

ABSTRACT

Barukh of Medzibezh was a Hasidic Rebbe in Podolia, Ukraine. The grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism, Barukh lived a royal lifestyle and believed that the Zaddik is the "leader of the universe," the one person whose power allowed him to override divine will.

The history of Barukh is not well documented. This thesis offers a profile of Barukh, both providing historical data of his life and stating his beliefs in various facets of Hasidic doctrine. It is posited that Barukh grew up almost entirely outside the direct influence of his grandfather, who died when Barukh was approximately three years old. His primary teacher was Pinhas of Korets, and he praises both Pinhas and Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, considering them the only two true Zaddikim. Barukh believed in many of the common Hasidic doctrines in his day: Opposition to Lurianic *Kavvanot*, praying to fix the imperfections in the *Shekhinah* instead of personal petitionary prayer, and the primary importance of the Zohar, which he considered himself a master. Additionally, Barukh advocated minimal conversation, according to *Bozma DiNehora* (the first complete work devoted to Barukh of Medzibezh). The evidence suggests that historians have sharply attacked Barukh's intelligence and his conduct based upon two primary sources: *Bozma DiNehora* and the memoirs of A. B. Gottlober, *Zikhronot Mimei Ne'urai*. Almost entirely ignored in scholarly circles is "*Likutei Imrot Tehorot*," the first printed collection of Barukh teachings, which appeared in 1850. This collection suggests that Barukh was more sophisticated mystic than academics have thus far portrayed.

Barukh's vision of the Zaddik is analyzed, using all the available sources on Barukh's teaching. While it has long been thought that Barukh was the first Rebbe to live an openly royal lifestyle, with carriage, throne, and "court," little real analysis of his teachings have been offered. It is found that Barukh's Zaddikism involves the dualistic, more ancient perspective that the universe is controlled by the constant battle between good and evil, between Zaddikim and *Resha'im*. In other texts, however, Barukh ponders the heavy burden placed upon the Zaddik to perform *avodah begashmiyut*, or worshipping God while simultaneously engaging in earthly activity. This act is seen as solely the burden of the Zaddikim, and anyone who attempts to engage in *avodah begashmiyut* will be halted by the Evil Inclination.

In a handful of texts, all from "*Likutei Imrot Tehorot*," Barukh describes the mystic's experience of channeling the divine influx into the world. The Zaddik/mystic is pictured as a vessel for the *shekhinah*, the tenth *sefirah* and source of contact between the world and the celestial powers.

Finally, in the conclusion, it is explained that the Barukh of *Bozma DiNehora* perceives his relationship with the divine as a question of faith, whereas the Barukh of "*Likutei Imrot Tehorot*" views it as a question of *deveikut*, or spiritual attachment to God. The two portrayals are so radically different that scholars need to consider the possibility that one of these two sources is unauthentic.

MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE BARUKH OF MEDZIBEZH
AND THE HASIDIC DOCTRINE OF THE ZADDIK

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To count the loss,
And measure the destruction;
To ponder "What if it had not been?"
Is to sink into the most unfathomable abyss
Of despair

This thesis is dedicated to the murdered Hasidim of Eastern Europe.

Annopol, Bar, Berdichev, Bratslav,
Chemelnick, Chernobyl, Chortkov, Dubno,
Gornostaypol, Husiatyn, Jaroslaw, Karlin,
Korets, Kremenchug, Liadi, Litin,
Lvov, Lyzhansk, Medzibezh, Mezhirech,
Nemirov, Ostrog, Piotrkov, Polonnoye,
Ruzhyn, Savran, Shepetovka, Sudylkow,
Tulchin, Uman, Vinnitsa, Warsaw; and Zhitomir

May the day come when all the murdered of Europe,
The victims of Cossacks, then Nazis,
Will rise once again and march to Jerusalem,
Singing exuberantly,
The "Cracover Niggun" by Shlomo Carlebach

לפתע ולפתאום בבקר לא עבות
וריח כל הצומח נדף
וכל הצפרים עפות במין כנף אחת
אללי לכל רואן בכך והוא לא נטל בנדיו
את ענבי עיניו ולא סחט!

So very suddenly, one cloudless morning,
the fragrance of growth filling the air,
and all the birds were flying with some sort of single wing
Woe to the man who, seeing them thus, did
not pluck the grapes of his eyes and
crush them with his hands!

גם הצפרים עצמן אינן יודעות מי קצץ להן כנף
לפתע ולפתאום הן עפות כך באוויר
נוטות אל צד
ואף דם אינו נוטף ואין הכר כי לכל צפור
היו שתי כנפים להעביר

Even the birds, they themselves, do not
know who cut off their wing. So very
suddenly, and they were flying through
the air, thus, tilted to one side. And no
blood drips, and there is no sign that
every bird once had two wings, to carry

לבבות דקסיפין מהבא להתם -
עקשו אין יותר להתם.
בדבר אלהים כמו בחלום נחתכה כנף
ועל מקום החתוך התם.

yearning hearts from over-here to
over-there. Now over-there is no more.
By the word of God, as if in a dream,
the wing was cut off, and then He
sealed up the gash.

--Uri Zvi Greenberg
("כריתת כנף")
"The Severing of the Wing"

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Chapter I: Introduction to the Study of Barukh of Medzibezh

I. Introduction

Barukh ben Yehiel lived like a king. The grandson of the great founder of Hasidism, the Ba'al Shem Tov, he rejoiced with immense wealth, a royal throne of gold, precious jewels, and a regal palace in Medzibezh, then Tulchin, then finally in Medzibezh again until the end of his life. As a third-generational Hasidic leader, he grew up in the shadow of his grandfather, claiming the rights to the Besht's prestige at a time when the Hasidic movement had begun to transform itself from a small, Podolian (Ukraine) social order into a global, dynastic empire led by the many students of the Besht's greatest disciple, Dov Baer of Mezhirech, also known as the Maggid. Barukh watched as countless Rebbes built their dynasties throughout Eastern Europe, especially Volhynia. He followed suit and created a royal court in his own home town.

Despite his efforts to claim authority over the entire Hasidic world, which allegedly includes insulting other Rebbes and insisting that his lineage entitled him to automatic honor, Barukh's teachings and real biography have been ignored. Without any sons, Barukh did not create a dynasty like his many fellow Rebbes. His difficult personality earned him many enemies, and his (small) circle of disciples did not publish his teachings until many years after his death. The Hasidim of today, for the most part, have forgotten Barukh. When I asked bookstore owners in Jerusalem for *Bozina DiNehora*, the primary collection of Barukh's teachings, few had even heard of it.

Despite his importance as a bridge between early Hasidism and its nineteenth-

century incarnation, few have examined Barukh's teachings to ascertain whether he was, as Pinhas of Korets and Dov Baer of Mezhirech allegedly claimed, a *davar hiddush*, a new creation in the development of Hasidic thought. Such a study is long overdue.

2. Sources for the Teachings by Barukh ben Yehiel of Medzibezh

The story of Barukh's life and teachings has come down to us today in a perplexing fashion. While he did have disciples who learned under him, no book devoted to this leading Zaddik appeared in print until 1879, fifty-eight years after his reported death in 1811. However, while historians had disputed the historicity of his grandfather, Israel Ba'al Shem Tov,¹ the ample references to Barukh by other Hasidic figures leaves no scholarly question as to Barukh's existence.

The first literary source to preserve a Barukh teaching appears in the work by his brother, Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow (known in Hasidic literature as "R Ephraim"), titled *Degel Mahaneh Ephraim* ("Standard of the Division of Ephraim," a title borrowed from Num. 2:18), published in 1808 in an unknown location.² This book

¹Murray Jay Rosman decisively demonstrates the historicity of the Baal Shem Tov by examining Polish Archives. Moshe Rosman, *Founder of Hasidism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

²According to *Beit Eked Sefarim*, this 1808 first edition of 89 folios appeared without a place of publication. However, Jay Rock, in his unpublished dissertation, *Rabbi Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudlikov's Degel Mahane Ephraim*, p. 438-439, notes that Chaim B. Friedberg suggests that the first edition was published in Berdichev, 1809-10. Samuel Weiner agrees but gives it a question mark. However, Abraham Ya'ari disputes this claim and suggests that the very first edition was probably published in Polonnoye, in 1810. It is clear, however, that the first edition was published virtually simultaneous to Barukh's demise. If *Beit Eked Sefarim* is correct, then the very first edition was published prior to Barukh's death.

contains one teaching,¹ two questions,² and a dream³ related to Barukh, which R. Ephraim presumably recorded and which his son, Jacob Yehiel, later published after R. Ephraim's death, in 1800. Jacob Yehiel began the process of publishing his father's manuscript by 1803,⁴ when Barukh was still alive. The text itself refers to him as "my brother, may his light shine," suggesting that *Degel Mahaneh Ephraim* had virtually no editorial interference since Moses Hayyim Ephraim wrote it, even when persons mentioned within the text had died. References to Barukh's teachings and questions here are surely authentic.

¹Under Torah portion *Bo*, it reads, "just as I heard from my brother, the holy, well-known Rabbi, our teacher, Barukh, may his light shine, who said to connect the end of the Torah with its beginning. 'Before the eyes of all Israel, . . . *Bereshit* (i.e. the creation story).' This means, according to "the eyes of all Israel," who look at the Torah [That is,] corresponding to their [ability for] comprehension of Torah is the renewal of the act of creation, which is renewed every day." R. Ephraim proceeds to apply Barukh's notion to the verse, "This month shall mark for you the beginning of the months" (Ex. 12:2).

²These are difficulties which Barukh allegedly has with the text, and which R. Ephraim explains. The first one, found in *Degel, Parashat Terumah*, is the rabbinic interpretation of the word, תְּרומָה (*Terumah*, or "Contribution") in which the single word is broken in two, תְּרִיהַם (*Torah M*). Later, in *Parashat Ekev*, R. Ephraim explains Barukh's question as to which illnesses are meant by "The Lord will ward off from you all sickness, He will not bring upon you any of the dreadful diseases of Egypt" (Deut. 7:15).

³"In a dream I saw my master, my grandfather, and he gave me a handful of coins. Among them there were quarter-rubles -- several -- a half-ruble, white coins, old coins, and brass coins like the old gildens. **And for my brother Baruch Leib, he also took from this what amounted to two old gildens.** This was on our trips to the holy community of Meziboz. Such did I see in a dream on the eve of Friday, portion *Hukkat ha-Torah*, 5540 (1780)." Emphasis added. Translation from Rock, *Rabbi Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudlikov's Degel Mahaneh Ephraim*, 327.

⁴Four of the first five approbations were gathered in 1803, and all of them mention Jacob Yehiel's involvement in the process. The last of the original five, from Levi Isaac ben Meir of Berdichev, is dated 1807.

In addition to the actual text, *Beit Liked Seferim* notes that the 1815 Berdichev edition of *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* includes "additions" by Barukh.⁸ I could not find these alleged additions,⁹ and since the *Enziklopedia Talmusdat* makes no references to them, I believe that they do not exist in the 1815 edition. However, the 1850 Zhitomir edition definitely does contain additional Barukh material, labeled *Likutei Imrot Tehorat* on the title page.¹⁰ According to the header which introduces it, "All this was written while his sun still shone upon the earth, and now it is copied from anew in the year "How awesome is this HOLY PLACE,"¹¹ which is equivalent to 1836. Without any indication that he had died before these texts were recorded, it seems most likely that these are, indeed, his words. Published only twenty-five years after his death, this material represents the first collection of Barukh teachings.

Likutei Imrot Tehorat consists of both brief interpretations of texts from various Torah portions and more lengthy addresses. Many of the addresses have titles which suggest the occasions they were presumably presented, such as "Homily (*Drush*) on Song of Songs," "For the Haftarah of Shabbat Nahamu," and, "For Yom Kippur." Overall, it is

⁸p. 229.

⁸The rare book room in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York contains two copies of the 1815 Berdichev edition. The one which I examined had no additions and unfortunately, the second copy was unavailable because it was being prepared.

⁹Barukh of Medzibezh, "*Likutei Imrot Tehorat*," *Sefer Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* (Zhitomir, 1850) 192-199.

¹⁰מקם קדוש, by means of gematria (Jewish numerology), is equivalent to 596, which corresponds to the secular years 1835 and 1836. I could find no secondary sources which take note of this dating, despite its critical bearing on authenticating the teachings of Barukh.

partially organized, with weekly Torah portion material presented first (without introductory titles), followed by longer discourses for special calendrical occasions. However, the last portion contains a collection of dissimilar comments on verses from the Torah, the Talmud, and even the liturgy. Both the comments and the homilies are the longest and most elaborate of any materials attributed to Barukh, suggesting that these sermonic units were transcribed by a disciple shortly after they were presented to his followers. As with most Hasidic texts, Barukh probably taught in Yiddish and his disciples later transcribed his ideas into Hebrew.

Within the entire corpus of Barukh's works, these texts published in *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* contain his most complex and developed extant ideas. As we shall see, his views of the Zaddik are more sophisticated here than in later sources, and while no other texts ascribed to Barukh contain the Kabbalistic concept of a three-fold unity of God, Torah and Israel,¹¹ it appears five times in the body of the homilies. Also, whereas many later materials portray Barukh as self-absorbed and relatively non-verbal, these texts never suggest that he was focused upon either wealth or power. Considering the dissonance between these lesser-known texts by Barukh and the ones which appear later, it is quite possible that either these materials published in the 1850 Zhitomir edition of *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* (and nowhere else) or the later texts are inaccurately ascribed to Barukh. The *Degel* material is introduced simply as "precious things which we heard from the holy and blessed mouth which he said when we were with him. . . *HaKadosh*

¹¹Zohar 3:73a

uL'ARUKH" (the Holy and BLESSED)¹² without any indication of its redactors nor its origins. Without a reliable source, we must question their authenticity.

Moreover, the homiletic texts of *Likutei Imrot Tehorot* bear remarkable similarity in thought to the ideas of his brother, R. Ephraim, who refers frequently to the Zoharic passage suggesting that God, Torah and Israel are One. If some of the *Likutei Imrot Tehorot* texts did indeed appear in the 1815 edition of R. Ephraim's *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*, then it is possible that they were mistakenly attributed to Barukh when they were actually R. Ephraim's ideas.¹³ Nevertheless, without any proof otherwise, we should accept the editor's word that these texts are Barukh's.

The next source to include material in Barukh's name is *Hesed L'Avraham*,¹⁴ which consists primarily of teachings by Abraham ben Dov of Mezhibezh ("ha-Malakh") but also contains substantial material in the name of Abraham Ben Alexander Katz of Kalisk, as well as Barukh.¹⁵ These texts are almost entirely reprints of *Likutei Imrot Tehorot* texts, with only a few additional texts which add little significant new insight on

¹²Lit. "The Holy One and Blessed," probably intended as a variation on "HaKadosh Barukh-Hu," a traditional name for God.

¹³However, a CD-ROM search of recent editions does not reveal that these texts are in any part of today's version of *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*. If they are actually R. Ephraim's, then they were extracted from his work at a very early stage, which seems unlikely.

¹⁴"Kindness for Abraham," based upon Micah 7:20, "You will keep faith with Jacob, Loyalty to Abraham." First published in Chernovits, 1851. All citations based upon the Lemberg, 1858 edition.

¹⁵Barukh of Medzibezh, "*Likutei Y'karim*," *Hesed L'Avraham* (Chernovits, 1851) 33a-39a. However, unlike the two other Hasidic Rebbes, his name does not appear on the title pages of either the first three editions nor the most recent edition, *Hesed L'Avraham* (Jerusalem: Makhon Siftei Zaddikim, 1995).

Barukh¹⁶

After *Hesed I. Avraham*, the next work to appear with a major quantity devoted to the ideas of Barukh was *Migdal David*¹⁷ in 1873, written by Barukh's student, David Solomon of Tulchin (d. 1840). Very little is known about him, but it is stated that after he was a student of Barukh, he spent time with R. Shalom Shachneh,¹⁸ the grandson of the Great Maggid of Mezherech and father of R. Israel of Ruzhin. Identified as a "distinguished student" of Barukh,¹⁹ he left behind a literary legacy of two works, each one presumably completed between 1811 and 1840²⁰ but published posthumously by his grandson.²¹

¹⁶The new header for the *Hesed I. Avraham* version refers to Barukh as "*Bozina DiNehora*" ("Lamp of Light"), which becomes the title of the quintessential collection of Barukh stories and ideas, thirty years later. It adds, "Take it (the teachings) and bring blessing upon your homes, taste it and may your eyes shine. May I teach you FEAR of the Lord." Fear, *Yirah*, which is enlarged, is numerically equal to 611, indicating that these texts were redacted in the year 5611, or 1851, the year of publication for *Hesed I. Avraham*. There is no indication that they are reprints of the *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* material.

¹⁷David Solomon of Tulchin, *Migdal David* (Lvov, 1874).

¹⁸*Enziklopedia LaHasidut: Ishim*, 503-504; Title page of *Migdal David* (Lvov, 1873).

¹⁹Title page of *Hitor'rut HaTefillah*, Pietrkov, 1910.

²⁰Without exception, he refers to Hasidic works and luminaries who had died prior to Barukh, who died in 1811. He honors Barukh with "may the memory of the Zaddik and holy one be for a blessing for life in the world to come," a title bestowed upon those who have died. Since he himself died in 1840 (according to the *Enziklopedia LaHasidut*), he must have completed his two works between these dates.

²¹Samuel of Brody was the father of David Solomon of Tulchin (author of *Migdal David*), whose son, Samuel Lernovich, wrote *K'vod HaTorah*. David of Tulchin's grandson, Noah Zvi Lernovich, published his grandfather's work and his father's work, probably separately (*Beit Eked Sefarim* indicates they are of different sizes) in Lvov (Lemberg), in 1873.

The order of the publication for R. David Solomon of Tulchin's works is unclear. The earliest extant work is *Migdal David*, published in 1874. However, the title page and a textual note on folio 25a from that work states that *Sefer Hitor'rut HaTefillah* ("The Excitement of Prayer") had already been published.²² Interestingly, both *Beit Eked Sefarim* and the *Enziklopedia LaHasidim* list the first publication of *Hitor'rut HaTefillah* as Warsaw, 1901, over twenty-seven years later than what *Migdal David* suggests. While no known copy of an 1870 edition of *Hitor'rut HaTefillah* could be found, we should believe the publisher, that *Hitor'rut HaTefillah* was published two years before *Migdal David*. Both works were published by Noah Zvi Lernovich from the manuscripts of his grandfather. Additionally, in *Migdal David*, the grandson mentions frequently that he hopes to publish a third manuscript by his grandfather, titled *Bigdei Shabbat*, in the near future. Many of the glosses in Barukh's name found in *Migdal David* allegedly originate from this unpublished work. We will probably never know what ideas by Barukh, and probably by R. Shalom Sachneh, were left unpublished from this mysterious *Bigdei Shabbat*.

*Hitor'rut HaTefillah*²³ is a popular work of instruction on prayer, written in the second person to address the proper approach to prayer, which it frequently identifies with the Talmudic dictum, "Service of the Heart." While it cites six different Rabbis, Barukh's

²²The note on folio 25a by Noah Zvi Lernovich, the editor and grandson of R. David Solomon, asks the reader to "look in *Hitorut* [sic] *HaTefillah* from my master, my father, my grandfather, my teacher, my Rav, the writer, which had been published by me in 5630 (1870) in Zitomir."

²³I am using David Solomon of Tulchin, *Hitor'rut HaTefillah* (Piotrkow, 1910).

three teachings make his the most represented ideas in the work. Interestingly, he is called "HaKadosh u'Barukh," "the Holy Barukh,"²⁴ a title also found in *Likutei Imrot Tehorot* in his brother's *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*.²⁵ It seems that this was a common title for Barukh during his lifetime.

The teachings in *Hitor'rut HaTefillah* are brief and simple. One of them, that the word *Yesh* is an acronym for *Yir'at Shamayim*, also appears, interestingly, in *Likutei Imrot Tehorot*, suggesting a historical relationship between the two works. Another idea, which is unique to *Hitor'rut HaTefillah*, teaches that the *d'veikut* (spiritual attachment to God) gained during prayer is necessary for *d'veikut* during study, and vice versa.²⁶

By far the more significant work by David Solomon of Tulchin for studying Barukh is *Migdal David*, a collection of "pleasant homilies and [exegetical] hints and gematriot (mystical commentary based upon Jewish numerology)."²⁷ With three approbations, by Abraham Jacob of Sadigori (d. 1883, son of Israel Friedmann of Ruzhin), Menahem Mendel of Vizhnitz (d. 1884), and Jacob Samson of Kosov, it begins with an introduction by the author's grandson, Noah Zvi, who explains that his grandfather "drew from the wells and storehouses of treasures from the chief shepherd, mighty and awesome, like one of the Seraphs, pillar of the universe, pure and refined light, the faithful shepherd.

²⁴Shalom Shakhna Friedmann is also given a divine title, as "Sar Shalom." The ideas of Barukh appear on pages 6, 16, and 18 of the 1910 Pietrkov edition.

²⁵*Likutei Imrot Tehorot* in *Degel* (Zhitomir, 1850) 192.

²⁶*Hitor'rut HaTefillah*, p. 18.

²⁷Title page of *Migdal David*.

The Holy Barukh²⁸ The first twenty-one folios of actual text explore numerological associations in the Bible. The main body of texts, presumably by David Solomon of Tulchin, are placed next to a commentary on his words by his grandson Noah Zvi. Five of the nine teachings by Barukh are found in the grandson's additional commentaries, who claims that each of these allegedly originate in the unpublished *Bigdei Shabbat*. Interestingly, on 16b, the grandson repeats the teaching found in *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* that one should connect the end of the Torah to the beginning.²⁹

From folio 26a to the end (30b), the work is titled *Likutim Yekarim* ("Precious Extracts"). This portion is entirely disorganized. Unlike the first part of the book, these ten pages of material "which I heard from our master, the Holy One, Barukh"³⁰ have no additions by Noah Zvi. These texts, which appear out of any logical order, cover a wide range of ideas, including interpretations of Biblical and liturgical statements and Talmudic discussions. Again, passages which appear elsewhere, this time the 1850 *Degel* and *Hesed L'Avraham*, resurface in *Migdal David*.³¹ Also, the Hebrew fonts change six times, suggesting further disorder. Worse yet, a complication arises from the fact that a

²⁸*Migdal David* (Lvov, 1873) folio 2a.

²⁹*Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*, Bo.

³⁰*Migdal David*, folio 26a. As in *Hitor'rut HaTefillah*, he is called "Kadosh u'Varukh."

³¹*Migdal* 26a with *Hesed* 15b, *Migdal* 27a with *Hesed* 12b. Ironically, the first duplicated passage involves the sophisticated mystical notion of Torah, God, and Israel's unity, mentioned above. The versions in *Migdal* is simplified by the removal of several phrases, suggesting that Noah Zvi Lernovich used the materials which appeared in *Hesed L'Avraham* and abbreviated them. Since the *Hesed L'Avraham* texts are anonymous, it is possible that they, too, originate with David Solomon of Tulchin.

number of texts in this section, which are allegedly from Barukh, cite other Rabbis instead such as R. Phinehas ben Abraham Abba Shapiro of Korets and R. Ze'ev Wolf of Zhitomir.³² As a result of all these complications, we cannot assume that all the materials in this corpus of texts are authentically the teachings of Barukh.

The first book entirely devoted to Barukh to appear in print is *Bozina DiNehora*, first published in Lemberg, 1880. It contains both stories about Barukh and commentaries on verses from the Bible, Talmud, and liturgy. Its 33 folios (66 pages), without pagination, begin with an approbation by Zevi Hirsh Orenstein, a leading figure of nineteenth century Lvov. More intriguing are the "certifications" of Abraham Jacob of Sadgora,³³ David Moses of Chortkov, and Mordecai Shraga of Husyatin, the three of Israel Friedmann of Ruzhin's six sons who were alive at the time of *Bozina*'s publication. These certifications are written and signed by other individuals, presumably their personal aids. Moreover, all of their sons, R. Israel's grandsons, make written promises to purchase the work when it is published, and these promises, too, are written by other individuals who probably served them as aids. The preponderance of written acceptances by inheritors of the Ruzhin-Sadgora dynasty is particularly intriguing because of the strong parallels between R. Israel and Barukh. Both of them, as we shall see, claimed superiority over all other Zaddikim and each one was known for their illustrious courts.

According to the editor's introduction, the materials gathered were found among

³²Migdal 29a and 29b, respectively

³³He also offered an approbation to *Migdal David*.

the possessions of Libile Altshidaver, a prominent Hassid of Barukh,³⁴ who "gathered by hand his holy words and wrote them for memory in a book." The writer of this introduction, Nahman Jacob ben Elijah Libman of Bar, then explains that he "showed the holy writings to R. Menahem Nahum of Litin, the holy grandson of Barukh," who testified as to their authenticity based on his own memory of his grandfather. Nothing indicates exactly how the original texts came into his hands, and the only authentication of the body of texts comes from a grandson sixty-eight years after Barukh's death in 1811. Needless to say, this raises some serious questions of authenticity. Some of the stories found in *Bozina DiNehora* about Barukh reflect events which must have happened prior to the turn of the nineteenth century, such as those of his childhood³⁵ and others involving many other Zaddikim; it is impossible for Barukh's grandson to authenticate many of these events, since he would have been far too young, if even alive, to have any true knowledge of these events. Barukh's devoted Hasid could have only heard and not witnessed many of the tales, such as the first story in the work which refers to his earliest years, with Pinhas of Korets. Only as a legend of his Rebbe could Libile Altshidaver have possibly known this tale of Barukh's childhood.

The main body of *Bozina DiNehora* consists of twenty-three folios (4a-26b) with

³⁴*Bozina DiNehora* (Lvov, 1880) 1a, describes the miraculous naming of Libile's son, Solomon, by Barukh in 1792 only days after Solomon Ha-Levi of Karlin had been killed by Cossacks. Although Barukh was unaware of the death at the time of the ritual circumcision (when boys are named); he names the baby after R. Solomon of Karlin, who was his in-law. The story, which appears on 24a-24b of the first edition, is written in the first person, implying that these are Libile Altshidaver's actual words.

³⁵*Bozina DiNehora* 4a

individual, distinct paragraphs, arranged two columns per page. It contains both textual commentaries by Barukh and stories of his life, the last four folios consisting entirely of stories. While there is no order to the textual units, most of the commentaries, in Rashi script, are introduced by a citation of the interpreted verse and by the text itself, in square script. The comments are terse, usually no more than ten lines per paragraph, and many contain both Yiddish and Hebrew (usually, the Yiddish portions are quotations of Barukh). Once again, we are confronted by repetitions of texts which appear in earlier sources, such as the same teaching found in *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*³⁶ and *Migdal David*. This demonstrates that *Bozina DiNehora* is a composite text and that the publisher used previously published material in his work, without citation. The work concludes on pages 27a to 31b with several letters, including one from Barukh to Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk (d. 1788) and one from Jacob Samson of Shepetovka (d. 1801) to Barukh, the latter dated 1800³⁷. Both of these figures were in Israel at the time.

