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RABBI ISAAC HUTNER: A SYNOPTIC INTERPRETIVE BIOGRAPHY

“Not that any of us could write it, but if each major disciple of the Rosh Yeshiva were to write a book about him, each would write a different book.”

Disciple of Rabbi Isaac Hutner, the “Rosh Yeshiva”—dean—of Chaim Berlin talmudical academy

“Regardless of what you hear quoted in my name, do not believe it unless I have told it to you personally.”

Disciple, quoting Rabbi Hutner

Genesis describes Adam as having been “born” as an adult, created as a fully developed, mature being. Rabbinic commentary observes that Adam was born circumcised—a ritual, in Jewish tradition, symbolizing need for rectification, but, in the case of Adam, born without need of circumcision, a symbol of completion.¹ In encountering Isaac Hutner (1906–1980), it is as if the accounts of creation in Genesis and in rabbinic commentary were devised as metaphors for him. For example, one opens Rabbi Hutner’s letters, glancing at those written when he was sixteen.² Here, there writes neither a child nor a teenager, but an adult, and in every sense. Ideas are fully developed, and often original; sense of self is complete, but without the self-consciousness of youth; the Hebrew is remarkable for its crystalline clarity, for its rootedness in biblical metaphor, and, no less, for its control of modern Hebrew, giving the stern, austere biblical metaphor a suppleness and shading not endemic to it. One rereads the date on the letter: surely there has been a mistake. A sixteen-year-old does not write this way. But there is no mistake. Rabbi Hutner was born circumcised.

As his thought worked its way into print, as his personality left an unerasable imprint on disciples, rebellious or loyal, Rabbi Hutner

I benefitted immeasurably from comments generously offered by several disciples of Rabbi Hutner, and by his daughter, Mrs. Bruria David, on earlier drafts of this article. They saved me from many pitfalls, even as some of them disagreed with one or another of my interpretations, for all of which I am solely responsible.

performed a striking feat: he learned from a wide array of intellectual types and national styles without becoming either confused or changed. He remained always in control, learning and appropriating entire systems of thought and style yet transmuting them such that although their individual identities were clearly recognizable in him, they nonetheless constituted parts of something larger.

Rabbi Hutner embodied a problem: How can contrary, even contradictory systems of thought and life mesh without eclectic blending, or oscillation between poles? If the answer cannot be logical, it can be phenomenological: the complex and straightforward “Varshever Illui” (Warsaw prodigy) himself, born in 1906, soon to become a renowned Talmudist; and poet, and philosopher; and pietist, and egoist; and intellectual, and humorist; and private person, and public persona; and lover of Zion, and anti-Zionist; and personally liberal, and programmatically conservative; and devotee of the towering opponent of Hasidism, the Vilna Gaon, and practitioner of Hasidism itself. Rabbi Hutner once commented autobiographically on a rabbinic midrash on Adam: “Adam, it says, was created from earth gathered from all over the world. I, too, am a gathering point: from Poland, from Lithuania, from Riga, from Germany, from *Eretz Yisrael* [the Land of Israel], from the United States.”³ A panorama of influences, impinging on radical autonomy, entailed still another pair of contrary impulses: self-revelation and self-concealment. Revelation of self was possible because there was so much colorful and diverse baggage that Rabbi Hutner could set forth, layer after layer, without ever reaching the bottom layer. This he could guard from intrusive eyes. Captivating friendliness went hand in hand with unstated but clear prohibition of excessive familiarity to his person, such that the more one knew him, the less one knew, and similarly, the more one probes his writings—all of which he structured in both form and content with a clear definitiveness—the less certain one is of the ultimate perspective of the constellations of thought therein. Isaac Hutner, like all transition figures, is an enigma. In his case the quandary is deepened because we know so much about him.

I

From his early youth Isaac Hutner kept diaries and maintained an active and diverse correspondence. Self-reflection, first in relation to his own aspirations and to his self-chosen separation from his parents, and then in relation to his numerous travels and studies, was his lodestar. He entered school—a yeshiva in Lomza, Poland—

apparently for the first time, when he was fifteen. His first studies away from home launched a thirteen-year odyssey which saw him in close contact with virtually all of the major intellectual centers and mentors in the worlds of Talmud study, piety (the Musar movement), and Hasidism. Mere recitation of the itinerary, in its geographical diversity and rotation between lengthy and short pauses, gives evidence of the breadth, the urgency, and the discipline of his quest. After his brief stay in Lomza he returned to Warsaw (one-half year, until 1921); then to the Musar yeshiva in Slobodka, Lithuania (three-and-a-half years, until 1925); then to Slobodka's branch in Hebron, Palestine (four years, until 1929); then back to Warsaw (briefly, 1929); then to the University of Berlin (four months, 1929); then to Warsaw (one year, until 1930); then to Hebron and Jerusalem (three-quarters of a year, until 1931); then to Kovno, Lithuania, to write his prodigious work on naziriteship (one year, until 1932); then, for the last time, to Warsaw (one year, until 1933) where he married; then to Palestine (one year, until 1934); then to New York City (1934, until settling in Israel, late 1970s).⁴

“Slobodka”—after Warsaw, the first and lengthiest stop on the itinerary—was as much a concept and a person as it was an institution. A single, wooden building across the Niemen River in a small suburb of Kovno, Lithuania, Slobodka was a wellspring of brilliance, graduating more world-renowned Talmud scholars in the first quarter of the twentieth century than all other similar institutions combined, and molding the research method of the nonconformist, Harry Austryn Wolfson. Behind the intellectual brilliance stood Rabbi Moses Mordechai Epstein, but this was but part of the pulse in Slobodka. Wolfson was an anomaly in Slobodka in the sense that he drew his major inspiration from Rabbi Epstein. For most of the prodigies there, Talmud study—central as it was—drew its motivation and coloration from Rabbi Epstein's collaborator. The uniqueness of Slobodka was the idea of intellectual piety as embodied in “the Elder of Slobodka”—the academy's founder and mentor for nearly fifty years—Rabbi Nathan Zvi Finkel.

Secretive in the extreme, self-sufficient even earlier in life than was Isaac Hutner, the Elder, an orphan, appeared as if from nowhere at the age of fifteen, a budding scholar, counselor, and organizer.⁵ We know nothing of his early years and education. He wrote virtually no letters and published nothing, save a single, anonymous introduction to an anthology⁶ (he signed his name in code by rearranging the first letters of his names, *Nathan Zvi Hirsh Finkel*, to spell *Ha-ZaFuN*, “the hidden one”).⁷ Discovered in his early twenties as an emergent leader by an associate of Rabbi Simhah Zisl Ziv, the leading disciple of Rabbi Israel Salanter, Nathan Zvi Finkel studied

under Rabbi Simhah Zisl for a few years. Then he opened a precursor of the Slobodka yeshiva, when he was only twenty-seven, as if from that time forward he was “the Elder”—formative orator and educator, creative interpreter of Jewish thought from the pietistic point of view.

The Elder was always the pedagogue, revealing nothing of himself, at the same time eschewing privacy, rooming and boarding with his own students for twenty-five years, returning to his wife and family for two short periods yearly.⁸ His little need for formal privacy and comfort created certain educational advantages: a continual presence as role model; and full opportunity to glean knowledge of his students both in the classroom and in life, such that the raw data which formed the basis of his guidance and counseling was both unmediated and comprehensive. Individualized guidance was offered informatively, strongly or subtly, frequently or infrequently,⁹ always so that it could be acted upon in conjunction with full participation in the rigorous curriculum of talmudic studies; so that it enabled brilliant young pupils such as Aaron Kotler, Jacob Kaminecki, and Isaac J. Ruderman to develop in mind and differentiate in personality.

Isaac Hutner studied under the Elder from 1921 until the Elder’s death, in Palestine, in 1927. His letters testify to quantum leaps in deepening of understanding of fundamentals of Judaism¹⁰ (the progress in talmudic learning was unstated, taken for granted), but it was not just quantitatively that he learned from the Elder. In the Elder, Isaac Hutner witnessed intellectual independence, personal self-sufficiency, and an attractive relationship between self-concealment and effective pedagogy. The pedagogue’s task was not to implant his own perspective, but to refine those of his students; not to share the burden of his own spiritual failure, or the glory of his attainments, but to nurture the personality and discipline of budding disciples. If an unshakeable sense of independence—and of the value of fostering it in others—Isaac Hutner learned from the Elder, he stood in dialectical tension to him, as to all of his mentors. If he could learn much even in “fundamentals” from the Elder, he would still, it seems to me, recoil from him, both emotionally and intellectually. After the Elder’s death Isaac Hutner wrote in his typically revealing and mystifying way:

During the past year, the Elder of Slobodka worked hard to explain several fundamental perspectives which pertain to me personally, but in no way could I assimilate them, could I integrate them into my consciousness. And now, suddenly, with the death of the Elder, they have all become clear and vivid. . . . “Greater are the righteous in death than in life.”¹¹

Revealed here is Isaac Hutner's closeness to the Elder and sense of growth, including an openness to the unexpected; obscured here is the content of the "fundamental perspectives." Beyond all this there is revealed Isaac Hutner's inability to stand before the scrutiny of the Elder; illumination followed, but could not precede, his death. The quick slide into retrospective reverence ("Greater are the righteous . . .")—not insincere—highlights the difficulty of self-knowledge when demanded by a living presence. Isaac Hutner's reverence is not nostalgia. Rather, it is an expression of release, by grace, from a stubbornness which resisted even an accurate reading of his soul, for posthumous assent to the truth of the reading did not entail surrender to the reader. Reverence was easier when it was less consequential; emotional recoil was quieted when it was less important.

The intellectual recoil from the Elder stemmed from the fact that in Slobodka no intellectual inquiry (apart from Talmud study) was undertaken for its own sake. The Elder, pietist *par excellence*, turned extra-talmudic writings—aggadah, midrash, the homiletical literature, Jewish philosophy, and, of course, the medieval musar works—to lessons in character traits and personality development. All was refracted through an intelligence seeking to extract ethical and psychological insight, however tangential it might be within the text itself. Moreover, Jewish mysticism (kabbalah) was not touched at all, at least overtly. If, then, Isaac Hutner remained indebted to the Elder for opening before him the breadth of pietistic, musar literature, the pietistic perspective *per se* was constricting. A broader approach, respecting the integrity of disciplines in Jewish thought outside piety, was necessary.

