

Chapter One: Historical Context

“The perspective within which the *teshuvah* phenomenon should be understood and its significance measured extends beyond Israel, Judaism, and Jewish history. The context within which contemporary *teshuvah* should be understood is the renewal of interest in religion generally and the resurgence of traditional religious forms specifically in both Eastern and Western countries. *Teshuvah* is an example of a wider phenomenon of traditionalist religious revival, which is grounded in a staunch rejection of crucial aspects of Western secular culture and society.

Dissatisfaction with a questioning of secular values is certainly not unique to the past few decades. ‘It was the best of times. It was the worst of times.’ With this opening sentence of the *Tale of Two Cities* Charles Dickens indicates the apprehensions and misgivings which existed even in the age when faith in reason, science, and progress was at its height. Goethe sounded a note of grave pessimism upon considering the changes the West was undergoing. ‘Mankind will become cleverer and more perspicacious, but not better or happier, nor more energetic. I foresee a day when [*has v'shalom*] God will no longer take delight in his creatures and will again annihilate the world and make a fresh start.’”

(Aviad 1983: 152-153)

Certain aspects of *tshuvah* among the Breslov Hasidim only begin to make sense after you learn more about the historical context of the group and the biography of their master Rebbe Nachman. The Breslov were not a community frozen in time and even though there is a definite sense of center and periphery among them, they are not closed off to the world. I will therefore work toward a diachronic understanding of Breslov culture that accounts for the socially constitutive and constituted aspects of their history.

Though I agree with Janet Aviad’s statement above, this chapter offers a more internal perspective while not ignoring the wider context she suggests we consider. For this purpose, I give an account for the rise of Hasidism, Rebbe Nachman and his disciples within Hasidism, and the inter-communal and international forces they were in dialogue with. This historical account orients Breslov culture in time and space and makes sense of their way of teaching today. Readers should pay attention to the footnotes in this chapter which give voice to one anonymous Breslover’s critique against the Judaic Studies historical perspective that I offer in my analysis.

Hasidism began as a radical Jewish pietistic movement in Eastern Europe under the leadership of Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760). The Baal Shem Tov was the father of all Hasidic sects, and even though different Hasidic communities have different ways of living their tradition, all recognize him as the founder of Hasidic Judaism.

In his essay, “Hasidism as a New Approach to Torah,” Abraham Joshua Heschel writes:

“The Baal Shem took the tradition of Jewish learning, the Talmud and Kabbalah, mysticism, and gave it a new luster and a new meaning. He was very much influenced by and adopted quite a number of

ideas from Jewish mysticism, Kabbalah, but he gave them a new slant, a new accent. To use a Hasidic term, he tried to consolidate the abstractions and philosophic reflections of Jewish mysticism into what he called a way of worship, an existential way, application to human terms rather than letting them stay in their naked abstraction.” (Heschel 1996: 38)

Thus, the Baal Shem Tov introduced a new way of relating to the tradition, a new way of proceeding along the learning path, “an existential way”. He also recharged the nature of learning relationships as Avraham Greenbaum explains in *The Wings of the Sun*:

“Chassidism had restored to the forefront of Judaism the concept of the Tzaddik as a spiritual leader who guides people in healing the maladies of their souls and fires them to serve God. It was an ancient idea: after the exodus from Egypt the Jewish People ‘believed in God *and* in Moses His servant’ (Exodus 14:31). Since that time every age had its leaders. When the Rabbis taught that one must submit oneself to a teacher (Avot 1:6) it is clear that this meant more than just a professor from whom one could gain information, but rather a saintly individual whose conduct and bearing would serve as an inspiring example of living Torah even in his most intimate personal activities.” (Greenbaum 1995: 58)

The specific *tzaddik* figure of the Breslov community is Rebbe Nachman (1772-1810) who died almost two hundred years ago in Uman, Ukraine. He is still their living master, the true *tzaddik* [*tzaddik ha-emet*], the righteous one of his generation.

