Hasidism: A Mystical Movement Within Eastern European Judaism

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Hasidism is a mystical religious revival movement within Judaism, which draws from the Kabbalist tradition. It was called into existence by the charismatic figure Israel ben Eliezer (ca. 1700–1760), who was active in Poland. With Tzadikism, it developed specific forms of cultivating a religious elite, apocalyptic expectations, and communal life. This modern Hasidism, which is to be differentiated from the similarly named medieval "Chassidei Ashkenaz" ("German Hasidism", "German Pietists"), spread into the Slavic lands of eastern Europe and Romania after the second half of the eighteenth century, and, following the persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust in the twentieth century, throughout the world, especially into North America and Palestine/Israel.

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Beginnings

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the movements that sprang up around the "Pseudomessiah" Shabtai Zvi (1626–1676) (➔ Media Link #ab) (Jewish Sabbatean Movement), who in the end converted to Islam, and his successor (➔ Media Link #ac) Jacob Frank (1726–1791) (➔ Media Link #ad), who became a Roman Catholic, disappointed many Jews. According to Gershom Scholem (1897–1982) (➔ Media Link #ae) after these disappointing developments the mystical ideas of Kabbalah were passed down among Jews in three ways. One could, like some Orthodox kabbalists "pretend that nothing in particular had happened", one could try "to lead the Kabbalah back from the market place to the solitude of the mystic's semi-monstic cell"[1] or – and this was the Hasidic path – one could transform the kabbalist doctrine and use it to inspire a revival movement intended for the entire Jewish people.

▲ 1

Hasidism began with the Polish amulet writer (Hebrew, "Ba'al Schem", a term referring to a miracle healer who uses the magical power of the name of God) and visionary preacher Israel ben Eliezer (ca. 1700–1760) (➔ Media Link #af), who quickly became the subject of legends. He was also called the "Ba'al Schem Tov" (literally, "master of the good name") and was known in the Jewish world under the acronym "Besht".[2] Since the most important biographical source, the so-called "In Praise of the Besht" ("Schivche ha-Bescht"), did not appear in print until 1815, little about his life and the beginning of the movement is known with certainty. It is reported that Israel ben Eliezer lost his parents as a child and was taken into custody by the head of the community; he became first an assistant to the teacher and then warden of the synagogue and studied Kabbalist texts at night. Apparently Israel ben Eliezer possessed a charismatic personality already as a youth, but he performed magic and miraculous deeds in public only after he had reached middle age.[3] After an itinerant period in which he worked in a stone quarry in the Carpathians, ran a pub, and travelled through Galacia, Podolia, and Volhynia, the Besht settled in Medzhybizh (➔ Media Link #ag) in Podolia (Southwest Ukraine), which became one of his most important areas of influence and the first centre of Hasidism.

▲ 2

Israel ben Eliezer now began to assemble a circle of disciples, although, admittedly, not all of them would share his beliefs in every aspect. His following consisted of those who were unhappy with the prevailing rabbinical conception and practice of religion, because, from the perspective of Sabbatean piety, they considered the contemporary, unattractive

Rabbinism, which was often overly formal and pilpulistic,[4] to be sterile, or because individuals often felt lost and unprotected in the large and thus anonymous congregations.[5]

After the Besht's death, two of his followers shaped the continued path of the Hasidic movement: Jacob Joseph Kohen of Polnoy/Polonoye (Ukraine, died 1782) (➔ Media Link #ah) published the first theoretical text of Hasidism, "Sefer Toledot Yaakov Yosef", about twenty years after the Besht's death. His text summarised the oral teachings of the late master. Notably, the first edition of this book had to be printed without the normal *haskama*, the rabbinical *nihil obstat*. The other influential follower of the Besht was Dov Ber of Mezritsh (1710–1773) (➔ Media Link #ai), who became known as "the Great Maggid".[6] While Jacob Joseph of Polnoy lived rather reclusively, the Great Maggid assumed leadership of the movement by gathering a circle of disciples whom he sent out to minister to its scattered followers. The third generation of Hasidic teachers emerged from among Dov Ber's disciples, and they in turn founded dynasties of their own, which shaped Hasidism throughout the entire nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The disciples of the Great Maggid turned to the north towards Belarus and Lithuania (Aaron the Great of Karlin (1736–1772) (➔ Media Link #aj) and his successor Shlomo of Karlin (1738–1792) (➔ Media Link #ak)), to the west towards Galacia (Elimelech of Lizhensk, 1717–1787 (➔ Media Link #al)), towards central Poland, and later towards Moravian Nikolsburg/ Mikulov (Shmuel Horowitz, (1726–1778) (➔ Media Link #am)). A Hasidic group led by Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk (1730–1788) (➔ Media Link #an) arrived in the 1770s in Palestine.[7] This phase of Hasidic development is characterised by rapid geographical and numerical expansion, which continued into the nineteenth century: frequently entire congregations were persuaded by emissaries of the Great Maggid to become part of the Hasidic movement. Shmuel Ettinger pointed out the paradoxical elements in this development: on the one hand, Dov Ber of Mezritsh represented a rather authoritarian style of leadership, but, on the other hand, the dynamic which he inspired led to a decentralisation of the movement and finally to the splintering of Hasidism into various competing groups.[8]

