

The author of this essay recently received the Ph.D. degree from New York University for his dissertation on *Responses of Hassidic Leaders and Hassidim During the Holocaust in Europe, 1939 - 1945, and A Correlation Between Such Responses and Selected Concepts in Hassidic Thought*. This essay was excerpted from this study which is scheduled for publication in the near future.

THE HOLOCAUST AND KIDDUSH HASHEM IN HASSIDIC THOUGHT

I

Whenever the subject of *Kiddush Hashem* (sanctification of God's name) came under discussion during the Holocaust, Maimonides' classic summary¹ of the various means by which the Jew may fulfill the commandment of the Sanctification of God's Name was invoked. Rabbi Shimon Huberband,² Rabbi Menahem Zemba³ and Hillel Zeitlin⁴ in the Warsaw Ghetto, all paraphrase Maimonides, applying the term *Kiddush Hashem* to any Jewish victim of the Holocaust.

"As Maimonides ruled: 'A Jew who is killed, though this may be for reasons other than conversion, but simply because he is a Jew, is called *Kaddosh*.'"⁵

Maimonides, however, clearly reflects the consensus in the Talmud, cautioning against the indiscriminate application of *Kiddush Hashem* by death alone in the event that the Jew has a choice.⁶ The Jew is bidden to sanctify God's Name in life,⁷ especially when the enemy offers no choice but death.⁸ Moshe Prager, a Holocaust researcher, focusing on religious responses, defines *Kiddush Hashem* within the Holocaust context.

What is *Kiddush Hashem*? Dr. Burg⁹ made reference to both passive and active forms of *Kiddush Hashem*. This is not exact. What actu-

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ally determines [*Kiddush Hashem*], is the very focus of the conflict. If one wishes to really understand the Ghetto, one must determine: What does the enemy want from me? If the enemy demands my honor, then my honor bids me to sacrifice life for honor . . . However, the moment the enemy clearly insists: "I demand your life," then a sense of honor compels me to fight for my life.¹⁰

This broader concept of *Kiddush Hashem*, contextually tied to the objective of the foe, moved Rabbi Yitzchak Nissenbaum¹¹ to coin the phrase, "*Kiddush Hahayim*," Sanctification of Life, as the way to *Kiddush Hashem*.¹²

Though *Kiddush Hashem* was reinterpreted in terms of *Kiddush Hahayim*, the Holocaust odds ran high in favor of some form of *Kiddush Hashem* terminus in death, rather than life. Here as well, the Holocaust added a new dimension. In Jewish martyrology of the past, the Jew had the option of choosing life, most likely, by rejecting Judaism.¹³ The martyr of the Holocaust, without life options before him, and counter to the expectations of his murderer, did indeed choose the manner in which he would accept and prepare for his death. Freedom of choice between one's life or religious faith was converted to the option of

going to one's death degraded and dejected, as opposed to confronting [death] with an inner peace, nobility, upright stance, without lament and cringing to the enemy . . . This new option . . . became another attribute of *Kiddush Hashem* during the Holocaust.¹⁴

Hassidic responses of *Kiddush Hashem* are interpreted on the background of both the *Kiddush Hahayim* manifestations, especially as these were reflected in spiritual-passive resistance and physical resistance, and presently, *Kiddush Hashem*, the manner in which death was faced.

II

One notes the *zekut* (privilege) motif in anticipation of offering one's life for *Kiddush Hashem*. The *Ostrovzer Rebbe*, Rabbi Yehezkel Halevi Halstuk, confronted the Nazis in Zusmir in *tallit* and *kittel* during the Winter of 1943, prior to being shot,

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and declared:

For some time now have I anticipated this *zekut* [of *Kiddush Hashem*]. I am prepared.¹⁵

The *Koloshitzer Rebbe*, Rabbi Hana Halberstam, in 1914, anticipated his own death during the Holocaust in the Fall of 1942. Hassidic tradition relates how this *Rebbe*, at the age of thirty, prayed at the grave of Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk:

May the Almighty grant, that I be privileged to die for *Kiddush Hashem*.¹⁶

Ahron Zeitlin describes an aged Hassidic *Rebbe* whose only son was murdered in the Holocaust. The night prior to a planned rescue of the elder *Rebbe*, the son appears in a dream to his father, depicting the "infinite holiness" of those who died for *Kiddush Hashem* in the Holocaust. The following morning the *Rebbe* refused to be rescued, lest "he be denied the privilege of *Kiddush Hashem*." The following day, the *Rebbe* joined other Jews being assembled for their final destination.¹⁷ The *Shidlowitzer Rebbe*, Rabbi Haim Rabinowitz, comforted the people packed in the cattle wagons without food and water on a four day trip to the death camp.

