

## R. Nathan Sternhartz's *Liqqutei tefilot* and the Formation of Bratslav Hasidism

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### Abstract

One of the more astounding books produced by Bratslav Hasidism is *Liqqutei tefilot* (1822–1827), composed by R. Nathan Sternhartz of Nemirov, which established a whole new genre in Bratslav literature. This article discusses the book's genesis, publication, and primary goals, as well as the controversy it generated. The new Bratslav theology that emerged after the death of Rabbi Naḥman led to disputes, both internal and external, over the role and character of R. Nathan. Examining this particularly obscure chapter in the early history of Bratslav Hasidism sheds light on the movement as it exists today in all its diversity, both ideological and social.

### Keywords

Bratslav Hasidism – Hasidism – Jewish mysticism – Kabbalah

One of the more remarkable texts produced by the Bratslav Hasidic movement is *Liqqutei tefilot* (Collected Prayers) by R. Nathan Sternhartz of Nemirov (1780–1845). It contains, according to the work's own title page, “Everything good for the Jewish people” and “Prayers, supplications and entreaties, appeasements, placations and confessions, and great inspiration for the soul,” as well as “tremendous and powerful yearning for God, and intense longing for his service and his Torah.”<sup>1</sup> It is a work significant not only in its own right, but because it

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1 Nathan Sternhartz of Nemirov, *Liqqutei tefilot* (Bratslav: Sternhartz, 1822–1827), title page. All references below are to this edition. Later citations (part 1, prayers 108–155; part 2, prayers 50–58) are from the 'Even shetiyah edition (Beitar Ilit: 'Even shetiyah, 2009). On the order of

established an entire genre used by almost two centuries of Bratslav Hasidim.<sup>2</sup> There is much, therefore, to be gained from an understanding of the work's history: its formation, the circumstances of its publication, its initial goals, and the controversy that accompanied its appearance—in a word, the politics of its publication. This has been a largely obscure topic in the history of the Bratslav Hasidim—a group whose later iterations and ideological developments have not received sufficient attention. Indeed, the apparent lack of research into the relationship between Bratslav theology and the historical circumstances in which that theology arose can lead, at times, to a misunderstanding of the movement's essence and contribution to Hasidic thought, and even to ignorance of its central components. Recently published manuscripts of Bratslav Hasidism containing traditions from this period have greatly enriched our understanding of the movement. Nevertheless, it seems to me that a new and deeper reading of the movement's classic texts is also needed. In this context, the events surrounding the publication of *Liqquṭei tefilot* serve as a fascinating test case for understanding processes that shaped and molded Bratslav Hasidism after the death of R. Naḥman toward the end of 1810—a period that greatly influenced the movement's development over the nineteenth century. It would seem that the formulation of a new theology, following the death of the tzaddik, greatly influenced the small group of Hasidim that began to reorganize itself amid the thicket of Hasidic groups and local tzaddikim that surrounded them. There is no question that Bratslaver Hasidim were a minority when compared to the large and central Hasidic courts of nineteenth-century Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, a careful examination of the early stages of the movement's development, and the processes that led to its formation and solidification as a self-defined unit after the passing of R. Naḥman, can also shed light on the multifaceted and variegated historical and theological manifestations of Bratslav Hasidism today.

### Origin of the Work

R. Naḥman told his disciple and scribe, R. Nathan Sternhartz, “to create prayers out of the teachings”—that is, to compose personal prayers based upon the lessons that were collected in R. Naḥman's magnum opus, *Liqquṭei Moharan*

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its publication, initially in booklet form over a period of years, and on the various editions, see below, nn. 16, 17, and 67.

2 For more on this, see below, n. 112.

(published in 1808 and 1811), for “this creates great delight Above.”<sup>3</sup> The idea was based on a teaching that R. Naḥman delivered in praise of *hitbodedut*—secluded, personal prayers to God:

It is also good to turn the teaching into prayer. That is, when one studies or hears some Torah discourse from the true tzaddik, he should make a prayer out of it. He should beg and plead with God over everything mentioned in that discourse: When will he, too, be worthy of attaining it all? How far he is from it! He should beseech God to make him worthy to attain everything mentioned in the discourse. God will lead the wise person and the one who desires truth on the path of truth. The person will figure out by himself how to do this, so that his words are charming and are properly argued, so that it may please God to draw him closer to true worship. This type of speech ascends to great heights, especially when one turns Torah into prayer. This creates very great delight above.<sup>4</sup>

The value of spontaneous prayer, solitude, and personal supplication is a central theme in Bratslav Hasidism and in depictions of the life of its founder. Here, however, R. Naḥman expressed a longing for someone to transform his teachings into *their* personal prayers: “I greatly desire that my teachings be made into prayers. However, I do not know to whom to entrust this work.” R. Nathan, who was present at the time, understood from “his holy gestures that this was a wondrous and awesome thing.”<sup>5</sup> However, R. Naḥman was not speaking in the abstract; for he had a specific model in mind: *Yad ha-qaṭanah*, a commonly found book published about a decade earlier. He even showed the work to R. Nathan, who later recounted the incident:

3 Nathan Sternhartz of Nemirov, *Śiḥot ha-Ran* (Jerusalem: 'Agudat meshekh ha-naḥal, 1985), 102, §145; idem, *Liqqutei tefilot*, part 1, introduction; part 2, prayer 22; idem, *Liqqutei halakhot*, 8 vols. (Jerusalem: Qeren 'Odesser, 2008), 3:105b–106a, 'Orah ḥayyim, Hilkhot rosh ḥodesh, 5, §36. Elsewhere he goes so far as to say, “The delight that rises up from them to God has never before existed.” Idem, *Alim li-terufah* (Warsaw: A. L. Cigelman, 1930), 49b, letter 117. See also *Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom*, ed. Aryeh Kaplan and Zvi Aryeh Rosenfeld (New York: Sepher, 1973), 281–283. On the unification of prayer and Torah study, see Alon Goshen-Gottstein, “Between Mysticism and Mystic Theology: Torah and Prayer in the Thought of Rabbi Naḥman of Bratslav and R. Nathan of Nemirov” [Hebrew], *Renewing Jewish Commitment*, ed. Avi Sagi and Zvi Zohar, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv: Hartman Institute, 2001), 2:801–849.

4 Naḥman of Bratslav, *Liqqutei Moharan* (Bratslav: Sternhartz, 1821), 2:25.

5 Sternhartz, *Śiḥot ha-Ran*, 102, §45.

At the end [of the book *Yad ha-qaṭanah*], several concepts are explained in the form of prayers. Each one begins with the words, “O, my God . . .” He showed it to me and told me to read it. He then said: “See how this author presents many of his concepts as prayers to God.” And he hinted at his longing that the same be done with his teachings. For his way was to allude to lofty matters in an offhanded way, as he found it difficult to fully explain himself, due to the great accusing forces, obstacles, and other reasons. He would thus only hint at wondrous things, leaving the person to understand it on his own—if he so desired. This explains many of the Rebbe’s wondrous dealings with me, which are impossible to explain.<sup>6</sup>

R. Naḥman’s curious allusions and behavior (“he hinted at his longing”) nevertheless made their mark on R. Nathan, who found an answer to R. Naḥman’s desire in the volume lying before him. *Yad ha-qaṭanah* (1800), by R. Dov Berish Gottlieb, was originally published anonymously, in booklet form, in Lemberg.<sup>7</sup> It seems that this work, whose author was not a Hasid (despite some apparent affinities to Hasidic thought), had a marked effect on R. Naḥman, particularly Gottlieb’s critique of science, philosophy, medicine (including his comments about doctors), the vanities of this world, and the foolishness of those who pursue material desires, idle pursuits, honor, and riches—attitudes that appear throughout R. Naḥman’s works, with minor variations.<sup>8</sup> The book contains lengthy discussions, written in flowing and original verse, whose purpose is to dispel “great and prodigious doubts” in matters pertaining to “the foundations of religion, faith, and worship,” in the style of ethical works and Maimonides’

6 Ibid.

7 [Dov Berish Gottlieb], *Yad ha-qaṭanah* (Lemberg: Gottlieb, 1800). The book contains twelve sections, such as “The Gate of This World,” “The Gate of Israel,” and “The Gate of Body and Soul.” Parts of the work were published in booklet form throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century and were fairly popular. A new edition was published in 2009 in Jerusalem. Gottlieb died in 1896. For more on him, see Aharon Walden, *Shem ha-gedolim ha-ḥadash* (Warsaw: F. Baumrittera, 1864), *ma’arekhet sefarim*, 10, §7; Avraham Stern, *Melitzei ’esh: Al ḥodshei ’Av ve-’Elul* (Vranov: Shmuel Zinger, 1933), 44a.

8 For instance, *Yad ha-qaṭanah*, introduction, 1a (concerning the vanities of this world and false leaders who pursue the levels of tzaddikim, without ever attaining them); 17b, 20a (on the vanities of this world); 18b (on the misfortunes of life); 20b–21a (on the lunacy of people who waste their lives and are filled with worries); 59b–60b (on medicine, and tzaddikim who do not require it); 64b–65b (on the wisdom of philosophers, who make great claims and dare to assert that they have acquired true wisdom); 65b–68b (on the final redemption). The work contains interesting parables that would likely have attracted R. Naḥman’s interest (7b–9a, 9b, 88a–b, and more).

*Mishneh Torah*. At the end of the book is a special section in which the essential points of the work are restated in the form of prayers—the section to which R. Naḥman was alluding.<sup>9</sup> Chapter 12, entitled *Sha'ar ha-ʿemunah* (The Gate of Faith), is “a general overview of the faith and religion of Israel,” arranged “in the form of song and praise, in a clear and easy to follow language.” The author was inspired “to arrange the material for myself in the form of requests, expressing the depths of my pain and heartfelt sorrow, in order to pour out my heart over them every day,” and “to say them each morning, especially when I awake from my sleep—and my mind is free from the distractions of the world.”<sup>10</sup> The ten short prayers of this section are formulated like personal petitions to God and are written in a remarkably flowing language, as compared to contemporaneous rabbinic works. Each prayer begins with the words, “You, O God.” At the end of this section is a short prayer entitled “Tefilah le-ʿani” (Prayer of a Poor Man), and the text of the *vidui* (confessional prayer). The style and substance of these prayers must certainly have caught the attention of individuals attracted to prayer and supplication, such as R. Naḥman, who upon seeing this book requested that a similar one be written based upon his own teachings.

Even though R. Naḥman “did not clearly explain what he meant,” R. Nathan understood from his hints and the general thrust of his words exactly what needed to be done. For “his main intention was straightforward—that we should try to reflect upon his holy and awesome teachings, in order to understand the teachings’ practical applications.”<sup>11</sup> Apparently, R. Naḥman had other disciples who understood his words similarly, and who also began composing prayers based upon his teachings, such as R. Yizhak Segal, the son-in-law of R. Yekutiel, the preacher of Tirhavits, although none of these prayers have been preserved.<sup>12</sup> Nor was this the last time R. Naḥman alluded to this idea. In 1810, he again spoke of the moral exhortation derivable from his teachings, had they been presented differently:

The moral exhortation in my teachings is very wondrous and powerful. If people would deliver these teachings in a different format, such as a sermon, they would break a person’s heart. For they all contain powerful

9 *Yad ha-qaṭanah*, Gate 12, “Song of Faith,” 88a–130b.

10 *Ibid.*, 89b.

