
The First Hasidic Rabbis in North America

Ira Robinson

The Issue

On March 3, 1893, the *American Hebrew*, traditionalist-oriented journal of the Americanized Jews of New York, reacted editorially to a story in the *New York Herald* of the previous Sunday which had, in the best muckraking tradition, exposed a seeming scandal on the Lower East Side. A rabbi on East Broadway, calling himself a Baal Shem (i.e., a master of the numinous power contained in the names of God), had been doing what such rabbis had done for centuries, writing amulets in order to cure the ailments of the faithful. For the *Herald*, this was a "nefarious faith-cure humbug." The *American Hebrew* supported this view, editorializing that it

caused a blush of shame to mantle the cheek of every honest Jew. . . . It is proper that every one who is at all representative of Judaism should emphatically reprobate this trickster and should especially denounce his attempt to cloak his swindling under the guise of religion.¹

When a reader pointed out that the rabbi was, in point of fact, most likely "as sincere as any [person] occupying Jewish and Christian pulpits; [whose] faith-healing remedies are based with calculating exactness upon formulas in the Kabbala and even in the Talmud," the editor of the *American Hebrew* deemed it necessary to comment:

It surpasses our comprehension how any fairly intelligent Jew can for a moment defend such practices. Rather the reverse, we should all exert the fullest influence possible to discountenance the transplanting of this system to this country.²

The transplantation of Hasidic Judaism to North America, which so frightened the *American Hebrew* in 1893, is, one hundred years later, an accomplished fact. For most observers of the American Jew-

ish scene, however, Hasidic settlement in North America is basically a post-World War II phenomenon. Though they acknowledge that a sizable portion of the mass Eastern European Jewish emigration to North America from the 1880s to the 1920s came from areas where Hasidic Judaism was dominant, their assumption is that there was no organized Hasidic life in America during this period. The pronouncement of Jerome Mintz is typical:

Although hasidic Jews had been part of the earlier waves of immigration to America in the last century, for the most part they had come as individuals, leaving behind their Rebbe and the majority of the court. As most Rebbes had remained in Europe during this earlier period, the focal point of hasidic life had been missing.³

The considerable attention paid of late to contemporary North American Orthodox Judaism has caused a reevaluation of the history of American Orthodoxy. In particular, the role of the interwar Orthodox community in developing an institutional basis for the postwar development of American Orthodoxy has been noted.⁴ In all this, however, the history of the establishment of Hasidic Judaism in North America has been sadly neglected.

Why should this be so? In the first place, it is assumed that the European leaders of Hasidic Judaism did not themselves go to America and discouraged their followers from going to a country which had the reputation of not being conducive to maximal Judaic observance. Thus those Hasidic Jews who did somehow emigrate to North America did so completely bereft of spiritual leadership. On the surface, this assumption has much to recommend it. Within Eastern European Orthodox circles America *was* considered an "impure" country to be avoided if at all possible.⁵ Nineteenth-century Hasidic rebbes *did* discourage their followers from emigrating. Thus, R. David Shifrin, an early follower of the Lubavicher Rebbe to emigrate to the United States, recalled his parting with his rebbe, R. Shalom Dov Baer Schneersohn:

I did not come to ask whether to go. I had the ticket. I just did not want to be like a student who flees from the heder and does not tell the rebbe where he is going. Therefore I came to tell the rebbe that I am going to the United States.⁶

The same, however, could be said of the mitnagdic rabbinical establishment. It was, in fact, the Lithuanian rabbi David Willowsky (Ridbas) who stated that in America "even the stones are *tref*,"⁷ and similarly it was the Lithuanian rabbi Israel Meir ha-Kohen (Hafez Hayyim) who stated, in his book for emigrating Jews, *Nidhe Yisrael*, that emigration to America was to be avoided or, at least, that America was to be made into a temporary place of settlement with the clear intention of returning to a land where Judaism could be properly observed.⁸ Despite these strictures, the Lithuanian rabbinical establishment, led by such personalities as Rabbi Isaac Elhanan Spector of Kovno, began sending rabbis to the United States and Canada as early as the 1880s.⁹ As for the Hasidim, it makes no sense that they should have emigrated in any great numbers without somebody attempting to fill the vacuum of Hasidic spiritual leadership.