Fellow Jews, do not fear death. To die for *Kiddush Hashem* is a great privilege.¹⁸

Proper *hakanah* (preparation) and *kavanah*, prior to the performance of a *Mitzvah*, is essential as well, prior to the act of *Kiddush Hashem*. In discussing the significance of *Kiddush Hashem*, the *Koidenover Rebbe*, Rabbi Alter Perlow, in the Vilna Ghetto retold the Hassidic legend of the "Zaslover Martyrs" who died for *Kiddush Hashem*. Their souls came to the *Ba'al Shem Tov* pleading for *tikun*, since their thoughts during the act of *Kiddush Hashem* were not pure.¹⁹ The *Piazesner Rebbe* taught in the Warsaw Ghetto: Those who fail to praise God in death, will neither be aware of Him in the world to come.²⁰ Rabbi Mendele Alter, the brother of the *Gerer Reb-*

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be, was among a group of Jews ordered to undress in Treblinka during the Summer of 1942. Realizing that these were his last moments the *Rebbe* pleaded desperately for a glass of water. A Jewish guard usually noted for his cruelty to fellow Jews, was touched with the plea. He provided the water under the impression that the *Rebbe* wished to quench his thirst prior to death. Instead, the *Rebbe* used the glass of water to cleanse his hands, as an act of purification prior to *Kiddush Hashem*, urging:

Fellow Jews, let us say the *widui* (the confessional) prior to death.²¹

The Brezner Rebbe,²² Zaloshizer Rebbe,²³ Matislaker Rebbe,²⁴ and Stoliner Rebbe²⁵ are among a number of Hassidic leaders who led Jews in their final *widui* as preparation for *Kiddush Hashem*.

The attitude developed prior to *Kiddush Hashem* also determined the manner in which death was actually confronted. The *Kiddush Hashem* reports of the Brezner,²⁶ Grodzisker,²⁷ and Zaloshizer Rebbeim²⁸ reflect their calming influence upon the terrified victims, as they themselves faced death with dignity.²⁹ In each of these instances the final request included the wearing of a *talit katan* or *talit* at the time of death. Other descriptions of *Kiddush Hashem* actually include instances of confronting death with the *hitlahavut* (ecstasy), appropriate to the fulfillment of the final and ultimate *Mitzvah*.³⁰ With a Torah scroll in his hands, Meir Ofen, a Kabbalist and a Hassid of the Dzikover Rebbe, led hundreds of Jews during their march to the mass grave, reciting from *Psalms* 33:1, "Rejoice in God, righteous ones!"³¹ The Grodzisker Rebbe,^{31a} in an inspiring message prior to entering the gas chambers in Treblinka, urged the Jews to accept *Kiddush Hashem* with joy. He led them in the singing of *Ani Ma'amin*.³² The Dombrover Rebbe³³ prayed the Sabbath service, his last, with great fervor; sang the Sabbath meal songs, and led twenty Jews in a Hassidic dance, prior to death in graves dug by themselves.³⁴ The Spinker Rebbe³⁵ danced and sang in the death wagons to Auschwitz, especially the prayer "*Vetaher libenu leabdekha be'emet*" (Purify our

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hearts so that we may serve You in truth). *Esh Kodesh* observes that he who is murdered in *Kiddush Hashem*.

does not suffer at all . . . since in achieving a high degree of ecstasy, in anticipation of being killed for the sake of sanctifying His Name, blessed be He, he elevates all his senses to the realm of thought until the entire process is one of thought. He nullifies his senses and feelings, and his sense of the material dissolves in this process. Therefore, he feels nothing but pleasure.³⁶

The mutual interrelationship between God and the Jewish People, throughout, is evident in the *Kiddush Hashem* motive. The Slonimer Rebbe, cites the *Zohar*, in observing that God dyes His garments in the blood of the martyrs who died for *Kiddush Hashem*.³⁷ The Piazneser Rebbe contrasts the suffering as punishment for sins, and suffering for *Kiddush Hashem*. The latter is aimed not only at the individual physical Jew. The consequences of the suffering affect his very faith and way of life. In such instances [as exemplified by the *Kiddush Hashem* in the Holocaust], "it is we alone who suffer with Him."³⁸ *Em Habanim Semehah*³⁹ points to a similar interrelationship between *Kiddush Hashem*, sanctified by thousands and tens of thousands, [is the cause of the] weakening of the *kelippot* (shells),⁴⁰ enabling the gates of *Eretz Yisrael* to open."⁴¹ In turn, the very realization of Israel's return to Zion will serve to "magnify and sanctify the Name of God."⁴²

Kiddush Hashem was also manifested in *Kiddush Hahayim* (Sanctifying the Name of God in Life). Such responses took the various forms of modest physical resistance, a pattern of spiritual and passive resistance, and *mesirat nefesh* (uncompromising personal sacrifice), in order to assist others in time of crisis. Rabbi Nehemya Alter⁴³ set the tone at a meeting of Rabbis in Lodz, insisting that *Kiddush Hashem* may take various forms. However, crucial to the nature of the very act is "not to degrade ourselves before the *goyim*."⁴⁴ *Kiddush Hahayim* dictates that the Jew face death, and live his life in dignity, cognizant of the Divine component present in man. Dignity in response to attempted acts of physical and spiritual degradation was dramatically demonstrated in Lublin towards the end of

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1939.⁴⁵ The German commander had forcibly assembled the Jews in an empty field on the outskirts of the city and ordered them in jest to sing a Hassidic melody. Hesitantly, someone began the traditional melody "*Lomir zich iberbeten, Avinu Shebashomayim*" (Let us become reconciled, Our Father in Heaven).