When Isaac Hutner arrived in Palestine in 1925, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kuk was at the height of his powers.¹² Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine, talmudist, poet, philosopher, essayist, mystic, and pietist, Rabbi Kuk was a man of no little controversy. This was primarily because of his integration of antireligious, socialist Zionism into a mystical worldview in which harmony was conceived as the temporary, if positive, inclusion of opposites on the path to perfection.¹³ The controversial side of Rabbi Kuk dominated Isaac Hutner's attitude toward him years later, but as a young man his predominant interest was in learning from him. The dominant note then was high esteem and admiration. In many ways Rabbi Kuk was the Elder's opposite, notwithstanding Rabbi Kuk's own roots in the Musar movement¹⁴ and reputation as a pietist of the highest rank—an "*ish kadosh*," a holy man. The Elder was personally closed, writing nothing, teaching through the power of insight into others, while Rabbi Kuk was personally open, spilling forth in lectures and

writings that welled up so spontaneously that, for some years, he wrote only in pencil, unable even momentarily to interrupt the flow of inspiration to dip the premodern pen into the inkwell. If the Elder addressed the whole person, restricting the flow of knowledge in accord with the powers of receptivity of the addressee, Rabbi Kuk addressed the heart and the mind, unleashing torrents of discourse woven from the entire range of Jewish thought: law, lore, philosophy, poetry, mysticism, pietism, homiletics, exegesis. The Elder was a pedagogue; Rabbi Kuk, an intellectual. Isaac Hutner sought to combine the two, to become the two.

For Isaac Hutner the personal, pietistic orientation of the Elder was necessary, but not sufficient. Isaac Hutner's intellectual curiosity required validation, and it was Rabbi Kuk who provided it, bringing him to an unrestricted confrontation with Jewish mysticism and philosophy on their own terms. From Rabbi Kuk Isaac Hutner acquired breadth of knowledge, from the Elder, an awareness of the value in revealing it selectively; from Rabbi Kuk, legitimization of intellectual quest, from the Elder, the need to channel and sometimes limit another's quest. Rabbi Kuk taught the young Hutner fearlessness in intellectual search; the Elder, wisdom in intellectual transmission. Rabbi Kuk taught the need for loyalty to one's vision, and aspirations; the Elder, the need for legerdemain in making available one's intellectual integrity. Rabbi Kuk embodied ever-expanding horizons; the Elder, self-restraint in nurturing the limited horizons in most people. In Rabbi Kuk Isaac Hutner witnessed self-revelation, in the Elder, self-concealment, and he appreciated both.

II

The Elder and Rabbi Kuk planted seeds in fertile soil, but sprouts were not immediately forthcoming. Isaac Hutner wished his seedbed to body forth a greater diversity than the complements of piety and thought, and not one sprout could blossom until each root was in place. Still to be nurtured was the ground of the enterprise, talmudic study; still to be designed were a number of hues among the flowers, such as critical scholarship and Polish hasidic thought; and, most important, still to be decided was the ultimate location of the garden.

After eight years in Lithuania and Palestine, Isaac Hutner returned home for the first time in 1929, at the age of twenty-three. The reunion with parents was poignant, but the overriding tone in his letters seems to me not to be genuine tenderness, but awareness of the pain that the long absence of a son—and the lack of opportunity to observe a ripening talmudic scholar—brought to people, parents, a

generation his senior.¹⁵ Ever solicitous of their feelings, he was only too aware of how much his journeys of body and soul had transformed him. In letters which his family has chosen to publish, there is no reference to his siblings (his official biography mentions them not at all). Whatever the precise complex of his family relations, and notwithstanding his developing penchant for self-concealment, his capacity for friendship and his depth of identification with the stoppings points along his odyssey—his self-revelation—were pronounced. A few weeks after arriving home in Warsaw, he set out for Berlin, writing at that time to a friend in Hebron: “These leave-takings [from, for example, parents in 1921, Slobodka in 1925, Hebron in 1929, parents, again, in 1929] have overtaken me just a little too much. But what can I do? This is my nature. Every place where I arrive, even as but a passing guest, I take root at once; I become a citizen in the land, in the environment. Naturally that makes the parting seven times more difficult. Am I, then, to be counted among the righteous, who lack tranquility in both this world and the next? I begin to feel a little bit proud.”¹⁶

In Berlin were contemporaries of Isaac Hutner on their own odysseys, young Orthodox prodigies of a kind whom he could hardly have expected to encounter in Palestine; and there were mentors whose syntheses were different from those of both the Elder and Rabbi Kuk, and whom he had good reason to suspect would open their doors to him. There was, for example, Rabbi Jehiel Jacob Weinberg, Ph.D., then forty-four, a pre-World War I student in Slobodka who had become its first graduate to seek a doctorate (at the University of Giessen), who was the first to bring a Lithuanian approach to Talmud study to the West; and who now was Rector of the Rabbinical Seminary for Orthodox Judaism, an explicitly cross-cultural enterprise.¹⁷ Weinberg was a practitioner of what then occupied a central place on the agenda of critical Jewish scholarship, the editing of critical editions of seminal Jewish texts by collation of manuscripts and philological expertise. Two other former Slobodka students, Saul Lieberman and Harry Austryn Wolfson, were doing this, respectively, in talmudic and medieval philosophic texts (*Al ha-Yerushalmi* [*On the Talmud of the Land of Israel*] and *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle*, both published in 1929). Rector Weinberg was working in the history of Jewish law. We may suppose that in Isaac Hutner's visits with the Rector, this kind of scholarship was discussed. A few years later we find young Hutner independently taking pains to secure a manuscript of Hillel of Verona's thirteenth-century commentary on *Sifra*, a rabbinic work on Leviticus of roughly the same authority as Mishnah. The manuscript was written in Italian script, which Isaac Hutner taught himself by comparing passages

from the Talmud quoted in the manuscript with the Talmud itself, until he was able “to study it as easily as a printed book.”¹⁸ His goal was to write a commentary on Hillel of Verona’s work in order to open up study of *Sifra*.

He began work on the Italian commentary in 1934, during his last stay in Palestine, and devoted his first years in the United States to completing it. Only one small section was published, however, in 1938.¹⁹ It was one of the last of the few items that he allowed to be published under his own name, until he officially broke his silence in 1964. In setting out for Berlin in 1929, he had translated Orthodox then-athiest then-Zionist then-Diaspora nationalist then-again-Orthodox Nathan Birnbaum’s *Eternal People* from German to Hebrew as a self-written letter of introduction. When word of the translation was leaked to a Hebrew journal he refused to let it be published, eventually relenting, typically, to allow part of it to be published anonymously.²⁰ To be accepted in the East European world of talmudic scholarship—“East European” signifying a metonymy for insulated, intensive Talmud study in Eastern Europe, Palestine, or the United States—as Isaac Hutner always was, it was impolitic to be associated with literary or scholarly endeavors. Early in his career, it seems to me, he made the conscious decision neither to limit the breadth of his interests nor to pursue them any more openly than his keen sense of their tolerability among his colleagues told him was possible. In this, Rabbi Hutner was unlike Rabbi Joseph Baer Soloveitchik, whom Rabbi Hutner first met in Berlin and who was so different from him, notwithstanding their similar urge to twin intensive talmudic studies with extra-talmudic perspectives. Rabbi Soloveitchik never concealed his extra-talmudic, philosophic interests—a stance which aggravated his already natural penchant for loneliness by overtly setting him apart from that community of first-level East European talmudic scholars who should have been his natural circle. Rabbi Hutner, through public concealment of his broad interests, did gain acceptance in his natural circle, but at a price: a different kind of self-induced loneliness. He would become a lonely eminence because of a sweep and grasp that he could rarely share.

For the same reasons that he would hesitate to reveal his literary and scholarly endeavors, he would be unhesitant in revealing his talmudic abilities. It was to this task—not critical scholarship—that he turned upon his return to Warsaw from Berlin. He did not begin at once. A customary, twofold gesture—waiting, absorbing, maturing; and quick movement, sudden initiative—preceded *Torat ha-Nazir* (*Law of the Nazirite*). Its germination found him studying a year in Warsaw, then another nine months in Palestine, whereupon

he returned, full-circle, to the Slobodka yeshiva in Lithuania, promptly and intensively to undertake a work that would reflect the erudition of a scholar beyond his years. People had known him to study for nearly twenty-four hours without stop. That is apparently what he did now, learning tractate *Nazir*, setting down both analyses and original interpretations, completing the work in no more than half a year! So unfailing was his certitude that he sent every few pages to the printers as soon as they were finished, not even waiting until the entire manuscript was finished to insure that all sections correlated.²¹ Various proofs were sent to internationally renowned Talmud scholars with a request for a formal approbation. Enthusiastic replies were readily forthcoming.²²

The book marked a turning point. Rabbi Hutner would marry soon after it was published, securing not just his lifelong partner but steady financial support from his in-laws in order to allow him to develop his intellectual interests freely, unburdened by practical considerations.²³ In no small measure this was the result of the stature that the book both conferred and confirmed. Isaac Hutner would become “Rabbi”—teacher—setting his sights less on how and what to absorb from others, more on how and what to transmit to others. It was this reorientation which entailed his most radical uprooting—an uprooting, as he said, always for the sake of growth.

And so [he wrote in 1934] I am now on my way to America. Here I am, on the ship, sailing to New York. In these last years, I have been swept by the flux of events in my life, wave after wave, journey after journey, migration upon migration, and have known no rest. All these journeys, migrations, travels, all that probing—inside and outside of myself— . . . were nothing other than the result of an inner urge disturbing my peace, consuming me with its flame, beating my back with a thousand hammers and grabbing my head by its tails—goading me to find the way *to myself by myself*. I must create even the first stalks with my own hands.²⁴

As a comprehensive retrospective, unifying and conceptualizing his dense and differentiated itinerary into a single period of search, this reflection identifies one unmalleable quality which stood out even at the journey’s beginning: independence. If Europe and Palestine were most fertile ground for independence as a student, the United States would be most fertile ground for independence as a teacher, a rabbi. “I must concede that had I not been in the United States all these years—had I remained in the Holy Land—life there would not have allowed me that nonalignment [*i-hizdahut*] so essential to my spirit. . . .”²⁵

Independence, in the sense of guarding the essential self, the bottommost ego, from the insistent demand for transformation: a term not to be cherished by pietists, but to be taken for granted in

Hasidism. If in the Elder's musar Rabbi Hutner observed self-concealment, self-scrutiny, self-sacrifice, and growth and tranquility—all of which he sought to embody—he saw all this after his formative years in Warsaw, “formative” because, by sixteen, he was beyond his years. Although his paternal heritage derived from the Lithuanian pocket within the predominantly hasidic, religious sector of Jewish Warsaw, he knew the larger hasidic community of his birth. His maternal heritage was hasidic. The attractive traits of the Elder's musar he could locate in the iconoclastic, Polish hasidic eddy of Kotsk, with which an uncle was associated. He studied in the Gerer *shtibl* in Warsaw. He absorbed Hasidism's dominant view that the ego, though not to be left untended, was not to be transformed, either. Whether the hasidic ethos shaped Isaac Hutner, or merely confirmed prior inclinations, we cannot know. We do know that he was able to reconcile a Musar stress on criticizing the ego and a hasidic stress on nurturing it.

