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first published in:

Gershom Scholem's „Major trends in Jewish mysticism“ 50 years
after : proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on the
History of Jewish Mysticism / ed. by Peter Schäfer and Joseph Dan.
- Tübingen : Mohr, 1993, S. 327 - 336
ISBN: 3-16-146143-6

Postprint published at the Institutional Repository of the
Potsdam University:

In: Postprints der Universität Potsdam : Philosophische Reihe ; 15
<http://opus.kobv.de/ubp/volltexte/2008/1867/>
<http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:kobv:517-opus-18673>

Postprints der Universität Potsdam
Philosophische Reihe ; 15

Response

The Buber–Scholem Controversy about Hasidic Tale and Hasidism – is there a solution?

by

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The shrill sounds of the now seemingly outdated controversy between Gershom Scholem and Martin Buber at the beginning of the sixties are still in the minds of every student of Hasidic literature and thought. – The “Scholem-community” feels content and the “Buber-community” upset.

We can summarize the case in a few words. Martin Buber, the pioneer of Hasidism in the Western World, held the position that whoever would want to understand Hasidism had to turn to Hasidic tale as here, in the tales of the Hasidim, real Hasidic life was to be found. Whereas in the Hasidic homilies we meet mere non-creative tradition especially in the form of Kabbalah. Buber did not totally deny the importance of the Hasidic Midrash but he regarded it just as a commentary, i.e. as second-hand material, whereas, in his view, the tale was a true mirror of real Hasidic life:

“Because Hasidism in the first instance is not a category of teaching but one of life, our chief source of knowledge of Hasidism is its legends, and only after them comes its theoretical literature. The latter is the commentary, the former the text. ... It is foolish to protest that the legend does not convey to us the reality of Hasidic life.”¹

According to Buber, it is less important in Hasidic thought what man does than how he performs whatever he does. And exactly this non – or even anti-legalistic position is, in Buber’s view, represented in the tales of the Hasidim. In Buber’s eyes, Hasidism was a non-gnostic religious outlook in which the “separation between ‘life in God’ and ‘life in the world’”, the primal evil of all ‘religion’, is overcome in genuine, concrete unity”.²

Scholem, conversely, stressed the basically platonic outlook of Hasidism in its view of reality:

“They do not teach us to enjoy life as it is; rather do they advise – nay enjoin – man to extract, I may even say distil, the perpetual life of God out of life as it

¹ M. Buber, *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*, p.253; *Werke*, München/Heidelberg 1963, III, p.760; G. Scholem, *Martin Buber’s Hasidism*, in: *Commentary*, 32,4 (1961), p.305–316, here p.308; retranslated version in: G. Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, London 1971, pp.228–250, p.234.

² *Werke, Die Chassidische Botschaft. Spinoza ...* ch.1, III, S.748; *Commentary*, p.315; *Idea*, p.245.

is. This extracting must be an act of abstraction. It is not the fleeting Here and Now that is to be enjoyed but the everlasting unity and presence of transcendence." ... "The Here and Now is transcended and vanishes when the divine element makes its appearance in contemplation."³

Scholem, while stressing the continuity between Hasidism and Kabbalah regards the Hasidic homilies as the only valid source for Hasidic thought and he denies any primary source value of the Hasidic tale for the specific Hasidic thought.⁴ On the contrary, in order to understand the Hasidic tale one is bound to take recourse to the Hasidic homily.⁵ Thus Scholem reproaches Buber for increasingly neglecting the theoretical literature of Hasidism and concludes: "I dare say that many readers of Buber would never so much as suspect that such a literature even exists."⁶

This clear difference between Scholem and Buber did, however, not even exist when Scholem published his *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* twenty years earlier.⁷ In this first summary of Scholem's view of Jewish mysticism he was still under the strong influence of Buber's view of Hasidism. When writing this book, Scholem did not hesitate to say that Hasidism, in regard to the doctrine, had not created anything new:

"If you were to ask me: what is the new doctrine of these mystics, whose experience was obviously first hand ... I should hardly know what to answer."⁸

Instead, as with Buber, Scholem's view was that the major achievement of the Hasidic movement was the large number of charismatic personalities whose acts have replaced the doctrinal teaching of the Torah:

"The whole development centers round the personality of the Hasidic saint; – *Personality* takes the place of *doctrine*, ... The opinions particular to the exalted individual are less important than his character, and mere learning, knowledge of the Torah, no longer occupies the most important place in the scale of religious values. A tale is told of a famous saint who said: "I did not go to the 'Maggid' of Meseritz to learn Torah from him, but to watch him tie his boot-laces."⁹

Here, Scholem is still clearly heavily influenced by Buber. It is exactly this personalistic-charismatic view which caused Buber to prefer the legend to the more theoretical homily. For Buber believed the legend to be the

³ *Commentary*, pp. 312, 313, *Idea*, pp. 240, 241.