Both Yehuda Liebes and Arthur Green speak of Rebbe Nachman’s role as *tzaddik ha-emet* for his Hasidim. Green writes:

“His is the all-inclusive soul of his generation, the soul Moses bore in the past and which Meshiach is to bear in the future. All other souls are but specifications or subdivisions of that ‘general’ soul; merely being in the presence of such a figure may thus be an experience of enlightenment, as communication flows between the general and the particular. Elsewhere this *zaddiq* is described as having a gravitational pull that attracts to him all the souls in the world, including those of all other *zaddiqim* ... he fashions a tabernacle out of the myriad of human prayers that are channeled through him.” (Green 1979: 120)

Rebbe Nachman promised his followers that his fire would burn until the coming of Messiah and thus extended his “all-inclusive soul” to cover all future generations as well.

Yehuda Liebes shows how the Breslov community still today lives as if under Rebbe Nachman’s tabernacle when he writes:

“From its inception, the Hasidic movement as a whole had stressed the religious importance of the personal tie with the *tsaddik*, and the conceptual roots of this idea can be traced back to early kabbalistic literature and particularly to Sabbateanism.¹ This idea took hold of R. Nachman, who had grown up in the heartland of Hasidism. However, under the influence of his forceful and profound personality, as well as of his exceptionally illustrious ancestry, Bratzlav Hasidim developed this notion ad absurdum and so, paradoxically, have remained without a *tsaddik* since R. Nachman’s death. Bratzlav has been a leaderless community for close to 170 years, not because of their failure to appreciate the importance of leadership but quite the contrary – because they cannot conceive of a higher religious principle, their leader has

¹ Many Hasidim would disagree with Liebes’ notion that the disciple’s relationship to the *tzaddik* has roots particularly in Sabbateanism. One Breslover deemed such a notion “an ugly inference”. He clarified, “The model for the Chassidic Rebbe is the *Navi* [Prophet] – and the circle of disciples, the *B’nei Neviim* [Children of the Prophet].”

become a unique and irreplaceable figure. The absence of a leader has earned them the nickname of ‘the dead Hasidim,’ *di tote Hasidim*, a term that excels in conveying the absurdity of their condition ... Cleaving to a *tsaddik* does not eradicate spiritual problems, but it does shift the concern with these questions from the public realm to that of the individual *tsaddik*.” (Lieber 1993: 117)

Lieber’s problematic comments connect us with present day Breslov social reality. He uses the words ‘absurd’ and ‘paradoxical’ to describe their condition and also highlights the messianic nature of the Breslov sect. I will show how their situation is not so absurd and how their messianism is of a special order. Rebbe Nachman is their eternal teacher and the relationship between Rebbe Nachman and his disciples is the ultimate student-teacher relationship. Within this relationship, one can usefully distinguish between how Rebbe Nachman interacted with the world and how his Hasidim even today identify themselves and how they relate to the world.

Rebbe Nachman set clear and radical moral guidelines for his Hasidim. He encouraged his followers to stay simple in their faith and to bind themselves tightly to him. He warned them to stay far from the sophistry of the nations and even from the philosophical works of such great Jewish sages as Rabbi Moses Maimonides. His emphasis on simplicity and strict adherence to Jewish law was a protective and healing act, shielding his followers from the dangerous atheistic forces of modernity.

While he was busy building a close community of faithful Breslovers, Rebbe Nachman was also interacting with the very people, ideas, and influences he wanted his Hasidim to avoid. During the last year of his life, Rebbe Nachman, instead of tending to the needs of his followers, often would play chess and speak with the atheistic enlightenment Jews known as Maskilim. Rebbe Nachman’s seemingly dualistic ways of relating to insiders and outsiders, is a source for the dynamic relationship between the communitarian need of Breslov Hasidim to foster and protect a particular sacred center and at the same time engage in dialogue with the currents of the modern world. That apparent dualism still persists in their community today.

Moshe Mykoff, a Breslover Hasid who edited a collection of Rebbe Nachman’s teachings, poignantly sketches the more universal and dialogical side of “the Rebbe” in historical terms when he writes:

“Rebbe Nachman lived at what must count as one of human history’s most significant turning-points. His lifetime spanned the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution, the American War of Independence, and the French Revolution. Goethe, Kant, Byron, Beethoven, and Mozart were all active during the Rebbe’s day. In an era poised for a paradigm shift that would engender great reason but also

profound doubt, an unparalleled conquering of external frontiers but also an unprecedented inner void, Rebbe Nachman put his finger on the pulse of the dawning age and said: 'I'll tell you a secret. Great atheism is coming into the world ...' Almost two hundred years later, don't we know it! We also know that on the personal level, estrangement from God is paralleled in another form of 'great atheism' – an alienation from self. Addressing an age in which feelings of emptiness would predominate, Rebbe Nachman developed a universal doctrine that speaks to the spiritually seeking as well as to ordinary people facing the problems of everyday living. His message, one of hope and joy, teaches that even where the black-hole-of-self seems most impenetrable, sparks of light are waiting to be released. His words of inspiration reach out to the faithful of any faith, to the not-so-faithful, and even to those with no faith at all." (Mykoff 1994: 11-12)