The Earliest Hasidic Rabbis in North America

New York City, which apparently had a "Polish" synagogue as early as the 1840s, was home to Rabbi Joshua Segal, known as the Sherpseser Rav, who came there in 1875¹⁰. When Rabbi Jacob Joseph, a mitnaged from Vilna, was appointed chief rabbi of New York, Rabbi Segal was offered the position of *av bet din* under him. His refusal to take the subordinate position, and his subsequent appointment as "chief rabbi" of some twenty Hasidic congregations, organized as "Congregations of Israel, Men of Poland and Austria," was one of the primary factors in the decline of the prestige of Jacob Joseph's chief rabbinate, and amply demonstrates that Jewish immigrants from Hasidic areas were lacking in neither spiritual leadership nor organizational elan.¹¹

In 1893, the same year as the *New York Herald* exposé referred to at the beginning of the paper, Rabbi Hayyim Jacob Vidrovitz of Moscow came to the United States, where he was able to gather under his rabbinical control "a few small hasidic *shtiblach*" in New York and proclaimed himself "Chief Rabbi of America."¹²

Hasidic Jews were organizing in other communities as well. In 1894 there was a report in the *Jewish Exponent* of Philadelphia of a "wonder working rabbi" in Baltimore.¹³ The year 1896 saw the arrival in Boston of one of the first Lubavichers in the United States, Rabbi D. M. Rabinowitz, who became spiritual leader of the Agudat ha-

Sefardim of that city.¹⁴ Close attention to the Yiddish press of these years would doubtless elicit yet other examples of nineteenth-century Hasidic organizations and rabbis in America.

Of course it is one thing to say that there were rabbis serving Hasidic congregations and propagating Hasidic doctrines, and quite another to assert that there were Hasidic rebbes in America in this early period. In fact there were, if we know what we are looking for. It must be borne in mind that, in the context of late-nineteenth-century Hasidic Judaism, it was not merely descendants of old, established Hasidic dynasties who served as rebbes. To a certain extent, the field was open to men whose charismatic qualities gained them a certain following, especially if they could claim a distinguished ancestry, but sometimes even when they could not. It was inevitable that men of this kind, whom Solomon Poll, in his work on postwar Hasidism in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, calls "shtikl rebbes,"¹⁵ would be the first to go to North America. Just as Jacob Joseph would probably not have agreed to become chief rabbi of New York had he not been in debt,¹⁶ so those Hasidic spiritual leaders who could make a go of it in Europe did not emigrate to the United States. In this first period, therefore, Hasidic leadership in America went to such shtikl rebbes as the anonymous Baal Shem of East Broadway and the "wonder working rabbi" of Baltimore.

The first evidence of concern on the part of the established Hasidic leadership for providing "legitimate" Hasidic leaders for America comes in 1903, when R. David Biderman, the Lelover Rebbe, instructed his nephew and disciple, R. Pinhas David Horowitz, to emigrate to America.¹⁷ According to the tale told by his descendants, R. Pinhas David was horrified at the very idea and refused to go, eventually setting out for America only during World War I, as an alternative to imprisonment.¹⁸

Credit for being the first "legitimate" Hasidic rebbe to settle in the United States appears to go to the Ukrainian Twersky family. R. David Mordecai Twersky, a descendant of R. David Twersky, the Tolner Rebbe, settled in New York in 1912.¹⁹ Certainly the growth of American Jewry in the immediate prewar years as well as the increased institutionalization of Orthodoxy in the New World made

America an increasingly attractive destination for Hasidic rebbes—if not for settlement, then at least for a visit.