The song, however, did not arouse much enthusiasm among the frightened masses. Immediately, Glovoznik [the commander] ordered his hooligans to attack the Jews since they refused to fully comply with his wishes. When the angry outburst against the Jews continued, an anonymous voice broke through the turmoil with a powerful and piercing cry, "*Mir velen sei iberleben Avinu Shebashomayim*," We will outlive them, O Father in Heaven! Instantly, the song took hold among the entire people, until it catapulted [the people] into a stormy and feverish dance. The assembled were literally swept up by the entrancing melody full of *dveikut*, which had now been infused with new content of faith and trust.⁴⁶

The intended derision was turned into a disaster for the bewildered Nazis, forcing the commander Glovoznik to order a halt to the paradoxical spectacle.⁴⁷ The Zelichover Rebbe,⁴⁸ while hiding in Zelichov, in June 1942, responded to the increasingly despondent fellow Jews who shared his hiding place:

We must remain hidden, perhaps it will save the life of but one Jew. Every Jew who remains alive, sanctifies the Name of God amongst many. He is indeed a man of courage, because he will not submit to the Nazis and will not extinguish his precious life.⁴⁹

The Piazesner Rebbe touches upon the necessary interrelationship between those who die for *Kiddush Hashem*, and the implication of *Kiddush Hahayim* for those who remain alive. Directing his remarks to those in the Warsaw Ghetto whose spirits have fallen, the *Rebbe* cautions:

We have always been bidden to control ourselves against temptations and evil inclinations as implied by [the teaching] "Who is strong? He who controls his [evil] inclinations."⁵⁰ And presently we have been given an additional responsibility: to control ourselves against dejection and depression, and to support ourselves in God. True, this is very, very difficult, since suffering is too much to bear, may God

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have mercy. However, at a time when many Jews are burned alive sanctifying God, and are murdered and butchered only because they are Jews, then the least we can do, is to stand up to the test and with *mesirat nefesh*, control ourselves and support ourselves in God.⁵¹

Rabbi Menachem Zemba may have summarized the *Kiddush Hahayim* motif during a zealous plea for resistance prior to the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in April 1943.

Thus, by the authority of the Torah of Israel, I insist that there is absolutely no purpose nor any value of *Kiddush Hashem* in the death of a Jew. *Kiddush Hashem* in our present situation is embodied in the will of a Jew to live. This struggle for aspiration and longing for life is a *mitzvah* to be realized by means of *nekamah mesirat nefesh* and in the sanctification of the mind and will.⁵²

III

Hallowing and sanctifying the Name of God is rooted in Hassidism and permeates its teachings and mode of life. In its efforts to achieve *tikun* in this world as a preparation for *tikun* in the upper world, Hassidism sought

to overcome the separation between the holy and the profane . . .⁵³
Everything wants to be hallowed, to be brought into the holy, everything worldly in its worldliness . . . Everything wants to come to God through us . . . to let the hidden life of God shine forth.⁵⁴

Though Buber viewed Hassidism "as the only mysticism in which time is hallowed,"⁵⁵ Hassidism actually elaborated upon Judaism's principle of "*Venikdashti betok bnei Yisrael*"⁵⁶ (I shall be sanctified amidst the children of Israel).

Kiddush Hashem in Hassidism assumes various guises attainable ultimately in death, as well as in life. Interpreting the verse, "Because of You, we are killed all the day; we are considered sheep for slaughter,"⁵⁷ the second Komarnor Rebbe, Rabbi Eli-ezer Zvi Safrin echoed the *Midrash*:

There are not to be found among any other nation those who are ready to sacrifice their souls for *Kiddush Hashem*, blessed be God, as may be found within in Israel.⁵⁸

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According to Hassidic tradition the Baal Shem Tob offered the last two hours of his life as a gift to God, "a true sacrifice of the soul (*mesirat nefesh*).⁵⁹ The traditional view of *Kiddush Hashem* as the supreme test of faith, which allows every Jew to reach heights of sanctity, was noted by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, and incorporated into the Habad school of Hassidic thought.

Even the simplest of Jews, and sinners in Israel, by and large, sacrifice their lives for *Kiddush Hashem* and [in the process] undergo terrible suffering, so as not to deny the One God.⁶⁰

The *zekut* motive⁶¹ is also evident in Hassidic thought. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, when discussing "the purpose of all creation," observes:

Thus, every Jew [is prepared to] be killed for *Kiddush Hashem*, happy in the privilege of sanctifying, by his own means, the Name of Heaven.⁶²

Rabbi Nachman of Brazlav petitions the

Master of the Universe, to grant me the privilege, in Your compassion to sacrifice my life for *Kiddush Hashem*, in truth, at any time.⁶³

Hassidism expounded, that man in the service of God should perform all of his deeds with *mesirat nefesh*. Rabbi Yaakov of Polnoya draws the following instruction from the saying of the Sages,

Who is wise? He who learns from *every* man.⁶⁴ Even to the extent that he learns from a prohibited act. [For instance] when he sees someone in the act of cohabiting with an animal, [may he apply the following lesson]: if this one endangers his life (since the law of the land prescribes the death penalty for such an act), yet does not hesitate for even one moment, because of the physical pleasure derived—how can he (who observes the act) not fail to sacrifice his life in the service of God, which is an eternal, spiritual delight!⁶⁵

Rabbi Aaron of Karlin⁶⁶ taught:

Es kon nit zein emes afilu ein tnua ketanah, un mesriat nefesh, (The

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slightest act cannot be sincerely performed without *mesirat nefesh*).

