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 זכיראל ועיראל דניאל גריאל בריאל אהניאל



בשם אהיה והא הוא אא בב או מאכ אאא

אשבעת עלך חוה ראשונה בשם שהוא יוצרן ובשם שלשת סלאכים ששלת יוצרן כשכילך ומלאך נאיי הים ונשבעת להם במקום שהמצא שמוחם שלא
 תזיקו אותם ולא אחת כמחנותיך ומשרתיך ולא לכל מי שישא שמוחם לכן בשמותם ובחוחום הכתובים פה אני משביעך ואת מחנותיך ומשרתיך, שלא תזיקו את
 יולדת פלוגית בת פלוגית ולה לר שגולר לה לא ביום ולא בלילה לא במאכלם ולא במשתם לא בראשם ולא בלכבם ולא בשני סאור וארבעים
 ושמונה אכריח: ולא בשלשה מאות וששים וחמשה גדרם ככה השמות והחתומות האלה אלו אני משביעך ואת מחנותיך ומשרתיך

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POPULAR MEDIEVAL AMULET TO PROTECT THE MOTHER AND CHILD AGAINST ATTACK BY LILIT DURING
 CHILDBIRTH.—FROM *Sefer Raziel*, AMSTERDAM, 1701.

JEWISH MAGIC AND SUPERSTITION

A Study in Folk Religion

JOSHUA TRACHTENBERG

Foreword by Moshe Idel

PENN

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS
 Philadelphia

TO MY PARENTS
DEBORAH AND SIMON TRACHTENBERG

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FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

The author of *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion*, Joshua Trachtenberg (1904–1959), was a reform rabbi active on the eastern coast of the United States for most of his career. He studied at Columbia University—and this book represents an advanced form of his Ph.D. thesis—and served as a rabbi in communities in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. In turning his attention to the neglected field of magic, he was indubitably inspired by Lynn Thorndike's classic series on this subject. Thorndike, also a Columbia scholar, was one of the readers of this book. However, it should be mentioned that a generation beforehand other rabbis contributed to the study of both magic and folklore. Moses Gaster, the father of another Columbia University scholar, Theodor H. Gaster, was an eminent scholar with whose writings Trachtenberg was well acquainted.¹ Rabbinic studies and involvement in educating rabbis were the background of two older contemporaries of Gaster's, Moritz Guedemann, who was active mainly in Vienna, and Ludwig Blau, who was active in Budapest. Both were authors of significant books that dealt with Jewish magic and that played an important role in Trachtenberg's book.² In our generation, two scholars in particular have addressed the subject. David Ruderman, a Reform rabbi, devoted an important study to magic in the Renaissance.³ Daniel Sperber, an Orthodox rabbi, devoted many studies to magic in rabbinic literature.⁴ Recently, another Orthodox rabbi, Menachem Hacohen of Jerusalem, who serves also as the chief rabbi of Rumania, edited an entire issue of the semi-popular journal *Mahanaim*, a review for studies in Jewish thought and culture, entitled "On Jewish Magic." Another interesting phenomenon was the critical edition of the most important Jewish book of magic, the *Sefer ha-Razim* of late antiquity, which was compiled by R. Mordekhai Margoliot in order to show how different the Rabbis were from their contemporaries who dealt with magic.

More than in the many other fields of Jewish studies, it is in the domain of magic that the comparative approach flowered, as all the

above studies exemplify. The spiritual distance of those rabbinic scholars from the topic of magic in their own religious lives facilitated the understanding of the historical and conceptual affinities between the different religious worlds. Nevertheless, at least insofar as Trachtenberg's book is concerned, the situation is a little bit more complex.

The title and subtitle of his book are more than an appropriate description of its content. They contain much of the attitude of the author toward his topic. One would hardly resort so often to the term "superstition" in a book written today about magic⁵ and, as we shall see below, the attempt to relegate the subjects dealt with in Trachtenberg's rich book to a "folk religion," namely to some sort of popular religion, has its problems. However, although these remarks may leave the impression that this is an obsolete book, such an impression is quite superficial. Trachtenberg's contribution, more than sixty years after its first publication, is very significant and still relevant for any serious scholar of Jewish magic. It consists in an extensive collection of the pertinent material and careful analysis of numerous sources found in print and in manuscript, all arranged according to some major topics. In addition to exhausting an impressive number of sources, mainly belonging to medieval Ashkenazic Jewish culture, the book represents the broadest available survey of major topics that constitute Jewish magic in the Middle Ages, treated in a comparative manner. Though the book is much more open to the European background of some aspects of Jewish magic, the absence of the Arabic magical elements in Trachtenberg's discussions of Jewish magic is conspicuous.⁶ The author was less concerned with issues of definition, methodology, or sociology of magic. His approach is much more textual, descriptive, and integrative. By the last term I refer to the effort to bring together different sources dealing with the same topic and assume that they reflect the same approach. Trachtenberg's ability to reach so many disparate sources, which belong to quite different literary genres, makes his book the broadest survey of Jewish medieval magic, and still indispensable even several decades after its publication.