The second edition,³⁸ which *Beit Eked Sefarim* and *Enziklopedia LaHasidim* lists

³⁶*Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* Bo and *Migdal David* 16b, there are seventeen different duplications of text or ideas between *Migdal David* and the first edition of *Bozina DiNehora*. One more duplication between the two appears in subsequent editions of *Bozina DiNehora*. Some of the units found in *Migdal David* are those which are allegedly from the unpublished *Bigdei Shabbat*.

³⁷The other letters are from the Ba'al Shem Tov (who signs it "Israel ben Eliezer of Tlost") to Moses of Kitov, from the Ba'al Shem Tov to Jacob Joseph Ha-Kohen of Polonnoye, from Moses of Sivran to Abraham Joshua Heschel of Apta, and a generalized statement by Mordecai of Chernobyl one year after the death of his father, Menahem Nahum Twersky of Chernobyl, in 1798. Their authenticity should be questioned, particularly those attributed to the Ba'al Shem Tov.

³⁸Barukh of Medzibezh, *Bozina DiNehora* (Lvov, 1884) in *Sefer Toldot uMinhagei Hatam Sofer*, 1989. This is the same work which contains *Hitor ru HaTefillah* by David

as thirty-six folios, preserves the order and content of the first edition, although there is only one column on each page, and the pages are numbered. The title page states that "now, it is published a second time with additions, precious collections and wonderful stories." Unfortunately, I was only able to find an edition which omits the approbations, the introduction, and the last half of the work (the most important parts!), so I can only speculate that it contains the additions which it claims. Certainly by the fourth edition, these changes do indeed appear,³⁹ and the work shows major differences from the original edition. The introduction adds,

[I brought this holy booklet to the publishing house] for the first time in 1880 in Lvov, and now I have brought it to be published a second time with precious additions: a collection of statements and wonderful stories from the holy Rabbi mentioned above which were in writing yet had still not been published. And many of them were heard in his name from the mouth of Yoski, may his memory be for a blessing, grandson of the writer of *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* of Sudylkow, may the memory of the Zaddikim be for eternal life. I also corrected all the errors and omissions which were in the first edition.⁴⁰

The primary difference between the 1880 and the 1889 editions is the addition of several pages of both texts and stories, sandwiched between 22b and 23a of the first edition.

Solomon of Tulchin, as well as *Rom'mut HaTefillah* (both published together in Piotrkov, 1910).

³⁹Barukh of Medzibezh, *Bozina DiNehora* (Piotrkow, 1889).

⁴⁰*Enziklopedia LaHasidut: Sefarim* column 414 claims that the major changes actually occur in the third edition and that the fourth is identical to the third in content and design.

⁴¹*Bozina DiNehora* (Piotrkow, 1889) 7-8. With the exception of this addition, the introduction is identical with the first edition. Unlike the first edition, which was published by Nahman Jacob of Bar (who also wrote the introduction), the title page of the 1889 edition indicates that "it is brought to the publishing house through the cooperation of R. Hanina Lipa Margaliyot and R. Moses Yadkes of Berdichev."

precisely at the point where it turns exclusively to tales about Barukh. The shorter length of 29 folios (58 pages) merely reflects the tighter placement of the text onto the pages. The added texts, which begin on page 40, are divided into five and a half pages of textual commentary and then six and a half pages of stories, so that the last eight pages consists entirely of stories about Barukh.⁴² The interpretations and stories are slightly shorter than those already printed in the first edition, but like the older texts, the additional texts are primarily written in Hebrew, with some Yiddish quotations.

While Nahman Mendel of Bar claims to have corrected "the omissions which were in the first edition," this second edition deletes five paragraphs and eliminates parts of at least two others which had been printed in 1880.⁴³ Some of the eliminations are unnecessary duplications which appear in the original edition, but it is unclear why other paragraphs are abbreviated, since the removed contents seem necessary for understanding the text.⁴⁴ Worse yet, two of the added texts actually create duplications!⁴⁵

⁴²In addition, a short text is placed by itself on page 24, in the midst of those which had previously been published: "And at the time that his grandson passed, he said, 'Such is 'Many are the misfortunes of the Zaddik,' meaning that the Zaddik has many misfortunes, 'and from all of them (מכּוּלָם), but spelled without the vov), -meaning He will also be embarrassed (מבּוּלָם), 'He will save him (יִצְלֵט)' from the same language as prayer (צִלְתָּה), meaning that afterward, the Holy One, Blessed be He will apologize to him."

⁴³The 1886 and 1889 editions omit the statement from Mordecai Twersky of Chernobyl, even though it is listed on the title page, and some paragraphs from the other letters are also deleted.

⁴⁴Compare, for instance, 23a of 1880 to 48 of 1889, in which half the story about Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow's visit to Medzibezh disappears.

⁴⁵Page 41 contains a repetition of p. 13-14 of the 1889 edition. Below it, there is a repetition of the first teaching, without the story elements, in which Barukh interprets S.o.S. 8:8 (see above).

Perhaps the greatest problem with the additions to the first edition, as with all the other texts (with the exception of the teaching questions and dream found in *Degeif Mahaneh Efrayim*), is the lack of attributions. The compiler states that "many of them" were from Yoski, the grandson of Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow, but since the appellation "may his memory be for a blessing" implies that he had already died by 1889, it is not clear how these materials were gathered since he could not have shared them himself for publication. We are forced to conclude, as with the first edition of the work and *Migdal David*, that *Bozma DiNehora* may not reflect the genuine thoughts and experiences of Barukh. We can only assume its authenticity.⁴⁶

The next editions of *Bozma DiNehora* are essentially reprints of the 1886 Piotrkov edition⁴⁷ until the late twenties, although the 1925 Bardejov edition adds several teachings and letters to the last six pages.⁴⁸ In roughly 1930,⁴⁹ Reuben Margalit (1889-

⁴⁶Louis I. Newman (*The Hasidic Anthology: Tales and Teachings of the Hasidim*, 1934) also states that he doubts much of the work's authenticity.

⁴⁷This is not confirmed, since I was unable to view it. However, the 1889 Piotrkov edition, according to *Enziklopedia LaHasidut*, is the same as the 1886 edition. Among the later printings are a 1903 Warsaw edition of 72 pages (which follows the 1884 Lemberg edition) and an identical 1910 edition from Berdichev (*Enziklopedia LaHasidut Sefarim* 414). I had access to the version published in Bardejov, Slovakia in 1925 (48-numbered pages). My copy lacks both the approbations, the introduction, and the letters in the back, although the cover mentions the presence of the latter. *Enziklopedia LaHasidut Sefarim* 415 confirms that the approbations were omitted from this edition. Newman (1934: 532) states that he uses a 1926 Bilgoraj edition, which matches the pagination of my 1925 edition, but the *Enziklopedia LaHasidut Sefarim* 415 claims that the approbations are included. Finally, the *Enziklopedia LaHasidut Sefarim* 415 claims that there is a 1925 Lublin edition of forty pages, matching the 1886 Piotrkov edition but lacking the approbations, several paragraphs of text, and the letter of Moses Zevi Wertheim of Savran. These five editions are the only ones for the forty years between 1889 and 1930.

⁴⁸Page 43 has comments on Ex. 33:5 and Ps. 94:20 which are not in previous editions; 43 to 44 contains another letter from the Ba'al Shem Tov and a court ruling with three signatures;

1971)⁴⁰ published a new 92-page version, titled *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem*, in which he reorganizes all of the material (with the exception of the 1925 additional material, which is omitted) into four sections: 1) *Makor Barukh* (pages 3-35), an essay, based upon the stories from earlier editions of *Bozina DiNehora* as well as additional (sometimes) annotated sources, which gives the history of Barukh, his brother Moses Hayyim Ephraim Sukylkow, his mother Edel, his father Yehiel, and his uncle Zvi; 2) *Imrot Tehorot*⁵¹ (36-49), which consists of the material originally printed in the 1850 Zhitomir edition of *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* (and in every edition of *Hesed Le'Avraham*); 3) *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem* (50-78), which contains all the previously recorded teachings in Biblical, Talmudic, and liturgical order (the latter based upon the holiday cycle), as well as additional Barukh teachings from several other books (cited by name)⁵² and the

44-46 has an unattributed story about Barukh. 46-47 contains a portion of the famous letter from the Ba'al Shem Tov to his brother-in-law, Abraham Gershon of Kutow (which had already appeared in *Ben Porat Yosef* by Jacob Joseph ben Zevi Ha-kohen Katz of Polonnoye, 1781), and 47-48 contains a story which relates to the Apter Rebbe, dated 1894, (not mentioned in *Enziklopedia LaHasidut Sefarim*)

⁴⁹*Beit Eked Sefarim* lists a 1930 Lvov, a 1931 Zamosc, and an undated Bilgüray edition, while *Enziklopedia LaHasidut Sefarim* 416 omits the 1931 edition and states "Bilgüray, after 5687 (1927)."

⁵⁰Born in Lemberg, this prolific bookseller is perhaps best known for his annotated edition of the *Zohar*, *Tikkunei Zohar*, and *Sefer Hasidim*. He also wrote numerous biographies, including one on Abraham ben Moses Maimonides. *Makor Barukh* was one of several treatments of Hasidism by Margalit. In 1957, he received the Israel Prize for his work on Hasidism and Kabbalah (*Encyclopedia Judaica* 9:57-8).

⁵¹It is mistakenly titled, *Omrot, Tehorot*, according to *Enziklopedia LaHasidut Sefarim* 416.

⁵²Most notably are *Sifte Zaddikim* (Lemberg, 1823, although I was only able to find the 1889 edition [third] from Josefow; thus, it was not possible to date the added materials) compiled

approbations and introduction from the first edition, and 4) *Migdal David* (78-87), a version of David Solomon of Tulchin's original 1873 work which extracts the teachings by Barukh. At the end of the work (87-90), additional notes, teachings, and historical information about Barukh are added in the form of a letter by Hayyim Issachar Gross of Mukachevo.

The Reuben Margalioi edition of *Bozina DiNehora* has become the definitive source for Barukh's history and his teachings. While some subsequent editions of *Bozina DiNehora* were reprints of the older version, most simply copy Margalioi's original edition, without changing the format. The most recent version, which I will be using, was published in 1985.⁵⁴

Many other Hasidic works refer to Barukh, and many of their materials are included in *Makor Barukh* without citation. *Enziklopedia LaHasidim* mentions that *Neta Sha'ashu'im* (Warsaw, 1891) by Nathan Neta ben Abraham of Chelm contains an entire section, called *Likutim*, devoted to Barukh. The small booklet entitled *Seder Hadorot HeHadash*,⁵⁵ which offers selected tales and information about the students of the Ba'al

by Phineas Lerner of Dinovitz, *D'vash HaSadeh* (1909, unknown origin) compiled by Dov Ber Meir, *Zror HaHayyim* (I could not find a copy, and *Bet Eked Sefarim* lists thirteen different works with the same title, none of which suggests the same work), and *Kol Simhah* (also not found among the 19 listed works in *Bet Eked Sefarim*).

⁵³The one exception is section one, *Makor Barukh*, which at some point, anonymously, was expanded to include the original *Makor Barukh*, the additions by Hayyim Issachar Gross of Mukachevo, and other additional material.

⁵⁴*Sefer Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHadash* (B'nei B'rak: Makhon Lehoza'at Sefarim She'al Yedei Gemilut Hesed "Toldot Yizhak," 1985). This includes the revised *Makor Barukh*.

⁵⁵Menahem Mendel Bodek, *Seder HaDorot HeHadash* (Satmar, 1901).

Shem Tov, contains some of the stories about Barukh found in *Ma'or Barukh*. I also found that the six-volume *Ner Yisrael*⁵⁶ contains seven pages of material on Barukh from the Ruzhin-Sadgora Hassidic dynasty. There are undoubtedly many other sources which deal with Barukh, either in ideas or in stories. Margaliot's efforts have made the greatest contribution toward the rediscovery of the legendary grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov, yet it is still the task of researchers to assemble these scattered texts from the great sea of Hasidic literature.

Beside the internal sources on Barukh, there are few secular works which shed light upon Barukh. Simon Dubnov⁵⁷ relies upon a memoir by Abraham Baer HaKohen Gottlober,⁵⁸ who did not have any direct contact with Barukh (and who, Dubnov explains, was born the year Barukh died), to describe the Rebbe's court.⁵⁹ Very little else has been written about Barukh or his entourage, and outside of Hasidic literature, there are no writings which offer first-hand descriptions of the life of Barukh. Nearly every primary or secondary source is now in the Reuben Margaliot *Bozma DiNehora HaShalem*, albeit without citations.

The textual problems encountered throughout this discussion force us to confront

⁵⁶Haim Dov Stern, ed., *Ner Yisrael*, vol. 6 (B'nei B'rak: Haim Dov Stern, 1987) 406-412.

⁵⁷S. Dubnov, *Toldot HaHasidut: Al Yesod Mekorot Rishonim, Nidpasim veKhitvei-Yad* (Tel Aviv: D'vir, 1967). This is largely a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in *Voschod* 12 (1890): 125-145.

⁵⁸A.B. Gottlober, *Zikhronot Mimei Neurat: Meshulavim im Zikhronot HaDor LeZikhron LaDor HaBa*, 3 vols. (Warsaw, 1880).

⁵⁹Dubnov 212.

the fundamental problem that virtually all of our sources are unreliable and biased. The large corpus of texts known from *Likutei Imrot Tehorot*, as an anonymous source, may not represent the thoughts or words of Barukh. The ideas allegedly recorded by his "distinguished" student, David Solomon of Tulchin, appear adulterated by either R. David's grandson or by R. David himself. Even the largest collection of texts, *Bozma DiNehora*, which has the distinction of written approbations by several and the support of Barukh's grandson, suffers from a lack of genuine authentication. This leaves us with the disappointing task of qualifying every teaching and tale which is in Barukh's name as potentially inauthentic.

3. Survey of English Studies and Translations of Barukh of Medzibezh

Despite the uncertainty in the textual history of Barukh, his royal lineage and extreme personality as documented in *Bozma DiNehora* have kept his legend alive for English translators and interpreters of Hasidism. There are four primary translations of collections of Barukh legends and teachings. The first interpreter to expose Barukh to the English-speaking world was Louis Newman, whose monumental work, *The Hasidic Anthology*, contains fifty-three paraphrases of his teachings scattered throughout the book, which is categorized topically.⁶⁹ It consists of summaries, not translations, of Barukh's thoughts, and usually his interpretation strips the original statements (almost entirely from *Bozma DiNehora*) of their social significance and cultural origins. His goal is stated in the introduction:

⁶⁹Louis I. Newman, *The Hasidic Anthology* (New York: Scribner, 1934).

We are making this Anthology available in a desire to enrich the homiletical literature of American Jewry and to display to English readers some of the masterpieces of Hasidic wisdom, little known outside of Europe. We believe that American preachers ought to welcome the illustrations and quotations this Anthology presents. We believe the material can be employed bodily and almost verbatim, by preachers, if desired. We are of the opinion that in addition to Jewish preachers and speakers, Christian ministers will appreciate the extraordinary attraction of these tales and sayings.⁶¹

With these the expected goals, one cannot depend upon these translations to capture the essence of Barukh. Most of the teachings presented are ones which are readily acceptable to a western readership. Virtually none of the teachings dealing with the concept of the Zaddik receive any attention, and those that do relate to the Zaddik ignore the doctrinal significance of the teaching. The *Hasidic Anthology* is practically useless for the study of Barukh's conceptualization of the Zaddik.

After *The Hasidic Anthology*, the next major contribution was Martin Buber's classic *Tales of the Hasidim: Early Masters*.⁶² Buber collected numerous stories about various Rebbes from Hasidic literature and recorded their adventures, arranging them by personality. It was originally in German, but soon translated into both Hebrew⁶³ and English. While most of the translations are reliable, some of the tales reveal radical interpretation by Martin Buber, at times even fundamentally changing the meaning of the

⁶¹Newman, *Hasidic Anthology*, lxxxix-xc.

⁶²Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim: Early Masters*, trans. Olga Marx (New York: Schocken, 1947) 87-97.

⁶³Martin Buber, *Or HaGanuz: Sippur HaHasidim*, trans. unknown (Jerusalem: Schocken, 1947) 95-104.

stories.⁶⁴ His stories also tend to romanticize Hasidic leadership, leaving the reader devoid of authentic Hasidic thought. Without textual citations, Buber's collection only extends the efforts of Louis Newman to wider western exposure to Hasidism. It is essentially a philosophical work, not an historical one.

The descendent of Hasidim himself, Elie Wiesel also provides his readers with two popular works on Hasidic tales. His first major effort at telling the stories of major Hasidic figures, *Souls on Fire*, touches upon the grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov only incidentally,⁶⁵ but his portrayal of Barukh is entirely negative and, at times, contrary to the original sources.

A proud man, prone to fits of anger and depression, this grandson of the Ba'al Shem's, claimed to be different from the other Hasidic Masters of his generation, and he was. He believed that everything was due him, for he saw himself as heir, not to his father, who went almost unnoticed, but to his grandfather.⁶⁶

His visitors were blessed, even as he insulted them, even as he cursed them. To a child who had surprised him in a domestic quarrel, he said: "You don't understand, what you have just witnessed was a discussion between God and the Shekhina."⁶⁷

⁶⁴When one compares the Hebrew translation of Buber's work to the original Hebrew text, some of Barukh's tales have entirely different meanings. Compare, for instance, *Or HaGamuz* 95 to *Bozina Di Khehora* (Lvov, 1880) 4a. The former is a story of Barukh's self-proclaimed brilliance and superiority, while the latter is a tale of the waning wisdom of his generation. The English translation, *Tales* 87, of course, originates from the same German source as the Hebrew re-translation.

⁶⁵Elie Wiesel, *Souls On Fire: Portraits and Legends of Hasidic Masters*, trans. Marion Wiesel (New York: Random House, 1972) 82-84.

⁶⁶*Souls*, 82.

⁶⁷*Souls*, 82-83.

In *Makor Barukh*, it is Moses of Ludmir who explains to his son the hidden significance of his fights with his wife.⁶⁸

Wiesel's *Four Hasidic Masters*, which he republished as *Somewhere a Master*,⁶⁹ suffers from the same historical imprecision as *Souls on Fire*. The prolific and profound Nobel Prize winner, like Buber, has made an essential contribution to the field of Hasidism, yet his works' historical veracity must be questioned. His interpretation of Barukh's adventures, while not altogether accurate, do bring this towering figure to life, and for that Wiesel should be commended.

Unlike earlier efforts, Louis Jacobs' *Hasidic Thought* concerns itself exclusively with intellectual history, offering translations of the Hasidic writings of thirty-five Rebbes, including Barukh of Medzibezh.⁷⁰ Following a short biography on Barukh, Jacobs provides faithful translations to five significant passages from *Bozina DiNehora* and interprets them. The collection is excellent for its accuracy, and his insights demonstrate his depth of understanding of Hasidic thought. Unfortunately, with only five translations offered for Barukh, it only minimally contributes to a study of the Besht's grandson.

Thus, the English-speaking world has been denied the means of entering the mystical world of Barukh of Medzibezh. With the dissonance between *Likutei Imrot Tehorot* and *Bozina DiNehora*, the minimal exposure has been entirely centered around

⁶⁸*Makor Barukh*, 56.

⁶⁹Elie Wiesel, *Four Hasidic Masters and their Struggle Against Melancholy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978) 29-60; Elie Wiesel, *Somewhere a Master: Further Hasidic Portraits and Legends*, trans. Marion Wiesel (New York: Summit Books, 1982) 73-94.

⁷⁰Louis Jacobs, *Hasidic Thought* (New York: Behrman House, 1976).

the second source, which has dubious origins. No translations of any part of *Likutei Imroi Tehorot*, which I believe to be the most authentic source available on Barukh, have ever been offered of which I am aware. This survey of English resources makes it clear that English translations and research on Barukh's thought still need evaluation.

4. Issues Confronting Research on Barukh of Medzibezh

The lack of academic research on Barukh is an issue which extends beyond English-speaking academia. No serious studies of Barukh have ever been published, in any language. The general Hebrew works of Simon Dubnov⁷¹ and Horodetzsky⁷² merely survey the sources of this major figure of early Hasidism, with only minor concern for his theology.

If Barukh was such a major figure, whose court was immense and whose conflicts with other Tzaddikim was infamous, why are our sources so unreliable? Why was *Likutei Imroi Tehorot* only published once, at the most twice, in *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*, the work of Barukh's brother? Why does the *Sha'ar* (title page) of *Hesed L'Avraham* mention both Abraham Ben Dov of Mezhibezh ("ha-Malakhi") and Abraham Ben Alexander Katz of Kalisk, yet neglects Barukh, whose anonymous material are of a comparable length to those of R. Abraham of Kalisk? Was he only famous in his own mind? Is it because he is the last biological descendant of the Ba'al Shem Tov to attract any real attention? The dearth of concrete information about Barukh ben Yehiel of

⁷¹Dubnov, *Toldot HaHasidut*, 204-213, 309-316, 337-339.

⁷²S.A. Horodetzky, *HaHasidut V'haHasidim*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: D'vir, 1922).

Medzibezh suggests that either his fame was not so vast or that it really consists of infamy. Unlike other Rebbes, Barukh does not establish a historically significant lineage, and outside of the Ruzhyn-Sadgora dynasty, very few write about him even within Hasidic circles. It took sixty-nine years after his death for a book to be published in his name, far longer than one would expect from the son of royalty, the Ba'al Shem Tov, for whom Eli Wiesel states, "Every Hasid had two Masters: his own and the Baal Shem."⁷³ Barukh, grandson of the Holy Besht, perhaps the first Zaddik to maintain a royal court, has only survived marginally in Hasidic memory.

5. Goals of this Study

Despite the poor preservation of Barukh's history and teachings, his importance for the study of Hasidism is immense. A direct descendant of the Ba'al Shem Tov, Barukh should be identified with the earliest stages of Hasidism, when the center was in the Ba'al Shem Tov's city of Medzibezh, in Podolia (western Ukraine). While Hasidism flourished through the students of Dov Baer of Mezhibezh, who establish Hasidic centers throughout Volhynia (northwestern Ukraine), Barukh never strays more than 100 miles from his birthplace, allegedly claiming his rights to heir of his grandfather's legacy. Due to his central role, Barukh is important for a comprehensive understanding of the new movement of Hasidism. Joseph Weiss, in his monumental *Reishit Zemihatah Shel HaDerekh HaHasidut* ("The Beginning of the Efflorescence of the Hasidic Way") does not examine Barukh's teachings in any detail in his examination of the burgeoning movement,

⁷³Eli Wiesel, *Souls On Fire*, 15.

so research is still necessary. This is a modest contribution toward filling the void. In chapter 2, a portrait of Barukh is painted with the many texts which purport to preserve his memory. The profile includes both historical information and some of Barukh's thought on some of the more significant scholarly issues, such as Barukh's textual tradition and the role of *Kavvanot* in Barukh's worship.

One of the essential transformations of Jewish leadership which arose with the advent of Hasidism was the development of a spiritual intermediary, the *Zaddik*. While the term, "*Zaddik*" had already existed for centuries of Jewish thought,⁷⁴ its role as a title of supreme authority and communal leadership experienced dramatic development as Hasidism swept Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, despite its widespread appeal in Hasidic circles, the concept has long been examined in depth within the philosophies of the Great Maggid's students, particularly Elimelekh of Lyzhansk, Galicia, and Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Habad. Arthur Green's scholarly dissertation on Nahman of Bratslav⁷⁵ also sheds light on the *Zaddikism* of Barukh's nephew, who probably grew up under his shadow. Despite the close evaluation of Nahman's thought, virtually no effort has been made to link the *Zaddikism* of Nahman with that of his uncle. In chapter 3, this study examines Barukh's doctrine of the *Zaddik* and its place in the Hasidic world.

The study of Barukh ben Yehiel of Medzibezh is limited by a dearth of historically verifiable information. Nevertheless, it is my hope that the reader will become familiar

⁷⁴See the beginning of chapter 3.

⁷⁵Arthur Green, *Tormented Master* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1992).

with this towering figure of Podolian Hasidism, the grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov, the first of the royal Zaddikim. To understand Barukh's thought, we must first journey to Medzibezh in the second half of the nineteenth century and serve as witnesses of his life experience.

Chapter 2: A Profile of Barukh ben Yehiel of Medzibezh

1. Early Years

The details of Barukh's life remain shrouded in mystery. Like his grandfather, virtually no physical evidence remains from this towering figure of Hasidism, "the head of all Hasidic communities in Podolia" between 1780 and 1811.¹ The literary sources on Barukh offer us legends, tales which merely characterize his personality without offering dates or a clear sense of his life experiences. However, in the course of these tales, some details emerge. This chapter serves to offer a personality profile of Barukh and to note any details that can be ascertained about his life. Nearly every story about Barukh can be found within *Bozina DiNehora*, some only appearing in Reuben Margaliot's *Makor Barukh* within *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem*.² Neither *Migdal David* nor *Likutei Imrot Tehorot* contain any of the stories of his experiences, so this chapter is almost exclusively culled from the materials found in *Bozina DiNehora*, as well as a few outside sources.

Shivhei HaBesht, first published in 1814, offers the following tale surrounding the birth of Barukh:

Once on Simhath Torah the members of the holy group, the disciples of the Besht, were dancing joyfully in a circle and the Shekinah was in flames about them. During the dance the shoe of one of the lesser members of the group was torn. He was a poor man and it angered him that he was prevented from dancing with his friends and from rejoicing in the festivity of the mitzvah.

¹Dubnov 208.

²I will use *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHadash* (1984), the most recent version of Margaliot's collection.

The Besht's daughter, the pious Edel, who was also in the house, was standing on the side watching their celebration of the Water Libation.³ She said to that disciple: "If you promise me that I will give birth to a baby boy this year, I will give you good shoes immediately." She could say this because she had shoes in the store.

He promised her that she certainly would have a baby boy. And so it was that the rabbi, our rabbi and teacher, Barukh of the holy community of Tulchin, was born to her.⁴

Historians date R. Barukh's birth to anywhere between 1750 and 1758.⁵ Abraham Gottlober attacks the story of Barukh's birth from *Shivhei HaBesht*,⁶ characterizing the man who promises Edel a son as a poor drunkard who was a member of this circle of Hasidim, adding, "He was poor like most of the members of the sect." Gottlober's work,

³*Simhat Beit Shoeyah*, the Festival of Water Libation, took place on the last day of Sukkot (Suk. 51a), which today corresponds to Simhat Torah. The writer here merely refers to Simhat Torah by its mishnaic name.