11 Sternhartz, *Liqqutei tefilot*, part 1, introduction.

12 Levi Yizhak Bender, *Śiaḥ śarfei qodesh*, 8 vols. (Jerusalem: ʿAgudat meshekh ha-naḥal, 1994–2009), 2:177; *idem*, *Dibburei ʿemunah*, 5 vols. (Jerusalem: ʿAgudat meshekh ha-naḥal, 2006–2008), 2:86. On Bender, see *Dibburei ʿemunah*, 5:184–185; Noah Ha-Levi Sternfeld, *Sefer gidulei ha-naḥal*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: ʿAgudat meshekh ha-naḥal, 1984), 47.

edifying and moral exhortation. Therefore, you should be careful to do as I told you, to make these teachings into prayers. For as soon as you make these words of Torah into words of inspiration and prayers, it will certainly inspire you and break your heart.<sup>13</sup>

There is no question that R. Nathan used *Yad ha-qaṭanah* as a model for his project, and that Gottlieb's "clear language" and "light and inclusive phrasing" had a strong influence on all of his subsequent writing. Nevertheless, he did not rush to compose the prayers, and it was not until 1815—five years after R. Naḥman's passing—that the work began to take form. At that point, he began composing the prayers in an orderly fashion, following the chapter order of *Liqquṭei Moharan* for the most part.<sup>14</sup> Manuscripts of these prayers circulated among Bratslav Hasidim from 1817 until 1822, when R. Nathan's son, Shachna, began to publish some of them on the underground press that his father had set up in his home. Twenty-two prayers were published at this point, without a title page or introduction.<sup>15</sup> In 1823, the printing was suspended for a year during R. Nathan's trip to the land of Israel. On his return to Nemirov in 1824, he reapplied himself "to complete the publication of the prayers," although the final volume did not appear until 1827, and then only in the face of great personal suffering, significant funding problems, denunciations from various "informants," and fear of the authorities, who had already closed down the press once before. The final volume contains 158 prayers, based on the two sections of *Liqquṭei Moharan*, and includes an opening apologetic.<sup>16</sup> Various fragments of the original manuscripts have been found, and in each of the nineteenth-century editions further prayers were added from manuscripts. As

13 Sternhartz, *Śiḥot ha-Ran*, 134, §196. See also Kaplan and Rosenfeld, *Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom*, 338–339.

14 Nathan Sternhartz of Nemirov, *Yemei Moharnat* (Jerusalem: 'Agudat meshekh ha-naḥal, 1982), part 1, 119, §96: "In 5575 (1815) the prayers began to be established."

15 *Ibid.*, part 1, 119, §98–99; part 2, 148, §19.

16 R. Nathan writes about the events surrounding its publication in several places: *ibid.*, part 1, 119–121, §96–99; 121–123, §101–104; Sternhartz, *Alim li-terufah*, 6b–7b, letters 7–8; 8a, letter 10; *idem*, *Ḥayyei Moharan/Yemei Moharnat/Yemei ha-tela'ot/Hashmaṭot* (complete version based on manuscripts) (Beit Shemesh: Nequdot ṭovot, 2005), 579, "Qunṭres ha-tosafot," §54. See also Nathan Zvi Koenig, *Neveh tzaddiqim* (Bnei Brak: Koenig, 1969), 116–131; Avraham Rubenstein, "Liqquṭei tefilot: The Tale of its Composition and Printing" [Hebrew], *Alei Sefer* 1 (1968): 139–156; Chaim Menachem Kramer, *Through Fire and Water: The Life of R. Nathan* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Makhon naḥalat tzvi, 1996), 255–259, 335–336; Eliezer Heshin, *Maṭmonim: Mi-kivshonah shel ḥasidut Bratslav* (Jerusalem: 'Otzarot Bratslav, 2008), 31–38; Shlomo Zalman Weitzhandler, "Genuzot," *Otzarot* 165 (2013): 3.

is true of other Bratslav works, the most recent printings tend to be the most complete (*kolel hashmatot*, “including deletions,” as the Bratslavers put it), and include prayers that were missing in earlier editions.<sup>17</sup> It seems that a small number of prayers remain unpublished, while others have undergone internal censorship for various reasons. R. Nathan himself writes that he continued to compose his prayers even after *Liqqutei tefilot* was published.<sup>18</sup> Bratslaver Hasidim have a tradition that “a great many sections of *Liqqutei tefilot* were lost in flames, for the world did not deserve to see or derive benefit from them at all.”<sup>19</sup>

### Prayers over the Hidden Tzaddik

*Liqqutei tefilot* is a volume of beautiful prayers, written in a flowing and expressive language, that, beyond their unique reworking of ideas found in *Liqqutei Moharan*,<sup>20</sup> articulate the struggles of a young Hasid with the untimely passing of his teacher, who nevertheless remains true to his goal of spreading the message of the “true tzaddik” in the world. They are both an expression of his desire to arouse others to repent, in the spirit of his teacher, and a means through which readers can find personal relevance in R. Naḥman’s teachings. A significant number of prayers speak about the necessity of searching for and drawing close to “true tzaddikim,” as opposed to “illustrious, but false, leaders,” who must be avoided. As in *Liqqutei Moharan*, the term “true tzaddikim” is a literary code alluding to the one “true tzaddik,” who is R. Naḥman himself—the single,

17 The manuscript version of *Liqqutei tefilot* includes forty-five prayers (The National Library of Israel, manuscript division, 8<sup>o</sup>202). The important editions containing the missing prayers are those of Naḥman of Tultshin (Zholkva: Bratslav, 1848), which includes the prayers that remained in manuscript, and which were eventually incorporated in the standard editions; Aharon Leib Zigelman (Warsaw: Bratslav, 1930); Naḥman Burnstein (Jerusalem: Ḥasidei Bratslav, 1968), which includes the prayers over the Punkten Decree (136b–137a), which had previously been censored (some of these sections also appear in the manuscript of the Schocken Institute, Jerusalem, 14280); and the ‘Even shetiaḥ edition (see n. 1 above), which includes all the missing pieces. On the history of the early printings, see Gershom Scholem, *‘Elleh shemot sifrei Moharan* (Jerusalem: Azriel, 1928), 19–21; Koenig, *Neveh tzaddiqim*, 163–173; Rubenstein, “Liqqutei tefilot,” 150–156; and David Assaf, *Bratslav: An Annotated Bibliography* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 2000), 13.

18 For instance, Sternhartz, *‘Alim li-terufah*, 58b–60a, letters 150–152.

19 Ibid., “Introduction to the Letters,” 2; Avraham (Kochav Lev) Sternhartz, *Ṭovot ve-zikhronot* (Bnei Brak: Koenig, 1978), 133; Bender, *Śiaḥ śarfei qodesh*, 1:66, §187.

20 Sternhartz, *Liqqutei tefilot*, introduction, 2.

unique tzaddik, unparalleled till the coming of the Messiah. Thus, even when R. Nathan speaks about “true tzaddikim,” “tzaddikim of the generation,” and “tzaddikim” who should be sought after in his time, he means only R. Naḥman, whom people should search for and draw close to, despite his physical absence. Even though some scholars attenuate these claims with a more literal reading, in which the terms “true tzaddik” or “true tzaddikim” genuinely mean other Hasidic leaders of the time, I believe that this is far from the historical context in which these statements arose, far from R. Nathan’s dialectical approach of revelation and concealment, and far from the way Bratslav Hasidim themselves have understood these statements for generations. Furthermore, my claim has already been made by several researchers, primarily Joseph Weiss. To Bratslaver Hasidim, there is no “tzaddik of the generation” other than R. Naḥman, and both the lack of a specific appellation and the use of the plural (“tzaddikim”) reflect the habit of concealment that typifies R. Nathan’s writings of that period.<sup>21</sup> It is not that Bratslaver Hasidim denied the existence of other tzaddikim, but that they considered them as subordinate to the one True Tzaddik—an approach firmly based upon R. Naḥman’s own statements. R. Nathan’s prayers, therefore, are not a general, Hasidic admonition over faith in tzaddikim, but are primarily directed to encourage a relationship with the true hidden tzaddik, despite his recent departure from the world.

This approach explains numerous paradoxical phrasings found throughout the work, particularly in the first twenty-two prayers, although the topic of the “tzaddik of the generation” appears in almost every prayer in the book. A number of prayers address the great sorrow that accompanies the death of the “true tzaddikim” (whose passing is compared to the destruction of the Holy Temple), even as they repeatedly encourage the Hasid to find the “true tzaddik in this generation” who is the aspect of “the faithful shepherd, and true leader,” and to draw close to him, travel to him, and hear his teachings.<sup>22</sup> R. Nathan

21 For arguments supporting this reading, which traditionalists tend to oppose, see Hillel Zeitlin, *Oro shel mashiah be-torat ha-bratslavi* (Warsaw: Grafia, 1936), 5–6; Joseph Weiss, *Studies in Bratslav Hasidism* [Hebrew], ed. Mendel Piekarz (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1975), 151–152; and, more extensively, Jonatan Meir, “Mystical Songs of Bratslav Hasidim” [Hebrew], in *Jewish Prayer: New Perspectives*, ed. Uri Erlich (Beer Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press, forthcoming). See also the very sharp statements made in this context by various Hasidim, such as Yizhak Breiter, “Halukhei ha-naḥal,” *’Or zoreah* 2 (1929): 16b; Naḥman of Tultshin, “Letters,” in Sternhartz, *’Alim li-terufah*, 205b, letter 1; and Shmuel Horowitz, *Zion ha-metzuyenet* (Jerusalem: Shilo Press, 1948), 3–4.

22 See, among other places, Sternhartz, *Liqqutei tefilot*, vol. 1, 5a–6a, prayer 4. For similar prayers, see *ibid.*, prayers 13, 18, 19, 21, 22, 30, 63, 64, 65, 76, 86, 127; vol. 2, prayers 7, 8, 33, 56. R. Naḥman himself compared the death of tzaddikim to the destruction of the Temple



certainly did not have in mind any of the contemporary Hasidic leaders, and there is no indication that he himself sought out a new spiritual mentor after R. Naḥman's death. Neither did he imagine a "second coming" of R. Naḥman himself (an idea that never existed among Bratslav Hasidim). Rather, he meant a new revelation of the soul of the tzaddik within the soul of the Messiah, or a new revelation of the tzaddik through his literary legacy, the presence of his disciples, and visiting his grave.<sup>23</sup> R. Naḥman himself had stated: "There was never such an original figure like me in history," and "My fire will burn until the coming of the Messiah," and "from [me] until the Messiah, there will be nothing new." These words, found in R. Nathan's own notebooks, certainly fueled his dreams.<sup>24</sup>

The order of the prayers and the range of topics in *Liqqutei tefilot* largely follow the chapters of *Liqqutei Moharan*. However, there is a clear shift in the meaning of R. Naḥman's teachings within the new historical context—that is, the lack of the tzaddik's physical presence. Indeed, it often seems that the relationship between the prayer and its teaching are merely associative or even incidental. This distinguishes the work from R. Nathan's other collections, such as *Liqqutei 'etzot* (Collected Advice) and *Qitzur liqqutei Moharan* (Abridgment of *Liqqutei Moharan*), which are closely tied to their sources, and makes it more

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(*Liqqutei Moharan*, 2:67)—a lesson that was apparently related to the passing of R. Levi Yizhak of Berditchev. There is no question, however, that R. Nathan interpreted this teaching quite differently—or, to be more specific, that he translated R. Naḥman's words to fit the new reality, after R. Naḥman's own death. This is one of R. Nathan's convoluted literary tactics that makes his prayers more than a mere interpretation of R. Naḥman's teachings, but an original contribution to Bratslav thought.

- 23 For a discussion of "the search for the true tzaddik of the generation" according to *Liqqutei tefilot*, see Gedalyah Aharon Koenig, *Shu"t sha'arei tzaddiq*, 4 vols. (Bnei Brak: Koenig, 2012–2013), 1:40–43, 238; 2:47–50; 3:81; 4:81, 102–104; *Sefer 'emet ha-ne'ederet* (Jerusalem: Rosh Bayit, 2103), 82–88, 98–116, 126–128, 216, 307–313, 329–331; and *Quntres 'al kiso lo yeshev zar* (Jerusalem: Lashon tzaddiq, 2013), 24–33. The idea of a "second coming" of R. Naḥman has no basis whatsoever in Bratslav writings and first appears in academic literature. See Joseph Dan, *The Hasidic Story: Its History and Development* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Keter, 1975), 171; Zvi Mark, *Scroll of Secrets: The Hidden Messianic Vision of R. Naḥman of Bratslav* [Hebrew] (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2006), 159–172; Arthur Green, "Naḥman of Bratslav," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, ed. Gershon David Hundert, 2 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 2:1246.
- 24 Sternhartz, *Ḥayyei Moharan*, "Gedulat nora'ot haśagato," 167, §247; *ibid.*, "Šiḥot ha-shayyakhot le-torot," 32, §46; *ibid.*, "Nešiyato ve-yeshivato be-'Uman," 153, §229; *ibid.*, "Ma'alat ha-mitqarevim 'elav," 186, §306; Breiter, "Halukhei ha-naḥal," 16b. This material was published only following R. Nathan's death, and the material was not available to the other Hasidim beforehand.

similar to the tumultuous and winding style of *Liqquṭei halakhot*—a work that R. Nathan composed over a period of decades but only began to publish toward the end of his life.<sup>25</sup> Still, considering the unique genre of the prayers, as well as the specific period in which they were composed, the work reveals a more personal side of its author. And while it is based upon R. Naḥman's teachings, it includes concepts that R. Nathan would enlarge upon in his lengthier writings in the future. The many additions to R. Naḥman's teachings that appear here suggest an early and unusual attempt to formulate a cohesive theology that would bind Bratslav Hasidism into a living movement, despite its founder's demise. For instance, in the matter of verbal confession before a tzaddik—a concept that appears in *Liqquṭei Moharan* and was practiced for a limited time in R. Naḥman's circle—R. Nathan prays:

Over all this, in Your compassion, may we merit to verbally confess all our sins, misdeeds, and offenses that we have committed from our youth until today, before the true tzaddik and sage of the generation . . . so that he may atone for us through his wisdom and humility, and teach us the straight and true path . . . and through him, may we merit being absorbed in the Infinite (*'ein sof*).

