality of baseness.”[[37]](#footnote-37) The question addressed here is not whether both qualities are endorsed – the quality of eminence and the quality of baseness. Indeed, R. Menachem Mendel writes that both are needed, each in different situations[[38]](#footnote-38): “Therefore, each time, every intelligent person must weigh on the scales of justice which side to emphasize. He must decide, sometimes inclining toward greatness, sometimes toward baseness, according to the need of that particular moment. The *tzaddik* will follow the path appropriate for him at that specific time.”[[39]](#footnote-39) Instead, the problem here is that R. Menachem Mendel assigns these two opposing aspects to the same attribute – *behinat kol*, the quality of “All.” Some might say that this is a given, that the quality of “All” contains everything, including these opposing qualities; but this is not what we find in the sources discussed here. At any rate, R. Menachem Mendel views the quality of “All” as one of the outstanding characteristics of the *tzaddik*.

**Spiritual *Tzaddikut* and Materialist *Tzaddikut* – Anti-Magia for *Tzaddikim***

Peshischa is considered a Hasidic school that shifted away from the path of the “materialist *tzaddikut*” that characterized most of the *tzaddikim* of Poland and Galicia. According to the accepted Peshischa myth, R. Bunem’s hasidim belittled miracles and the provision of material assistance. To them, the *tzaddik*’s main importance was his ability to give them spiritual instruction in methods of divine worship. Yet in reality, the picture was not so sharp, as R. Bunem himself was credited with miracles, which further exalted his reputation in the view of his hasidim.[[40]](#footnote-40) This should not surprise us, as we would be hard put to find any *tzaddik* who did not demonstrate his power through miracles; this even includes *tzaddikim* who were considered opponents of miracle-working. However, R. Bunem’s view of the *tzaddik* may certainly be considered in the category of “spiritual *tzaddikut*,” similar to that of R. Shneur Zalman of Liady before him and several *tzaddikim* that came after him. R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov, on the other hand, followed in the footsteps of R. Elimelech of Lizhensk and others, and viewed bestowing material abundance as one of the *tzaddik*’s major roles. Yet here as well, the picture is hardly precise. In R. Elimelech’s writings, we identify a certain tension between the powerful desire to ascend to spiritual heights through mystical experiences, and the need to return to the earthly world to bestow material abundance.[[41]](#footnote-41) For R. Menachem Mendel, this tension is slightly different: on one side is the *tzaddik*’s aspiration to teach his hasidim about worshipping God, while on the other is the need to bestow material abundance. Both cases describe a similar conflict –between spiritual *tzaddikut* (in all its varieties) and material *tzaddikut*.

When discussing material *tzaddikut*, we must distinguish between different forms. First, we differentiate between the *tzaddik*’s role in regularly bestowing divine abundance, between attending to the welfare of his *tzaddikim* or of the Jewish people as a whole – their “lifespan, children, and livelihood” – and his activity as a miracle-worker. Both activities are demonstrations of the *tzaddik*’s supernatural powers and ability to influence earthly reality. Thus, both are worthy of being considered magic in a “soft” sense. Only a focused act that creates a paranormal change in the reality observed by the senses can be considered “hard” magic.[[42]](#footnote-42) Peshischa took a critical stance toward both types of magic, but not through denying the tzaddik’s ability to create the change – rather, by expressing contempt for those who asked him to perform such acts instead of requesting spiritual guidance.[[43]](#footnote-43) As we will see below, R. Menachem Mendel demonstrates a positive attitude toward soft magic, along with a sense of restrained discomfort. But he demonstrates a generally negative attitude toward magic in the “hard” sense.

As we have seen above, R. Menachem Mendel considers Joseph the ideal individual who bestows divine abundance on others in this world. By contrast, Moses represents the individual who instructs the Jewish people in God’s path and in the ways of divine worship. To him, the verse “And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him” (Exodus 13:19) implies the need to integrate both types of leadership. To illustrate this, he gives the following parable:

This may be interpreted through a parable. Once there was a king who had two generals. One oversaw provisions, supplying the soldiers with food and bread, and the other needs and supplies of war. The other was responsible for leading the battle, giving tactical orders with astuteness, and directing the soldiers in conducting campaigns one after the other, as soldiers usually do in war. The second general, the one in charge of instructing the soldiers in how to conduct the war, feared that perhaps the first general, the one in charge of preparing the battle provisions, was not performing his appointed duty in full. If so, this would be a disadvantage for his [the second general’s] own role. He would be unable to lead his soldiers in the optimal way, because he would not have all the provisions that he required. He then thought of a sensible suggestion. He would join the first general and assist him in his role, so that [the first general] would not falter, and so that he would be able to lead his soldiers in his special role.

The moral of the story is clear. The Holy One, blessed be He, appoints two kinds of *tzaddikim*: one instructs the masses in divine worship with intelligence and knowledge, the other provides them with their daily needs. The *tzaddik* who instructs them in divine worship must work together with the *tzaddik* who bestows them with heavenly abundance – because the lack of material sustenance is a true obstacle in worshipping God.[[44]](#footnote-44)

While the first part of this passage seems to hint at the need for the existence of two types of *tzaddikim*, the explanation clarifies that this is not the case. Instead, the *tzaddik* who is like Moses must adopt the qualities of the *tzaddik* who is like Joseph. The somewhat apologetic tenor of the passage indicates covert recognition of the superiority of the spiritual *tzaddik*. However, R. Menachem Mendel seems to attempt to override the weakness of material *tzaddikut* and present it as a necessary tool for the existence of spiritual *tzaddikut*.