⁴Dov Baer ben Samuel of Limits, *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov [Shivhei ha-Besht]: The Earliest Collection of Legends about the Founder of Hasidism*, trans. Dan Ben-Amos and Jerome R. Mintz (Northvale: Jason Aronson, 1993) 223-224. The one other reference to Barukh within *Shivhei HaBesht* merely offers information about Barukh's family: "Once I was in the holy community of Tulchin with a man whose name was Rabbi David. At that time there was a marriage arrangement made between the Hasid, our teacher Barukh and the Hasid Rabbi Joseph, the son of Rabbi Jehiel Mikhel, God bless his memory. Rabbi David heard [the following Torah insight] from Rabbi Joseph who heard it from the Besht. . . ." *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov*, 200. Rabbi Joseph is Joseph of Yampol, whose son Isaac of Kalish marries Barukh's unnamed daughter.

⁵Dubnov, *Toldot HaHasidut*, 205 claims he was born "approximately" in 1750; Tzvi M. Rabinowicz, *The Encyclopedia of Hasidism* (Northvale: Jason Aronson, 1996) 37 and *Makor Barukh* (1984) 14 suggest 1753; Wiesel, *Somewhere A Master*, 78, David Halahmi, *Hokhmei Yisrael* (Tel Aviv: Hoza'at Sefarim Abraham Zioni, 1957) 210, and Abraham Kahana, *Sefer HaHasidut: Min R. Yisrael Besht ad R. Nahman MiBraslov* (Warsaw: 1921) 317 offer 1757 as the probable date.

⁶Abraham Baer HaCohen Gottlober, *Zikhronei Mimei N'uraj: M'shulavim im Zikhronei HaDor l'Zikaron l'Dor haBa* (Warsaw, 1880) 40.

far from complimentary toward Hasidism, is one of the only non-Hasidic sources available, and though he writes some of his memoir based upon earlier written sources, including *Shivhei HaBesht*, there are other stories which are not recorded elsewhere. He explains that after the poor, inebriated Hasid's promise, "Edel had a son, thank God, and his name was Barukh, who is the Zaddik, R. Brukhl of Medzibezh."⁷ *Makor Barukh* adds the tradition that Edel had been barren for years before she bore Barukh's brother Moses Hayyim Ephraim in 1748.⁸ The anonymous Hasid whom Edel helps is also identified there as David Leikas (d. 1799).

Other sources contradict the story from the problematic *Shivhei HaBesht*, a collection which never refers to Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow, nor to his sister Feiga, the latter becoming the mother of Nahman of Bratslav. In contrast to *Shivhei HaBesht*, *Shem HaGedolim HeHadaash* cites a tradition in the name of Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl, who suggests that Barukh and his brother Moses Hayyim Ephraim (known simply as "Ephraim") were twin brothers. *Makor Barukh* also offers this possibility as an alternative to the story in *Shivhei HaBesht*,⁹ but Dubnov refutes these claims,¹⁰ basing his objection upon the "Holy Epistle," an authenticated letter¹¹ unsuccessfully sent by the Besht to his brother-in-law, Abraham Gershon of Kutow. Dated 5512 (1752), the letter

⁷Zikhronot 40.

⁸*Makor Barukh* 14.

⁹*Makor Barukh* 14.

¹⁰Toldot 205.

¹¹One of only four authentic letters. See *Founder of Hasidism* 125.

refers to R. Barukh's brother, Ephraim, as "my grandson, the important young man (*Hatan*), the honorable Ephraim."¹² For Ephraim to be known as a *Hatan*, he would need to have been at least thirteen. Without any reference to Barukh in the letter, the evidence suggests that Ephraim was older than his brother, perhaps substantially. Moreover, while Ephraim cites his grandfather constantly in his book, *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*, both from other sources and from his own experiences (even devoting an entire section to "the things which I heard from the mouth of my master," the Besht), Barukh only offers three extant teachings in the Besht's name,¹³ none of which indicate that he heard them directly from him. This suggests, as Abraham Kahana concludes, that he had virtually no memorable contact with the Besht,¹⁴ who died in 1760.¹⁵ Barukh apparently was too young to remember his grandfather, so the later date of 1757 seems most accurate for his birth date.

The story from *Shivhei HaBesht* suggests that Barukh's parents, Edel and her husband, Yehiel Ashkenazi, supported themselves as owners of a store.¹⁶ No other

¹² *Founder of Hasidism* 106.

¹³ "Likutei Imrot Tehorot" 194, 197; *Bozina* (1880) 18b.

¹⁴ Kahana, *Sefer Hasidut*, 317.

¹⁵ However, there are stories that Barukh spends time with his grandfather. He tells the Besht that he wants to study "with your Rabbi, Ahiyah the Shilonite" (*Makor* 24). At three, he allegedly outwits the Besht's guest, explaining that the apparent Zoharic contradiction, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were standing before Abraham at his tent, can be explained as the presence of the divine attributes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, meaning *Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tiferet* (*Makor* 24-25, *Tales* 87). These tales, and others, are unquestionably fictitious in their present form.

¹⁶ Abraham Rubenstein notes that this is the only source for this tradition. Abraham Rubenstein, *Shivhei HaBesht: Mahadurah Moeret uMevoeret* (Jerusalem: Hoza'at Reuben Mass, 1991) 282.

references to Barukh's parents appear in all of *Bozina DiNehora*, and it seems that they were not central to his experience. Edel elsewhere is known as a *Zaddekhet*, and *Makor Barukh* preserves many stories about her piety as the daughter of the Besht, as well as tales of her husband Yehiel, who is said to come from a wealthy family.¹⁷

Barukh's siblings, too, seem minimally important to his experience: Feiga appears in no sources on Barukh, while Moses Hayyim Ephraim can be found in only a few. The very last teaching of *Bozina DiNehora* offers a story of an interaction between Ephraim and the Besht without any reference to Barukh. It reinforces the notion that the Besht was a master of angelic names (a "Ba'al Shem"):

Leib of Letichev explained that he was the teacher for the holy Rabbi R. Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow, grandson of the Besht. In his childhood, he was sitting at the table with the Besht. Suddenly, the Besht said to him, "If you want, I will show you something." He said "Yes" to him. The Besht ordered a piece of parchment be brought to him, and he laid the parchment under the tablecloth on the table. He sat puzzled for one hour, then removed the parchment from under the tablecloth, and found written upon it, "I am Metatron, Prince of the Divine Countenance."¹⁸ He gave the parchment to the Rabbi of Sudylkow as a gift and commanded him to guard it well for the sake of preserving it, so the parchment was protected with him. Yet while R. Leib was his teacher, the parchment was lost, and at that same time, his teeth began to hurt. May God protect us and may we merit the coming of the redemption, speedily in our days.¹⁹

The Ba'al Shem Tov was a powerful influence upon Ephraim, but there is little indication

¹⁷*Bozina HaShalem HeHdash* 6-14.

¹⁸Gustav Davidson, *A Dictionary of Angels, Including the Fallen Angels* (New York: The Free Press, 1967) 192.

¹⁹*Bozina* (1880) 26b. It was removed from subsequent editions, resurfacing in Margaliot's *Makor Barukh* (1984) 16.

that he had any impact upon Barukh

Moshe Rosman's published analysis of Polish records in Medzibezh offers no evidence of Barukh's existence, while his uncle Hersh, his parents Yehiel and Edel (sometimes called "Hodol" or "Judel"), his brother Ephraim (named "Froim") and even his sister-in-law Jettel are all listed in the census of 1764. This suggests that Barukh moved from Medzibezh, which comports with the theory that he studied under Pinhas of Korets and Dov Baer of Mezhirech after the Besht's death in 1760.²⁰ The idea that he studied with these two towering figures of early Hasidism probably derives from this excerpt from the longest story in *Bozma DiNehora*:

R. Victor of Litin related that the holy Rebbe R. Hayyim [ben Solomon Tyrer] of Czernowitz traveled from Volhynia,²¹ from Buchan²² to Medzibezh [to visit the] grave of the Besht.

These are the words which the Rebbe R. Hayyim said to the Rebbe R. Barukh: "I am traveling to the grave of the Besht. I have come to ask if you approve of my being at his grave." The Rebbe R. Barukh answered, "This month is *Menahem Av*. There is no *Yom Tov* [in Medzibezh]."²³ The Rebbe R. Hayyim said to him, "I had a long journey from Volhynia²⁴ here. . . . Now, I will return home without being at the grave of the Besht, though my entire goal was to be at his grave!" The Rebbe R. Barukh said to him, "If this is so, be at his grave!" The Rebbe R. Hayyim said, "But I

²⁰*The Encyclopedia of Hasidism* 37; Wiesel, *Somewhere*, 78; *Hokhmei Yisra'el* 210.

²¹Text reads "באדמ"ה," so it might be some other place.

²²Text reads *באדמ"ה*. He was born in Buczacz and later served a position in Butchan, so it is not clear to which city he refers here. See Rabinowicz, *The Encyclopedia of Hasidism* 196.

²³I.e. "There is no reason to make a pilgrimage to Medzibezh during this month of *Menahem Av*," which corresponds roughly to August.

²⁴See above.

want you to approve of it." Rebbe R. Barukh said to him, "I approve." The Rebbe R. Hayyim said, "But I want you to really approve." Rebbe R. Barukh said, "I really approve!" Rebbe R. Hayyim said, "I have a secret to tell you. Please ask the people standing by to leave." The Rebbe R. Barukh said, "I do not want to trouble all those standing around. It is better that we go to the den," and they immediately returned that moment. The Rebbe R. Hayyim went with him to the hostel.

R. Victor said to R. Hayyim, "I know the matter which you spoke about with R. Barukh is secret." Rebbe R. Hayyim said, "I asked him if he truly approved of my being at the grave of the Besht." R. Victor said to R. Hayyim, "And why did you ask him so many times? Didn't he say the first time that he approved? When we ask him something and he gives us an answer immediately, we do not ask him a second time." Rebbe R. Hayyim said, "Even though you are close to him, you do not know him like I know him. If you knew him like I know him, you would be scared of him as I am scared of him. When the Rebbe R. Barukh was a little boy, I came to the Holy Maggid of Mezhirech, and the Rav the Maggid said to me, 'I will show you a novel thing²⁵ which you have never seen, ever!' And I asked the Maggid what the innovation is, and the Maggid said to me, 'I have R. Barukh, grandson of the Besht with me, and I will show you that he is a novel thing.' And with all my words with him, a little boy came to the house, the Rabbi the Maggid stood from his chair and said to me, 'this boy is R. Barukh, grandson of the Besht. Look at him, for he is a novel thing!' I looked at him, but I did not understand his novelty. Afterward, many years later, I was in Ostrog with the Rebbe R. Pinhas, and we were sitting on chairs in the house. I spoke with the Rebbe R. Pinhas, and as I spoke with him, the Rebbe R. Barukh passed by, walking outside. The Rebbe R. Pinhas saw him by the window. The Rebbe R. Pinhas stood from his chair and said to me, 'Go quickly and you will see the Rebbe R. Barukh, that he is a novel thing which you have never seen, ever!' I remembered the words of the Maggid, too, who said this to me as well. I went with haste and went around many homes in order to come toward him, to see him face to face. And then, I saw him, and then I understood, that the truth is he is a novel thing in the world. Since then, I have known him. And if you knew him like I do, surely you would be afraid of him with great awe!"²⁶

In addition to characterizing Barukh as a *Hiddush* and demonstrating that Barukh acted as

²⁵ *A Davar Hidush*, in Jewish law, this represents a new basis for legal precedent.

²⁶ *Bozina* (1880) 24b-25b, (1889) 49-51, (1925) 36-38; *Bozina HaShalem* HeHadash 48-49.

a guardian for his grandfather's grave, this story also affirms that he spent time under the shadows of Dov Baer of Mezhirech and Pinhas of Korets, the latter having moved to Ostrog. Other stories also suggest that Barukh spent his formative years with Pinhas of Korets:

He said [in regard to other Zaddikim], "I want to ask them about the Kavvanot²⁷ which they pray. Do they know the essence of the angels? Have one of them seen an angel even once? I have seen the essence of the angels, for once I had traveled with the holy Rabbi, R. Pinhas, may the memory of the Zaddikim be for eternal life, on the Sabbath to the holy Rabbi R. Joseph of Polonnoye. The holy Rabbi from Polonnoye really loves me. Out of politeness, since I was young and he was much older, I didn't want to sit before him, and he also did not want to sit before me, yet I needed to sit so that he would sit. I took out my canister to smoke²⁸ tobacco. He said to me, 'Brukhil,²⁹ I heard from your grandfather the Besht that you will fill his space. Can you smoke tobacco like the Besht? When he wanted to go to exalted worlds, he would imbibe tobacco. Each time he smoked tobacco, he went from world to world.'

"We were there for the Sabbath, and after the Sabbath, a special messenger came to the holy Rabbi, R. Pinhas [telling him] that he should return to his home immediately because there was an urgent matter and that he needed to come home immediately. The holy Rabbi of Polonnoye was engaged in *Hithodedut*³⁰ in a room that was especially dedicated to it. The situation was disappointing for the Rabbi, R. Pinhas, who did not know what to do: Whether to postpone his return home until after the *Hithodedut* of the Rabbi of Polonnoye, which was impossible since it was obvious that he would be in *Hithodedut* for a day or longer, or whether to travel, without the Rabbi's knowledge, which was also impossible. He didn't know what to do.

²⁷ *Kavvanot* are "intentions" which are stated prior to the performance of a commandment or the recital of a prayer, introduced by the school of Isaac Luria, in 16th Century Safed.

²⁸ Lit. "draw out."

²⁹ Gottlob also calls him by this diminutive, as stated above.

³⁰ "Spiritual self-isolation," a mode of worship in which the individual meditates alone in an effort to connect with God.

"So, the holy Rabbi, R. Pinhas asked me to go to his room of *Hithodedut* to ask if he would give permission to the Rabbi, R. Pinhas to travel home because of an urgent matter. But, when the holy Rabbi, R. Pinhas requested this from me, I did not know what to do. If I went to the room for the Rabbi, it would bother me that I might be confusing him. But if I did not go, it would bother me to not perform the will of R. Pinhas. But this much, I had known, that the Rav from Polonnoye had long ago had a teacher who taught with him, but my grandfather the Besht saw that this teacher was not from among the teachers of the Truth,"³¹ so he took that teacher from him and gave him another one from among the teachers of the Truth. I said to the Rabbi, R. Pinhas, 'Let the two of us go together to the Rabbi, to the room,' and so it was. The two of us went, coming to the door, but the door was bent and inferior. I took my hand and touched the door, and immediately the handle fell off and the door opened. We entered the room and we saw the [same] teacher [from long ago] who was learning with him, and fear fell upon the Rabbi, R. Pinhas. He could not stand there, though I remained standing in the room. So from this, I have known the essence of the angel, but the famous ones of our generation have never known or seen the face of an angel."³²

That Barukh was taken from one place to another by Pinhas implies that he was probably quite young at the time. Barukh was not fond of many, but he apparently had an affinity toward Pinhas and Jacob Joseph ben Zevi Ha-Kohen Katz of Polonnoye, whom he considered worthy of Hasidic leadership:

He used to say, "May I be numbered among the Zaddikim,"³³ Master of the Universe, may I be counted among the Zaddikim: I do not mean with those [others];³⁴ I mean with the holy rabbi Rav Pinhas of Ostrog (Pinhas of

³¹Circumlocution for "Kabbalist," Joseph Weiss, "The Kavvanoth of Prayer in Early Hasidism," *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, ed. David Goldstein (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) 98.

³²*Bozina* (1880) 23a-b, *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 34.

³³Zohar 2:206a and from the B'rikh Sh'mei prayer during Torah service.

³⁴Short phrase translated from Yiddish. *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 124 adds, parenthetically, "That is, his intention was not [to be considered a Zaddik among] those whom he didn't consider Zaddikim."

Korets) and with the holy rabbi from Polonnoye³⁵
 Once, they heard him say, "May I be numbered among the Zaddikim," I
 want to be an overseer among the Zaddikim."³⁶

It is significant that the two figures he held in highest regard were both top students of the Besht, though neither received the mantle of leadership after his grandfather died. R. Pinhas hoped that Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye would take over the leadership,³⁷ but it passed to Dov Baer of Mezhirech, whom as we have seen, called Barukh a "novelty." Outside of one passage, however, there is no reference to the Great Maggid in any other texts in the corpus of Barukh material. It is quite possible that while he may have spent some time under the tutelage of Dov Baer of Mezhirech, he may have also resented his authority and that of his students. The terms *deveikut*,³⁸ *hitlahavut*,³⁹ *hittul yesh*⁴⁰ and *hitpashtut hagashmiyut*⁴¹ are virtually absent from the corpus of Barukh's teachings,⁴² yet

³⁵Probably Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, disciple of the Baal Shem Tov and author of four works, most noticeably *Toldot Ya'akov Yosef*.

³⁶*Bozina* (1925) 30; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 124; Kahana (translated to Hebrew) 317-318; not in first edition of *Bozina DiNehora*.

³⁷Abraham Joshua Heschel, "*LeToldot Pinhas MiKoriz*," *Alei Ayin* (Jerusalem Schocken, 1952) 222.

³⁸"Devotion," attachment or cleaving to God.

³⁹"Ecstasy," a high state of *deveikut*. It constitutes "burning enthusiasm, in which the soul is aflame with ardor for God whose presence is everywhere." "Hasidism," *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 7, col. 1405.

⁴⁰"The annihilation of self," the ultimate expression of spiritual ecstasy in which the individual is no longer connected to the material world.

⁴¹"Stripping away of corporeality," the complete abandonment of material existence, achieved through prayer.

⁴²Many of the tales, however, use these terms.

these are central notions to the teachings of Dov Baer of Mezheritsch. It is strange that Barukh would not continue the teachings of his teacher, so it seems likely that his time with and regard for Dov Baer, the inheritor of the Hasidic enterprise, was minimal. The other possibility is that he questioned all authority, as the following text suggests:

In the days of his youth, the holy Rav, Rebbe R. Barukh, may the memory of the Zaddikim be for eternal life, would sit in the holy community of Ostrog hiding, not reciting any Torah. Once, the holy Rabbi, R. Pinhas of Korets asked him to recite Torah to him. He responded to him, "We have a little sister" (S.o.S. 8:8) that is, the intellect is small among us, as in "Say to wisdom you are my sister" (Prov. 7:4).⁴³ "And she does not have breasts," (S.o.S. 8:8) That is, we have no one from whom we can suckle new intellect, for now we do not have any Rabbi from whom to learn. "What will we do for our sister on the day that she will be spoken for?" [This means] What will we do, for our intellect, when we [are done] speaking all the wisdom which we have? What will we say after that?"⁴⁴

His refusal to study as a youth and his belief in the inadequacy of the minds of his generation could simply represent youthful rebellion, but as we shall see, his dislike of many others suggests that he never outgrows this attitude.

Pinhas of Korets, however, never faces the ire of Barukh. We also find Pinhas of Korets in several other stories. These tales serve to demonstrate Barukh's spiritual or intellectual superiority over his teacher and everyone else. Without offering a source, Abraham Kahana offers the following narrative:

Once, R. Barukh was staying with Pinhas of Korets. When R. Barukh was asleep one afternoon, R. Pinhas gathered his students around [Barukh's] bed, approached the *mezuzah*, and put his hand over it, covering it.

⁴³He is using the phrase from Proverbs to establish a link between intellect and "sister."

⁴⁴*Bozina DiNehora* (1880) 4a. Buber, in *Tales*, incorrectly translates the last sentence as "What shall I do with my little wisdom when I have said all there is to say?"

Behold, R. Barukh began to move and awaken. But when R. Pinhas removed his hand from the *mezuzah*, R. Barukh dozed again. He did this several times. Afterward, he turned to his students, "Did you see? Even in his sleep, there isn't even a moment [that he is] without *devekut* in God, may He be blessed."⁴⁵

Barukh here appears to have been staying with him, probably during his early years. Even

Pinhas of Korets learns Torah from the Ba'al Shem Tov's grandson:

The holy Rabbi R. Pinhas of Ostrog (Phinehas of Korets) asked him, "It is written, 'I will return to you next year, and your wife Sarah shall have a son' (Gen. 18:10). Where is it written that the angel returned to him?" He answered him, "It appears in the Zohar [regarding] 'He saw three men standing near him.' 'Three men' are the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." This means that the three fathers are the three angelic figures as it is known to kabbalists.⁴⁶ This is why the angel says to him, 'I will return to you and Sarah shall have a son.' This means that 'I, myself, I will be a son for her.'⁴⁷

With so many references to Pinhas, we can safely conclude that Barukh spent a significant period of his life with Pinhas of Korets and held this teacher in high regard. The scholarly notion, however, that he studied with Dov Baer is not substantiated by the texts found in *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHadash*.

2. Barukh's Wisdom

Reuben Margalit's *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem* clearly organizes Barukh's textual insights into categories. One finds that they cover the gamut of Jewish texts, from

⁴⁵*Sefer HaHasidut* 317; *Makor Barukh* 25.

⁴⁶*L'yod'ei Hen*, kabbalists.

⁴⁷*Bozina* (1880) 5b-6a, *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 73a.

biblical and Talmudic exegesis to liturgical commentary, including the Haggadah and even *Petihot Eliyahu*. A disproportionate number of insights use the Psalms as the textual foundation for his ideas.

Barukh distinguishes himself by his use of the Zohar more than with any other sources. Kahana writes, "Despite the fact that he did not give high regard to matters of Torah, knowledge of the Zohar was a very special value" for Barukh.⁴⁸ There are many examples of his application of Zoharic notions, found throughout the corpus of his works, especially within *Likutei Imrot Tehorot* of the 1850 *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*. Of course, the Zohar was and remains a central text for Hasidim, but Barukh's claim to erudition with this central work of Jewish mysticism, in particular, involves a self-perceived superiority over his colleagues:

Once on Lag B'Omer, he asked a Zaddik and learned one who at that time was at the meal if he was capable of giving a saying of the Zohar, and he said, "Yes." So, he commanded him to give a saying from the Zohar. After he finished the saying, the Rav R. Barukh said to him, "If you can [only] learn on a revealed level⁴⁹ as [you have] with the Zohar, you cannot learn anything."

Afterward, he asked the holy Rabbi R. Yosili of Yampol⁵⁰ if he could say [something from the] Zohar, who told him that he didn't know how, but he could read the words.⁵¹ He commanded him also to give a saying from the Zohar. So he began to speak, but each and every time, the Rabbi R.

⁴⁸Kahana 318.

⁴⁹I.e. if he could teach the text as if it was obvious, without secret meanings.

⁵⁰His son-in-law's father.

⁵¹He could also be referring to Idra Rabba (Zohar 3:127b-145a), which contains the word **המלות** at its beginning in some manuscripts. Regardless, it is clear that R. Barukh is portrayed as a master of Zohar in this text.

Barukh helped him in his words.⁵²

According to Abraham Simḥah Horowitz of Baranav (1846-1910), Barukh would conclude reading the Zohar every Lag BaOmer,⁵³ the *Hilulah* (date of death) of Simeon Ben Yohai, who is attributed with writing the Zohar. While A. S. Horowitz's conjecture may be false, there are several traditions which suggest that Lag BaOmer was an important day to Barukh for its ties to the Zohar. He honored it in several ways.

His holy way was to sit during the *Hilula* of Rashbi on Lag B'Omer for a meal in holiday clothing and be quite joyous. Once, he opened the title page of the Zohar and said, "From the Godly Tanna Rashbi," which means, from the Tanna who teaches us, "the Godly," how to worship the Lord. And once, he directed his attention to the Zohar and said (and these are his words),⁵⁴ "Rashbi, I know you and you know me."⁵⁵

Indeed, legends reveal that his relationship with Simeon Ben Yohai was unique. He believed himself to be the inheritor of the Zohar, and that this claim was exclusively his. His pompous attitude was reflected in his dreams:

Once, he sat down for a meal on Tu Bishvat⁵⁶ in a jestful mood. He told of a dream which he had dreamt: "There were great numbers of Zaddikim sitting around the table. Among them were some who were still alive and there were some who were in 'the world of Truth.'⁵⁷ Rashbi⁵⁸ was sitting

⁵²*Bozina* (1889) 47, *Bozina* (1925) 34; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 41.

⁵³*Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 41.

⁵⁴In Yiddish.

⁵⁵*Bozina* (1889) 46, *Bozina* (1925) 34; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 41.

⁵⁶Jewish Arbor Day, made significant by Jewish mystics.

⁵⁷I.e. they had died.

⁵⁸Acronym for Rabbi Simeon Bar Yochai, a Tannaitic Rabbi (3rd Century) who is accredited with writing the Zohar, the central work of Jewish mysticism.

at the head of the table, and I was standing at the [other] end of the table, facing Rashbi. Rashbi said words of reproof and castigation, saying to them (in these words), 'This is how one worships the great and awesome God when you worship.' and out of great fear, my face began to turn yellow. Rashbi stood up from his chair and came to me at the end of the table and patted my shoulders in a friendly way, saying to me, 'Bruchil, my friend, my words are not intended for you. You are a perfect man.'"⁵⁹

Barukh's connection to the Zohar was said to be so strong that for others, "it was impossible to tolerate" his interpretations "out of the magnitude of his holiness." Even Abraham Joshua Heschel of Apt (1748-1825, who lived in Medzibezh after Barukh's death), legend has it, felt endangered hearing him simply read the text.⁶⁰

Some of his teachings which touch upon the Zohar have remained. Most of them use the Zohar tangentially, such as the following (which first appeared outside of the corpus of Barukh-related texts):

In the holy book, *Avodat Yisrael*, from our teacher, the holy *gaon* of Koznitz,⁶¹ in the *Haftarah* for *Parashat Chayei Sarah*, he teaches regarding the verse, "King David was now old in days" (1 Kings 1:1), in the following words:

Behold the Zaddik, holy one of God, Our teacher, Barukh, grandson of the Rabbi, Israel Ba'al Shem gave an interpretation of the verse, "And Abraham was now old in days" (Gen 24:1), based upon what appears in the Zohar:⁶² Why does the text say "Abraham Abraham" (Gen. 22:11) and

⁵⁹Last sentence was translated from the Yiddish. *Bozina* (1889) 46-7, *Bozina* (1925) 34; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 41.

⁶⁰*Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 41-42.