The musar practice of self-scrutiny presumed an essential psychological health, an ability to step outside the self and view it objectively, to analyze and criticize it without destroying it. However, with the passage of the generations, thought Rabbi Hutner, the presumption of essential psychological health no longer held; people had weakened. It became necessary to build ego, to foster self-regard—self-confidence and self-trust—to restore the rung of being with which the Musar sensibility had begun and from which it ascended. Implicit in all of Rabbi Hutner's writings is a clear message of encouragement: Man can achieve. Man is great. While in Slobodka this concept (*gadlut ha-adam*) had represented the foundation of pietistic devotion—the state from which an essentially healthy person could transform himself—in Rabbi Hutner's thought the concept represented the culmination, the essence of psychological health, which itself required much effort to attain. Rabbi Hutner himself spared no effort in fostering his own foundation of essential health, or self-regard. A feature unifying his letters is the pronoun “I” and the adjective “my.” He set forth the significance of these ubiquities most clearly in a letter in 1933.

I am now becoming steeped in studies. . . . Study in its various guises absorbs me, and yet I know that the essence of my personality is the life of my soul and not the life of my mind. . . . For me to live a life of the soul means to live a life of soul-creativity. For myself, I cannot imagine any realm of life of the spirit to be without creativity. But this is the rub: I am not able to be creative in the life of the soul without first taking important strides—creative ones—in study and *mada*. And so, I am stuck between the insistent claims of the soul, which penetrate to my depths, and between the command of my personality to overcome these claims temporarily, [as I pursue my studies] to build for greater soul-creativity at a later time.²⁶

The soul—the ego—was to be trained to perform acts of righteousness and tasks of holiness, to be nurtured and channeled, not changed. And at bottom, the twenty-eight-year-old groom who set out for America, manuscript of Hillel of Verona in hand, was now to use, not change, his ego to build an institutional-intellectual world of a kind never before seen there.

III

America unleashes zest, all the more so for a person who possesses it to begin with and especially if he senses that America will do just that. Already within a year after arrival Rabbi Hutner was delivering addresses in English. His appearance was modern: no East European, long black rabbinical caftan, and no beard. It would be three to four decades before American rabbinical academies (yeshivas) produced their own deans, earlier ones being European transplants—with the exception of Rabbi Hutner. To all outward appearances—dress, language, easy camaraderie with American ways of thinking and the American street urchins who became some of his first students—he was the first American yeshiva dean. Energetic, financially secure, something of a *bon vivant*, his personal tapestry, which already interwove whole schools of thought, was further recast. His adjustment to America proceeded with such rapidity that it entailed recoil from America. It was as if he had leapt over the sequential, prototypical achievements of an immigrant generation and its offspring—a first generation's struggle for survival and a second generation's adjustment and desire for acceptance—and moved directly into a third generation's assumption of acceptance and the right to be critical. For if Rabbi Hutner learned rapidly to fit in, he also consciously developed an authoritarian style at variance with the American ethos.

The style, if personally rooted, was also contextual. Amid a second generation of rapidly assimilating Jews who spurned what he called “the honor of Torah” (*kevod ha-Torah*), such honor could be instilled by insisting strictly that honor be paid to a person, a rabbi—himself—who, through knowledge of Torah and its vast talmudic commentary, embodied it.²⁷ Rabbi Hutner was not to be addressed except in the third person (“the Rosh Yeshiva”), not to be taken leave of by turning one's back and leaving, but by walking backwards out the office door (so as not to turn one's back on Torah), and, most important, not to be challenged once he had reached decisions on matters of communal policy, of yeshiva administration, of personal guidance, of intellectual formulation.

Personal and contextual, all this also constituted a reversal: If young Isaac Hutner made it a habit to seek mentors and to accept the submission of discipleship, the mentor Rabbi Hutner expected a parallel submission from his own disciples. Sometimes he sounded almost Nietzschean: "The single refuge in 'the tangible' is this: the Personality. The Person, Man: it is he who is Fact; the Tangible; Reality. One personality can revitalize a generation's majestic life, suffusing it with the light of Torah—such a personality being weightier than innumerable ideas, speeches, intellectual creations."²⁸ At the core of such a personality was not the power of manipulation, but of self. In Rabbi Hutner's case the power was not just intellectual and literary, but pedagogical and personal. If some were repelled by his carefully cultivated sense of distance, others learned that this did not preclude accessibility, good conversation, humor—friendship—and show of emotion. In personal conversation he would tell jokes and would entrance with grace and charm. He would give hours to counseling, sing tunes from Italian opera in informal attire, or ask his driver to stop suddenly in the mountains so that he could put to poetry a spiritual inspiration that had overcome him. He would sign letters, "with joyful tears of love,"²⁹ or write, after his visit to the grave of Rabbi Judah Loew (Maharal, c. 1525–1609), in Prague:

When tears well up into weeping, we know why we weep. My tears at this moment, however, surely and surely did not well up now. My tears are old and venerable now, having gathered in the subsoil of the soul now and over time, in their own time. Hidden tears, the soul itself hid them by placing a concealing rock over the entrance to the well of the soul. Across time—their own time—there gathered types of tears, different tears. In this hidden spot of tears there are those of "My eyes dropped streams of water for not having kept your Torah" and of "Extend grace to me, wretched am I"—tears of sharing the sorrows of men, of pitying an orphaned generation, of yearning for the countenance of parents and teachers whom I was privileged to view once upon a time, of yearning for the higher light in blessed hours of engagement with the secrets of Torah, of reciting the *Song of Songs* from out of a mighty sense of their loftiness—tears flowing as water libations upon the altar, the altar of love for God, tears of exaltation. All these types of tears, sentenced to hiding across ages, across years, now coalesced into one unity beneath the concealing rock, and behold! When my fingers just grazed Maharal's tombstone, the concealing rock on my breast split to smithereens and my tears came gushing, like a waterfall cascading downward between clefts in the rock.³⁰

In the encounter with America, in which the implications of Rabbi Hutner's intricate intellectual baggage were to be pulled and tugged into kaleidoscopic diversity, it was Maharal who came to be a model. Rabbi Hutner became devoted to his writings, as both expositor and appropriator. The most protean figure in medieval Jewish thought, unclassifiable in his range of interests, Maharal wove

them into his own unique blend, undissolvable into its component parts.³¹ These, according to contemporary enthusiasts, embraced not only Jewish law, lore, philosophy, mysticism, ethics, educational theory, and homiletics, but even a theory of relativity which marked him as Albert Einstein's most serious precursor.³² Rabbi Hutner's attachment to Maharal grew as his own development in America underwent seemingly diametrically opposed transformations.

Institutionally Rabbi Hutner took root in a talmudic academy, Mesivta Rabbi Chaim Berlin, which in effect he founded in 1936. For a brief period, he also served as principal of Yeshiva Rabbi Jacob Joseph high school. Mesivta Chaim Berlin, which he headed for over four decades, and which, in 1956, expanded to include a *kolel*, or advanced center for married students (named after two of Maharal's books), was vintage in Lithuanian orientation—an extension of Slobodka and Hebron. However, even as Rabbi Hutner grew into the archetypical Lithuanian yeshiva dean—beginning his beard in 1941, assuming the title “Rosh Yeshiva,” delivering lectures in Talmud—he planted the seeds of an opposite growth that flowered, decades later, alongside the Lithuanian tradition. In dress he eventually adopted the Polish hasidic garb of his native Warsaw—tall, round, wholly fur hat (*spodik*) for Sabbath and holidays, flowing black robe, prayer belt (*gartel*)—even as he came increasingly to adopt certain customs of Hasidism's arch opponent, the Vilna Gaon.³³

The synthesis had a Hutnerian logic. The devotion to the Vilna Gaon was grounded in his achievement, unprecedented in centuries, of mastery of the entirety of Jewish legal and kabbalistic traditions, together with a marked (if instrumental) interest in math, sciences, and textual studies.³⁴ The devotion to Hasidism was grounded in a post-Holocaust commitment to perpetuating the unassimilatory stance of that segment of Jewry least easily swayed by Western narcissisms in pursuit of goods and glory.