ON THE SOCIOLOGY OF JEWISH MAGIC

Methodologically speaking, Trachtenberg assumes that the beliefs and the practices dealt with in his book are part of a "folk religion." The assumption is, as articulated in the very opening of the

book, that the author deals with "ideas and practices that never met with the whole-hearted approval of the religious leaders, but which enjoyed such wide popularity that they could not be altogether excluded from the field of religion."⁷ It is very difficult to understand why he added this description since most of the material he adduced had been extracted from written sources, many of them authored by elite figures, while other of his sources were written by anonymous authors. In any case, since Trachtenberg focused on medieval material, he could not resort to oral material. Thus, the popular nature of magic and "superstition" that he hints at in his subtitle is quite problematic, and may point to his preference to consider the topics he analyzed as the beliefs of popular rather than of elite sources. As we will see below, magical elements are found in many, though not all, forms of Jewish literature written by the elite. However, before enumerating the major instances in which those Jewish literatures resorted to magical elements (in the next section) let me adduce two examples of clear affinities between Jewish elite figures and magical practices.

In one of his writings, R. Abraham Abulafia (1240–1291), the founder of ecstatic Kabbalah, strongly denigrates the resort to popular magic. He first adduces a famous passage from Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* that sharply criticizes the resort to amulets and then he writes:

I have found in one of the books, whose title I would like not to mention [explicitly]: "Whoever wants to bring a woman to him so that she will love him, let him pronounce the name of WHW YLY SYT 'LM,⁸ frontward and backward seven times, in the night of Wednesday, during the first hour of night, which is the time of Saturn, and let him conjure Qaftziel, that is the angel presiding over that planet, by that name. At that time let him write four names on a parchment of a deer, without interrupting the writing by any speech. Then, let him put the amulet on his neck as an amulet and then the woman, whose name and the name of her father he has pronounced, will love him a great love, by the virtue of that name." Similar things I have found in great numbers, and they are almost infinite; and these things have spread and reached the hands of great Rabbis, but they hide them in a scrupulous manner and they think that their treasury is replete with pearls. And they are very reverent [awesome] while studying the names when they need them. And these things may get crazy, [even] these nice men, or others like them as the great Rabbi [Maimonides] has said.⁹ And from this issue you may

understand all the other and know that all the types are similar to them . . . and whoever will negate their efficiency, will be answered immediately that a certain famous Rabbi has caught the demon and put it in prison in a house during the whole night and in the morning he found a small mosquito and killed it and immediately the demon ran away from the house. Those and those like them, together with their Rabbis, have been caught by the demons and their eyes have been darkened, and their hearts blinded, and they have been brought to madness and death [by those beliefs]."¹⁰

This is a sharp parody on the reliance on linguistic magic, coming from an adherent to Maimonides. The sarcastic tone notwithstanding, I do not believe that Abulafia has exaggerated when pointing out the diffusion of the interest in magic, the social layers that were interested in magic, and the deep reverence of those beliefs and practitioners toward the holy names. "Great Rabbis" as well as more simple-minded people are described as resorting to magical practices. I assume that those unnamed Rabbis were of Ashkenazic origin, and Abulafia, who studied Ashkenazic esoteric material and was inspired by it in the details of his mystical techniques, attempted to safeguard their honor despite their involvement in magic. That indeed he was acquainted with magical practices based on magical names is quite evident from the first book he wrote, 1271's *Sefer Get ha-Shemot*; the title means "Divorcing the [Magical] Names." There a similar crusade is waged against the false names attributed to God. Many years later, in a book written in 1285/6, after mentioning an erotic recipe similar to that mentioned above, the same kabbalist depicts those books as "books of heretics, which lure others in order to err, following their vain beliefs."¹¹ Elsewhere in the same book he mentions "those who boast in their knowledge of the names and the actions produced because of their pronunciation or writing, in the manner of the incantations which spread [ha-hashba'ot ha-mit-pashshetot] among the modest men, considered to be the sages of this generation, and called the masters of [divine] names¹² but they [in fact] confuse the hearts and induce fear in the sages of the stupid ones, and they demand from the people to be called sages and rabbis and masters, but they are slaves, subjugated to slaves of slaves."¹³

This is again another description of linguistic magic, which fits much more the Ashkenazic rather than the Spanish Jewish culture. Again, also here the elite is criticized: "the sages of this generation." To what extent Maimonides's strong rejection of magic, both in its

linguistic and astro-magical forms, has contributed to the emphasis on magical views of Judaism in Spain is still an issue that requires investigation.¹⁴ As Daniel O'Keefe has pointed out, magic may surge in places where there is too little religion, namely where the rationalistic visions of religion are strong.¹⁵ In any case, it is obvious that Abulafia conceived magic as part of a practice that is both popular and elite. It is important to point out that a kabbalist such as Abulafia could oppose magic in sharp terms and that the relationship of Kabbalah, as well as other types of Jewish literature, to magic is, oftentimes, a complex one.