⁶¹The Maggid, Israel ben Shabbethai Hofstein of Kozienice (1733-1815), a student of Dov Baer of Mezhibezh and writer of several works, including *Avodat Yisrael*, a Torah commentary.

⁶²Zohar Tosefta to Genesis, Noach 60a:
 אית ליה תדין רוחין רוחא חד בעלמא דין ורוחא חד בעלמא דאחי וחכי תשכח בכלהו צדיקי משה משה
 יעקב יעקב אברהם אברהם שמואל שמואל שם שם בר מיצחק דלא כתיב ביה כמה דכתיב בהו. בגין דיצחק
 בשעתא דאתקרב על גבי מדבחה נפקת נשמתיה דהוה ביה בהאי עלמא וכיון דאתמר ביה באברהם ברוך מחיה

"Moses Moses" (Ex. 2:4)? Its meaning is "Both above and below;" that is, that every Zaddik below has a root which carves his soul into the upper world, and there it cleaves with truth. [However} in the earthly way, he is in this world. With all his holy actions and his upright paths, he draws his holiness from the root of his soul, which is above, down to this world. This is the meaning of "And Abraham aged" (*Zaken*), he is from the hidden world⁶³ which is called by the name "*Ziknah*;" "He came into days," [meaning that he came] to draw [down] to this world, which is within "days" and within time.⁶⁴

Thus, Barukh applies the Zoharic notion that Zaddikim have a presence in both spheres to interpret a Biblical passage, an approach to text which was rather common within the Hasidic circles of his day.⁶⁵ In addition, the materials in *Likutei Imrot Tehorot* delve in greater depth into Zoharic principles, as we shall see with regard to Barukh's views of the Zaddik.

Beside applying the Zohar in his interpretations, Barukh was also known for his special facility with Song of Songs, although this is demonstrated in liturgical, not exegetical, sense.⁶⁶ While the following legend is clearly hyperbolic, it has become one of the best known stories of Barukh. The first edition contains the story in its entirety, but

המתים תבת ביה נשמתיה דעלמא דאתי. בגין דא תשכח דלא יחד קב"ה שמיא אלא על יצחק בגין דאתחשב כמת ועל דא רמז קרא ואמר הן בקדושו לא יאמין וגו'. ד"א אלה תולדות בגין דהוה צדיק שבת ליה תרי זמני. תמים היה בדורותיו אבל בדרין אחרנין אינו נחשב לכולם כמו דרא דאברהם ודרא דמשה ודרא דדוד ד"א חמי מאי עבד בדרא דכלהו חייבים ק"ו אלו היה בדרא דכולהו צדיקים ע"כ:

⁶³"HaOlam Hanistar"

⁶⁴*Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 73.

⁶⁵This is the basic approach applied by his brother Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow throughout *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*.

⁶⁶It became traditional, as a result of kabbalistic influence, to chant Song of Songs on Friday afternoon. "Most of the Hasidim are careful to say it each afternoon, and if they did not manage to say it before *minhah*, they say it after the prayer." Aaron Wertheim, *Law and Custom in Hasidism*, trans. Shmuel Himelstein (Hoboken: Ktav, 1992) 186.

subsequent editions until 1930 only offer the first half:

It was already mentioned and made known⁶⁷ of his wonders when he would chant Song of Songs on Sabbath evening (Friday prior to the Sabbath) after immersing,⁶⁸ when he would burn like fire and the spiritual ecstasy was heavenly. And the "knowers of favor"⁶⁹ have said about him that he had the sparks from the soul of King Solomon,⁷⁰ may he rest in peace. So, when he chanted Song of Songs, he would become ecstatic and ascend "like a flaming brazier" (Zech. 12:8). No person could stand there, for they would nearly go out of their mind and die.⁷¹ Anyone who was not used to the spiritual cleaving and the stripping away of corporeality would likely get sick and die.⁷²

The holy Rabbi, our teacher and Rabbi, R. Zvi of Zidichov, may his memory be for life in the world to come, told that once he was in Medzibezh and hid himself there in his room with another Hasid⁷³ to hear the Song of Songs from the holy mouth of the Rebbe Reb R. Barukh. When he began the Song with fervor and yearning, the hasid said to the holy Rebbe that his thoughts were confused by all the fire which burned within him. And when he said the verse, "His banner of love was over me. Sustain me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love" (S.o.S. 2:4-5), it really seemed like fire was burning around him.

⁶⁷Interestingly, there are no previous references in *Bozina DiNehora* to which this could be referring. Either the writer is referring to Barukh's fame outside of the text, or this passage comes from another source.

⁶⁸Hasidim under the influence of Lurianic Kabbalah stressed immersion in a *mikveh*, a ritual bath, every Friday before the Sabbath. Cf. Wertheim, *Law and Custom*, 215-216.

⁶⁹ Cf. Ecc. 9:11.

⁷⁰Tradition attributes King Solomon as writer of Song of Songs, based upon the first sentence, "The Song of Songs, by Solomon" (S.o.S. 1:1). This statement may also have messianic overtones as a reference to his Davidic lineage.

⁷¹*Hitpashtut HaGashmiyut*; lit. "Leave from corporeality," but really a term for the spiritual state of achieving complete annihilation of the self.

⁷²Both *Deveikut* and *Hitpashtut HaGashmiyut* are virtually nonexistent in the Barukh texts. This is the only time the latter term ever appears.

⁷³In the Margalioth version of 1985, he is identified as Judah Gershon. *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHdash* 51.

[The rest is omitted from the 1889 and 1925 *Bozina DiNehora*]:
 The hasid that was with him fled because he could not take the great, awesome fire. He "witnessed the thunder and lightning" (Ex. 20:15), and the entire house ablaze like fire, so he strengthened his heart and made an effort to hear the voice of the angel of the Lord, until he came to the verse, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me" (S.o.S. 7:11), then he nearly lost his mind. But the holy Rabbi R. Zvi, may he rest in peace, said, [as an oath], "Behold, I am sacrificing my soul to the Lord with love to hear the words of the 'living God' as he gave them at Sinai. And if, God forbid, my soul separates from my body, behold, it is to do the will of my Creator, may He be blessed."

And so, a new spirit was emanated down to him from the Highest Places and he saw a fire of the Lord burning in the house. It is impossible to relate it. He stood there, until he heard the verse, "For love is fierce as death, . . . Its darts are darts of fire, a blazing flame of God" (S.o.S. 8:6). Then, because of the intensity of fervor and yearning, he was nearly taken out of existence, God forbid, but the Lord was his Aid until he finished chanting Song of Songs.

The holy Rabbi R. Zvi would always say that whenever, God forbid, he fell in his worship due to mental descent and the such, he would remember those dear moments when he heard Song of Songs from the mouth of the holy one of Medzibezh and his eyes would shine, for his words were "like a flaming brazier" close to his holy and pure heart.⁷⁴

This story suggests an individual whose intensity during prayer was immense. However, it teaches nothing about his textual skills.

Non-Hasidic sources are particularly harsh in their attack upon Barukh's intellect.

Gottlober suggests that "he didn't read, teach or study. . . he didn't know Torah or social etiquette."⁷⁵ Dubnov writes, "The Hasidic tradition needs to admit the truth, that R.

Barukh was not distinguished in Torah knowledge."⁷⁶ He bases his judgment upon such

⁷⁴*Bozina* (1880) 26a, (1889) 51 (partial), (1925) 38 (partial), 51(1/2); *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 50-51.

⁷⁵Gottlober 40.

⁷⁶Dubnov 210.

stories as Barukh's childhood avoidance of Torah in Pinhas' home previously mentioned and his preference for action over study:

"Do not be evil, within yourself" (Avot. 2:18). It seems that every person was created to repair something in the world. It seems that he is either of need to the world or the world is in need of him. There are those who always sit, secluded in inner rooms, continuously studying there, who do not leave to speak to anyone. For this, they are called "evil." When one speaks with someone, he repairs that which he was created to fix. This is the meaning of "Do not be evil, [being] with yourself [exclusively]." This means [Do not be evil] through the thing which [makes you] you sit by yourself, in self-isolation (*hitbodedut*).⁷⁷

We find, here, that he did not accept the concept of *hitbodedut*, a notion which his nephew Nahman emphasizes and which we find Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye practiced, in the story above. However, more than *hitbodedut*, Barukh combats any activities which do not induce physical change. Words, too, are useless for effecting *tikkun*. We find the following interpretation of Psalms:

"Not from the desert peaks" (Ps. 75:7). "Desert" (מִדְבָּר) is related to the word "speech" (דִּבּוּר) and "peaks" (הָרִים) is related to the word "exaltation" (הַתְרוֹמָמוֹת), which is to say that not from speech alone can one achieve exaltation.⁷⁸ One must do and fulfill.⁷⁹

It is also reported that "He said about himself that he never spoke idle chatter."⁸⁰

Barukh's sources suggest that he was a man of action rather than a man of thought.

⁷⁷*Hitbodedut*, a Hasidic term for spontaneous prayer performed individually. R. Barukh's nephew, Nahman of Bratslav, was a major advocate for *Hitbodedut*, and R. Barukh here criticizes the practice. *Bozina* (1880) 5b; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 92.

⁷⁸Barukh's substitutions renders "Not from speech is there exaltation."

⁷⁹ *Bozina* (1880) 10b, *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 83.

⁸⁰*Bozina* (1880) 5b.

Dubnov claims there is no indication that he did either. Perhaps he was referring to himself when he teaches the following:

“Even a fool, if he keeps silent, is deemed wise” (Prov. 17:28). He interpreted it: Even though the fool is silent and does not say anything, he is still considered the wise one.⁸¹

Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHadaash adds that Barukh is similar in his preference for silence with members of the Ruzhyn-Sadgora dynasty, particularly David of Chortkov.⁸²

Based upon these sources, which form the basis for Dubnov's negative caricature, there is no reason to believe that Barukh was any less competent with texts than any of his Hasidic contemporaries. While the texts state he believed in action over words, to suggest that he was intellectually inferior is not warranted. The text which teaches that he remained quiet as a youth with Pinhas of Korets, if anything, suggests that his textual erudition was superior anyone else. His interpretation of Song of Songs certainly demonstrates a command of interpretation. All the criticisms of Barukh are overstated.

Very few of the sources report Barukh's attitude toward prayer. As we have seen, he was known for his passionate chanting of Song of Songs. However, the following text suggests that Barukh believed that prayer is better served with simple gestures.

Once, he spoke to his grandson, R. Israelish, whose way was to scream during prayer. He said to him, “My son, please consider the difference between the wick of cotton-wool and that of linen. This one burns secretly and comfortably, and this one screams and its voice is boisterous.” And he said to him, “Believe me that one motion of truth, even with the smallest

⁸¹*Bozina* (1880) 8a; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadaash* 87.

⁸²*Bozina HaShalem HeHadaash* 30.

toe is enough.”⁸³

Barukh shows disdain for overly expressive prayer. Too much motion and emotion during prayer is simply insincere. His most vehement attack upon another Hasidic figure is reserved for Levi Yizhak of Berdichev,⁸⁴ who was known for his bizarre behavior during prayer.⁸⁵ There is only one text, in addition to the Song of Songs text above, which suggests that Barukh's behavior during prayer deviated from regular behavior:

Once, during Grace After Meals, when he came to these words, “Our holy One, holy One of Jacob,” he acted childlike before the Omnipresence, like a child acts around his father. He said, “‘Our holy One,’ make us holy; ‘Sanctifier⁸⁶ of Jacob,’ had you not sanctified Jacob when you wanted to?”⁸⁷

Barukh acts like a child before a father, but this does not suggest the wild antics of Levi Yizhak of Berdichev or the screams of his grandson. His prayer was expressive, but well within the realm of ordinary prayer.

The Lurianic Kavvanot, which were defended by some early Hasidim (such as

⁸³*Bozina* (1889) 46, (1925) 33; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 67.

⁸⁴See *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 58, where Barukh challenges his Hasidim, “Whomever speaks harshly against the Rabbi of Berdichev, I promise him his reward in the World to Come!”

⁸⁵An example of his unusual behavior can be found in Buber, *Tales*, 210: “On the forenoon of the Day of Atonement. . . he was so overwhelmed with fervor that . . . he fell on the floor and lay as one dead. In vain did those standing near seek to revive him. They lifted him from the floor, carried him to his room, and laid him on his bed. Then the Hasidim, who knew very well that this was a state which had to do with the soul, and not a sickness of the body, continued in prayer. . . .”

⁸⁶*K'dosh* is normally translated here as “Holy One;” Barukh translates *Kadosh* as “Sanctifier.”

⁸⁷*Bozina* (1889) 48, (1925) 35; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 97; *Tales* 88-89.

Hayyim ben Solomon Tyrer of Czernowitz,⁸⁸ student of Yehiel Mikhel of Zlotchov, who learns from Pinhas of Korets and the Maggid that Barukh is a *Hiddush*) but disregarded by most, were not advocated by Barukh. The Ba'al Shem Tov, Barukh's grandfather, probably did not use them either;⁸⁹ Barukh may simply be following his grandfather's way (Joseph Weiss considers the Besht too ignorant to use the *Kavvanot* properly). We find the following interpretation by Barukh on Psalm 138:

"For You have enlarged above all Your name, Your word" (Ps. 138:2). For every commandment has *Kavvanot* and holy names, but the principle intention is to fulfill the will of the Creator with each commandment He uttered, and that we do His will. This is like what our Sages said: "Why do we sound [the Shofar]? The Merciful One said 'sound' [the shofar]" (R.H. 16a)! This is the meaning of "For you have enlarged above all Your name," meaning above all the holy names; "Your word (אמרתך)," to focus [on what] You said (אמרת) and that we will do Your will, and this is the purpose of the intention.⁹⁰

Louis Jacobs explains that Barukh advocated emotional commitment to the "simple meaning of the words" over the *Kavvanot*.⁹¹ He takes a non-mystical, literal approach to prayer, unlike like his grandfather, whose method Weiss calls "attachment of oneself to the letters," whereby the individual atomizes each and every letter and enters a meditative

⁸⁸Louis Jacobs, *Hasidic Prayer* (London: The Littman Library, 1993) 81.

⁸⁹Weiss, "The Kavvanoth of Prayer," 100. However, the same article notes that *Shvhei HaBesht* indicates he did perform Kavvanot. Weiss concludes, "Israel Baalshem [is not] explicit in denouncing the Lurianic method of meditation, but in practice he is clearly interested in more individual meditations directed at more concrete and proximate aims than the Sefirotic ones of the Lurianic *Kavvanoth*." Weiss 102-103.

⁹⁰*Bozina* (1880) 13a, (1889) 24, (1925) 15; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 86.

⁹¹*Hasidic Prayer* 83. Jacobs never indicates which teaching is the basis for his interpretation of Barukh's thought.

state of contemplation.⁹²

His opposition to *hitbodedut*, *Kavvanot*, and extreme prayer gestures suggests that Barukh did not bring mysticism into his prayer. However, there are some ways in which he clearly connects with the Ba'al Shem Tov and Hasidism. One way is his belief in continuous *deveikut* (although he never uses this term) all day long:

"My tears have been my food. . . I am taunted all day with 'Where is your God?'" (Ps. 42:4). For there are many people who connect themselves to the Creator, blessed is He, only during prayer. But afterward, all day long, service to God is forgotten from their hearts. This is the meaning of "I am ever taunted with 'Where is your God,'" which is to say, all day, How did you worship the Lord?⁹³

In *Hitor'rut HaTefillah*, Barukh's "distinguished student," David Solomon of Tulchin writes, "I heard from the holy Rav, Admur Barukh, who used to say the expression of our Sages, "legal discussion needs prayer" (Tos. to Meg. 28b; Tos. to B.B. 3b) which means that [Torah] study needs prayer, and so, too, the opposite."⁹⁴ He uses this statement as a proof that study can also lead to *deveikut*. Based upon these texts, it does seem that Barukh did believe that one should try to be in constant spiritual elevation, even when one is not praying. As we will find in the discussion about Zaddikim, he carries this idea to the Hasidic extreme of *avodah begashmiyut*, "worship in corporeality," in which the individual (usually the Zaddik) continuously worships God, even when engaged in the most mundane or even profane acts.

⁹²Weiss 104.

⁹³*Bozina* (1880) 15a; (1889) 27, (1925) 17; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 83.

⁹⁴*Hitor'rut* 18.

Barukh also accepts the basic Hasidic stance toward petitionary prayer. Louis

Jacobs writes,

In mythological language. . . when man lacks anything the lack is in the Shekhinah since then God's purpose remains unfulfilled. The Hasid, it is therefore taught, should not ask for his needs to be satisfied because they are *his* needs but because ultimately they are the needs of the Shekhinah. Even when praying for himself his true aim is for God. Even petitionary prayer serves his aim of self-transcendence.⁹⁵

The act of praying for "the needs of the Shekhinah" appears at least twice in texts attributed to Barukh. He states,

Once, he was healed from a horrible illness. He said [and these are his words], "O Lord my God, I cried out to You," (Ps. 30:3) that is, [I cried] over the imperfection that afflicted You. "And You healed me;" and of course the remedy came to me.⁹⁶

Barukh explains that the source of imperfection in God is sin. Our role is to pray for the elimination of the flaws in the Shekhinah so that She can be made whole once again. He uses the story of Hannah and the birth of Samuel as the basis for his argument.

One who sins and performs a transgression gives power to the *Sitra Ahra*⁹⁷ and makes an imperfection in the Shekhinah, God forbid. It appears in the Gemara, "One who prays for the welfare of his fellow, he is answered first" (B.K. 92a). So, a person needs the essence of all his prayers to be for the glory of the Shekhinah.

This is the intention of King David, may he rest in peace, who said, "They cried to the Lord,"⁹⁸ which means that when a person experiences afflictions, undoubtedly an imperfection [caused by] some sin, he needs to

⁹⁵*Hasidic Prayer* 24.

⁹⁶*Bozina* (1880) 15b; (1889) 28, (1925) 18.

⁹⁷Lit. "The Other Side," signifying for Jewish mystics the evil forces in the world.

⁹⁸*Bozina* (1880) 18a adds, "the children of Israel," which suggests that he is quoting Ex. 14:10 or Judg. 4:3, which does not make sense contextually.

cry "to the Lord," that is, concerning the imperfection of the Shekhinah. "And He saved them from their distresses" (Ps. 107:19), which means he saved them from their hardships.

This is also the intention of the verse, "And Hannah prayed" (Sam. I 2:1) "concerning the Lord" (Sam. I 1:10) . . . When Hannah saw that [Hophni and Phinehas] were not proper and were not behaving in the upright way, and that they were damaging the Shekhinah, she was sad over the imperfection of the Shekhinah, and so she prayed "concerning the Lord" (Sam. I 1:10), meaning the prayers she prayed for a son were not for her own good, but rather for the good of the Shekhinah; that God would give her a fit son who would fix all this.⁹⁹

Barukh, like many of his Hasidic contemporaries, believed that the Shekhinah, the tenth sefirah which represents God's presence in the world, needed *tikkun*, or repair. Every flaw in the world, whether it be poor health, barrenness, or the existence of evil-doers, reflected an imperfection in the Shekhinah. The human mission, therefore, is to pray for the perfection of the Shekhinah, which would provide the corresponding perfection in the flawed world. Barukh shared this view with many others, including his grandfather and brother, Moses Hayyim Ephraim.¹⁰⁰

The concept of "strange thoughts" (*mahshavot zarot*) also appears once in the corpus of Barukh's texts, although he does not state what one should do when a strange thought enters the mind. The doctrine of elevating strange thoughts only appears in the ideas of the first generations of Hasidism (including some of his contemporaries), while later Hasidim tend to try to conquer them by thinking about something else. Barukh's nephew Nahman of Bratslav and Shneur Zalman of Liadi take this approach.¹⁰¹ Barukh

⁹⁹*Bozina* (1880) 18a-b, (1889) 32-33, (1925) 22; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 85.

¹⁰⁰*Hasidic Prayer* 25.

¹⁰¹*Hasidic Prayer* 112-113.

merely mentions strange thoughts without offering a solution to the problem:

"A psalm of Asaph. O God, heathens have entered into Your domain" (Ps. 79:1). "Heathens," meaning strange thoughts. "Into Your domain," meaning the mind. Because of the strange thoughts, "they have defiled your holy Temple" (Ps. 79:1), meaning the heart. "They have turned Jerusalem into ruins;" the heart is called Jerusalem, for just as Jerusalem is in the middle of the world, so too the heart is in the middle of the body, meaning that [the strange thoughts] have made the heart into chaos.¹⁰²

When strange thoughts enter the mind, Barukh asserts, they are like non-Jews entering the Temple. Unfortunately, Barukh does not provide a model for ridding oneself of strange thoughts. This absence of a method suggests that he may not have had any elaborate system like Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, who writes in the Besht's name,

As I have heard from my master how to put right the strange thoughts. If it is thoughts of women he should intend to elevate them by attaching them to their root in Hesed ['Lovingkindness'], according to the mystery of 'And if a man shall take his sister. . . it is Hesed' [Lev. 20:17]. And thoughts of idolatry produce a flaw in Tiferet ['Beauty'] of Israel. And enough has been said.¹⁰³

The elevation of strange thoughts meant connecting the source of the thought to its corresponding Sefirah in the mystical system of divine emanations. Barukh never suggests such an approach (nor does he ever use the Sefirotic system for any other purpose).

The texts suggest that perhaps Barukh had a strong tie to the Holyland. It was the one place to go for answers to difficult questions:

"If a case is too baffling for you to decide, . . . you shall promptly repair to the place" (Dt. 17:8). According to the Tanna (Ben Azzai), "There is nothing which has no place" (Avot 4:3). For with Torah, the Holy One,

¹⁰²*Bozina* (1880) 14a, (1889) 26, (1925) 16-17; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 83; Newman 476.

¹⁰³*Hasidic Prayer* 105.

Blessed be He created the world, and with Torah, the world is ruled. Just as the world is divided into borders and districts, so too the twenty-two letters of the holy Torah are divided into portions, and there are big and little portions. Behold, each and every matter in the Torah belongs to a place by itself, and there is a special place for it. For this reason, it is possible that when a person comes to a specific place, specific meanings of the Torah are revealed to him, things which were hidden from him [prior to his arrival] since the Torah matter belonged to that place. This is the meaning of "there is no thing that has no place," and this is the intention of the verse, "If a matter is too baffling for you," [meaning] when a matter in the Torah is difficult for you and you do not know which place you will find [the answer], here is the advice: "You shall promptly repair to the" special "place," which is Jerusalem. It is known that it is the [central] point of all the earth. Certainly, all of the Torah is included there.¹⁰⁴

Barukh clearly views Jerusalem as the center of the metaphysical universe. In the physical realm, too, he contributed to the settlement of the land of Israel, as a letter to Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk (who was in Israel at the time) and one from Jacob Samson Shepetova attest.¹⁰⁵ He even writes that he hopes to visit Israel shortly.¹⁰⁶

3. Barukh, the Rebbe of Joy

Barukh was surrounded by many Hasidim. His disciples, according to various sources, include Mordecai of Lachowicz,¹⁰⁷ Moses Tzvi Savran,¹⁰⁸ Asher the First of

¹⁰⁴*Bozina* (1880) 16b-17a, (1889) 30, (1925) 20; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 79.

¹⁰⁵Both letters appear in the back of *Bozina DiNehora*, in nearly every edition.

¹⁰⁶*Bozina* (1880) 27b-28a.

¹⁰⁷*Encyclopedia of Hasidism* 273.

¹⁰⁸*Encyclopedia of Hasidism* 426.

Karlin, Zvi Hirsh of Zidichov,¹⁰⁹ Nisan Kavler¹¹⁰ and most significantly, David Solomon of Tulchin, author of *Migdal David* and *Hitor'rut HaTefillah*. Gottlober describes Barukh's Hasidic court, probably the first Rebbe to mimic the outer trappings of royalty.¹¹¹ His court included a throne, covered wagons and carriages, gilded and decorated to a level comparable to real royal possessions. Gottlober even reports, libelously, that Barukh had a court jester, Zvi Hirshel Ostropolier, whose function was to keep the "king" constantly amused.¹¹²

Many people came to him, as his letter to Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk suggests, for help as a Rebbe. He encouraged his followers in their hardships:

Once, his close associates, people of merit, complained¹¹³ before him: Why were their lives always in distress and difficult while people who had already rejected the Lord, their success is quite immense? He said to them, "Do not think that distress is removed by your goodness, nor your success by your wickedness. The psalmist already hinted, "Fear the Lord, you His consecrated ones, for there is no shortage for those who fear Him" (Ps. 34:10). The shortage does not come because of fearing the Lord, and this

¹⁰⁹*Enziklopedia LaHasidut*.

¹¹⁰Nathan of Nemirov, *Tzaddik (Chayey Moharan): A Portrait of Rabbi Nachman* (Jerusalem: Breslov Research Institute, 1987) 223.

¹¹¹Arthur Green, "Typologies of Leadership," *Jewish Spirituality: From the Sixteenth-Century Revival to the Present* (New York: Crossroad, 1987) 144.

¹¹²*Zikhronot* 40. Gottlober claims that Zvi Ostropolier once made a joke that was too critical of Barukh for the Rebbe's taste, whereupon he ordered his men to throw Zvi out from the roof of Barukh's house, which they did. Zvi allegedly grew ill from the injuries and soon died. Gottlober adds, "These are the holy ways of the Zaddik, R. Brukhl, grandson of the Besht." *Zikhronot* 41.

¹¹³Lit. "Apologized."

is the proof. We see that "Heretics¹¹⁴ have been reduced to starvation, but those who turn to the Lord shall not lack any good."¹¹⁵

Barukh's answer to the burning question of theodicy depends upon the elimination of what he perceives as a false link between piety and wealth. One must worship God for the sake of ultimate redemption, but this redemptive event transpires outside of our present, corporeal existence. Within this world, there is no guarantees of success. His message to his adherents, in this text, is to continue with their proper worship and accept that their reward will come later.

Despite the existence of evil within others, Barukh does not accept the extremist position that people are either entirely good or entirely evil. Commenting upon Psalms, he states,

"A little longer (*'od*) and there will be no wicked man" (Ps. 37:10). This means that even if a Jewish person deviates, God forbid, from the proper path and acts wickedly, he is still not made into a wicked person until nothing good remains within him. Instead, "A little more (*'od*)," which is not wicked, remains within him. "You will look at where he was--he will be gone." This means, make an effort to look at the little part where there is no wickedness and you will see that he is not wicked.