Hassidim often use the terms *Kiddush Hashem* and *mesirat nefesh* interchangeably.⁶⁷ In order to dedicate one's soul to God, the soul had to be gradually sensitized and prepared to make the offering. To die for *Kiddush Hashem*, according to Rabbi Nachman Kossover,⁶⁸ is the ultimate in human altruistic behavior, since "he who is ready to die for God, does so because he loves Him, and not as a reward."⁶⁹ Rabbi Israel of Rizin interpreted Leviticus 1:2,⁷⁰ as follows: "Only he who brings himself to the Lord as an offering, may be called man."⁷¹ Rabbi Moshe of Kobrin⁷² anticipated that man would eventually replace the Temple sacrifices as the ultimate expression of devotion to God. "Lord of the World, we, we shall bring ourselves to You in place of the offering."⁷³ *Mesirat nefesh* in this tradition helped prepare the ground for the *Kiddush Hashem* responses noted in the Holocaust.

The related *Kiddush Hashem* motifs of *zekut* (privilege), *hakanah* (proper preparation), *hithlahavut* (ecstatic response to a religious act), as well as the acceptance of death with dignity and honor, were all part of a complex interlocking pattern of consequences, as a result of a special relationship which would be effected and realized between the Jew, the Jewish People and God, via *Kiddush Hashem*. The Maggid of Zlochov,⁷⁴ applied the kabbalistic formula of man's deeds which impact upon the cosmos,⁷⁵ to the concept of *Kiddush Hashem*.⁷⁶ This symbiotic relationship between man and the cosmos is dramatized in Hassidic tradition. The Baal Shem Tob visited the bereaved Jewish mother of a boy who was killed in Polnoya,

a victim of "*alilat sheker*," and who very much sanctified the Name . . . He [the Baal Shem Tob] comforted her, saying: "You should know that all of the worlds which were opened for Isaac at the time of his binding,⁷⁷ were also opened [for the boy] when he was killed."⁷⁸

The *Kiddush Hashem* impact may also reverberate in the regions of the *sefirot*, resulting in a repositioning of the various symbolic terms which represent God's mystical qualities. Rabbi

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Yitzchak Isaac of Komarno, a devout *Kabbalist*, isolated *mesirat nefesh* and *Kiddush Hashem* as the factors enabling the Jew to elevate the Divine manifestation of *Malkut* (the "kingdom" of God),⁷⁹ to the level of *Binah* (the "intelligence" of God).⁸⁰

Another kind of interrelationship between the Jew and his Creator through *Kiddush Hashem* had been noted by the *Matislaker Rebbe*.⁸¹ An identical observation is recorded of the *Gerer Rebbe*.⁸² "Why is man afraid of dying? Does he not then go to his Father!"⁸³ In a similar vein, Rabbi Moshe Leib Sassov⁸⁴ was seen dancing on a vessel threatened to be destroyed by a terrible storm. When his teacher Rabbi Schmelke inquired as to the reason for the unexpected exuberance, Rabbi Moshe responded: "I am overjoyed at the thought that I shall soon arrive in the mansion of my Father." "I shall join you, then," said Rabbi Schmelke.⁸⁵

Kiddush Hashem is also related to redemption in Hassidism. In the letter of the Baal Shem Tob to Rabbi Gershon Kitover, reference is made to instances of *Kiddush Hashem* in the communities of Zaslov, Sibotke and Danowitz.

All gave their lives for *Kiddush Hashem* and sanctified the Name of Heaven, thus responding to the test. Due to this virtue, our Messiah will come.⁸⁶

The prolonged *Galut*, and its intensification, can be reversed. Its *tikun* "consists of self-sacrifice for *Kiddush Hashem*, along with *mesirat nefesh*, with all our heart and soul,"⁸⁷ taught the Komarnor Rebbe.

Despite the evident readiness of Hassidim to die for *Kiddush Hashem* with *mesirat nefesh* when put to the test, "the very purpose of creation of man is that he observe the *Torah* and its commandments, 'and live by them,'⁸⁸ but 'not die by them,'⁸⁹ except when the time has come to leave this world."⁹⁰ Good deeds of man represent the raw materials which sanctify both the upper and lower worlds. They serve to counter the phenomenon of death according to Dov Ber of Mezritch.⁹¹ In his prayer requesting God to allow him the privilege of experiencing *Kiddush Hashem*, Rabbi Nachman of Brazlav straddles a thin

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line between *Kiddush Hashem* articulated in life, and that expressed in death. On the one hand, Rabbi Nachman pleads:

May I truly be prepared to die any death and to suffer every pain and torment for the sanctification of Your great Name.⁹²

Yet, significantly, in the balance of the prayer, Rabbi Nachman clearly makes reference to a vicarious *Kiddush Hashem* death experience, stopping short of death itself. He prays for the ability

to portray within my mind all of the deaths and torments, in a realistic likeness . . . until I actually sense the pain of death and torment, as if in fact I would be killed or tortured for the Sanctification of Your great and holy Name, to the very point when my soul shall practically expire . . . This would make it necessary to overcome [the final death process] and to diminish those thoughts in order that I not die prematurely, God forbid.⁹³