Let me turn to a much later example of elite magic dealing with an attempt to bring about historical redemption. In an epistle sent by R. Samuel Catalani of Ascona to his son Raphael in Corfu, he describes the following sequence of events related to the visit of Nathan of Gaza, the prophet of the famous messiah Sabbatai Tzevi, to Rome in the summer of 1668:

In all the communities of Rome there is an unanimity that Nathan has the word of God, because of the deeds he did there. He did not stay there but one night, and he cut his beard and he dressed himself in a respectable garment and went together with his householder¹⁶ and stayed at the *heqdesh*¹⁷ at night after the night prayer. . . . They said to him: Perhaps [it] is this man who is called Nathan of Gaza. . . . And before the sunrise they went together to the pope's house of kingship and he stayed there the whole day around and around the house of kingship with great intentions (*havvanot*) that he was reading and intending. And at the hour of twenty-three he exited and went out, and he walked during two days the walk of eight [days].¹⁸

This is a dense passage, both from the historical and the conceptual points of view. However, before engaging the content of this passage, let me adduce another one, which tells us a slightly different story dealing with Nathan's stay in Rome. Unlike the first version, stemming from a Sabbatean source and thus sympathetic to the Sabbatean prophet, the second one stems from the pen of R. Jacob Sasportas, one of the fiercest opponents of this messianic movement. Nathan is described again as someone who first

Went to Rome and he was like someone who was hiding. And when it became known to the Jews, they wanted to damage him, but he hid himself and changed his garment and cut his beard in order not to be recognized.

And he went out of Rome like a fugitive and ran to save himself and arrived at Leghorn. And he found some people who still kept their belief [in Sabbatai Tzevi] and he told them that he went to Rome in a mission of his Messiah, and he performed his mission and did his deed in the river of Rome, and he threw there a written scroll, and in the span of one year Rome will be overthrown.¹⁹

The two versions deal with what seems to be a historical event: an attempt to circumvent the Vatican by pronouncing some form of magical statement in order to destroy it. This was part of an eschatological enterprise, which assumed that the destruction of Christianity, and perhaps also of Islam, are part of the apocalyptic scenario connected to the messianic mission of Sabbatai Tzevi. Magic as related to such sort of *imaginaire* has been already adumbrated in a legend related to the early sixteenth-century R. Shlomo Molkho.²⁰

MAGIC IN THE VARIOUS JEWISH LITERATURES

A main problem that haunts many of Trachtenberg's analyses is the dissociation between the magical topics he treats from the more general world views of the medieval authors he discusses. Someone may assume from reading his book that those passages may be intrusions of elements that are not integral to the book from which they are quoted. In Thorndike's famous series of volumes about magic and science in the Middle Ages, which left such a great impression on Trachtenberg, many important figures are dealt with in a more exhaustive manner in separate chapters, allowing a more comprehensive understanding of the magical nature of their thinking. But this is not the manner in which Trachtenberg treated his authors. For him, a certain magic topic was the center of gravity, and he adduced much material to this effect from different sources. What is, therefore, missing in Trachtenberg's discussions is not only the existence of magic in the elite groups, but also the manner in which magic practices and magical world views are integrated into larger religious schemes. My assumption is that the performative nature of the vast majority of forms of Judaism facilitated the acceptance of magic as another form of performance, or as an interpretation of the efficacy of the rabbinic rituals.

Let me here present the presence of magic in some of the main

forms of Jewish literature with footnoted annotations to update the most important bibliography concerning scholarship on magic in recent time.

1. The belief that the performance of the biblical rituals has dramatic repercussions on the course of nature, which is basic for biblical thought, is immanently and eminently magical. The performance of the divine commandments or the submission to the divine will is the crucial way to keep the world in a status quo. The practice of blessing, *berakhah*,²¹ as transmission of power is quite representative of some of the biblical views of the circulation of power by means of holy men, kings, or priests, as well as the mantic practices.²² These remarks, to be sure, do not ignore the biblical critiques of other forms of magic.

2. These kinds of practices have been elaborated in the rabbinic thought, as we may easily discern from a long series of important discussions regarding the maintenance of the universe by means of sacrifices and the concomitant recitations of the account of creation, the so-called *ma'amadot* for example. Magicians were conceived to be holy men in rabbinic Judaism, witness Honi (Onias) the circle-maker, Hanina ben Dosa, R. Zeira and Rabba, and many others. Rabbinic literature since the Middle Ages followed, *mutatis mutandis*, those more open attitudes toward magic operations.²³

3. In the *Heikhalot* literature, there are many magical elements,²⁴ some of which are as strong as those found in the rabbinic literature. Also *Sefer Yetzirah*, one of the oldest and most influential post-biblical books in Judaism, has obvious magical aspects.²⁵

4. The Hasidei Ashkenazic esoteric and exoteric literatures, composed during the decades of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries in southern Germany (and their parallels composed in some parts of France) are replete with a variety of magical elements, more precisely linguistic magic, which is, together with some other demonic motifs, quintessential for the understanding of those types of literature.²⁶

5. Some forms of Jewish philosophies, like those of two twelfth-century authors, R. Abraham ibn Ezra and R. Yehudah ha-Levi, and subsequently the huge literature inspired by those authors, which flourished in the mid-fourteenth century, have absorbed magical elements from Arabic sources, originally stemming from Hellenistic milieux, in their influential presentations of Judaism.²⁷ Those

authors adopted and adapted forms of astro-magical approaches, which assume the possibility of collecting, and sometimes even drawing, the celestial effluvia by some forms of rituals and objects.