If the synthesis had its logic, it could also have met sociological needs. Why did Rabbi Kuk's picture, hung yearly in Rabbi Hutner's Sukkah, come down some years after his arrival in America? Was it because of a growing disenchantment with Rabbi Kuk's zealous Zionism, or because of Rabbi Hutner's growing acceptance into the crown circle of East European yeshiva deans, who disapproved of Rabbi Kuk, or a combination of the two? Why were Rabbi Hutner's writings, with rare exception, published anonymously up to 1964? Was it because they represented personal teachings, delivered in the privacy of his classes (to which no outsiders were admitted), shaped for the specificity of an induplicable classroom atmosphere? Or, was it also because his writings at times were neither didactic nor straight

emanations from his mind, but literature—a playing with words and their effects, for their own sake—reflecting an esthetic bent which, too, was not to be exhibited for sociological reasons?³⁵

The constant ferment in Rabbi Hunter entailed a periodic reorientation not only toward mentors, such as Rabbi Kuk, but also toward contemporaries and students. On the one hand, a disciple could write (on the occasion of the posthumous publication of Rabbi Hutner's letters):

The outpouring of love in these letters, the delicacy with which he gave the sharpest of reproofs, the passionate pleas with which he provided encouragement, the lucidity and authoritativeness with which he clarified fundamentals of belief, the insistence on being kept informed of the most mundane details of the lives of *talmidim* [students or disciples], his inquiring after the welfare of a correspondent's spouse, reminds us dramatically of our own individual contacts with the Rosh Yeshiva. Who can forget the quite extraordinary interest with which he devoted himself to the personal concerns of the *talmidim* of his study hall? These letters bring to mind the Rosh Yeshiva being prepared again and again to spend hours on end in conversation with an individual young yeshiva student, probing, searching, healing and uplifting. . . . They recall for us the Rosh Yeshiva as the master craftsman engaged in fashioning—out of the crudest clay—nothing less than the noblest form of creation, the *talmid chacham* [Talmud scholar].³⁶

And yet, although his yeshiva succeeded in inculcating a sense of both devoted discipleship and personal autonomy, there were periodic housecleanings. Students or disciples, some of long standing, suddenly were no longer to be seen in the yeshiva. If given to good humor, friendship, and emotional sharing of a disciple's burdens, Rabbi Hutner also elicited hostility or repudiation. He could be abrasive in admonition, high-handed in asserting his independence of monied or competing intellectual interests, disdainful of publicity agents of even Orthodox organizations, and forceful in branding insubordination among students. For a variety of reasons, many of his closest disciples would not send their children to Mesivta Chaim Berlin.³⁷ Some of the students at Mesivta Chaim Berlin or in its circle left of their own accord, to become, for example, a prominent anti-traditional Holocaust theologian (Richard Rubenstein),³⁸ a noted academic-critical scholar of Talmud (David Weiss Halivni), or a foremost student of Rabbi Soloveitchik (Aharon Lichtenstein). Those who left Mesivta Chaim Berlin pained Rabbi Hutner precisely because he was otherwise effective in winning fierce loyalty.

IV

Rabbi Hutner's relationship with contemporaries also generated tensions. Rabbi Soloveitchik, for example, spoke at an early dedica-

tion of Mesivta Chaim Berlin, and at least as late as 1939 these two Lithuanian titans corresponded in talmudic matters.³⁹ There was also an old connection to the Soloveitchik family, stemming from Rabbi Soloveitchik's father having asked young Isaac Hutner to keep an eye on his youngest son, back in Eastern Europe. However, as the views of Rabbis Hutner and Soloveitchik on philosophical and public matters developed, they came to differ sharply.

On the question of whether secular knowledge has a place in sacred studies, Rabbi Soloveitchik's position is clearly affirmative. For him, secular knowledge must be studied openly, analyzed explicitly, and then synthesized with the pertinent teachings of Jewish sacred literature. If, in the synthesis, Torah remains dominant, its coloration takes on a contemporary, Western hue which represents the actualization of the Divine word for the present generation.

Rabbi Hutner rejected synthesis but not secular study, at least for a select few. The unexceptional Talmud student would be unable to cope with intellectual challenges to tradition that Western philosophy, historiography, and other branches of learning pose. For Rabbi Hutner himself, secular study was less central than for Rabbi Soloveitchik. First of all, Rabbi Hutner conceived Jewish sacred literature itself to be more inclusive than did Rabbi Soloveitchik. For example, Rabbi Hutner fully subsumed under the rubric of "Torah" the psychological and pietistic teachings that the Musar movement harnessed, while Rabbi Soloveitchik did not. Then, with regard to knowledge that both categorized as secular, they conceived it differently. To Rabbi Hutner's unitive mind, secular study identified a domain of the sacred within itself, a procedure which amounted to Torah's reclaiming what rightfully belonged to it; for Torah, said Rabbi Hutner, was the sovereign source of all that is sacred. Hence he saw neither a moral nor a technical justification for the citation of secular sources in his writings. To Rabbi Soloveitchik's categorizing mind, secular knowledge, even if subject to the sovereignty of Torah, retained an intrinsic value. Hence, he cites it freely and extensively.

On the public question of whether Orthodox participation in pluralistic umbrella groups such as the Synagogue Council of America conferred legitimacy on Conservative and Reform Judaism's representatives in these groups, Rabbi Hutner was as adamant in opposing Orthodox participation as Rabbi Soloveitchik was in taking a different stand.⁴⁰ To Rabbi Hutner, it was impossible to separate between legitimate, common interests and the conferral of legitimacy on heterodox coworkers. To Rabbi Soloveitchik, such categorization was possible. The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menahem Schneerson (born 1902), who also opposed Orthodox participa-

tion in umbrella groups, still met with Rabbi Hutner's opposition—and also against a background of earlier friendship. From Rabbi Schneerson's arrival in America in 1941 until he became the Lubavitcher Rebbe in 1950, he and Rabbi Hutner maintained an intimate *havruta*, or fixed time for joint study. Decades later, when Rabbi Hutner lay on his deathbed, the Lubavitcher Rebbe had his physician phone from the United States to Israel regularly to inquire about Rabbi Hutner's condition. But all this could not obscure a clear breach. Rabbi Hutner relentlessly sustained a biting critique of the Lubavitcher movement on a number of grounds.⁴¹

All three prodigies who met in Berlin in 1929—Joseph B. Soloveitchik, Isaac Hutner, Menahem Schneerson—sustained a self-image so powerful and a certitude so unqualified that there could be no room for even delicate criticism among them as they each developed mutually exclusive kingdoms, so to speak: modern, secular-talmudic philosophic synthesis for Rabbi Soloveitchik; a worldwide hasidic movement for the Lubavitcher Rebbe; and an elite, talmudic-pietistic training center for Rabbi Hutner. In their divergence, the larger problem they embody is the elusiveness of an affirmative definition of modern Orthodox Judaism. There was no disagreement, however, on what it was not. Typically, Rabbi Hutner demonstrated this most poignantly, going beyond biting disagreement, to definitive rebuke, in his attitude toward Abraham Joshua Heschel.

Heschel, who taught at the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary of America for twenty-seven years, was literally Rabbi Hutner's contemporary, as both were born in Warsaw a year apart. One of Rabbi Hutner's students in the late 1970s cited an interpretation of Heschel, without citing it in his name, to which Rabbi Hutner responded, "You read that in Heschel!"—and slapped the student across the face.

The opinionated Rabbi Hutner had read whom he took to be an unacceptable interpreter of Judaism. Heschel fit into no single religious, secular, or academic category within modern Judaism. No one of his titles—"rabbi," "doctor," "professor"—fit him. He was always, simply, "Abraham Joshua Heschel," a creation unto himself. Rabbi Hutner rejected this. It was not Heschel's affiliation with the Conservative movement *per se* that repelled Rabbi Hutner. For if, in Rabbi Soloveitchik and the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Hutner perceived competing conceptions of Orthodoxy, in Professor Saul Lieberman (1898–1983)—a critical scholar of Talmud at the same Jewish Theological Seminary—Rabbi Hutner observed a greater, yet not unbridgeable, distance. Given what he took to be their common doctrinal links (forged in Slobodka), Rabbi Hutner offered Professor

Lieberman a position at Mesivta Chaim Berlin, which was turned down. The irony is compounded in light of Rabbi Hutner's later, fierce opposition to any Orthodox association, on the institutional level, with the Conservative movement—the dean of whose rabbinical school Professor Lieberman later became.

Rabbi Hutner's continual ferment entailed an uncharacteristic submission to the authority of two figures—an approximation of his stance as a student in Europe, when he searched out mentors. One of the two represented an extension of Rabbi Hutner's past; the other, a deviation from it. The first, Rabbi Aaron Kotler (1892–1962), was the “*ari she-ba-havurah*,” “the lion of the pack,” the most talented, loyal extension of the talmudic scholarship and intensity of pietistic purpose of Slobodka. In matters of high policy—such as whether to open a college in which secular studies would be sanctioned—Rabbi Hutner bent to Rabbi Kotler's will (the school was not opened).⁴² A far different figure, the Hungarian anti-Zionist Satmar Rebbe (Rabbi Joel Teitelbaum, 1888–1980), was, said Rabbi Hutner, royalty; and one honors royalty. Rabbi Hutner explained with reference to the midrash that states that Noah once was late in feeding the two lions in his Ark, and was clawed. Noah humbled himself in the service of his zoo: why did he deserve to be clawed? Because, said Rabbi Hutner, these were last lions. One does not neglect the honor of a last, majestic leader of undifferentiated, communally cohesive, pre-Holocaust East European Jewry. It delighted the protean Rabbi Hutner when representatives of two diametrically opposite faces of Orthodoxy—the arch Zionist Rabbi Kuk's son, Rabbi Zvi Judah, and the arch anti-Zionist Satmar ally Rabbi Amram Blau—once met uncomfortably in Rabbi Hutner's waiting room. Both sought counsel from the same person. That Rabbi Hutner grew apart from Rabbi Kuk's Zionist views is clear. That he retained the highest regard for his person and his erudition is also clear. How he squared that regard with his emergent submission to the Satmar Rebbe is an issue he never addressed. Did the dialectical tensions in his multi-hued prism find a welcome anchor, a stream of pure light, in monochromatic Satmar Hasidism? Or did the meeting of the two opponents in his waiting room signify that Rabbi Hutner had tugged their perspectives into a unity?

V

To unify perspectives: this is the burden of Rabbi Hutner's thought, whose scope transcends traditional topics in Jewish thought. In his corpus, gathered in eight volumes of *Pahad Yitshak* (1951–1982),⁴³

Rabbi Hutner sought to integrate opposites beyond well known pairings such as reason and emotion, or autonomy and theonomy, stretching into unbroken ground, conjoining the likes of naive and informed faith, abstract and parabolic expression, and laughter and seriousness.⁴⁴ It was not that traditional pairings did not occupy him; they suffuse his writings throughout. The dialectic between Halakhah and Aggadah—Jewish law and lore—finely calibrated legal discussion and unrestrained magical, anecdotal, and imaginative discussion, for example, was, in Rabbi Hutner's writings, no dialectic at all. So thoroughly did he harmonize law and lore that only by consulting the source listings in the appendices to his expositions in *Pahad Yitshak* is it possible to separate the one from the other. In neither tone nor content can they be extricated from the unifying matrix into which he cast them. To Rabbi Hutner, as to Rabbis Israel Salanter and Joseph B. Soloveitchik, law and lore are mutually illuminating; interpenetrating and completing each other. The difference between Rabbi Hutner, on the one hand, and Rabbis Salanter and Soloveitchik, on the other, is that only Rabbi Hutner undertook thoroughly to set forth the interrelation of law and lore. Not the occasional, sharp ray of luminous insight of Rabbi Salanter, nor the more sustained yet occasional essays of Rabbi Soloveitchik, but volume upon volume of discourse, ranging across the whole of talmudic law and lore, constituted Rabbi Hutner's agenda. For him the entire Talmud comprised not two legitimate but different and discrete types of discourse, and still less a regrettably stale marriage of adjacencies who dwelled together but could not warm each other's consciousness. The Talmud was a felicitous juxtaposition of apparent discrepancies—law and lore—the perception of whose deeper interrelationship awaited only the proper intellectual and spiritual sensibility to bring it forth.

