

SUMMARIES

Hannah Kasher

BETWEEN “IT IS A TREE OF LIFE” AND “THE TREE OF LIFE” — A NOTE ON TORAH AND WISDOM IN MAIMONIDES’ TEACHING

The expression “tree of life” was generally explained as a metaphor for wisdom or for the Torah. For Maimonides, in contrast to his father, the expression “the tree of life” (Gen. 3:24), with the definite article, refers to wisdom (or counsel: עצה derives from צע which brings to everlasting life (חיים)), while the indefinite expression “It is a tree of life” (Prov. 3:18), refers to the Torah, which is one of the ways to attain some of the required knowledge.

Oded Porat

THE LINGUISTIC FORM ‘AND THE AIR WAS ESTABLISHED’ IN SEFER MA’AYAN HA-HOKHMAM: ITS JEWISH SOURCES AND THE NON- CATASTROPHIC FIGURING OF THE FIRST STAGE OF EMANATION

Following an extensive research in *Sefer Ma’ayan ha-Hokhma* (‘Book of the Fountain of Wisdom’), this article presents the historic and literary conclusions in regard to its Languedocian locality and its time, as one of two primal treatises of the anonymous *Iyyun* literature.

The analysis of the linguistic form ‘*nivka ha-avir*’ reveals its inner-Judaic and Hebraic sources, from Biblical wisdom literature, the *Piyyut* background and *Commentaries on Sefer Yetsira*, that were available both to Ibn Gabirol and to *Ma’ayan ha-Hokhma*. By that, the present research tends to lessen the centrality of foreign sources as influencing those literary works. Those Hebraic contexts reflect

the meaning of 'nivka' in *Ma'ayan ha-Hokhma* as an establishment, not as the usual rendering of it as irruption, breach, cleavage, split or hatch. Those last renderings are applied, by the same Semitic root, in the mythic description of the parallel stage of emanation in the *Zohar*. In accordance with the method and discipline of *Ma'ayan ha-Hokhma*, I suggest a description of the first act of emanation as a non-catastrophic act, extending the establishments of the primordial forces in the transcendent into the primal light or metaphysical voice.

The inquiry of meaning of that linguistic form in *Sefer Ma'ayan ha-Hokhma* shows its firm positive contexts of grounding, as the founding of the abyss and the depths, as the founding-ready preliminary stage of a saturation (*Le surcroît*) in the cloud before the breaking-through of the sound of the lightning, as a fission and a shining that comes by itself, as the patterns of the primal 'Voice' that are printed in the air, and as paving and placing. The passive context of 'nivka' shows as well the conditioning of a move of the emanates, united with the primal Air or Ether, as creating the terms needed for the establishment in the preliminary stage of emanation. One can deduce from here the ever-continuous mission of making the Absolute attended, as hidden, within every coming-into-being and in each progress of language.

Moshe Hallamish

ANNA BE-KHO'AH

The famous *piyyut Anna Be-kho'ah* appears for the first time in Sephardic manuscripts from the fifteenth century, although I believe that it originated in Ashkenaz. It was first printed in a Sephardic *siddur* in 1544 in Venice, though many contemporary kabbalists were also familiar with it. Once the *piyyut* was accepted by Rabbi Isaac Luria, it began being used in daily rituals, and according to the special guidelines that accompany it.

Eli Gurfinkel

NETZAH YISRAEL BY MAHARAL OF PRAGUE AND THE OUTLOOK
ON REDEMPTION OF RABBI YOEL TEITELBAUM OF SATMAR

The process of destruction and renewal that the Jewish people endured during the 20th century resulted in different ways and views of the Orthodox community, within them the extreme ones of Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum (referred to below as R. Y.T.), of Satmar. Some of his doctrines are based on the foundations of the eschatological teachings of Maharal of Prague in his work *Netzah Yisrael*. This research reveals the issues where the bond between R. Y.T and Maharal are evident, considers the role of treatise of the philosophy of R. Y.T, and critically assesses the explanations rendered by R. Y.T. As well, the author indicates many other characteristics where there is a philosophical common denominator between the two doctrines.

Isaac Hershkowitz

U'MIMIDBAR MATANAH
THE HOLOCAUST'S IMPACT ON A KABBALISTIC TREATISE
FROM SIBERIA

Rabbi Isaac Messer, a Polish kabbalist, was exiled during the Holocaust to Siberia, where he died after years of wandering and hunger. While at exile he composed a kabbalistic treatise with numerous acronyms and gimatriyas, entitled *U'mimidbar Matanah* (a gift from the desert). According to Prof. Hallamish, the main innovation of this book is the very ability of the author to conceive and create such an esoteric piece despite his existential distress.

