

HASIDISM: HISTORY

I. INTRODUCTION (Arthur Green)

In the past, the study of East European Jewish life, and Hasidism in particular, by Western Jews has fallen into one or the other of two great pitfalls. Thus, Hasidism has been criticized for its "primitive, "superstitious," or even "un-Jewish" beliefs (Graetz, and the Haskallah; Dubnow -- Toledot ha-Hasidut -- made effort to be objective, but was trapped by own rationalism. Eliezer Zvi Zweifel -- Shalom al Yisrael -- is only one of Haskallah to relate positively to Hasidism), or else it has been hopelessly romanticized, loved-to-death, reduced to the banalities of chicken-soup-soaked song and dance routines. We warn you in advance to try to avoid the prior judgments of the first pitfall or the trivializations of the second. Hasidism is, above all, a most serious religious movement, one which makes major claims about the spiritual nature of mankind, and it should be treated in a sympathetic yet serious manner.

In studying Hasidism from a historian's point of view, we shall have to deal with that complex historical phenomenon known as a religious revival movement. Such movements, which appear in widely varied cultural contexts throughout the history of mankind, have been studied from various viewpoints. Before we embark upon our specific task, it would be good to consider certain possible approaches which might be applied to such movements in general and as they relate to Hasidism in particular:

The Social History Approach: A movement like Hasidism must be seen in the context of the growth and changes in the nature of Jewish communal organization. In the eighteenth century, the old

forms of social order were breaking down, due to various pressures from within and without. In the West, the outside world was ready to accept the Jews (to some extent) into general society, and thus the breakdown of the old Jewish order led directly toward Haskalah (modern "enlightenment") and Westernization. In Eastern Europe, the outside world was not yet ready to accept the Jew, and thus Hasidism, a new type of social movement, representing the emergence of the lower classes organized around a group of charismatic saints, stepped into the existing power vacuum and restructured the community. From this perspective, the particular theology and religious attitudes of the Hasidim are of secondary importance, as they served chiefly as an ideological justification of the new communal power structure. (Proponents of this view would include such Jewish historians as Jacob Katz, Bernard Weinryb, and Raphael Mahler, given certain subtle variations in emphasis.)

The History of Judaism Approach. Hasidism is to be seen as a direct outgrowth of the long and venerable tradition of Jewish mysticism in the middle ages. While in earlier times mystical speculation was the property of small and elite groups, and was at times highly theoretical in character, the influence of mystical ideas grew greatly in popularity after the sixteenth century. Such themes as devekut (mystical attachment to God), self-negation, and the transformation of reality through the "raising of sparks" entered into Hasidism from earlier mystical literature, and there became the common property of wide circles among East European Jews. Thus, Hasidism should be viewed in the context of Jewish mysticism as a whole, and especially as a reaction to the mystical heresy which formed around Sabbatai Zevi in the seventeenth century. Sabbatianism and heretical mystic

doctrines, portrayed as the great enemies of Hasidic lore, nevertheless had a great impact upon the religious message which lies at the core of the Hasidic movement. (This is the emphasis of Gershom Scholem, Joseph Weiss, and Rivka Schatz in the study of Hasidism.) (Also of importance - Ben Zion Dinur who, however, overemphasizes the nationalist - Messianic element in Hasidism.)

The Religious - Phenomenological Approach. The parallels to Hasidism which seem to exist in other religious and cultural traditions cannot be ignored. While Hasidism does grow out of a particular historical context, and its leaders did, of course, study earlier mystical writings, it is most essential for the student to try to ask: What type of religious phenomenon is Hasidism? What is its essential message? What is the nature of spirituality as taught and practiced by the Hasidic masters? Seen from this perspective, Hasidic masters may indeed have much in common with Indian gurus, the love of God they taught may have much in common with the Sufi poetry in Islam, and the Hasidic tale may be valuably compared to the Zen Koan. While the differences between the respective cultural contexts should not be ignored, a study of Hasidism should lead one to a broader perspective on the nature of human religiosity as a whole, and to an appreciation of the mystic strivings of people throughout the world. (This is most basic to the approach of Martin Buber, though Scholem and his students have by no means ignored it.)

The Orthodox Hasidic Approach. The sources of Hasidism must be approached with great reverence, and the student should allow the masters to address themselves to his own life. Hasidic teachings contain nothing which was not at least implicitly present in the Torah as given at Sinai, and as worked out through the

Sages (by a process of continuous revelation) through all ages. Thus, any view of Hasidism which tries to see it as bound by limitations of time and space misses the point; any study which is not open to accepting the Hasidic view of life as one's own is simply a wasteful intellectual exercise, the very thing Hasidism set out to combat. Hasidism is the clearest presentation of the essential path to God in Judaism. It is only worth studying as a path to personal religious self-discovery. One should thus be careful to learn it only from an authentic Hasidic teacher, and not via the works of modern non-Hasidic scholars who are themselves closed to the message it presents. (This is the view of contemporary Hasidic teachers, especially the Lubavitcher Hasidim; Buber is greatly influenced by this approach, though in a non-Orthodox context. Orthodox Hasidic historians include Aaron Markus; Kamelhar -- Dor Deah -- who is highly uncritical; Hillel Zeitlin, who is incisive, poetic, but often follows his own mystical bent.)

(NL: Our way will be to comb through all appraoches so as to collect best, most compelling insights. I am not committed to the literal truth of every Hasidic tale, but I do regard it as a valid, vital, if problematical "new way in the service of the Lord.")

II. KABBALAH: (A. Green)

A. Since early times, students of the Kabbalah (the Jewish mystical tradition), have divided the area of Jewish mysticism into two parts: theoretical mysticism (kabbalah 'iyunit) and "practical" mysticism (kabbalah ma'asit). The latter discipline often received a bad name from being associated with magical practices, faith healing, the writing of amulets, and the like. In fact, however, "practical" mysticism itself has another side to it, which comes to the fore particularly in Hasidism. That is an emphasis upon the devotional side of mysticism. Many earlier kabbalists, concerned primarily with the theoretical aspects of the tradition, would write long treatises on the mystical nature of the Godhead, on the various "upper worlds" and their relation to one another, etc. Rarely would they have in the writings an explicit concern with the worshipper, with the mystic himself, and what it was that he sought to attain in his own religious life. One can leaf through hundreds of pages in certain of these early writings, and scarcely find a single reference to the state of mind expected of the devotee. Of course, this is not to say that the authors themselves did not attain or seek such states, but there was a great reticence in the kabbalah to speak directly about one's own religious life.

