

This characteristic sample of Lurianic hagiography does, however, make use of what must have been common knowledge in Safed: Karo's Maggid, the kind of messages he was wont to convey, and the title of Karo's manuscript diary. The Maggid's words as reported by Shlomel are so similar to the stereotyped beginnings of the entries in the printed *M.M.*, though not quite identical with them, as to leave little doubt about the essential correctness of the information. Shlomel makes it quite clear that he is not merely reporting a rumour; people in Safed used to hear the Maggid's voice. By the time of Shlomel's arrival in Safed, more than forty years before the *editio princeps* of the *M.M.*, the existence of Karo's autograph entitled *Sefer ha-Maggid* was common knowledge or, at least, common rumour.<sup>1</sup>

Another testimony to the Maggid's revelations should be added to Shlomel's because, though of late date, its wording is again so similar to that both in the *Shibhey ha-ARI* and in the printed *M.M.* as to suggest an identical origin. Yet the phrasing is also sufficiently dissimilar to indicate different traditions, not mere copying. The Jerusalem Rabbinate in its approbation to Elisha Ashkenazi's edition of the *M.M.*<sup>2</sup> writes as follows:

'And the Lord was with Joseph and he was a prosperous man' [Gen. xxxiv. 2], reading and studying the six orders of the *Mishnah*, so that the spirit of the Lord moved within him and he heard the voice speaking through the *Mishnah* itself: 'begin and conclude, be strong and of good courage, let not thy hand be weak to save me "for I am ready to halt and my sorrow is continually before me" because of "a servant [i.e. the power of evil] when he reigneth and an handmaid that is heir to her mistress [i.e. the female principle of evil is usurping the place of the divine *Shekhinah*]'". For I am *in exile among Slavonians and Serbs*<sup>3</sup> as

<sup>1</sup> The identity of this manuscript diary with our *M.M.* is, of course, a different problem to be discussed in the next chapter. Mr. M. Benayahu kindly drew my attention to another early reference to manuscripts of Karo's *Sefer ha-Maggid*. Immanuel Aboab, in his *Nomologia o discursos legales* (Amsterdam, 1629, p. 309), states in connexion with Joseph Karo: 'Yo he visto escritos de mano, muchos advertimientos, y reuelaciones de altissima doctrina, que dizen le fueron enseñados de lugar soberano.'

<sup>2</sup> Venice, 1649.

<sup>3</sup> I am proposing this questionable translation with all due hesitancy. The Hebrew text: *ואני בתוך הגולה בין סלונים וסרבים* obviously echoes, and perhaps merely means the same as, Ez. ii. 6, *סרבים וסלונים* ('though briers and thorns be with thee'). Still, I cannot help feeling that the phrase here refers to the specific

the lily among thorns, and my sorrow is stirred. But thou, blessed of the Lord, hast holpen me and comforted me by the melody of your voice with which you recite and study the *Mishnah* . . . and much more of this kind is written in the papers of the Maggid who spoke to him *mighty promises and the revelation of kabbalistic mysteries*<sup>1</sup> without end or number.

The passage is illuminating in many ways. First of all it confirms the general pattern of the entries in the *M.M.*: 'mighty promises' of a more personal nature and the 'revelation of kabbalistic mysteries'.<sup>2</sup> Secondly the quotation exhibits many of the stylistic features and typical turns of phrase of the Maggid. Finally the message quoted by the rabbis of Jerusalem in 1649 obviously goes back to a written source and not to an oral tradition since it clearly dates from Karo's European days, i.e. from before 1536. The *Mishnah-Shekhinah's* complaint 'and I am in exile among Slavonians and Serbs' most probably refers to Karo's residence in Nicopolis.<sup>3</sup>