Rabbi Simcha taught that a Jew involved in the process of life, as a partner of God in creation, bears witness to God's greatness. Therefore,

when a Jew dies, a member of God's chosen People, the Lord takes the loss to heart, since this accounts for one person less to glorify and sanctify His Name.⁹⁴

The Baal Shem Tob viewed his own efforts at miracle healing "only for *Kiddush Hashem*."⁹⁵ The Kotzker Rebbe emphasizes *Kiddush Hashem* as *Kiddush Hahayim*. Interpreting the verse "You shall be men holy to me,"⁹⁶ the Kotzker taught:

Let your holiness be human, and may your human acts be holy. This is the holiness demanded from man. God has no need for angels in heaven.⁹⁷

The other world is not to be sought as an escape from the responsibilities of life on this world. Said Rabbi Naftali of Rapshtitz:

No Jew can possibly inherit the world to come except by means of this world.⁹⁸

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NOTES

1. Moses Maimonides, "Ma'amar Kiddush Hashem," *Iggarot Harambam*, (The Letters of Maimonides) Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1960, 29-65. Also Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah, Sefer Hamadah*, "Yesodei Hatorah," Chapter 5, 1-11.

2. *Kiddush Hashem: Katabim Mime Hashoah Metok Hagenazim shel Arkion Ringelblum Begetto Warsha*, (Writings from the Days of the Holocaust from the Hidden Ringelblum Archives in the Warsaw Ghetto), edited by Nahman Blumenthal and Joseph Karmish, Israel: 1969, 23-24. Hereinafter, *Kiddush Hashem*.

3. Hillel Seidman, *Yoman Getto Warsha*, (Diary of the Warsaw Ghetto) New York: The Jewish Week, 1957, 221. Hereinafter, *Yoman Seidman*.

4. Mordechai Lansky, *Meme Hayehudim Begetto Warsha*, (The Life of the Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto) Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1961, 209. Huberband, Zemba and Zeitlin were all close to Hassidism. Rabbi Huberband's maternal grandfather, under whose influence the young Shimon came was the Hassidic *Rebbe* of Chencin in Poland, (Rabbi Haim Shmuel Halevi Horowitz). *Kiddush Hashem*, *op. cit.*, 11. Rabbi Menahem Zemba, a key religious leader in the Warsaw Ghetto and among those who encouraged physical resistance (*Yoman Seidman*, *op. cit.*, 95, 221), was significantly influenced by the Hassidic school of Kotzk, of which his grandfather was an ardent follower. The Kotzker school was characterized by its emphasis on intellectual depth and honesty, a disdain for ceremony, and a relentless search for new horizons in the realm of the holy. He also studied in the Yeshiva of the *Rebbe* of Gur. Simcha Elberg, "Rabbi Menahem Zemba," *Eleh Ezkerah*, (These Will I Remember) Vol. II, edited by I. Levin, New York: Research Institute of Religious Jewry, 1957, 38-51. Hillel Zeitlin, noted scholar, writer (including a number of authoritative studies on Hassidism) and mystic, spent the final days of his life in the Warsaw Ghetto studying the Zohar, prior to his death in Treblinka. Hillel Seidman, "Hillel Zeitlin," *Morgen Journal*, January 26, 1947. Also a brief essay "Hillel Zeitlin," in *Yoman Seidman*, *op. cit.*, 294-298.

5. *Kiddush Hashem*, *op. cit.*, 23. A search of Maimonides' works and consultation with scholars failed to reveal such a source.

6. "Maamar Kiddush Hashem," *op. cit.*, 60. See *Talmud Sanhedrin* 74a, citing *Leviticus* 18:5, "You shall keep My laws and My norms, by the pursuit of which man shall live," interprets this as: "You shall live by, and not die by them."

7. "Maamar Kiddush Hashem," *op. cit.*, 55.

8. Meir Dvorzeski, Yosef Gutfershten, *Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Conference on Manifestations of Jewish Resistance*, Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1970, 129; 380. Henceforth, *Proceedings :Resistance Conference*.

9. Reference to Dr. Yosef Burg, Minister of Welfare, The State of Israel, who addressed the April 7-11, 1968 Conference cited, *ibid*.

10. Moshe Prager, *Proceedings: Resistance Conference*, *op. cit.*, 119.

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11. President of the Religious Zionist Mizrahi movement in Poland prior and during the early Holocaust period. Died in the Warsaw Ghetto, 1943.

12. "It was then that the vacuum of the Ghetto was filled with Rabbi Yitzchak Nissenbaum's profound dictum, 'This is the hour of *Kiddush Hahayim*, and not of *Kiddush Hashem* by death. The enemy demands the physical Jew, and it is incumbent upon every Jew to defend it: to guard his own life.'" Nathan Eck, *Hatoim Bedarke Hamawet*, (Wandering on the Roads of the Dead) Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1960, 37. See also Shaul Esh, "*Kiddush Hahayim Betok Hahurban*," *Molad* (Israel), No. 153-154 (1961), 106-199.

13. Meir Dvorzeski, "*Haamidah Behayeh Yom Yom Begeta'ot U'wemahan-oth*," *Proceedings: Resistance Conference*, *op. cit.*, 128.