The Hasidic groups all shared a lifestyle and piety, which was characterised by exuberance, ecstatic prayer and other practices. While earlier research focused on the reasons for the founding of Hasidism, following the work of Gershom Scholem interest has shifted to the characteristics of Hasidism which link the revival movement to early manifestations of Jewish mysticism. Along these lines, Moshe Idel called for the replacement of the historical and socioeconomic analysis of the Hasidic movement with a "panoramic approach", which should attempt to understand the various manifestations of Hasidism (and the other mystical tendencies within Judaism) in relation to a common spectrum of sources. According to Idel, the Hasidic teachings can be interpreted as a new configuration of older texts which include the medieval philosophy and thirteenth-century kabbalist literature of Castile, the mystical writings of Rabbi Löw of Prague (1525–1609) (➔ Media Link #ao) (Maharal), and the Kabbalah of the Renaissance.[9] "Hasidism can be understood not so much as a reaction or solution to, but rather as a synthesis of diverse mystical elements and paradigms present in earlier types of Jewish mysticism."[10] This "holistic" approach is countered by studies, which examine the differing forms of Hasidism within their individual local contexts in eastern and southeast Europe.

The Spread of the Hasidic Movement

Hasidism had already grown from a small sect to a mainstream division of Judaism by the first third of the nineteenth century, and it included the majority of Jews in the Ukraine, Galacia, and central Poland, as well as large Jewish congregations in Belarus, Lithuania and Hungary. The spread and fragmentation of the Hasidic movement can be understood in the context of the economic and socio-political crisis of the Polish Jewry in the first half of the eighteenth century, which was divided – following the partitions of Poland (➔ Media Link #ap) – into various political territories and thus exposed to different (Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and Prussian) influences.[11]

The Russian campaign led by Napoleon (1769–1821) (➔ Media Link #aq) played an important role in this development, because it was seen by some Hasidic Jews as the apocalyptic war of "Gog and Magog", with which they associated messianic hopes.[12] As a result of the complex political relationships within Eastern Europe, Hasidim in some areas supported Napoleon and in other areas opposed him. The resulting uncertainty is connected to the decline of traditional rabbinical authority, which Jacob Katz has established for the preceding decades. The resulting demise of the traditional

institution of the Jewish congregation (*Kehilla*) led to a weakening of the cohesive powers of the old hierarchical social orders and created a vacuum – felt by both individuals and congregations as a whole – which Hasidic groups and their prayer communities (*minjanim*) and study groups could then fill.[13]