It has already been mentioned in passing<sup>4</sup> that Alkabetz's epistle, printed in the *SheLaH* and subsequently in most editions of the 'Order of Service for the *Shabu'oth* Vigil' (*tiqqun leyl shabu'oth*), was responsible more than anything else for popularizing Karo's Maggid. There is no reason at all to doubt the authenticity of the epistle<sup>5</sup> which has come down to us in three, ultimately in two,

briers and thorns by which the *Shekhinah*, resting upon Karo and his circle, is surrounded as the lily among thorns, i.e. by the Slavonian and Serb population of the Balkans. Karo lived at the time in Nicopolis; cf. below, ch. 5. To validate the proposed translation it would, of course, be necessary to adduce more examples of such punning use of the expression *סרבים וסלונים*. For the time being no such examples are known to me. I am assured by an expert in Slavonic philology, my colleague Dr. M. Altbauer, that the terms Slavonian and Serb were certainly in use at the time and no doubt current also among the Jews living in Bulgaria (Nicopolis).

<sup>1</sup> My italics.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. below, p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. below, p. 92 f.

<sup>4</sup> Above, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> As is done by Rosanes, op. cit., pp. 219-20. Greenwald, op. cit., pp. 197-9, though pronouncing the *M.M.* to be a fabrication, admits the genuineness of the Epistle. Rosanes's arguments are easily disposed of, though he is undoubtedly right in drawing attention to the unusual signature *אלקוויץ*. 'The *hasid*' may well have been an honorific bestowed upon Karo by the circle of his disciples and admirers. (Cf. also the quotation from Cordovero, below, p. 193, n. 3.) The best witness here is Alkabetz himself who addresses a kabbalistic *responsum* (preserved in many manuscripts and printed at the end of his commentary on the Passover *Haggadah* (*Berith ha-Levi*, Lemberg, 1863)) to Karo in this style: *שאלת ממני החכם החדש האשל האדיר צדיק יסוד שלם מוה"ר יוסף קארו*

versions. It first appeared in the *editio princeps* of the *M.M.* (Lublin, 1646) and apparently quite independent of it again in the chapter entitled *masseketh shabu'oth* in Isaiah Harwitz's *SHeLaH* (Amsterdam, 1649). A slightly divergent text is given in *Hemdath Yamim* (Constantinople, 1735-7),<sup>1</sup> but a careful analysis leaves little doubt that we are dealing here not with a different tradition but with a tendentious rewriting. The changes and omissions are too significant and systematic to be accidental, and as they relate more particularly to the Maggid's exhortations to proceed forthwith to the Holy Land and to his description of the sufferings of the *Shekhinah* 'which lieth in the dust' and needs to be raised up, the particular Sabbatian bias is evident enough. The author of *Hemdath Yamim* gives himself away in his own manner and as much as admits that he produces a 'doctored text' when he introduces the Epistle with the words: 'And in the hidden treasures of my master's writings I discovered an epistle of the kabbalist Rabbi Solomon Alkabetz, who was a companion of Rabbi Joseph Karo,