⁴ Cf. e.g. *Commentary*, p. 309, *Idea*, p. 235.

⁵ *Commentary*, p. 310, *Idea*, p. 236.

⁶ *Commentary*, p. 309, *Idea*, p. 235.

⁷ Jerusalem 1941. Cf. my paper *Gershom Scholems Darstellung des Hasidismus und seine Auseinandersetzung mit Martin Buber*, FJB 12 (1984), S. 105–127.

⁸ *Major Trends*, p. 338.

⁹ *Major Trends*, p. 344. For the real meaning of this dictum in Hasidic context on the basis of the original source see my *Philosophie und Hasidismus – ihre Wechselwirkung im Denken Martin Bubers*; in: *Martin Buber (1878–1965)*, Arnoldshainer Texte Band 57, edd. W. Licharz, H. Schmidt, Frankfurt a. M. 1989, Vol. I, S. 281–294.

most adequate literary means of expressing the innermost essence of personal human life.¹⁰

Only some years later did Scholem find his own position, (now in a total opposition to Buber), when he published several studies on Kabbalistic "Begriffs-Geschichte". In these articles Scholem depicts the historical development of central Kabbalistic terms ending with their final Hasidic meaning.¹¹

Scholem's studies in the history of Kabbalistic terms demonstrate that all the Kabbalistic terms he has scrutinized so far have gained a new layer of meaning within Hasidic thought. Thus Scholem arrived at a conclusion in opposition to that in his *Major Trends*. He now stated very decidedly that Hasidism had indeed developed new mystical doctrines, in spite of its continuous use of Kabbalistic terminology. In Scholem's modified view Hasidism had achieved its own doctrinal standing. He even dropped his somewhat compromising opinion of Hasidism as a form of popularized Kabbalah which he still held when he published *Major Trends*.¹²

The turning point for the latter notion can be traced to the doctoral thesis of R. Schatz-Uffenheimer, written under the supervision of Professor Scholem. In this book, R. Schatz vehemently rejects the definition of Hasidism as being a popularization of Kabbalah. She stresses that, on the contrary, the Hasidic demand for continuous divine service even in every day life (*avoda ba-gashmiyut*) is a most elitist demand for spiritual virtuosi and not at all for popular use.¹³

The comparison of Hasidic homilies with anterior Kabbalistic texts demonstrated to Scholem that Hasidism is, however, a late but an innovative and creative branch of Kabbalah, and that the sole source for the historian interested in the doctrines of Hasidism are its homilies and not the Hasidic tale or the charismatic personality as Scholem himself seemed originally to believe whilst being still under Buber's influence. Consequently, from then on Scholem concentrated on Hasidic homily and totally

¹⁰ Cf. the above-mentioned paper on Buber's Philosophy and my *Martin Bubers Chasidismusdeutung*, in: *Dialog mit Martin Buber*, Arnoldshainer Texte Bd. 7, ed. W. Licharz, Frankfurt 1982, S. 231–256; *Martin Buber und die jüdische Tradition*, in: *Das Freie Jüdische Lehrhaus – eine andere Frankfurter Schule*, Publikationen der kath. Akademie in Freiburg i. Br., ed. R. Sesterhenn, S. 38–49.

¹¹ *Devekuth, or Communion with God*, in: *Review of Religion*, NY 14 (1949/50), p. 115–139; reprint in *Idea*, p. 203–227; *Die Lehre vom "Gerechten" in der jüdischen Mystik*, *Eranos Jahrbuch*, 27 (1958), p. 237; repr. in: *Von der mystischen Gestalt der Gottheit, Studien zu Grundbegriffen der Kabbala*, Zürich 1962 (Frankfurt a. M. 1973); engl. partly. *The Doctrine of the Righteous in Jewish Mysticism*, in: *The Synagogue Review* 34 (1960), pp. 189–95; *Gilgul, Seelenwanderung und Sympathie der Seelen*, in: *Von der mystischen Gestalt*.

¹² Pp. 329, 344.