Thus, in January 1914, R. Israel Hagar, the Viznitzer Rebbe, made a tour of North America. In Philadelphia, the *Jewish Exponent* reported that

Friday evening . . . five hundred Jews, young and old, stood on the benches [of the synagogue] to get a glimpse of the "Righteous Jew" as he is called. . . . On Saturday afternoon, after Mincha services, the rabbi was supposed to bless the Jews. Several thousands of people flocked to the synagogue. The police, fearing a riot, told the rabbi that the blessing would have to be postponed. . . . During the week the rabbi . . . will advise the distressed and give them his blessing.²⁰

Other Hasidic rabbis known to have immigrated to North America at this time include R. Yudel Rosenberg, known as the Tarler Rebbe, who came from Lodz to Toronto in 1913 to be rabbi of its Polish synagogue,²¹ and Pinhas David Horowitz, who arrived in Boston in 1916 at the request of that city's Hasidim and began calling himself the Bostoner Rebbe.²²

The postwar period saw more immigration of Hasidic rabbis, including Moshe Zvi and Meshullam Zalman Twersky, brothers of the original Twersky in the United States. Moshe Zvi arrived in 1924 and lived in Philadelphia. Meshullam Zalman spent some time in Philadelphia before moving on to Boston in 1927.²³

Other Hasidic rabbis of this period included R. Moshele Lipschitz, whose address on Sixth Street in Philadelphia gained him the name *Der Zegster Tzaddik*.²⁴ A center of Hasidic life in New York was arising in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Kranzler, whose interests center almost exclusively on the post-World War II period, notes in passing that "a few rebbes" settled there in this period.²⁵ Another scion of the Twersky family, R. Jacob, whose father had lived in Antwerp, settled in Milwaukee in 1927.²⁶ R. Zvi Elimelekh Hertzberg (1894–1971), a native of Dinov, Galicia, and an "official" of the court of the Belzer Rebbe, came to America in 1923, first to New York, then to Youngstown, Ohio, and finally to Baltimore.²⁷ The mid-1920s also saw the beginnings of an organized Lubavicher presence in North America.²⁸ An extensive tour by the Lubavicher Rebbe, R. Joseph Isaac Schneersohn, took place in 1929; and in the 1930s, the Lubavicher

Rebbe apparently considered the possibility of moving his court to America.²⁹ This era also saw the emigration of several Hasidic rabbis from Eastern Europe to England.³⁰

These facts, gleaned in a serendipitous way, could doubtless be further amplified, so that other North American Jewish communities with a Hasidic presence could be added to the list. Research on the first Hasidic rabbis in the United States is still in its infancy. However, enough has been demonstrated to amply show that pre-World War II North America was hardly a barren desert for adherents of Hasidic Judaism.

A Case Study of a North American Hasidic Rabbi

All of the foregoing, of course, merely scratches the surface. In order to flesh out the picture, we need to gain a closer perspective on the lives and problems of these first Hasidic rabbis. For this purpose, I will present in some detail the North American experience of one of the people I mentioned earlier, whose biography I am currently writing, R. Yudel Rosenberg (1859–1935).³¹

Rosenberg was born in the small town of Skaryszew in Russian Poland, claiming distinguished ancestors on both sides of his family. Apparently he excelled in his Torah studies, becoming known as the Skaryszewer Ilui. Also, like many traditionalist youths of his generation, he was exposed to the literature of Jewish modernism—the Haskalah. Married at seventeen, Yudel Rosenberg moved to the town of Tarlow, where, after a period of independent study, he went into business.³²

His failure as a businessman and the necessity of providing for a growing family forced Rosenberg, ostensibly against his will, to become rabbi of Tarlow in 1885. Dissatisfied with life as a small-town rabbi, he moved to Lublin, where he hoped to find a position as a rabbinical judge. In 1891, in consonance with this goal, he took and passed a Russian government examination designed to test his proficiency in the Russian language and laws concerning the rabbinate, as was required in order to officiate as a rabbi in Poland.³³

Having backed the losing candidate in the election for the Lublin rabbinate in 1892, Rosenberg moved to Warsaw. In the metropolis of