Hasidism, following a trend already initiated in the mystical circles of Safed, changed this emphasis. The nature of the upper worlds and the various manifestations of the Godhead (sefirot) were no longer talked about for their own sake: the focus was now on the religious life of the individual: how he was to act, what were the personal qualities he was to cultivate, how he was to set about seeking the nearness of

God -- in short, an emphasis upon the devotional life and the ethic of mystical piety. In fact, the Hasidim never referred to their own writings as "mystical"; they rather called them "ethical tracts" (sifrey mussar) or "books by those who fear the Lord" (sifrey yere'im).

This shift in emphasis may best be illustrated by an interesting change in terminology. When Nahmanides, one of the great Kabbalists of the Middle Ages, sought to reveal to his reader the secret mystical meaning of a given Biblical verse, he would introduce it by the formula: "In the way of truth," בדרך האמת, as though to say, "Now I shall reveal the true meaning of this verse to you." When the first Hasidic masters sought to comment on a verse, they would paraphrase Nahmanides and say: "In the way of service." Their message was clear: we are not interested in the abstract truth of a particular passage, but rather in a much more practical question. What is its meaning in service? How can I better serve God through understanding this verse? The central thrust is that of devotion, of how to serve and worship, a thrust which has the worshipper himself, rather than any abstraction, at its center.

B. Basic Kabbalistic Background: (NL)

1. ZOHAR: Ein-Sof and Sefirot. Structure of Sefirot. Function of some of them.
2. LURIA: Zimzum; Breaking of Vessels; Tikkun. Importance of themes of Exile and Redemption; Messiah; reality of evil.

C. Sabbatianism (beginning 1665-6)

1. (A. Green) Hasidism is sometimes seen as a reaction to the great cataclysm which befell the Jewish communities of the Ukraine and Poland in the two decades of the Cossack

rebellion (Chmelnicki) which began in 1648. Whatever the true statistics of the debacle were, it is undoubtedly true that many thousands of Jews were brutally massacred, and that whole Jewish communities were uprooted and temporarily wiped off the map. According to this theory, the old order under which Jews had lived, never fully succeeded in re-establishing itself. This left a vacuum in community leadership.

This calamity was soon followed by a second great event which further shook the roots of Jewish communities in Poland and throughout the world. The messianic movement of Sabbatai Zevi, originating in Turkey in 1666, continued to influence the inner life of Jewry for over a hundred years. While most Jews openly rejected Sabbatai as a "false" messiah when he converted to Islam, the attraction to crypto-Sabbatianism and the mystical heresies it fostered are not to be dismissed lightly. A radical rereading of all the sources of Judaism came about in the wake of Sabbatianism, and many scholars have seen in Hasidism an anti-Sabbatian reaction which was nonetheless subtly influenced by those very ideas it sought to combat.

These two great events (Chmelnicki and Sabbatai Zevi) may be called the pre-history of the Hasidic movement, and help us understand the spiritual and political "soil" in which Hasidism then took root. It should be mentioned that Scholem, the scholar who did the great spade-work of re-discovering the great influence of Sabbatianism, tends to place more importance on that movement than does Weinryb, who feels that Scholem overemphasizes the role of Sabbatianism

in Eastern Europe.

2. Sabbatian Theology - (from Scholem, "Redemption Through Sin")

I

Sabbatian movement persisted with remarkable obstinacy certain sectors for approximately 150 years after Sabbatai Zevi's conversion. Its affairs were deliberately hidden from the public eye. Rich literature circulated only among groups of "believers" (ma'aminim) - down to the last of the Donmeh in Salonika the last Frankist in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Its opponents labored ceaselessly to root it out and systematically destroy it. Extensive religious literature was still to be found in the hands of Frankists in Moravia and Bohemia at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Hardly to be wondered at that one should instinctively avoid the kinds of inquiry that might lead to the discovery of heretical opinion, to say nothing of actual licentiousness, in the most unlikely places.

II

Messianic revival of 1665-66 spread to every sector of the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora.

Generation preceding Sabbatai Zevi's teachings of Rabbi Isaac Luria resulted in grafting of the theories of the Kabbalists onto the traditional Jewish view of the role and personality of the Messiah. Lurianic speculations about the nature of the redemption and "the restored world" (olam ha-tikkun) added new contents to the popular Messianic folk-myth of a conquering national hero, raising it to the level of a supreme cosmic drama. Transformation of the entire Creation leading to a rectification of the primordial catastrophe of shevirat ha-kelim... divine worlds would be returned to their original unity and perfection. By stressing the spiritual side of the redemption far more than its outward aspect, Kabbalists of the Lurianic school gradually converted it into a symbol of purely spiritual processes and ends. Kabbalists themselves never once imagined that a conflict might arise between the symbol and the reality it was intended to represent. On the contrary: the spread of Lurianic teachings, so it was thought, was in itself bound to hasten the coming of the historical Redeemer.

Appearance of Sabbatai Zevi. Who could deny that the Shekhinah, the earthly presence of God, had risen from the dust?

"Heretical" Sabbatianism was born at the moment of Sabbatai Zevi's totally unexpected conversion. For the first time contradiction appeared between the two levels of the drama of redemption, that of the subjective experience of the individual on the one hand, the objective historical facts on the other. One had to choose: "Heretical" Sabbatianism was the result of the refusal of large sections of the Jewish people to submit to the sentence of history by admitting that their own personal experience had been false and untrustworthy.

Thus, the various attempts to construct a Sabbatian theology, all motivated similar purpose, rationalize the abyss that had suddenly opened between the objective order of things and that inward certainly which it could no longer serve to symbolize. Following upon the initial paradox of an apostate Messiah, paradox engendered paradox. Simple question: What could be the value of a historical reality that had proved to be so bitterly disappointing, and how might it be related to the hopes it had betrayed?

^{Can} Essence of the Sabbatian's conviction in a sentence: it is inconceivable that all of God's people should inwardly err, and so, if their vital experience is contradicted by the facts, it is the facts that stand in need of explanation.

A new type of Jew had appeared for whom the world of exile and Diaspora Judaism was partly or wholly abolished and who uncompromisingly believed that a "restored world" was in the process of coming into being. Great historical disappointment experienced by the Sabbatian instilled in him paradoxical conviction he and his like were privy to a secret whose time had not yet come. This certainly imparted a special meaning to his use of the terms "believer" and "holy faith."