Before the Great Maggid died in 1773, a new social structure had already been developed among the Hasidic leaders of the third generation. It focused on the relationship between the "Rebbe", the "Tzadik", and his successors. (➜ Media Link #ar) Because of their personal charisma, which they attributed to the Besht, the leading Hasidic figures demanded allegiance and loyalty. Jacob Joseph of Polnoy[14] and then Elimelech of Lizhensk were the first to formulate the doctrine of the "Tzadik", giving Tzadikism a social and theological basis.[15] According to the teachings of the Besht, every Jew was expected to make the effort of reaching the highest level of spiritual life. These efforts were now transferred to the relationship between the Rebbe (i.e., the teacher) and his followers. This can be viewed as a terminological paradox: although Hebrew had traditionally referred to those who were exceptionally pious as "hasid" and to those who followed the universal religious law as "tzadik" (i.e., "righteous") these terms were now reversed: the Tzadik became the extraordinary *homo religiosus* who had access to divine grace which he could transfer to his followers.[16] The mass of simple "believers" were now characterised as "Hasidim", and their conception of themselves and legitimation both as individuals and as groups resulted from their association with "their" Rebbes.[17] "The Hasidic sect served as a framework for direct contact between the leader and his followers, and the communion with God inherent in the *Zaddik*'s enthusiasm was transmitted to his followers and, in any case, was nourished by the group's being together."[18] The Tzadik became a channel of divine blessings, and the Hasidim could participate in the divine gift to the extent that he affiliated himself both internally and externally with his teacher.[19] The relationship between the Rebbe and his followers was mutually beneficial in that the master lived from the contributions of his Hasidim, but also gave part of his income to the needy. In this system, the contact between the Rebbe and his Hasidim acquired special importance – for example, during visits at his "court" on Jewish holidays or during travels of the Tzadik. The religious mediation was also maintained, as the office of the Rebbes became hereditary and some of the dynastic courts acquired magnificent furnishings and developed a ceremonial character based on the example of the Polish nobility, which had disappeared as a result of the divisions of Poland. Most of the Hasidic dynasties gradually took on the names of the native places of their founders: "Gerer Hasidism" was named for the small town of Góra Kalwari (Hebrew Gur, Yiddish Ger) near Warsaw, the hometown of Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Rothenburg Alter (ca. 1798–1866) (➜ Media Link #as); "Belzer Hasidism" (➜ Media Link #at) took its name from the small Galician town of Belz, the native place of Rabbi Sholom Rokeach (1779–1855) (➜ Media Link #au); "Vizhnitzer Hasidism" was named for the town of Vyzhnytsia in western Ukraine; etc.

The Hasidism promulgated by the Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav (1771–1810) (➜ Media Link #av), a great-grandson of the Besht, is especially important. He emphasised the ascetic tendencies within Hasidism and, faced with the growing strength of Tzadikism, asserted that he wanted to return to the original Hasidism. Rabbi Nachman became best known for his stories and allegorical fairy tales, of which Martin Buber (1878–1965) (➜ Media Link #aw) published a free adaptation in 1906, which was sharply criticised by later scientists.[20] Nachman's mysterious trip to Palestine is supposed to have become quite adventurous when it was caught up in Napoleon's military campaign in the Orient. Martin Cunz's analysis of the travelogues calls the trip a "hermeneutische Pantomime" (hermeneutic pantomime), in which the individual facts (or perhaps even the facticity of the trip itself?) have less meaning than the transformation of doctrine.[21] In 1802 Rabbi Nachman settled in the Ukrainian town of Bratslav. Eight years later he died in Uman (Ukraine) (➜ Media Link #ax) without any heirs. Since then he has been worshipped as the sole Tzadik by his followers, who hope that he will return to them one day soon.

The Lubavitcher Hasidism can be viewed as similarly significant. This dynasty is named for the home place of its second Rebbe, who settled in 1813 in the west Russian city of Lyubavichi. The movement was founded by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745–1813) (➜ Media Link #ay), a follower of the Great Maggid who was sent to spread the faith in the north. In 1797, in the course of the clash with his neighbouring Lithuanian opponents, Rabbi Schneur Zalman published "Tanya" (Aramaic, "we have learned") in which he developed a philosophical-esoteric system that combined the rational elements of traditional rabbinical Judaism rooted in the Kabbalah with the mysticism of Hasidism.[22] In regard to this background and the movement's emphasis on Torah scholarship, this branch of Hasidism is called "Chabad" Hasidism after the acronym of the Hebrew terms "Chochmah" (wisdom), "Binah" (understanding), and "Da'at" (knowledge). In classical Chabad piety, which underwent a renaissance at the end of the nineteenth century, the Tzadik was recognized as an authority, although without the messianic aspect of mediation and without the resulting personality cult.[23] It was

this "rational Hasidism", which in the beginning made it possible for the Lubavitcher Hasidim to counter the accusations and allegations of their Lithuanian opponents.[24]

The Opponents of Hasidism (Mitnagdim and Maskilim)