However, since the one, unique tzaddik to whom these words apply was no longer alive, R. Nathan adds: “May it be that the words of confession that I confessed to you be considered and accepted before You as though I confessed them to the sage and true tzaddik of the generation.”<sup>26</sup> However, these words—unusual in themselves—were further radicalized years later, when

25 It is very difficult to accurately date the various chapters of this multivolume work. For a fascinating examination of the transformation of Bratslav Hasidism based on this book, see Roe Horen, “Judaism as Viewed through the Prism of Faith in the Righteous: A Study of the Works of R. Nathan of Nemirov” [Hebrew], *Kabbalah* 24 (2011): 263–304. See also Mendel Piekarz, “The Lessons of the Composition *Liqquṭei halakhot* by R. Nathan of Nemirov” [Hebrew], *Zion* 69 (2004): 203–240.

26 *Liqquṭei tefilot*, part 1, prayer 4, 6b–7a, based upon *Liqquṭei Moharan* 1:4, 3a, in which R. Naḥman discusses “verbal confession before a Torah scholar.” R. Nathan reported that before R. Naḥman delivered this teaching, he spoke of how the Baal Shem Tov would hear the confessions of his disciples. Sternhartz, *Ḥayyei Moharan*, 38–39, “*Śiḥot ha-shayyakhhot le-torot*,” §58; Eliezer Shlomo Schick, *Pe'ulat ha-tzaddiq* (Jerusalem: Heikhal ha-qodesh, 2004), 198–201, §358–361; Shmuel Horowitz, *Śiḥot ve-hit'orerut* (Jerusalem: Menorah, 1938), 5a. See also Arthur Green, *Tormented Master: A Life of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav* (University: University of Alabama Press: 1979), 45–46, 60–61; Shmuel Abba Horodezky, “Rabbi Naḥman of Bratslav” [Hebrew], *Ha-goren* 4 (1903): 131; Ada Rapoport-Albert,

R. Nathan stressed that the act of confession should occur specifically at the tzaddik's grave. For "when a person comes to his grave, and cries out over his many sins, which are the aspect of [spiritual] failings, then he brings great pleasure to the tzaddik, for then the tzaddik lowers himself to the low place of he who came to his grave, in order to deliver him."<sup>27</sup> This is one example of many, which run like a thread through the entire book. Other examples include spiritual attachment to the tzaddik after his death, attaching one's prayers to the hidden tzaddik (which entails a specific formula recited by Bratslav Hasidim even today prior to prayer or the performance of the commandments), faith in the true tzaddik despite controversy surrounding him, looking at the face of the tzaddik, giving "redemption money" to the hidden tzaddik, and many similar ideas. In all these cases, we find a fascinating transformation of the concept of the greatness of the living tzaddik, in this world, into that of the hidden tzaddik, who is nevertheless present.<sup>28</sup>

*Liqqutei tefilot* also contains a number of fairly innovative prayers. It is not surprising that R. Nathan prayed to be connected to the true tzaddik, whose soul should be aroused to advocate on the petitioner's behalf.<sup>29</sup> Similar prayers had appeared in earlier works, in relationship to other tzaddikim. R. Nathan's prayers, however, contain numerous other paradoxical formulations that stress the greatness of faith in tzaddikim, or more precisely, faith in R. Naḥman. These include, for instance, the request to be saved "in the merit and strength of true tzaddikim, the elders of holiness," as well as the request that God act "for your sake, and for the sake of the true tzaddikim," or "For your sake, living God, and for the sake of the true tzaddikim who, in their deaths, are called living." Of particular interest is the combination "Lord God and God of our fathers. God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, and God of all the true tzaddikim." All these phrases reflect R. Nathan's view of R. Naḥman as the tzaddik of his generation, who held sway over the supernal realms.<sup>30</sup> For R. Nathan's intention was not merely to strengthen his reader's faith in the power of tzaddikim in general, but to convince them of the power of one particular tzaddik. His

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"Confession in the Circle of R. Nahman of Bratslav," *Bulletin of the Institute of Jewish Studies* 1 (1973–1975): 65–96.

27 Sternhartz, *Liqqutei halakhot*, 8:26b, Ḥoshen mishpat, Hilkhot mattanah 5, §21. See Naḥman of Tscherein, *Parpera'ot le-ḥokhmah* (Lemberg: Karl Budweiser, 1876), 5a (on *Liqqutei Moharan* 1:4); Koenig, *Sha'arei tzaddiq*, 4:242–244.

28 A summary of R. Nathan's approach to this, albeit somewhat extreme, can be found in *Parpera'ot le-ḥokhmah*, 5a.

29 For example, Sternhartz, *Liqqutei tefilot*, part 1, prayers 23, 30, 58, and 104.

30 Similar texts can be found in many prayers, such as *Liqqutei tefilot*, part 1, prayers 27, 29, 30, 38, 49, 66.

prayers are a remarkable expression of a man afflicted by suffering and mental anguish, yet with the soul of a devoted mystic, who seeks illumination from the supernal sources and the true tzaddik, as in his request to attain the level of the tzaddik, or his desire “to be included in the soul of the true tzaddik of the generation.”<sup>31</sup> Even if similar prayers can be found in other Jewish works, R. Nathan’s formulations, which refer, unquestionably, to R. Naḥman as the soul of the Messiah, are unique and extreme. No such formulations can be found among R. Nathan’s colleagues, but *Liqquṭei tefilot* is full of similar examples, an examination of which would make a fascinating study in itself. Our point here, however, is to highlight those places where R. Nathan attempted to formulate original thoughts and not merely translate R. Naḥman’s teachings into prayers.

R. Nathan’s efforts to formulate a new theology become apparent in his repeated request that God “reveal and illuminate for us the true tzaddikim of this generation, and allow us to draw close to them.”<sup>32</sup> Such a prayer is necessary, since “due to our sins, an iron wall has risen between us and the true tzaddikim, who have become hidden and concealed from our eyes.” This iron wall and concealment refer to the death of R. Naḥman. Thus, R. Nathan’s prayers, filled with his desire that God reveal the true tzaddikim of his time, was actually a request that God reveal R. Naḥman in a new way, after he had become hidden.<sup>33</sup> More precisely, they expressed R. Nathan’s longing and desire for his teacher who had died (“the tzaddikim of the generation who have become concealed”) and his attempt to forge a relationship with him anew (as in the continual searching after the true tzaddik). That is, despite R. Naḥman’s concealment, one should still attach oneself to him and seek and follow his advice and guidance. To R. Nathan, the true tzaddik was a living tzaddik; as the Talmud states, “Tzaddikim are considered alive, even in their deaths.” Therefore, the possibility always exists to draw the one, unique tzaddik out of concealment, and to enliven him anew at each moment.

In his later work, *Liqquṭei halakhot*, R. Nathan expresses many of these ideas more explicitly—perhaps one of the reasons that he waited so long to publish the work. For instance, he speaks of death as the “aspect of extended sleep” and a necessary descent before the subsequent ascent and rectification of the tzaddik. He explains:

This is the meaning of “the righteous is taken away from the evil to come” (Isa 57:1). That is, when your actions are evil and you do not properly seek

31 *Liqquṭei tefilot*, part 1, prayers 14, 25, 61, 64, 87, 90; part 2, prayer 5.

32 *Liqquṭei tefilot*, part 1, prayer 4. See similar formulations in prayers 17 and 63.

33 A classic example of this can be found in part 1, prayer 13, 25b–29a.

the tzaddik . . . then the tzaddik is taken away. However, when you repent and are inspired to search for him properly, then he is considered truly alive. For true tzaddikim are always called alive.<sup>34</sup>

Or, as he writes:

The tzaddik dies only to appearances; actually, he never dies at all. Rather, his lowest aspect immediately ascends and illuminates the world, which is the inspiration that he leaves behind in the world, through his books and his disciples.<sup>35</sup>

Similar ideas can be found in *Liqqutei tefilot*, albeit in a less overt manner. Surely, though, R. Nathan's readers understood his veiled allusions. That is, through his writing, publishing, and teaching, R. Nathan himself had become the channel for drawing down the tzaddik's light. He is "the true disciple who correctly receives the consciousness of his teacher, until his words are filled with holy inspiration"—the aspect of Joshua (to the tzaddik's Moses), and the liaison of the tzaddik in this world, with the power to reveal his hidden light.<sup>36</sup> Thus, he is also the enemy of false tzaddikim, who seek to conceal the holiness of the true tzaddik after his passing; that is, those who no longer believe in R. Naḥman as the last, true tzaddik until the Messiah.

This new theology developed, perhaps, in response to the great dilemma caused by the death of the one unique tzaddik; a tzaddik who seemed greater than Moses, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, and the Baal Shem Tov, and who made many promises, yet failed to fulfill them. It is also an attempt not only to live in the shadow of this hidden tzaddik, but to enliven him and to interpret him into a new reality, and thus create a basis for the continuity of the disciples who remained. At times, here and there, R. Nathan's own unique character seems to shine forth, including the new role that he claimed for himself—whether as the revealer or concealer of secrets, or the one who can grant atonement, or visit the barren, or originate Torah ideas and inspire the people.<sup>37</sup> Ideas such

34 Sternhartz, *Liqqutei halakhot*, 7:215b, Ḥoshen mishpat, Hilkhot sheluḥin, 5, §14. Similar phrases can be found throughout the work. See the index to this work by Nathan Zvi Koenig, *Nofet tzufim*, 4 vols. (Bnei Brak: Kollel Bratslav, 1976), 3:78–102, s.v. *tzaddiq*; idem, *ʿAnshei ha-shem* (Bnei Brak: Kollel Bratslav, 1978), 78–79, s.v. *histalkut Mosheh*.

35 Sternhartz, *Liqqutei halakhot*, 5:213a, 216b, Yoreh de'ah, Hilkhot pidyon bakhor, 5, §9, §17.

36 Ibid., 7:214b–215a, Ḥoshen mishpat, Hilkhot sheluḥin, 5, §12.

37 Sternhartz, *Liqqutei tefilot*, part 1, prayers 29, 41, 53, 61, 107, 123, 147.

as these may very well have been the cause of the great controversy that soon engulfed him.

### Publication and Controversy

The trials and tribulations surrounding the publication of *Liqqutei tefilot* have been discussed at length elsewhere, as have a number of issues in R. Nathan's unique theology. At present, I would like to focus on a less well-known aspect: the political context of the work's publication, particularly as it was framed within the larger question of the continuation of Bratslav leadership after R. Naḥman's passing. Clearly, R. Naḥman's Hasidim, including his close disciples, were thrown into great confusion after his death, for R. Naḥman "left us no direction regarding what to do after his passing."<sup>38</sup> Many surely felt that "the tzaddik has died, and all hope has been lost." And since "neither his replacement nor his inspiration remain in the world," little choice remained but to adhere to one of the other Hasidic tzaddikim of the time.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, this seems to have happened, and after R. Naḥman's passing, a portion of his Hasidim either became followers of other tzaddikim, or considered themselves fit to serve as Hasidic leaders in their own right. With so few Bratslav Hasidim remaining, it was logical to expect the tiny group to soon disband and vanish entirely. In one of his prayers R. Nathan writes, with great fear, about a similar-sounding situation in which "the true tzaddikim depart, due to our great sins . . . and I wander to and fro, like a body without a soul, like a lump without thought, like a ship lost in the depths of the sea without a captain, while the storm wind rages at every moment."<sup>40</sup> The story of R. Nathan's confusion and anguish during those years deserves a study in its own right, especially his deep disappointment and inner struggle, which almost brought him to move his entire family to the land of Israel after he visited there for almost a year (a plan that was canceled due to "very great obstacles").<sup>41</sup> Here, however, we

38 Sternhartz, *Yemei Moharnat*, part 1, 97, §67.

39 Sternhartz, *Liqqutei halakhot*, 7:216–217b, Ḥoshen mishpaṭ, Hilkhot sheluḥin, 5, §17–18; idem, *Liqqutei tefilot*, part 2, prayers 33, 56. See also the various sources related to this in [Yehudah Asher Goldblum], *Or ha-tzaddiq* (Jerusalem: Makhon 'emeq ha-naḥal, 2010), 211–226. (This work contains a large number of clear and explicit sources on this topic, presented in response to leadership claims made by one of the Bratslav teachers of recent times.)