This source indicates the need to connect the two methods of leadership in a hierarchical manner, identifying the spiritual path as the principal one, and the material path as a prerequisite for it. But in another passage, R. Menachem Mendel explains that the need to combine them derives inherently from the *tzaddik*’s attribute of “All.” He repeats the idea that the *tzaddik* must embody this attribute of “All,” which is the integrative characteristic of Jacob (“the middle line that includes what is on the right and what is on the left”). But in this citation, he emphasizes that this quality of Jacob “includes the entire range of shades.” First, he explains that the meaning of this characteristic is the ability to unite with the diverse types of individuals that are present within the Jewish people, and to contain them:

Each *tzaddik* in every generation who wishes to bestow abundant good to the Jewish people must grasp this quality – the quality of Jacob, the attribute of “All.” He must unite with the Jewish people and pass through them, gathering the entire Jewish people into his own being, absorbing into himself all its diversity. Thus, his prayer is called prayer on behalf of the public, as it includes the entire range of shades, the attribute of “All.” He is then able to continue the blessing of totality that was given to Jacob and bestow abundant goodness on the Jewish people. In this manner, we understand how the *tzaddik* contains many varieties of individuals, and he rejoices in his diverse nature, because he must embody the attribute of “All,” which includes all variations. Thus he is called “All.”[[45]](#footnote-45)

Undoubtedly, this section contains a pluralistic suggestion that the *tzaddik* cannot embody only one type of human being, but rather should contain all types within himself. Here we might expect that the author would develop the concept in an individualist direction that recognizes the unique qualities of each and every *hasid.* Instead, R. Menachem Mendel again directs the discussion toward the *tzaddik*, requiring him to construct his personality in a manner that integrates diverse kinds of leadership. To emphasize his point, he repeats the typology of Moses and Joseph:

This is the hidden meaning of “And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him” – because Moses represented the entirety of knowledge of the entire Jewish people, and he bestowed to Israel Torah, fear of God, *mitzvot* and good deeds. Joseph bestowed material abundance, as in the verse “Joseph nourished” (Gen. 47:12) and the verse “It was he [Joseph] who sold” (Gen. 42:6). When Moses realized that he was appointed to be Israel’s faithful shepherd and to bestow on them wisdom, understanding and knowledge, he adopted Joseph’s attribute, so that he could bestow abundance on Israel in lifespan, children, and livelihood.[[46]](#footnote-46)

According to R. Menachem Mendel, the *tzaddik* is supposed to integrate the role of spiritual teacher with that of the provider of material abundance. As a spiritual teacher, he must embody the diverse qualities of his followers. Apparently, the essence of his message does not mean unification of all varieties of individuals under the *tzaddik*’s wings, but mainly that the *tzaddik* himself must integrate all types.

As seen, these passages relate to bestowing material abundance, which is a constant process that the *tzaddik* performs for the entire public, and does not necessarily require overt reorganization of natural systems. In relation to this role, we have seen that R. Menachem Mendel feels a certain discomfort, but in the final analysis, he overcomes it and asserts that this role is essential and significant. Yet with regards to miracles, which involve changes in the natural order, his position is much more outspoken, and in a certain sense even anti-magical. In a sarcastic homily, he cites an interpretation given in the Talmud on the *mitzvah* of *hakhel* [assembly], in which portions of the Torah were read to the masses on Sukkot after a Sabbatical year. According to the Sages, at this gathering “If the men came to learn, the women came to hear, but wherefore have the little ones to come? In order to grant reward to those that bring them.”[[47]](#footnote-47) According to R. Menachem Mendel, within the hasidic milieu we can also identify three groups, each one representing an archetype: “Eminent individuals, *tzaddikim* and hasidimwho have the quality of knowledge, the combination of wisdom and understanding [...] – these embody the male aspect.” In comparison, “there are many who express the female aspect, and they do not have [...] the characteristic of knowledge, the combination of wisdom and understanding.” Finally, “there are some who are even more limited in intelligence, and they are like children.”[[48]](#footnote-48) Each group searches for a different quality in the *tzaddik*:

Eminent individuals who express the male quality [...] come to learn the essence, that is the fear of Heaven, for this is the core of the individual. In contrast, the ordinary masses, who are of lower value, embody the female aspect. They are somewhat simple-minded; they come only to hear of miracles, and they are not focused on the essence, which is fear of Heaven. As for children, who lack refined intelligence, and are at a very base level – why do they come? To grant reward to those who brought them, because they need miracles.[[49]](#footnote-49)

While it is true, that the *tzaddik* musttend to the needs of the “simple-minded,” those on a “very low level,” R. Menahem Mendel’s disapproval of the pursuit of miracles is clear. In this case as well, we identify a very similar pattern to that of the two previous attributes. Those individuals who distance themselves categorically from miracles – both the stories about them and the performance of them – are “eminent individuals, *tzaddikim* and hasidim” (this refers to “true” hasidim, who are on a high spiritual level), and this level is appropriate for them. All others are involved in the low-level occupation with miracles, as those who hear about them and those who hope for them. Here we do not identify resistance to magic, or denial of its power, but we do find a clear objection to the occupation with it and to positioning it at the focus of hasidic life. As noted above, the Peshischa anti-magic stance was similar to this approach.