All Sabbatian doctrine had as its aim the resolution of this contradiction.

III

Question: Since the redemption had already been at hand, since the Messiah had actually revealed himself to his people, why had he forsaken them and his religion -- why had the historical and political deliverance cosmic process of tikkun been delayed? Paradoxically compelling answer: the apostasy of the Messiah was itself a religious mystery of the most crucial importance! Predicted in the relevant prophecies Nathan of Gaza, even more so Abraham Cardozo,

now proceeded to expound a new doctrine to which Sabbatai Zevi himself apparently subscribed.

As long as the last divine sparks (nitzotzot) which fell at the time of Adam's primordial sin into the impure realm of the kelipot (hylic forces of evil particularly strong among the Gentiles) have not been gathered back again to their source -- the process of redemption is incomplete. Therefore left to the Redeemer, the holiest of men, to accomplish: to descend through the gates of impurity into the realm of the kelipot and to rescue the divine sparks still imprisoned there. As soon as this task is performed the Kingdom of Evil will collapse of itself, for its existence is made possible only by the divine sparks in its midst. Messiah is constrained to commit "strange acts" (ma'asim zarim) of which his apostasy is the most startling; necessary for the fulfillment of his mission. Formulation of Cardozo: "It is ordained that the King Messiah don the garments of a Marrano, so go unrecognized by his fellow Jews.

Underlying the novelty of Sabbatian thought more than anything else was the deeply paradoxical religious sensibility of the Marranos constituted a large portion of Sephardic Jewry. Had it not been for the unique psychology of these reconverts to Judaism, the new theology would never have found the fertile ground to flourish in that it did. The Sabbatian doctrine of the Messiah was perfectly tailored to the needs of the Marranic mentality. Abraham Cardozo was of definite Marrano origin. Contradiction of duplicity and duality was involved in the religious consciousness of the Marranos. Formal apostasy had never been considered by them to represent an irreconcilable break with their mother faith. Now along came a religious metaphysic which exalted just such a form of life to the highest possible level by attributing it to the person of the Redeemer himself!

What now took place in Sabbatianism was similar to what happened in Christianity at the time of the apostles, the chief difference being the shifting of the tragic moment in the Messiah's destiny from his crucifixion to his apostasy, a change which rendered the paradox in question even more severe. This novel conception soon added one, a basis in aggadic literature, that the King Messiah was to give a "new Torah" and that the commandments of the Law (mitzvot) were to be abrogated in Messianic times.

It was at this point that a radically new content was bestowed upon the old rabbinic concept of mitzvah ha-ba'ah ba-averah. Once it could be claimed that the Messiah's apostasy was in no way a transgression, but was rather a fulfillment of the commandment of God, the entire question of the continued validity of the Law had reached a critical stage. Even before his apostasy Sabbatai Zevi

violated several of the commandments by eating the fat of animals and administering it to others, directing that the paschal sacrifice be performed outside of the Land of Israel, cancelling the fast days. His followers soon began to seek explanations for these acts, and here began a division which was to lead eventually to an open split in the movement.

IV

New doctrine of the necessary apostasy of the Messiah was accepted by all the "believers." It expertly expressed the contradiction between the outward reality of history and the inward reality of the "believers'" lives. In turn, however, other questions arose which the doctrine of necessary apostasy was in itself insufficient to answer.

First, what was the nature of the Messiah's act? Intended to be an example for others? Or was it essentially inimitable, a theoretical model only?

Second, nature of the transitional period during which the Messiah was in the clutches of the kelipot? Properly be called the redemption or not? What exactly was the relationship of inwardness to outwardness in the present age?

Third, what was the status of the Torah during this period?

These were the principal dilemmas which were to shape the developemnt of Sabbatianism in the course of the following hundred years, to transform it from a Messianic movement into a nihilistic movement.

It is necessary to distinguish between two opposing Sabbatian factions which emerged from the clashes of opinion surrounding these disputed points, as well as from differing interpretations of the theosophical sod ha-elohut revealed by Sabbatai Zevi: moderate and rather piously inclined wing, and a radical, antinomian, and nihilistic wing. Both contained many subdivisions.

Moderate Sabbatianism shared by many rabbis and Nathan of Gaza, Abraham Cardozo, Abraham Rovigo. Cardozo valuable source.

Apostasy of the Messiah was not intended to serve as an example for others. To follow in his footsteps was to belie the significance of his act. Sabbatai Zevi's conversion was in a class by itself and was not an object of imitation. The Jew was expected to remain a Jew. As long as the redemption did not manifest itself outwardly in the realm of objective events in history, no aspect or commandment of the Torah was to be openly tampered with except for the small number of innovations, such as the cancellation of the fast of Tish'ah be'Av. Even on this point there was disagreement. View of the "moderates" that during the transitional period under way, the kelipot still retained a good deal of their power. Could only be eliminated by mitzvot: "facade" of rabbinic Judaism must be allowed to remain temporarily standing, although great changes had already taken place within. One unmistakable testimony to this inner transformation was the abandonment by many of the "moderates" of the mystical meditations (kavvanot) of Isaac Luria. First to discontinue their use was Nathan of Gaza.

V

Have seen principal feature of "moderate" Sabbatian doctrine belief that the apostasy of the Messiah was sui generis. Enormous tension between the subjective and the objective found a legitimate expression in this one act alone. Whereas Sabbatai Zevi had actually done strange and objectionable things in the name of the holy, celebration of this paradox among the "believers" restricted to the domain of faith. It was indeed the Messiah's fate to scandalize Israel by his deeds, but it was decidedly his fate alone.

Line was clearly difficult to maintain. If the spark of the redemption had been experienced by all, why should not all do as the Redeemer? Soon the cry was heard: Let us surrender ourselves as he did!

Psychological background for the great nihilistic conflagration that was to break out in the "radical" wing of the Sabbatian movement. Crucial moment: were to join forces with passions of anarchy and lawlessness that lie deeply buried in every human soul. Traditionally Judaism had always sought to suppress such impulses - now allowed to emerge in revolutionary exhilaration, burst forth more violently than ever. Aura of holiness seemed to surround them:

Messianism was transformed into nihilism. Having been denied the political and historical outlets it had originally anticipated, the new sense of freedom now sought to express itself in the sphere of human morality. Psychology of the "radical" Sabbatians utterly paradoxical and "Marranic." Guiding principle: Whoever is as he appears to be, cannot be a true "believer."