Poland, he eked out an existence on the fringes of the official rabbinate while publishing numerous books from 1902 on. These included a supercommentary on the talmudic tractate *Nedarim*, a short-lived rabbinical periodical, and the beginnings of an ambitious project to reedit large portions of the Zohar and translate them from Aramaic to Hebrew.³⁴ He also published a number of literary forgeries, supposedly derived from a nonexistent "Royal Library of Metz," which included, most prominently, *Nifla'ot Maharal mi-Prag 'im Ha-Golem* (1909), which gave the world what was to become the standard version of the story of the Golem of Prague, and which Yosef Dan has called the most important twentieth-century contribution of Hebrew literature to world literature.³⁵

These publications seem to have so enhanced Rosenberg's reputation that in late 1909 or 1910 he moved from Warsaw, where, apparently, he had at long last realized his ambition of official status as a *dayyan*, to the city of Lodz, where he attempted to set himself up as a Hasidic rebbe. He called himself the Tarler Rebbe after the town where he had first functioned as a rabbi.³⁶

The most reasonable explanation for Rosenberg's move is that he thought he could do better as a rebbe in Lodz, a city which tended to look to the outside for its spiritual leadership, than as a *dayyan* in Warsaw. Though contemporary Hasidism was dominated by major institutionalized dynasties such as Ger, Lubavich, Alexander, and Belz, there was still room at the bottom of the ladder for a newcomer to set up a synagogue or study house and attempt to attract followers while, at least at the outset, supplementing his income from other sources.³⁷

Rosenberg settled in Balut, a working-class district of Lodz, and did attract some followers, supplementing his income as rebbe by practicing homeopathic medicine. In a letter written toward the end of his life, he recalled this aspect of his practice as rebbe.

When I lived . . . in the city of Lodz as a rebbe of Hasidim I needed to dispense cures and remedies. I wrote the book *Refael ha-Mal'akh* ["The Angel Raphael"] . . . for I did not want to take fees [*pidyonim*] for nothing. Thus I was obliged to seek cures and remedies which were good and effective. I especially employed homeopathic remedies which were effective. The medical books I had were from great professors, all in the Russian language.³⁸

As is clear from this passage, Rosenberg was a mixture of the old and the new. *Refael ha-Mal'akh*, which he published in 1911, contained three methods of treating illness: home remedies and medicines that could be obtained from pharmacies without a doctor's prescription, amulets, and incantations. He could, on the one hand, thunder against a rival Hasidic practitioner's prescription for a barren woman that she consume the foreskin of a circumcised child:

Enough of such stupidity and foolishness. It merely makes a jest and mockery that such things can be found in the literature of Israel. These minor rebbes [*rebbelekh*] who give out such a remedy are of inferior intellect and without sense. . . . They think that everything printed in such books is something which has substance.³⁹

On the other hand, he could state, with regard to an amulet he prescribed for a difficult childbirth:

This amulet was revealed to me from Heaven. I earnestly give a very great warning that no man utilize this amulet unless he know and understand the secret of the combination of these three [divine] names.⁴⁰

Rosenberg also wrote other sorts of books in Lodz in order to supplement his income. These works ranged from the halakhot of *prosbul* (a talmudic legal formula pertaining to loans) and *sha'atnez* (forbidden mixtures of wool and linen) to collections of midrashim and Hasidic stories.⁴¹ All of his activities combined, however, were not enough to make ends meet. In the first place, Lodz was suffering an economic recession, which impacted particularly hard on the poor Jews who were Rosenberg's Hasidim. Secondly, there was a great deal of competition at the bottom end of the rebbe market, a competition which was often accompanied by mutual accusations. Thus, in one of Rosenberg's letters to his eldest son, Mayer Joshua, he describes an accusation against him alleging that he was "not a rebbe, but only a *maskil* [follower of the Haskalah] and unbeliever [*apikoros*] and a bit of a doctor."⁴² This could not have helped.

In the same letter, Rosenberg summed up his financial situation. His daughter, Hessel, married to a man who had emigrated to Toronto, had received ship's passage from him in order to join him in Canada. However, Rosenberg reminded his son:

She has no [money for] expenses. If she keeps living with me, what shall she live on? I have nothing I can give her, for want and pressure on livelihood is very great here. It is as plain as can be that people are dying of starvation.