**Renewal [*Hitchadshut*]**

One of the central concepts of Peshischa Hasidism is constant renewal, and the requirement to prevent divine worship from becoming routine. This concept was somewhat refined by R. Mordechai Yosef of Izbica,[[50]](#footnote-50) but it was already present in the writings of R. Simcha Bunem, and perhaps even in those of “the Holy Jew.”[[51]](#footnote-51) This idea is also present in other types of Hasidism, and is found in classical rabbinic and medieval literature. However, Peshischa places a much stronger emphasis on it than what we find in other sources. Only a small number of hasidic groups took up the struggle against lackluster routine in the mode of the Peshischa *tzaddikim* and its representatives. But in the writings of R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov, this concept occupies a central position, and he even coins a unique term for it: *hitchadshut ha-ahava* [renewal of love], that is, love of God.

R. Menachem Mendel relates to this issue in several locations in *Ahavat Shalom*, each time in a similar mode. Following the model of the Zohar, he explains that there are two types of love: love between friends, and love between lovers. Each has its own advantage – love between friends is constant and stable, and not subject to upheaval, while love between lovers is based on a continuous dynamic of moving closer and drawing apart, and therefore it is more vital. After the period of distance, “new love is born, new strength, new pleasure.”[[52]](#footnote-52) R. Menachem Mendel calls for unification of these two types of love, but at the same time, he notes that in contemporary times, this is an impossible task:

As is known, there are two types of love – love between friends and love between lovers. Love between friends is constant, as in [the Zohar’s statement], “two friends who will never part.” But this love gradually dwindles, for constant pleasure is not true pleasure. Love between lovers is not constant. Sometimes they are distant, and after this distance, they move closer together with more force. These two kinds of love should not be separate – there should be constant pleasure, and still one should feel renewed love. But now during Exile, there is no unity or connection between the two kinds of love [...]. Sometimes there is union and marriage between them, and sometimes there is no union between them. But in the future, may it come speedily in our days [...], in that day there will be one Lord, and His Name will be One, [...] and love between friends will have the attribute of renewal, like the love between lovers.[[53]](#footnote-53)

In a homily on the weekly portion of *Toldot*, in which R. Menachem Mendel repeats this concept almost ad verbatim, he clearly alludes to the superiority of love between lovers. In his words, the love between friends “is not so important, because constant pleasure is not pleasure, and therefore it must be united with the love between lovers.”[[54]](#footnote-54) By contrast, this love between lovers, which blossoms after separation and reunification, “is very important and creates a beautiful scent, the perfumed scent of the Garden of Eden.”[[55]](#footnote-55)

The love between lovers grants the individual a unique viewpoint that enables him to experience “the clarity of Shabbat,” to the point of humiliation (in the positive sense of the word). This encourages repentance and *tikkun ha-brit* – the hasidic term for atoning for wasting seed and sometimes other sexual sins.[[56]](#footnote-56) Indeed, in a paradoxical manner, R. Menachem Mendel determines that love between lovers is achieved thanks to “purifying the material”[[57]](#footnote-57) – again a hasidic term for extreme norms of sexual behavior, sometimes even partial asceticism – and instructs that “as the body becomes more purified, this leads to greater love between lovers, the attribute of renewal and fragrant scent.” No less importantly, he views Shabbat as a means for achieving love between lovers: through the distancing created in the six days of Creation, days of routine, the individual is able to achieve *kiruv*, to unite with God, on Shabbat. This is especially evident on Shabbat, when the *tzaddik* hosts his followers in his court:

When people gather together in the unity of peace and truth, the love between lovers is born, and the fragrant scent is born. Especially when individuals gather together at the *tzaddik*’s home and they sit together, in shame and humility, awe and submissiveness, then the fragrant scent is created by the resting of the Shekhina. We may compare this to a person who enters a perfumer’s shop. He may give nothing and take nothing, yet still he takes away a pleasant scent and brings it out with him.[[58]](#footnote-58) [...] This is the meaning of “the mandrakes [*dudaim*] give a smell” (Song of Songs 7:14). The word *dudaim* is formed of the combination of the letters in *dodim* [friends] and[the letter] *aleph*. This indicates that through unity, the attribute of “All,” the attribute of love between lovers is created. [...] This is the love that emits a fragrant scent, the perfumed scent of the Garden of Eden.[[59]](#footnote-59)