The representatives of traditional rabbinism opposed the Hasidic movement from the start – especially because they feared a continuation of Sabbatean theology and perceived Hasidism to have antinomian tendencies. On the one hand, Hasidism did nothing to undermine the basic inherited norms of religious law and rituals, but on the other hand, it did result in changes to religious practice, primarily regarding prayer times and the wording of certain prayers. The most significant modification of the Halacha (the moral and religious commandments of the Jewish tradition) was the requirement to use a specially sharpened knife for kosher butchering.[25] These changes, which can probably be explained from a sociological standpoint as necessary for defining Hasidism as a distinct social group, were neither revolutionary innovations nor violations of religious law per se. Nevertheless, they were perceived by non-Hasidic authorities as a danger for the cohesion of the Jewry and the traditional Jewish way of life.[26] In addition, the Hasidic teaching that the Tzadik could vicariously perform religious duties for his followers could be understood as dangerously antinomian – an interpretation which was strengthened by the observation that some Hasidim demonstrated a lack of seriousness in regard to certain matters of ritual and Halacha and were not ashamed to use distilled spirits to stimulate their religious feelings.[27] The kernel of truth in this criticism lay in the Hasidic doctrine which suggested that one should serve God not only with the "good impulses" but also with the bad.[28] As far as the function of the Rebbe is concerned, Jacob Joseph of Polnoy had already developed the teaching that the Tzadik was – through introspection or even through an intentional soteriological violation of the commandments – to find a particle of guilt within himself in order to expunge the guilt of others and contribute to the redemption of the world.[29] In this context, the Hasidic communal life with its dance and song raised the suspicions of some contemporaries. Critics also observed that the charismatic exercises of the men were only possible because the women provided for their material existence and, furthermore, that Hasidism contributed more than a little to the solidification of already indefensible social conditions in Eastern Europe.[30] One of the most well known contemporary critics from the ranks of the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah (➜ Media Link #az)) was Joseph Perl (1773–1839) (➜ Media Link #b0), who published a satirical pamphlet in German in 1816 with the title "Über das Wesen der Sekte Chassidim" (On the nature of the sect of the Hasidim).[31] The Jewish historian Simon Dubnow (1860–1941) (➜ Media Link #b1) also harshly criticized the Hasidic movement; in the stories of Rabbi Nachman of Braslav, Dubnow could only see a fever-induced fantasy.[32]

Regarding religious matters, there were halakhic disputes and congregational political arguments in various locations. In Lithuania, Hasidism finally encountered organised resistance, which crystallised around Rabbi Elijah ben Shlomo Zalman (1720–1797) (➜ Media Link #b2), the Gaon ("exceptional Talmud Scholar") of Vilnius (➜ Media Link #b3). Aside from the ritual innovations which the Hasidim had introduced, the Gaon rejected the mystical enthusiastic devotional practice and the Rebbe's mediatory role because these things went hand-in-hand with the ignorance of the Rebbe's followers who had abandoned the traditional study of the Talmud and rabbinical literature. Although he himself had kabbalist inclinations and had belonged to an ascetic group of Hasidism in his youth, by the end of his life, Rabbi Elijah ben Shlomo Zalman had become a leading figure of the anti-Hasidic opposition in Lithuania ("Mitnagdim", literally: "opponents"). In the course of the conflict with Chabad Hasidism he made the congregation in Vilnius to officially ban this competing movement in 1772. In 1781 the ban was renewed and Hasidic books were burned. The conflict escalated in the years after 1790, when both sides asked the political authorities for help in their bitter fight. Although the conflict between Hasidim and Mitnagdim continued in the following decades and in principle into the twentieth century as well, there was a also a rapprochement between the two groups. This was possible for two reasons: first of all, the Hasidim repeatedly emphasised the basic validity of traditional religious law. They thereby minimised their antinomian tendencies and began a gradual return to the traditional practice of Talmudic study in various forms.[33] In addition, both religious groups were held together by their common opposition to the Jewish Enlightenment.

The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

Starting in the mid-nineteenth century, the spread of the Jewish Enlightenment and the secularisation stopped the

growth of Hasidism within the Jewish population. "The very rise of the Haskalah served as evidence that Hasidism had become outmoded. Rather than a progressive force, it became a stumbling block on the road of development...."[34] After years of expansion, the Hasidim adopted a more passive role and attempted to preserve their lifestyle by opposing the modern ideas of Enlightenment, Jewish nationalism and socialism. The sole innovative element of Hasidism in the second half of the nineteenth century was the introduction of methods of studying the Torah which were similar to those employed by the Lithuanian Mitnagdim – an attempt to actively oppose the advance of the Haskalah.[35] The vehement rejection of secular Zionism (➜ Media Link #b4) as propagated by Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) (➜ Media Link #b5) led the diverse Hasidic groups at the beginning of the twentieth century to seek a cooperation with their former Lithuanian opponents and the neo-orthodox German Jews. In 1912 the anti-Zionist (➜ Media Link #b6) orthodox organisation "Agudat" was founded in Katowice in Upper Silesia with the significant participation of the Gerer Rebbe R. Aryeh Löb ben Avraham Mordechai Alter (1866–1948) (➜ Media Link #b7).[36] This involvement led Gershom Scholem to allege that Hasidism had sunk "into a political instrument of reactionary forces".[37] The Gerer Hasidim benefitted from these activities after World War I because they had been able to gain political experience which they then used in the re-established Polish state and parliament.