נר"י לעריך לפני זוהר חכמתך כוונת האלהי רשב"י ע"ה . . . ענ שמעתי מפי קדושת חסידותך . . . וכאשר נסתרת מאת פני יפעתך הקדושה והטהורה גמרת עלי להאריך אהלי אפדנו . . . כי גולה אני ממקומי לעלות אל הר ה' הנה כתבתי המושג אצלי *The responsim ends (ibid. 43b)* ארץ הצבי טוב"ב במאמר הזה ואם כי גולה אני ממקומי לעלות אל הר ה' ואני מטלטל . . . ואין לי ספרים . . . ואל שרי אתחנן יאיר עיני ועיניך במאור תורתו ויחדנו בהר הקדש לעבדו בשכם אחד אכ"ר. נאום הגולה ממקומו לעלות אל הר ה' והדומו . . . This proves that (a) Karo's reputation was one of saintliness in particular; (b) he and Alkabetz met long before they both settled in Safed; (c) Alkabetz went to Palestine before Karo, and the Maggid's promises to the latter 'to unite thee again with Solomon my chosen one' refer to Alkabetz. (This was already perceived by Schechter and others.) The final paragraph of the *responsim* incidentally uses a phrase which also occurs at the end of the *Shabu'oth* Epistle but is not found elsewhere, to my knowledge, in contemporary epistolary style. Obviously the phrase *שדי אתחנן* (based on Job viii. 5) was a favourite one with Alkabetz. That Adrianople can very well be described (*contra* Rosanes) as *אל אמר הצעיר שלמה*, exactly as in the *Shabu'oth* Epistle, is borne out by Alkabetz's introduction to *Berith ha-Levi*, which begins: *בכמהר"ר משה זה"ה בכמהר"ר שלמה הלוי אלקבץ תנצב"ה ברצות ה' דרכי מבית אבי לקחני ולעלות אל הר ה' לבי נשאני וכעלותי ההרה אל עיר הגדולה . . . לאלקים נהלני הקריה ארריאנופולי . . .* There follows a eulogy on the exemplary piety of the scholars and saints there: *הן כל אלה ראתה עיני מחסידותם* and Alkabetz concludes: *כי עתה בתוך הגולה ומיטב ספריי הנה היזם* and *וקדושתם כי עתה טוב"ב ואני מטלטל וגולה אל הר ה' עולה . . . ואני תפלה לאל להתאחד עמכם בהר ה' עמכם*.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Y. Tishby kindly drew my attention to this version.

in which he recounts a marvellous event [that befell] in the academy of Rabbi Joseph Karo during the *Shabu'oth* vigil.' As Professor Tishby<sup>1</sup> has convincingly shown, this 'master' or 'teacher' is a purely fictitious personality invented to cover the author's own ideas. Quotations from the writings or papers of the 'master' are therefore—by definition—always suspect.<sup>2</sup>

Although the subject-matter and preoccupations of the Epistle are different from those of the *M.M.*, they both share the Maggid's typical turns of phrase<sup>3</sup> as well as his tendency to indulge in excessive praise of maggidism as if the very fact of receiving revelations mattered more than their contents.<sup>4</sup> There is thus sufficient evidence to show that Karo had a Maggid both in Europe (i.e. in Nicopolis)<sup>5</sup> and in Safed. According to the sources quoted so far this Maggid seems to have been identical with both the *Mishnah* and the *Shekhinah*,<sup>6</sup> although in one or two statements,<sup>7</sup> taken in isolation, he need not necessarily be more than simply a kind of messenger from the celestial academy. The messages appear to have consisted mainly of exhortations, spiritual counsels, flattering praise, 'mighty promises', and the communication of kabbalistic explanations on points of doctrine or on the Scriptures. The Maggid never appeared to Karo in any form of vision but spoke through his mouth<sup>8</sup> so that others, present in the same room or behind the door,<sup>9</sup> could distinctly hear his words.<sup>10</sup> Karo was neither a 'roller' nor was he 'speaking tongues'; his Maggid was a genuine case of well-ordered, lucid, but automatic speech. The fact that all descriptions agree in speaking of 'a voice in the mouth of the *hasid*' may

<sup>1</sup> *Lחקר המקורות של ס' חמדת ימים*, partly published in *Tarbiz*, vol. xxiv (1954/5), pp. 441 f., and partly still awaiting publication.

<sup>2</sup> According to Professor Tishby this instance is merely one typical example of the author's method of treating his sources throughout his work.

<sup>3</sup> e.g. . . . *לכן . . . אליכם . . . בדבר* . . . *באהבתי בתורת ביראתי . . .*

<sup>4</sup> e.g. *לשבח בענין הלימוד כחצי שעה ואמר ראו השמע עם קול ככם* . . . *שאל אביך וכו' . . . אם זה כמה מאות שנה שמעו או ראו הדבר הזה ואתם* . . . Cf. also below, p. 264.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. also the explicit statement in the title of MS. C 1 (below, Appendix B).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. below, pp. 266 ff.