If the source listings of Rabbi Hutner's discourses reveal overtly the integration of law and lore, these listings reveal covertly an integration no less significant: the blending of philosophy and kabbalah with law. Covertly: A statement of Rabbi Hutner will, for example, take as its fulcrum a stock philosophical concept—such as the distinction between the unknowability of God's essence and the knowability of his activities—with no reference to any philosophic source. The reference will be to a seemingly tangential, legal source, which draws the distinction in a strictly legal context, without philosophic elaboration.⁴⁵ One who brings no prior philosophic knowledge to the statement will not notice the mask, but, under the impression that he is studying law, will learn philosophy. One who does bring prior knowledge will, under the impress of Rabbi Hutner's analysis, observe the limits of law, philosophy, and kabbalah dilate,

reaching into each other in hitherto unnoticed ways and to a hitherto unnoticed extent. All this is covert. Substantively the reader perceives the multifaceted topic without the mediation of any technical terms, but formally it is like reading in a hall of mirrors—you think you see one thing, but really see another—like reading (in the language of Rabbi Hutner himself) the secret Torah (*nistar*) in the language of the revealed Torah (*nigleh*)⁴⁶—and one never knows whether one has comprehended all the allusions.

The use of halakhic terminology to argue implicitly for the interpenetration of Jewish law, lore, philosophy, and kabbalah is one of two ways that Rabbi Hutner subsumes these disciplines under the one rubric of Halakhah. The other way is the style of his “Statements,” or *ma’amarim*, as he entitled his discourses with characteristic definitiveness (and also because he first presented them orally, the written statement being a reformulation of lecture notes). These statements follow no usual style of philosophical, logical, or imaginative reasoning; they are, rather, “battlefields,” to use the traditional halakhic term for halakhic exposition, oral and written. All that Rabbi Hutner sets forth, in any area, is done in the form of purely halakhic analysis. Halakhic sources are marshaled; contradictions or other problems in the sources are set on the table; additional halakhic sources (or other sources; parts of Maharal, for example) with little or no apparent relevance are expounded and illuminated such that the glimmerings of a solution to the original problems begin to flicker; and, finally, an original thrust of thought brings all sources (both originally cited and subsequently expounded) into unforeseen harmony. Such, in general, is halakhic analysis, used by Rabbi Hutner throughout, most fully in his longer discourses. Such is the irreducibility of the Lithuanian Talmud student in all of Rabbi Hutner’s formal, published writings.

Less prominent problematic pairings in the history of Jewish thought occupy Rabbi Hutner as much as the pivotal modern issue of the Halakhah and its complements and contraries. I have chosen a short selection to illustrate the Hutnerian blend because only a lengthy exposition could demonstrate it fully, as he does, in lengthy statements. With reference to Maimonides’s commentary to Mishnah, Rabbi Hutner discusses the pairing of the natural and the demonic (the material and immaterial), and of man and the world. Maimonides writes that demons have no reality, but, comments Rabbi Hutner,

in several instances statements of the talmudic sages point to the reality of demons. The way to explain the seeming discrepancy is with reference to *’Avot de-Rabbi Natan*, which states (chapter 31) that all that exists in the world finds an analogue in man. And the opposite is also true: all that exists in man finds

an analogue in the world. Now, in the mind of man there exists the power of imagination, with which man can sketch a reality that in fact does not exist in the world. It is a reality only by the power of imagination. Since this kind of power exists in man, it certainly has a creaturely analogue in the world—the creatures whom we call demons. That is to say, demons are reality-nonreality. Proof: When we speak about something as a figment of the imagination, we mean that such a thing has no reality. However, to the researcher in human psychology at the moment of his examination of the inner workings of the mind of man, this imagination is reality, apodictically. And so, Maimonides has written well that demons have no existence in reality, but this in no way contradicts all of the talmudic passages pointing to the reality of demons.⁴⁷

Just as man has an imagination, so does nature. Just as man's imagination is real to him, nature's imagination is real to it (or, if the imagination of the world is to be a concept without sense, then so is the imagination of man, and this is unthinkable). Therefore, just as man is subject to the imaginary world he creates, the world is subject to the demonic world it unleashes. On the plane of reality-nonreality the natural and the demonic—the material and immaterial—meet.

This worldview reflects not simply an Enlightenment assumption of continuity between man and nature (of "natural law" in man and society), but finds its deeper roots in ancient interpretations of the Platonic logos,⁴⁸ one of which is reflected in an ancient midrashic tradition. "The Holy One, Blessed be He, looked in the Torah and created the world"⁴⁹—the Torah, blueprint for human living, is the blueprint for nature. But if man and nature are uniplanar, their real-nonreal creations—imagination and demons—need not necessarily be equivalent in value. Elsewhere Rabbi Hutner elaborates on Rabbi Israel Salanter's imperative to transfigure human imagination.⁵⁰ What this implies for the ultimate reality and malleability of the demonic remains unknown, for if Rabbi Hutner left volumes of thought, he also left suggestive, unfinished notebooks, from which the citation above is taken. If unfinished, his notebooks, no less than his finished work, illustrate the range of constituent elements in his aspiration to unity. Rabbi Hutner works with Jewish legal sources, but the upshot is more than strictly halakhic. It is kabbalistic, psychological, philosophical, homiletical. A unique blend has been created.

The blend impels the reductionist temptation to express Rabbi Hutner's thought in categories of Western philosophy or modern Jewish thought. Behind the temptation is the difficulty of classifying thought, such as Rabbi Hutner's (and Abraham Joshua Heschel's), which controls an entire range of sources—halakhic, mystical, philosophical, homiletical, pietistic, poetic, exegetical. The temptation itself is to regard Rabbi Hutner's use of these sources as but the clothing of an essence, a clothing which can be stripped to reveal the

essence. Rabbi Hutner's use of an array of sources, however, is not merely a mode of expression. It is his mind, his pith, his being.⁵¹ To abstract him, to pry him loose from his sources, is to eviscerate him. Rabbi Hutner's mask was to use one kind of Jewish source to hide another, but not to hide a doctrine unlinked to the Jewish sources at all. To succumb to the temptation to see Rabbi Hutner this way is merely to confess to the difficulty of evaluating a fresh claim about the authoritativeness and the unity of all traditional Jewish sources, a claim which would render obsolete familiar distinctions between philosopher and mystic, *ba'al musar* and hasid, halakhist and poet, commentator and original interpreter.

The medium of Rabbi Hutner's essays, no less than the substance, betokens a melding of opposites. Rabbi Hutner's use of Judaism's appointed times—Sabbath and holidays—as the medium through which to explicate Judaism's beliefs represents a confluence of two streams in the Jewish approach to dogma. In the most fertile period of the drawing up of dogmas of Judaism—the medieval period—the debate over whether Judaism had dogmas, and, if it did, over what they were, was confined to Iberian Jews, to thinkers working under the attack or the stimulus of Christian or Islamic theology and philosophy.⁵² East European Jewry, with the single exception of Yom Tov Lippman Muhlhausen, implicitly took a phenomenological approach: Jewish consciousness was to be constituted from the living of Jewish law and lore, not from out of discussion of beliefs upon which law and lore rest. The living of Judaism is readily differentiated according to its special times, Sabbath and holidays, while the discussion of Judaism is readily differentiated according to its doctrines. The blending of the phenomenological and the doctrinal in Judaism is readily achieved by classifying each of Judaism's beliefs as a lesson taught by each aspect of its special times. In bringing together the phenomenological and the dogmatic, Rabbi Hutner was unique only in the rigor which he brings to the task. The rubric itself, though traceable to Isaac Arama of the fifteenth century,⁵³ has emerged in the last half-century as a popular form.⁵⁴ The breakdown of the insulation of East European Jewry and its derivatives, and the vitality it has brought to rationalist West European Jewry and its derivatives,⁵⁵ have led to the Sabbath-holiday frame for discussion of Jewish belief. Nowhere is the cross-fertilization it represents put to firmer use than in Rabbi Hutner's eight-volume *Pahad Yitshak*, with at least one volume devoted to Passover, Pentecost, New Year, Day of Atonement, Sabbath and Tabernacles, Chanukah, Purim, and letters and other writings. As with the sources and the substance of Rabbi Hutner's thought, its Sabbath-holiday medium reflected his being. His statements on the

Jewish beliefs, expressed in the frame of each Jewish special time, were delivered during that time. This scheduling was intentional. The atmosphere of the given holiday would assure the statement about it the stamp of authenticity.⁵⁶

VI

"I speak poetry, and they want to hear prose!" Rabbi Hutner once lamented. A pithy remark, pregnant with meaning—with humor, irony, a sense of self-worth, of style, of imperfect acceptance, imperfect understanding on the part of his audience. Rabbi Hutner formed deep attachments, not just to places and ideas. By humor or by intellect, by confidence stemming from ability or by an exotic touch stemming from nonconformity, he charmed, taught, forged bonds of relationship that left close associates unable to function for weeks after his death. And yet, "they" wanted to hear prose: with many he did not communicate. Attraction and repulsion—the strands of others' relation to him—were the strands of his own relation to an enduring pulsation, from his youth to his deathbed: the Land of Israel, *Eretz Yisrael*. Attraction—of the world for him, and to him—and repulsion—of the world by him, and for him—underlay his complex personality. As he encountered the world, as it encountered him, the enduring dialectic came to especially poignant expression in his relation to the Land of Israel. He left it so often, returned to it so insistently.

I remember how a lyrical exaltation formed in and around me in preparing to go up to the Land of Israel the first time. All of my personal, written reflections and letters to friends and comrades at that time constituted nothing other than one exuberant and majestic outpouring. And truth to tell, all of my ascents to the Land of Israel—the second time, the third time—were events of the soul, root-and-branch, mighty in value, momentous in result.⁵⁷

These early ascents, as a student, were problematic. They were too placid, too perfect. The Talmud: "The Holy One, blessed be He, gave three precious gifts to Israel, all through suffering: Torah, the Land of Israel, and the world-to-come."⁵⁸ Without suffering there is no acquisition in the Land of Israel. Suffering, said Rabbi Hutner, is required, not optional. Suffering, if absent during young Isaac Hutner's student years in the Land, descended upon him during his descents, or departures, from it.