While his teachings may indeed be universal and accessible to all, Rebbe Nachman also had a more particularist side demonstrated by the following warning he gave to his disciples: "You may twist my teachings whichever way you wish [to understand them], just as long as you don't depart from so much as a small passage of the *Shulchan Aruch* [lit. the "Set Table", the code of *Halacha*, Jewish law, detailing all of the practices and observances commanded of a Jew]. (trs. Kramer 1989: 107)" Clearly there are very pragmatic boundaries to Rebbe Nachman's universalism.

Through my experiences in both Jerusalem and Tsfat, I witnessed that the former community tended to emphasize the more universal or dialogical aspect of Rebbe Nachman's way while the latter emphasized the more particular or communitarian aspect. By emphasize, I mean that they enacted different dimensions of Breslov social reality. This manifested itself in concrete ways. First, the Jerusalem community was more individualistic. It was a bigger community than Tsfat and more urban. While the Jerusalem community had its regulars and inner circles, their synagogue was also a center that many visitors and curious *baalei tschuvah* passed through.

Tsfat, on the other hand, was smaller, more quiet, in the mountains, slower, and more private. The community felt more like a family. The Tsfat community, unlike Jerusalem, had a clear leader, a *Rav*, who everyone followed and who was a center of their attention. While the Jerusalem community was accessible to me, it was more challenging to get involved with the Tsfat community. It took a little pushing to be able to study at the Breslov *Yeshivah* in Tsfat. And even my teacher, who was close to the community and had at one time lived in Tsfat, said he was surprised I was accepted.

Based on a historical and biographical understanding of Rebbe Nachman and his Hasidim, I argue that these two communities represent more than just two ways of walking the Breslov path. They represent two different aspects of Breslov social reality,

of the personality and biography of their Rebbe. A deeper awareness of the blurred distinction between the public and private, inner and outer, historical and psychological, universal and particular nature of Rebbe Nachman and the Breslov Hasidim is essential for an understanding of these different aspects.

In *Tormented Master: A Life of Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav*, Arthur Green writes, "... [T]hat which was *descriptive* of Nahman's own inner life was taken as *prescriptive* for the lives of his disciples, and was thus abstracted from its psychological context."² (Green 1979: 122)." I discussed above that, as the true *tzaddik* and the *tzaddik ha dor* [*tzaddik* of the generation], Rebbe Nachman's soul was overarching, In other words, his personality and biography serve as living examples of Torah and spiritual mastery to be emulated and practiced by his disciples. He was aware that his life and spirit would have pragmatic consequences on his future disciples when he promised them, "My fire will burn until the coming of Messiah!"

That messianic fire, however, was generated in a certain historical context. Thus the social processes, conflicts, and movements of Rebbe Nachman's time influenced the way in which he and his followers came into being and continued to develop their community even after their master's death. Rebbe Nachman found himself responding to social forces such as atheism and the Industrial Revolution in a way that was imitated and emulated by his followers. The story of his life itself became a pragmatically prescribed way of life for his disciples in ways that they themselves might not be fully conscious of. His being thus became and is an abstracted yet very present force in the Breslov communities of later years and even today.