However, I show that *U'MM* indeed has a substantial innovation regarding metaphors of food and *Tikkun* via eating and blessing. One easily spots the almost obsessive preoccupation of Messer with questions of food. About one-third of the book relates to various aspects of the food (its impact on the human ability to rise and raise his level of spirituality, dealing with shortages and consequential damage to the spiritual world, and more). Moreover, reading the book consistently reveals Messer gradually abandons the model of eating as a tool to raise the Divine sparks,

and thus to rectify the sins of mankind. In contrast, he finds comfort in metaphors of food as an expression of the impact God has on the world, and how He reveals himself and his *Shekhinah*.

Yossi Katz

SANCTIFYING A BUILDING AND ITS ADDRESS

The Habad Movement and Beis Moshiah on 770 Eastern Parkway, New York

The Habad movement regards the building that houses its headquarters on 770 Eastern Parkway in New York as nothing less than a temple. Even the building number, 770, is considered holy. Ascribing such a degree of sanctity to a building and its street address is a unique cultural-geographic phenomenon that cannot be comprehended without an understanding of the powerful messianic activism of the Habad movement, the lofty status of the late rebbe, Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson, who is believed by many to be the messiah, or at least worthy of the title, and the fervent longing of his followers for a connection to him.

It was the Rebbe himself who sanctified both the house and the number of the house, 770, which was assigned to the building by the city years before its purchase by Habad in 1940. The Rebbe spoke at length about the holiness of the building and number in his sermons, drawing parallels to the Temple in Jerusalem. In Jewish numerology, he said, 770 is equal to the Hebrew word *paratzta*, meaning “burst forth,” a highly symbolic concept in the Habad world. It is also a numerical equivalent of “beis moshiah” (messiah’s house). The Rebbe made it clear: The house on 770 Eastern Parkway was where the Third Temple would be revealed, and both would be transported to Jerusalem.

When the Rebbe died in 1994, the house and number continued to be the most tangible and meaningful connection to the departed leader. For the Habad faithful, 770 in New York, its architectural replicas around the world, and even the number 770 alone, are more than a symbol. They are the precious link that enable them to commune with the Rebbe. Followers of Habad have come up with many uses for 770, incorporating it in their phone numbers, addresses, license plates, and more.

Rafael Sagi

HASIDIC PSYCHOTHERAPY
ACCORDING TO THE MODEL OF REPRESSION-SEPARATION-
AMELIORATION OF RABBI YITZCHAK GINSBURGH

Ginsburgh formulates a concept of the “Complete Man” (*ha-adam ha-shalem*), following Habad’s anthropological and psychological principles, in a systematic, schematic, logical and discursive fashion.

Ginsburgh, however, does not suffice himself with a theoretical anthropological-psychological-Hasidic model of the complete man, but rather, seeks to develop a practical, universally applicable, Hasidic psychotherapy. In other words, a messianic rectification of the individual resulting from the application of a Hasidic psychotherapy. I therefore present the various psychotherapeutic practices developed by Ginsburgh, largely based upon his original interpretation of the Beshtian concept of *Repression-Separation-Amelioration*. The uniqueness of this practice is that it sets the “Other” at the heart of the therapy, as opposed to Christian ethics that places the self at the center. Thus, Ginsburgh breaks new ground in therapeutic practices, which are already finding wider application in the field of clinical psychology.

Tsippi Kaufmann

THE SHEKHINAH IN DISGUISE
A CHAPTER IN THE THEOLOGY OF THE BESHT

The most famous parable told by Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov (Besht) is the parable of the Son of the King and the imaginary walls, which prompted many scholarly discussions. Another less known parable of the Besht is that of the merchant’s wife. The former is told using the sage’s pattern of father-son relations, while the later is told using the pattern of marital relations. The later parable didn’t receive any serious discussion in Hasidic research. It was also claimed that the Besht was ‘forced’ to tell it only because of his essential attitude toward storytelling in general.

In the present article a wide literary analysis of the merchant’s wife parable is suggested, using insights from the research of Midrash. The article identifies the gap

between the parable and its moral and discusses its meaning. Also, discussed is the radical theology expressed through widening anthropomorphic images regarding the Godhead. The discussion enables us to look at this parable as fundamental and meaningful part of Beshtian theology. The parable of the imaginary walls expresses the idea of God's immanence on the personal-mystical level, while the merchant's wife parable expresses the same idea on the national-historical level.

Nahem Ilan

A WINDOW TO THE COMPLEX WORLD OF A JEWISH SCHOLAR
IN FIFTEENTH CENTURY SPAIN

The first part of the literary review addresses Ackerman's book, which discusses Zerachia Ha-Levi Saladin's sermons. Zerachia was a Jewish scholar in mid fourteenth-early fifteenth century Spain, and Ackerman focused mostly on the intellectual attitudes in those sermons. In the second part of the review I discussed some linguistic, literary, social and cultural aspects of those sermons.