<sup>7</sup> e.g. Vital's references to Karo's Maggid, above, p. 15, n. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Epistle*: *הקול מדבר בפי החסיד נר"י קול גדול*.

<sup>9</sup> *Shibhey ha-ARI*, quoted above, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> *בחיתוך אותיות* (Alkabetz, *Epistle*).

indicate that it was a different voice and that listeners did not recognize it as Karo's own. There is, at any rate, no compelling reason to assume with Schechter<sup>1</sup> that 'the listeners recognized in the strange sounds of the Mentor Angel Caro's own voice'. The Maggid's promise to Karo<sup>2</sup> that one day he would be vouchsafed revelations of a still higher order and that then

I shall grant thee to behold Elijah, for the Ancient of Days will be clothed in white garments and will sit facing thee and will speak unto thee as a man speaketh unto his friend and thine eyes shall behold thy teacher; and although thy wife and other men and women will be in thy house, he will speak with thee *and thou shalt behold him*<sup>3</sup> but they shall not see him and the voice of his speech shall appear to them as if it were thine may well refer to what would occur at a later stage. It does not imply that during the usual maggidic visitations Karo spoke with his normal voice but rather suggests the opposite. For the time being Karo only enjoyed the *charisma* of automatic speech; he hoped for the gift of vision plus audition. If we assume the Maggid to have spoken with a different voice from Karo's normal one, then the phenomenon attains even greater resemblance in its salient features to normal mediumistic states and trances.

We may safely assume that many of the recorded instances of maggidism were cases of automatic speech, though, of course, the term *maggid* is used to cover a very wide range of charismatic experiences. Often it means a messenger, angel, or other dream-figure appearing during sleep and not, as in the case of Karo and others, after waking. Actually, automatic writing too could be described as a 'maggidic' manifestation.<sup>4</sup> Of particular interest in this respect is the testimony of one of the greatest and most moving figures in the history of Jewish mysticism, Moses Hayyim Luzzatto (1707-47 (1744?)), who seems to tell of a subjective experience of automatic speech (i.e. no mere audition) which was, however, inaudible to bystanders. Luzzatto's own account states:<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Safed' in *Studies in Judaism* (2nd ser.) (1908), p. 214. Also Scholem seems to assume the voice to have been different; cf. *Sabbatai Zevi*, vol. i, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> *M.M.* 34b. 2.

<sup>3</sup> My italics.

<sup>4</sup> As, apparently, in the case of Taytazak, if we may judge from the manuscript mentioned above, p. 14, n. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Letter to Rabbi Benjamin ha-Kohen; see S. Ginzburg (ed.): *אגרות רמח"ל* (Tel-Aviv, 1937), p. 39.

This is a short account of the event: On the first of Sivan 5487 [= 1727], whilst I meditated a certain meditation, I fell asleep. When I awoke I heard a voice saying, 'I have descended to reveal unto thee the hidden mysteries of the Holy King'. For a while I stood trembling, then I collected myself but the voice did not cease . . . until one day he told me that he was a *maggid* sent from heaven.

Though this account suggests a normal case of audition, the information is supplemented on one essential point by Luzzatto's disciple Yequthiel Gordon, who writes: 'he was visited by a *maggid*, a holy and awe-inspiring angel,<sup>2</sup> who revealed to him marvellous mysteries . . . and this is the [usual] procedure: this angel speaks *out of his mouth*,<sup>3</sup> though we, his disciples, do not hear anything.' It is possible, of course, that Yequthiel's wording is not meant to be pressed literally and merely reflects a conventional *cliché* or figure of speech established by the earliest literary references to maggidism in general, which are none other but those referring to Karo's Maggid. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the possibility that Luzzatto may present yet another variation on the theme of maggidism; in addition to dream-figures, auditions, automatic speech, automatic writing, &c., we may have here a case of *endophasia*.