Ultimately, Rosenberg realized that he could not make a go of being a rebbe in Lodz. Thus, in 1913, when he received an invitation from the Polish synagogue of Toronto, issued at the behest of his son-in-law there, to come and serve as its rabbi, he accepted.⁴³

Yudel Rosenberg arrived in Canada in July 1913. His congregation in Toronto, Beth Jacob, which had been founded in 1905, had at the time only sixty-five members. However, according to one account, hundreds of people worshipped there and participated in such Hasidic ceremonies as the "third meal" of the Sabbath, conducted on Saturday afternoons, at which Rosenberg presided.⁴⁴

In Toronto, Rosenberg came to be known as the Polisher Rebbe.⁴⁵ He continued to look the part of the Hasidic rebbe, with his beard and *pe'ot* (side-curls), *shtreiml* (fur hat), and *bekeshe* (long coat), despite the fact that his appearance in this guise meant that he was subject to harassment when he appeared on the street, and hence he did so infrequently. Some things, however, changed when Rosenberg crossed the Atlantic. Though there is evidence that he continued to write amulets for those who desired them, he ceased the practice of homeopathic medicine—perhaps because the practice of medicine was more stringently regulated in North America.⁴⁶

Moving to Canada, unfortunately, did not solve Rosenberg's financial problems. Toronto, no less than Lodz, was suffering from an economic recession, and Rosenberg's constituents, the Polish-Jewish community, having arrived fairly recently, were relatively less in a position to support a rabbi than other sectors of Toronto's immigrant Jewish community. This situation, incidentally, was not unique. Kranzler, in his account of Williamsburg, remarks that the Hasidic community in this era was economically less well off than the mitnagdic Orthodox community. According to the accounts we have of Rosenberg's rabbinate in Toronto, he suffered from economic want to the point, at times, of actually having no bread to put on the table.⁴⁷

In order to make ends meet, Rosenberg attempted a number of things. He was a mohel (ritual circumciser), adjudicated disputes brought to him, and went out of town to serve on rabbinical courts

when called upon. He wrote books on halakhic subjects dealing with mikveh and synagogue procedure—topics of immediate relevance to Orthodox Jews in North America. None of these things yielded a sufficient income.⁴⁸

For an immigrant Orthodox rabbi in North America, Hasidic or not, the only way to make a decent living was through the supervision of the kosher meat industry. Rosenberg, naturally, turned to this field as well. Kashrut, in Toronto, was controlled by other, more established rabbis, with whom Rosenberg had to compete for his livelihood. For a brief time in 1915 he affiliated himself with the rabbis of the Toronto Va'ad ha-Kashruth, but he soon broke away and attempted to organize his own system of kashrut supervision, employing ritual slaughterers who had refused to affiliate with the Va'ad and whose meat had been banned by the other rabbis, and attacking the very legitimacy of the Va'ad. Perhaps because his community had little economic power, Rosenberg's efforts in kashrut came to naught.⁴⁹

Another of Rosenberg's initiatives in Toronto was more successful. This was the organization of an institution for the Jewish education of children, at first simply called the Polish Talmud Torah and then formally named Etz Hayyim. It was Rosenberg who was largely responsible for the spiritual direction of the school, which soon boasted four teachers and some 120 students. He made sure that the Jewish education offered at Etz Hayyim was free of "secular" tendencies and as close as possible to the elementary education offered in Poland.⁵⁰

Ultimately, Rosenberg was unable to make a go of it economically in Toronto, and so, in 1919, he shifted his base of operations to Montreal, where he had been invited by a faction of butchers and slaughterers to become their chief rabbi and, not incidentally, to serve as a counterweight to the authority of R. Hirsch Cohen, a Lithuanian rabbi who had been in Montreal since the 1890s and was generally acknowledged by the city's established Jewish community as its chief rabbi.⁵¹