"True faith" cannot be a faith which men publicly profess. Contrary, "true faith" must always be concealed. One's duty to deny it outwardly, every Jew is obliged to become a Marrano.

What was formerly sacred has become profane - what was formerly profane has become sacred. Now that the Redeemer has arrived, two spheres are in opposition: the inward commandment, which alone can effect a tikkun, become synonymous with the outward transgression. Bittulah shel torah zehu kiyyumah.

עשיה נכונה

More than anything else, this insistence of the "radicals" on the potential holiness of sin - justify by citing out of context the talmudic dictum "A transgression committed for its own sake is greater than a commandment not committed for its own sake" - alienated and offended the average Jew.

In two later additions to the Zoharic corpus, the Tikkunei ha-Zohar and the Ra'ya Mehemna, subject of four emanated worlds. In connection with these, occasionally hear of a "Torah of Atzilut" and a "Torah of Beriah," the meanings not entirely clear. By the time of the Kabbalists of the School of Safed, however, latter terms employed in a definite sense to indicate two aspects of the one essential Torah, i.e., the Torah as it is understood in the supernal World of Atzilut and the Torah as it is understood in the lower World of Beriah. What the Sabbatians now did was expound the Torah of Beriah, the Torah of the unredeemed world of exile. The Torah of Atzilut, on the other hand, is the "true" Torah which, like "the mystery of the Godhead" it makes manifest, has been in a state of concealment for the entire period of the exile. Now that the redemption has commenced it is about to be revealed although in essence it is identical with the Torah of Beriah, its way of being read will be different, thus, all the commandments and prohibitions of the Torah of Beriah will now be reinterpreted by the light of the World of Atzilut. There is no such thing as forbidden sexual practices. Slogans for their new morality!

Reborn
Tikkun

Concept of the two Torahs extremely important one for Sabbatian nihilism, corresponded so perfectly to the "Marranic" mentality. Torah of Atzilut was to be observed strictly in secret; Torah of Beriah, be actively and deliberately violated. How, "radicals" could not agree. Genuine desires for a reconsecration of life mingled indiscriminately with all kinds of destructive and libidinal forces tossed up from the depths.

Among the leaders of the Dönme, the antinomian blessing composed by Sabbatai Zevi, mattir isurim, became a byword.

Sexual element in this outburst was very strong: little to wonder at texts of rabbinical excommunications eighteenth century that children of the "believers" were to be automatically considered bastards. No matter how thoroughly fantastic and partisan the allegations of the anti-Sabbatians may seem to us, we have not the slightest justification for doubting their accuracy.

Unexpected discovery. Well into the present age, Sabbatians in Salonika, the Donmeh, twenty-second day of the Hebrew month of Adar known as "the Festival of the Lamb," a carefully guarded secret. The sacramental value of exchanging wives.

History of Sabbatian nihilism began in 1683, when several hundred Jewish families in Salonika converted to Islam "so as to conquer the kelipah from within."

VI

Figure of Sabbatai Zevi becoming entirely mythical. His conversion into a mythological figure was complete. Like the early Christians, "radicals" eventually came to believe that the Messiah had not been a mere superior human being, but an incarnation of God Himself in human form. Accepted by all the "radical" groups down to the last of the Frankists. Considered by them to be the most profound mystic truth in their entire body of doctrine.

Summary: distinguishing beliefs of "radical" Sabbatianism:

1. The belief in the necessary apostasy of the Messiah, and those who believe in him too; sacramental nature of the descent into the realm of the kelipot.
2. The "believer" must not appear to be as he really is.
3. The Torah of Atzilut must be observed through the violation of the Torah of Beriah.

VII

Jacob Frank (1726-91) will always be remembered as one of the most frightening phenomena in the whole of Jewish history: purely self-interested motives, truly corrupt and degenerate. Strongman - snuff out its last inner lights and pervert whatever will to truth and goodness was still to be found in the maze-like ruins of the "believers." The doctrine of the sacred sin thoroughly debased upon coming in contact with the person of Frank. Holiness made into a mockery. His admirers saw in him the type of the true saint, a new Sabbatai Zevi and an incarnate God.

Figure of tremendous if satanic power.

The annihilation of every religion and positive system of belief - this was the "true way" the "believers" were expected to follow. Concerning the redemptive powers of havoc and destruction Frank's imagination knew no limits. "Wherever I set foot all will be destroyed, for I came into this world only to destroy and to annihilate. But what I build, will last forever." "No man can climb a mountain until he has first descended to its foot. Therefore we must descend and be cast down to the bottom rung, for only then can we climb to the infinite. The descent into the abyss requires not only the rejection of all religions and conventions, but also the commission of "strange acts," - voluntary abasement of one's own sense of self, so that libertinism and the achievement of that state of utter shamelessness which leads to a tikkun of the soul are one and the same thing.

VIII

Toward the end of Frank's life the hopes he had entertained of abolishing all laws and conventions took on a very real historical significance. As a result of the French Revolution the Sabbatian and Frankist subversion of the old morality and religion was suddenly placed in a new and relevant context. Seemingly, the Revolution had come to corroborate the fact that the nihilist outlook had been correct all along.

These last Sabbatians had been drawing closer to the spirit of the Haskalah so that when the flame of their faith finally flickered out they soon reappeared as leaders of Reform Judaism, secular intellectuals, or simply complete and indifferent skeptics. Even the "moderates" tended to believe that the commandments were for the most part meant to be observed only in the Land of Israel -- a doctrine that was ultimately to have a catastrophic effect on all traditional ties and to help prepare the way for the philosophy of assimilation.

III. Conditions under which Hasidism arose:

- A. Poverty: Most Jews ate meat only twice a year...
- B. Persecution: The "Thirty Years' War" and its conclusion in the decrees of 1648 - 1649 Chmelnicki pogroms. Poland is emptied of its Sages, such as the Shakh and Taz. Jews now denied right to settle in many large cities. Many income-producing occupations forbidden to them. Pay taxes, but have no civil rights. The noblemen considered the Jews in his territory as if they were indentured slaves. In 1740 a law was almost passed making the Jew the "subjecti-haereditati," the law not being passed only because of economic reasons. In effect, however, it was the case. The Jew could be arrested at any time, his children baptized against his will. The Jesuit priests, the blood libels (twenty such incidents during the life time of the Besht, 1700-1760) The Christian students -- "Schüler - Gelauf." The low cultural level in the yishuvim. The story told by the Old Man of Shpole about the town in which he served. The yearning for depth, light, hope.