14. *Ibid.*

15. Menashe Unger, *Sefer Keddoshim*, New York: Shulsinger Brothers, 1967, p. 36. See also, "*Delegat Shildert Letzte Minuten Fun Ostrovzer Rebbe*," *Der Morgen Journal*, June 3, 1946, 3.

16. Unger, *op. cit.*, 342.

17. Ahron Zeitlin, "*A Maise Mit A Rebbe Un Zein Zuhn*," *Morgen Journal*, July 12, 1946, 5.

18. Y. M. Kersh, "*Brief fun Churef-Gevorene Yiddishe Shtet un Shtetlech*," *Forward*, July 11, 1946, 8.

19. Unger, *Sefer Keddoshim*, *op. cit.*, 374, citing Joseph Fuchsman, an eyewitness. The legend evidently refers to attempts at forced conversions in the communities of Zaslow, Sivtovke and Danowitz, related in a letter of the *Baal Shem Tov* to his brother-in-law Rabbi Gershon Kitov, *Shivhe HaBesht*, Israel: Talpiot, 1965, 168-169. Also, Horodetzky, *Hahasidut Weahasidim*, Tel. Aviv: Dvir, vol. I, 56.

20. *Esh Kodesh*, Jerusalem: Wa'ad Haside Piazsne, 1960, 97-98. Hereinafter, *EK*.

21. Moshe Prager, *Eleh Shelo Nikne'u*, Vol. I, Bnei Brak, Israel: Netzach, 157-158. As recorded by eyewitness, Rabbi Abraham Shmuel Binyamin Sofer.

22. Rabbi Nahum Yehoshua Halevi Pechenik, in an open grave in Sarne, Poland. Unger, *Sefer Keddoshim*, *op. cit.*, 84.

23. Rabbi Shem Klingsberg, in the main square of Plashov, Poland. His final prayer included: "May it be Thy Will that I have the privilege of atoning for all Jews." Unger, *Sefer Keddoshim*, *op. cit.*, 152.

24. Rabbi Yehezkiyah Fisch, *ibid.*, 233. A day prior to his arrival in Auschwitz he exclaimed with a joyous clap of his hands: "Tomorrow we shall meet with our Father!" A note was discovered among his books found in the Matislaker Ghetto with the inscription of the prayer to be recited prior to *Kiddush Hashem* via death. *Eleh Ezkerah*, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, 75.

25. Rabbi Moshe Perlow, in the Stoliner Ghetto. Unger, *op. cit.*, 272.

26. *Ibid.*, 84.

27. Rabbi Eliezer Horowitz. *Ibid.*, 101.

28. *Ibid.*, 152.

29. Dignity in response to crisis was the theme of the Slonimer Rebbe, Rabbi Shlomo David Yechoshua Weinberg, in a message to his Hassidim delivered

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in the Winter, 1940. Drawing upon the teaching of the Riziner Rebbe, (Rabbi Israel of Rizin, died 1850), the great grandson of Rabbi Dob Ber, the *Slonimer* prepared his Hassidim. "The son of the king, who is an inseparable part of his father the king, does not change his character under any condition, no matter how depressed. Though he may be degraded and despised . . . at the nadir [of life], he must yet know and recall always, that he is the son of a king." *Zikron Kadosh*, (Jerusalem: Yeshivat Bet Abraham, 1967), pp. 12-13. As told by eyewitness, Moshe Weinberg. See *EK*, 158, for identical *ben melech* motive.

30. Moses Maimonides, "*Maamar Kiddush Hashem*," *op. cit.*, 58.

31. Mordechai Eliav, ed. *Ani Maamin*, (I Believe) Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 23-24.

31a. Rabbi Yisrael Shapira.

32. Unger, *Sefer Kedoshim*, *op. cit.*, 103, 110; Rabbi Yitzchak Herzog, *Ha-olam*, April 4, 1946.

33. Rabbi Haim Yehiel Rubin.

36. M. A. Ger, "The Dombrover Rebbe, "Tanzt Mit Zeine Hassidim," *Der Tag* (*The Day*) March 3, 1946 (Section 2), 2.

35. Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Weiss. *Hassidut Spinka Weadmoreha*, Jerusalem, 7, 10. Also Unger, *op. cit.*, 309.

36. *EK*, *op. cit.*, 8-9. The Rebbe supports the point by citing various medieval Rabbinic sources dealing with the subject of *Kiddush Hashem*.

37. Unger, *op. cit.*, 280. See also *Zikron Kadosh*, *op. cit.*, 5.

38. *EK*, *op. cit.*, 191-192.

39. *Em Habanim Semeha*, a key primary source for this research, authored by Rabbi Yissachar Shlomo Teichthal, a leading Hassid of the Munkachser Rebbe and *dayan*. The manuscript is an attempt to explain the Holocaust, then in progress, in terms of the religious Jew's neglect of *Shivat Zion*. The work was written and completed in Budapest three months prior to the formal Nazi occupation of that city. The author was subsequently transported to Auschwitz where he met his death. Henceforth, *EHS* (Budapest, Zalman Katz Katzburg, 1943).

40. "The power of the *kelippah* is dependent upon the *Galut*. With the abolishment of *Galut*, the *kelippah* will also be abolished." *EHS*, 214.