40 Sternhartz, *Liqqutei tefilot*, part 1, 26a–b, prayer 13.

41 Sternhartz, *Yemei Moharnat*, part 1, 136–137, §3. This voyage, which was in many ways the reverse of that undertaken by R. Naḥman years earlier, is captured in great detail by

are concerned with R. Nathan's efforts to formulate a theological solution to the complex situation, through a sort of ritualization of Hasidism, with the hope that this activity would preserve the tradition of his teacher, and perhaps even broaden its influence. Even before his trip to Israel he had started working in this direction, and he invested even more energy into it after his return. Only through such efforts would Bratslav Hasidism survive without the presence of a living mentor. Through the establishment of fundamental tenets and clear rituals, R. Nathan would unite the small groups of R. Naḥman's followers, scattered through various locales (which were often under the jurisdiction of other, rather hostile Hasidic leaders). Every word uttered by R. Naḥman during his lifetime, and especially the comments he made on his last Rosh Hashanah, were interpreted by R. Nathan as a sort of last will and testament directing the activities of future generations. As R. Nathan subsequently wrote, "I continually understand, in retrospect, his holy words, as to how to act."<sup>42</sup>

After monumental efforts, R. Nathan succeeded in reinventing Bratslav Hasidism and writing a new chapter of its history by attracting young people (including some who had never even met R. Naḥman), by presenting teachings during the third meal of Sabbath (at first R. Naḥman's own words, and ultimately his own), by affirming the importance of the Rosh Hashanah gathering in Uman, even after the tzaddik's passing, by endlessly promoting Bratslaver values (such as personal prayer, seclusion, faith in tzaddikim, simplicity, joy, sexual purity, the greatness of R. Naḥman's soul, and the value of controversy), by stressing the importance of visiting R. Naḥman's grave and maintaining there a perpetual oil lamp, by disseminating and teaching the importance of the *Tiqqun ha-klali*, by founding a new study hall, and by the publication of "holy books." If R. Naḥman died without providing clear instructions for his followers, R. Nathan "derived his conclusions from true or imagined hints of his teacher, and through this he saved Bratslav Hasidism from extinction," as Joseph Weiss succinctly puts it.<sup>43</sup>

Not long after his teacher's death, R. Nathan published, despite numerous obstacles, several works: *Sippurei ma'asiyyot* ("R. Naḥman's Tales," which included part of *Shivḥei ha-Ran* at the end of the work), a newly edited version of *Liqqutei Moharan* (including the previously unpublished second

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R. Nathan in his autobiography, *ibid.*, part 1, 120–121, §99; and part 2, 129–270, §1–190. See David Assaf, "My Heart was Divided Whether to Travel" [Hebrew], *Davka* 1 (2006): 23–25; Kramer, *Through Fire and Water*, 267–341.

42 Sternhartz, *Yemei Moharnat*, part 1, 97, §67.

43 Weiss, *Studies*, 222. See also Ada Rapoport-Albert, "Bratslav Hasidism," *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, 1:231.

part), *Liqquṭei 'etzot*, *Qitzur liqquṭei Moharan*, *Shemot ha-tzaddiqim*, and *Sefer ha-middot*.<sup>44</sup> R. Nathan speaks frankly about the challenges he faced in raising funds for these works even from Bratslaver Hasidim, who did not seem particularly eager to donate money toward the establishment of a publishing house. He writes: “[To convey] everything that happened to me regarding the publication would require a huge volume. It is absolutely impossible to explain it in writing. God willing, in the world-to-come, they will speak of this a very great deal.”<sup>45</sup> In addition, he had in his possession entire notebooks of teachings and recollections, as well as other works, such as *Ḥayyei Moharan* and *Śiḥot ha-Ran* (which are actually one book split into two), that were not published until years after his passing. Much time would be required, he wrote then, to “work at the writing of his holy words”—a process that entailed recalling R. Naḥman’s various statements and then editing and translating them into Hebrew for the sake of the new Hasidim who were seeking religious guidance in their daily lives.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, a large part of R. Nathan’s works are devoted to spiritual practices (which Bratslavers term “advice”) that were attractive to young people and offered them spiritual and practical alternatives to the “wonder-working” tzaddikim who were emerging at the time.<sup>47</sup> R. Nathan also saw himself as guardian of the innermost traditions of his teacher, and maintained that his words “flowed from the extremely exalted and awesome source, lofty and mighty”—that is, from R. Naḥman himself.<sup>48</sup> Yet, despite these achievements, there were others who were less than pleased with R. Nathan’s approach, as we will see below, or who may have understood R. Naḥman’s teachings differently than the way R. Nathan was presenting them. Perhaps this latent antagonism hastened R. Nathan’s publication efforts, which included retrieving all the manuscripts of R. Naḥman’s teachings that the other Hasidim had in their possession. Indeed, he claimed that he was the sole guarantor of their publication, for “all of these writings were from me,” and “it was from me that

44 Sternhartz, *Yemei Moharnat*, part 1, 99–106, §68–75; 108, §80; 117, §89–90; 119–121, §97–99; 122–123, §103–104; part 2, 137–139, §5–8; 143–147, §14–17.

45 *Ibid.*, part 1, 138, §6.

46 *Ibid.*, part 1, 109–110, §81. For more on *Śiḥot ha-Ran* and *Ḥayyei Moharan*, see Eliezer Heshin, “The Manuscripts and the Printing of *Ḥayyei Moharan* and *Śiḥot ha-Ran*” [Hebrew], *Śiḥot ha-Ran ha-shalem 'im no'am śiḥot* (Brooklyn: Witriol, 2011), 21–29.

47 On R. Nathan’s advice and conduct literature, some of which he began composing during R. Naḥman’s life, see Zeev Gries, *Conduct Literature (Regimen Vitae): Its History and Place in the Life of Beshtian Hasidism* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1990), 231–275.

48 Sternhartz, *Alim li-terufah*, 22b, letter 45; 100a, letter 230.



the companions received them.” In this way, he established the legacy of his teacher in his own spirit.<sup>49</sup>

R. Nathan, however, was not yet satisfied. He longed to publish something of his own—his own prayers—as an expression of the new theology, as well as a revised version of R. Naḥman’s words. (R. Nathan’s magnum opus, *Liqqutei halakhot*, also served this purpose. Yet, although R. Nathan began composing it during R. Naḥman’s life, it was only printed many years later.) Suddenly, in the midst of publishing *Liqqutei tefilot*, an internal controversy was directed against R. Nathan by a number of senior Bratslav Hasidim (led by R. Shmuel Isaac and R. Yudel of Dashev, who apparently sought a different model of leadership, one that was perhaps more mystical, visionary, or ecstatic), and it seems that the publication of the prayers played a part in this.<sup>50</sup> There is no lack of passages in *Liqqutei tefilot* that could have easily sparked this reaction, such as those that refer to the function of the deceased tzaddik in the daily life of the Hasidim (since there were disciples who did indeed believe that a substitute for R. Naḥman could be found). Similarly controversial were the statements made

49 Ibid., 11a, letter 17. R. Nathan, as well as subsequent Bratslav Hasidim, mentioned at times “manuscripts of friends” (i.e., other Hasidim). See, for instance, Shmuel Horowitz, *Liqqutei Moharan mi-ktav yad rabbeinu* (Jerusalem: ‘Einav, 1934), 21–22. A manuscript that contained alternative versions of teachings found in *Liqqutei Moharan*, erroneously attributed to R. Nathan, was partially published by Nathan Zvi Koenig in his “*Liqqutei Moharan mi-ktav yad Moharanat zt”l*,” in *Liqqutei Moharan* (Bnei Brak: Kollel Bratslav, 1975), 1–64. Notebooks containing teachings, conversations, and stories from R. Naḥman that had belonged to R. Naftali survive, and some of them were published at the beginning of the twentieth century. See Zvi Mark, *Revelation and Rectification in the Revealed and Hidden Writings of R. Naḥman of Bratslav* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2011), 25; idem, *The Complete Stories of Rabbi Naḥman of Bratslav* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Yediot ‘Aḥronot Books, 2014), 104. Some content was added to the edition of *Liqqutei Moharan* that was published in 1938 in Opatów by Yizhak Breiter and Zvi Lasker.

50 Bratslav writings only hint at this controversy. See, among other sources, Sternhartz, *‘Alim li-terufah*, “Hashmaṭot,” 187a–b, 218; Nathan Zvi Koenig, *‘Emanat ‘Uman* (Bnei Brak: Kollel Bratslav, 1966), 32–37, letter 13; Naḥman of Tscherein, *Parpera’ot le-ḥokhmah*, 35a (on *Liqqutei Moharan*, 1:61); Avraham Hazan, *Kokhvei ‘or* (Jerusalem: Yeshivat Bratslav, 1933), 121–122, “Ṣaṣon ve-šimḥah,” §10–11; Bender, *Dibburei ‘emunah*, part 2, 77–82; Eliezer Shlomo Schick, *‘Erekh ‘appayim* (Brooklyn: Qeren Hadpasa, 1977), 100; idem, *Asher be-naḥal*, vol. 21 (Jerusalem: Heikhal ha-qodesh, 2009), 90–91, letter 119; idem, *Šiḥot Moharosh* (Jerusalem: Heikhal ha-qodesh, 2004), 236–238; idem, *‘Imrei Moharosh*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Heikhal ha-qodesh, 2009) 238; Kramer, *Through Fire and Water*, 340–341, 598–599. See also Weiss, *Studies*, 222, 236–241; Mendel Piekarz, *Studies in Bratslav Hasidism* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1996), 259–264; Green, *Tormented Master*, 149–150; Jonatan Meir, “The Controversy Surrounding R. Nathan of Nemirov” (forthcoming).

by R. Nathan concerning his own self-perception, to which was bound the question of the practical leadership of the movement. One thing is clear: the book of prayers that he wrote, particularly those composed after 1824, had a strong, mostly negative effect. Some disciples even imagined that R. Nathan desired to become some sort of prophet or new Hasidic leader. This internal division actually reflected R. Nathan's attempt to present himself as the sole representative of R. Naḥman's teachings, as well as the leader of the group, even if not exactly the Rebbe. This conclusion is based on dozens of internal Bratslav sources, a number of which have only appeared in print over the last few years, that reflect the hagiographic oral tradition that has been transmitted among the Hasidim for decades.

According to these traditions, it seems that after R. Naḥman's death, certain individuals accused R. Nathan of fabricating statements in his mentor's name and thus challenged him with the question, "Fun ven nempt men dos?" (Where are you getting this from?).<sup>51</sup> In other words, they interpreted his actions and comportment as resembling those of a Hasidic rebbe. Thus, it is reported in the name of R. Shimon, one of R. Naḥman's leading disciples, who accompanied him on his voyage to Israel, that he once commented about R. Nathan, with an undeniable element of scorn: "I thought that this one was a disciple of our Rabbi. Yet, in the end, he is the Rebbe himself."<sup>52</sup>

It is also recorded that on numerous occasions, R. Nathan vehemently protested that he was *not* the Rebbe: "Ich vais ich bin nich der Rebbe!" (I know that I am not the Rebbe!). This too implies that there were Hasidim around him who considered him fit for the role, or, alternatively, who suspected that he himself sought the title.<sup>53</sup> In one of his letters to his son he mentions this

51 Sternhartz, *Ḥayyei Moharan*, "Qunṭres ha-hosafot," 573, §27; Naḥman Yisrael Bornstein, *'Otzar naḥmani*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Lashon tzaddiq, 2013), 63–65, §53. For a less antagonistic version of this question, see Bender, *Śiaḥ śarfei qodesh*, 7:31, §63.