IV. The Religious Context:

A. Background

As we have seen, Hasidism did not originate in a vacuum; there were specific socio-political and religious events which led into the formation of the movement.

This is also true in a more particular way which we are now prepared to examine. Hasidism began to emerge in the Ukrainian province of Podolia around the fourth decade of the eighteenth century. This area was something of a backwater in the Jewish community of its day; it had never been a particular center of Talmudic learning, and had been badly ravaged by the Ukrainian uprisings of the previous century. It was an area of smaller towns (largely Jewish in population) and villages; there was no major Jewish city in this part of the Ukraine.

Why, then, did Hasidism first take root in this area? Earlier historians attributed the birth of Hasidism in Podolia to a single figure, Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, of whom we shall have more to say later. It seems, however, that the origins of Hasidism are more complex than simply the genius of a single teacher. There were several groups current in Podolia at the time, each of which made a particular contribution to the incipient Hasidic movement. Hasidism may be said to have been born through the coinfluence of three types of religious figures, who were particularly prominent in this area, and whose influence was heightened by the very lack of organized large communities or great Talmudic study-centers: ~~Crypto-Sabbatians~~ ^{and Ba'al Shem's} Maggidim; pre-Hasidic Mystics. Also active

in this period were the crypto-Sabbatians - but their influence on incipient H'm is much less than some historians would have us believe

1. Pre-Hasidic Mystical Societies. These were small elite groups of pious Jews who sought to study the secrets of the Torah and who lived lives of great ascetic rigor and devotion. Highly revered by the communities in which they lived (we know of such circles in Brody and Medzhibezh, for example), they practiced the prayer techniques of the Safed Kabbalists, imparting their secrets only to the initiated few. Most of them felt that the study of Kabbalah had been badly damaged by the Sabbatian outbursts, and they looked askance at a second current group:
2. Crypto-Sabbatians. These continued to exist in Podolia and the adjoining areas into the mid-eighteenth century. The followers of Jacob Frank, the most radical of the European Sabbatians, entered into public debate with the Rabbis at Kaminitz, the Podolian capital, as late as 1757. The Frankists were not the only Sabbatian believers in the area, however. Many pious ascetics, including even some members of the mystical societies mentioned above, continued to harbor some more-or-less quiescent forms of belief in the apostate messiah (Controversy R. Jonathan Eibeshutz vs. R. Jacob Emden).
3. Popular Wandering Preachers. These powerful figures, themselves sometimes men of only rudimentary Rabbinic learning, would go from town to village and preach in the synagogues on Sabbath afternoons. Their message was usually one of threatened damnation and a tear-producing plea for penitence. Partly in reaction to Sabbatianism, they were obsessed with the sinfulness of their time, and they put fear into the hearts of simple Jews who came to hear them.

At the same time, their status as wanderers made them bearers of news, as well as carriers of new ideas from one community to another. (More on this group later.)

All of these groups (the separation between them is somewhat artificial and should not be taken too literally) exercised great power over the Jewish imagination. Unlike many of the Rabbis in their day, they were not generally people of wealth or good family, and they were thus more readily able to identify with the daily struggle for existence that was the lot of most of the Jews who surrounded them. Whoever the Ba'al Shem Tov was, and our picture of him is still in some ways incomplete, it is clear that he emerged from already existing circles of pietists and preachers in the Ukraine.

B. The Sub-Intelligentsia

1. The intelligentsia of those days was composed of two levels: the Establishment, which was the Rabbinate; and the sub-intelligentsia, composed of the preachers as the higher level, and the miracle healers (baale shem) as the lowest level. The attitude of the Establishment Rabbis to the Besht was part of their general attitude to the preachers and others of the lower intellectual classes: trouble-makers, suspected heretics, and money-seekers. (WZ, 55).
2. The Baale-Shem consisted of professionals who were nothing more than folk healers and magic healers, who sold their amulets to the villagers and were largely exorcists

amongst the village Jews. (WZ, 53, 54)

3. The Preachers (*ד'ה'ד'ה' ד'ג'ה'*)

- a) Weiss maintains (WZ, 202) that the specific personality type is a continuation of the ecstatic Sabbatian "prophet" who had as one of his functions the divulgence of the secret sins of individuals. They feverishly worked for the cause of repentance. In the Shivhei... (See In Praise, p. 209) we find that R. Nahman of Kosov belongs to a group of pneumatic figures who "prophecy," except that this particular group of HK undertook, for some reason unknown to us, but probably in reaction against Sabbatianism, no longer to prophecy.
- b) The personal lot of these preachers was unenviable. They had to be on the road all their lives, and could preach only when the local Rabbi gave them permisison. Their living was very meager, and if their sermon did not go over, they were not paid. (WZ, 49). Thus, they were largely dependent upon handouts from individuals, very often in front of the whole congregation, something which demeaned them. (WZ, 50)
- c) Weiss (WZ, 52) maintains that Sabbatians were especially to be found in this particular social group of the sub-intelligentsia which contained many rebellious elements, who objected to the establishment. The fact that they were a wandering group, and had cells in many places, made them especially suspect to the establishment Rabbis.
- d) Weiss says (WZ, 56) that just as the Sabbatians were largely based on anti-clericalism, so the early Hasidim.

Each, in turn, suffered from the Establishment. Nevertheless, Weiss (WZ, 58) holds that despite a number of kinds of continuity, there is more dissimilarity and discontinuity between the Sabbatians and the Hasidim.

e) Most important is the psychological state of these preachers. They despaired of their people. They had a tremendous awareness of crisis and especially their own failure. They would meet often to discuss what they could do to be more effective in getting the people to repent. It is this crisis that led to the development of various theological principles that awaited further development in Hasidism. (WZ, 59)

4. The career of the Besht included a number of vocations of this sub-intelligentsia: in the beginning, he was the watchman in the Beth Hamidrash, and then became a Baal-Shem, which was the highest he could go in the lowest level of the intellectual class. See Shivhei..., Heb. p.56, on a story demonstrating the low level of Baalei Shem (WZ, 54).

The Circle of Pneumatics, known as the Havurah Kadisha (HK). Its members are called Benei HK or Anshei Ha-havurah. The HK, which consists to a large extend of preachers (mokhihim and maggidim) are all co-equals. It is a loose association of spiritual personalities bound to each other by mutual agreement rather than on the authoritative basis of a leader (WJ, 204). R. Nahman of Kosov is an important figure, but not the head, since there is no such head. (WJ,205) Besht made many concerted efforts to gain social and spiritual recognition by this group, which often met it Kutov. He

seems to have had little success with R. Nahman of Kosov (WJ,210).