It is like what King David, may he rest in peace, said: "I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will chant hymns to my God through my still existing (*b'odi*)." (Ps. 104:33). [This means] Behold, I am grasping and making every effort to thank and sing to the Lord by virtue of this [little] part (*ha'od*) [which is still good].¹¹⁶

According to this text, Barukh finds hope that all people have the potential for good. One must look for the goodness within even the worst sinner. It is important to note that

¹¹⁴*Kefirim*, or "Lions," are reinterpreted here as *Kofrim*, or heretics.

¹¹⁵*Bozina* (1880) 21b, (1889) 38, (1925) 26.

¹¹⁶*Bozina* (1880) 16b, (1889) 30, (1925) 19-20; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 82.

Barukh never employs Kabbalistic terms to explain the source of goodness within each individual. Whereas we might expect to find a reference to "sparks" of the divine which exist within every individual, Barukh does not incorporate Lurianic mysticism into this text, nor in virtually any other text. This is certainly why Dubnov attacks his intellect. However, it may simply reflect the nature of the teachings which we have recorded in his name. Since we have no evidence that Barukh ever crystallized his teachings into the written form, our sources merely reflect oral traditions which Barukh's students recorded. When he taught that every individual contains at least one good part, he was not writing for posterity; rather, he was speaking as a Rebbe, providing his community a *hashkafah* (viewpoint) which would allow them to cope with difficult individuals. Barukh was speaking as a Rebbe interested in the welfare of his Hasidim, not as a philosopher interested in a metaphysical theory of evil.

Constant joy was important to Barukh, as reflected in his writings. He encouraged his Hasidim to celebrate life every day, not just on the Sabbath. He teaches,

[It appears in the Gemara] "We, for instance, who have meat and wine every day, how shall we mark the Sabbath?" (Shab. 119a). . . . On the Sabbath, it is a commandment to celebrate with meat and wine, and it is known that a "change of diet [is the beginning of bowel disease]" (San. 101a, Ket. 110b). Therefore, one needs to celebrate during the week with meat and wine as well, so that there will not be a change of lifestyle on the Sabbath, and it will be a complete delight. It is also hinted that on the Sabbath, the food of every day of the week is elevated, as it is known.¹¹⁷

Barukh believed in experiencing Judaism with joy, including alcohol. Unfortunately, Gottlober exploits this point in his memoir: "[Barukh] would celebrate all the days of his

¹¹⁷*Bozina* (1880) 22a, (1889) 39, (1925) 26-27.

life with wine. . . and everyone who walked in his drunk path was smitten by wine and lost."¹¹⁸ This attack against Barukh's character ignores his opposition to excessive use of alcohol:

He said that there are people whom when they drink liquor (משקה), then they are made pious. Concerning this it is stated, "Do not make molten (מסכה) gods for yourselves" (Lev. 19:4).¹¹⁹

Alcohol should not replace God as a source of worship. Nevertheless, Barukh is not advocating complete avoidance of liquor. More importantly, he tells his adherents that they should never let depression dominate their lives, which could have catastrophic results:

He said that sadness really spoils livelihood. Due to this, every person should see to it that he have joy. This is hinted at in the Torah: "You shall have nothing but joy" (Dt. 16:15). The end initials form the acronym, *Hatakh*,¹²⁰ who is the chief angel of livelihood.¹²¹

Barukh insisted that joy dominate on the Sabbath. Any breach of the merriment could not be tolerated. Even honored guests were required to delight in the Sabbath:

Once, an important and honored man who came from the Holy Land was a

¹¹⁸*Zikhronot* 40.

¹¹⁹Liquor (*Mashkeh*) and molten (*masekhah*), while not related grammatically, are pronounced identically when the vowels are manipulated. *Bozina* (1880) 21a, (1889) 37, (1925) 25.

¹²⁰והי"ת א"ך שם"ה, when the final letters are rearranged, spell חתך.

¹²¹*Bozina* (1880) 8a, (1889) 16, (1925) 9. According to Gustav Davidson, *A Dictionary of Angels, Including the Fallen Angels* (New York: The Free Press, 1967) 137, "Hatach" is "an angel invoked in medieval Jewish incantation rites." Others connect this angel to the atonement ritual of *Tashlikh*, but I could find no reference connecting this angel to livelihood. Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Atheneum, 1984) 164-165.

guest with him. His importance was recognized by the Rabbi R. Barukh, for he would draw near to him the most. On Sabbath night, he was sitting at the table of the Rabbi. This man was one of those who are always mourning for Zion and Jerusalem, whose way is to be in anguish and sorrow always. When the Rabbi sang *Kol M'kadesh*¹²² according to his way¹²³ with the regular melody and came to the words, "Lovers of the Lord who are waiting for the building of Ariel,"¹²⁴ the Rabbi looked upon the guest and saw him worrying and sighing according to his way on weekdays. The Rabbi departed the melody from the song and scolded him with rebuke, "Lovers of the Lord who are waiting for the building of Ariel; On the Holy Sabbath, be glad and rejoice!"¹²⁵ Afterward, he returned to the song with the regular melody.¹²⁶

Barukh made clear to his guest that they had to be joyful, even if, ironically, it required scolding them in order to convince them.

4. Barukh with Others

Barukh was difficult to understand at times. His behavior was often peculiar and self-serving. The following story attests to this reality:

Once, he was sitting for a meal. On one side was his son-in-law's father, Abraham Dov of Chmielnik, may the memory of the Zaddikim be for eternal life, and on the other side was his [other] son-in-law's father, R.

¹²²The first of several Sabbath evening table songs.

¹²³This may signify that it is his own melody. *Enziklopedia LaHasidut: Ishim* pictures a melody for *Adir Hu* (from the Passover liturgy) on page 37 of the pictorial section, labelling it the work of R. Barukh.

¹²⁴First verse of an alphabetical acrostic.

¹²⁵This is the continuation of the song.

¹²⁶*Bozina* (1889) 47-48, (1925) 35; *Tales* 95.

Joseph of Yampol (ר' יוסף יאמפול).¹²⁷ A rich and pungent man came to the house, and the Rav R. Barukh commanded his people to drive him outside. Immediately, they drove him out. His son-in-law's father, Rav Abraham Dov said to him, "What should be done with the Gemara, 'One who humiliates his fellow in front of others'" (B.M. 59a, Sanh. 107a)? Immediately, the Rav R. Barukh turned his face to him and said to him, "What did the teacher say? 'One who humiliates his fellow in front of others?' Why doesn't he finish the statement? 'He has no share in the world-to-come.' Is it possible when I saw him that judgments dwelt upon him? It is for this reason that when I scorned him I nullified the judgments that were upon him. I would not lose my [place] in the world-to-come for the sake of a Jew." Immediately, he answered that he did not know this. The Rabbi, R. Joseph said to him, "I, too, had difficulty over the matter but I knew that one does not ask or protest against this, for apparently, he knows what he is doing."¹²⁸

The motif of insulting an individual for the sake of redeeming them is repeated elsewhere as well:

Once, a woman came before him crying and pleading for her daughter, who had difficulty giving birth. He began to curse her with fierce curses which melted the hearts of those who heard. It was perplexing for those standing by, so he said to them, "Why are you perplexed? Know that curses which leave my mouth are blessings!" He took the Zohar and showed them *Parashat Vayeshev*,¹²⁹ and this is his words: "There is anger and there is anger. There is anger which is blessing from above and below, and it is called *Barukh*."¹³⁰

Barukh, as this last text reveals, suffered from narcissism. By no means was he lacking in

¹²⁷There is no sign here that he had died yet, so that this source was possibly written some time between Abraham Dov's death and that of R. Joseph's. It could also simply be an oversight.

¹²⁸*Bozina* (1889) 46, (1925) 33-34; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 60.

¹²⁹Zohar 1:184a.

¹³⁰*Bozina* (1880) 20b. This passage only appears in the first edition of *Bozina DiNehora*.

ego. We have seen that he claimed to know the "essence of angels" and to have a special relationship with Simeon Bar Yohai. Horodetzky adds that he said, "I thank you, Rashbi, for the Zohar, for if it were not for it, I would not be better than my fellow" and "There are no contradictions for me, and every meaning of the Torah is clear to me"¹³¹ In *Bozina DiNehora*, he even claims halakhic superiority: "He said, If I knew that I would transgress even the tiniest law *derabanan*¹³² in my life, I would not desire living."¹³³ With such a bloated ego, it is not surprising that he used his sharp tongue to insult others:

When the holy Rabbi R. Naḥum of Chernobyl, may the memory of the Zaddikim be for eternal life,¹³⁴ was accepted for the first time as a Rabbi and Teacher, he was accepted with great honor. When Rabbi R. Barukh, whose soul is in Eden, heard about the great honor which they made for him, he said, "If [they give honor] to the transgressors of His will, then all the more so, so too [should they give honor] to the performers of His will." He immediately explained his words to them. "Since the Holy One Blessed be He wants honor for the Zaddikim even though they flee from the honor and disobey His will, certainly it is fitting for the performers of His will [to receive] still more honor."¹³⁵

Is this a compliment or an insult? Barukh seems to be delegitimizing Naḥum of Chernobyl's title of Zaddik, while simultaneously suggesting that he performs God's will.

¹³¹*Bozina* (1889) 43, (1925) 30; Horodetzky 13; Dubnov 211.

¹³²A law which the Rabbis ordained which is not directly commanded by the Torah.

¹³³*Bozina* (1889) 43, (1925) 30.

¹³⁴R. Menahem Naḥum Twersky of Chernobyl (1730-1798) was a student of the Ba'al Shem Tov and later of the Maggid of Mezheritsch. He wrote *Meor Einayim*, which consists of interpretations of the Torah portion. "After his marriage he earned his livelihood as a *melamed*, a teacher of young boys." Avraham Yaakov Finkel, *The Great Chasidic Masters* (Northvale: Jason Aronson, 1992) 44.

¹³⁵*Bozina* (1880) 21a, (1889) 37, (1925) 25.

Barukh must have been an extremely difficult person to understand.

In his tenure as a Rebbe, Barukh managed to accrue many opponents, including both Mitnaggedim and Hasidim. The texts typically do not distinguish between these two forms of opposition. *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHadash* reports that he left Tulchin and returned to Medzibezh because "the members of his community began to criticize him harshly for his leadership of honor and grandeur, and his opponents (*mitnagdav*) fought until he was compelled to uproot his home."¹³⁶ In another text, Barukh is told by his adherents that "wicked people had come to see and mock him."¹³⁷ Whether from his own community or from the opponents of Hasidism, Barukh made many enemies.

One reason for his disfavor among other Hasidim is his effort to claim legitimacy. More than once he claims legitimacy as the descendent of royalty. Other Rebbes attest to his special title:

Once, his son-in-law's father, the holy Rabbi R. Solomon of Karlin came to the community of Tulchin. The Rabbi, R. Solomon went from his hostel to the holy Rabbi, R. Barukh. The whole wide world of citizens of Tulchin went with him. When the holy Rabbi, R. Solomon opened the door, he then knocked afterward. He did this several times: He would open up the door, knock afterward, and close the door. But the holy Rabbi R. Barukh did not see him because he was standing by the window, his face directed away.

Everyone said, "Why is the Rabbi afraid to go into the room? We are not so afraid of him!" The holy Rabbi, R. Solomon said, "How could I not to be afraid? For I saw the Besht standing by him, curling his hair!"¹³⁸

Barukh's claims to superiority often involve diminishing the worth of other

¹³⁶*Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 29.

¹³⁷*Bozina* (1889) 46, (1925) 33.

¹³⁸*Bozina* (1880) 21b; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 56; *Tales* 94.

Rebbes. While many came to him with respect, the legends about him suggest that he expected honor, even demanded it as his fundamental right as the Besht's grandson. In some cases, he considered those who did not offer it as his enemies. His *Yihus* (lineage) entitled him to fame.

He did not hesitate to let others know his origins. Gottlober tells the story of the efforts of Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1813) to gather funds for the poor and for redemption of captives, soon after his release from jail in St. Petersburg, 1801.¹³⁹ He decides to attempt to enlist the aid of Barukh. After passing through Bratslav, where Barukh's nephew Nahman warns him of his uncle's temper,¹⁴⁰ Shneur Zalman reaches Tulchin, where Barukh has established his court.¹⁴¹ The next morning, Shneur Zalman finds him putting on *tefillin* of Rabbeinu Tam.¹⁴²

¹³⁹Gottlober 42-44. See also Horodetzky 13-15. Aryeh Kaplan offers the period of these events to be early 1810, based upon Habad and Bratslaver documents. See Aryeh Kaplan, *Until the Mashiach: Rabbi Nachman's Biography: An Annotated Chronology*, ed. Dovid Shapiro (Jerusalem: Breslov Research Institute, 1985) 178-179.

¹⁴⁰He says, "*Peterbokh -- Feter Barukh!*" ("coarse belly -- Uncle Barukh").

¹⁴¹While we have no clear evidence for when Barukh moved back to Medzibezh, this text suggests that his time there was actually rather limited. He dies in 1811, so if this text is accurate, his time in Medzibezh as a Rebbe was limited to no more than ten years. Dubnov, 208 notes the difficulty determining precisely when he moved from Tulchin to Medzibezh, stressing that it is indeed possible that he lived in both places simultaneously. Kaplan, *Until the Mashiach* 231-232 suggests that Barukh became Rabbi of Tulchin in 1780 or 1781 (based upon *Hokhmei Yisrael* 210) and returned to Medzibezh in 1788, but that he would stay in Tulchin for one winter and one summer month per year.

¹⁴²Unlike regular tefillin, known as tefillin of Rashi, these philacteries place the texts in a different order, one which the Zohar prefers. Until the advent of Hasidism, tefillin of Rabbeinu Tam were only worn by the elite. In this case, too, it may be an expression of his elitism. See Wertheim 120-125.

Gottlober records Barukh's first words to Shneur Zalman: "What is your question and why have you come to me?"¹⁴³ Shneur Zalman explains that his purpose is to gather funds and to promote the welfare of Jews worldwide. Gottlober explains that Barukh becomes enraged at the founder of Habad because he had expected him "to come bow down to him." Moreover, Barukh's work was "to pray morning and night, to immerse in the *mikveh* (ritual bath) daily. . . and to engage in the marketing of *yir'at shamayim* (heavenly awe)," not to involve himself in worldly affairs. "Who loves money more than this Holy Zaddik, the grandson of the Besht?" the *maskil* (adherent of the enlightenment) asks sarcastically.¹⁴⁴ Barukh responds to Shneur Zalman's philanthropic ideas with a shriek: "God will save Israel!" Shneur Zalman then attempts to pacify his foe, but it is too late. Barukh says "Who asked you to improve Israel's welfare?" Frustrated, Barukh attempts to change the subject and engage him in a new fight: "I heard that when you were in Petersberg, you taught Kabbalah to a gentile man who is not Jewish." Shneur Zalman gives up all efforts at civility and responds, "I spoke of Kabbalistic matters with this gentile. . . that gentile knows more of the wisdom than many Rabbis that are here in Volhynia and Podolia!" With little more to say, Barukh sneers, "Don't you know that the *tefillin* that are on my head and arm are the *tefillin* of my grandfather the Besht?" Shneur Zalman responds accordingly,

Your headdress which you are wearing for your head, remove it and put on

¹⁴³Gottlober 43.

¹⁴⁴Gottlober 44.

another set 'as frontlets between your eyes'¹⁴⁵ and on your arm, because your tefillin are unfit! Without a doubt, you didn't know that Tefillin which are not checked for seven years become unfit according to law. These tefillin, without a doubt, have not been checked for many years since they belonged to the Besht; and what is holy in your eyes, the law does not recognize!¹⁴⁶

Barukh can only answer with, "I know this, that your faith is already cut off!" as Shneur Zalman walks out the door. Barukh's supporters, Gottlober's narration concludes, surround Shneur Zalman's lodgings and try to attack him, but he narrowly escapes through the window.

This story reveals several aspects of Barukh's personality. It suggests that he relied upon his claim as a descendent of the founder of Hasidism, whose tefillin he wears. It also suggests that he felt threatened by other Hasidic leaders of his time. Shneur Zalman, as a student of Dov Baer of Mezhirech, probably intimidated Barukh for his central role in the spread of Hasidism. Shneur Zalman's willingness to travel for the benefit of the Jewish community represents the antithesis of Barukh's approach, who rarely, if ever, ventures more than one hundred miles from his home in Podolia, the waning center of Hasidism. Unlike his grandfather whom he venerates, these stories of Barukh's experience suggest precisely the conclusions of Simon Dubnov: Barukh was "an arrogant man, an aspirer for power, for honor and for wealth."¹⁴⁷ The following story contributes to this portrayal:

¹⁴⁵Dt. 6:8.

¹⁴⁶Gottlober 44.

¹⁴⁷Dubnov 208.

Once, he said that after his death, "the Zaddikim will lock the gates of the Garden of Eden. What will I do? I will sit behind the gate and recite the Zohar as I know how and understand. By this, all the animals of all the worlds will be so enticed that the Zaddikim will open the gates and come to hear Zohar from my mouth. Then I will enter the Garden of Eden and close the gates, and the Zaddikim will remain outside."¹⁴⁸

It is also told that "Once, he was sitting at a table and before him were many Zaddikim. He began to insult and mock the Zaddikim who had died more than a hundred years. All who heard were puzzled"¹⁴⁹ Barukh even suggests that his modesty is superior to that of everyone else: "He said regarding the attribute of humility, 'If there are one thousand [humble people], I am among them; if there are two, I am among them.'"¹⁵⁰

Barukh is also known to have disputes with many others. *Makor* Barukh within *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHdash* describes many of these, including Mordechai of Chernobyl (1779-1837),¹⁵¹ and Levi Yizhak of Berdichev (1740-1810), whose acrobatic prayer posture becomes a source of ridicule for Barukh.¹⁵² He also insults Shalom of Shakhne, the grandson of Dov Baer of Mezhirech, in front of one of his students.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁸*Bozina HaShalem HeHdash* 41; Horodetzky 13. I was unable to find this particularly damaging story in *Bozina DiNehora* prior to Margaliot's revisions, for understandable reasons!

¹⁴⁹*Bozina* (1880) 21b, (1889) 38, (1925) 26; *Bozina HaShalem HeHdash* 61; Kahana 317.

¹⁵⁰*Bozina* (1889) 43, (1925) 30; Kahana 317; Horodetzky 13; Dubnov 211.

¹⁵¹*Bozina HaShalem HeHdash* 59. He claims his hat is nicer!

¹⁵²*Bozina HaShalem HeHdash* 57-9. While the text suggests that Barukh in fact admits jealousy of Levi Yizhak's *d'veikut* after the latter's death, it seems doubtful.

¹⁵³*Bozina HaShalem HeHdash* 61.

Shalom later says "R. Barukh has made a ladder for himself out of the Zaddikim, and he goes up on top of them to his Father in the Heavens."¹⁵⁴ Even his nephew, Nahman of Bratslav, has a dispute with him for a while, beginning in 1803. Allegedly, Nahman claimed that he surpassed the piety of his great grandfather the Besht when he was only thirteen, and this angered Barukh so much that he pushed him.¹⁵⁵

Sometimes, however, he seems to have resolved his conflicts. There is some evidence that Barukh and his nephew Nahman ease their tensions.¹⁵⁶ More significant is Barukh's reconciliation with Jacob Samson of Shepetova (d. 1801) who was sent by Barukh to Israel to help with the settlement there.¹⁵⁷ Upon his arrival there in 1799, he found, allegedly, that all the funds which Barukh collected for the settlement in Israel were sent exclusively to Russian immigrants, not Polish ones. He decided to engage in an international fundraising effort to support the Polish settlers,¹⁵⁸ which angered Barukh. Jacob Samson sends Barukh a letter, dated 1800, to ease the tensions between them. The

¹⁵⁴*Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 61.

¹⁵⁵Kaplan, *Until the Mashiach*, 100. The polemic against Barukh in Bratslav literature appears in several places. Nathan of Nemirov writes, "He [Nahman] started saying how the Baal Shem Tov was from the *sefirah* of *Binah*, understanding, while the Magid of Mezritch was from that of *Chokhmah*, wisdom, and how even though Binah is lower than Chokhmah the Baal Shem Tov's Torah teachings were drawn from the level of Binah which is above Chokhmah. The teachings of R. Baruch, on the other hand, were drawn from the level of Binah which is below this level of Chokhmah." *Tzaddik (Chayey Moharan)* 307-308.

¹⁵⁶*Until the Mashiach* 152.

¹⁵⁷*Hokhmei Yisrael* 186.

¹⁵⁸Kahana 326.

letter is published in the back of *Bozina DiNehora*. That Rabinowicz lists Jacob Samson of Shepetova as “a close friend of R. Barukh of Medziborz”¹⁵⁹ indicates that Jacob Samson was successful in his efforts.

The one student of Dov Baer of Mezhirech whom Barukh honors is Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk (1730-1788). His letter to this leader of the Hasidic settlement in Israel is printed, like Jacob Samson of Shepetova's, in the back of nearly every edition of *Bozina DiNehora*. It appears without a date, although it probably originates from the late 1770s.¹⁶⁰ Offering essential information about Barukh's life, it indicates that he prays for sons and good *Shiddukhim* (marriage negotiations) for his daughters, suggesting that he has no sons and that his daughters are still quite young.¹⁶¹ He informs Menahem Mendel

¹⁵⁹Rabinowicz 240.

¹⁶⁰Dubnov notes, however, that if it is an authentic letter, it would have necessarily been written prior to Menahem Mendel's death in 1788. Dubnov 208. The letter indicates that Barukh's desire is to visit Israel “next year,” where Menahem Mendel is currently building an edifice. This suggests that the letter was sent close to the time of Menahem Mendel's arrival, when he probably began his building campaign. Since Menahem Mendel did not arrive there until the end of 1777 (Rabinowicz 310), we can surmise that this letter was sent in the late 1770s, possibly the early 1780s.

¹⁶¹In *Bozina* (1880) 17b, we learn that one of these daughters later becomes ill in the following story: “Once, he travelled to Tulchin through Brohlib and had medicines from a doctor for his daughter, Rayzil. The servant put the medicines on the window-sill in his hostel. While [Barukh] was walking around the house, he saw the medicines sitting on the window-sill. He said, ‘If it is God's will that my daughter Rayzil be healed, then she does not need the medicines. However, if the Holy One Blessed be He shows his wonders and his powers to everyone, then there would be no free will. Rather, everyone would know that he performs wonders. But it is the will of God that everyone have the ability to notice with his mind that [wonders] are from the Lord. Therefore, he does not show his powers to everyone but rather clothes everything in nature, and one who notices will notice. He gave power to herbs so that they cure the sick. This is the meaning of “Creator of remedies” (in the Yotzer prayer). But why did he create the remedies? Can he not heal with His words? However, [it also says] “Awesome (*Nora*) of Praises,” God

that he has recently been appointed to a position in Tulchin,¹⁶² where he has become overwhelmed by the burdens of his job. "I am afraid to hide my eyes from them and to conceal my face from the matters of their needs, and with great mercy I lead them," he writes, adding that "the weakness of my body" requires healing so that he can efficiently perform his work. His high esteem for Menaḥem Mendel of Vitebsk can be seen in his efforts to send him gifts to help him establish his settlement in Israel. In the last paragraph, he indicates that he is sending him a "small gift" of a silver knife and fork, money gathered from his community's *pushke* (charity box), and most impressively, the *parokhet* (Torah curtain) from his congregation.

5. The Legacy of Barukh

Rabinowicz states that Barukh had married the daughter of the wealthy R. Tuvia of Ostrova, at which time he moved to Tulchin. When she died, he remarried to the daughter of Aaron of Titov, moving to Medzibezh.¹⁶³ Between these two wives, *Hokhmei Yisrael* records that Barukh left behind no sons, but that he had three daughters: Adel, wife

feared (*yare*) that that his praises would be in the mouths of the creatures, that he [would be called] "Master of wonders." This means that everyone would see his wonders with certainty. For this reason, He created medicines to clothe everything in nature, so that everyone would have discernment." *Makor Barukh* in *Bozina HaSHalem HeHadash* 64 states that she (or another daughter) eventually dies, inferring that it is caused by his dispute with Shneur Zalman of Liadi.

¹⁶²If both the recorded interactions with Shneur Zalman and the letter to Menaḥem Mendel of Vitebsk are authentic, then we find that Barukh must have been in Tulchin at the very minimum for twenty years, between 1780 and 1801. Undoubtedly, his time in Tulchin was significant, as *Shivhei HaBesht* calls him "Barukh of Tulchin," (See above).

¹⁶³*Encyclopedia of Hasidism* 37.

of R. Jacob Pinhas ben R. Abraham Dov (Orbach) of Chmielnik (or Polonnoye); Hannah, wife of R. Isaac Drohovicher; and Rayzel, wife of R. Dov of Tulchin, son of Solomon of Karlin. Eventually, he dies on 18 Kislev, 1811 in Medzibezh. He was buried next to his grandfather and his brother.

The historical representation of Barukh is contradictory. Some texts, such as the stories in *Bozina DiNehora* and Gottlober's scathing memoir, depict Barukh as egocentric and narcissistic. Others, such as *Likutei Imrot Tehorot* in the 1850 *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* (which offers no stories), *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* proper (in which Moses Hayyim Ephraim indicates that he is answering his brother's inquiries), and the letter from Barukh to Menaḥem Mendel of Vitebsk offer a much more positive portrayal of the leader of Podolian Hasidism. Probably, the actual Barukh of Medzibezh was a little of both, aware of his special title as a descendant of the Besht, but also interested in spiritual matters and the welfare of the Jewish people.

Gottlober's ugly assault against Barukh has had the greatest impact on the way scholars have evaluated Barukh. Although the *maskil* outrageously exaggerates the negative account of Barukh, Dubnov and others accept the "memories" of a man who only lived after Barukh's death and therefore could not have witnessed his allegations. As Arthur Green notes, Dubnov¹⁶⁴ and other scholars, such as Horodetzky, have assaulted Barukh's character based primarily upon both Gottlober's memoir and the legendary material found within *Bozina DiNehora*, without considering the entire treasury of

¹⁶⁴ Arthur Green, *Tormented Master: The Life and Spiritual Quest of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights, 1992) 53.

materials recorded in his name.

Every negative allegation against Barukh in Gottlober's *Zikhronot* centers around his actions as a Rebbe. Barukh's behavior stems from his view of the role of the Zaddik, the new Hasidic functionary whose role was to provide physically and metaphysically for the masses of Hasidim. No study of the grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov can be complete without evaluating this critical element in his thoughts. To understand Barukh's conduct as a Zaddik, "foundation of the world" (Prov. 10:25), we now turn our attention to his own words on the subject.