52 Avraham Hazan, *'Avaneiha barzel* (Jerusalem: Yeshivat Bratslav, 1935), 41–42, §54. Obviously, a statement like this can be read in one of two ways, as praise or as scorn. For a slightly different version, based upon other sources, see Bender, *Śiaḥ śarfei qodesh*, 7:32, §68; idem, *Dibburei 'emunah*, 2:86; Bornstein, *'Otzar naḥmani*, vol. 1, 48–50, §39. The story is also cited twice in Shmuel Horowitz's manuscript "Śiḥot ve-sippurim" (Schocken Institute, Jerusalem, 70132/14, pp. 9, 23), where the statement is attributed to someone else (Yizhak Segal, the son-in-law of Yekutiel, the preacher of Tirhavits), and the issue is the question of leadership immediately following R. Naḥman's death.

53 Avraham Hazan, *Qunṭres yemei ha-tela'ot* (Jerusalem: Einav, 1933), 137–138, §4; Eliezer Shlomo Schick, *'Ilan ha-ḥayyim: Śiḥot ve-sippurim* (Brooklyn: Moriah, 1981), §118; Bender, *Dibburei 'emunah*, 2:87–88; Bornstein, *'Otzar naḥmani*, vol. 1, 43, §31. See also *ibid.*, 44–45, §32; 50, §39.

internal dissension, which reached its peak in the years 1826–1827: “God knows and bears witness that I merited understanding [R. Naḥman’s] awesome and pure intention beyond everyone else, as he himself explicitly admitted on numerous occasions.” These words were undoubtedly directed against the other leading disciples, who contested R. Nathan’s leadership aspirations and questioned his claim to be the sole interpreter and transmitter of their Rebbe’s teachings.<sup>54</sup> We find numerous instances of such statements by R. Nathan during these years. For instance, immediately after R. Naḥman’s death, he wrote in his diary that R. Naḥman “already testified about me that I understand him better than everyone else.” Apparently, R. Nathan was trying to position himself as the sole authoritative source of R. Naḥman’s teachings, even at that early date.<sup>55</sup> According to one tradition, R. Naḥman appeared to R. Nathan in a dream in 1826 and told him to begin delivering Torah teachings at the third Sabbath meal—that is, to act in the fashion of a Hasidic leader, which was certain to arouse the ire of R. Naḥman’s other close disciples, among them mystic visionaries who also claimed to have been in contact with R. Naḥman since his death, and who undoubtedly had other traditions and practices.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, those same disciples boasted about the esoteric traditions that they had also received from R. Naḥman (such as the “Burnt Book”). They attracted disciples of their own, and teased R. Nathan for “dealing with youth” (i.e., his main talent was for attracting young people to Hasidut and not for leadership).<sup>57</sup> Even R. Naftali, who was one of R. Nathan’s closest friends, occasionally protested R. Nathan’s new conduct and the new path that he seemed to be forging for himself.<sup>58</sup> As if this were not bad enough, a later tradition hints at an episode in which some of R. Naḥman’s disciples may have tried to excommunicate

54 Sternhartz, *ʿAlim li-terufah*, 10b, letter 16. See also the introduction to *Ḥayyei Moharan*, 1: “And [R. Naḥman] said, explicitly, that there is no one who understands him besides me, a little, and other similar statements.”

55 Sternhartz, *Yemei Moharnat*, part 1, 95, §66.

56 Hazan, *ʿAvaneiha barzel*, 64–65, §10 (see also 74, §40). For more about these disciples, see Piekartz, *Studies*, 259–264; Weiss, *Studies*, 82–83, 222; Gries, *Conduct Literature*, 247–248; Zvi Mark, “The Mystical Fellowship: On the Visions of R. Shmuel Isaac of Dashev and R. Yizhak of Tirhavit (Two of R. Naḥman of Bratslav’s First Disciples)” [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 78 (2009): 231–254.

57 Hazan, *ʿAvaneiha barzel*, 8–9, §6. On the “Burnt Book” and various traditions associated with it, see Weiss, *Studies*, 215–248; Zvi Mark, “Out of the Ashes: *Liqqutei Moharan* and *The Burnt Book*” [Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 23 (2011): 301–331.

58 This is implied in letters originally omitted (i.e., censored) from the work *ʿAlim li-terufah*, “Hashmaṭot,” 187a–b. A later tradition relates that R. Nathan originally desired to live in Uman, but resisted doing so because R. Naftali was living there. Bender, *Štaḥ šarfei qodesh*,

R. Nathan at some point early in his career, either because they disagreed with his approach or because they felt that he was distorting R. Naḥman's teachings. The matter was dropped, however, for unknown reasons.<sup>59</sup>

This complex picture, which deserves further, careful analysis, is also reflected in the publication and reception of *Liqquṭei tefilot*. Bratslaver Hasidim relate that

after Moharanat (our teacher, R. Nathan) published *Liqquṭei tefilot*, some of the Hasidim said to him: "You are fit to be the Master of Prayer (one of the characters in R. Naḥman's Tales)." Moharanat responded: "Our Rabbi (R. Naḥman) is the Master of Prayer. However, if I am one of the king's men, I am the orator."<sup>60</sup>

That is, there were some who interpreted the publication of *Liqquṭei tefilot* as part of a revamped Hasidism and an attempt to present a late form of Bratslav teachings. Certainly, there were those among the young Hasidim who considered R. Nathan as a rebbe in his own right. These and similar remarks can be found in various forms in late Bratslav hagiography, and they reveal to us the complex dynamics that surrounded R. Nathan at that time.

### An Opening Apology

In his preface to *Liqquṭei tefilot*, however, R. Nathan presents an entirely different approach that attenuates his reasons and intentions for publishing the work. Actually, he claims, it would be good for each person to compose his own version of such prayers. Initially he had written the prayers only for himself, and it was only after seeing how hard it was for others to do the same that he realized that "it would be helpful to write them [his own prayers] in a general way, in a way that was universally applicable, and to share them with other

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7:37, §82; Eliezer Shlomo Schick, *Gaḥalei 'esh*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Heikhal ha-qodesh, 2009), 228. See also Goldblum, 'Or ha-tzaddiq, 212, 214, 219–220; Meir, "The Controversy."

59 This was alluded to by Avraham Hazan with respect to R. Shmuel Isaac of Dashev and R. Yizhak. See Hazan, *Kokhvei 'or*, "Šašon ve-šimḥah," 121, §11; and in one of his letters, idem, *Kokhvei 'or ha-shalem* (Jerusalem: 'Agudat meshekh ha-naḥal, 2009), 240. The publication of the material omitted from this work and from the letters, which exists in manuscript, will further clarify this issue.

60 Sternhartz, *Ḥayyei Moharan*, "Quntres ha-hosafot," 572, §23; Bender, *Šiaḥ šarfei qodesh*, 2:136–137, §591. R. Nathan used this imagery elsewhere. See, for instance, *Liqquṭei halakhot*, vol. 1: 'Orah ḥayyim, 176a, Hilkhot tefilah, 4, §12.

Hasidim, so as not to withhold their benefits.”<sup>61</sup> In other words, he first wrote the prayers for himself alone, and only afterward reworked them in a “popular style” that was applicable to every individual.<sup>62</sup> We know that at a very early stage in their composition, R. Nathan was already circulating his prayers among Bratslav Hasidim, allowing them to “copy and recite them themselves.” Most likely, his target audiences were the young Hasidim who had become his students, and not R. Naḥman’s senior disciples, though it was to the latter that he directed his apology. Yet, despite the tone of his preface, it is clear that he desired his prayers to become a part of the unique combination of Torah study and prayer that R. Naḥman had promulgated, so that the Hasidim would study the various chapters of *Liqqutei Moharan* and then recite the relevant prayer.<sup>63</sup> In several prayers, R. Nathan even left room for the reciter to insert his own name or personal details (such as the sins he had committed), as is commonly found in prayer books.<sup>64</sup>

The clearly apologetic tone of the preface helped R. Nathan to defuse the primary critique directed against the prayers he had composed. It was with this in mind that R. Nathan wrote in his introduction, “It is not overreaching to compose new prayers. Many people, both great and small, wrote and formulated many prayers before me.” One need not possess *ru’ah ha-qodesh* (divine inspiration) in order to write new prayers, for “it is not prohibited for an individual who is not on a high spiritual level or who lacks divine inspiration to compose new prayers. To do so makes him just like any other author who is not on a high spiritual level, or who does not possess *ru’ah ha-qodesh*.”<sup>65</sup> Certainly, these words were written in defense of claims made against him. And yet, despite his apparent self-effacement, he immediately adds that

They [the prayers] have on what to rely [i.e., they are relying on a tradition], for they rest on solid foundations—the words of the holy teachings of our great, holy and awesome Rabbi, whose words were all spoken with divine inspiration, on an extremely high level . . . therefore, all of these

61 Sternhartz, *Liqqutei tefilot*, introduction, 4. See Koenig, *Neveh tzaddiqim*, 117.

62 Bratslaver Hasidim see this as the prayers’ strong point. See, for instance, the statements of R. Avraham Hazan in Bender, *Śiaḥ śarfei qodesh*, 3:200–201, §554.

63 Sternhartz, *Yemei Moharnat*, part 1, 55. For instructions he gave to his son to recite specific prayers, see Sternhartz, *‘Alim li-terufah*, 7b–8a, 37a, 149b, letters 9, 83, 355; idem, *Ḥayyei Moharan*, “Quntres ha-hosafot,” 574, §35; Bender, *Śiaḥ śarfei qodesh*, 2:163, §674.

64 See, for instance, Sternhartz, *Liqqutei tefilot*, part 1, prayers 4, 41, 67, 104, 105, 122, 151, 152; part 2, prayers 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 42, 44, 45, 47; and the prayer that accompanies *Tiqqun ha-klali*.

65 Sternhartz, *Liqqutei tefilot*, introduction, 5–6.

prayers come from a holy place, flowing and emerging from the holy fountain that comes out from the house of God.

He even goes so far as to say, “Every wise person who sincerely desires truth will recognize the greatness of these prayers, for never before in the world were there prayers anything like them.”<sup>66</sup> The entire introduction, which was added to the book after it was printed, is a lengthy defense of R. Nathan’s new path, which includes the composition and publication of the prayers. R. Nathan knew well how his preface would be received, both by those within and without his immediate circle, and he was thus forced to justify his actions and downplay their significance. All this was written after the first printed booklets had already reached the Hasidim, at least one of whom had already protested R. Nathan’s enterprise. We can identify the significant dates fairly accurately: from the printer’s marking, the paper, and the page layout, it can be established that the introduction was written in the years 1826–1827 and added to the collected pamphlets, together with the title page, close to their final, complete printing.<sup>67</sup> By this time, the internal dispute against R. Nathan had already begun, with his opponents accusing him of claiming the role of prophet or inspired spiritual leader—accusations that were related to his attempt to establish a new spiritual practice.<sup>68</sup> It is safe to say, then, that R. Nathan did not write this preface only for people outside the immediate circle of R. Naḥman’s disciples, but for those within it as well. As we will see below, R. Nathan’s conceptualization of his own position was at least equal to, if not more radical than the claims made against him, for he attributed great significance to the prayers, far beyond what he wrote in his apologetic preface.

66 Ibid., 4, 6.

67 Due to problems in ordering paper at various stages of the printing, the book’s folios are printed on different types of paper; while the title page and introduction are recognizable by their blue paper, the first pamphlet of prayers was printed on plain paper. R. Nathan went back to using blue paper at the end of part one (prayers 94–99), which was printed in 1824, and at the end of part two (from prayer 14 until the end), which was printed in 1827. This clearly indicates that the introduction and title page were added to the pamphlets only after the book was finished, and it seems that the introduction was written in 1827. On the stages of the work’s composition see above, nn. 16–17.

68 Gershom Scholem noted that the book “was published in the period of greatest persecution, as is alluded to in the Hebrew title of the year.” *’Elleh shemot*, 19. Nonetheless, it should be pointed out that the external persecution of R. Nathan primarily occurred in the 1830s. It seems that the title page was added after the completion of the book and in the context of the internal controversy. See also Schick, *’Erekh ’appayim*, 100.