In his essay "Redemption Through Sin", Gershom Scholem (1971) takes an in-depth look at the messianic movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which preceded Hasidism. He focused on the messianic apostasies of Shabbatai Zvi (1600's) and of Jacob Frank (1700's) to give us a new framework for understanding that period. He points to a time of crisis in Jewish history. The messianic movement of the Shabbatians was a blow that shook Rabbinic authority to the core. The community was in

² A Breslover's response: "Green's statement is true in general, but not in an unqualified sense. There are many forms of *Avodah* [divine service] beyond the devotion of an ordinary Chassid to his master including following the 613 commandments, healing heresy, and understanding Torah teachings as they manifest in everyday life. We participate in these forms of *avodah* through *emunah* [faith] and becoming close to the *tzaddik*."

danger of breaking from within. Some orthodox authorities point to this breaking as the inspiration and source of the other breaks within the Community of Israel including the Haskalah (enlightenment Jews) and the Reform and Conservative non-orthodox movements. Thus, the Shabbatian messianic crisis gave rise to a radical and cosmic battle between heterodox and orthodox forces. (Scholem 1971: 78-141)

To clarify this conflict between orthodox and heterodox forces, I will define my terms. By orthodox I mean Rabbinic authority, halachic [*Shulchan Aruch*, Jewish Law] practice. Jewish orthodoxy came into being as we know it after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E.. With the beginning of *Galut* [exile], the Talmudic Rabbis had to establish a strong institution and living communitarian vessel in order for the Jews to survive culturally and spiritually. The wise men of that time decided to give written form to the oral traditions, and produced the texts of the Mishnah and the Talmud. They substituted the offering of daily prayers for the Holy Temple sacrifices of incense and animals, and synagogues became the centers for Jewish communities. Thus the Rabbinical tradition was established during the years of exile and indeed was essential to the survival of the Jewish people. However, this particular form of orthodoxy would be necessary only until the building of the Third Temple, which would coincide with the coming of Messiah.

Birth pangs of *Meshiach* would, according to some mystical traditions, disintegrate the exilic form of Rabbinical authority and reveal a new Torah and a new spiritual order which would be a total upside-down and inside-out version of the *Galut* realities for the Jewish people. Those exilic realities include disconnection from the Land of Israel and a history of anti-Semitism among the nations manifested in such crises as the Spanish Inquisition and the Eastern European pogroms. Messianic redemption would bring an end to these painful realities. However, according to this tradition, the orthodoxy must at first feel the “birth pangs” of this redemption through encountering an apparently heterodoxical force that seemed to undermine its authority. (Scholem 1971: 78-141)

The messianism of Shabbatai Zvi in the 1600’s demonstrated this turning of Rabbinic tradition upside-down and inside-out in radical yet heretical ways. When Shabbatai Zvi converted to Islam, most of his followers were left disillusioned, and certainly the *halachic* Rabbis were horrified by this sin of leaving the faith. However, to

his inner circle of believers, his actions were the opposite of sins. They were true signals of his messianic status. The close followers of Shabbatai Zvi saw his actions as the ultimate in messianic duty. That is, with the coming of Messiah it would be necessary to send a redeemer into the darkness of the nations in order to lift and free the fallen sparks of holiness that remained in need of *tikkun* [repair]. What the orthodoxy saw as sin, the Shabbatian heterodoxy saw as the most righteous of acts.

For Shabbatian messianism, we can see a process of degeneration as the movement lost its spirit and took on different forms. Thus the Frankists, who emerged in the next century, took on a darker side of the Shabbatian spirit. More than purposely disobeying the commandments, they actually burned the Talmud and became a nihilist extreme version of the messianic movement that preceded them. In addition to the external and modern forces of European Enlightenment, we can see the degenerative consequences of the Shabbatian revolution as internal roots for the crises of atheism and assimilation that Jews of Rebbe Nachman's time faced. Scholem's analysis makes it clear that the Shabbatian movement caused a radical spiritual revolution within the Jewish community that had consequences beyond the specific heretical events themselves. It was indeed a crisis that left rifts and wounds. These wounds of disillusionment and loss of faith, asserts Yehuda Liebes, were what Rebbe Nachman dedicated his life to healing.³

Scholem does not talk about Rebbe Nachman in his piece but his historical analysis makes Liebes' argument more understandable and believable. He writes, "The Sabbatean movement was already waning in R. Nahman's time, but the splintering and the apostasy that came in its wake had not receded – quite the contrary. There was no longer any hope of restoring Jewish faith through conventional means. A totally new approach was required for this purpose, and R. Nahman intended to accomplish this task."⁴ (Liebes 1993: 116) How would he accomplish such a task, such a healing?