Chapter 3: Barukh and Zaddikism

1. The Doctrine of the Zaddik

For the student of Hasidism to truly understand Hasidic doctrine, s/he must acknowledge the centrality of the doctrine of the Zaddik, together with the concept of *deveikut*. This is underscored when examining the thought of Barukh of Medzibezh, for his lifestyle develops the profile of this Hasidic figure in altogether new directions. While his teachings on the Zaddik are relatively conventional, the way he conducts his own life as a Zaddik ushers in a new approach throughout the Hasidic world.

Several studies of the doctrine by scholars have emerged, but no comprehensive work has yet emerged. In "The *Zaddiq* as *Axis Mundi* in Later Judaism," Arthur Green examines the history of the term, "Zaddik," in Jewish literature,¹ explaining that in the Rabbinic period, it had two distinct definitions. First, it could simply mean "a righteous one," distinct from wicked individuals in society. Second, "Zaddik" could mean "a unique individual, a wonderman from birth, heir to the biblical traditions of charismatic prophecy as embodied in Moses and Elijah."² The Zaddik of the rabbinic period "sustained the world" by his actions, and it is this notion which becomes significant later to Hasidism.

Green then offers the thirteenth-century Kabbalistic notion of Zaddik. The Zaddik became equivalent to the ninth of ten emanations (*sefirot*), the "foundation" and vessel

¹Arthur Green, "Zaddiq as *Axis Mundi*," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 45 (1977) 327-47.

²"Zaddiq as *Axis Mundi*" 331.

through which all divine life flows from the upper *sefirot* down to the *Shekhinah*, the tenth of the *sefirot* and the one which contacts the material universe. Green warns the reader that this divine *Zaddik* remains immaterial; the sefirotic *Zaddik* has not yet merged with the human *Zaddik*. Within the human realm, Simeon ben Yoḥai represents the Kabbalist's quintessential "Zaddik," who represents human perfection and the reincarnation of past Jewish holy men, such as Moses. Nevertheless, the human *Zaddik* remains earth-bound. Furthermore, Kabbalah elevated the significance of Moses, whose soul was said to include all future souls.

Green devotes the last section of his essay to the Hasidic developments of the *Zaddik*, noting that it draws from both the rabbinic and Zoharic predecessors. He explains the new intermediary role: "The *Zaddiq*, being at once bound to both heaven and the earth, becomes a channel through which others may ascend to God and by means of which blessing comes down into the world."³ He raises the question among Hasidism whether there were many *Zaddikim* or only one, showing that Elimelekh of Lizhensk and others believed that there could be several. Even with multiple *Zaddikim*, Green suggests that each Hasid would view his own *Zaddik* as the *Axis Mundi*, or focal point of the universe. Many of the *Zaddikim* themselves, however, believed there was only a *Zaddik haDor*, the one *Zaddik* who became the *Axis Mundi*. The Besht, he suggests, may have considered himself this *Zaddik*. Green specifically mentions both Barukh and his brother Moses Hayyim Ephraim, the former believing that he was "the sole legitimate heir to his grandfather's mantle of leadership and, as the reigning *Zaddiq* in the BeSHT's town of

³"*Zaddiq as Axis Mundi*" 338

Medzhibozh, viewed all other claimants as usurpers.”⁴ He believes that Nahman of Bratslav, Barukh’s nephew, wanted to purify and elevate the role of the Zaddik to its ultimate level, in which he himself represented the *Zaddik HaDor*, the reincarnation of R. Simeon ben Yohai. The Zaddik, in Nahman’s eyes, was the actual Holy of Holies and the *even shetiyah*, the foundation stone by which the world was created.⁵ It is in this sense, argues Green, that the Zaddik truly becomes the *Axis Mundi* within Judaism.

Another important article for understanding the doctrine of the Zaddik was written by Joseph Weiss. Weiss devotes an article to describe the Zaddik’s ability to control divine will, based upon the thought of Dov Baer of Mezhirech.⁶ Noting that the Maggid claims that the magical powers of the Zaddik are actual and physical, not figurative as in the rabbinic literature, Weiss asks the fundamental theological question regarding thaumaturgy: How can the divine will be altered? The Maggid’s answer was that God actually wants the Zaddik to alter His will. Even more daring, the Maggid claims that it pleases God if the Zaddik triumphs over Him! Weiss explains that “The magical activity of the *Saddik* becomes sharply visible at the point where the *Saddik* rules by means of the Divine Will. But according to the Maggid, this is not strictly a Divine Will, but the creation of the *Saddikim* themselves, the projecting of their will into the divine sphere.”⁷

⁴“*Zaddiq as Axis Mundi*” 340.

⁵“*Zaddiq as Axis Mundi*” 341.

⁶Joseph Weiss, “The *Saddik*--Altering the Divine Will,” *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) 183-193.

⁷“The *Saddik*--Altering the Divine Will” 186.

The Zaddik, therefore, has the ability to form the Divine Will itself, certainly a radical concept within Jewish history. The Zaddikim in these texts, acting independently, have the ability to effect God. Weiss notes that elsewhere, the Maggid claims the Zaddik is God. In one text, the Maggid writes, "If we stir up love in the heart of the *Saddik*, then love is stirred, so to speak in Him also, may He be blessed: and if it be fear, then likewise. . . . The heaven and the heavens above the heavens cannot contain Him, and yet He has confined his *Shekhinah* within man."⁸ We find that the Maggid has claimed the actual unity of God and man, that the Zaddik has the ability to know what is happening in the heavenly spheres because they are part of that sphere. Weiss concludes by indicating that "The theoretical basis of divine monism comes out clearly in other formulae of the Maggid. Union with God is understood. . . as a state achieved by man or, more specifically, by the *Saddik* on account of his congenital nature. The *Shekhinah*, which in normal conditions contracts itself within man, constitutes the basis of this unity."⁹ As we shall find later, union with God is rarely suggested by Barukh, but the idea that the Zaddik has greater power than God does appear in his works.

2. The Zaddikism of Barukh -- An Overview

When we examine Barukh's conceptualization of the Zaddik, we find a heterogeneous treatment which at times treats the title as the exclusive status of an elite,

⁸*Or Torah* (Lublin, 1884) 96, quoted in "The *Saddik*--Altering the Divine Will" 189.

⁹"The *Saddik*--Altering the Divine Will" 192.

while at other times it suggests a pietistic level of accomplishment, available to all.¹⁰

Sometimes, it represents oligarchical leadership, while in other texts, Barukh contends that he was the only Zaddik. As with most Hasidic commentaries on biblical texts, Barukh frequently uses biblical figures as prototypes of the Hasidic Zaddik. Many of his interpretations describe the Zaddik in corporeal, regal terms, particularly those sources which appeared in *Bozina DiNehora*. However, the deeper philosophical and particularly metaphysical treatments which appear in *Likutei Imrot Tehorot* in the 1850 Zhitomir edition of *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*, by his brother Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow, suggest a more sophisticated, mystical approach the function of the Zaddik, whereby the Zaddik functions as a channel for divine influx. We begin the examination of Barukh's Zaddikism with the more rudimentary interpretations and progress toward the more complex materials.

3. Good and Evil

For Barukh, the Zaddik sometimes serves as an antidote to the toxic effects of the wicked, or *Resha'im*. The cosmic battle between good and evil requires that the Zaddikim fix the damage sustained from the wicked doers in this world. Moses fixes the destruction of Amalek:

The Rabbi opened with the verse, "Then, whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed" (Ex. 17:11). Our Rabbis, may their memory be for a

¹⁰Green explains that in the first three generations of Hasidism, the term "Zaddik" emerged out of other leadership paradigms and underwent several transformations, and that in its initial conceptualization, for some it lacked the exclusivity which it later acquired. See "Typologies of Leadership," 136-138.

blessing, said "Was it the hands of Moses which made war?" Etc. (R.H. 29a). We need to understand what the war of Amalek was. For behold, when Israel left Egypt, faith was strong in the heart of all Israel, who saw signs and great wonders and awe, as our Sages, may their memory be for a blessing, stated, "Even a maid servant at the [Red] Sea saw. . ." (Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, B'shallah 15:2)¹¹. And faith was strong in the heart of all Israel, as it is written, "And when Israel saw the great Hand. . . and they had faith in the Lord and His servant Moses" (Ex. 14:31). (So this is the meaning of) "Amalek came and fought with Israel [at Refidim]" (Ex. 17:8), for every objective and desire of the same evil-doer was to weaken the faith, as it is written, "how he surprised you (קָרַךְ) on the march" (Dt. 25:18) [meaning] that he made the faith cold (קָרַךְ).

Moses our Teacher was in contrast to this [evil person], and his objective and desire was to strengthen the faith in the hearts of the Children of Israel, as it is written,¹² "his hands were faith¹³ [until the sun set]" (Ex. 17:12).¹⁴ So, when faith triumphed, then "Israel would prevail" (Ex. 17:11). And the scholar will understand.¹⁵

While the term "Zaddik" does not appear in this unit, Barukh clearly views Moses as the Zaddik whose purpose here is to save the entire Jewish people from the evil work of Amalek, the biblical embodiment of evil whose sole function is to destroy Israel. While "every objective and desire" of Amalek the *Rasha* (wicked person) was to harm Israel, the

¹¹"Faith was strong . . . B'shallah 15:2" not in *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHdash*, but may be found in the 1858 edition of *Hesed L'Avraham* and the 1850 *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*.

¹²"How he surprised you . . . Children of Israel, as it is written" does not appear in *Hesed L'Avraham* 1858 and 1860, but does exist in the 1850 *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*. It is omitted from *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHdash* also.

¹³The simplest meaning of *Emunah* here is "reliable," but in this context, Barukh is using it as "Faith," which is the more common usage outside of this context.

¹⁴Portion in brackets only in *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHdash* 121.

¹⁵*Degel* (1850) 199; *Hesed L'Avraham* (1858) 18b, (1860) 59a, (1995) 126; *Bozina HaShalem HeHdash* 121; According to 1858 *Hesed L'Avraham*, "For *Parashat Beshallah*."

“objective and desire” of Moses the Zaddik was to save them. It is the sole responsibility of Moses to give faith to the people in this text. Barukh believes that the Zaddik is the only individual who, at times, can help his constituency. It requires a superhuman to combat the toxic effects of evil.

The war between Zaddikim and *Resha'im* continues into the days of Barukh. At times, the *Resha'im* were even victorious:

I heard in the name of the Rabbi, the Zaddik, Rav Barukh, may his memory be for a blessing, may his soul be in the garden of eternal rest, that once he was staying at a rich, famous person's home for the Sabbath and could not speak words of Torah there. He understood that certainly an evil person (*rasha*) had already dwelt there in that house. They checked and found that it was as he said. He said grievingly, “Seek my Temple and my Hall.”¹⁶ That is, through my “Temple”, which [also] means dwelling-place; through this, I was dumbfounded.¹⁷

Even Barukh the Zaddik cannot dominate the forces of evil when they are unleashed against him. This certainly must have been a consoling thought for a man who made many enemies, as we have seen in the previous chapter. The Zaddik conceptualized by Barukh was a combatant with the forces of evil in an ongoing battle. This is an expression of dualism: There cannot be Zaddikim without corresponding *Resha'im*. The Zaddikim are, measure for measure, the antithesis of the *Resha'im*:

“A Zaddik eats to his heart's content, but the belly of the evil ones (*resha'im*) are empty” (Prov. 13:55) [The verse lets us] understand the superiority of the Zaddik, who eats for the satisfaction of his soul. When

¹⁶From the Sabbath day table song, *Deror Yikera*.

¹⁷*Ne'elamti*, which has the same grammatical root as *Ulami*, “my Hall.” He therefore has retranslated “Seek my Temple and my Hall” as “Give a *d'rash* (teach Torah) in my dwelling-place and I am dumbfounded.” *Bozina* (1880) 12b, (1925) 14-15; *Sifte Zaddikim* 91; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 95.

they have a guest, the Zaddik, though full, eats so that he will not embarrass the guest away from eating.

"But the belly of the evil ones are empty;" even though [an evil person] is hungry, he does not want to eat so that the guest, too, will not eat.¹⁸

Barukh's Zaddik, in these texts, represents the solution to evil in the world. They directly counterbalance the effects of the wicked, the *Reshaim* who try to destroy everything.

Implied in this conceptualization is the absolute necessity of the Zaddikim. Most people are neither Zaddikim nor *Resha'im*, but rather average people who must function between these extremes.¹⁹

In all these texts, the Zaddikim are entirely earthly and have no connection to the heavenly forces any more than the average individual. Absent from this conceptualization of the Zaddik is any union with God or channeling of divine influx for the benefit of the people. The *Resha'im*, too, are entirely earthly. In a sense, this is a return to the earlier Rabbinic and Kabbalistic notions of the earthly Zaddik. Barukh is not particularly mystical in these sources.

In one other text, Barukh alludes to the measure for measure correspondence between Zaddikim and *Resha'im*.

"Maybe ('*Ulai*') the woman will not consent to follow me" (Gen. 24:5); Rashi interprets this as follows, "It is written 'For me ('*Elai*')'; Eliezer had a daughter and saw an opportunity [to get her married]. Abraham said,

¹⁸*Bozina* (1880) 6b, (1889) 13, (1925) 6; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 87.

¹⁹The term, *Beinoni* (average person) appears in only one paragraph out of the entire corpus of texts (*Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 84), but its inclusion suggests that Barukh viewed the world as divided into three categories of people: Zaddikim, average people, and wicked people. Such a division was quite common in Hasidism; Shneur Zalman of Liadi's philosophical treatise, *Tanya* is devoted to the *Beinoni*, also frequently referring to the two extremes.

'You are cursed and [Isaac] is blessed,²⁰ and the cursed do not cleave to the blessed.' And as it were, it raises a question: He should have said the opposite, that the blessed does not cleave to the cursed. However, Rashi is hinting at another idea with his refined language: Whenever the Zaddik wants to negotiate a marriage with someone rich, if the rich person sees that the Zaddik wants to negotiate a marriage with him, he excites himself immediately against the Zaddik and does not want to connect with the Zaddik. This is the intention of Rashi, "The cursed do not cleave to the blessed," meaning that the cursed doesn't want this.²¹

Abraham and Isaac within the Hasidic literature represent Zaddikim at times,²² but Eliezer, Abraham's servant, is also usually portrayed as a pious individual and not as a sinner.²³ For Barukh, while Eliezer is conceived as cursed, he simply serves as a rhetorical device to explain an apparent contradiction in the tradition. In his analysis, he affirms Rashi's statement, "the cursed do not cleave to the blessed" by identifying the Zaddik with one who is blessed. The dualism is minimized, however, because Eliezer does not represent evil in the tradition. This source, therefore, represents a transitional text in Barukh's theory of the Zaddik, who need not have a truly evil counterpart in the universe.

Barukh frequently uses Biblical figures such as Abraham and Moses as models for

²⁰ Abraham's descendants are blessed by God, whereas Eliezer's family, who are descendants of Canaan, are cursed after the flood, when Ham witnesses his father Noah drunk (Gen. 9:24).

²¹ *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 73.

²² For an excellent analysis of Abraham's place in Hasidic literature, see Arthur Green, *Devotion and Commandment: The Faith of Abraham in the Hasidic Imagination* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1989).

²³ In Gen. R. 60:2, Eliezer is called wise, and elsewhere, he is conceived as more pious than anyone in later generations.

the Zaddik.²⁴ In *Bozina DiNehora*, he teaches that Moses had an obligation to remain rooted with the people whom he served:

"The Lord said to Moses, 'Go to the people. . . and set a limit for the people. . . all who touch the mountain will surely die' . . . The Lord said to Moses, 'Go down, warn the people lest they be destroyed' . . . and Moses said to the Lord, 'the people cannot ascend. . . because you warned us, saying, "set limits around the mountain"' . . . so the Lord said to him, 'Go down and ascend. . .'" (Ex. 19:10, 12, 21, 23, 24).

He raised a question: "Why did the Holy One, Blessed be He, say "Go down" twice? Had He not already said to him "Go down, warn the people?"

He explained that "Moses our Teacher, may he rest in peace, who was at a great, high level; the magnitude of his attaining the living God was very strong by his fulfillment of His commandments. He did not understand how they could transgress the word of God, God forbid. Therefore, when God, may He be blessed, said "Go down, warn the people," he was quite bewildered and said to the Holy One, Blessed be He, "Why do I have to go back down and testify to the people? Behold, the people cannot ascend because you 'warned us,' etc.! How is it possible to transgress, God forbid, Your words and Your commandments?" The Holy One, Blessed be He, answered him, "Go down!!" meaning, "Please get down from your grand and lofty level and see that they can easily transgress the word of God. Therefore Israel, who are at a lower level, can transgress the word, and you need to descend and to warn the people, to hurry them a second time that they may not ascend the mountain [and this is the reason that "Go down" is written two times, for it has the sense of descending from a (higher) level, as in "Go down because your people are acting destructively" (Ex. 32:7)]."²⁵

Using Moses on the top of Mt. Sinai as a symbol, Barukh characterizes the Zaddik as an individual who at times dwells at a very high spiritual level, distant from sin, basking in the warmth of continuous fulfillment of commandments. His ease at fulfilling God's will can

²⁴In *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHadash*, besides the sources cited here, the Zaddik is identified with Abraham (page 73), Aaron (77), and Mordecai (90).

²⁵Brackets are found in the original text, including the first edition. *Bozina* (1880) 16a, (1889) 29-30, (1925) 19; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 76.

make it difficult for him to understand how the ordinary Hasid can sin, so God orders the Zaddik to lower himself to the spiritual level of the average individual. There, the Zaddik can influence the people to lead a pious lifestyle.

Barukh states explicitly that Moses warns Israel not to ascend, suggesting that the Zaddik must both descend into the corporeal world and also warn his followers against attempting their own elevation to the level of the Zaddik. This descent is only tangentially related to the katabatic concept of "*yeridah l'zorekh aliyyah*," or "descent for the sake of ascent."²⁶ This idea teaches that the Zaddik enters into the sinful world of wrongdoers in order to uplift them. Sometimes, this descent even involves the Zaddik committing sin. In this text, however, Moses descends, yet his goal is expressly not to raise the people up, for they are told that they may not ascend the mountain. Barukh suggests here that Moses is at a fundamentally higher level. This hierarchical approach to the Zaddik does not allow the average individual to ever attain the spiritual status of the Zaddik. The Zaddik, in Barukh's opinion, occupies a unique position in society which is fundamentally remote from access by the average Jew.

4. *Avodah B'gashmiyut*: The Exclusive Imperative of the Zaddik

The work of the Zaddik, in Barukh's eyes, at times places a special burden upon him which further separates him from his community. Just as Barukh writes to Menahem

²⁶See Rivka Schatz Uffenheimer, *Hasidism as Mysticism*, trans. Jonathan Chipman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 59; Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995) 103; and Green, *Tormented Master*, 295.

Mendel of Vitebsk that the people in Tulchin are overwhelming him with their needs,²⁷ he views Joseph the Zaddik's experience in Egypt as complicated by tremendous responsibilities:

"You must tell my father everything about my high station in Egypt and all that you have seen" (Gen. 45:13). "My high station" (*k'vodi*) is linguistically similar to "weight" (*k'veidut*); that is, that "you should tell my father of the magnitude of my burden which I have in Egypt, that I need to sit with the royal ministers to supervise them in royal matters; but within the deep parts of my heart, I need to think of God and to sweeten things to their root."²⁸

Joseph must engage in two tasks at once. Outwardly, he must serve as a supervisor for government officials, functioning fully as an officer of the Pharaoh. Simultaneously, Joseph must "sweeten things to their root," i.e. perform acts of *tikkun*, or repair of the universe, by meditating upon the divine. The Zaddik functions both in the material plane and the metaphysical realm, according to Barukh, yet this overwhelming double existence is necessary for the Zaddik. It is an example of *avodah b'gashmiyut*, worshipping God through corporeal acts. Rivka Schatz Uffenheimer writes,

"The true gap between man and reality only opened up from the moment that *avodah b'gashmiyut* became seen as obligatory. . . . Hasidism worked hard to explain itself through saying that contact which is seemingly necessary is not true spiritual contact! It stressed the schizophrenic element within *avodah b'gashmiyut*, explaining that the full service within 'corporeality' is only that which man performs as a given action, while his spirit is focused elsewhere."²⁹

²⁷*Bozina* (1880) 27a-27b; see previous chapter.

²⁸*Bozina* (1880) 15b, (1889) 19; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 74.

²⁹Rivka Schatz Uffenheimer, *Hasidism as Mysticism*, trans. Jonathan Chipman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 57.

While Joseph was engaged in the service of the Pharaoh, he was really engaged in the service of the Creator. This was his burden as a Zaddik. The truly competent Zaddik has to juggle the dual responsibility of living in the corporeal world, engaged in earthly tasks, while his spiritual focus is entirely on God. This is the essence of *avodah b'gashmiyut*.

Barukh believed that the demands of *avodah b'gashmiyut* could be so damaging that the Zaddik, who was the only one who should attempt to perform this kind of worship, could easily become despised by the rest of the world. One of his more elaborate teachings illustrates this point.

"If a man has two wives, one loved and the other hated, and both the loved and the hated have borne him sons, . he may not treat as first-born the son of the loved one in disregard of the son of the hated one who is older. Instead, he must accept the first-born, the son of the hated one, and allot to him a double portion of all he possesses" (Dt. 21:15-17).

He, may his memory be for a blessing, interpreted it as establishing two kinds of worship. There is the one who worships God, Blessed be He, with Torah and prayer alone, which is like "the loved one," for this worship is loved and dear in the eyes of all who see it.

But there are Zaddikim, who also, in earthly matters [such as] eating and drinking and the remainder of bodily needs, also "There, He made for them a fixed rule" (Ex. 15:25),³⁰ worship to the Omnipresent, Blessed be He; [they] elevate (*ma'aleh*) all the holy sparks (*hanizot hakedoshim*) from all earthliness. This is like "the hated," for not everyone is capable of reaching this kind of worship to God, may He be blessed, in these matters. Most of them think that the Zaddik does his corporeal needs without intention to the Heavens, like the rest of the simpletons. Therefore, he is considered like "the hated" in the eyes of the world.

Yet Scripture states, "he may not treat as first-born the son of the loved

³⁰This Biblical phrase, which describes a compact made after the waters are sweetened at Marah, is entirely missing from Louis Jacob's translation. It relates to a biblical miracle performed by Moses, the great Zaddik in Hasidic literature, which involves a bodily need for water. Barukh here is offering a reference to a concrete example of *avodah b'gashmiyut* performed by a Zaddik.

one," because "Instead, he must accept the first-born, the son of the hated one, and allot to him a double portion," so that the worship (*avodah*) of this Zaddik, in corporeal needs (*zorkhei hagashmiyut*), is considered in God's eyes, may He be blessed, "a double portion," as the worship of the "loved" one.³¹

Barukh apparently accepted the Lurianic theory of *Shevirat Kelim* ("shattering of the vessels"). Kabbalists argued that due to a cosmological catastrophe, containers holding divine light could not withstand immense forces, so they exploded. Sparks of divinity were scattered throughout the physical world; in food, people, and everything imaginable. It then became the responsibility of humans to repair the disorder by "elevating the sparks" (*ha'alat nizozot*), bringing them back to their proper place. The Zaddik's act of *avodah begashmiyut* performs this necessary *tikkun*, repair of the broken vessels. In this text, *avodah begashmiyut* specifically involves elevating sparks while engaged in "eating, drinking, and the remainder of bodily needs." The requirement to engage in *ha'alat nizozot* necessitates *avodah begashmiyut*.³² Like many of his Hasidic contemporaries, Barukh believed that every earthly act, at all time, gave the Zaddik an opportunity to elevate the fallen sparks of divinity. Yet here, the elevation of sparks (*ha'alat nizozot*) becomes the sole endeavor of the Zaddik, who will be despised by others for engaging in *avodah begashmiyut*. Nevertheless, the Zaddik's *avodah begashmiyut* entitles him to a "double portion."

Louis Jacobs notes that perhaps the Zaddik is despised by others because people wish to view the Zaddik as a holy man, untainted by the impurities of the material world,

³¹*Bozina* (1880) 12a, (1889) 22, (1925) 13-14; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 79.

³²*Hasidism as Mysticism* 57.

yet the Zaddik's responsibility is to function within corporeality. Moreover, Barukh himself was accused of enjoying the physical bounty of the land excessively, with his gilded carriages and accumulation of wealth, so in this sense he was certainly despised and comparable to the "hated" wife for his *avodah begashmiyut*.³³ Barukh claims that the Zaddik must function in the material world, and that all of his actions are superior to the average individual's endeavors because his spiritual prowess allows him to elevate sparks while performing the most mundane of actions. If Jacobs' assertions are correct, then Barukh's exploitation of the Hasidic concept of *avodah begashmiyut* may have led to his alleged gross materialism.

This obligation to perform *avodah begashmiyut* requires the Zaddik to remain entirely within the corporeal world, without flying away in ecstasy. Barukh criticised other Hasidic leaders, such as Levi Yizak of Berdichev and his grandson R. Yisrael who allowed their fervor to carry them away from the material world. Aaron serves as a role model for Zaddikim:

He said that the main principle of worship for the Tzadik is that he be like an [ordinary] man, and even if he is filled with fervor which burns like fire for the Holy One, Blessed be He, he should see to it that he not be "light which leaves the container," which is the body. Rather, all of it should be hidden within him. He should do all corporeal activities without any alteration.

This is the intention of our Rabbis, may their memory be for a blessing, in relationship to the menorah: "Aaron did so accordingly" (Num. 8:3), which teaches that he didn't change [any of the details].³⁴ It is a great surprise to think that Aaron, the holy one of the Lord, would deviate from the commandments of the Lord so that he would be praised here for not

³³*Hasidic Thought* 54.

³⁴Rashi, based on Sifrei.

changing [anything], only the matter is as stated above; for they already told of another saint who was the attendant in the synagogue, who would improve the candles and give oil for light with the candle tool. Then with all his spiritual attachment to the Lord, Blessed be He, he could not do it correctly. He poured the oil outside the container.

So, for this reason, the holy Torah mentions Aaron's praiseworthiness; that he, with the magnitude of his spiritual attachment (*deveikut*) to the Creator, Blessed be He, with regard to the candelabra and its purpose, he was not stopped from the completion of a corporeal activity, doing the matter properly, to improve the candles and the wicks, and to light them in a suitable fashion.³⁵

The Zaddik must function on both planes, the physical and the spiritual. Barukh thinks that this form of worship is extremely difficult, believing that it should be reserved for the pious elite. This is harmonious with the views of his grandfather the Besht, who Ada Rapoport-Albert cites with regard to *avodah b'gashmiyut*, "Each man should conduct himself according to his own rank."³⁶ Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye writes,

A pupil might want to emulate such a wise man when he carries out corporeal tasks. But the pupil does not know that at such times his teacher is fulfilling [the request implied in the verse] "Thy word have I hid in mine heart" [Ps. 119:11], namely, that he is occupied with corporeal things while at the same time meditating their inner spiritual content. Thus, the pupil may emulate the external appearance of the teacher's corporeal activities, and be punished. . . .³⁷

In contrast, Barukh teaches that a layman attempting to imitate the Zaddik, trying to perform *avodah begashmiyut*, would be stymied by the Evil Inclination.