### A Note about *Tiqqun ha-klali* and R. Naḥman's Grave

It is interesting to note, in this context, a specific prayer composed by R. Nathan and printed in 1821 together with the *Tiqqun ha-klali*—the ten chapters of psalms selected by R. Naḥman for recitation at his grave.<sup>69</sup> The booklet was apparently distributed among the Hasidim who had come to Uman for Rosh Hashanah as part of R. Nathan's attempts to establish the Rosh Hashanah gathering, the recital of the *Tiqqun ha-klali*, and the visit to R. Naḥman's grave as central components of Bratslav Hasidism.<sup>70</sup> According to one tradition, Rabbi Aharon, the head of the Bratslav *beit din* and one of R. Naḥman's close disciples, who had heard the secret of the *Tiqqun ha-klali* directly from R. Naḥman, protested the inclusion of R. Nathan's prayer in the printed version of the *Tiqqun* (this was the first of his prayers to be printed). R. Nathan replied, "I wrote this prayer for myself, but whoever feels the need can say it too."<sup>71</sup> However, at the beginning of this prayer, it is only written: "It is good to recite this prayer after the ten chapters of Psalms." Further, the prayer is worded in a way that makes it an integral part of the *Tiqqun* itself, so that is it not only good to say the two together, but absolutely necessary. This is indeed how the Hasidim of later generations understood it, and in a short time reciting that prayer became an important ritual for Bratslav Hasidim, inseparable from the recitation of the *Tiqqun ha-klali* itself. From the text of the first printing, it is also clear that while it was preferable to say the ten psalms at R. Naḥman's grave, the option always remained to recite them elsewhere. We can understand this somewhat indefinite statement not only as a reflection of R. Naḥman's instructions regarding the *Tiqqun* (R. Naḥman's comments regarding his *Tiqqunim* were at times ambiguous and mercurial, spontaneously responding to the needs of

69 Naḥman of Bratslav, *Tiqqun ha-klali, ki hu' tiqqun ha-berit* (Bratslav: Sternhartz, 1821). The prayer was written in 1818 and given to the Hasidim who came to pray at the grave. See Sternhartz, *Yemei Moharnat*, part 1, 119, §98.

70 On the history and development of the concept of the holiness of R. Naḥman's grave, see Zvi Mark, "A Righteous Man Caught in the Jaws of the Sitra Ahkra, the Holy Man, and the Profane Site: The Pilgrimage to the Grave of Rabbi Naḥman of Bratslav in Uman on Rosh Hashanah" [Hebrew], *Reshit* 2 (2010): 112–146; Jonatan Meir, "Goral ha-tzaddikim: A Forgotten Satire against Bratslav Hasidism and the Pilgrimage to Uman" [Hebrew], *Dehak: Journal of Hebrew Literature* 4 (2014): 283–313. See also the many relevant sources collected by Koenig, *Sha'arei tzaddiq*, 4:75–95.

71 Bender, *Šiaḥ Sarfei qodesh*, 2:151, §632, where it is written: "One of the Hasidim asked him," whereas the person's name can be found elsewhere: Koenig, *Sha'arei tzaddiq*, 3:305–306. Another tradition identifies the person as R. Naftali. See Aharon Yosef Koenig, "Genuzot," *Otzarot* 154 (2013): 3. See also Schick, *Erekh appayim*, 100–101.

the moment), but also as revealing R. Nathan's own doubts and hesitations regarding the establishment of this new ritual.<sup>72</sup> It should be recalled that R. Nathan had not yet formulated a clear theology concerning R. Naḥman's grave, nor had the Rosh Hashanah gathering in Uman yet taken on the cosmic significance of a specific rectification, made at a specific place and time; at that moment it was still only an expression of longing for a leader who had died.<sup>73</sup> The question of the prayer's validity, raised by one of the leading Hasidim, can only be understood in light of the ritualization of Bratslav Hasidism that R. Nathan was seeking to institute—a ritualization that surprised a number of his colleagues as well, who had also studied with him under R. Naḥman. Along these lines, later collections of Bratslav traditions report that R. Aharon did not see great significance in holding the Rosh Hashanah prayers specifically in Uman, and that he considered this custom an invention of R. Nathan and not an explicit injunction of R. Naḥman.<sup>74</sup> Similar claims were made by Hasidim in the Bratslav centers of Teplik and Tirhavits who had sought to have R. Naḥman buried in their towns, and who held no unique ideology featuring a Rosh Hashanah gathering in Uman. R. Nathan, however, insisted that he had heard otherwise from R. Naḥman: "Uman has been designated as the place of [his grave] since the beginning of creation, where he would work toward the perfection of the world for generations, for all who visit him there and

72 This is clear from a note that he added at the end of the prayer: "If a person is beside his holy grave, he should say this: And in the merit of this tzaddik who lies here, who is the foundation of the world, the flowing stream, the source of wisdom, for the sake of whom I trudged and traveled, with great difficulty, in order to come here and prostrate myself on the grave of this true, holy tzaddik, who promised us, during his holy life, that he would always come to our aid, when we come to his grave and give a coin to charity, and say these ten chapters of psalms. Behold, I have done as I am required; do what is upon you." These words, which are printed in parentheses, clearly indicate that the *Tiqqun* and the prayer can also be said elsewhere than beside the grave. For a description of the revelation and development of the *Tiqqun ha-klali*, see Sternhartz, *Šiḥot ha-Ran*, 98–99, §14; idem, *Ḥayyei Moharan*, 152–153, §225; Naḥman of Tscherein, *Parpera'ot le-ḥokhmah*, 13a–b (on *Liqquṭei Moharan* 1:92); Mark, *Revelation and Rectification*, 115–153; Meir, "Goral ha-Tzadikim," 294–297; and Yehosha Druck, "Genuzot," *Otzarot* 174 (2014): 3.

73 An early formulation of the value of traveling to a dead tzaddik on Rosh Hashanah can be found in *Liqquṭei tefilot*, prayer 61, where R. Nathan speaks of the grave as the "foundation stone" and the "Holy of Holies"—ideas that would be far more radically developed by R. Naḥman of Tscherein in *Parpera'ot le-ḥokhmah*, 34b (on *Liqquṭei Moharan* 1:61). Similar phrases can be found throughout *Liqquṭei halakhot*.

74 Avraham Sternhartz, *Ṭovot ve-zikhronot*, 166–167; Koenig, *Sha'arei tzaddiq*, 3:258–259; Bender, *Dibburei 'emunah*, 2:77–82. An allusion to a similar concept can be found in one of R. Nathan's letters. See Koenig, *'Emunat 'Uman*, 20–21, letter 13.



recite the ten chapters of Psalms . . . as he promised while alive.”<sup>75</sup> Thus, we can understand R. Nathan’s *Tiqqun ha-klali* prayer as part of his attempt to encourage pilgrimage to the grave at specific times, to establish a special prayer ceremony, and to lend a sense of continuity to a Hasidic group attached to a hidden leader. All of these things were once the focus of great internal debate before they became the central practices of Bratslav Hasidism.

### The New Prophet

Even if R. Nathan did originally write his prayers for himself, the apologetic tone in his introduction indicates that they conceal a more radical intent. No doubt, the senior Bratslaver Hasidim, who opposed R. Nathan’s new path, heard this undertone clearly—as did R. Nathan’s foreign opponents, who, in the mid-1820s, began reacting to a new and threatening Hasidic group that was taking form. Students of R. Nathan related how he once commented angrily to his disciple, R. Naḥman of Tulchin: “The opponents (*mitnagedim*) ask if these prayers contain divine inspiration (*ru’ah ha-qodesh*). Really, they are even higher than divine inspiration, since they are drawn from the fiftieth gate.”<sup>76</sup> These words directly contradict R. Nathan’s own statements in his introduction to the prayers. Even though the great controversy surrounding R. Nathan, led by the Hasidic master R. Moshe of Savran, did not begin until the mid-1830s (accompanied by the defacement of books, physical and verbal abuse, and threats to totally annihilate Bratslav Hasidism),<sup>77</sup> the internecine conflict began at a far earlier stage, shortly after the publication of *Liqqutei*

75 Sternhartz, *Yemei Moharnat*, part 1, 96, §66. On the dispute concerning R. Naḥman’s burial place, see, among other sources, Avraham Hazan, *Sippurim nifla’im* (Jerusalem: Zuckerman, 1935), 41; Schick, *Pe’ulat ha-tzaddiq*, 704–705; Bender, *Dibburei ’emunah*, 4:90–91.

76 Hazan, *Kokhvei ’or*, “Anshei Moharan,” 50–53, §25; Shmuel Heshel Friedman, *’Emunat ḥakhamim* (Safed: Makhon ’emunat ḥakhamim, 2008), 351–352. See also Bender, *Śiaḥ sarfei qodesh*, 1:176, §397.

77 On the controversy of the 1830s, see Raphael Mahler, *Divrei yemei Yiśra’el: Dorot ’aharonim* (Tel Aviv: Merhaviva, 1976), vol. 6, 32; Shmuel Abba Horodezky, *Ḥasidut ve-ḥasidim* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1943), vol. 3, 79–80; idem, “Rabbi Naḥman,” 150–151; Weiss, *Studies*, 38–39; Green, *Tormented Master*, 89, 128, 130, 176; Piekarsz, *Studies*, 265–267; idem, “The Lessons,” 208–213, 223; Zvi Mark, “Why Did R. Moses Zvi of Savran Persecute R. Nathan of Nemirov and Bratslav Hasidim?” [Hebrew], *Zion* 69 (2004): 487–500; and David Assaf, *Untold Tales of the Hasidim: Crisis and Discontent in the History of Hasidism* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2010), 120–121. A large amount of information about this controversy has

*tefilot*. Surprisingly, both controversies share similar roots and are related to religious issues as well as matters of honor, prestige, and exclusive influence over large Hasidic territories. The initial controversy, fomented by the Bratslav community leaders, was in response to R. Nathan's work with young people, to whom he was providing original advice and guidance in serving God, thereby effectively forming his own Hasidic group. It was in this context that R. Nathan spoke of the great confusion and obstacles that he faced in the publication of his prayers. The controversy with the rabbi of Savran grew out of a local power struggle over territorial control. Only later were theological issues added to the debate, such as claims of heresy, aberrant sexual behavior, and Sabbatianism—common charges in religious disputes of the time. Yet a careful examination of the various controversies involving R. Nathan does reveal that the instigator of the external dispute even had a connection with those of R. Naḥman's close disciples who had opposed R. Nathan.<sup>78</sup> In either case, both those within and without recognized that R. Nathan was creating a living Hasidism—and perhaps, even a new religion—based upon his own novel approach to R. Naḥman's teachings, which was attracting many young people, including those raised in other Hasidic courts.

R. Nathan relates that in the year 1817, a number of his prayers were copied and circulated among Bratslav Hasidim in manuscript form, “until it became known to the opponents, so that it also fueled the controversy.”<sup>79</sup> He also speaks about the “slander” of 1824 (after part of the prayers had already been published), and of “the great controversy here, which led to informers denouncing me, and [the police] coming suddenly to my home and locking up the print shop.”<sup>80</sup> Nothing is mentioned in Bratslav about this “controversy” or who these “informers” were. It is not beyond speculation that they were Bratslavers themselves, faithful to the path of R. Naḥman, though in a way different from that of R. Nathan. The printing of *Liqquṭei tefilot* would only have fueled their opposition, even if it did not actually trigger it. It should be recalled that R. Nathan's printing press was not shut down after the printing of R. Naḥman's writings,

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been preserved in *Yemei ha-tela'ot* and *'Alim li-terufah*. On the defacement of *Liqquṭei tefilot* in the years of controversy, see Sternhartz, *'Alim li-terufah*, 75b, letter 170.

78 There are many allusions to this throughout Bratslav writings. See, for instance, Sternhartz, *'Alim li-terufah*, 102b, letter 235; Hazan, *Yemei ha-tela'ot*, 142–143; and Shick, *'Erekh 'appayim*, 100–101. I discuss these sources at greater length elsewhere. See Meir, “The Controversy.”

79 Sternhartz, *Yemei Moharnat*, part 2, 137–138, §5.

80 *Ibid.*, part 1, 119–121, §99.

but only after he issued his own texts. In such an atmosphere, the reporting of the illegal print shop activities should not come as a surprise.