In his commentary on the weekly portion of *Ki Tavo*, R. Menachem Mendel emphasizes another aspect: “When a person reaches an eminent level, and a spirit appears to him from on High, in great and powerful holiness, this is undoubtedly divine favor, because this would not be possible without the assistance and aid of the Holy One, blessed be He.”[[60]](#footnote-60) It is hardly every day that an individual merits such illumination. But according to R. Menachem Mendel, the individual must bring himself to a state in which this feeling arises within him each time anew: “He must recognize God’s benevolence toward him in a renewed manner each time, as if that day God granted him the ability to rise from the lowest level to the highest height.”[[61]](#footnote-61) R. Menachem Mendel particularly emphasizes the importance of renewal in learning Torah, which “must be renewed for him as if it was given to him on that very day.” Again, he highlights the feeling of renewal on Shabbat: “Each Shabbat he should feel renewal and additional love, as if that is the first Shabbat bestowed from the supreme Source.” He is aware that this feeling does not come by itself. Rather, “one must toil to achieve this,” but he promises that one who exerts himself will merit discovery of the “hidden light.”[[62]](#footnote-62) This obligation applies not only to these two *mitzvot*, but “the same applies to all the *mitzvot* – one must feel renewal each time, as in the very first hour, as if they were commanded this very day.”[[63]](#footnote-63)

I will conclude this section with two astute passage that also express the concept of opposition to routine religious practice. In both, the emphasis is not on the need to renew for its own sake, but on the need to progress, to climb upward on the ladder of divine worship. First, R. Menachem Mendel asserts that lack of progress delays the coming of the Messiah:

Regarding the verse, “Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor today?” [I Sam. 20:27], I heard in the name of the holy Rabbi Menachem of Kosov, may his righteous memory be a blessing, who said by way of implication [*remez*]: “Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse” – this means that the holy Torah hints that you should not find this difficult, why the Messiah who is called the son of Jesse has not come. The explanation for this is: “neither yesterday, nor today,” in other words, because we remain on the same level in worshipping God. As we were yesterday, so we are today – but the Holy One, blessed be He, has created humanity to add and progress every day in holiness.[[64]](#footnote-64)

The following source brings us back to R. Shmuel Shinover. As the reader will recall, he was a follower of R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov, but at one stage in his life, he met R. Simcha Bunem of Peshischa and became a dedicated follower of his. His book *Ramatayim Zofim* is replete with R. Simcha Bunem’s sayings. But in support of the concept of renewal, he cites his previous Rebbe, R. Menachem Mendel, quoting in his name:

I heard from the holy Rebbe, Rabbi Mendel of Kosov, who said: “‘We will go with our young and with our old’ (Ex. 10:9) – for *tzaddikim*, this means from one level to the next, and we will not stand in place in matters of worshipping God. [...] The great *tzaddikim* pray [to restore] the days of their youth, as in the verse “Oh, that I were as in months past” (Job 29:2).[[65]](#footnote-65)

Both of these sources reflect the demand for that same dynamic that underlies the requirement for renewal. In this context, we should note that the concept of renewal is in many ways “a substitute for mysticism.”[[66]](#footnote-66) With this term, I refer to attempts to awaken in the *hasid* the feeling of elevation and challenge, but this is far removed from the powerful mystical experience of the Ba’al Shem Tov and his pupils. Although *Ahavat Shalom* is replete with kabbalistic terms and references to worlds, *sefirot*, divine sparks, husks and so forth – I was unable to find indications of a powerful mystic experience of the kind described by members of the early hasidic generations. The concept of renewal is apparently a solid feeling of intensifying one’s awareness of the religious act, and does not share much with the tempestuous nature of the mystical experience.

In this context, we note that in the writings of R. Simcha Bunem of Peshischa, who is sometimes (unjustly) considered a “rationalist,” we find expressions of the mystical ideal.[[67]](#footnote-67) Possibly, he would have considered renewal as a means of reaching this ideal. But among the later hasidic schools that descended from Peshischa, the mystical ideal was relegated to the distant past or the hoped-for future, while “renewal” occupied a more central position. In Gur Hasidism as well, which neutralized many of the “dangerous” Peshischa values, this concept was preserved in full force, and even became a core value in the teachings of its Rebbes.[[68]](#footnote-68) Considering this, it is hardly surprising that among the Peshischa concepts that we have identified in R. Menachem Mendel’s writings, this is the only idea that is not limited to *tzaddikim* alone – rather, he teaches it to every Jew.

**Summary and Conclusions**

Studying the thought of R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov reveals that this *tzaddik* was a philosopher with a well-formulated hasidic theory that is characterized by several unique emphases. His are not random ideas – rather, he repeats the central motifs in his philosophy in a methodical way that we may track in certain places in his writings, and that combine to form a uniform picture. Apparently, the trend of most of the Rebbes of Kosov-Vizhnitz to rely heavily on linguistic nuances and *gematriya* has caused many to assume that this is the focus of their interest. But regarding the founder of the dynasty, I believe we may reject this assumption out of hand. R. Menachem Mendel presents himself as a thinker whose ideas are on an equal footing with those of important *tzaddikim*, who have been the subject of much more intensive study and research than he has enjoyed.