I am rooted in the Land of Israel. It is this ground from which I draw nurture. And now, as I am about to leave this Land I bear the pain not just of a tree stripped of its roots but of a tree uprooted whole. The pain is double: the

absence of nurture, and roots dragged along after a tree, everywhere it goes. . . . The pain of departure presses, presses, to the point of depression. I only hope to God that He give me the merit to return, soon.⁵⁹

For a year or two after his arrival in the United States he still wrote to friends in Palestine that he hoped, expected, to see them soon, and at the moment of departure in 1934 he hoped that his return would entail suffering, since “in the Land of Israel I was and in it I dwelled and at it I looked, but an acquisition in it I did not acquire. When I return to it this time it will be in suffering and I shall taste a new taste, that of acquisition. With black fire on white fire these words blaze in my blood . . .”⁶⁰

If young Hutner departed in uncharacteristic monolithic passion, he returned, decades later, with typical dialectic vitality, trying to articulate the twinning of tangible and intangible objects of sanctification (land and time), of each day and the End of Days, and of rejection and return: “Abraham our Father did not merit his high ranking, in its essence, until after he ascended to the Land of Israel *for the second time*: ‘And Abraham went up from Egypt.’”⁶¹

On his last return dialectic vitality did not resonate in the exposed, raw, geographically and socially ubiquitous extremes of the Middle East. These were no longer the days of the Elder and of Rabbi Kuk—and of Rabbi Joseph Hayyim Sonnenfeld, the staunchest ideological opponent of Rabbi Kuk; of Rabbi Abraham Dov Ber Kahane Shapiro, the rabbi and talmudic author of Kovno; of Rabbi Menahem Ziemba, the scholar and martyr of Warsaw and its ghetto; of Rabbi Solomon Eliezer Alfandari, the centenarian mystic and rabbinical judge of Constantinople, Damascus, Safed, and Jerusalem; of Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer, scholarly father-in-law of Rabbi Aaron Kotler. The days of carefree absorption from all of these teachers,⁶² days of undistracted integration of all their intents and purposes, were long behind Rabbi Hutner. Old, seasoned, suffering, escapee of Palestinian terrorists (who held him, with others, on a hijacked airplane for a month in Jordan) and entrappee in a sapping lawsuit (over rights to a yeshiva), Rabbi Hutner with his subtle correlations could not take root in the Land of Israel so readily, so effectively, as he once had. And yet, it is difficult to assess his last decade. His controlling metaphor then was planting, as opposed to building.⁶³ Building can be rushed; natural seeding cannot. It must proceed in its own time. Perhaps we simply do not know what Rabbi Hutner was attempting. Perhaps he was not granted the time to husband a last dialectic. As Maimonides said of God, as Rabbi Jacob Kaminecki (colleague of Rabbi Hutner) said of the Elder of Slobodka,⁶⁴ so may we say of Rabbi Isaac Hutner himself, “To know him one would have to be him.”

NOTES

1. *'Avot de-Rabbi Natan* (minor tractate, Babylonian Talmud, standard editions, end of fourth division), chapter 2; trans., Judah Goldin, *The Fathers according to Rabbi Nathan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 23.
2. Anonymous [Rabbi Hutner's family], "Zikhronot" [Memories], in Joseph Buxbaum, ed., *Sefer ha-Zikaron le-Maran Ba'al ha-Pahad Yitshak Zts'l* (Jerusalem: Machon Yerushalayim, and Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 1984), 5 (letter dated Nisan 2, 5682 [1922]), 8 (letter dated Rosh Hashanah eve, 5682 [1922]), 9–10 (letter dated Tishrei 7, 5683 [1922]), 10 (letter dated 5723 [1923]).

"Zikhronot" is a 128-page biographical essay divided into two parts: a chronological review of Rabbi Hutner's life (3–66), and an analysis of his thought and spiritual character (67–130). Even though the essay is a personal remembrance, and deletes important material, it is a primary source for its letters and diary notations, and for certain biographical information and oral statements of Rabbi Hutner, published nowhere else.
3. "Zikhronot," 79 (oral tradition).
4. "Zikhronot," 3–27.
5. For biography and memoirs of the Elder of Slobodka, see, respectively, Dov Katz, *Tenu'at ha-Musar* [The Musar Movement], vol. 3 (Tel Aviv: Abraham Zioni, rev. ed., 1967), 17–207; and M. Gerz [Gershon Movshovich], *Musarnikes: Tipn un Geshtaltn* [Musarniks: Types and Images] (Riga, 1935), chapters 1, 2, trans. Lucy Dawidowicz, "The Old Man of Slobodka," in *idem*, ed. and Introduction, *The Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe* (New York, Chicago, San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), and Katz, 208–316.
6. Introduction, *Etz Peri* (Vilna, 1881); for identification of the Elder as author, see Katz, *ibid.*, 26. It was in this anthology that Rabbi Israel Salanter published his clearest and maturest formulation of the unconscious psychological forces.
7. Katz, *ibid.*, 212.
8. *Ibid.*, 37.
9. *Ibid.*, 280–281, 306–307.
10. Isaac Hutner, *Pahad Yitshak: Iggerot u-Ketavim* [Pahad Yitshak: Letters and Writings] (Jerusalem and Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 1981), letter 159 (Nisan 11, 5687 [1927]), p. 251; letter 153 (Av 10, 5687 [1927]), p. 253.

Pahad Yitshak, the series title of Rabbi Hutner's writings, has several layers of meaning. *Pahad* denotes both dread and awe, representing in turn both fear of Divine punishment and awe at the Divine majesty. All this is the *pahad* of Isaac (*Yitshak*) Hutner. The series title hints, however, at something more: not only the transcendent gaze and experience of Isaac, but also the sense that his disciple-readers must ascribe all this *to* Isaac. The series title is not only inherently twofold, denoting Divine punishment and Divine majesty, but rhetorically a double entendre, a statement about both the attitude of Isaac himself and the attitude of others toward him. As we shall indicate below, part of Rabbi Hutner's style was authoritarian.
11. *Ibid.*, letter 159; "Greater the righteous," *Hullin* 7b.
12. Biography on Kuk: Jacob Agus, *Banner of Jerusalem* (New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1946); Zvi Yaron, "Introduction: Toward a Biography of Rabbi Kuk" [Hebrew] (and literature cited therein), *Mishnato shel ha-Rav Kuk* (Jerusalem: World Zionist Organization, 1974); Moses Zvi Neriya, compiler, *Hayyei ha-Re'iyah: Orhotav ve-Haguto* [The Life of Rabbi Abraham Isaac ha-Kohen (Kuk): His Ways and His Thought] (Tel Aviv: Moriah, 1983).
13. I owe this formulation to Kuk scholar Jerome Gelman.
14. On Rabbi Kuk's personal and intellectual links to the Musar movement, see Agus, *Banner of Jerusalem*, 13–16; Hillel Goldberg, *Israel Salanter: Text, Structure, Idea—The Ethics and Theology of an Early Psychologist of the Unconscious* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1982), 281 note 166; and Abraham Isaac Kuk, "Kedosh Yisrael" [Israel (Salanter) the Holy], *Sha'arei Zion*, vol. 13, nos. 3–5 (Kislev-Shevat, 5693 [1933]), 17–19.

Zvi Judah Kuk (Rabbi Kuk's son) does not confirm Agus's contention that Rabbi Kuk observed formal mourning rites for Rabbi Israel Salanter upon his death in 1883, but does

- confirm the general picture of Rabbi Kuk's early appreciation of Musar doctrine and personalities (interview with Zvi Judah Kuk, July, 1977, Jerusalem).
15. "Zikhronot," 7–8 (letter dated summer, 5682 [1922]), 8 (letter dated Rosh Hashanah eve, 5682 [1922]); 8 (letter of father, dated Yom Kippur eve, 5683 [1922]), 8 (letter dated Elul, 5683 [1923]), 8–9 (letter dated Tammuz, 5684 [1924]); 11 (letter dated Nisan 10, 5685 [1925]), 17; Hutner, *Iggerot u-Ketavim*, letter 165 (Adar 12, 5689 [1929]), pp. 276–277. Rabbi Hutner's first book is dedicated to his parents "with love and admiration"; see note 22.
 16. "Zikhronot," 17 (letter, 1929).
 17. Biography on Weinberg: Eliezer Berkovits, "Rabbi Yechiel Yakob Weinberg Zts'l: My Teacher and Master," *Tradition*, vol. 8, no. 2 (Summer, 1966); Samuel Atlas, "Ha-Ga'on Rabbi Yehiel Yaakov Weinberg Zts'l: Kavvim li-Demuto [The Gaon Jehiel J. Weinberg: Elements of a Portrait]," *Sinai*, vol. 58, nos. 4–6 (1966); Gavriel Hayyim Cohen, "Devarim le-Zikhro shel Haraha'g Dr. Yehiel Yaakov Weinberg Zts'l" [Words in Memory of the Gaon, Rabbi Dr. Jehiel J. Weinberg], and Moses Stern, "Ish Eshkolot" [Multifaceted Personality], *De'ot*, no. 31 (Winter-Spring, 1966). Weinberg's writings have been collected in *Seridei Esh* [Remnants of a Conflagration], 4 vols. (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kuk, 1961–1966; rpt. in 2 vols., 1977); and *Et Ahai Anokhi Mevakkesh: Rashei Perakim le-Hiddabberut bein Palgei ha-Yahadut* [I am my Brothers's Keeper: Outlines toward a Dialogue between the Factions of Judaism], (Benei Berak: Netzah, 1966). On the continuing relationship between Weinberg and Hutner, see *Seridei Esh*, vol. 3, n64.
 18. "Zikhronot," 26 (undated letter, c. 1934).
 19. Isaac Hutner, *Kuntres Osef ha-Halakhah ha-Mehudashot ha-Nimtsa'ot be-Sifra Asher Lo Ba Zikhran be-Talmud Bavli* [Monograph Collection of the Derived Laws Found in Sifra, Unmentioned in the Babylonian Talmud]. This, together with Hutner's commentary on Hillel of Verona's commentary, were reprinted as appendices to vol. 2 of Shachne Koleditsky's critical edition of and commentary on Hillel of Verona's commentary, *Sifra de-Bei Rav, Torat Kohanim*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1961). The commentary was printed anonymously. On identification of Hutner as author of this anonymous appendix, see Hutner, *Iggerot u-Ketavim*, letters 177, 191.
 20. "Zikhronot," 17, and diary notation cited there.
 21. "Zikhronot," 12, 25 (letter, c. Nisan, 5693 [1933]), 19–20 (diary notation); 20.
 22. Hayyim Ozer Grodzinski, Abraham Isaac Kuk, Abraham Dovber Kahane Shapira, in Isaac Hutner, *Torat ha-Nazir* (Kovno, 1932), unnumbered front pages. Rabbi Grodzinski, the venerable rabbi of Vilna, referred to young Hutner as one of the generation's greats (*gedolei Torah*), and wrote that even though it was his custom not to respond to requests for approbations, in this case he would make an exception. Rabbi Kuk referred to young Hutner as a genius (*ga'on*), and his book as the product of a fully ripened mind (*da'at zekenim*). Rabbi Shapira referred to him as a sage and a genius.
 23. "Zikhronot," 23–25.
 24. "Zikhronot," 26 (diary notation).
 25. "Zikhronot," 79 (oral tradition). The original impetus to emigrate to America may have originated in Rabbi Hutner's encounter with the American contingent studying in the Slobodka branch in Hebron. Perhaps through this contingent he glimpsed the possibilities for iconoclastic educational work. See the special appreciation that he allotted to these American students, murdered in the Arab pogrom in Hebron, 1929, in his essay in the memorial volume for the victims. He took note of the Americans' special sacrifice and special mission—to teach "Torah and fear of God" to American Jewish youth. Did his decision to emigrate to the United States partially originate in a desire to take up the task of the martyred? See Isaac Hutner, "Mi-Ma'amakim" [From the Depths], *Sefer Zikkaron li-Kedoshei Yeshivat Hevron "Keneset Yisrael"* (Jerusalem: Hever Talmidim mi-Yeshivat Hevron, 1930); rpt. *Iggerot u-Ketavim*, letter 166, p. 259.
 26. *Iggerot u-Ketavim*, letter 174 (Elul 28, 5693 [1933]), p. 267. In personal communication with me (May, 1987), Rabbi Hutner's daughter, Mrs. Bruria David, said that *mada* in this passage refers to firm intellectual formulation, as opposed to mere emotional response. *Mada*, she said, is used here in the sense of Maimonides' *Sefer Hamada*, one of whose sections—*Hilkhot Deot*—is one of Rabbi Hutner's definitions of his discourse in *Pahad Yitshak*. Since Rabbi Hutner studied science and math, it is plausible that *mada* in this passage refers to secular studies, especially since the passage earlier refers to "study in its