³⁵*Bozina* (1880) 10b, (1889) 20, (1925) 12; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 77.

³⁶Ada Rapoport-Albert, "God and the Zaddik as the Two Focal Points of Hasidic Worship," *Essential Papers on Hasidism: Origins to Present*, ed. Gershon David Hundert (New York: New York University Press, 1991) 305.

³⁷*Sofnat pa'ane'ah*, p. 32a (New York, 1954), quoted in Rapoport-Albert, "God and the Zaddik" 305.

He said that the actions of the Zaddikim, the holy ones of the Exalted One, they lead themselves in the way of all the land; they eat and drink and sleep and pray little, and the majority of their words involve worldly matters. With those qualities, they worship God. An ordinary person should not take their example, because the Zaddik, from his childhood, is holy and pure, and all his thoughts are solely upon the Holy One Blessed be He. He need not struggle with the Evil Inclination, so for this reason, even in minor worship like this, he cleaves and connects his pure thoughts to God, may He be blessed. But the ordinary person, who needs to mend (*letakken*) his actions, if he observes the Tzadik and wants to worship God with worship like this too, the Evil Inclination prevents him.³⁸

Barukh has offered a qualitative distinction between the Zaddik and the average person.

Whereas the Zaddik is "holy and pure" from his earliest years, the "ordinary person" (*ben adam*) lacks the congenital requirements to perform *avodah begashmiyut*. Any attempt to worship God in earthly activities, in this case listed as eating, drinking, sleeping and limited prayer, will fail because the Evil Inclination does not permit its fulfillment in ordinary people. This suggests that Barukh believed that Zaddikim represent a biological elite in society, defined from birth and set apart from ordinary people.

We find this exclusivity of Zaddikism present in several other texts also.

Sometimes, it suggests that their superior pedigree endows them alone with the ability to bear the impact of God's attribute of judgment:

Once, he said, "But goodness for Israel" (Ps. 73:1); "but" lessens it. In other words, the goodness will be lessened because of the interference of evil. May it only be goodness! And since He will not delay the quality of judgment, he added "God (**אלהים**) for the clean of heart." May the quality of judgment³⁹ be only "with the clean of heart;" with me and my brother Ephraim. May the quality of judgment be managed with us alone, and not

³⁸*Bozina* (1880) 4b, (1889) 10, (1925) 4; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 75.

³⁹The divine name, **אלהים**, is associated with the quality of judgment, **מדת הדין**, throughout Rabbinic literature.

with Israel in general.⁴⁰

Barukh here suggests that only he and his brother, Moses Hayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow, can handle God's attribute of judgment. Barukh asks that only the two of them be given the burden of God's *midat hadin*, which he implies would destroy the ordinary person.

This is not to say that Barukh wishes to suffer from the attribute of judgment, as the following text demonstrates:

Once, he interpreted the verse, "I will thank You, Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify [Your name forever]" (Ps. 86:12). In other words, man is also obligated to accept the bad like the good with joy. With regard to himself, the Zaddik can rejoice: But, for others to rejoice with him, they need to see the joy and goodness with their [own] eyes. Then they, too, can rejoice through the joy of the Tzadik. This is the meaning of "I will thank You, Lord my God, with all my heart," meaning, Even though I myself "thank you" even over [the harsh experiences on account of] the quality of judgment (*midat hadin*), God forbid, I desire to "glorify your name for the world,"⁴¹ that is, before the world, and this is impossible unless you treat me [kindly] with the quality of mercy.⁴²

While the Zaddik is capable of tolerating the *midat hadin*, Barukh pleads to God not to judge him by that measure so that he can be an effective leader. Barukh believes that the Zaddik carries the welfare of his entire community upon his shoulders, and "as the Rebbe laughs, so too laugh all the Hasidim."⁴³ Therefore, the Zaddik's joy is necessary not for his own satisfaction, but for the sake of his followers, who will receive psychosomatic

⁴⁰*Bozina* (1880) 21a, (1889) 37, (1925) 25; *Bozina HaShalem HeHdash* 25.

⁴¹While the simple contextual meaning of the verse renders לעולם as "forever," Barukh has understood the word as "for the world," meaning for all people. In Yiddish, *oilem* means "the masses."

⁴²*Bozina* (1880) 16b, (1889) 30, (1925) 20; *Bozina HaShalem HeHdash* 83.

⁴³Modified old Yiddish song.

happiness.

5. The Zaddik's Limitations

Sometimes the Zaddik's different status forces him to bear greater judgment by God:

"All (*Hakol*) are obligated for an appearance-offering" (Hag. 1:1). This means that since the Zaddik⁴⁴ sees⁴⁵ and understands more of the holiness of God, may He be Blessed, he has a greater obligation [than everyone else]. "For there is not one Zaddik on earth who does what is best [and doesn't err]" (Ecc. 7:20).⁴⁶

On the one hand, the Zaddik in this text is subject to more critical treatment than the average individual whom he serves since he has a deeper understanding of God. Yet on the other hand, the Zaddik is like everyone else who has the ability to sin. This text warns the Zaddik who thinks his special status in society allows him to sin.

Similarly, Barukh (like many Rebbes) believed that the Zaddik must maintain constant humility. While he may not have accepted Elimelekh of Lizhensk's extreme position that "the true Zaddik always sees himself as a fraudulent Zaddik,"⁴⁷ Barukh shows in several places that Zaddikim, too, should approach their service to God with humility and awe:

⁴⁴The quotation says *Hakol* (everyone). In Kabbalah, *Hakol* signifies Zaddik.

⁴⁵"Appearance-offering" (*R'ayah*) and "sees" (*ro'eh*) share the same Hebrew root, ראה.

⁴⁶*Bozina* (1880) 6a, (1889) 12, (1925) 6; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 90.

⁴⁷Noam Elimelekh to Gen. 6:9, cited by Louis Jacobs, *The Doctrine of the Zaddik in the Thought of Elimelech of Lizensk* (Cincinnati: University of Cincinnati, 1978) 13.

By way of purity, "Fear the Lord, you His consecrated ones" (Ps. 34:10), which means that the consecrated ones, that is, the Zaddikim, they too should fear the Lord.⁴⁸

The Zaddik must be a God-fearer. Barukh underscores this teaching with the following interpretation.

"The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness" (Ps. 29:8). "Wilderness" (מִדְבָּר) comes from the same root as "speech" (דִּבּוּר). This means that the Zaddik who is afraid⁴⁹ to let speech leave his mouth has "the voice of the Lord." "The Lord shakes," [meaning] whomever is afraid from the Lord, "the wilderness of Kadesh" [which means] his speech is holy.⁵⁰

The Zaddik who hesitates to speak, according to Barukh, has been granted holy speech. In a sense, this is another example of Barukh's belief in the power of silence, discussed in the previous chapter. However, in this source, Barukh praises a Zaddik's fear to speak, not just his silence. The added element of fear suggests Barukh's belief that Zaddikim should be humble. The virtue of modesty finds clear expression in his interpretation of Psalm 118.

"Open the gates of justice (צֶדֶק) for me, that I may enter them and thank the Lord. This is the gateway to the Lord, Zaddikim shall enter through it" (Ps. 118:19-20). This means that it seems to the Tzadik by his conduct that he still has not begun any worship of the Lord, may He be blessed. He asks from the Lord, may He be blessed, to open "the gates of justice" for him. "I will enter them and thank the Lord." Scripture says, "This is the gateway to the Lord, Zaddikim shall enter through it," which means that while it seems to him that he still has not begun any worship of the Creator,

⁴⁸*Bozina HaShalem Hehadash* 82.

⁴⁹"Shakes" is יָדַל; to cause fear is יָדַל.

⁵⁰קֹדֶשׁ, "Kadesh," is the place where the Israelites stayed for most of their time in the wilderness. קֹדֶשׁ, "holy," also contains the Hebrew root, √קֹדֶשׁ.

this in itself is the "gateway to the Lord."⁵¹

The Zaddik who considers his own prayers insignificant and worthless before God has the merit of true worship. Barukh understood humility as a prerequisite for the Zaddik.

6. The Zaddik's Symbiosis with His Community

According to Barukh, precisely what is the Zaddik's purpose? One answer to this question appears in *Migdal David*, the collection of teachings assembled by Barukh's student, David Solomon ben Samuel of Tulchin.

I heard from our master, our teacher, our Rabbi, the holy Barukh, (his soul is in the garden of eternal rest, the memory of the holy righteous is for eternal life), the meaning of the verse, "With a voice of joy and thanks the masses rejoice" (Ps. 42:5); that because of the "voice of joy and thanks" and prayer of a Zaddik, material abundance is drawn to the masses of people so that [each person can] sow produce and harvest, etc. [The individual] has happiness and joy, but the common man does not know that it is drawn to him by the prayer of the Zaddik, and he thinks that his strength and the might of his hand made all this wealth.⁵²

The Zaddik's function is to provide his followers with material wealth. In this source, Barukh specifically teaches that the Zaddik provides his community with sustenance, meaning food. In many other Hasidic texts, including *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* by his brother, the Zaddik gives his followers "*Hayey, Baney, umezoney*," "length of life, children, and sustenance," based upon Raba's teaching, "[Length of] life, children, and sustenance depend not on merit but [rather on] *mazzal*," or destiny (M.K. 28a). Perhaps the reason this phrase never appears in the body of Barukh's teachings is that he himself

⁵¹*Bozina* (1880) 5b, (1889) 11, (1925) 5; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 85.

⁵²*Migdal David* 5b-6a; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 98.

never had any sons. In any case, the source from *Migdal David* demonstrates that Barukh considered the Zaddik's mission as providing for the material well-being of his community, even if the people do not realize that he has given them their sustenance.

Joseph Dan writes, "Standing in a special relationship with his followers, the Hasidic community with which he was associated, he derived spiritual power from their belief in him and transformed this power into a means of providing them with divine sustenance and protection from the forces of evil. In a more worldly sphere, the people of the community furnished the Zaddik's material support; and the Zaddik, by his spiritual efforts, provided them with the blessings of sons, long life, and sustenance."⁵³ Dan suggests that the Zaddik received his power by his followers' financial support. Barukh's critics, such as Gottlober and Dubnov, capitalize on his alleged excesses in this realm, and stories such as the following contribute to his poor standing with historians:

Once, the holy Rebbe of Sikol⁵⁴ was with [Barukh]. He marvelled about how great a Zaddik he was, so Rebbe R. Barukh asked him about his morals, and the Rebbe of Sikol told him that he takes little money. Rebbe R. Barukh told him, "On the contrary! Since you take little money, it seems that you are not such a great one like you say. For it is written, "This is the gateway to the Lord, Zaddikim. . ." (Ps. 118) And it says in the Zohar, "The Zaddikim are the gates of the Holy One, Blessed be He."⁵⁵ And to understand why the Zaddikim are called the "gate of the Lord," [it is because] they have all the prayers of Israel in their hand. For they open the gates with their prayers, and since they are connected to Israel on all levels, they also raise the prayers of all of Israel.

⁵³Joseph Dan, *The Teachings of Hasidism* (New York: Behrman House, 1983) 28.

⁵⁴I could not find this city in any atlas (סיקאל).

⁵⁵I could not find this quotation by use of CD-ROM. In the next quote, he cites the same idea in his grandfather's name instead of the Zohar, suggesting that it might only be tangentially related to the Zohar.

"In what manner do they have a connection with the masses of people? Aren't all their actions and their work above nature? God therefore made them desire money, so that the masses⁵⁶ would give it to them. And with this they connect themselves with all of Israel and elevate their prayers through the gates.

"It is like a parable of a human king: In the courtyard of the king guards are placed at every gate in order that they let no person approach the king within. The gate closer to the king has a greater and more honored guard, until at the doorway of the king stands the chief guard. Whomever wishes to approach the king, at first, the simple guard does not let him go through his gate. So, he gives him a little something in money, and he lets him go. And each time he comes to a gate closer to the king, there is a more honored officer standing there. He needs to give him more money to go through his gate, until he comes to the courtyard of the king's castle. There the chief guard stands; he needs to scatter lots of money for him so that he will let him go to the inner court of the king's castle to speak to the king.

"And now, since you accept less money, it seems that you are appointed over a minor gate."⁵⁷

This text, which disappears after the first edition of *Bozina DiNehora*, establishes Barukh's belief in a direct correlation between wealth and a Zaddik's efficacy as a "gateway to the Lord. The formula is simple: The wealthier the Zaddik, the closer he is to God.

Interestingly, Barukh applies the Zoharic notion that the Zaddikim are the gates to God in this story. Elsewhere, in a passage which I could only find in *Bozina DiNahora HaShalem HeHdash*, Barukh attributes the same teaching to his grandfather:

He said, "My grandfather the Besht said, 'This is the gateway to the Lord, Zaddikim' (Ps. 118) which means that the Zaddikim are the gate to the

⁵⁶Lit. "the world."

⁵⁷*Bozina* (1880) 25b. It was omitted from subsequent editions, so Dubnov was correct when he wrote, "In the second edition of the book, I did not find the teaching: Perhaps the writer (Horodetzky, who quotes this passage) drew from the first edition and it was deleted from the second edition, because it demeans the Zaddik." Dubnov 212.

Lord. My brother, the holy Rabbi Moses Ephraim said it is written 'sin couches at the door' (Gen. 4:7). Sin is the evil inclination which hovers at this door and gate, and it seduces people to disagree about the Zaddik, saying that he is not a Zaddik. This is what King David, may he rest in peace, meant by, "I extoll You O Lord, for You have lifted me up (דליתני)" (Ps. 30), which is related to door (דלת) and gate, that all would believe in him, that he is a door and gate to the Lord.⁵⁸

This multiple attestation of the principle that Zaddikim are the gateway to God suggests that Barukh held this teaching in high regard. He undoubtedly viewed himself as such a gateway. This rereading of Psalm 118 appears in yet another teaching, which originally may have been linked to the last one due to its close similarity:

"I extol You (ארומנך), O Lord, for You have lifted me up (דליתני)." I heard in the name of the Rabbi the Zaddik, Rebbe Reb Barukh from the community of Medzibezh, may the memory of the Zaddikim be for eternal life,⁵⁹ regarding the verse, I extol You, O Lord, for You have lifted me up," that there are four meanings:

"I will extol You," I will praise you, for you have made me a door (דלת) and a gate for all of Israel so that whomever needs to pray and to beseech the Lord to make repentance, I open for them the opening and the gate to the Lord (and it is also possible to say that this is the meaning of the verse, "This is the gate to the Lord, Zaddikim" [Ps. 118]).⁶⁰ Up to here, he interpreted "You have lifted me (דליתני)" as related to the word, "door (דלת)."

Another interpretation of "You have lifted me up (דליתני)" is that it is related to the word, "bucket (דלי)," that is, I give praise to the Lord because He has made me a bucket for all of Israel. This resembles the case of a deep well with living waters, and one needs a bucket with a long rope

⁵⁸*Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 85.

⁵⁹This first portion only appears in its complete form, in the original source, *D'vash HaSadeh* (Bilgoraj, 1909) 39-40. It appears in *Bozina DiNehora* in a much abbreviated form in the first edition, page 21b. *D'vash HaSadeh* is a collection of exegetical texts assembled by Dov Baer of Risha (d.1884), a student of the "Seer" of Lublin.

⁶⁰This parenthetical comment, a comment on Psalm 118, also appears in *D'vash HaSadeh* in parentheses.

to draw living waters from there. Without this, they cannot in any way draw from there because of its depth. Likewise, the entire world needs the Zaddik, that he will bring abundance for them, all that is good, from the source of life. He is like a bucket.

Another interpretation of "You have lifted me up (רליתני)" is that it is related to the word, "poverty (רלות),"⁶¹ so that he praises the Lord because He knows his degree of humility, for the Zaddik is always humble and lowly in His eyes.

Or it is according to its simple meaning, that it is suggesting elevation, "You have lifted me up,⁶² and not let my enemies rejoice over me," related to "my eyes look upward (רלו) to the Omnipresence" (Is. 38:14).⁶³

Barukh offers four different interpretations of the first verse of Psalm 30, three of which pertain to the role and character of the Zaddik. In the first, Barukh once again suggests that the Zaddik is a gateway—that he gives people heavenly access by opening the pathways for their prayers to reach God. In this case, the Zaddik is similar to the King's guards in the story of the King's palace. Barukh's second interpretation compares the Zaddik to a bucket drawing water from a deep well. In this characterization, the Zaddik functions as a lifeline for people, providing them with the divine abundance which sustains them. This corresponds to the principle that the Zaddik provides for his adherents' material sustenance, found in *Migdal David*. Third, Barukh reinforces the notion that the Zaddik must always be humble, a recurring theme in Barukh's teachings.

By way of summary, we have found that Barukh understood the Zaddik as a powerful, aristocratic individual in a community whose superior spiritual powers allowed

⁶¹In the original *D'vash HaSadeh*, it is written "רלית," which seems unlikely. Probably the version in *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHadash* is a later correction.

⁶²הנבחרתי in *D'vash HaSadeh*, הנבחרתי in *Bozina DiNehora*. See previous note.

⁶³*D'vash HaSadeh* 39-40; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 81.

him to both elevate the divine sparks and provide for the material well-being of his constituency, through *avodah b'gashmiyut* (worship in corporeality) and through prayer. The Zaddik needed to be a God-fearer and humble, and in return for his services, he could expect material support from his many followers. In several teachings, he is also viewed as a gateway to God.

7. Cosmological Considerations

With the exception of the gate imagery, Barukh's doctrine of the Zaddik from what we have elicited is void of thaumaturgical and metaphysical elements. Many questions still remain unanswered. What is Barukh's perspective on the process by which the supernal influx comes down to the people? Is the Zaddik involved in the events? How do the *Sefirot* play a role in the process? What exactly is the Zaddik's relationship to God and the divine will? Is he inextricably tied to the Deity, as Dov Baer of Mezhirech suggests?⁶⁴ Is he a "channel" or a "vessel" for the journey of the abundance from the heavenly realm into the corporeal world? In essence, the question becomes, To what extent is Barukh of Medzibezh a mystic?

Unfortunately, and not surprisingly (based upon past negative characterizations of Barukh), very few texts address these more sophisticated issues. The handful that do confront these questions, interestingly, are almost exclusively in the 1850 Zhitomir edition of *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*. *Bozina DiNehora* is virtually useless for this study, which suggests that the historian attempting to ascertain an historically accurate portrayal of

⁶⁴See Weiss, "The *Saddik*--Altering the Divine Will."

Barukh of Medzibezh must cautiously remind himself or herself that either *Bozina DiNehora* or *Likutei Imrot Tehorot* from *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* may not reflect the actual views of Barukh of Medzibezh.

With that limitation and caveat in mind, we can begin to examine the texts which suggest what Moshe Idel calls the "Mystico-Magical Model" of mysticism.⁶⁵ Defining this model, Idel writes the following:

"The mystico-magical model is anabatic by its very nature. It presupposes the capacity of the *Zaddiq* to leave this world by ascending to or by assimilating with the divine. This 'ascent' is a deep transformation of the self through its temporal spiritualization, self-effacement, annihilation, and cleaving to the divine."⁶⁶

Close contact with the divine constitutes the first stage of the mystico-magical world, whose second phase is the drawing down of the divine influx from the supernal source.⁶⁷

The quintessence of the mystico-magical model can be defined as the sequence of an inner, mystical experience that consists of a cleaving to God, often preceded by a self-induced feeling of "nothingness" -- that is, an expansion of consciousness, and the subsequent return to this world and drawing down into it the divine energy by performing the ritual, and then distributing that energy to others. . . . Man is not instrumental in an active manner in the process of the descent of the influx.⁶⁸

Our search therefore centers on texts which suggest that the *Zaddik*'s experience of ascent involves *unio mystica* and a resultant drawing down of divine abundance into the world.

In *Likutei Imrot Tehorot*, Barukh explains the difficulty of Moses to speak as

⁶⁵Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995).

⁶⁶*Hasidism* 104.

⁶⁷*Hasidism* 105.

⁶⁸*Hasidism* 107.

that the vessel is filled; he cannot [tolerate it, and he]⁷³ enters the world of speech, which is *Malkhut*; this is the way of the world. There are things which are finished in the higher worlds with good thoughts,⁷⁴ and when it is necessary to bring it to the world of action, it needs to be dressed in words, as it is written, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made" (Ps. 33:6), that with the words of God, the world was created.⁷⁵ This is the meaning for one who expresses with his lips what is found in his mouth, new things.

And so, too, the action of the Zaddikim: With their words, new heavens are created;⁷⁶ he will hear what he says and will gain understanding from his own words which leave his mouth. This is the way of the Zaddikim who want to teach Torah and prayer. Whomever wishes to worship the Lord starts below [and goes] upward; he speaks and connects himself and purifies himself with the words and [then] ascends above. This is the meaning of "I have surely taken note (פָּקַד)" (Ex. 3:16), which is a sign that He sent them one who would bring them, that he would be פָּקַדָּהוּ,⁷⁷ that his mouth was burnt so that he would be "slow of speech."⁷⁸

Barukh's Moses cannot speak because of his *deveikut*, or attachment, to God. His "slowness of speech" is actually an expression of his spiritual superiority. Moses, like the Zaddik, becomes filled with the "great light," meaning the light of the higher divine *sefirot*, and as a result, he cannot emit words. Ultimately, Moses and the Zaddik speak, but their

⁷³This phrase was omitted from *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHadash*.

⁷⁴Singular in *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHadash*.

⁷⁵This entire phrase after the biblical quote is omitted from *Bozina DiNehora HaShalem HeHadash*. For a similar treatment of Ps. 33:6, see Elimelekh of Lizensk, *Noam Elimelekh*, *Teze*, in Rapoport-Albert, "God and the Zaddik" 321.

⁷⁶This is a common concept in Hasidism, that the Tzadik's Torah insights (Hiddushim) create new worlds. Cf. *Degel Machaneh Efrayim*, *Noam Elimelekh*, etc.

⁷⁷He has interpreted *Kad* in one of two ways: 1) *Kadud*, or pierced or 2) rearranging the letters, *dak*, or delicate or tender. Ex. R. 1:26 suggests that Moses burned his tongue on coals as a child in the Pharaoh's court, so his mouth could have easily been made tender.

⁷⁸*Degel* (1850) 192-3; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 109; *Hesed L'Avraham* (1995) 124-125.

speech does not come from their own thoughts but rather from the "world of thought," i.e. the higher *sefirot*. The Zaddik's words are actually an expression of *Malkhut*, or the *Shekhinah*, whose revelation occurs because the Zaddik channels the higher sefirotic light through his body and out his mouth, which corresponds to the *Shekhinah* in the Kabbalistic tradition.⁷⁹ The Zaddik is as astonished by the words emitted from his mouth as those who hear him speak, for he merely serves as a channel and vessel for divine speech. When the Zaddik serves God, Barukh teaches, he acts as a receptacle for *Shekhinah* through his *deveikut*. The deeper his *deveikut*, the less he is able to speak, which eventually leads to a revelation of the tenth *sefirah* of *Shekhinah* and the corresponding creation of new worlds through words.

In this text, Barukh radically departs from the teachings found in *Bozina DiNehora*, in which the Zaddik is entirely separate from God. The experience of the Zaddik here is *unio mystica*, whereby the mystic and God become one through speech. This notion that the Zaddik functions as a vessel for the *Shekhinah* is not a Hasidic invention; Idel notes that "the Hebrew terms *kelim* (vessel) and *zinorot* are very important to the theosophy of R. Moshe Cordovero. . . . The Zaddiq imitates the revealed divinity by becoming instrumental in the transmission of the divine influx from the Sefirotic realm to the mundane one, just as the *Sefirot* are transmitting the influx from the Infinite to the lower levels of reality."⁸⁰ In Barukh's comment, the Zaddik brings words into the world,

⁷⁹See Tikkunei Zohar 17a; Moses Hqayyim Ephraim of Sudylkow, Barukh's brother, links the mouth to *Malkhut/Shekhinah* at least seventeen times.

⁸⁰*Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* 192.

not the divine influx. Nevertheless, it is clear that Barukh's description borrows from the Cordoverian conceptualization of the Zaddik as a vessel for the divine. The parallel to the Christian notion of "speaking in tongues" is also very clear. It is certainly possible that his ideas are patterned after the Christian mystical experience. Rosman shows that Medzibezh was roughly two-thirds Christian,⁸¹ so the non-Jewish mystical experiences certainly could have influenced his understanding of the Jewish experience.

In the following text, the Zaddik makes "a pipe to draw benevolence and blessing into the world:

The Rav opened with "You have given new moons to Your people" (Rosh Hodesh *Musaf*). This is an acronym for Rachel,⁸² which represents the dwelling of the Shekhinah⁸³ and the renewal of the Intellect; "You have given to Your people," that Israel was considered "last of action and first for thought" (cf. Gen. R. 1:4).⁸⁴ And the month of Elul consists of days of will and days of repentance, its acronym being "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine" (S.o. S. 6:3).⁸⁵ The acronym formed by the last letters makes four yuds,⁸⁶ that all the creations of the world are only [created from] His will, may His name be blessed, which He willed. He created

⁸¹*Founder of Hasidism* 66.

⁸²ר"א ש"ח ד"ר ש"ל ע"מ is the acronym from ר"ח.

⁸³Rachel is identified with the tenth *Sefirah*, called *Malkhut* or *Shekhinah*, throughout the mystical literature. See *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim, Vayeze*, נ; Ra'ya Mehimna Lev. 20a; Elliot R. Wolfson, *Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995) 16.

⁸⁴In the L'cha Dodi prayer, the first *Sefirah*, *Hokhmah* (*mahshavah*, or thought) unifies with the tenth *sefirah*, *Malkhut*, or *Shekhinah*, which represents *ma'aseh*, or the active presence of God in the world.

⁸⁵In Rabbinic thought, God is Israel's Beloved in the Song of Songs. The month here symbolizes the reciprocal relationship between the divine and the world.