The points that I have addressed in this article are the Peshischa-based concepts in R. Menachem Mendel’s writing. We have seen that he requires that every *tzaddik* remain faithful to his own path, and avoid adopting methods that are appropriate for other *tzaddikim*. We also observed that he demands unceasing effort to achieve “truth,” both in the simple meaning of distancing oneself from falsehood, and also in the Peshischa understanding of uncompromising self-knowledge. We have shown that he demonstrates a positive relationship toward “material *tzaddikut*” of the soft type (perhaps with a muted discomfort toward this position). As for hard magic, those miracles that are outside the bounds of nature, he views this as a matter appropriate for the “simple-minded.” In addition, he demands that his hasidim engage in “renewal of love” and constant refreshment of their religious awareness. In all these attributes, R. Menachem Mendel demonstrates substantial similarity to the Peshischa method, particularly that of R. Simcha Bunem.

Here we are inspired to ask: can we draw more far-reaching conclusions from this? Do these findings shatter the accepted, fixed images of the various branches of Hasidism, enabling us to determine that instead, such ideas are fluid, and not characteristic of one certain group or another? In my opinion, the answer to this is negative. First of all, because outside of Peshischa circles, R. Menachem Mendel was the exception that proved the rule. Even if we find these attributes in small doses sprinkled throughout the writings of other thinkers in the hasidic space, we do not find them in a concentrated fashion, except for in the schools of Peshischa and Kosov. Therefore, this seems to point to a difference in emphasis. But as I have shown elsewhere, in traditional cultures, a change in emphasis should sometimes be understood as an important and even revolutionary contribution.[[69]](#footnote-69)

Secondly, and more importantly, even after identifying the shared characteristics, a significant and crucial difference remains: for R. Menachem Mendel, individualism, the “truth” and anti-magical sentiment remains the province of *tzaddikim* only, while R. Simcha Bunem seems to have demanded this of all who came to receive his instruction. This is a pivotal difference, because the Peshischa method of spiritual inquiry is what led many to consider it an eccentric Hasidism – fresh, revolutionary, even “anarchic.” Placing this spiritual search in the hands of *tzaddikim* alone removes the revolutionary barb from this method. Further, it transforms a revolutionary innovation into yet another prerogative of the class of *tzaddikim*, another level in the effort to glorify them and place them on a pedestal above the masses.

Yet here we must stop and recall that Peshischa was also very distant from the “democratic,” egalitarian spirit that treated the masses benevolently. Instead, Peshischa radiated a distinctly elitist attitude and viewed itself as designed for elite individuals only. Even if these elite Jews were not necessarily members of the *tzaddik* class, clearly its leaders and members did not think that personal, deep spiritual inquiry was appropriate for every human being. Here we identify two types of elitism. One is the elitism of the *tzaddik*, which in the relevant period can be considered a type of institutionalized elitism directed toward the aristocracy in its formative stages. The other is an elitism of meritocracy, which pertained to individuals of “true” refinement, without relation to their status. In this context, Piekarz’s statement resonates: “In the social reality, the elitist element within Hasidism existed with regards to the *tzaddik*, but there was no way it could exist within the social dynamic of a particular hasidic community, except in relation to another community.”[[70]](#footnote-70)

In the final analysis, both forms of Hasidism succeeded in appealing to the masses and recruited entire towns into their ranks. Elitism existed in both, on the level of the *tzaddikim*, but the willingness to expand it, even slightly, to other superior individuals, creates an important social distinction. In any case, in the broader philosophical dimension, which rises above the concrete social context in which the classes developed, R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov’s conceptions of hasidic attributes make an enriching contribution to the literature of hasidic philosophy, comparably and in parallel to the ideas of R. Simcha Bunem of Peshischa.