Returning to Karo, we may conclude that the question of his having had a *maggid* must be answered in the affirmative.<sup>4</sup> We may now turn to the related yet distinct problem of the authenticity of the *M.M.*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> The *maggid* is thus considered to be an angel! Cf. below, pp. 78-79, 81.

<sup>3</sup> My italics.

<sup>4</sup> It is worthy of note that the news of Karo's maggidic visitations, though well known to his contemporaries in Safed, was not automatically broadcast to all the congregations of Israel—at least not until the Lurianists began their intensive propaganda-barrage from Safed. This is, of course, quite in accordance with the traditional self-imposed silence of kabbalists concerning their mystical or charismatic states (cf. *MTJM.*, pp. 15-16, 121-2). When the news of Karo's death reached Turkey, Rabbi Moses Albelda chose as a text for his memorial eulogy the verse Num. xxiv. 4, 'He hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty'. The reader who after this promising opening expects a reference to the Maggid will find himself grievously disappointed, for Albelda continues his oration וקיימנו וקיימנו וקיימנו הרב הגדול הזה שהחיינו וקיימנו וקיימנו בספרו הגדול בית יוסף, וכבר הודיע הרב ז"ל במדרגת הנבואה בסוף ח"ב ששעות ספרים והיבורים (i.e. Maimonides in pt. ii of his *Guide for the Perplexed*) הוא ממדרגת הנבואה (*Darash Moshe*, Venice, 1602, fol. 103b).

grace, teaches Karo the 'fear of the Lord', is provided with letters of recommendation, and causes a spiritual revival in the 'Great City'. However, in spite of the applicability of some phrases to Molkho, there is nothing in the whole entry militating against the assumption that 'Solomon' signifies Solomon Alkabetz. Alkabetz, one of the most 'inspired' members of the Salonica circle of kabbalists, came to see Karo on his journey to Palestine and found him recovering from a severe illness and possibly from a no less severe spiritual crisis. The meeting produced a kind of 'conversion' in Karo: an intensification of his mystical life and the resolve to participate fully in the kabbalistic-ascetic revival propagated by Alkabetz. The eschatological character of Alkabetz's propaganda is evident from his pre-occupation with the fate of the *Shekhinah* and from his urgent calls to proceed forthwith to the Holy Land.

What is quite certain is that already at that time three different kabbalistic centres were in existence, illuminating one another in a kind of mystical communion. The one is the place of Karo's residence (Nicopolis), the other the 'great city' to which Solomon repaired with Karo's recommendation (Adrianople), and the third is the 'metropolis in Israel' (Salonica). Whatever the ultimate verdict on the identity of Solomon, it is beyond any doubt that Solomon did *not* go to Salonica but travelled *from* Salonica, via Karo's place of residence, to Adrianople.

The discovery of the existence in Turkey of organized or at least gradually crystallizing devout brotherhoods on the pattern known to us from Safed, sharing common ascetic practices and entertaining similar mystical and eschatological ideals and expectations, permits us to see in a new light certain statements contained in Alkabetz's famous *Shabu'oth* Epistle,<sup>1</sup> to which insufficient attention has been paid so far.

The epistle presents the closest possible identification of the *Shekhinah* with the Maggid. The celestial voice speaking through Karo introduces itself in unmistakable terms as the very *Shekhinah*. She praises her pious sons for raising her up from the depths of abject exile by their devotional and ascetic exercises. Exactly as in the communication preserved in the approbation of the Jerusalem

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. 19 f. and notes *ibid.*

rabbinate<sup>1</sup> or in the aforementioned entry in the *M.M.*,<sup>2</sup> the *Shekhinah* expresses her satisfaction with the efforts of her sons and responds, on her part, with 'mighty promises and the revelation of esoteric teachings',<sup>3</sup> viz. with 'many more [revelations] of this [esoteric] Science and many great promises'.<sup>4</sup> The brethren are greatly moved by excessive joy on the one hand and by pity and sorrow for the *Shekhinah* on the other, bursting into tears at hearing her plaintive voice 'like the voice of a sick woman beseeching us [to help her]'.<sup>5</sup>