6. Kabbalah, in most of its various forms, presupposes a magical understanding of the universe; practices based on this assumption have been permeating kabbalistic life and literature up through the present day. Especially obvious are the magical elements in late fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century Kabbalah written in Spain, Italy, Jerusalem, and Safed.²⁸ The entire practical Kabbalah, an important branch of the kabbalistic literature, is still only at the extreme margin of modern research and its impact on the understanding of Kabbalah as a larger phenomenon will be, in my opinion, dramatic in the sense that the more operative, performative, and energetic elements will become much more central, while the more theological, mythical, and symbolic elements, which are overemphasized in modern scholarship as being the core of Kabbalah, will lose part of their undisputed centrality. A better understanding of the history of some of the mystical techniques found in Kabbalah will show that some of them stem from magical sources.²⁹ Likewise, neglected texts found in manuscripts related to "saintly" mystical figures, like Joseph Gikatilla and R. Isaac of Acre in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Shlomo Molkho³⁰ or Joseph Karo in the sixteenth century, and R. Isaac of Radville in the eighteenth century, will reveal a much greater role played by magic in their activities than previously suspected.

More conspicuously, the Renaissance Kabbalah has integrated magical elements, many of them stemming from medieval Arabic magic, especially the Arabic appropriation of the hermetic one, but also an influence of al-Kindi's is perhaps detectable.³¹ In general, the golden age of the synthesis between magic and Kabbalah is the century between 1470 and 1570, and can be found mainly in the writings of the anonymous authors of the vast kabbalistic literary corpus related to *Sefer ha-Meshiv*, as well as in the writings of R. Yohanan Alemanno, R. Joseph ibn Sayah, and R. Moshe Cordovero. Kabbalah has been perceived, perhaps because of the special accent put on magic among some Jewish kabbalists in late fifteenth-century Italy, as the source of magic. It is in this period when some Christian thinkers emphasized the magical aspects of Kabbalah. So, for example, we read in a report dealing with Pico della Mirandola's stand:

That divine philosophy of Pythagoras, which they call Magic, belongs to a great extent to the Mosaic tradition; since Pythagoras had managed to reach the Jews and their doctrine in Egypt, and knowledge of many of their sacred mysteries. . . . Zoroaster, the son of Oromasius, in practicing magic, took that to be the cult of God and the study of divinity; while engaged in this in Persia he most successfully investigated every virtue and power of nature, in order to know those sacred and sublime secrets of the divine intellect; which subject many people called theurgy, other Cabala or magic.³²

Via the integration of magic, hermeticism, Kabbalah, and Pythagoreanism, Kabbalah has been understood as close to or identical with magic in many forms of occult literature in premodern Europe.

7. As pointed out above, there are magical elements in seventeenth-century Sabbateanism, at least insofar as Nathan of Gaza was concerned.

8. Finally, Polish Hasidism, which emerged at the middle of the eighteenth century and is still a vital form of Jewish spirituality, is deeply informed by magical ways of thinking and manners of action that are conceived to be both effective and licit.³³ Martin Buber, one of the most powerful and influential exponents of Judaism in our century, produced the first sympathetic effort to present Hasidism to a larger public in the form of German translations and phenomenological expositions of mainly the legendary aspects of Hasidism. His presentation of mystical Judaism, which turned in the 1920s into a much more dialogical brand of philosophy, involves nevertheless a dichotomy between the kabbalistic, medieval phase of Jewish mysticism and the much later Hasidic religiosity. One of the major differences between the two modes of Jewish spirituality that Buber himself accentuated is the magical, schematic nature of Kabbalah, which he presented as being quite different from the nonmagical, devotional, and spontaneous Hasidism. One of the finest phenomenologists of religion, Buber emphasized several times the retreat from magic as a defining feature of Hasidic religiosity. So, for example, he declared that the magical nature of the manipulation of letters and divine names was indeed adopted by Hasidism, "but this magic ingredient never touched the center of Hasidic teaching."³⁴ Buber's attempt to do away with the magical elements in Hasidism was duly noticed by Gershom Scholem, the founder of the modern study of Jewish mysti-

cism; he drew attention to it in two very succinct remarks.³⁵ However, though recognizing Buber's fault on this point, no writings about Hasidism belonging to Scholem's school of research made substantial changes concerning this issue, as the most extensive studies emanating from this school demonstrate. It will suffice to read the recently printed book of Rivka Schatz Uffenheimer in English,³⁶ Isaiah Tishby's various articles on Hasidism, or Mendel Piecarz's books in Hebrew on this movement in order to see how embedded in "spiritualism" these scholarly descriptions of Hasidism are.