1. Studies on R. Simcha Bunem abound. Here I will note only those that were published in the past two decades. Sources in English: Glenn Dynner, *Men of Silk: The hasidic Conquest of Polish Jewish Society* (Oxford :‎ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. R. Menachem Mendel of Kosov was the son of R. Ya’akov Koppel of Kolomei, who in hasidic tradition is considered a student of the Ba’al Shem Tov. R. Menachem Mendel was a student of R. Zvi Hirsch of Nadvorna, R. Ze’ev Wolf of Czarny Ostrów, R. Meshulam Feivish of Zbarazh, and R. Moshe Leib of Sassov (Haim Kahane, *Even Shtiya*, Munkacs, 5690, ch. 2, par. 3-7, pp. 11-13). Some sources attest that he also studied with R. Elimelech of Lizhensk. He became Admor in 5562 (1802). His influence expanded rapidly and spread to the villages, and he subsequently became involved in a dispute with R. Yitzchak of Radwil, R. Avraham Yehoshua Heschel of Apta and R. Chaim of Chernovitz. He was known for his prayer and fatherly concern for his hasidim. R. Menachem Mendel became the patriarch of the extended Kosov-Vishnitz dynasty. Most of his philosophy is found in the following books: *Ahavat Shalom* [Love of Peace] (Lemberg, 5564 [1802] [!]; *Ratzon Menachem* [Menachem’s Desire] (Marmarosher Publishing Akzion-Drokrey: Marmarosh-Sighet, 5634 [1874]); *Ahavat Shalom Tanyana* [Love of Peace II] (Chernovitz, 5644 [1884]). Regarding *Ahavat Shalom*, the catalog of the Israel National Library in Jerusalem notes that this is “One of the books that were falsely attributed to the publisher Jedes Rosanes. The actual year of publication is indicated by the notation in the preface: Menachem ben Ya’akov Kappel *li-prat katan*.” In *gematriya*, this is equivalent to 5593 [1833]. The references below are to these editions. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. R. Shmuel Shinover, *Sefer Ramatayim Zofim al Tanna de-Bey Eliyahu* [Ramatayim Zofim Book on Tanna de-Bei Eliyahu] (Warsaw, 5641 [1882]), part I, ch. 3, par. 14 (p. 56). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. I found only one passage that demonstrates R. Menachem Mendel’s abilities as a Torah scholar. This section was first published under the title *Parparet Na’ah* [Pleasant Anecdotes] in an unfortunately neglected work: R. Aharon Moshe of Brad, *Seder Zva’ot* [Order of Wills] (Chernovitz, 1857), last page (unnumbered). At any rate, from the style of this passage, we may determine that R. Menachem Mendel was well-versed in scholarly discourse and considered a *zaken ve-ragil* [elderly and experienced man]. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Glenn Dynner indicates that for R. Simcha Bunem, scholarly achievement served as a political tool, at least to some extent, as it enabled his students to attain positions of influence in Polish towns (Dynner, *Men of Silk*, 55). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. On the myth of Peshischa and its creation, see Gellman, *Ha-Shvilim*, 215-235, and the many sources cited there. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Alexander Zederbaum, *Keter Kehuna o Divrei Ha-Yamim Le-Kehunei Ha-Emuna Ha-Yisraelit Ve-Bnoteiha* ]Crown of Priesthood, or Chronicles of the Priests of the Israelite Faith and its Subsidiaries] (Odessa, 5627), 127-133; Avraham Ya’akov Weisenfeld, *Halifat Michtavim* [Correspondence] (ed. Feivel Hirsch Wattestein), 79-81. For analysis and additional sources: Gellman, *Ha-Shvilim*, 216-222. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Raphael Mahler, *Ha-Hasidut Ve-Ha-Haskalah* [Hasidut and the Enlightenment] (Merhavia, 5721), 293-352. For analysis and critique: Gellman, *Ha-Shvilim*, 234-235. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Martin Buber, *Or Ha-Ganuz: Sipurei Hasidim* [Hidden Light: Hasidic Stories] (Tel Aviv, 5765), 47; Rosen, *The Quest for Authenticity*. For analysis: Gellman, *Ha-Shvilim*, 231-226. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Gellman, *Ha-Shvilim*, 283. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Kauffman, *Ve-hineh be-Kohelet*, 349-355; Brill, “Grandeur and humility,” 424-425. In addition to their sources, I add the following, which hint at true mystical experiences: R. Simcha Bunem of Peshischa, *Kol Simcha* [Voice of Joy] (Breslau, 5619): Genesis 2a, s.v. “*Hen ha-adam*”; Noah 4a-b, s.v. “*Ba-midrash*”; Exodus 27b, s.v. “*Va-yomar*.” However, in at least one reference in this work, we find a hint of the assumption that the individual may experience full communion with the divine [*dvekut*] only in the afterlife: *Va-era* 29a-b, s.v. “*Va-era*.” [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. This message is found in the well-known parable of the bridge and the treasure: R. Yisrael Berger, *Simchat Yisrael* [Joy of Israel] (Pyotrkov, 5670-1910), part II, par. 30, p. 49. For analysis of this tale and related sources: Dan Almagor, “*Yesh makom she-timtze’ehu: gilgulav shel ha-sipur ha-hasidi shel ha-otzar mi-tachat la-gesher, ha-kashur be-besht, be-R. Nachman u-be-R. Simcha Bunem mi-Peshischa*” [There is a place that you will find: Configurations of the hasidic story of the treasure under the bridge, attributed to the Ba’al Shem Tov, R. Nachman, and R. Simcha Bunem of Peshischa], in: *Ayin Tova:* *Du-Siach U-Fulmus Be-Tarbut Yisrael: Sefer Yovel Le-Mle’at Ayin Shanim Le-Tova Ilan* [“Good Eye”: Dialogue and Polemic in Jewish Culture: Anniversary Volume Honoring Tova Ilan on Her Seventieth Birthday], ed. Nachum Ilan (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Me’uhad and Ne’emanei Torah Ve-Avoda*,* 5750), 496-516. According to another tradition, “In Peshischa, [R. Simcha Bunem] would often reflect on whether it might be better to completely annul the concept of leadership [i.e., the position of Admor], because the public relied too strongly on the *tzaddikim* [*de gutte yuden*]” (Avraham Issachar Binyamin Alter, *Meir Eini Ha-Golah* [Illuminator of the Diaspora] [Pyotrkov, 5698], part II, par. 572, p. 59). For more on this, see Kauffman, 346-347. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Rosen, *The Quest for Authenticity*, 21-23, and more under the index entry “authenticity.” [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Babylonian Talmud 31a. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *Ratzon Menachem*, 7b. Although this book was published long after R. Menachem Mendel’s death, it was printed from a manuscript owned by his son, R. David of Zveltov. For the parallel: *Ahavat Shalom Tanyana* [Love of Peace II], Tu b’Av, 11b. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. *Ahavat Shalom*, *Va-yetze*, p.??, 22b. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. For example: Yehoshua Eleazar Menachem Hoysman, *Pri Yesha Aharon*, part II (Jerusalem, 5763), 391-392. However, we sometimes find formulations about the characteristic of truth in Karlin that resemble those in Peshischa: Binyamin Braun, *Ke-Sefina Metaltelet: Hasidut Karlin Bein Aliyot Le-Mashberim* [*Like a Rocking Boat: Peaks and Crises in Karlin Hasidism*] (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 2018), 70-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *Ahavat Shalom*, *Va-Yetze*, 21a-b. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. R. Avraham Hershkovitz, *Birkat Avraham Al Ha-Torah* [Avraham’s Blessing on the Torah] (Munkacs, 5661-1900), *Bereshit* 1b. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. On the characteristic of humility in Hasidism: Mendel Piekarz, *Bein Ideologiya Le-Metzi’ut: Anava, Ayin, Bitul Mi-Metzi’ut U-Dveikut Be-Machshavtam Shel Rashei Ha-Hasidut* [Ideology and Reality: Humility, Nothingness, Nullification of Reality and Devotion in the Thought of the Hassidic Leaders] (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 5754); Immanuel Etkes, *“Anava”* [Humility], in *Middot Ve-Regashot* [Qualities and Emotions], ed. Assa Kasher and Aharon Namdar (Ramat Gan: Hoshen Le-Mishpat, 5755-1994), 26-30; Yitzchak Alfassi, “*Anava be-mishnat ‘ha-hozeh mi-Lublin*” [Humility in the thought of the Hoze of Lublin], Sinai 106 (Sivan-Tammuz 5750), 167-174. On this quality in Peshischa: Brill, *Grandeur and Humility*, 428-436. See also Zvi Meir Rabinowitz, *Bein Peshischa Le-Lublin: Ishim Ve-Shitot Be-Hasidut Polin* [Peshischa and Lublin: Personalities and Philosophies in Polish Hassidism] (Jerusalem: Kesharim Publishing, 5757), in which almost every chapter discusses this *tzaddik*’s concept of humility. i.e. R. Simcha Bunem’s? [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Jospeh Weiss*, Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford: The Littman Library, 1983), 69-94; Rivka Schatz-Oppenheimer*, Hasidism as Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 65-79; Moshe Idel, *Hasidism Between Ecstasy and Magic* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 109-11; Rachel Elior, “The paradigms of *yesh* and *ayin* in hasidic thought,” in Ada Rapoport-Albert, ed., *Hasidism Reappraised* (London: Litman Library, 1996, 168-179 ; idem, *The Mystical Origins of Hasidism* (Oxford: Littman Library, 2006), 7, 54, 69, 148. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Many similar formulations can be found in Mendel Piekarz, *Bein Ideologiya Le-Metzi’ut*. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Kauffman, *Ve-Hineh Ba-Kohelet*, 355 and 366. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *Ahavat Shalom*, *Yitro* 51b; *Va-Yikra*, 52d. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid., *Yitro* 51b-c. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Ibid.*, Bereshit* 3b; *Va-Yakhel* 62b; *Pikudei* 67d; *Ba-Midbar* 87c; *Be-ha’alotcha* 90b-c; *Shalach* 92c; *Pinchas* 10a-b; *Nitzavim* 125a. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Ibid., *Va-yakhel* 64d; *Shalach* 92c; *Pinchas* 106a; *Devarim* 111b-c. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ibid., *Bereshit* 3b-c; *Bereshit* 4b; *Shalach* 91a-b; *Shalach* 92c-94c; *Pinchas* 106a-b; *Nitzavim* 125a (in connection to correcting the defect of circumcision, which is also related to the quality of *yessod –* foundation). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ibid.*, Bereshit* 3c-d; *Bereshit* 4b; *Be-ha’alotcha* 90b-c; *Shalach* 31a-b; *Shalach* 92c-d; *Pinchas* 106a-c. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ibid., *Bo* 41c; and in most of the citations in the preceding footnote. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Ibid., *Be-ha’alotcha* 90b. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Ibid., *Hayei Sarah* 16a; *Va-yakhel* (“Love and Peace”); *Pinchas* 106a-c. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. *Bereshit* 3b; *Va-Yikra* 73a; *Nitzavim* 125a. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. *Shalach* 92d-93a. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. In his words: “A Jew must grasp both ends. In other words, sometimes he must grasp the high end, as in the verse, ‘And his heart was uplifted in the ways of the Lord’ (II Chron. 17:6). At other times, he must distance himself from the upper realm and grasp the low end. The middle point is not sufficient – he must grasp the lowest end only” (*Ahavat Shalom*, *Ki Tisa* 61b-c). [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Gellman, *Ha-Shvilim*, 74-179; Kauffman, 355, note 51, and sources cited there. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. For example: R. Elimelech of Lizhensk, *Noam Elimelech* (Lvov, 5648-1788), *Shelach* 74d-75a. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. For many years, philosophers and researchers have attempted to define magic. A glance at the list of sources in the most comprehensive work on this topic is enough to indicate the enormous range: Bernd Christian Otto and Michael Stausberg, *Defining Magic: A Reader* (Oxford: Routledge, 2014). Naturally, I will not enter the debate on this issue, which demand a much broader discussion than a mere dictionary definition of the phenomenon. For the present discussion, a dictionary definition will suffice, such as “The power of apparently influencing events by using mysterious or supernatural forces” (Oxford online dictionary), or “an extraordinary power or influence seemingly from a supernatural source” (Merriam-Webster online dictionary). Within these parallel definitions, there is room to distinguish between the broader understanding of the phenomenon and the narrower one. SUGGEST ADDING CLARIFICATION OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SOFT/HARD MAGIC [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Kauffman, *Ve-hineh be-Kohellet*, 344-346. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. *Ahavat Shalom*, *Be-Shalach* 42a. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. *Ahavat Shalom*, *Be-Shalach* 42a. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. BT Hagigah 3a. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. *Ahavat Shalom*, *Va-Yelech* 126d. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Aviezer Cohen, *Toda’ah atzmit be-sefer mei ha-shiloach ke-kli le-kiyum ha-zikah she-bein ha-el ve-ha-adam* [Self-realization in *Mei Ha-Shiloach* as a tool for fulfilling the connection between God and the individual], doctoral dissertation, Ben Gurion University of the Negev (2006), 119, 171-177, 304. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Rosen, *The Quest for Authenticity*, 160-162; and on the Holy Jew – ibid., 191, note 14, but he relies on later sources that are not thoroughly reliable. Gellman has pointed out that the figure of the Holy Jew is shrouded in legend, and the attempt to reconstruct this historical image and doctrine is almost impossible. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. *Ahavat Shalom*, *Va-Yeshev* 26a. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid., *Bereshit* 4d-5a. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Ibid., *Toldot* 17a. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Ibid. 26b; ibid. 1c. In this way, man completes the entire purpose of Creation, as “the purpose of Creation was for the primary, and the intelligent man will feel the continuous pleasure of renewed love, as in the first and primary” (ibid.). ראשית [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Ibid., *Toldot* 17a-b. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Based on Pirkei De-Rabi Eliezer (Venice, 5304/1544), ch. 25, p. 21c. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. *Ahavat Shalom*, *Toldot* 17b. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Ibid., *Ki Tavo* 123d. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ibid. On the terms “lowliness” and “eminence” in Hasidism: “Gershom Scholem, “Devekut, or communion with God,” in Gershon David Hundert, ed. *Essential Papers on Hasidism* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 290-249; Ada Rappaport Albert, *Hasidim Ve-Shabta’im, Anashim Ve-Nashim* [Hasidim and Sabbateans, men and women] (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Institute, 5775), ed. Immanuel Etkes and David Asaf, 95-125; Zvi Mark, *Al matzavei “ketanut” ve-“gadlut” be-haguto shel R. Nachman mi-Breslev ve-al shorsheihem be-kabbalat ha-Ari* [On the states of “lowliness” and “eminence” in the thought of R. Nachman of Breslev and on their roots in Lurianic Kabbalah], *Da’at* 46 (5761), 45-80. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Ibid. DOES THIS REFER ONLY TO THE AHAVAT SHALOM CITATION IN THE PREVIOUS REF.?