41. *Ibid.* According to *Kabbalah*, the *kelippot* are the prisons in which the holy sparks are confined against their will.

42. *Ibid.*, 15. We have here the profound concept of *Kiddush Hashem* in death eventually leading to *Kiddush Hashem* in life, within the context of the Jewish People in its Homeland. This is a form of *tikkun* central to Hassidic thought.

43. Son of the *Sefath Emeth*, the Rabbi of Ger, and brother of the Gerer Rebbe during the period of the Holocaust.

44. L. Feingold, "*Megai Haharegah*," *Ani Ma'amin*, ed. by Mordechai Eliav, Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1969, 23.

45. As told to Moshe Prager by an eyewitness, Dr. Warman, the chairman of the *Yudenrat* in Lublin.

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46. Moshe Prager, "The Hassidic Movement During the Holocaust," *Sefer Habesht*, Y. L. Cohen Maimon, ed. Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1960- 269-270.

47. *Kiddush Hahayim* was reflected in the manner which potential humiliation was transformed into an elevating and religious experience.

48. Rabbi Avraham Shalom Goldberg.

49. Unger, *op. cit.*, 181.

50. *Mishne Abot* 4:1.

51. *EK*, *op. cit.*, 169. *Kiddush Hashem* in death assumes meaning in the manner which those who remain alive achieve *Kiddush Hahayim*.

52. Issar Frankel, *Yehide Segulah*, Tel Aviv: Alef, 1955, 212.

53. Buber, *The Origins and Meaning of Hasidism*, New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1960, 180.

54. *Ibid.*, 181.

55. *Ibid.*, 239.

56. *Leviticus* 22:32 reads: "You shall not profane My holy Name, that I may be sanctified in the midst of the Israelite people, I the Lord who sanctify you." Expounding on the background of the Talmudic discussion (*Sanhedrin*, 74) concerning *Kiddush Hashem*, *Rashi* notes: "And one must sanctify the Name, this is the meaning of 'Venikdashiti' (That I may be sanctified), namely, 'shemoser nafsho al ahabat yozro' (that he gives over his soul because he loves his Creator), [*Rashi* in Talmud *Sanhedrin* 74a]. In *Leviticus* 22:32, *Rashi* further defines the ultimate *Kiddush Hashem* as martyrdom. "And when he gives over his soul let he be prepared."

57. *Psalms* 44:23.

58. Berl, *Reb Yitzchak Isaac Mekomarno*, *op. cit.*, 190. See also *Tanhuma* "Tezaweh," 5. According to *gimatriya*, numerical code word play, popular among mystics, the numerical value for the Hebrew letters in the phrase "Because of You, we are killed all the day," is equal to the numerical value of "Israel." (541)

59. Buber, *Tales of Hasidim: Early Masters*, *op. cit.*, 83-84. Compare with *Shibhe Baal Shem Tob*, *op. cit.*, 161. Actually it was his disciple, Rabbi Pinhas of Koretz (died 1791) who interpreted his master's offer to the Angel of Death: "*Ani mohel leka otan shte sha'ot, welo ta'aneh oti*," (I relinquish for you these two hours, and desist, pray, from further torment), as a final precious gift of life to God. "My teacher, the Baal Shem Tob, realizing the imminence of his death, exclaimed: 'Lord of the Universe, I make thee a gift of the remaining hours of my life.' This is true martyrdom for the sake of the Lord." Pinhas of Koretz, *Nofeth Zufim*, Warsaw: 1929, 11.

60. *Likute Amarim: Tanya*, *op. cit.*, Part I, chapter 18, 22. Tishby has documented the unique teaching of the *Habad* school of Hassidic thought, whereby there is hidden in "the right space of the heart" of every Jew, (irrespective of his degree of Jewish observance or level of intellectual attainment) is posited an equal amount of natural respect and love for the Divine and holy. The *Kiddush Hashem* phenomenon prevalent among all strata and elements in Jewry, reflects this collective view of the relationship between the Jewish

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People and its God. I. Tishby, "Hassidut," (Hassidism) *HaEnziklopedia Haibrit*, Vol. 17, Jerusalem: Masadah Press, 1965, 814.

61. i.e., *Kiddush Hashem* assumes the characteristic of being privileged rather than obligation.

62. *Kedushat Levi*, Munkatch, 1939, 69b.

63. *Meolamo Shel Rabbi Nahman Mebraizlav*, edited by David Hardan, Jerusalem: The World Zionist Organization, 1971, 62-63.

64. *Mishneh Abot*, 4:1.

65. *Toldot Ya'akov Yosef*, Brooklyn, N. Y.: Yosef Weiss Publishers, n.d. 19b, 26b.

66. *Beit Ahron*, Brody: 1873, 157.

67. Berl, *Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Mekomarno*, *op. cit.*, 238, 308, 309. See also *Likkutei Amarim: Tanya*, *op. cit.*, Part I, Chapter 18.

68. A disciple of the Baal Shem Tob, Died, 1775.

69. Newman, *Hassidic Anthology*, New York: Schocken Books, 1963, 438.

70. The verse dealing with the laws of sacrifice begins: "When any man from you shall bring an offering to the Lord."

71. Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim: Later Masters*, *op. cit.*, 59.