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The First World War and the new geopolitical boundaries between the central European countries had significant implications for various Hasidic groups. Many Hasidim were forced to flee from their native regions and settled in large cities, where they remained after the war. There they were, however, often cut off from the courts of their Rebbes.

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In the 1920s, after several years of dynastic turmoil among small Hasidic groups in eastern Hungary, a Hasidic movement was reestablished under the leadership of Rabbi Yoel Teitelbaum (1888–1979) (➜ Media Link #b9) in Satu Mare (Yiddish, Satmar, in northern Transylvania). This movement is somewhat isolated within Hasidism because of its religious extremism, its organisational separatism (it rejected participation in the Agudat Israel), and its extreme anti-Zionism.[38]

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The most important changes came, however, as a result of the Russian Revolution. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn (1880–1950) (➜ Media Link #ba) of Lyubavichi, who opposed the communists, was arrested in 1927 and sentenced to death for counterrevolutionary activities. Only after global protests was he freed and allowed to emigrate from the Soviet Union to Latvia. After the outbreak of World War II, he was able to flee to the USA, where he settled in the New York neighbourhood of Crown Heights. In 1948 Lubavitcher Hasidim founded the community of Kfar Chabad approximately eight kilometres southeast of Tel Aviv, which houses numerous educational institutions and is the centre of the Chabad movement in Israel. (➜ Media Link #bc)

▲ 16

During the Holocaust, the remaining Hasidic centres in Eastern Europe were destroyed and the Hasidim who lived there murdered.[39] After the war, the surviving Rebbes immigrated to North America (like the Satmarer and Lubavitcher Hasidim) or to Palestine (like the Gerer, the Belzer, and the Vizhnitzer Hasidim) and reestablished their courts. Although most Hasidim continued to oppose Zionism, new Hasidic centres and settlements were founded in Bnei Brak (near Tel Aviv) and Kfar Hasidim. Following the formation of the state of Israel, the Hasidic courts of Ger, Belz, and Vyzhnytsia were involved – with varying levels of intensity – in the Agudat Israel movement, which now functioned as a political party with parliamentary representation. This led to the weakening of anti-Zionist rhetoric among these groups, while Satmar Hasidism, led from its centre in New York, maintained and strengthened its anti-Zionist enthusiasm in the course of the twentieth century.[40]