¹³ *Quietistic Elements in Eighteenth Century Hasidic Thought* (Hebr. *Ha-Hasidut kemistika*), Jerusalem 1968, pp. 15–16.

neglected Hasidic tale. And this inspite of the undeniable fact that Judaism never before had produced such a vast quantity of popular tales written within a relatively short period of time. This fact at least, even if it may be a fact of mere quantity, demands some explanation as it seems to be – to a certain degree – a justification for Buber's choice. Scholem, however, left this question open!

Nevertheless there was still the need to answer this question and it was Joseph Dan who made a first response to the problem in his book *Ha-Sippur ha-Hasidi*.¹⁴ Dan, too, being faithful to Scholem's results, emphasizes strongly the fact that there is no trace of Hasidic doctrine in these tales. But, according to Dan, this freedom from doctrine provided a basis for a total narrative freedom never before known in Judaism because since then every tale received its justification by its doctrinal value only. A tale without ethical or theological message had been previously intolerable in Jewish literature. In Dan's view this condition has been dropped in Hasidism, as now the tale as a tale was endowed with its own true value.

Dan adduces testimony from the close surroundings of the Ba'al Shem Tov demonstrating that the Besht saw in the telling of tales a religious value independent of whether they contained any specific religious doctrine or not. Thus, telling tales became for the Ba'al Shem Tov a means of divine service. In telling tales, the Zaddik may extract and elevate the holy sparks embedded in the tales which are to be found in all creation, according to Lurianic doctrine. This testimony about the Besht would then be a historical one and could give a biographical clue originating from the beginning of the Hasidic movement for the high evaluation of tales in Hasidism and its tremendous literary production by his followers.¹⁵

This predilection for telling tales as a form of divine service by the Besht, should, however, as Dan says, be distinguished from another reason which Dan regards to be decisive for the Hasidic literary output. This second factor for the rich tale production by the Hasidic movement is the possibility of a mythological plot and the existence of a mythological hero, both having been prepared by Lurianic Kabbalah and Sabbateanism only. These movements preconceived, as Dan maintains, the idea of a human individual hero who is able to combine the human with the Divine world by his deeds and who can act as a mediator between God and man.

This kind of mythological figure was, however, first realized in Hasidism in the third generation, particularly in Elimelekh of Lisensk's doctrine of the Zaddik. And Dan sees it as the reason why Hasidic tale began to flourish only in this particular time and not right from the beginning of the movement. And that is why the basic collection of Hasidic

¹⁴ Jerusalem 1975.

¹⁵ Op. cit. pp. 46–52.

tales, the *Shivhe ha-Besht*, was not printed until 1815, whereas the doctrinal literature appeared in print as early as 1780.

This line of argumentation is an early serious and requisit answer to the enigma why Hasidism produced in a rather explosive manner such an impressive amount of tales, and this despite the fact that the majority of "Hasidic" tales are lacking in even the most central Hasidic doctrines. It is in addition the first attempt at explanation of the importance the tales had for the Hasidic movement – an importance which had been overestimated by Buber and finally neglected by Scholem.

In a recent article, however, G. Nigal argues – against the central historical timing of Dan, as held by Scholem, that traces of tales about the Besht were to be found in the earliest printed Hasidic writings of Ya'akov Yosef of Polonoye, the most faithful disciple of the Ba'al Shem Tov.¹⁶ On the other hand, a survey of a great number of Hasidic tales, including the *Shivhe ha-Besht*, demonstrates that the purported freedom from doctrine does not mean a total disregard of topics and themes in Hasidic tales. This is only true insofar as that they in most cases do not convey specific "Hasidic" theology but that they do to a large extent continue the pattern of Jewish folk tale and its themes.

From this, one may conclude that the stimuli for these tales are not new developments in Hasidic theology, but the result of the same reasons which had led to the rise of similar tales before. That is, Hasidic tale production is seemingly not dependant on the creation of a new type of hero which first developed in the third generation of Hasidut. This, for example, is evident in the tales of the "Ba'al Shem"-type¹⁷ which are obviously the heritage of developments following Hasidut Ashkenaz, or the tales of a "Sündenprophet"-type (prophet of sin-type¹⁸). In the latter, a man discovers ethical and ritual sin and uncleanness by charismatic insight. These are already present in the tales about ha-Ari and in Sabatean tales¹⁹ and it is all the more evident in the case of tale-types of the form *Ma'ase be-Hasid* and others which are abundant in Hasidic lore.