The latter two were, like Buber, acquainted with Hasidism first hand, not only from the study of books, but also through the magical elements inherent in the theory of the *tzaddiq*. However, its sources in some forms of Kabbalah escaped them. What is and was quite evident is that Hasidism is a kind of spirituality that is centered around the *tzaddiq*, the righteous holy man, who in some cases is a wonder-worker and in many others is conceived of as able to bless his followers in a way that will help them in matters of spirit and body altogether. This was quite evident in Buber's native Galicia, as it is today, when academic books on Hasidism written by scholars of mysticism were inclined to overlook this obvious characteristic of the movement.³⁷

9. The resurgence of magic in the modern period, perhaps we may call it the postmodern period, is dramatic, as any unbiased observer of the developments in Jewish religious practices in the last two decades can easily see. Pilgrimages are being made to sacred tombs for the sake of cure, practical kabbalists visit for similar purposes, and magic is even being utilized to attempt to solve political problems. Witness the curse of Saddam Hussein by kabbalists during the Gulf War in 1991 by means of a ritual named *pulsa' di-nura'*, literally "the beating by fire," or the same ritual that was applied to the late Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin some years later. The ongoing printing of magical literature, kabbalistic or not, by the Bakal and other publishing houses in Jerusalem is to be seen within the framework of the same development. Some integration of kabbalistic magic is discernible as well in the New Age forms of spirituality.

10. Without the understanding of the phenomenologies of some forms of Judaism—with a few, sometimes influential exceptions, such as Maimonides's seminal theology, Jewish Enlightenment thought, and some modern forms of orthodoxy—as magic at the core, because of the centrality of ritualistic and liturgical performance acts over knowledge and faith, it will be difficult to understand the great open-

ness of Jewish literature over millennia toward magical elements in their environments and their readiness to incorporate them. In other words, without integral magic there is no incorporation of alien magic. Some forms of magic found in Judaism are similar to others found in the environment, and the affinities between them are clues regarding the latter's incorporation. Likewise, the dissimilarities between different types of magic, some of them found in Jewish sources and some of them found elsewhere, are often the reason for antagonism toward the alien types of magic. Sometimes new forms of magic have been accepted by Jewish sources, enriching the range and the phenomenology of magic in Judaism.

11. Antagonism toward magic is found, to be sure, in some of the rabbinic texts as part of developments from some biblical anti-magical stands. This antagonism has been combined with the impact of Greek intellectualism, or logocentrism, in the Middle Ages, and of French and German philosophies during the Enlightenment. The integration of these "alien" elements, which are consonant with some less magical aspects of the biblical and rabbinic ways of thought, was instrumental in producing some new forms of Judaism, which are interesting in themselves, but insofar as the critical attitude toward magic, not very representative of the older, more performative proclivities. Finally, we should mention the indifference toward magic in the huge corpus of Jewish poetry over the centuries.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

The recent scholarly renaissance of interest in magical literature, mainly in the last two decades, constitutes a dramatic change in Jewish studies.³⁸ This development is somehow related also to other processes in modern scholarship: the move from the study of higher culture as the main focus of academic research to greater emphasis on the more popular culture; the move from the study of the written culture toward a much greater emphasis on orality; and the shift from the study of exotericism, the official religion or culture, to esotericism, the minority, sectarian, or sometimes even clandestine phenomena. The move of scholarship from the examination of structured ways of thought to the less articulated ways of experience and experimentation, from mind to emotion and only then to body, is part of the disenchantment from the religious axiology that was still being perpetuated in scholarly enterprises.³⁹ The spiritual was con-

ceived to be more essential, more "noble" than the "lower" forms of human experience, with the corporeal at the bottom of the scale. Magic, concerned with material purposes, was related to this lower part of the scale, which was conceived of as immersed in gross materiality. By resorting to vertical metaphors I make no attempt to insinuate my own position, but to convey the taxonomy of both the religious establishment and a part of the academic establishment at the beginning of the study of the history of religion and of Judaism. In principle, scholarly studies should strive to reach a much more horizontal picture. In the case of medieval Judaism, or any abstract forms of speculation, philosophy, mysticism, and magic should be depicted as different forms of the religious *imaginaire*, which are much more interconnected and often times overlap, interpenetrate and trigger rather than separate.⁴⁰ They constitute, in my opinion, different ways of imagining reality, as well as attempts to make sense of it and sometimes to act upon it. All of them, psychologically speaking, are effective, or ineffective, at the same time.