72. A disciple of Rabbi Mordechai of Lechovitz, who in turn was the disciple of Rabbi Shlomo of Karlin, a disciple of Dov Ber of Mezritch.

73. *Ibid.*, 168.

74. Rabbi Yechiel Michal of Zlochov, a disciple of the Baal Shem Tob. Died, circa 1786.

75. The formula usually is stated as follows: "*Betaruta deletata, Itaruta le'eylah*," (With that which impacts below, one impacts above). The statement appears routinely in *Kabbalah* and Hassidic thought. See, *Toldot*, *op. cit.*, 4b; for a variant formula see *Kedushat Levi*, 23a.

76. Buber, *Early Masters*, *op. cit.*, 149.

77. Reference to *Genesis* 22:1-19. This episode was subsequently transformed into the forerunner and prototype of *Kiddush Hashem*. See Shalom Spiegel's definitive documentation of the *Akedah* theme in Jewish Martyrdom, *The Last Sacrifice*, New York: Schocken Books, 1969.

78. *Shibhe Baal Shem Tob*, *op. cit.*, 132.

79. The tenth in the series of ten *sefirot*.

80. The second in the hierarchy of *sefirot*. As a result of man's sinful pattern the manifestation of *Malkut* had fallen from its previous higher sphere. This represents a form of *Hillul Hashem* (the desecration of God's Name), the very opposite of *Kiddush Hashem*. Only *mesirat nefesh* and *Kiddush Hashem* can restore ("tikun zeh") *Malkut* to its original position. This represents a form of *tikun* central to Hassidic response.

81. Rabbi Shem Klingberg. Unger, *Sefer Kedoshim*, *op. cit.*, 152.

82. Rabbi Yitzchak Meir of Gur, disciple of Rabbi Simha Bunam of Pshsha, died, 1866.

83. Buber, *Later Masters*, *op. cit.*, 311.

84. Disciple of Rabbi Schmelke of Nikolsburg, a disciple of Rabbi Dob Ber. Died, 1807.

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85. Newman, *op. cit.*, 67-68.
86. *Igeret Hakodesh, Shibhe Habesht*, *op. cit.*, 169.
87. Berl, *Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Mekomarno*, *op. cit.*, 238.
88. *Leviticus* 18:5.
89. The interpretation of "live by them, but not die by them," is originally noted by Rabbi Ishmael, in *Sanhedrin*, 74a.
90. *Toldot*, *op. cit.*, 113. Rabbi Yaakov Yosef refers to death under normal, natural circumstances.
91. *Torath Hamagid*, ed. by Yisrael Klapholz, Tel Aviv: Pe'er Hasefer, 1969, vol. 1, 166b, 167a. Especially significant, is the following reference: "That which is written, 'You shall be holy, [for I, the Lord your God, am holy. *Leviticus* 19:2.], may be interpreted as follows: When you sustain the ideas referred to as 'holy,' as we know, then you too will be holy—modelled after the Name of God. Thus, you will not encounter death . . . to wit, when you are alive, you will not be considered like the dead, God forbid." *Ibid.*
92. *Meolamo Shel Rabbi Nahman Mebrazlav*, *op. cit.*, 63.
93. *Ibid.* Implied is the following: Absolute terminus of life forever prevents man from further sanctifying God's Name. Life is necessary for repeated *Kiddush Hashem*. This concept is a favorite of the Psalmist. "What use would my death be, if I went down to the grave? Can the dust praise You? Will it declare the truth?" (*Psalms* 30:10). "The dead cannot praise the Lord. Nor any who descend to silence" (*Psalms* 115:17). "I do not wish to die, but to live, and I shall tell of the works of God" (*Psalms* 118:17). A simulated experience of *Kiddush Hashem*, without sacrificing one's physical existence, is also noted in the teachings of Rabbi Elimelek of Lizensk. "Thus we deliver our souls to [sanctify] His great Name, Blessed Be He. Man should always imagine that he truly sacrifices his soul in order that he may achieve the unity of His great Name." *No'am Elimelek*, Lemberg 1874, 24d. "This is the meaning of the verse 'And when the time approached for Israel to die' (*Genesis* 47:29), He [Jacob] so completely devoted his soul [to the sanctification of God] that he was indeed close to death." *Ibid.* Both teachings imply a form of *Kiddush Hashem* without destroying life.
94. Rabbi Simcha of Parsischa. Newman, *op. cit.*, 49.
95. *Shibhe Baal Shem Tob*, *op. cit.*, 151. An implied facet of *Kiddush Hahayim*. For further treatment of the manner in which Hassidism viewed miracles as the glorious manifestation of the Divine in this world, see Yitzchak Alfasi, "Hasagot al Enoshiut U'moftim B'yisrael," *Sefer Habesht*, *op. cit.*, 112-129.
96. *Exodus* 22:30.
97. Eliezer Steinman, *Shaar Hahasidut*. Tel Aviv: Hoza'at Sefarim Neuman, 1957, 236. See also Menahem Mendel of Kotzk, *Emet We'emunah*, Brooklyn, N. Y.: Ahavat Hakadmonim, 1971, 133.
98. *Shaar Hahasidut*, *op. cit.*, 261.