In Montreal, Yudel Rosenberg and Hirsch Cohen fought a bitter kosher-meat war in the early 1920s which ended in a stalemate and a compromise whereby Cohen became president of the rabbinical council of Montreal's Va'ad ha-'Ir and Rosenberg vice-president.⁵² It

should be noted that in these kosher-meat disputes, Rosenberg was attacked, among other things, for his adherence to Hasidism. Thus one satirical anti-Rosenberg handbill states: "The womanish Zaddik, Rosenberg, came and declared [an allegedly *tref* animal] kosher with his *pe'ot*. . . . The *pe'ot* with his fifty-dollar check make everything kosher."⁵³

In Montreal Rosenberg continued his literary activities with the publication of books and pamphlets containing sermons and halakhic decisions. His main project during this period, however, was the completion of his new edition and translation into Hebrew of the Zohar. Though he had published the first volume, covering the Book of Genesis, as far back as 1905, it was only now that Rosenberg resumed and completed the project in eight volumes published in the years 1924–1931. In 1927 he also published a companion volume, *Sefer Niflous ha-Zohar*, giving a bilingual Hebrew-Yiddish edition of stories regarding Rabbi Simeon Bar Yohai, the hero of the Zohar.⁵⁴

What Rosenberg hoped to accomplish with his work on the Zohar was to make it a genuinely popular book, one which might be studied by schoolchildren and synagogue study groups in the same manner as the Mishnah and the *Eyn Ya'akov*. His ultimate aim in all this was nothing less than to help bring about the coming of the Messiah. As he stated:

I know that my book . . . is not needed by the great men who are comparable to divine angels. . . . However, they, too, will rejoice . . . when they see the awakening of ordinary men to study and understand the statements of the holy Zohar. For that is a sign that salvation will soon be revealed. . . . The good of the community of Israel will arise through the study of the Zohar. We cannot say that [salvation] depends upon [the study of the Zohar] by the great ones of the generation alone. . . . For there will yet come a new revelation [of the Zohar] to the masses of Israel . . . who will taste of the Tree of Life.⁵⁵

The general impression given by a perusal of Rosenberg's writings is that his life as a Hasidic rabbi in Canada was one of ceaseless struggle

between the pious remnants of Israel and the helpers of Satan. . . . At that time Jacob, the spirit of ancient Israel [*Yisrael sabba*] will remain almost alone with no help or support. For the people will go in darkness and will not wish to go in the spirit of ancient Israel. Only a tiny minority will be the remnant which God calls. Then Jacob will remain limping on his hip because of the coldness of

those who support the Torah “until the dawn breaks”—that is, until the light of Messiah glimmers.⁵⁶

Conclusions

Before we are able to say that the experience of Yudel Rosenberg was typical of the fate of those Hasidic rabbis and rebbes who came to North America prior to World War II, much more research will have to be done. However, even in the current state of research, it is possible to make a few generalizations.

1. A prewar North American Hasidic community did exist and did enjoy a spiritual leadership.

2. Established Hasidic leaders, like the contemporary mitnagdic leaders, tended not to come to America unless under pressure from economic or political need. This meant that Hasidic spiritual leaders who settled in North America in this period tended to be men of the second rank, unable to establish themselves satisfactorily in Europe.

3. Hasidic rabbis, like the community they served, tended to emigrate later than their mitnagdic counterparts, and hence found themselves at a decided disadvantage in establishing their own control of kashrut supervision, with all its social and economic implications, in the face of an already established system headed by mitnagdic rabbis. This fact helps to explain the bitter battles over kosher-meat supervision which took place in city after city in North America in this period.

4. Though the prewar Hasidic spiritual leadership in North America was not visibly more successful in propagating its vision of Judaism than its mitnagdic counterpart, neither was it less successful. When, during World War II and its aftermath, the surviving remnants of Hasidic life in Europe took refuge in the New World, they did not find a tabula rasa. Hasidism and Hasidic leaders already existed in North America. The prewar Hasidic pioneers had provided a base upon which the new Hasidic immigrants proceeded to build their communities.