Even the Hasidim did not refer to the members of HK as disciples of the Besht. At most, they referred to them as Benei Hekhala of the Besht (WZ, 47).

Very little is known about them. Some members are: R. Yehudah Leb, the Mokhiah of Polonnoye; R. Yehudah Leb of Pystian; R. Menahem Mendel of Bar; R. Nahman of Horodenka; R. Nahman of Kosov; and the Besht. (WZ, 49). It cannot be proven whether R. Gershon of Kutov was a member of the HK (WJ, 211).

V. THE BESHT

A. Israel b. Eliezer born cal. 1700 in village of Okupy near Tlust. Hard facts extremely difficult to come by - remarkable for a major religious figure of only 200-250 years ago. Overwhelmed by legendary material. Mention *G'yan nae* (Eng.: In Praise of the Besht).

(Assign: Minkin, chapters 1-4; In Praise, Nos. 1,2,3,4,7,9,19, 31,54; and cf. 54 to 118, 227. By end of term - all of Wiesel, Souls on Fire).

B. Historians on the Besht. Because of the paucity of documentary material and the enormous amount of legendary and hagiographical material on the Besht, historians have come to a number of remarkably different conclusions about his personality. Thus a French writer, Eshkoli, considers him as exclusively legendary, and of no value personally for history. (NL: Ephraim Deinard, in a little booklet published in New Jersey at the turn of the century, maintains that he never existed). Dubnow too is concerned by the very tiny amount of reliable documentary evidence. He maintains that the Mitnaggedim in the early history of the movement, at the end of the eighteenth century, hardly knew anything about the Besht. Dinur comes to dramatic conclusions about the importance of Besht and early Hasidism. He maintains that the legends and stories do have a historical core, once the legendary elements are stripped away. His whole attitude is that the hidden message of Hasidism is a redemptive, Messianic one. It is founded on a social uprising on the one hand, and prophetic leadership "charismatic" (Otto's term), primarily

Messianic rather than social in its origin, on the other. The Messianic note was disguised by the early leaders of the Movement, for fear that the Movement as such would be accused of Sabbatianism. (SB, 335-337).

Dubnow goes to the other extreme: Hasidism characterized Judaism and, in reaction to the Messianic extravagancies of Sabbatianism, in effect abandoned the Messianic and redemptive element, and focused only on the individual.

Scholem takes a middle stance: Hasidism "neutralized" the excessive Messianism of Sabbatianism and restored it to its normal place in the hierarchy of Jewish values and thought.

C. Biography. Following is a thumb-nail sketch: As a child, was orphaned from both parents, and raised by the town's charity. Loved to seclude himself in the forest. At twelve, he became an assistant teacher (Belfer) (analogue of the contemporary school-bus driver). Afterwards as assistant sexton in the synagogue. Used to sleep during the day after his work, and stay up all night in study and divine service. At eighteen married a woman, who shortly thereafter died. Again takes up task as assistant teacher in several towns of Galicia. In Tlusk, near Brody, becomes somewhat famous, and is chosen as the third member of an arbitration court. During such an arbitration, meets an important man -- Rabbi Ephraim of Kutov, who recommends his divorced daughter as a wife. They seal the contract, and on his way back to Brody, R. Ephraim dies. Israel Besht goes to the son of Rabbi Ephraim, R. Abraham Gershon, one of the sages of the Kloiz of Brody, where he is distinguished both in Talmudic learning and Kabbalah. He appears dressed as a poor peasant, smoking his famous pipe. R. Gershon thinks he

is a beggar and gives him a coin, whereupon R. Israel shows him the Tena'im. R. Gershon must accept the match, and they are married. Israel disguises himself as an ignorant commoner. R. Gershon wants to teach him Torah, but fails. R. Gershon tells his sister: either divorce him or leave because you are an embarrassment to me. She stays with her husband and they go into the Carpathian Mountains, where R. Israel quarries clay and his wife takes it into the wagon to sell it in town. According to legend, they live this way for seven years. The purpose of this seclusion is the opportunity for spiritual introspection, as opposed to theologizing. Afterwards, moving from place to place and other lowly occupations, during which she supports him, he learns the art of folk healing, using herbs and Divine Names: a Baal Shem, (use of amulets). Baalei Shem were quite frequent then, and some of them were scholars. Used a great deal of psychology, and emphasized spiritual healing. Moves to Brody, and associates with the Sages of the Kloiz of Brody. Becomes famous as a wonder worker. His new way in the service of the Lord begins to spread, and especially attracts people by his prayer: Hitpashtut Hagashmiyut ("ecstasy"). Is called "Baal Shem Tov." Signs himself as such. It is not known who first called his group, "hasidim." His purpose: to organize a "holy community" which should have a special character. To this end he does the following:

1. Changes the prayer from Ashkenaz to ^{י"ל אשכנז} Ashkenaz. Attracts a great deal of opposition because of this. Also ^{אשכנזי אשכנזי אשכנזי} Ashkenazi Ashkenazi Ashkenazi
2. The prayer itself is long, with frequent outbursts in Yiddish, much movement, and song (by the worshippers, not cantor or choir). Mention R. Abraham ^{Kahshkar} ~~Karliner~~ - ^{ג"ל} .

3. Dispenses amulets. The "kvittle" and pidyonot." One amulet that we have from him, simply records: Israel the son of Sarah. (Buber interprets this as really a non-amulet, but a sign of an I-Thou relationship between the Besht and the Hasidim.) Taught that prayer with kavannah is more important than the amulet.
4. Re-instituted Tevilat Ezra, and immersion before prayer, even on the Sabbath.
5. Instituted the "table" (tisch). "This is the table that is before the Lord" -- the altar. On it was concluded the "order of service," daily and Sabbath and holidays. At this time taught his new way. Especially the third meal on the Sabbath. The table was like the altar, and the meal was like the eating of sacred meat, such that the remnant (shirayim) were distributed to the priests. "And all that was left of the meal offering, Aaron and his sons shall eat it" -- in Midrash Rabbah: "Praise for the children of Aaron that they ate the remnants of the table of the King." Essentially the ceremonial meal was a sign of closeness between the Hasidim and their teacher.
6. Meanwhile travelled to many towns and villages to spread his doctrine.