Nevertheless, it should be stated that it was primarily R. Nathan's foreign opponents who openly mocked the prayers and began persecuting him in the 1830s—during the days of “the great uproar.” Similarly, the maskilim had also gotten hold of several prayers prior to their publication and had begun to mock them. As early as 1815, the maskil Joseph Perl alluded to R. Nathan's prayers toward the end of his satirical work on R. Yaakov Yitzchak, the Seer of Lublin. He wrote, in an ironical tone:

This is a gift for the Hasidic sect, who sit at the right of the Rabbi, who occupies the throne of the Hasidim in each and every city. And particularly, in honor of the great Hasid, our teacher and rabbi, Rabbi Nathan, the son of Rabbi Naftali Hertz of great Nemirov, who has filled the world with the light of his work, the stories of the rabbi and Hasid, R. Naḥman Bratslaver. Even today he works selflessly, day and night, to bring to light his work, the fruit of his spirit, to fulfill the will of his teacher, and fill the lack of the House of Israel. For he composes prayers and supplications based on all the teachings found in the work *Liqqutei Moharan*. “Master of the world” and “May it be your will.” And soon, it will be brought to press.<sup>81</sup>

It seems that several of R. Nathan's prayers actually reached Perl just prior to their publication, leading him to write a similar, satirical prayer in R. Nathan's own unique style—including a prayer for the eradication of the heretical texts of the Hasidim.<sup>82</sup> Perl makes R. Nathan into a mockery, mentions him countless times throughout his satirical works, and even wrote a sharp pasquinade in R. Nathan's very own style. However, R. Nathan was apparently unaware that he had become the butt of the maskilim's lampoonery. At this point, his attention was focused more on the internal and external controversy that raged

81 Shimshon Ha-Levi Bloch, *Neqyyut u-perishut*, The National Library of Israel, Manuscript Division, 106, Joseph Perl's Archive 4<sup>o</sup>1153, Folder 110.

82 Joseph Perl, “Prayer against the Hasidim” [Hebrew], The National Library of Israel, Manuscript Division, 106, Joseph Perl's Archive 4<sup>o</sup>1153, Folder 5. On the complex relationship between R. Nathan and Joseph Perl, see Jonatan Meir, *Imagined Hasidism: The Anti-Hasidic Writings of Joseph Perl* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 2013), 28–61; and idem, “Joseph Perl, Rabbi Nathan of Nemirov, and the Invention of Holy Books” [Hebrew], in *The Library of the Haskalah: The Creation of a Modern Republic of Letters in Jewish Society in the German-Speaking Sphere*, ed. Shmuel Feiner, Zohar Shavit, Natalie Naimark-Goldberg, and Tal Kogman (Tel Aviv: ‘Am ‘oved, 2014), 350–391.

among the Hasidim than on the small group of Galician maskilim, who only became a matter of concern to him in the late 1830s and early 1840s.<sup>83</sup>

The external polemics claimed that R. Nathan was likening himself to a prophet (the association between Nathan the prophet and Nathan of Gaza being an obvious one),<sup>84</sup> that he laid claim to divine inspiration,<sup>85</sup> and that he compared himself and his prayers to King David and his psalms (a similar claim had been made against Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto years earlier, over his own prayers). These and similar accusations were among those that underlay the charges leveled against him by the Russian government, which ultimately led to his arrest.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, criticisms were leveled against specific prayers in *Liqqutei tefilot*. For instance, Eliezer Zvi Zweifel decried the “feculent prayers” over the act of confession before the tzaddik (mentioned earlier).<sup>87</sup> Thus he writes, at the end of a work whose ostensible purpose was to defend the early period of the Hasidic movement:

I must present [the reader] with one of their compositions, which makes one's hair stand on end, and from which one can judge all the rest. May the reader heed well what is being read to him. It is known [by the new

83 That being said, many prayers throughout the work disparage “heretics” and “philosophers,” drawing on passages from *Liqqutei Moharan*. See, for instance, Sternhartz, *Liqqutei tefilot*, part 2, prayers 4, 14. One can find similar passages throughout *Liqqutei halakhot*. For a fuller discussion, see Shmuel Feiner, “Sola fide! The Polemic of Rabbi Nathan of Nemirov against Atheism and Haskalah” [Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 15 (1999), 89–124. The relationship of R. Nathan to the maskilim in Uman, as well as the maskilim in Brody and Lemberg, deserves further study.

84 Joseph Perl, *Ma'asiyyot ve-iggerot me-tzaddiqim 'amityyim u-me-anshei shlomenu* [Hasidic Tales and Letters], ed. Chone Shmeruk and Shmuel Werses (Jerusalem: Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1970), 96–97. On this point see Meir, *Imagined Hasidism*, 43. There is no question that accusations such as these were hurled at R. Nathan during the controversy of the 1830s. This explains many strange events that occurred during this time, such as marking Bratslaver synagogues with crosses, or forcibly shaving half the beards of Hasidim, or accusing them of denying the validity of the oral Torah. See Meir, “The Controversy.”

85 Sternhartz, *Liqqutei tefilot*, introduction, 5; Hazan, *Kokhvei 'or*, “Anshei Moharan,” 50–53, §25; Koenig, *Neveh tzaddiqim*, 117–118.

86 Sternhartz, *'Alim li-terufah*, 76b, letter 170; Hazan, *Yemei ha-tela'ot*, 163, §30. There is hope that the official documents of the imprisonment, which principally relate to the illegal print shop that R. Nathan set up in his home, will soon be released. This will allow for a clearer picture of the motivations and identities of the slanderers, and their principle accusations.

87 Sternhartz, *Liqqutei tefilot*, part 1, 6b–7a, prayer 4.

Hasidim] that each and every one must visit his teacher on the Days of Awe. However, for those unable to fulfill this edict properly, a prayer has been written to recite sometime on Yom Kippur. And this is it: “[May it be your will] Lord our God and God of our fathers, that all of the confessions and requests that I make of you, should be pleasing and acceptable to you, as though I had confessed and requested compassion from the tzaddik.” (I recall that this prayer appears in the work *Tiqqunei tefilot* of R. Naḥman—which is unquestionably the work of his disciple R. Nathan—though perhaps not in these exact words.) Shouldn’t we be tearing [our clothing in mourning] over the open desecration of God’s name that comes from this feculent prayer?<sup>88</sup>

There is no question that Zweifel, for the most part, and justifiably so, sensed that the prayer related to issues of *tiqqun ha-berit* (the rectification of the covenant). He described R. Naḥman as someone who “almost never stopped speaking nonsense and delusions,” and repeatedly expressed his agitation over the “obscene language and sexual concerns” found in Hasidic works.<sup>89</sup> Even though Zweifel’s somewhat inaccurate appraisals were made at a much later date, they nonetheless reflect earlier critiques of the prayers made by both the maskilim and the *mitnagedim*. However, the main critique we find in earlier sources revolved around the deification of a specific tzaddik, who continues to be the leader of his generation even after his passing. It is not surprising, then, that R. Nathan chose to censor parts of his prayers and to temper his words in the preface, in order to downplay their novelty and significance.

In his letters R. Nathan warned dozens of times against transmitting his writings to outsiders, who might mock them.<sup>90</sup> Now that some of his private writings have been published, we can form a slightly clearer picture of his attitude toward the greatness of his prayers. It appears that R. Nathan held the prayers in exceedingly high esteem. “Prayers like these have not yet been in the world,” for they touch upon “all the traits and all the things in the world,” and “whoever recites them consistently, with honesty and sincerity, will

88 Eliezer Zvi Ha-Kohen Zweifel, *Shalom ‘al Yiśra’el v̄ shem mi-shem tov* (Zhitomir: A. S. Shadov, 1868), 106. See Yaakov Cna’ani, “Eliezer Zvi Zweifel” [Hebrew], *Mizrah u-ma’arav* 2 (1928–1929): 443; Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment in the 19th Century* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2010), 175.

89 Eliezer Zvi HaKohen Zweifel, *Shalom ‘al Yiśra’el* 3, 1 (Zhitomir: A. S. Shadov, 1870), 45.

90 Sternhartz, *‘Alim li-terufah*, 8b, letter 11; 120a–b, letter 279. See Ken Frieden, “Neglected Origins of Modern Hebrew Prose: Hasidic and Maskilic Travel Narratives,” *AJS Review*, 33 (2009): 7–8.

definitely merit eternal life.”<sup>91</sup> And when *Liqquṭei tefilot* was finally published, he wrote: “How can I thank God for all his kindness to me—that I was worthy to complete this work of public benefit, the likes of which has never existed before?”<sup>92</sup> And he even went as far as to declare that “Now that [these] prayers are in the world, whoever allows a single day to pass without reciting them will ultimately give an accounting for it,”<sup>93</sup> that “one day, a nation will arise that will praise God with these prayers,”<sup>94</sup> and that “many individuals have already merited *gan eden* through [these] prayers.”<sup>95</sup> To Bratslav Hasidim, R. Nathan’s work does not simply complement R. Naḥman’s *Liqquṭei Moharan*, it is one with it. It is part of the very fabric of Bratslav teachings, and an aspect of the “revelation of his [R. Naḥman’s] holy and awesome original teachings, which are the true wellsprings of salvation,” and not a book that stands apart in its own right. The author successfully laid out fundamental theological principles based upon *Liqquṭei Moharan* and made them relevant to the Hasidim even after the tzaddik’s demise.<sup>96</sup> According to R. Nathan, the prayers of *Liqquṭei tefilot* were like R. Naḥman’s words themselves.<sup>97</sup> R. Nathan’s self-understanding is an important topic that deserves a study of its own, for it seems as though he sought to place himself in a complex and exceptional position: the faithful successor of the tzaddik, but not the tzaddik himself; the bearer of a secret, but not its ultimate revealer; the aspect of Joshua, who completed the great rectification initiated by Moses; the disciple through whom the hidden light shines; and the channel through which the concealed Torah becomes revealed. In one of R. Nathan’s letters, written during the period of great controversy and censored from the early editions, R. Nathan draws a comparison between R. Isaac Luria and R. Naḥman, and between himself and R. Hayyim Vital.<sup>98</sup> In other, unpublished manuscripts, R. Nathan speaks of dreams he had in which both Moses and R. Naḥman appeared to him, praised his books, and encouraged

91 Sternhartz, *Liqquṭei tefilot*, introduction, 5–6.

92 Sternhartz, *Yemei Moharnat*, part 1, 123, §104; idem, *Alim li-terufah*, 38b, letter 86.

93 Moshe Yehoshua Bezhilianski (Alter Tepliker), *Hishtapkhut ha-nefesh* (Jerusalem: Halperin, 1904), introduction, 7a; Hazan, *Kokhvei ’or*, “Anshei Moharan,” 52, §24. For a more refined version of this statement, see Bender, *Śiaḥ śarfei qodesh*, 1:175, §395; 6:21, §40.

94 Hazan, *Kokhvei ’or*, “Anshei Moharan,” 52, §24.

95 Ibid., 53, §25.

96 This is clear from various sources. See Sternhartz, *Alim li-terufah*, 38b, letter 86; 146b, letter 350; Friedman, *’Emunat ḥakhamim*, 354.

97 Sternhartz, *Alim li-terufah*, 48b, letter 117; 146b, letter 350.

98 Ibid., 81b, letter 188 (uncensored letter: *Alim li-terufah Manuscript*, Petersburg National Library, EVR IV 93, 4a).

him to keep writing and publishing.<sup>99</sup> His prayers became a pipeline to his teacher, and his opponents, both within and without the Bratslav camp, well understood their implications. That which R. Nathan only alluded to, or shared with his inner circle of disciples, was obvious enough to those hostile to him. Bratslav Hasidism was rejuvenated with a new leader at its helm, a leader who could present R. Naḥman's teachings in a new way, even though he himself was not a Hasidic rebbe in the traditional sense of the word.

### Canonization and Renewal

It was only after the internal controversy had died down (following the passing of R. Naḥman's elder Hasidim) and the external controversy forgotten (with the death of the Rebbe of Savran) that many Bratslav Hasidim began to openly extol the prayers. Between 1837 and 1845, R. Nathan attracted many new Hasidim to Bratslav, including those who had never met R. Naḥman. He further developed his unique approach and once again became involved in publishing. It is not surprising, then, that during this period, he chose to publish the work *Liqqutei 'etzot*—a book of advice and practical guidance that would be useful for the newcomers<sup>100</sup>—and the beginning of his magnum opus, *Liqqutei halakhot*, which constitutes a mature expression of the unique interpretations and conceptualizations that he only alluded to in *Liqqutei tefilot*.<sup>101</sup> At this point, the internecine feuds over the correct approach to Bratslav Hasidism had passed, and R. Nathan was able to develop and transmit its values, as he understood them. When he sought to attract the youth of Brody and Lemberg,

99 Hazan, *Yemei ha-tela'ot*, introduction, 134; Bender, *Śiaḥ śarfei qodesh*, 3:28, §60; Heshin, *Maṭmonim*, 51; Meir, *Imagined Hasidism*, 48; Nathan Zvi Koenig, *Shenat ratzon* (Bnei Brak: Kollle Bratslav, 1978), 175 (Koenig cites a manuscript of one of R. Nathan's dreams from 1816). According to Avraham Hazan, a similar dream can be found in the manuscripts of Shmuel Horowitz, "Śiḥot ve-sippurim," Schocken Institute, Jerusalem, 70132/10.