- various guises." Typically, one does not discover Rabbi Hutner's mathematical interests straightforwardly. A student at Mesivta Chaim Berlin, also enrolled in undergraduate school, was asked by Rabbi Hutner what he was studying. The student replied that he was taking a course in higher mathematics, on the order of differential equations. Rabbi Hutner asked for the name of the text. The student told him. Rabbi Hutner said: "It was better in the original." A search was made: the textbook was published originally in German.
27. Binyomin Ben Chaim [pseudonym], "The Sefer Torah of the Azoroh: Rav Yitzhak Hutner Zts'l," *Jewish Women's Outlook* (January-February, 1981), 9.
 28. "Zikhronot," 91 (diary notation, 1934); cf. similar remarks delivered in 1974, in "Zikhronot," 91.
 29. *Iggerot u-Ketavim*, letter 233 (Shevat 6, 5719 [1959]), p. 312.
 30. "Zikhronot," 62 (1974). Rabbi Hutner's emotional responsiveness and poetic soul pervade his writings. For a few of many possible examples, see "Zikhronot," 16–17 (letter, c. 1927), 43 (oral tradition, 1956), 60 (oral tradition, 1972); 77–78, 102 (poems and songs composed by Hutner; undated and 1954, respectively); *Iggerot u-Ketavim*, letter 171 (Nisan, 5690 [1930]), p. 263, letter 252 (1968), pp. 323–324; *Pahad Yitshak: Hanukkah* (Brooklyn, 1953), 38.
 31. On Maharal, see Byron L. Sherwin, *Mystical Theology and Social Dissent: The Life and Works of Judah Loew of Prague* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press and Associated University Presses, 1982); Theodor Dreyfus, *Dieu parle aux hommes: la révélation selon le Maharal de Prague* (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1969); Andre Neher, *Le Puits de l'Exil; la théologie dialectique du Maharal de Prague* (Paris: A. Michel, 1966); Aaron F. Kleinberger, *Ha-Mahashavah ha-Pedagogit shel ha-Maharal mi-Prag* [The Educational Thought of the Maharal of Prague] (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1962); Gershom Scholem, *Zur Kabbala und ihrer Symbolik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977), 209–259; Ben Zion Bokser, *From the World of the Cabbalah: The Philosophy of Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954); Aaron Mauskopf, *Religious Philosophy of the Maharal of Prague* (Brooklyn: Hammer Publishing Co., 1949). See also Johanan Cohen-Yashar, *Bibliografyah Shimmushit shel Kitvei ha-Maharal mi-Prag* [Select Bibliography of the Writings of the Maharal of Prague] (Jerusalem, 1967).
 32. Judah Loew (Maharal), *The Book of Divine Power, Introductions: On the Diverse Aspects and Levels of Reality*, trans., annotated, illustrated by Shlomo Mallin, in collaboration with Aryeh Carmell (Jerusalem and New York: Feldheim, 1975).
 33. Institutional career: "Zikhronot," 30–31, 35, 43. Hasidic development (*gartel*, mid-1950s; *spodik*, mid-1970s): "Sefer Torah of the Azoroh," 9. Attachment to Vilna Gaon: "Zikhronot," 37, 49, 76.
 34. On the Gaon's secular interests, see Emmanuel Etkes, "Ha-Gra v'ha-Haskalah—Tadmit u-Metsi'ut" [The Vilna Gaon and Enlightenment—Image and Reality] in Etkes and Y. Salmon, eds., *Studies in the History of Jewish Society in the Middle Ages and in the Modern Period* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1980); Nahum Glatzer, "The Beginnings of Modern Jewish Studies," in Alexander Altmann, ed., *Studies in Nineteenth-Century Jewish Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 28–31; Jacob Dienstag, "Ha-Im Hitnagged ha-Gra le-Mishnato ha-Filosofit shel ha-Rambam?" [Did the Vilna Gaon Oppose the Philosophic Teaching of Maimonides?], *Talpiot*, vol. 4, nos. 1–2 (1949).
 35. On the anonymity and subsequent identification in 1964, of Rabbi Hutner's writings: Introduction, *Pahad Yitshak: Hanukkah* [Chanukah] (Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 1964).
Many of Rabbi Hutner's students are firmly convinced that there was nothing strange or calculated about their mentor's refusal, for years, to attach his name to his writings. One student said: "Everybody knew that the Rosh Yeshiva wrote them. The message was simply that if you did not hear the *ma'amar* directly from the Rosh Yeshiva, you did not get the whole thing. These *ma'amarim* were whole productions—the way he sat down, the way he took off his glasses, the build-up and denouement of the issues at hand. You had to have been there to get the full import."
 36. Yisroel Mayer Kirzner, "By the Writing Desk of the Master: Reflections on Pachad Yitzhak: Igaros Ukesavim," *Jewish Observer*, vol. XV, no. 10 (December, 1981), 12. I have translated some Hebrew terms in this citation, and omitted others.

37. Because of various dislocations—"purges" and physical relocations—Mesivta Chaim Berlin went through a weak period during the mid- and late 1960s, just at the time when children of Rabbi Hutner's first disciples reached the age for advanced yeshiva education. One objective reason for parental refusal to send children to Mesivta Chaim Berlin may have been its lack of an organized curriculum. Beyond objective reasons for the disciples' refusal to send their children to Chaim Berlin stood, perhaps, ambivalences: over whether a parent wished to subject his child to the complex emotional burden of the inevitable relationship, within Chaim Berlin, with Rabbi Hutner; over whether a certain hostility on the part of the parent overrode his personal relationship with Rabbi Hutner and appreciation of the latter's educational ability; and, over whether a parent wished his child to attend a yeshiva that permitted secular studies in college.

The single time that Rabbi Hutner publicly addressed a contemporary issue—Holocaust theology—his position elicited wide argument and even some denunciation. In an Orthodoxy society which reveres its scholar-leaders (*gedolei Torah*), the only way to express hostility in print is through issues. Personal response accounted for some of the disagreement which greeted Rabbi Hutner. See his "Holocaust," rendered into English by Chaim Feuerman and Yaakov Feitman, *Jewish Observer*, vol. XII, no. 8 (October, 1977); letters, and Yaakov Feitman, "Reviewing a Shiur: Rabbi Hutner's 'Holocaust' Seminar," *Jewish Observer*, vol. XII, no. 10 (January, 1978); Lawrence Kaplan, "Rabbi Isaac Hutner's 'Daat Torah Perspective' on the Holocaust: A Critical Analysis," *Tradition*, vol. 18, no. 3 (Fall, 1980).

38. For Rubenstein's relationship to Hutner, see Richard Rubenstein, *Power Struggle* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), 98–118. "[Rabbi Hutner] was certainly the most authoritative yet humane interpreter of what I regarded as God's law I had ever met. Twenty-five years later, a part of me still regrets that I could not permanently remain his disciple. I know that he cannot be happy with the direction my career has taken. Nevertheless, of all my religious teachers, I retain the greatest respect for him" (101).
39. Correspondence: Buxbaum, *Sefer ha-Zikkaron*, 221–227.

In presentations of Jewish thought, Rabbis Hutner and Soloveitchik sometimes follow an almost identical line of argument, citing the same sources, raising the same questions, and resolving them in a similar way. See Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "*Ish ha-Halakhah*," *Talpiot*, vol. 1, nos. 3–4 (1944), trans. by Lawrence Kaplan, *Halakhic Man* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1983), 110–113; Isaac Hutner, *Pahad Yitshak, Yom ha-Kippurim* [Day of Atonement] (Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship, 1978), 27:1.