Hasidism did not have to create a new tale-type or hero but could simply continue previous developments. G. Nigal is not wrong when asserting, "Obviously one might say there is nothing in Hasidic tale that is

¹⁶ G. Nigal, *Or hadash al ha-sippur ha-hasidi*, *Sinai* 104 (1989), pp. 154–162.

¹⁷ Cf. my *Jüdische Wundermänner in Deutschland*, in: K. E. Grözinger, ed., *Judentum im deutschen Sprachraum*, S. 190–221, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt 1991.

¹⁸ Cf. my *Sündenpropheten. Halachaprophete im Judentum Osteuropas*, *FJB* 15 (1987), S. 17–46.

¹⁹ For the latter cf. for example, M. Benayahu, *Shemu'ot shabta'iyot. Pinqasehem shel Rabbi Binyamin ha-Kohen we-Rabbi Avraham Rowigo*, in: *Michael* 1 (1972), p. 50, no. 9; J. Weiss, *A Circle of Pneumatics in Pre-Hasidism*, in: *Studies in Eastern European Jewish Mysticism*, Oxford 1985, pp. 27–42.

not to be found in its predecessors either in regard to content nor in literary form.”²⁰ But I think that in recognizing this insight one should, however, apply the reasoning of J. Dan that Hasidism hallowed the tales as a legitimate religious form of expression in a hitherto unknown way. The conclusion to be drawn from this then should be: Hasidism accepted previous and contemporary popular Jewish folk tale as a legitimate means of religious expression and by this, Hasidism sanctified popular Jewish folk-religion as a legitimate form of Jewish piety, opposing the view that only Rabbinic culture represents true Judaism.

This process of assimilation of the earlier folk tale into Hasidism is clearly seen when examining the narrative structures of the so called Hasidic tales. Whenever a Jewish theological or philosophical system created a new topic for popular piety it created a new type of tale. This is particularly evident in the legend of Yizhaq Luria, the Ari. When Lurianic Kabbalah introduced a new psychology into Jewish thought, explaining human destinies as being part of a history of souls extending from Adam to the present day, the popular folk tale brought forth a new type of tale, the *Gilgul*-tale, in order to formulate this idea in tale form. In these new tales, human destinies or confrontations with animals are explained as stages of a process of punishment and cleansing, that is a process of *Tikkun*, thus helping man to face his destiny in this world.²¹ This is also the case of the tales of *Teshuva*, going back to the new penitential practices introduced by Hasidut Ashkenaz and reinterpreted by Lurianic Kabbalah. Another new tale-type introduced in the wake of Lurianic Kabbalah and Sabateanism is the above mentioned “Sündenprophet”-tale type. All these new types of tale created their own new narrative structure, consisting of a new pattern of so called *Motifems*²² or *Morphems*. As far as I can currently judge, Hasidism did not create any new tale-type (except perhaps of

²⁰ *Ha-sipporet ha-hasidit*, Jerusalem 1981, p. 15. And cf. my *Ba'al Shem oder Ba'al Hazon, Wunderdoktor oder Charismatiker, Zur frühen Legendenbildung um den Stifter des Hasidismus*, *FJB* 6 (1978), S. 71–90. *Die hasidischen Erzählungen, Ihre Formen und Traditionen*, *FJB* 9 (1981), S. 91–114. *Die Gegenwart des Sinai, Erzählungen und kabbalistische Traktate zur Vergegenwärtigung des Sinai*, *FJB* 16 (1988), S. 143–183.

²¹ Cf. my *Kafka und die Kabbala. Das Jüdische in Denken und Werk von Franz Kafka*, Frankfurt a. M. 1992, pp. 114–144, 237–241.

²² The term introduced by Alan Dundes (*From Etic to Emic Units in the Structural Study of Folk Tales*, in: *Journal of American Folklore* 75 (1962, p. 95–105) denotes those motifs which make up the indispensable elements of a tale in opposition to motives which may be introduced into a tale without basically changing the narrative structure and which might be taken away without destroying the typical form of the tale. The *motifems*, forming the basic narrative structure of a tale might be realized by a number of interchanging motifs then called *allomotives*. The Ba'al Shem might for example help a petitioner without using a *Shem*, that is a Divine name. This way of helping by a miraculous deed would be the *motifem* of the tale. The *allomotif* would then be that in a second tale of this type the Ba'al Shem would use instead prayer, or reading the Zohar etc.