In the Jerusalem approbation the *Shekhinah* actually refers to the *Mishnah* and speaks *through it*. In the Epistle (as in the *M.M. passim*) the identity is brought out even more explicitly:

Hearken, my pious friends, my dearly beloved, peace be with you, blessed are ye and blessed are they that bore you, both in this world and in the world to come, for that you have taken upon yourselves to crown me in this night. It is many years since the crown fell from my head and there is none that comforteth me; I am thrown in the dust, embracing dunghills. But now you have restored the crown to its former glory. Therefore be strong my friends, be of good courage, my beloved, rejoice and be glad, and know that you are of the exalted few that are privileged to belong to the 'Palace of the King'.<sup>6</sup> . . . Behold I am the *Mishnah* that correcteth man,<sup>7</sup> I have now come to speak to you . . . and you have been exalted [this night] and I have been exalted [likewise] this night through you and through the brethren in the great city, the metropolis in Israel.

The analogy with the communication in the *M.M.* is evident. Not only is the *Shekhinah* exalted, but also 'you and the brethren in Salonica are all exalted before God'.<sup>8</sup> The Epistle too bears out our contention that similar kabbalistic circles or brotherhoods existed in the various Turkish centres. The *Shabu'oth* vigil in Karo's house was not the first of proceedings of this kind. On the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, pp. 18-19.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. above, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> הבטחות עצומות וגילוי רזי תורה (cf. above, p. 19).

<sup>4</sup> Epistle: רבות כהנה וכהנה מעניי החכמה וכמה וכמה הבטחות גדולות.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: וכולנו געינו בכביה נרוב שמחה וגם בשמענו את צרת השכינה בעונותינו וקולה כחולה המתחננת אלינו.

<sup>6</sup> A common kabbalistic metaphor for high mystical achievement.

<sup>7</sup> A favourite phrase with the Maggid; cf. below, p. 267.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. the quotation above, p. 103.

contrary, we must assume that Alkabets and his circle had already established this liturgical innovation in Salonica and that Alkabets subsequently introduced it wherever he came. The significant feature of the vigil in Karo's house is the keen awareness of the participants that they were in full spiritual communion with the brethren in Salonica, engaged on the same liturgical and mystical devotion.

The Epistle is obviously addressed to Salonica. Alkabets's main complaint to the addressees is that they had kept the vigil only during the first night of *Shabu'oth* whereas in Karo's house they had watched both nights of the feast:

Awake ye, my brethren, be strong and of good courage, rejoice in the service of our Creator. But behold, it appears from the Maggid's words<sup>1</sup> in the first night that all or some of you also foregathered [in the same fashion], for thus you were mentioned. But in the second night you were not mentioned [by the Maggid], wherefore . . . take these things to heart.

The Epistle next holds Karo's decision to join Alkabets's project of settling in Palestine as a tempting bait in front of the Salonica brethren: 'for it was promised in the last vision that the *hasid* [i.e. Karo] and I shall merit to dwell in the [Holy] Land.' Alkabets indicates that he does not intend to return to Salonica again; the Epistle therefore ends with the hope that he and the brethren would meet again on 'holy ground', i.e. in Palestine, there to serve God with united strength.<sup>2</sup>

Although the general tenor and message of the Epistle is apt to rouse the suspicion that it is a typical fabrication of the kabbalistic propaganda that emanated from Safed,<sup>3</sup> yet both the internal evidence and the agreement with the *M.M.* strongly argue in favour of its genuineness. It remains true, of course, that the Epistle is propagandistic in its intentions. Alkabets sent it to Salonica in order to encourage the brethren to follow his example; he did not

<sup>1</sup> Incidentally we learn that Alkabets already described this type of charismatic manifestation by the technical term *maggid*; cf. below, p. 265-6.