Before I deal with this question, it is important to note that Rebbe Nachman certainly responded to circumstances and forces that were even more internal, personal,

³ A Breslover's response: "This centrality of Shabbatianism is Scholem's hobby horse. A wider understanding of the historical furl that preceded it would open up other ways of interpreting things. There was plenty of trouble besides this terrible episode. However, I believe the historical approach is inadequate since its premises discount all spiritual factors... I am admittedly impatient with the 'Judaic Studies' world view and its often disrespectful approach to Judaism in general and Hasidism in particular."

⁴ A Breslover's response: "Rebbe Nachman was not just a religiously impassioned social engineer, the way Liebes seems to state here."

and particular than the Shabbatians and the Frankists. The private contexts are as important as the public contexts of Rebbe Nachman's life for understanding how he and his Hasidim came into being.

Along these lines, Arthur Green's book *Tormented Master* attempts to capture the more psychological dimensions of Rebbe Nachman.⁵ Green's focus on the private, psychological, inner aspects of Rebbe Nachman's life and Liebes' focus on the public, historical, outer aspects, balance each other well. Indeed they overlap and the duality shouldn't be over emphasized because the social processes involved are more subtle than that.

Liebes argues that Rebbe Nachman's messianism is of a different order than the Shabbatian messianism that came before him. As mentioned above, Rebbe Nachman had dedicated his energies to healing the wounds caused by the 'false messiah' and his followers. How did he deal with this crisis? On the one hand, Rebbe Nachman wanted to protect his Hasidim from the fate of the Shabbatians. Therefore, he prescribed simplicity of faith and a distancing from sophistication as mentioned above. On the other hand, while he wanted to protect his community from Shabbatian forces, he himself always interacted with the enlightenment, atheist, and even Frankist Jews. As a healing act, Rebbe Nachman engaged in intimate dialogue with those heretical forces. In fact, Yehuda Liebes attempts to show in *Studies in Jewish Myth and Jewish Messianism* (1971) how Rebbe Nachman might have taken teachings, practices, and even one of his famous stories from Shabbatian sources, transformed them and made them *Kosher*⁶ [ritually pure and holy]. In a certain sense, just as Shabbatai Zvi's conversion to Islam was an attempt to descend into darkness to redeem the lost and fallen sparks of holiness, so too was Rebbe Nachman attempting to redeem the Shabbatians. But different boundaries existed for Rebbe Nachman. Unlike the Shabbatians and the Frankists, he did not alter even a small part of the "set table" or orthodox Jewish law.

Rebbe Nachman dealt with the wounds caused by the Shabbatians in two ways. First, he created a community that was strong, faithful, messianic, non-heretical, simple,

⁵ A Breslover's response: "Green's inferences, too, are based on a severely limited frame of reference."

⁶ A Breslover's response: "I think the source of these speculations is Joseph Weis – not Liebes or Green. This assumption [that R. Nachman's teachings are rooted in Shabbatianism] is pure nonsense."

morally pure, and protected. Second, he engaged in an intimate healing relationship with the very forces and teachings from which he wanted to protect his Hasidim.

This apparent paradox is inherent in the Breslov ritual of reciting the *tikkun ha-klali*, the general healing or remedy. The practice of *tikkun ha-klali* involves the recitation of ten particular psalms. The Breslov Hasidim recite the *tikkun ha-klali* multiple times daily and emphasize that it is especially important to recite it at Rebbe Nachman's grave. Not only does Liebes argue that the Rebbe intended this *tikkun* to heal the wounds of, and protect his Hasidim from, Shabbatianism, but he also claims that the very notion of *tikkun ha-klali* came directly from Shabbatian teachings. Liebes writes:

“There seems to be some awareness, among R. Nahman's contemporaries as well as among his opponents, of ha-tikkun ha-klali's Sabbatean origins. One indication might be the vehement insistence of Bratzlav Hasidim on the complete novelty entailed by this tikkun. Accusations of Sabbateanism directed against R. Nahman were consistently censored and are not mentioned in authentic Bratzlav writings⁷ ... Bratzlav Hasidim insistently demanded that the tikkun should always be explicitly recited in R. Nahman's name ‘so that his lips might whisper gently in his grave,’ because ‘they [the ten psalms: 16, 32, 41, 42, 59, 77, 90, 105, 137, and 150] are a completely new tikkun unknown to any creature since Creation.’” (Liebes 1993: 145-146)

On one level we have the dialogic relationship between Rebbe Nachman and the evil, heterodoxical forces he is battling against, and on another level we have the tendency of his followers to deny this aspect of their Rebbe's reality. This discussion of Rebbe Nachman and his disciples' history reveals conflict, paradox, cosmic battling, and contradicting forces at play. This chapter gives a historical context for Breslov and is intended to emphasize the importance of understanding the dynamic and complex relationship between “the Rebbe” and his Hasidim.