one, vide infra), characterized by its own new sequence of Morphems or Motifems. Hasidic notions only appear, as far as I am aware, within "Hasidic tales" on the level of motifs, that is as simply appended motifs or in the form of a so called *Allomotif*, as in the following case: The miraculous cure performed by the Ba'al Shem and effected by the pronounciation of a Divine name is replaced by the Hasidic notion of an alphabet-prayer or by drinking *le-hayyim* by a community of Hasidim²³. While the structure and the topic of the tale remains traditional, the switch takes place only in the motifs. From this, one may clearly see that Hasidism simply took possession of the traditional lore and introduced some specific Hasidic notions into it. It did not create a really new Hasidic tale specific to Hasidic theology.

Hasidic tales of this kind are not bound to the creation of a new religious type and are therefore not dependant on the accomplished doctrine of the Hasidic Zaddik. They might, therefore, belong to the very beginning of the movement or to the time when Hasidism transcended the elitist group of mystics and entered broad popular circles.

The topics dealt with by Hasidic tale cover all spheres of Jewish life and it is not only the Hasidic Rebbe who functions as their hero. But in cases where the Rebbe really is the hero of the tale his role differs considerably from tale to tale. That is, in the various tales he is depicted as an amalgam of different religious types. Sometimes he is a hero of the Ba'al Shem type, helping in very down-to-earth matters of every day life. Sometimes he is depicted as an individual mystic and sometimes as a messianic-spiritual helper of the Lurianic "Psychagogue"-type, having an insight into the history and stage of *Tikkun* of every individual soul incarnated in men and animals and endowed with the knowledge to propose the desired penitential *Tikkun*. At times this hero is depicted as a charismatic prophet and sometimes as the leader of a community, etc.

We may therefore conclude that, these Hasidic heroes are responding to different human needs – and very often even to contradictory ones. And I believe that the task of research of Hasidic tales lies in this very point. Hasidic tale is a branch of folk-literature responding to all kinds of different needs of Eastern European Jewish society. To uncover these needs and spheres of daily life would not only give a picture of Jewish life in these regions, but would indicate to what degree real Hasidic conceptions had succeeded in penetrating the every day life and thought of the Jew in Eastern Europe. And this explains the astonishing success of the movement within the broad Jewish masses in Eastern Europe.

²³ A similar conclusion is to be drawn from Yoav Elshatayn, *Morfologiya ve-simliyut shel gevuzat sippure "yesh gone 'olamo be sha'ah ahat" ba-sipporet ha-hasidit*, in: *Mehqare Yerushalayim be folqlor Yehudi*, 11–12 (1990), pp. 18–45.

My own research in this field²⁴ has so far produced seven basic groups of tales each dealing with different human needs. These can be outlined as follows:

1. Tales whose subject deals with the safeguarding of material life in this world. The hero of these tales is a Ba'al Shem who by means of magical power is able to help against any misfortune such as illness, barrenness, material need, loss of goods, and the like. He is the helper of both the individual and of groups of Jews. But he is not the type who gathers a steady community around himself. People visit him as they would a doctor or a lawyer. He helps and is usually paid for it. Then the contact is often broken for a while until a new problem arises.

2. The tales, which in a way contradict the concentration on the problems of every day life as mentioned in the above tales, are the ones which deal with the aim of attaining redemption and personal eternal bliss in the world to come. The hero of these tales is a spiritualistic charismatic one, of the "Sündenprophet"-type, uncovering sin and ordering respective penances. Or he is the type of a "Psychagogue" helping the souls to escape the state of transmigration. He might be in addition a type of celestial advocate, mounting up to the celestial courts in order to argue on behalf of his followers or supporting their prayer so that they may succeed in entering the celestial gates of supplication. A charismatic person like this is a real mediator between man and God and fulfills a mythological mission as J. Dan has described him. A man of this kind might gather a community, and disciples who succeed him.

3. Tales about the preservation and stability of human virtues. The hero of these tales is usually the Hasid who resists temptation persisting in his virtue like *Bittahon*, keeping the Shabbat, giving alms and keeping the *Mitzwot*, receiving his due reward from heaven.

4. Tales whose subject is the presence of the sacred in this world, such as sacred customs, places and times. These are aitiological tales for holy places like synagogues, houses of study, cemeteries and tombs, where man might contact the sacred transcendence while still living in this secular world.

5. Tales prescribing reliability and stability of relations within human society, for instance the relation and subordination between disciple and master, father and son, the Jewish community and the gentiles.