<sup>2</sup> ויכני להתאחד עמכם על אדמת הקדש לעונדו שכם אחד.

<sup>3</sup> Liturgical innovations (ותקנו תקנות רבות) with the purpose of sharing the exile of the *Shekhinah* and thus hastening redemption, appeals to leave the diaspora and settle in the Holy Land, &c.

include in the Epistle the actual kabbalistic revelations of the Maggid which, as he indicates, he set down in a special tract to be forwarded separately.<sup>1</sup>

The date of this extraordinary public manifestation of the Maggid presents an interesting problem. There is a strong presumption in favour of an early date, soon after Alkabets's departure from Salonica. The Epistle mentions manifestations on the two nights of *Shabu'oth*, and a third manifestation on the following Sabbath.<sup>2</sup> As *Shabu'oth* never falls on Thursday-Friday, the manifestations cannot have occurred on three consecutive days. If we assume *Shabu'oth* to have fallen on Wednesday-Thursday,<sup>3</sup> we can easily imagine the mood of enthusiasm and exaltation to have persisted to the following Sabbath. The only years that would fit this scheme are 1530 and 1534, with the balance of probability perhaps in favour of the earlier date.

One further point emerges from a comparison of the Epistle, the Jerusalem approbation, and the *M.M.* The strikingly emphatic and emotional urgency with which the *Shekhinah* is mentioned, the solicitude for her fate, and the appeal to come to her rescue are typical of Alkabets's mysticism and of those early maggidic messages that betray Alkabets's influence: the Epistle and the *M.M.* entries quoted above. We are, I think, entitled to reckon the Jerusalem approbation as belonging to the same group. The internal differences between the three texts are of minor importance. In the Jerusalem approbation and in the Epistle the *Shekhinah* speaks in the first person; the Epistle also has the explicit identification *Shekhinah-Mishnah*. In the *M.M.* the Maggid speaks *about* the *Shekhinah*, as elsewhere he speaks about the *Mishnah*, in spite of the fact that he is identical with both *Mishnah* and *Shekhinah*.<sup>4</sup> Even the Epistle is not quite consistent in its usage, for the manifestation of the second night is reported as follows: 'hearken my beloved . . . blessed are you that exalt *me*; how greatly are ye exalted . . . blessed are you and blessed they that bore you, fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings,

<sup>1</sup> Alkabets mentions א בקונטרס and refers the brethren to it: ובקונטרס ההוא וגם ביום השבת חזר הדיבור אל החסיד תראו.

<sup>2</sup> There is, of course, no compelling reason to do so.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. below, pp. 266 f.

Appendix to his essay on Safed.<sup>1</sup> Thus we find rules<sup>2</sup> 'at table, before Grace, to recite two chapters [of *Mishnah*] and one Psalm'—'to study as many *Mishnayoth* as is possible every Sabbath night'—'to repeat once a week all the *Mishnayoth* that you know'—'to learn by heart every week at least two chapters of *Mishnayoth*'. In fact,<sup>3</sup> 'most scholars study the *Mishnah* by heart, some two orders, others three'. The custom seems to have gained ground and to have spread beyond Palestine. Israel Isserl Götz, of Strassburg, the editor of a vocalized text of the *Mishnah*,<sup>4</sup> reports in his preface that the members of the *yeshibah* of Venice knew the *Mishnah* by heart: 'most of them, as well as the other scholars in the city know the six orders of the *Mishnah* by heart.'<sup>5</sup>