Afterwards, he moved to Mezhibozh, which became the headquarters of Hasidism until his death. Stayed there for eleven years. Attracted masses of ordinary people, also some scholars -- such as R. Yaakov Yosef (1700). His teaching is not through lengthy addresses, but through maxims, proverbs, brief interpretations, etc. Eventually, his very brother-in-law becomes his most devoted follower. Dies on the 2nd day of Shavuot, 1760.

- C. Variants of the Besht Story. See the English translation of Shivhei haBesht (Dan Ben Amos and Jerome R. Minsk, In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov): From tale seventeen and on, the classical legends. But up to that point we have the printers' own traditions, which are largely that of HaBaD. The latter is more sophisticated, playing up the Besht scholarship, and especially his Kabbalistic prowess. It speaks of a Rabbi Yoel Baal Shem and a Rabbi Adam Baal Shem. Israel Besht comes into this group of hidden Zaddikim about 1710, when he is about eleven years old. In the year 1712, as a youngster of fourteen, the Besht proposes his new way in Divine service. It concentrates on disseminating the Kabbalah and attracting ordinary people through stories and Aggadah. His proposal revolves primarily about: education. The Zaddikim must become teachers and assistant teachers. Through these children does the doctrine of Hasidism spread, and the Besht becomes the head of the group. Thus, schools are built all around the country and the Besht and his new doctrine become known. This work continues until about 1730, when people begin to stream to him. In 1734 he reveals himself and tens of thousands flock to hear him. It is this year that marks the beginning of the Hasidic Movement.
- E. Known facts about the Besht. After a long period of preparation, sometime between 1730 and 1738, he made his public appearance in Tlust in Podolia. He began as a Baal Shem (which profession he never gave up) but also as a visionary who prays with devekut and enthusiasm. Before his "revelation" he was probably an assistant teacher in a little town. In all probability he was also a shohet in a little village near Tlust. So, there can be little doubt that in his twenties he lived a life of silent

meditation in the Carpathian Mountains (SB 338-339).

- F. The Besht as Besht. Dubnow maintains that initially he chose the profession of Baal Shem out of poverty and need, but later clung to the role of "miracle worker" when he realized that it would be effective in helping him disseminate his new doctrine. Thus, his assumption of the name "Baal Shem Tov" as primarily a guide and educator. Similarly, Buber maintains that the title is something new, and the extra word implies a vast change of role. Scholem, however, disputes the whole thing by pointing out that the title "Baal Shem Tov" was already known in Kabbalistic literature, where there is absolutely no difference between Baal Shem and Baal Shem Tov. In fact, what difference there is, is that Baal Shem Tov is more often used for the magical and occult aspects of the profession! Furthermore, we have no evidence whatsoever of any change in the Besht's thinking from one period of his life to another. (SB: 338).
- G. The Besht as a man of the people. He is known as such both to enemies and supporters. Thus, R. David of Makov writes of him disparagingly as one who walks in the streets with his pipe in his mouth and speaks with women (SB: 342). His grandson, R. Ephraim, writes that he used to hear and see his grandfather tell what appeared to be irrelevant and simple stories, but that these were the greatest spiritual exercises. (SB: 342).
- H. The Besht as a scholar. Hasidim, of course, consider him to have been a great scholar and always referred to him as "Rabbi." The Mitnaggedim have uniformly considered him an am-haaretz. The later literature always uses this term. Scholem, however,

proves that in the early Mitnaggedic literature he is simply referred as "not a lamdan" - which means that compared to the great halakhists of Poland he was simply not in their league. But he certainly was not an ignoramus. His specialty lay in Aggadic literature and the like. Otherwise he could never have extracted the loyalty of such halakhic giants as Rabbi Yaakov Yosef and Rabbi Meir Margoliot. So, his fascination with Saadya and the Emunot Ve'deiot. He was, however, very conversant with the Kabbalah, although he gave everything, from Aggadah to Kabbalah, his own twist, or mystical interpretation (SB, 351-356). He was no "Rabbi" but he left an indelible historical impression because of the combination of his charismatic qualities and his ability to reach the people. (SB, 356)

I. The Besht as an occultist. The Besht never gave up the world of magic. He had one or two scribes who used to write not only his letters but also his amulets. This activity bothers many historians, especially such as Aaron Marcus. Yet we have a letter from R. Gershon from Jerusalem to the Besht, in the end of 1748, in which he asks him for a regular amulet rather than a new one each year! (SB:341). Buber maintains that for the Besht, the amulets lost their magical quality and were simply a sign of personal (dialogic?) relationship. This is a modernistic interpretation which Scholem refuses to accept. This effort to reduce the professional and occult aspect of the Besht begins at the very beginning -- with R. Nahum of Czernobil. However, this is contravened by the stories in Shivhei and the two authentic letters which we possess (SB: 341). His role as a charismatic leader and teacher cannot be separated from his professional role as a folk healer and miracle worker.

("Charisma" is used according to the definition of Rudolph Otto in his great essay on Jesus.) (SB, 339)

- J. The Besht's self-awareness as a charismatic. Scholars are at odds as to which of his charismatic qualities were genuine, and which the fruit of imagination. Scholem says that simply terming supra-normal or para-psychological gifts as "imagination" or "suggestion" or "auto-suggestion" conceals more than it reveals (SB: 340).

RYY (in TYY to Tzav) quotes the following parable by the Besht: a king appointed four ministers to watch over his treasures, and they took the treasures and fled. One thought about it, and returned on his own. The second consulted with a wise man who convinced him to return. The third went to a place where he saw other thieves being tried for the crime, and so out of fright he returned. The fourth did not return at all. When the three came back, the king gave the first one a greater position than before, because he had decided to return of his own accord. Not so to the second, who would not have returned had he not met the wise man. The third one, who returned because of fear of what they do to such people, was appointed by the king to be in charge of that place so that he always might see the pain and anguish of those who are thus punished. "And my teacher said that this refers to himself; and understand it." Scholem's interpretation: the place of judgment and anguish is not Gehenna, but this world which is very much hellish. The Besht sees himself as condemned to witness all the suffering of people whom he wishes to help. This yields a rather sad and modest self-image, unless we want to assume that the Besht also felt that he had the ability to relieve suffering. Similarly, R.