▲ 17

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Appendix

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Notes

1. ^ Scholem, Jewish Mysticism, p. 328.
2. ^ For a biography of the Besht from a historical perspective see Rosman, Founder of Hasidism 1996; on the Besht and his role, cf. also Etkes, The Besht 2005.
3. ^ For an analysis of the Besht's correspondence, see Lamm, The Religious Thought 1995, pp. 541–555.
4. ^ Pilpulistic (Hebrew, "pilpul" from "pilel", i.e. "pepper") refers to the method of teaching and discussing practiced at eastern European orthodox Talmud academies; the astute listing of all arguments and counterarguments was intended to clarify texts. Among the Hasidic opponents (and among those influenced by the Jewish Enlightenment) of this classical Jewish technique, the term acquired a negative connotation in the sense of "splitting hairs", "nit-picking" and intellectual aloofness.
5. ^ Maier, Geschichte 1972, p. 507.
6. ^ Cf. Buber, Der große Maggid 1992.
7. ^ Cf. Halpern, The Hasidic Immigration 1946; Barnai, The Historiography 1996.
8. ^ Cf. Ettinger, The Hasidic Movement 1991. Ada Rapoport-Albert has demonstrated the fallacy of the common portrayal of Hasidism as a centralised movement in the first two generations before the death of the Great Maggid in 1772. There were already various Hasidic centres during the life of the Besht, and during the lifespan of the Great Maggid the movement remained decentralised. It seems that the death of Dov Ber of Mezritsh, the Polish divisions, and the polemic of the Mitnagdim caused little change in this regard. The development of different Hasidic centres with the corresponding Rebbes was a result then of this pre-existing decentralised structure. This view is also compatible with the social structure of the Jewish communities in Eastern Europe before the establishment of Hasidism. See Rapoport-Albert, The Hasidic Movement 1990.
9. ^ Cf. Idel, Hasidism 1995, pp. 9–17.
10. ^ Ibid., p. 18.
11. ^ Cf. Etkes, The Study of Hasidism 1996.
12. ^ Cf. Buber, Gog und Magog 1957.
13. ^ Cf. Katz, Tradition 1971, p. 227–229.
14. ^ On the doctrine of Jacob Joseph Kohen of Polnoy, cf. Dresner, The Zaddik 1974.
15. ^ See Katz, Tradition 1971, pp. 235ff.
16. ^ Cf. Maier, Geschichte 1972, p. 511.
17. ^ This can be explained linguistically as follows: the Hebrew substantive "Hasid" (as used in reference to modern Hasidism and as opposed to the medieval "Chassidei Ashkenaz") never stands alone without an accompanying genitive. A Hasid can thus only be referred to as the follower of a particular Rebbe. For example, in Hebrew, one must be a "Hasid Gur" (i.e., a follower of the Gerer Rebbe), a "Hassid Braslav" (i.e., a follower of the Rabbi Nachman of Braslav), or a "Hasid Lubavitch" (a follower of the Rebbe in Lyubavichi), etc.
18. ^ Katz, Tradition 1971, p. 236.
19. ^ On the theology of Tzadikism and the social role of the Tzadik, cf. also Etkes, The Zaddik 1996.
20. ^ Cf. Buber, Die Erzählungen 1906, and Brocke, Die Erzählungen 1985, p. 298f.
21. ^ Cf. Cunz, Die Fahrt 1997, pp. 49–60. The term "hermeneutische Pantomime" comes from Ouaknin, Lire aux éclats 1992, p. 345.
22. ^ On the teachings of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, cf. Elior, The Paradoxical Ascent 1993.
23. ^ Maier, Geschichte 1972, p. 521.
24. ^ Cf. Ehrlich, Leadership 2000, p. 48. This sober underlying character of classical Lubavitcher Hasidism deserves special emphasis in light of the messianic exuberance which swept through this group at the end of the twentieth century.
25. ^ For a thorough examination of Hasidic practice in relation to Jewish religious law, see Wertheim, Law and Custom

1992.

26. ^ For a good overview of these controversies, cf. Wilensky, Hasidic-Mitnaggedic Polemics 1991.
27. ^ Cf. Maier, Geschichte 1972, p. 509.
28. ^ Cf. Jacobson, Hasidic Thought 1985, pp. 130–133.
29. ^ Cf. Morgenstern, Halachische Schriftauslegung 2006, pp. 42–44. This notion is quite similar to that sometimes cited in the context of Sabbateanism of "redemption via sin"; on this point, cf. Scholem, Erlösung durch Sünde 1992.
30. ^ Maier, Geschichte 1972, p. 511.
31. ^ Cf. the new edition of this text published under the supervision of Rubinstein in 1977.
32. ^ Brocke, Die Erzählungen 1985, p. 298.
33. ^ Some authors emphasise the common heritage and interests of Hasidim and Mitnagdim in regard to the future path of the Jewry in general: cf. Hasdai, Hasidim and Mitnaggedim 1988.
34. ^ Mahler, Hasidism 1985, p. xv.
35. ^ The foundation of Hasidic Talmud schools (Yeshivot) is an expression of this change, for example, the school founded by Abraham Bornstein (1839–1910) in the 1860s in Sochaczew or the Tomchei Temimim teaching institution founded by Sholom Dov Ber Schneersohn (1860–1920) in Lyubavichi in 1896.
36. ^ Cf. Morgenstern, Von Frankfurt nach Jerusalem 1995, pp. 56–60.
37. ^ Scholem, Jewish Mysticism, p. 325.
38. ^ Cf. Rubin, An Island 1972, pp. 34–40; on Hasidism in Hungary, cf. Poll, The Hasidic Community 1962, p. 26. During the Holocaust, Teitelbaum was saved by the Zionist activist Rudolf Kasztner (1906–1957) who negotiated with Nazi officials on his behalf. He was able to escape into Switzerland. On the radical anti-Zionism of Hungarian Hasidism, see also Aviezer Ravitzky, Messianism 1993.
39. ^ On the fate and activities of Hasidic Rebbes during the period of the Holocaust, cf. Schindler, Hasidic Responses 1990.
40. ^ Cf. Morgenstern, Kampf um den Staat 1990. In 2006 about 180,000 Hasidim lived in the USA – about half of the total number of orthodox Jews and three percent of the approximately six million Jews in the United States. Cf. Hoover, Hasidic Population 2010.

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