The evidence of the testimonies adduced so far does not go beyond Safed and the later period. It seems, however, that Karo's devotion to the study of the *Mishnah* must be dated as early as his European period. In fact, one brief and allusive statement in the *M.M.* actually suggests that the study of the *Mishnah* by heart was cultivated also by Karo's 'rival' Rabbi Joseph Taytazak of Salonica<sup>6</sup> and his circle. The Maggid praises Karo's diligent study of the *Mishnah* and adds 'for although there are others too who know the six orders of the *Mishnah* [by heart], one does not speak to them in the manner one speaks to you,<sup>7</sup> even though you know that you have committed graver and worse sins than they'.<sup>8</sup> The *M.M.* leaves no doubt that Karo's Maggid, though explicitly conceived as the *Shekhinah*, was associated with the *Mishnah* from the very beginning. Also Alkabets records in his Epistle that the first manifestation of the Maggid occurred 'when we had begun to read the *Mishnah* and had read two tractates. Then our Creator privileged us to hear the voice speaking in the mouth of the *hasid*.' That this was no accident appears from the account of the proceedings

<sup>1</sup> Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 2nd ser. (1908). Now cf. in addition the text printed in Y. M. Toledano, *Oṣar Genazim* (1960), p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Schlechter, *op. cit.*, p. 294. <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297. <sup>4</sup> Venice, 1704.

<sup>5</sup> רובם ככולם וחכמי העיר הנ"ל יודעים שיתא סדרי משנה בע"פ.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. above, pp. 118, 264.

<sup>7</sup> Note the identical wording of the passages referring explicitly to Joseph Taytazak, above, p. 118.

<sup>8</sup> *M.M.* 9a. 2: דאע"ג דאיכא אחרינין דידעין שיתא סדרי משנה לא ממלל לא עמהון כמה דממלל עמך, ואוף דידעת דאית בידך סורחנין תקיפין ובישין מנהון.

of the following night, when 'so great was the joy that we were ten [i.e. a full quorum for liturgical purposes], that [this time] we did not wait until the time for the recitation of the *Mishnah* . . . but immediately as we began reading the Ten Commandments from the Book of Deuteronomy . . . the voice of our beloved knocked . . .'. We may assume, therefore, that by the time of this memorable *Shabu'oth* vigil in Karo's house, the visitations of the Maggid were firmly linked to the study of the *Mishnah*. In this respect no change seems to have occurred in the pattern of Karo's maggidic visitations throughout a lifetime of charismatic experience. In another respect, however, a subtle but significant change does seem to have taken place. It is true that the *Mishnah* was not only the occasion or instrumental cause but also the very agent of the celestial revelations, yet this latter fact is less prominent in the earlier testimonies than in the later. The earlier statements<sup>1</sup> emphasize the identity of the heavenly speaker with the *Shekhinah* whereas the later texts<sup>2</sup> seem to lay the main stress on his identity with the *Mishnah*. And though, as we have seen, *Shekhinah* and *Mishnah* can be identified in terms of kabbalistic symbolism, yet the change in emphasis deserves attention. Revelational experiences after the study of *Mishnah* seem to have been known also to other mystics, and even Vital, who, as a rule, resorted to other methods, does mention in passing his habit of meditating over the *Mishnah* at the time of the afternoon prayer<sup>3</sup> in order to be enlightened concerning mystical questions such as, for example, his previous transmigrations.<sup>4</sup>

The identification of the Maggid as an hypostasis of the *Mishnah* inevitably brings to mind the one faintly similar story recorded in midrashic legend. The story, for which no early source has so far been found, is told for the first time in Al-Nakawa's *Menorath ha-Ma'or*<sup>5</sup> and deserves to be quoted here:

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, pp. 18-19, 51 n. 4, 103-9.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. above, p. 111. The *Shekhinah* motif is far less obtrusive in most of the *M.M.*

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also references to *M.M.* above, p. 257, nn. 2, 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Sefer ha-Hezyonoth*, pp. 54-55 (קריאת המשנה).

<sup>5</sup> Ed. Enelow, vol. iii (1931), pp. 275-6. Aboab quotes the same story from the *Tanhuma*, but it is not found in any of the extant recensions of this midrash (Enelow, *ibid.*, note).