6. Biographical-historical tales.

7. In addition to the above mentioned, there are the tales by Nahman Bratzlauer.

²⁴ Sponsored by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung. Cf. my records *Chasidische Erzählungen. Ursachen und Motive von Religion gemäß der Funktion und Aufgabe religiöser Volksliteratur am Beispiel der Chasidischen Erzählungen*, in: Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, *Jahresbericht 1988/89*, S. 21–25. *Der Hasidismus in Osteuropa, Theol. Realenzyklopädie (sub voce "Judentum")*, Vol. XVII, S. 377–386.

In all these tales the typical Hasidic topics are, if at all, usually only to be found on the level of motifs or allomotifs, never on the motifemic level. That means that all these tales and subjects are to be regarded as pre-Hasidic or non-Hasidic subjects and types of tale. The Hasidic element was merely introduced into them as a kind of secondary flavour, giving these tales and the society represented by them some Hasidic complexion or local colour, but not a totally new structure. Even in cases where, e. g., the Hasidic Rebbe replaces the traditional Rabbi in judging *Dine Tora* and deciding on ritual and social questions by means of his charismatic insight rather than by the accepted legal means, the Hasidic tale shows a slight modification in motifs only. Similarly, the Hasidic Ba'al Shem is not different from the non-Hasidic one, etc. In these cases the Hasidic element, as has already been stated, is introduced only as an allomotif and not on the morphemic level which would bring forth new types of tale.

Judging from the "Hasidic" tale material, we may conclude that Hasidism did not create a totally new type of Jewish folk religion. But it introduced some Hasidic motifs and notions into a broad strand of popular Jewish beliefs, thus adding a new Hasidic flavour to Eastern European Jewish folk-religion and society. Or, one could also argue: Since Hasidism did not venture to change this popular society totally but accepted its existing popular structures even giving them their sanctification, it was able to conquer the Jewish masses in Eastern Europe in such an amazingly short time.

The question of which topics within the Hasidic tales are essentially Hasidic ones can only be decided on the basis of a thoroughgoing comparison of all related tale material on the one hand and on the other, to be even more certain, on the basis of the theoretical and homiletical Hasidic literature, as Scholem had already stated.

There seems to be, however, one tale-type which was indeed a new creation of Hasidism and which also brought forth a new development on the motifemic level. It is the type of tale I would like to call the "celestial-trial"-tale type. In this category are those tales in which the Hasidic Rebbe by means of an *Aliyat-Neshama* ascends into the heavenly courts in order to act as an advocate in favour of individuals and of all Israel. It is this type of tale which could be most aptly called a "mythological" tale and which seems closely bound to the doctrine of the Zaddik. Yet the Besht himself had already prefigured this in his famous letter to his brother-in-law, R. Gershon Kutover²⁵. There, the Besht tells of his two *Aliyot* to heaven on Rosh ha-Shana pleading in favour of Israel. This type of advocate is a real mediator between heaven and earth, especially in the use of his personal

²⁵ Appended to Ya'akov Yosef of Polonoye, *Ben Porat Yosef*, Pietrkov 1884, pp. 254–56.

influence and power in the celestial courts rather than legal argumentation²⁶ in order to amend the divine decrees in favour of his adherents.

Regarding the above-mentioned controversy between Buber and Scholem, our question should not be whether or not the tales of the Hasidim are a source for Hasidic thought and theology, but rather ask to what degree did Hasidic theology succeed in introducing its specific notions into the popular Jewish tale known as the Hasidic tale. The answer to this question would enable us to recognize how deeply the Hasidic thought, being as we have seen quite elitist, succeeded in influencing the minds of the broad Jewish masses. The flavouring of popular tales with Hasidic notions could, therefore, be a criterion for this process. It could also be a criterion for the degree of real spiritual interaction within Hasidic society which de facto was split into two social layers, the elitist intellectual mystic on the one side and the broad masses on the other.

This approach to Hasidic tale takes heed of the undeniable fact of the important part these tales have played within the Hasidic society and gives them, simultaneously, new significance as a historical source for research on Hasidism.

²⁶ Cf. my *Himmlische Gerichte, Wiedergänger und Zwischenweltliche in der ostjüdischen Erzählung*, in: K. E. Grözinger et al., (eds.), *Kafka und das Judentum*, Frankfurt a. M. 1987, S. 93–112; and *Kafka und die Kabbala*, pp. 100–113.