Trachtenberg's bold effort to transcend the discontent and even the disregard of many scholars to the very existence of magical elements in Judaism was, especially in his time, a rare case in Jewish studies. It was an important step toward a more balanced understanding of the complex mosaic that constitutes Jewish culture. However, much more should be done, especially by reading numerous neglected manuscripts. Trachtenberg's erudition and open-mindedness are still exemplary even generations after the publication of his book, and some of the scholars in Jewish studies, some of whose names have been pointed out above, ignored the lesson of this enlightened rabbi. In a way, the Jews' beliefs regarding magic were conceived in his book as part of their integration in their European surroundings, and thus a part of their normality. That such an interest induced sometimes a demonization of the Jews by their gentile neighbors was treated in the other study of Trachtenberg's, *The Devil and the Jews*. It was published in 1943 and is, from many points of view, a sequel to the present book.

NOTES

1. See much of the material collected in the three volumes of Moses Gaster's work *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Medieval Romance* (London: Maggs Bros., 1925-28, rpr. New York: Ktav, 1971).

2. See Moritz Guedemann, *Die Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Kultur der abenlaendischen Juden* (Vienna: A. Holder, 1880-88), and Ludwig Blau, *Das altjuedische Zauberwesen* (Budapest: Rabbinerschule, 1898).

3. See David Ruderman, *Kabbalah, Magic, and Science: The Cultural Universe of a Sixteenth-Century Jewish Physician* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).

4. See Daniel Sperger, *Magic and Folklore in Rabbinic Literature* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1994).

5. See, for example, the closest title to that of Trachtenberg's book, Sperber's *Magic and Folklore in Rabbinic Literature*.

6. On the influence of Arabic magic on magical discussions in texts closed to Kabbalah, see Gershom Scholem, "Some Sources of Jewish-Arabic Demonology," *Journal for Jewish Studies* 16 (1965): 1-13 as well as his important edition and study of *Sefer ha-Tamar, Das Buch von der Palme des Abu Aflah aus Syracus* (Jerusalem, respectively 1926 and 1927). On this book and Kabbalah see Salomon Pines, "Le *Sefer Ha-Tamar* et les Maggidim des Kabbalistes," in *Hommage a Georges Vajda*, edited by Gerard Nahon and Charles Touati (Louvain: Peeters, 1980), 333-63 as well as Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), passim.

7. See p. vii of this book.

8. These are the first four combinations of letters of the so-called name of seventy-two letters. See pp. 95-96 of this book.

9. Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:62.

10. *Sefer ha-Melammed*, Ms. Paris, BN 680, fols. 292b-293a.

11. 'Otzar 'Eden Ganuz, Ms. Oxford-Bodleiana 1580, fols. 148b-149a.

12. See also *Sheva' Netivot ha-Torah*, in *Philosophie und Kabbala* edited by Erstes Heft (Leipzig: A. Jellinek, 1854), 22; Gershom Scholem, "Qabbalat Rabbi Ya'aqov ve-R. Yitzhaq," in *Madda'ei ha-Yahadut* (Jerusalem: Institute of Jewish Studies, 1927), 2:92 n.4.

13. 'Otzar 'Eden Ganuz, Ms. Oxford-Bodleiana 1580, fol. 146a.

14. See note 27 below.

15. Daniel L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: The Social Theory of Magic* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 133.

16. Namely R. Moses Cassuto or Capsuto, the rich merchant who accompanied Nathan. See Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi, the Mystical Messiah*, translated by R. J. Z. Werblowsky (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973), 771 n. 219.

17. Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 772, translates *heqdes* as "shelter for destitute wayfarers."

18. Isaiah Tishby, *Paths of Faith and Heresy* (Ramat Gan: Massadah, 1964), 77-78 (Hebrew). See also Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 772-74.

19. Jacob Sasportas, *Sefer Tzitzat Novel Tzevi*, edited by Z. Schwartz and I.

Tishby (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1954), 267–68; Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 77¹.

20. See M. Idel, "Shlomo Molkho as a Magician," *Sefunot*, n.s., 3 (1995): 198–202 (Hebrew).

21. On this topic see Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968), 44; Felicitas D. Goodman, *Ecstasy, Ritual, and Alternate Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 150–51. Compare these to the way Georges Vajda described the blessing in early Kabbalah: "Benediction, flux vivifiant l'univers," in his *Le commentaire d'Ezra de Gerone sur le cantique des cantiques* (Paris: Aubier, 1969), 196. Compare this view of the blessing to the principle of dynamis in theurgical Neoplatonism, where it is conceived in terms reminiscent of mana; cf. Georg Luck, "Theurgy and Forms of Worship in Neoplatonism," in *Religion, Science, and Magic: in Concert and in Conflict*, edited by J. Neusner, E. Frerichs, and P. V. McCracken Flesher (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 189–90.

22. On kings and magical views of reality see the theories developed by James Frazer and, following him, the theories of the Scandinavian and myth-and-ritual schools: Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1959); Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion of the Integration of Society and Nature* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1948); Aage Bentzen, *Kingship and Messiah* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1955); J. Coppens, *Le Messianisme Royal* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1968); and Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 199, 264. On later Jewish discussions about king, messiah, and magic see my *Messianic Mystics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 116. See also Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Paperbacks, 1988), 268–69, 272, and Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994).