⁸⁶I.e., נ"י דודי ו"דודי ל"י, each word ending with a yud, י.

upright human beings who would act according to His will, merely for the Lord alone.⁸⁷ All [of man's] yearning, salvation, desire, purpose, and will are for the Lord alone, to do the will of the Creator, Blessed be He. This is the meaning of "I am my Beloved's." When he annuls his [own] will entirely and all that is in the world, his will is only to satisfy his Fashioner. "And my Beloved is mine." The Holy One Blessed be He causes His *Shekhinah* to dwell within him. "He fulfills the will of those who fear Him" (Ps. 145) [meaning] the doers of His Will are to hearken to the command of His word. This is the meaning of "Will (רצון)." The letters rearranged mean "created (נוצר)" and "pipe (צנור)," that from the Will, "kindness (חסד) [is continuously] created" (Ex. 34:7), and he makes a pipe to draw benevolence and blessing to all the worlds. And [regarding] the four yuds at the end [of the verse, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine"] which is [related to] "O Lord, You have been our dwelling place/our refuge in every generation. . . . You return man to dust (Ps. 90:1,3), [the word "dust" being an acronym for] dwelling, vessels, woman,⁸⁸ which increase a man's self-esteem (Ber. 57b). "[Happy is the man who prepares for her] a fine dwelling in his heart, and fine vessels in his limbs, and 'a woman, fear of God," (Prov. 31:30) "in the soul"⁸⁹. This is [the idea that these are] the days of "will," in which the Holy One Blessed be He arouses the will in the hearts of Zaddikim⁹⁰ to do the Will, which is that "kindness is created" (נוצר חסד), which is חס. חס is equivalent to "Life" and equivalent to "Elul" (counting the word itself), so

⁸⁷The text may be bad here, as the text used in *Imrot T'horot* is "he will do according to his will (עשה)," while *Hesed L'Avraham* (1858) rendered it "it went up/will go up" in his will" (עלה).

⁸⁸In *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash*, it is incorrectly written as רב"ה instead of רב"א. probably because the two letters are similar in Rashi script. In the 1858 and 1860 versions of *Hesed L'Avraham*, the second and third, respectively, it is printed רבא. The acronym stands for דירה בלים אשה. Interestingly, Dt. 23:2 varies in manuscripts between רבה and רבא, so this may be influencing the typist's error.

⁸⁹Tikkunei HaZohar 22b. Adapted from Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, trans. David Goldstein, vol. 3 (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1994) 1225.

⁹⁰*Hesed L'Avraham* and *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* render it "Israel" instead of "Zaddikim."

that he is arousing the thirteen attributes of mercy.⁹¹

"And at the heads of your re-newings"⁹² (Num. 10:10, 28:11), that you renew all the heads [who fit under the category of] "He fulfills the will of those who fear Him." The fearers⁹³ make the will; as much as they arouse the will in their hearts, so, too is the upper will aroused, the [thirteen] sources of mercy. "You give it openhandedly, feeding every creature to its heart's content" (Ps. 145:16) which is also an acronym for "Rachel."⁹⁴ And He satisfies the will, so that there will be satisfaction with this Will, to do the will of his Owner, and he has no desire for any other will. "Happy is the man who finds refuge in You, whose mind is on the [pilgrim] highways." (Ps. 84:6) Amen.⁹⁵

In this text, a pipe is created to receive the divine influx. However, unlike the previous text, the Zaddik is not the actual pipe, but rather the simple performer of the divine will.

When the Zaddik does the divine will, he allows for the proper function of the pipe, which is to provide "kindness," or divine benevolence. Commenting upon this text, which he uses to support his "Mystico-Magical Model" of Hasidism, Idel writes,

In one of the teachings of the Besht's grandson, R. Barukh of Miedzyborz we learn that by the effacement of the importance of any existent in the world, the mystic strives to perform only the will of God, and thereby the divine Presence comes to dwell within him. The letters of will, *Razon*, are permuted into *Nozar*, created being. This play, meaning that out of the

⁹¹Compare Zohar 2:91a, 2:132b, and Ra'ya Mehimna Pinhas 232a, where the term is "13 attributes (מכילין) of mercy". While *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* prints "13 sources of mercy," the 1860 *Hesed L'Avraham* text places מקורין and מכילין in parentheses, suggesting an uncertainty in transmission. In light of the tradition found throughout the Zohar and other Hasidic texts (cf. Maor VaShemesh), "attributes" seems more likely than "sources". This is confirmed by *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* (1850) 196.

⁹² "Month" and "new" are both חדש.

⁹³I.e. Zaddikim

⁹⁴רחל, לבל יר רצון.

⁹⁵"*Likutei Imrot Tehorot*," *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* (1850) 196; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 115; *Hesed L'Avraham* (1995) 134.

divine will the divine mercy, *Hesed*, is created, is apparently a hint at the influx descending from the divine will. A further permutation of these consonants produces the word *Zinor*, the pipe or the channel, meaning the transformation of the mystic into a channel of the influx, which is distributed to the whole world.⁹⁶

Despite Idel's suggestion that the mystic himself becomes the pipe, the text does not support his conclusion that the mystic becomes the actual channel.. The Zaddik merely forms the pipe by his fulfillment of the divine Will, which has become his own will. While there is a union of the Zaddik's will and the divine Will, and while the *Shekhinah* rests within the mystic, he is not overwhelmed by God's presence in the mystical sense we find in the previous text. Nevertheless, Barukh here suggests that the Zaddik's role is to bring divine benevolence and the thirteen attributes of mercy from above into this world through his fulfillment of God's will. This notion is reinforced by the following text:

For *Nizavim*, the Rabbi opened with the verse, "It is not in the heavens, that you should say, 'Who among us can go up to the heavens and get it for us and impart it to us? . . . The thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it'" (Dt. 30:12-14).

Behold, it is written, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, by the breath of His mouth, all their host" (Ps. 33:6). The idea is known that on Rosh Hashanah the world is recreated anew, and when The Holy One, Blessed be He creates His world, it is ruled by the souls of Zaddikim (Gen. R. 8:7), that is to say, by those who are Zaddik-like and his holy word.

The word of the Lord which leaves his mouth creates heavens. It is written, "Mighty creatures do His bidding, ever obedient to His bidding" (Ps. 103:20). "Mighty creatures do His bidding," they make the words, [and this is the meaning of] "in your mouth and in your heart, to make it" (Dt. 30:14); through the words which leave from his mouth, they make it so that it will be such in his heart. . . .

And behold, Rosh Hashanah is the day of the creation of the worlds anew. Proportional to the level a person sanctifies and purifies himself so that his words leave with sanctity and purity from his mouth, and are "in his heart

⁹⁶*Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* 114; He further notes, p. 312, that the link between *Razon*, or will, and *Zinor*, or pipe, is established prior to Barukh.

to observe it," he draws upon himself the [divine] flow of blessing and good life for the entire year and upon all the members of his home and upon all the worlds, all of them, and they are renewed by him, since the Holy One Blessed be He rules with the souls of Zaddikim.⁹⁷

The Zaddik renews creation by bringing down the divine influx, which provides "blessing and good life for the entire year upon all the members of his home and upon all the worlds." While there is no vessel or pipe imagery here, the Zaddik is responsible for the successful flow of the *shefa*.

The idea that a vessel is made by the Zaddik may be found in another text in the 1850 *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* material collection, "*Likutei Imrot Tehorot*."

R. Joshua ben Levi said, "In the future, The Holy One Blessed be He will bequeath 310 worlds to each and every Zaddik, as it is written, "to bequeath material⁹⁸ to My lovers, and I will fill their treasures (Prov. 8:21)" (M. Ukz. 3:12).

One needs to ask, What is this duplication of language, that it says [literally], "for every Zaddik and Zaddik." Behold, there are two kinds of Zaddikim: One who worships⁹⁹ out of fear (love), and one who worships out of love (fear), and both of them are Zaddikim (in all their actions).¹⁰⁰ And behold, it is best if the two of them, love and fear, are together in each person, and it is known that the main principle of worship "with arousal from below"¹⁰¹ is what one draws upon oneself. [For] the person whose principle of worship is with fear of God, The Holy One, Blessed be He

⁹⁷"*Likutei Imrot Tehorot*," *Degel* (1850) 194; *Bozina HaShlaem HeHadash* 112; *Hesed L'Avraham* (1995) 135.

⁹⁸In Hebrew, "material" is *ש"י*, which is equal to 310.

⁹⁹"Acts" in *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* instead of "worships". The substitution occurs twice in this sentence.

¹⁰⁰Stated twice in *Degel* (1850) 198, using the parts in parenthesis the second time.

¹⁰¹See Zohar 1:244a, "Awakening below (*באתערותא דלתתא*, the same term) stimulates awakening above, and awakening above stimulates a yet higher world." *Wisdom Of the Zohar* 1042.

gives him love as a free gift. And so, too, one who worships out of love, which is a greater level. Nevertheless, it is possible [that] since he constantly draws love of God upon himself, and this is his task and his worship, that he will not have such strong fear all the time, so the Holy One Blessed be He gives the fear to him as a gift.

This is the meaning of "In the future, The Holy One Blessed be He will bequeath 310 worlds to each and every Tzaddik," as in "they will bring gifts (ש) to the one who is awesome (Ps. 76:12)," as it is written, "to bequeath material (ש) to My lovers;" this is one who worships out of love.

"Material" (ש), is an acronym for fear of heaven.¹⁰² And "their treasures" (*Ozroteihem*); this is one who worships out of fear, which is called "*Ozar*,"¹⁰³ [as in the statement, "The Holy One Blessed be He only has a treasury of fear of heaven in His world" (Ber. 33b)].¹⁰⁴ "I will fill," so that he will be complete,¹⁰⁵ with love as well--This is the inheritance from Him, may His name be blessed.

This is the meaning of the statement of our Rabbis, may their memory be for a blessing: "The holy one, Blessed be He, could not find any vessel that could contain the blessing for Israel other than peace, as it is written, 'The Lord will give strength to His people, the Lord will bless His people with peace' (Ps. 29:11)" (M. Ukz 3:12): Behold, this is the idea of two kinds of Zaddikim, that every person "will be burned by reason of [his envy of the superior] canopy of his friend" (B.B. 75a, Soncino Translation).

Nevertheless, the Holy One Blessed be He, makes peace, so that "The Lord will give strength (oz) to His people," that the Holy One Blessed be He helps ("ozer") him so that He bestows to this one love and to this one fear, [they would not be complete (in their worship)].¹⁰⁶ And so, The Holy One Blessed be He makes peace between them and a vessel holding blessing is

¹⁰²I.e., יראת שמים.

¹⁰³Ahavah, or love, is connected to the *sefirah* of *Hesed*, which is connected to expansion and growth, while *Yir'ah*, or fear, is connected to the *sefirah* of *G'vurah*, which corresponds to contraction and limitation. *Ozar* means cessation, so *Ozroteihem*, or "their treasures," is translated as "their cessations," i.e. *Yir'ah*, or fear.

¹⁰⁴Only found in *Degel* (1850) 198.

¹⁰⁵In Hebrew, "fill" and "fulfill" are the same word, *shalem*; to complete something is to also fulfill it. However, *Degel* (1850) 198 renders it *shalom*, which seems incorrect.

¹⁰⁶Parts in brackets are found in *Hesed L'Avraham* in parenthesis.

made. Read Carefully.¹⁰⁷

According to Barukh, neither the Zaddik who worships God from the perspective of love, which is tied to the *sefirah* of *Hesed*, nor the one whose worship originates out of fear of God, related to the *sefirah* of *Gevurah*, is complete in his relationship with God, even though “both of them [still qualify as] Zaddikim.” Barukh’s suggestion that an imperfect Zaddik is nevertheless a Zaddik seems astounding coming from a man who is characterized as elitist and critical of all leadership in his generation.

Barukh teaches that whatever imperfections a Zaddik has are compensated by God, Who provides him with the complementary sefirotic quality. All the Zaddikim together establish the “vessel holding blessing,” i.e. the divine influx. Again, there is no indication that the Zaddik is the actual vessel, but the text does provide another example of Barukh viewing the Zaddik’s function as bringing the divine influx, or benevolence, down to earth from above.¹⁰⁸

In all three of these texts, and throughout all of *Likutei Imrot Tehorot*, Barukh uses the plural form, Zaddikim, exclusively when describing this figure of leadership. It clearly contrasts with *Bozina DiNehora*, in which the singular term “Zaddik” dominates (although the plural form does exist there) that text. The Barukh of *Likutei Imrot Tehorot* was more of a pluralist with his metaphysical treatment of the Zaddik than the Barukh of

¹⁰⁷“*Likutei Imrot Tehorot*,” *Degel Maḥaneh Efrayim* (1850) 198; *Bozina HaShalem HeḤadash* 120; *Hesed L’Avraham* (1995) 144.

¹⁰⁸In one other text found in *Bozina HaShalem HeḤadash* 121 and *Hesed L’Avraham* (but not found, interestingly, in the 1850 *Degel*), there is a reference to the “pipes of influx” (*zīnorot hashefa*), but it only uses the term indirectly without any elaboration.

Bozina DiNehora.

8. Master of the Universe

As we have seen, on a material plane Barukh lived a life of extravagance. Green notes that he was the first Rebbe to apply the notion that the Zaddik is a king in a corporeal fashion, with a court jester, royal carriage, and a throne. His teachings reinforce this idea, emphasizing the elite position of the Zaddik in society and his unique talent to accept the burden of *avodah begashmiyut* and to tolerate the deleterious effects of the *midat hadin*, or divine judgment. In a thaumaturgic sense, the Zaddik either acts as the channel or pipe for the divine influx, or his actions allow for the proper function of the channel, so that his followers, and perhaps the world, can survive. The epitome of Barukh's vision of the Zaddik, which characterizes both his material and metaphysical role in the universe, appears in *Bozina DiNehora*:

The Holy Rabbi R. Abraham Dov of Chemelnik asked him, "It appears in the Gemara (Ber. 33b), 'The Holy One, Blessed be He, only has a store of the fear of heaven in His universe'¹⁰⁹ alone¹¹⁰, as it says, 'The fear of the Lord is His treasure' (Isa. 33:6)." The difficulty is that the word 'alone' is redundant."

He explained that it appears in the Gemara, "Everything is in the hand of heaven except the fear of heaven" (Ber. 33b). It is understood from here that the Holy One, Blessed be He, does not have a treasury of fear of heaven; it seems these statements contradict one another.

He explained the two aforementioned statements by what appears [in the

¹⁰⁹The Soncino edition's Talmudic text uses בבית נגיו, or "in his treasury;" *Bozina DiNehora* renders it בעולמו, or "in His universe."

¹¹⁰This word does not appear in the Soncino edition of the Talmud, yet this is the word which is the basis for his interpretation!

Gemara], “Zaddik rules with fear of God;”¹¹¹ The Holy One Blessed be He decrees, and the Zaddik annuls, etc.”¹¹² It seems, according to this statement that the Zaddik is the leader of the universe.¹¹³ However, if there is no Zaddik in the land, God forbid, then the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it were, leads the universe.

This is the idea of the Gemara, “Everything is in the hand of heaven,” which is to say that The Holy One, Blessed be He, as it were, by Himself leads the universe. But when does He lead the universe? [It says in the Gemara] “Except the fear of heaven,” which is to say at the time when there is no Zaddik, a fearer of heaven, in the land. However, when there is a Zaddik, a fearer of heaven, certainly the Zaddik leads the universe. So this is the way to also understand the Gemara, “The Holy One, Blessed be He, has nothing in His universe,”¹¹⁴ which is to say that the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it were, only leads the universe when “the treasury of fear of heaven” is “alone,” which is to say, at a time when there is no Zaddik in the land, God forbid, and “the treasury of fear of heaven” is only left in the hand of the Holy One, Blessed be He. However, when there is a Zaddik in the land, in whose hands is placed “the treasury of fear of

¹¹¹Barukh has changed the syntax of the original phrase from Sam. II 23:3. The entire verse is normally translated, “He who rules men justly, He who rules in awe of God.” Barukh has applied the word “Zaddik” in the sentence toward his Zaddikism.

¹¹²Cf. B. M.K. 16b.

¹¹³This phrase appears throughout Hasidic literature, its origins based upon Zohar 2:20a: דבר אחר דודי לי ואני לו הרועה בשושנים. מה השושנים קוצין מצויין בתוכם אף הקדוש ברוך הוא מנחין עולמו בצדיקים ורשעים. מה השושנים אלמלא הקוצים אין השושנים מתקיימין כך אלמלא הרשעים אין הצדיקים ניכרים. דאמר רבי יחודה במה הצדיקים ניכרים מתוך שיש רשעים דאלמלא רשעים אין הצדיקים ניכרים. ד"א הרועה בשושנים המנחין עולמו בשש שנים והשביעית שבת לה. ד"א בשושנים באותם שושנים בתורה:

In the Zoharic context, obviously the Hasidic sense of Zaddikism does not yet present itself. Here, “The Holy One, Blessed be He, manages His universe with Zaddikim and *Resha'im*,” or evil-doers. The Zohar teaches that without evil-doers, there cannot be Zaddikim, who represent a general category of righteous individuals. This corresponds to the Zaddikism of the first texts in this chapter. The Hasidim ultimately reinterpret the idea that God leads with Zaddikim and *Resha'im* to mean that the Zaddikim exclusively lead God's universe..

¹¹⁴Ber. 8a (twice) and Shab. 31b. Although Barukh does not seem to be alluding to it, the full text in Shab. 31b reads, “The Holy One, blessed be He, has nought else in His world but the fear of Heaven (יראת שמים) alone, for it is said, *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God?*”

heaven," certainly the Zaddik leads the universe.¹¹⁵

This is the quintessential Barukh teaching on the role of the Zaddik. He is the "manager" or "leader" (*manhig*) of the universe (*olam*), who rules with the fear of God, able to overturn the divine decrees. The Zaddik is granted omnipotence by God, who only manages the world when there is an absence of Zaddikim on earth. This teaching is reinforced in *Migdal David*:

(The grandson of the author said) Behold I heard in the name of our Master, our Teacher, our Holy Rabbi Baruch, may the memory of the Zaddikim and holy ones be for eternal life (and it is found in the holy writings of my master my father, my grandfather, my teacher my Rabbi, may his memory be for a blessing, in the holy book, *Sabbath Clothes*, which is still in manuscript form; God, who is blessed, may He give us the merit to publish it), who raised the issue:

The Zaddik rules by fear of God (2 Sam. 23:3) and according to this, from what is proper, all should be delivered into the hands of the Zaddik.

He explained that because there is no Pious one (*שׂאֵם חַסִּיד לֹדֶה*), for this reason, everything is in the hands of the Holy One, Blessed be He. This is as our Sages Z"l said, "All is in the hands of Heaven," that is, in the hands of the Holy One, Blessed be He; and why doesn't the Zaddik nullify it? This is why our Sages ended [the statement] saying "except for fear of Heaven," that is, because they are still outside of the aspect of "fear of heaven." and for this, they do not have the aspect of [being a] "Zaddik [who] rules." Up to here is his holy statement.¹¹⁶

This text furthers the notion that God rules only when there is no Zaddik, teaching that at the time he uttered these words, he felt there were "no pious ones," i.e. Zaddikim in the world. Oddly, *Migdal David* suggests that Barukh may not have always considered

¹¹⁵*Bozina* (1880) 9a-9b; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 89.

¹¹⁶*Migdal David* (1872) 11a-11b; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 99.

himself a Zaddik capable of nullifying divine decrees.¹¹⁷ However, most importantly, Barukh asserts here, in a second independent source, that Zaddikim lead and manage the universe.

While these two texts do not describe the means of controlling the universe at the Zaddik's disposal, they nevertheless provide an image of the Zaddik in regal terms, as a man of power who rules over all space. Barukh's Zaddik is a ruler, who has the power to annul divine decree.

"Whatever the All-Merciful does is (done)¹¹⁸ for good." (Ber. 60b). That is, when the Holy One Blessed be He does [something] for good, "it is done," meaning, it is fulfilled because the Zaddikim also agree to it; but if, God forbid, the opposite is the case, then he does not fulfill it because the Zaddikim annul the Omnipresent's decree.¹¹⁹

The Zaddikim control all that happens in the world. They have the power of veto over any action which God chooses to perform, so that God must follow their will. This notion that the Zaddik controls divine activity is not Barukh's *hiddush*, or new idea--it is based

¹¹⁷This view is corroborated by the following teaching (*Bozina* [1880] 13b, [1889] 25, [1925] 16 [portion in brackets missing from the 1889 and 1925 editions]; *Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 93):

In Petach Eliyahu, "There is none who leads You." He said in regards to [the Sages'] words, whose memory is for a blessing, "Who rules Me? [It is the] Zaddik," as it says, "Zaddik rules with fear of God; [The Holy One, Blessed be He, decrees and the Zaddik annuls it. The Zaddik decrees and the Holy One, Blessed be He, fulfills. It seems, according to this, that the Zaddik controls it, as it were. With regard to this, Elijah, may his memory be for a blessing, cries out before the Holy One, Blessed be He, "And there is none who leads You," meaning, that there is no Zaddik to annul judgments].

Barukh appears to believe that there were no Zaddikim in his day.

¹¹⁸The parenthetical "done" does not occur in the Talmudic text, nor the Soncino translation.

¹¹⁹*Bozina HaShalem HeHadash* 123. See also p. 97.

upon the Talmud (M.K. 16b) and used throughout the Ḥasidic literature¹²⁰--but his contribution here is that he both states his deep conviction that the Zaddik is omnipotent and lived a life filled with royal imagery. Barukh believed that the Zaddik, through *avodah begashmiyut*, converting *midat hadin* (judgment) to *midat haraḥamim* (mercy), and channeling the divine influx, controlled the universe as its king. Believing himself to be a Zaddik, he lived in Medzibezh with the outer accoutrements of royalty, allegedly including a throne, chariot, and court jester. For Barukh, the Zaddik is *manhig ha'olam*, leader of the universe.

¹²⁰*Degel Mahaneh Efrayim* uses it roughly five times, Levi Yizhak of Berdichev twenty-seven times, Elimelekh of Lizensk seven times, Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl twenty-six times, according to the CD-ROM search. See *Torah CD-ROM LIBRARY* (Jerusalem: Disc Book Systems, Ltd., 1996).

Chapter 4: Conclusions

In Ada Rapoport-Albert's "God and the Zaddik as the Two Focal Points of Hasidic Worship," the author suggests that Hasidism made God less accessible to the average individual than did Lurianic Kabbalah:

Far from 'bringing God down to the people,' Hasidism, right from the start, did precisely the opposite. It blocked entirely and a priori the direct route of ordinary people to God by placing the righteous or perfect men, the men of form, spirit, knowledge, or understanding or eventually, the zaddikim, in the middle of that route. . . . Far from being the demotic figure he is so often said to have been, the Besht was an aspiring elitist and a religious social climber.¹

We have found that Barukh viewed Zaddik's function was to act as the sole leader of the universe, sweetening the *dinim* and performing *avodah begashmiyut*, or worship through corporeality, in order to provide for the physical abundance of the community. It was the responsibility of the Zaddik alone to sustain his community, and with Barukh's reciprocal relationship to his adherents, we have seen that they certainly elevated his material being. Barukh appears to have fully embraced and encouraged the stratification of society through his belief that as a Zaddik, he fulfilled a role which his followers could never do. If the stories about him are true, then clearly Rapoport-Albert's assertion that Hasidism only distanced the ordinary Jew from communion with God is aggravated by the earthly conduct of Barukh.

The differences in philosophy between the two primary sources of *Bozina DiNehora* and "Likutei Imrot Tehorot" from the 1850 *Degel Mahaneh Efrayim*, especially

¹"God and the Zaddik" 314.

surrounding Barukh's doctrine of the Zaddik, is emblematic of the difficulty of rediscovering the historical Barukh of Medzibezh. The teachings in *Bozina DiNehora* are short and simple. The texts originating in "*Likutei Imrot Tehorot*" in comparison contain the most elaborate and mystical teachings of the entire corpus of Barukh's thought. Whereas *Bozina DiNehora* portrays the Zaddik in entirely earthly terminology, without reference to the *sefirot* or doctrinal terminology of the Great Maggid of Mezhirech's school, "*Likutei Imrot Tehorot*" describes the Zaddikim as vessels of the *Shekhinah*, channelers of the divine influx from above, and functionaries in the ongoing metaphysical drama of the continuous renewal of the universe through the revelation of the *Shekhinah*.

The philosophical differences between the two texts are comparable to the differences between the Great Maggid's "contemplative mysticism" and Nahman of Bratslav's "faith," elegantly described by Joseph Weiss in *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*. The Barukh of *Bozina DiNehora* maintains a "piety of faith," in which belief in God is the central concern in the cosmic struggle against evil. Barukh's relationship with God is personal, while his attitude toward man is pessimistic (i.e. he claims superiority over all and attacks many). Zaddikism is central to the doctrine of *Bozina DiNehora*, with particular emphasis on the regal nature of the Zaddik.

On the other hand, the Barukh of "*Likutei Imrot Tehorot*" ignores the question of faith altogether. As Weiss notes, "the contemplative mystic experiences, not a personal God, but that 'dynamic essence,' that 'divine spark' which dwell in all worlds and in all beings, in a real ontological sense."² "*Likutei Imrot Tehorot*" portrays a God Who fills

²"Contemplative Mysticism and 'Faith' in Hasidic Piety," *Studies* 46.

the mystic/Zaddik with *sefirotic* abundance, Who is completely unified with the mystic. Evil is virtually unknown in "*Likutei Imrot Tehorot*," and like the Great Maggid, "There is no gulf between God and man. On the contrary: a direct bridge unites them."³ Zaddikism is minimized, and in many texts, the term "mystic" replaces "Zaddik."⁴

The fundamental philosophical differences between the two texts suggest that one of the two sources is inauthentic. Which one, if any, should we dismiss? The vengeful memoir of A.B. Gottlober presents legends about Barukh which holds an affinity to the negative characterization of his personality in *Bozina DiNehora*, suggesting that this work is the more authentic source. However, the publication of the memoirs in the same year as *Bozina DiNehora* (1880) means that Gottlober could have conceivably read about Barukh's profile prior to finishing his memoir, so that a literary dependence exists. Barukh has been forever characterized by the negative portrayals found within this work. We should not dismiss "*Likutei Imrot Tehorot*" as inauthentic; in fact, based upon its earlier appearance than *Bozina DiNehora* and its unedited homiletic materials, I believe in its authenticity over the more popular collection of Barukh teachings.

Barukh was a major figure in Podolian Hasidism, yet very little serious evaluation of his ideas and life exists in the scholarly literature. It is my hope that this study serves a "*Bozina DiNehora*," a torch which sheds light upon this legendary, self-proclaimed "master of the cosmos."

³*Studies* 48.

⁴See, however, *Degel* (1850) 193: "The Holy One, Blessed be He and Torah and Zaddikim are one."

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