In the absence of evidence indicating direct influence, in the one direction or the other, disciples of either rabbi might set forth claims for priority of discovery. Recent research has demonstrated the fruitlessness of such claims in various contexts. On the simultaneous and independent discovery of the calculus, see A. Rupert Hall, *Philosophers at War: The Quarrel between Newton and Leibniz* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980). See also Robert K. Merton, "Resistance to the Systematic Study of Multiple Discoveries in Science," *European Journal of Sociology*, vol. 4, no. 4 (1963).

40. Rabbi Soloveitchik seemed genuinely in favor of such participation, but he backed down under pressure from Orthodox rabbis such as Rabbi Hutner in order to preserve the unity of American Orthodoxy. Officially his position was neutral. This process of taking a stand on public issues and then withdrawing it is not unusual for Rabbi Soloveitchik.

Hutner's position: "*Zikhronot*," 39–42; Soloveitchik's position: Eliezer Zalman Bernstein, "*Ha-Rav ve-Histadrut ha-Rabbanim*" [Rabbi Soloveitchik and the Rabbinical Council of America], in Saul Israeli, Norman Lamm, Yitzhak Rafael, eds., *Jubilee Volume in honor of Moreinu Hagaon Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik Shelita* (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kuk, and New York: Yeshiva University, 1984), vol. 1, pp. 23–25.

41. Rabbi Hutner's opposition to Lubavitch came to expression with colorful asperity. For example (interview with Saul [pseudonym], January, 1985, Jerusalem):

I was a student at Mesivta Chaim Berlin for only half a year, and had not spoken to Rabbi Hutner in about twenty years. I phoned him in New York, saying only "hello," to which he responded, "Hello, Saul, how are you?" He knew my voice! He had this habit of making appointments at strange times, so we met at 2:10 p.m., Sunday afternoon. I told him that I had come to New York to pick up my children from a summer camp—a Lubavitch camp. Whereupon he suddenly turned his whole body

around in his chair, his back facing me, and just sat there in blazing anger, glaring into space, for what seemed to be an eternity. He must have been silent for two minutes. I was dumbfounded. Then he said, "Saul, you come to see me once in twenty years, and all you can tell me is that you send your children to a *Lubavitch* camp? There aren't enough *other* camps?" He said that my children would return home saying that the Lubavitcher Rebbe was the Messiah, that Lubavitch would ruin my children.

Rabbi Hutner was opposed to the personality cult built up around the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and to the public projection of both the Rebbe and the Lubavitch movement, by the movement, through public media—print and broadcast journalism, books, film, and the like.

42. William B. Helmreich, *The World of the Yeshiva: An Intimate Portrait of Orthodox Jewry* (New York: The Free Press, 1982), 46–47, 50.
43. All volumes of *Pahad Yitshak* are regularly reprinted (and sold only through Mesivta Chaim Berlin). Initial publication dates for some of the volumes (listed in "Zikhronot," 47, and beginning in 1951) signify first publication of chapters about individual holidays. These chapters were collated in separate volumes devoted to a single holiday (except for the final volume, the posthumous collection of letters). As it now stands, *Pahad Yitshak* (Brooklyn: Gur Aryeh Institute for Advanced Jewish Scholarship) consists of separate volumes on Passover (1984), Pentecost (1983), New Year (1974), Day of Atonement (1978), Purim (1966), Chanukah (1964), Sabbath and Tabernacles (1982), and Letters and Writings (1981). The series title, *Pahad Yitshak*, was first introduced in 1964; see Introduction, *Pahad Yitshak: Hanukkah* [Chanukah] (1964). On the name see above, note 10.
44. Reason and emotion: "Zikhronot," 67 (oral tradition, undated), and *Pahad Yitshak* throughout.

Autonomy and theonomy: "Zikhronot," 72 (diary notation, 1973); *Pahad Yitshak: Yom ha-Kippurim* [Day of Atonement], statement 18; cf. Léon Ashkenazi, "Un Enseignement sur le 'Chabatt,'" *Tenth Anniversary Souvenir Journal, Gur Aryeh Institute* (Brooklyn, 1966); Steven S. Schwarzschild, "An Introduction to the Thought of R. Isaac Hutner," *Modern Judaism* vol. 5, no. 3 (Oct. 1985).

Naïve and informed faith (*emunah peshutah* and *gadlut*): "Zikhronot," 70 (diary notations, 1933, 1937), 71 (diary notations, 1935, 1953, 1973).

Abstract and parabolic expression: "Zikhronot," 73–74 (diary notations, 1925 and undated, respectively); *Pahad Yitshak: Pesah* [Passover], cited in "Zikhronot," 73; *Pahad Yitshak: Shabbat, Kuntres Reshimot* [Sabbath, appendix] 1:2–7. Quandaries of language occupy Rabbi Hutner throughout *Pahad Yitshak*. See, for example, *Pahad Yitshak: Shavuot* [Pentecost] 4, *Shabbat* [Sabbath] 3:3, for a discussion of the ambiguities inherent in the use of secular Hebrew terminology for sacred purposes; cf. Alan Mintz, "Mordecai Zev Feilerberg and the Reveries of Redemption," *Association for Jewish Studies Review*, vol. 2 (1977), 171–172, on the inevitable simultaneity of meanings in the Hebrew of classical sources as it is pressed to modern uses.

The "unpacking" of Rabbi Hutner's philosophic position on, for example, autonomy and theonomy, is complicated by his insistence on grounding his discourse in terms such as the imaginative language of midrash and aggadah. Rabbi Hutner's advancement over Slobodka musar is his concretization of abstract discourse about the "greatness of man" (*gadlut ha-adam*), but the ultimate point of his use of nonabstract discourse is his unitive aspiration itself, manifesting itself in this instance in the aspiration to unify different modes of discourse, the abstract and the parabolic. His use of parabolic and imaginative sources, then, is not simply an inherited form of discourse, or a pedagogic tool, as Schwarzschild argues (cited above, this note).

Laughter and seriousness: "Zikhronot," 124–129, on relation of joy (*simhah*) to life. To several disciples, Rabbi Hutner was one of the most humorous people they had known.

45. *Pahad Yitshak: Shabbat* [Sabbath] 13:3, citing Rashba, *Responsa*, vol. 5, n52.
46. "Zikhronot," 76 (oral tradition, undated).
47. "Zikhronot," 74 (diary notation, undated); Maimonides, *Commentary on the Mishnah, Avodah Zarah* 4.
48. Harry Austryn Wolfson, "Extradeical and Intradeical Interpretations of Platonic Ideas," *Religious Philosophy: A Group of Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 28–38.

49. *Bereshit Rabbah* 1:1.
50. *Pahad Yitshak: Pesah* [Passover] 70:4–12, esp. 10, 12.
51. See above, note 44, “abstract and parabolic expression.”
52. Menahem Kellner, “Dogmas in Medieval Jewish Thought: A Bibliographical Survey,” *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* (1984), 20.
53. Isaac Arama, *Akedat Yitshak* [The Binding of Isaac] (Salonica, 1552; rpt. Pressberg, 1849, New York, 1960). See Sara Heller-Wilensky, *R. Yitshak Arama u-Mishnato* [Rabbi Isaac Arama and His Thought] (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1956).
54. Authors have used this rubric, and anthologists have structured the writings of authors who did not use it in accord with it. Examples of the former: S. Y. Zevin, *Ha-Mo'adim ba-Halakhah* [The Jewish Holidays in Jewish Law] (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kuk, 1954); Moses Sternbuch, *Mo'adim u-Zemanim ha-Shalem* [Jewish Holidays and Special Times: The Complete Works], 9 vols. (Benei Berak: Netivot ha-Torah veba-Hesed, rev. ed., 1981). Examples of the latter: Moses Ibgil, ed., *Hokhmat ha-Matspun* [The Wisdom of the Conscience], vol. 5 (Jewish holidays according to the disciples of Israel Salanter) (Nice, 1979); Moses Zvi Neriyah, ed., *Mo'adei Hare'iyah: Haggim u-Zemanim be-Haguto u-ve-Orah Hayyav* [Jewish Holy Days according to Rabbi Abraham Isaac ha-Kohen Kuk: Holidays and Special Times in His Thought and Life] (Jerusalem: Moriah, 1982).
55. The insulation of East European Jewry broke down during World War I with the movement of the German army eastward. This brought German Jewish soldiers into contact with Polish Jewry, and, more broadly, held open East European Jewry for a brief period to visitors from the West. Neo-Kantian Hermann Cohen's Jewish revision of his position, for example, was partially spurred by an eye-opening visit to the East, earlier in 1914. After the war, mutual cross-fertilization manifested itself in the attendance of both West Europeans in East European yeshivas, and East Europeans in West European rabbinical seminaries, such as Rabbi Hayyim Heller's institute in Berlin. Of the thirty-eight students enrolled in 1924 at the Rabbinical Seminary for Orthodox Judaism in Berlin (which Dr. Jehiel J. Weinberg later headed), twenty-two were East Europeans (Isi Jacob Eisner, “Reminiscences of the Berlin Rabbinical Seminary,” *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* [1967], 41). On the other hand, American, West European, Australian, and South African Orthodox rabbinical students gravitated to East European yeshivas. In the Mir yeshiva in the 1930s, for example, about one-quarter of the student body was of non-Polish origin: forty Americans, thirty Germans, six Austrians, three Frenchmen, one Swede, one Dane, eight Englishmen, two South Africans, four Belgians, three Irishmen, two Scotsmen, and two Canadians (Cyril Domb, ed., *Memories of Kopul Rosen*, [London, 1970], 56; see also Alexander Carlebach, *Adass Yeshurun of Cologne* [Belfast, 1964], 121–125). On Hermann Cohen, see Samuel Hugo Bergman, *Faith and Reason: Modern Jewish Thought* (New York: Schocken Books, 1963), 43–44.
56. “*Zikhronot*,” 77. Part of the atmosphere was song, which, in his view, rendered the mind better able to absorb his statements.
57. “*Zikhronot*,” 11 (diary notation, c. 1935).
58. *Berakhot* 5a.
59. “*Zikhronot*,” 19 (diary notation, c. 1931).
60. “*Zikhronot*,” 26–27; 27 (diary notation, c. 1935).
61. “*Zikhronot*,” 53 (diary notation, c. 1970).
62. “*Zikhronot*,” 16, 17, 20 note 82.
63. “Sefer Torah of the Azorah,” 8. See also Pinchas Stolper, “The Great Planter—Ha'Gaon Rav Yitschok Hutner Z'tl,” *Jewish Press* (Dec. 4, 1981).
64. Interview with Rabbi Jacob Kaminecki, May 1984, Monsey, New York.