Pinhas of Korecz quotes the Besht as saying, "one must even go to hell for the sake of God." His grandson, R. Ephraim, at the very end of his book, quotes his grandfather as saying that if there were one other person who could say El rahum shmekha V'a'nenu like I do, the Messiah would come." Hence, we have the picture of a man who is fully aware of his charismatic gifts, and yet is equally aware of his limitations. (SB, 348, 349). Scholem quotes other interesting passages which show this complicated self-awareness as both a great charismatic and one who is always insecure spiritually. Despite Scholem's insistence that he always remained a "magician," he agrees that the Besht's teaching about prayer in devekut and hitlahavut and bittul ha-yesh, and his influence on people, often replaced or displaced the amulets (SB, 349). READ: LETTER OF BESHT TO R. GERSHON OF KUTOV

K. Zaddikism. In TYY (Mishpatim): Besht told him, that just as we find two people where one becomes the "garment" or "chair" for the other, so one who conducts himself in a supernatural manner (NL: charismatic?), has his needs performed for him by people who conduct themselves in a natural manner; the latter therefore becomes the "chair" for the former, and when both combined with each other they become one organism. Scholem sees the whole risky doctrine of Zaddikism as implied in this passage. However, the Besht never in practice made use of this theoretical dispensation to accept gifts from others, as did later Zaddikim. The Besht left the world as poor as he was in the beginning. He never exploited and abused his own charisma (SB, 349, 350).

Assigned Readings for V : In Praise, 13-16.
Assigned Readings for VI: Minkin, ch. 5-7. In Praise, #47,48, 62,114,209,222,228,229,249. Weisel - pp. 1-88.

L. His Family. His son, Zvi, almost unknown (see In Praise, #249).

His daughter is very famous: Udel (seen as an acronym for Esh Dat Lamo), the mother of R. Baruch of Mezhbozh, R. Moshe Chaim Ephraim, and of Feigel, who was the mother of R. Nahman of Bratzlav. (See In Praise, Nos. 114, 222). Udel was said to possess *עשרה נרות*.

M. Colleagues of the Besht. Dubnow (DH 102-104) counts three of them, all from Galicia. The first is R. Nachman of Kossow. (See Weiss on him). He sided with R. Jonathan Eibeshutz against R. Jacob Emden, and was vigorously attacked by the latter as a Sabbatian. The second is R. Nachman of Horodenka. He was a great optimist, considering every event as to the good (following Nachum Ish Gamzu of Talmudic fame.) Hasidim tell that when the military government installed soldiers in Jewish homes in Mezhbozh, Besht asked Rabbi Nachman to pray that the decree be nullified. When R. Nachman answered, that this too is to the good (perhaps expecting that the soldiers would protect the Jews from the Haidamaks), the Besht smiled and said, "how lucky that you did not live in the generation of Haman, for then you would have said the same thing about the anti-Semitic decrees of Haman." R. Nachman survived the Besht in Mezhbozh. He later went to Israel and settled there. An interesting Hasidic tale (of relevance to the developing Zaddikism) relates that on his way to Palestine a storm afflicted the ship which almost came to grief. The travellers gathered a minyan, R. Nachman took a Torah in his hand, and he said, "if, Heaven forbid, it has been decreed against us by the Heavenly Court that we be destroyed, then we, the court of this Holy Congregation together with the Holy One and His shekhinah, do not agree to this decree, and may

it be His will that this decree be voided." The worshippers answered "Amen," they recited the psalms, and the storm passed away, the ship ultimately arriving safely in Haifa.

The third of these was R. Menachem Mendel of Peremyshlyany. After the death of the Besht, he joined R. Nachman of Horodenka in the same trip to Palestine in 1764. He is as fatalistic as R. Nachman Horodenka is optimistic. Two small booklets which remain with us of his sayings may well be references to the Besht (i.e. they may represent an alternative form of Hasidism; see later). One important such statement is: "another important principle is not to study too much... for it we distract our thoughts from devekut in the blessed Lord and study much, we will, Heaven forbid, forget the fear of the Lord, and fear is most important." (DH, 104).

- N. His Disciples. His two most famous students are R. Dov Ber, the great Maggid, who survived the Besht by thirteen years, and moved the capital of Hasidism from Mezhibozh to Mezeritch. A very sickly man, gaunt, but very impressive -- the eye-witness report of a visit to Mezeritch by Solomon Maimon. He becomes the teacher of the greatest galaxy of religious spirits ever gathered together. R. Yaakov Yosef of Polonnoye, a great Talmudist but lacking the charisma of the others, becomes the man to reduce the oral traditions of the growing movement to writing. His four famous books -- TYT, Ketonet Passim, Tzafnat Paneach, Ben Porat Yosef, is unsparing criticism of the Rabbinate and contemporary Talmudists. (מכתביו של רבי יעקב יוסף פלוננוי) Invaluable record of the Besht's sayings, interpretation, and parables -- as well as those who were contemporary with the Besht.

VI. HASIDIC TALES; LITERATURE

A. The Hasidic tale is a vehicle for the depth of its thinking.

Even followers of HaBaD, the rationalist and theological wing of Hasidism, cherish the stories. Thus, Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch (author of Tzemach Tzedek) says: the Hasidic tale is the Hasidic nefesh; the Hasidic melody is the Hasidic ruach; the Hasidic encounter or socializing, is the Hasidic neshamah; and the Hasidic study and prayer is the Hasidic Chaya-Yechidah. Hence, the tale may be at the bottom of the hierarchy, but it is also its foundation: "it is a Mitzvah for us to relate the Exodus from Egypt even if we are all wise and all intelligent..." The story has a wonderful power, and through telling of the Exodus we can realize it...

(difference between Buber and Scholem on Hasidic tales).

B. Literature.

1. Besht: "ספר הכשר" - נער שם טוב.

2. RYY: "מסכת יצחק יוסף; חנוכה בסיוע, בירת יוסף"

printed about 1780-82, about 20 years after death B.

Surprising fact in works of RYY: lacks any direct comment on condition of movement durint time his books prepared or shortly before. All his writings reflect problematica of the very earliest group of Hasidism, before it spread into a movement. (ibid.)

3. Surprising difference between Maggid and RYY: Maggid

Devarav L'Yaakov, printed 1781 (both this and RYY's

books published by student of Maggid, R. Shelomo Lutzk)

reflect apparently different realities. Social element --

criticism, etc., which so evident in works of RYY,
completely lacking in works of Maggid. (ibid.)

Source almost all Hasidic literature (except *שני*) - *13120* *of*,
copied after *שני* by *13120*.