Many of Rebbe Nachman's teachings, including his collected works, *Likutey Moharan*, and his book of stories, *Sipporey Meisios*, survived because of the faithful discipleship of Reb Noson of Nemirov (d. 1845). Reb Noson was Rebbe Nachman's closest follower. The memory of their relationship serves the Breslov as an inspiration and an ideal model for how disciples should relate with their master. Reb Noson began the practice of “handing down” the Rebbe's teachings and is responsible for recording in great detail the Rebbe's biography. As Arthur Green writes, “The fact is that proper attention to biographical detail is essential to the *religious* task which Nathan of Nemirov

⁷ A Breslover's response: “Where are these attacks duly recorded? With all the opposition to Breslov, why is this never mentioned except by these secular ‘historians’?”

has set for himself. Not only is Nathan more than a mere teller of tales; he is also not simply a chronicler of events. Nathan is a self-conscious creator of a *new sacred history*, one in which the life of his master stands as the unique and all-important center of events in recent times.” (Green 1979: 9) The point to keep in mind here is the importance of this collective memory for the disciples as they have continued to have a living relationship with their teacher until today, and to be mindful of how central the Rebbe is in keeping the community together.

In his teaching, known as “Garden of the Souls (Likutey Moharan I: 65),” Rebbe Nachman gives his own description of the social reality I am trying to describe.⁸ The teaching provides a kind of cosmology which helps make the Breslov Hasidim’s attraction to live this God-fearing life more understandable. It gets at Rebbe Nachman’s role in the life of his followers. It gets at why my teacher did not want me to leave the field (described below) when I left Israel to return to the United States. It gets at the goal of the process of *tshuvah*, a process of centering and entering, running and returning into the garden of souls, seeking shelter from the forces of alienation and dehumanization, a process of *tikkun* [healing]. Rebbe Nachman writes:

“KNOW that there is a field where the most beautiful and pleasant trees and herbs grow. The precious beauty of this field and its plants and trees is impossible to describe. Happy is the eye that has seen it!

The trees and herbs are the holy souls which grow there. But there are many naked souls roaming and wandering in exile outside the field. They are waiting and longing to be fixed, so as to be able to go back in to their places. Sometimes even a great soul, on which many other souls depend, may go outside the field, and it is very hard for it to return. All these souls are waiting expectantly for the Master of the Field who can do what is necessary to restore them. Sometimes a soul is restored through the death of someone, or through a mitzvah or act of devotion performed by someone.

Anyone who wants to gird his loins and put himself forward as the Master of the Field has to be strong and powerful, a mighty warrior, a man of outstanding wisdom and saintliness. He needs to be on the highest of spiritual levels. There is one Tzaddik who can only complete the task with his own death, and even for this he needs to be very great indeed, because there are many great Tzaddikim who even with their death would not be able to help. Only a Tzaddik on the most outstanding of levels can complete what is necessary in his lifetime. For he has to go through tremendous suffering and hardship. Yet through his greatness he is able to overcome everything and accomplish all that is needed in the field.

When the Master of the Field succeeds in restoring the souls and bringing them in, then it is very good and beautiful to pray. For then prayer attains its perfection. The Master of the Field labors constantly, supervising everything, watering the trees and the plants, tending and cultivating them and doing all the other work needed in the field. He sees to it that all the trees are the right distance from one another so that none should overshadow and weaken another. Sometimes it is necessary to put a very close follower at a great distance so that he should not overshadow his friend.”

⁸ A Breslover’s response: “This teaching has far wider implications than you will suggest.”

Now that we have a deeper understanding of the Breslov cultural/spiritual field and the history behind it, we are ready to engage in the ritual analysis that makes up the body of this thesis. I have included the aspects of Breslov history which I felt were important for understanding how they practice their religious life today. However, I realize that the perspectives I chose to use are problematic from a Breslov point of view. Therefore, I included a friend's critical response in order to qualify and not over-simplify the history I chose to tell.