23. See, for example, Sperber, *Magic and Folklore*; Giuseppe Veltri, *Magie und Halakha* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1997); Jacob Neusner, *The Wonder-Working Lawyers of Talmudic Babylonia* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1987); Ithamar Gruenwald, "Ha-Ketav, ha-Mikhtav ve-ha-Shem ha-meforash: Magiah, Ruhaniyut u-Mistiqaq," in *Massu'ot: Studies in Kabbalistic Literature and Jewish Philosophy in Memory of Prof. Ephraim Gottlieb*, edited by Michal Oron and Amos Goldreich (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1994), 75–98 (Hebrew); Idel, *Golem*, 213–31; Elliot R. Wolfson, "Phantasmagoria: The Image of the Image in Jewish Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 4, no. 1 (2001): 78–120.

24. Peter Schaefer, *Hekhalot-Studien* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1988), 118–53, 277–95. On magic and Hekhalot literature see more recently the important study of Shaul Shaked, "Peace Be Upon You, Exalted Angels": On Hekhalot, Liturgy, and Incantation Bowls," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 2 (1995): 197–219,

and Michael Swartz, *Scholastic Magic, Ritual, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

25. For the magical understandings of this book see P. A. Hyman, "Was God a Magician? *Sefer Yesirah* and Jewish Magic," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 40 (1989): 225–37; Idel, *Golem: Magical and Mystical Jewish Traditions on the Artificial Anthropoid* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 9–26; and Yehuda Liebes, *Ars Poetica in Sefer Yetzira* (Tel Aviv: Schocken Publishing House, 2000), 63–71 (Hebrew).

26. See Idel, *Golem*, 54–80 and the attempt to distinguish between the different recipes to create golems found in the two main schools active in northern Europe, *ibid.* 81–95. Compare, however, Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 99, 101–3. For the possible sources of a theory of magical influence found in the works of R. Eleazar of Worms (*Sefer Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*, edited by N. E. Weiss [Benei Beraq, 1987], 70, 80; and *Commentary on the Prayer*, edited by M. and Y. A. Herschler [Jerusalem: The Herschler Institute, 1992], 708) see Joseph Dan, *The Esoteric Theology of Hasidei Ashkenaz* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1968), 227–28 (Hebrew), and the very important remark of Charles Mopsik, *Les grands textes de la Kabbale* (Lagrasse: Verdier, 1993), 200–2, who has pointed out the Neoplatonic and theurgical sources of a view very similar to that presented here, and compared it to later, kabbalistic parallels.

27. Shlomo Pines, "On the Term Ruhaniyyut and Its Sources and on Judah Halevi's Doctrine," *Tarbiz* 57 (1988): 511–40 (Hebrew); Dov Schwartz, "Different Forms of Magic in Jewish Thought in Fourteenth Century Spain," *PAAJR* 57 (1990/1991): 17–47 (Hebrew); *idem*, "Astrology and Astral Magic in Rabbi Shlomo Al-Qonstantini's Megalleh 'Amuqot," *Jerusalem Studies in Folklore* 15 (1993): 37–82 (Hebrew); *idem*, *Astral Magic in Medieval Jewish Thought* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1999) (Hebrew); M. Idel, "An Astral-Magical Pneumatic Anthropoid," *Incognita* 2 (1991): 9–31; *idem*, "Hermeticism and Judaism," in *Hermeticism and the Renaissance*, edited by J. Merkel and A. Debus (Cranbury, N.J., 1988), 59–76; Aviezer Ravitzky, "The Anthropological Theory of Miracles in Medieval Jewish Philosophy," in his *History and Faith; Studies in Jewish Philosophy*, Amsterdam Studies in Jewish Thought 2 (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1996), 154–204.

28. On magic in Jewish mysticism see the numerous and important observations in Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1974), especially 182–89, 362–65; Moshe Idel, "Inquiries into the Doctrine of *Sefer Ha-Meshiv*," in *Sefunot*, edited by J. Hacker (Jerusalem: Ben Zri Institute, 1983), 17:185–266 (Hebrew); *idem*, "Magic and Kabbalah in the Book of the Responding Entity," in *The Solomon Goldman Lectures*, edited by M. Gruber (Chicago: Spertus College, 1993), 6:125–38; Jonathan Garb, "Power and Kavanah in Kabbalah" (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 2000) (Hebrew); *idem*, "The Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph ibn Sayah," *Kabbalah* 4

(1999): 255–313 (Hebrew); Dov Schwartz, "From Theurgy to Magic: The Evolution of the Magical-Talismanic Justification of Sacrifice in the Circle of Nahmanides and His Interpreters," *Aleph* 1 (2000): 165–213.

29. See R. J. Z. Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo: Lawyer and Mystic* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1977), 38–83; Moshe Idel, "On R. Isaac Sagi Nahor's Mystical Intention of the Eighteen Benedictions," in *Massu'ot: Studies in Kabbalistic Literature and Jewish Philosophy in Memory of Prof. Ephraim Gottlieb*, edited by Michal Oron and Amos Goldreich (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1994), 25–52 (Hebrew). This issue is of a very great importance for the understanding of mystical techniques in Judaism, such as the dream-question recipes, and I shall deal with this issue in a separate study. See, for the time being, Idel, "Inquiries."