EXPLAIN *or ha-ganuz*? [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Ibid. See also *Mishpatim* 52d. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. R. Yisrael Dov Gelernter, *Ravid Ha-Zahav – Dvir Ha-Mutzna* [Golden Necklace – The Hidden Holy of Holies], part II, Przemysl 5636, *Mishpatim (Haftarah* for *Erev Rosh Hodesh*), 33d-34a. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. R. Shmuel Shinover, *Sefer Ramatayim Zofim al Tanna de-Bey Eliyahu* (see note 3 above) CAN DELETE THE WORDS IN PARENTHESES, part I, ch. 5, par. 94 (p. 91). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. On this term, see: Benjamin Brown, “Substitutes for mysticism: A general model for the theological development of Hasidism in the nineteenth century,” *History of Religions*56:3 (2017), 247-288. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. See above, note 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Avraham Segal, “*Al ha-Hit’hadshut be-kitvei R. Yehuda Aryeh Leib Magor u-mamshichav*” [On renewal in the writings of R. Yehuda Aryeh Leib Magor and his disciples], *Da’at* 70 (5771), 49-80; Dafna Schreiber, *Bein hasidut le-politika: Ha-Admor mi-Gur ba’al ha-Imrei Emet ve-ha “mafneh ha-tzibori” be-hasidut Polin* [Hasidism and politics: The Admor of Rebbe, author of *Imrei Emet*, and the “public turning point” in Polish Hasidism], MA thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2013, 27-30. PLEASE CHECK [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Benjamin Brown, “'But Me No Buts': The Theological Debate Between the Hasidim and the Mitnagdim in Light of the Discourse-Markers Theory,” *Numen* 61 (2014), 525-551. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Piekarz, *Hasidut Polin* [Polish Hasidism] (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 5760/1990), 59, 160. Piekarz is quoted in Kauffman, who rightly wonders, “In relation to another community” – is this not enough?” (*Ve-hineh be-Kohellet*, 341). [↑](#footnote-ref-70)