Ira Robinson is professor of Judaic Studies in the Department of Religion, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. He is the editor of *Cyrus Adler: Selected Letters* (1985) and co-editor of *An Everyday Miracle: Yiddish Culture in Montreal* (1990).

Notes

1. *American Hebrew*, March 3, 1893, p. 563.
2. *Ibid.*, March 17, 1893, p. 653.
3. Jerome R. Mintz, *Legends of the Hasidim: An Introduction to Hasidic Culture and Oral Tradition in the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 37.
4. On Orthodox Judaism in North America during this period, see Jeffrey Gurock, "Resisters and Accommodators: Varieties of Orthodox Rabbis in America, 1886–1983," *American Jewish Archives* 35 (1983): 100–187. Cf. also Jenna W. Joselit, *New York's Jewish Jews* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).
5. Cf. Aaron Rothkoff, "The American Sojourns of Ridbaz: Religious Problems Within the Immigrant Community," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 57 (1968): 557–572.
6. Shalom Duber Levin, *Toldois Chabad B' Artzois Ha'Briss* (Brooklyn: Kehot, 1988), p. 5. See also the case reported on p. 7, where the rebbe was not asked since he would "almost certainly" have advised against going.
7. Cf. Rothkoff, "American Sojourns of Ridbaz," p. 560.
8. Israel Meir ha-Kohen, *Nidhei Yisrael* (Warsaw, 1894), pp. 288–293.
9. Abraham Karp, "New York Chooses a Chief Rabbi," in *The Jewish Experience in America: Selected Studies from the Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, ed. Abraham Karp (Waltham and New York, 1969), vol. 4, p. 130.
10. Isaac Mayer Wise, *Reminiscences* (New York: Arno, 1973), p. 21. Interestingly, in this context, Wise identified Orthodox Judaism with "Polish cabbalistical rabbinism and supernaturalism" (p. 22).
11. Karp, "New York Chooses a Chief Rabbi," pp. 170–171.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 172, n. 128.
13. *Jewish Exponent*, July 29, 1894, p. 7.
14. Levin, *Toldois Chabad*, p. 7.
15. Solomon Poll, *The Hasidic Community of Williamsburg: A Study in the Sociology of Religion* (New York: Schocken, 1962), pp. 63, 118, 121.
16. Karp, "New York Chooses a Chief Rabbi," p. 141.
17. Amnon Levi, "Anglo-Saxon Haredim: Can They Serve as a Bridge Between Haredim and Non-Religious?" in *Religious and Secular: Conflict and Accommodation Between Jews in Israel*, ed. Charles Liebman (Jerusalem: Keter, 1990), p. 12.
18. Honoch Teller, *The Bostoner: Stories and Recollections from the Colorful Chassidic Court of the Bostoner Rebbe, Rabbi Levi I. Horowitz* (Jerusalem and New York: Feldheim, 1990), p. 13. See also Ira Axelrod, *Seventy-Five Years of Chassidic Life in America: The Story of the Bostoner Rebbes, an Authorized History* (Brookline, Mass., n.d. [1990?]).
19. Personal communication from Dr. Isadore Twersky. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* article on the Twersky family (vol. 15, cols. 1472–73) mistakenly dates the emigration of family members to the United States to the period after World War I. Cf. B. Re'em, "Semukhim le-'Ad ule-'Olam," *Ha-Modia*, December 7, 1990, p. 10.
20. *Jewish Exponent*, January 16, 1914.
21. On Yudel Rosenberg, see n. 31 below.
22. Teller, *The Bostoner*, p. 13.
23. Personal communication from Dr. Isadore Twersky. Cf. Re'em, "Semukhim le-'Ad ule-'Olam."
24. Hindy (Edith) Krohn, *The Way It Was: Touching Vignettes About Growing Up Jewish in the Philadelphia of Long Ago* (Brooklyn: Mesorah, 1989), p. 114.