30. See Idel, "Shlomo Molkho as a Magician."

31. See Moshe Idel, "Astral Dreams in R. Yohanan Alemanno's Writings," *Academia* 1 (1999): 111–28, especially 125 for al-Kindi's influence on Alemanno. For the Arab thinker's impact on Renaissance thought see Ivan P. Couliano, *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*, translated by Margaret Cook, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 18–23, 126–28. For magic in Renaissance Jewish thought see Erwin Rosenthal, "Yohanan Alemanno and Occult Science," *Prismata, Naturwissenschaftsgeschichtliche Studien, Festschrift fuer Willy Hartner*, edited by Y. Maeyama and W. G. Saltzer (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1977; rpr. Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1998), 349–61; Moshe Idel, "The Study Program of Yohanan Alemanno," *Tarbiz* 48 (1979): 303–30 (Hebrew); idem, "The Magical and Theurgical Interpretation of Music in Jewish Texts: Renaissance to Hasidism," *Yuval* 4 (1982): 33–63 (Hebrew); idem, "The Magical and Neoplatonic Interpretations of Kabbalah in the Renaissance," in *Jewish Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, edited by B. D. Cooperman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 186–242; idem, "Jewish Magic from the Renaissance Period to Early Hasidism," in *Religion, Science, and Magic in Concert and Conflict*, edited by J. Neusner et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 82–117; idem, "Magical Temples and Cities in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: A Passage of Masudi as a Possible Source for Yohanan Alemanno," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 3 (1981/82): 185–89; Ruderman, *Kabbalah, Magic, and Science*.

32. Adduced and translated by Daniel R. Walker, *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (London: Duckworth, 1972), 50.

33. Cf. Idel, *Hasidism*.

34. Martin Buber, *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*, edited and translated by Maurice Freedman, (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press International, 1988), 135; see also *ibid.*, 133–34, 179–80 as well as his *Tēudah vi-Yi'ud* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1963), 1:188 (Hebrew).

35. Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 231 and 247.

36. Rivka Schatz Uffenheimer, *Hasidism as Mysticism*, translated by Jonathan Chipman (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993). This study deals solely with what she thought were mystical-quietistic aspects of Hasidism, and there is no mention of magic whatsoever.

37. See Idel, *Hasidism*, 189–208. For recent studies on Hasidism and magic see Emmanuel Etkes, "The Role of Magic and Ba'alei-Shem in Ashkenazic Society in the Late Seventeenth Century and Early Eighteenth Century," *Zion* 60 (1995): 69–104 (Hebrew); idem, *Ba'al Hashem, The Besht: Magic, Mysticism, Leadership* (Jerusalem: Shazar Center, 2000) (Hebrew); Gedaliah Nigal, *Magic, Mysticism, and Hasidism: The Supernatural in Jewish Thought*, translated by E. Levin (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1995); Rachel Elior, "Between Yesh and Ayin: The Doctrine of the Zaddik in the Works of Jacob Isaac, the Seer of Lublin," *Jewish History: Essays in Honour of Chimen Abramsky* edited by Ada Rapoport-Albert and Steven F. Zipperstein (London: Peter Halban, 1988), 393–455.

38. I cannot mention here all the contributions to this field. See, for example, Peter Schaefer, "Jewish Magic Literature in Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 41, no.1 (1990): 75–91; P. Schaefer and S. Shaked, eds., *Magische Texte aus der Geniza* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994); Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1985); idem, *Magic Spells and Formulae* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993); Ron Barkai, *Science, Magic, and Mythology in the Middle Ages* (Jerusalem: Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, 1987) (Hebrew); Yuval Harari, *Harba' de-Moshe: A Critical Edition* (Jerusalem: Academion, 1997) (Hebrew); Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Peering through the Lattices: Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000); Dorit Cohen-Alloro, "Magic and Sorcery in the Zohar" (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 1989) (Hebrew); Michal Oron and Samuel Falk, *The Baal Shem of London* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, Tel Aviv University, 2002) (Hebrew); Stephen Sharot, *Messianism, Mysticism, and Magic: A Sociological Analysis of Jewish Religious Movements* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982). See also numero 85 (2000) of the Hebrew journal *Pe'amim*, which is dedicated in its entirety to magic.

39. Yehuda Liebes, "New Directions in the Study of Kabbalah," *Pe'amim*, 50 (1992): 150–70 (Hebrew); Moshe Idel, "On Judaism, Jewish Mysticism, and Magic," in *Envisioning Magic*, edited by P. Schaefer and Hans G. Kippenberg (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 195–214. I drew on some of the sections from this study in some of my discussions here.

40. See Moshe Idel, *Absorbing Perfections: On Kabbalah and Interpretation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2002), 11–12, 186–92.