100 The first edition of this work was published in 1816 in Dubno, with all mention of R. Naḥman or R. Nathan removed. Though R. Nathan rearranged the contents and added much new material in 1826, he was not able to reprint it till much later, in 1841 in Lemberg. The title page of this edition explicitly mentions R. Naḥman and includes the *Tiqqun ha-klali*. See Koenig, *Neveh tzaddiqim*, 136–137; Assaf, *Bratslav*, 10–11, §7.

101 Only the first volume was published during R. Nathan's life, in 1843 in Iași. Both this volume and the ones that followed were printed through the efforts of R. Naḥman of Tulchin, one of R. Nathan's close disciples. See Koenig, *Neveh tzaddiqim*, 87–116; Assaf, *Bratslav*, 13–15, §10; Yizhak Yudlov, "The First Edition of *Sefer Liqqutei halakhot*" [Hebrew], *Kiryat Sefer* 62 (1988–1989): 933–935.

he not only presented them with his edition of *Sippurei ma'asiyyot*, but with *Liqquṭei tefilot* as well—a work that bridged the gap to the deceased yet living tzaddik, and which embodied the essence of *'emunat ḥakhamim*—absolute faith in the rabbis.<sup>102</sup>

Shortly before his passing, R. Nathan spoke extensively about the importance of publishing. “One must draw near the Rebbe [i.e., R. Naḥman]. But if there is no Rebbe, one connects to the pen.”<sup>103</sup> *Liqquṭei tefilot* was one of the works that kept R. Naḥman alive and provided meaning and inspiration to a Hasidic group without a living leader. It was not long before the Hasidim began comparing R. Nathan's work to a new book of Psalms, and reciting its passages soon became an established ritual, as various early twentieth-century texts of Bratslav Hasidim in Poland and the Land of Israel attest. For instance, R. Yehiel Mendel of Medvedevka wrote about the importance of the prayers, which were written with “divine inspiration and which should be recited daily.”<sup>104</sup> R. Yizhak Breiter, a leading figure in Poland, wrote in his Bratslaver “Daily Itinerary”: “One should recite *Liqquṭei tefilot* every day, and should also create his own prayers; that is, he should pray to fulfill the words of the tzaddik that he learns from his books. Through this, he brings great delight to the Blessed One.”<sup>105</sup> R. Avraham Sternhartz also instructed his followers to recite the prayers regularly, in addition to reciting specific prayers before the Sabbath and holidays.<sup>106</sup> Thus, the prayers that were published within a specific sociopolitical context—to fortify R. Nathan's position among the orphaned Hasidim, and to provide a theological basis for the new community—became an essential component in the world of Bratslav Hasidim. *Liqquṭei tefilot* has been published in dozens of editions, divided and reassembled based upon topics and calendar events, partially translated into Yiddish and English, and

102 Sternhartz, *ʿAlim li-terufah*, 126a–b.

103 Ibid., “Iggeret ha-histalqut,” 128a.

104 Yehiel Mendel of Medvedevka, *Shir yedidot* (Jerusalem: Halperin, 1907), 6a, 7a. For more on Mendel see Meir, “Mystical Songs.”

105 Yizhak Breiter, *She'erit Yitzḥaq* (Jerusalem: ʿAgudat meshekh ha-naḥal, 2005), 93, “Seder ha-yom,” §15; Aharon Leib Zigelman, *Quntres ʿein zokher* (Brooklyn: Hadaf, 2008), 56. Many stories and anecdotes about various customs related to the regular recitation of the prayers can be found scattered throughout late Bratslav literature. See, for instance, Sternhartz, *ʿAlim li-terufah*, 206a, letter 2; 206b, letter 4; idem, *Ḥayyei Moharan*, “Quntres ha-hosafot,” 584, §73; Bender, *Śiaḥ sarfei qodesh*, 4:57–58, §168; 4:182, §600; 5:89–90, §207; 5:145, §351; 6:83, §193; 6:171–172, §391; 6:199, §443; idem, *Dibburei ʿemunah*, 2:89–90; and Naḥman Mordekhai Koenig, *Rav Peʿalim: The Life of Nathan Zvi Koenig* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Nofet tzofim, 2013), 111–112.

106 Koenig, *Shaʿarei tzaddiq*, 1:223–224, 2:111–112, 3:152–153, 4:110.



excerpted in countless anthologies.<sup>107</sup> Several editions have even tried printing the prayers together with their corresponding lesson, so that they could be recited simultaneously with Torah study. Thus, a unified teaching of Bratslav Hasidism was formed, and the teacher and his disciple were forged into one, in the minds of the Hasidim.<sup>108</sup>

After the years of controversy in the 1830s, Bratslav Hasidism rose from the grave, with R. Nathan successfully organizing and leading the group until his death in 1844. He also successfully transformed his prayers into an integral part of the Bratslav canon, as he succeeded in doing with an entire literature written at the behest of his teacher. He thus created a sort of “sacred library” that formed a bulwark against the “impure books” of the *mitnagedim* and the *maskilim*.<sup>109</sup> When the internal battles had settled, and the political feuds faded away, it became possible to speak of a clearly defined and undisputed Bratslav canon. It is possible to appreciate the centrality of *Liqqutei tefilot* among later Bratslav Hasidim, and how R. Nathan was perceived by later generations of Hasidim, from the introduction to the work *Hishtapkhut ha-nefesh* (Jerusalem, 1904), edited by R. Moshe Yehoshua Bezhilianski (Alter Tepliker):

For our rabbi, R. Nathan, fulfilled the verse: “he did not budge from the tent”; that is, the tent of the teaching of our holy Rabbi, the light of lights, etc., the author of *Liqqutei Moharan*. For he received [R. Naḥman’s] holy understanding to an amazing degree of perfection—more than all the other righteous disciples. For our Holy Rabbi shone from within with an illumination of his holy consciousness, like the great light [of the sun] shines upon the lesser light [of the moon]. For our Holy Rabbi said of him

107 This practice originated among Bratslav Hasidim in Warsaw during the first half of the twentieth century. See, for instance, the pamphlets printed by Aharon Leib Zigelman, *Tefilah ve-teḥinah le-lag be-’omer* (Warsaw: Bratslav, 1927); idem, *Tefilah le-rosh ha-shanah* (Warsaw: Bratslav, 1927); and Shalom, *’Elleh shemot*, 37–38. Yosef Zvi Rimon described how these prayers were praised and how they were recited during that time in “Sefer Liqqutei tefilot,” *Do’ar ha-yom*, October 23, 1931, 6.

108 The first overt attempt at this type of synthesis was by Yehudah Leib Zigelman of Warsaw, who published, in booklet form, *Liqqutei Moharan* together with the corresponding prayers, and sections from *Parpera’ot le-ḥokhmah*. He got as far as lesson 8. A complete synthesis of *Liqqutei Moharan* and *Liqqutei tefilot* was achieved by Yizhak Isaac Zilberman (without *Parpera’ot le-ḥokhmah*), in his *Torot ve-tefilot* (Jerusalem: Sfera, 1953), a work that has been reprinted numerous times.

109 Sternhartz, *’Alim li-terufah*, “Iggeret ha-histalqut,” 188a–b; Naḥman of Tscherein, *Parpera’ot le-ḥokhmah*, 35a–b (on *Liqqutei Moharan* 1:61); Piekarz, “The Lessons,” 223; Meir, *Imagined Hasidism*, 47–55, 58–59.

that he understood him better than everyone else, and that he studied, taught, acted, and fulfilled all the words of our Holy Rabbi with absolute perfection. He revealed to us upright approaches [to acquiring] positive virtues, and especially in the matter of prayer and meditation, which he received from our Holy Rabbi. He formulated wondrous and awesome original insights to encourage each person in their service of God. These are written in the book *Liqquṭei halakhot*, which he composed on all four parts of the *Shulḥan 'arukh*, as our Holy Rabbi instructed him. And he wrote the book *Liqquṭei tefilot*, which includes prayers, pleas, supplications, placations, appeasements, confessions, and great inspiration for the soul of each Jew, so that a person can arouse himself to remember his ultimate fate, [prayers that are] based upon the holy chapters of *Liqquṭei Moharan*, as instructed by our Holy Rabbi.<sup>110</sup>

It is hard to imagine such a hackneyed text being written immediately after R. Naḥman's passing. Certainly it fails to accurately portray the historical reality. Yet the words exactly capture the mentality of Bratslav Hasidim from the mid-nineteenth century until today—a mentality that has penetrated even into popular literature and academic research. The boundaries between R. Naḥman and R. Nathan have become completely blurred, and as a result, so has any theory of the early development of Bratslav Hasidism and the internecine fighting that accompanied it.<sup>111</sup> Actually, it is almost impossible to analyze any Bratslaver teaching in terms of its precise origin, since R. Naḥman's main legacy was preserved and transmitted almost exclusively by R. Nathan. Nevertheless, the possibility remains that a close reading of various texts (such as *Liqquṭei tefilot*) will uncover substrata of allusions and shed new light on previously buried historical layers, thus granting us a more complex picture of this important Hasidic group. The politics surrounding the publication of *Liqquṭei tefilot* were obvious to the Hasidim of the time, and a fresh examination of the events reveals stages in the development of Bratslav Hasidism as they occurred within a changing historical reality.

After the initial impetus leading to the publication of *Liqquṭei tefilot* faded and the question of leadership became irrelevant, R. Nathan's works were

110 Bezahilanski, *Hishtapkhat ha-nefesh*, introduction, 6a–b. See similar statements by two recent Bratslaver leaders: Yaakov Meir Schechter, *'Osef ma'marim 'al yanim nora'im ve-sukkot* (Jerusalem: Bratslav, 2011), 38; Bender, *Dibburei 'emunah*, 4:75–76.

111 See for example, Eliezer Steinman, *Kitvei Rabbi Naḥman of Bratslav* (Tel Aviv: Kneset, 1951), 15; Shimon Ernst, "Rabbi Nathan of Nemirov," *Do'ar ha-yom*, May 18, 1934, 5; Meir Shimon Gashuri, "Rabbi Nathan of Nemirov," *Talpiyyot* 6 (1953): 373.

canonized within the body of Bratslav literature. Ultimately they became the foundation of a new and open-ended genre in which numerous similar prayers were composed by later Bratslav Hasidim. This began with R. Naḥman of Tscherein, who wrote prayers on the chapters of *Liqquṭei Moharan* that R. Nathan had not completed (*Liqquṭei tefilot ve-tahanunim*, Lemberg: Rohatin, 1876), and continued in R. Efraim ben Naftali's prayers based on *Liqquṭei halakhot* (*Tefilot ha-boqer*, Jerusalem: Frumkin, 1881), in the prayers of R. Avraham Hazan (*Šašon ve-šimḥah*, Jerusalem: Bratslav, 1933), in the prayers of R. Yizhak Breiter (collected in the works *Naḥalei 'emunah*, Bnei Brak: Koenig, 1967, and *She'erit Yitzḥaq*, Jerusalem: 'Agudat meshekh ha-naḥal, 2005), and in dozens of other smaller publications that have gone beyond the earlier formulas and that continue to be published today.<sup>112</sup>

It is very easy to think of Bratslav Hasidism as a single flawless and unchanging unit. It is also easy to ignore the unique contribution that the various books have made to the movement, each within its historical or theological context. Many Bratslavers themselves, who imagine the existence of a unified picture and clearly formed doctrine, take this approach for granted—as do those connected romantically with R. Naḥman today, as in the past. It seems to me that scholars of Bratslav Hasidism would do well to free themselves from this constrictive view and take steps to identify the complex twists and turns in the development of this group, within an accurate historical and theological context.

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112 An extremely original contribution to this genre can be found in the unusual prayers of Eliezer Berland, published recently in various formats, under the title *Tefilah le-'ani* (Prayer of a Poor Man). See, for instance, the book *Tefilah le-'ani: Tziyyun rabbenu ha-qadosh* (Jerusalem: Har Tzion, 2007), which contains a serious blurring of the distinction between the tzaddik and God, and remarkable expressions of attachment to the tzaddik and "soul impregnation."