25. George Kranzler, *Williamsburg: A Jewish Community in Transition* (New York: Feldheim, 1961), p. 18.
26. Abraham J. Twersky, *Generation to Generation: Personal Recollections of a Chassidic Legacy*. (Brooklyn: Traditional Press, 1986), p. ii.
27. Tsvi Elimelekh Hertzberg, *Tzaddik be-Emunato* (Jerusalem, 1987), p. 12. Cf. Isaac Fein, "Salahti . . .," *Ha-Doar*, 29 Elul 5735, pp. 601–603.
28. Levin, *Toldois Chabad*, p. 15.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
30. Tzvi Rabinowicz, *Chassidic Rebbes: From the Baal Shem Tov to Modern Times* (Southfield, Mich., and Spring Valley, N.Y.: Targum/Feldheim, 1989), p. 362. Four rebbes are enumerated in this source.
31. I am presently preparing a biography of Rabbi Rosenberg entitled "A Kabbalist in Montreal: The Life and Times of Rabbi Yudel Rosenberg." For the present, see Ira Robinson, "A Letter from the Sabbath Queen: Rabbi Yudel Rosenberg Addresses Montreal Jewry," in *An Everyday Miracle: Yiddish Culture in Montreal*, ed. Ira Robinson, Pierre Anctil, and Mervin Butovsky (Montreal: Vehicule, 1990), pp. 101–114.
32. Robinson, "Kabbalist in Montreal," chaps. 1 and 2.
33. *Ibid.*, chap. 3. The Russian government certificate issued to Rosenberg upon passing the examination is in the possession of Mr. Lionel Albert of Montreal. A photocopy is in the author's possession.
34. *Ibid.*, chap. 4.
35. Yosef Dan, "The Beginnings of Hebrew Literature" [Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 1 (1981): 85; Ira Robinson, "Literary Forgery and Hasidic Judaism: The Case of Rabbi Yudel Rosenberg," *Judaism* (in press).
36. Robinson, "Kabbalist in Montreal," chap. 6.
37. Cf. n. 15 above. Professor Robert M. Shapiro, of the Baltimore Hebrew University, in his research on the Jews of Lodz in the interwar period, informs me in a personal communication that he has discovered the traces of a number of shtikl rebbes in Lodz.
38. Yudel Rosenberg to Moshe Blistreich, Hanukah 5695 (Rosenberg Papers, Jewish Public Library, Montreal). A photocopy is in the possession of the author.
39. Yudel Rosenberg, *Sefer Refael ha-Mal'akh* (Piotrkow, 1911), p. 6.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
41. Robinson, "Kabbalist in Montreal," chap. 6.
42. Yudel Rosenberg to Mayer Joshua Rosenberg, dated Lodz, Wednesday of Parshat va-Yigash [no year cited]. The original is in the possession of Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Meir of Jerusalem. A photocopy is in the possession of the author.
43. Shemen, "Ortodoksia," in *Der Idisher Journal: Yubilei Oisgabe* (Toronto, 1950), p. 10.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Leah Rosenberg, *The Errand Runner: Reflections of a Rabbi's Daughter* (Toronto, 1981), p. 41.
46. Cf. the letter to Moshe Blistreich cited in n. 38 above.
47. Shemen, "Ortodoksia," p. 11.
48. Cf. Stephen Speisman, *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937* (Toronto, 1979), pp. 166–167.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 281.
50. *Ibid.*, pp. 173–174.
51. Ira Robinson, "The Kosher Meat War and the Foundation of the Montreal Jewish Community Council, 1922–1925" [Hebrew], *Proceedings of the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Divi-

sion B, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1990), pp. 369–376. An expanded, English-language version of this article will appear in the *Journal of Canadian Ethnic Studies*.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 374.

53. Handbill, undated, in Jewish Community Council file, Canadian Jewish Congress Archives, Montreal.

54. Cf. Ira Robinson, "A Kabbalist in Montreal: Yudel Rosenberg and His Translation of the Zohar" (Paper presented at the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion, 1987).

55. Rosenberg, *Sefer Zohar Torah* (Montreal, 1924), Genesis, p. 9.

56. Rosenberg, *Sefer Peri Yehuda* (Bilgoraj, 1935), pp. 34–35.