CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTH RIDGE

JEW AND NON-JEW: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AN AREA OF CHABAD
COSMOLOGY AND THE "WORLD VIEW" OF THREE
LUBAVITCHER HASSIDIC INFORMANTS

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by

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF FIGURES</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter

1. **INTRODUCTION**  
   - General Approach and the Delineation of the Problem  
   - Specific Focus of Investigation  
   - Data Gathering  

2. **MAN IN CHABAD COSMOLOGY**  
   - Inhabitant Beings of the Four Worlds  
   - Memalle and Sovev  
   - Souls  
   - Jews and non-Jews: Different Missions in Life  

3. **JEW AND NON-JEW: AN ASPECT OF WORLD VIEW**  
   - WHAT IS JEWISH CULTURE?  

4. **CONCLUSION**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOTNOTES</th>
<th>REFERENCES CITED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>'Peoples' or 'Nations'</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>People Who Live In Or Come From Different Countries, Regions, States</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Elements of the Way of Life or &quot;Culture&quot; of a Jewish Community</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

JEW AND NON-JEW: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AN AREA OF CHABAD COSMOLOGY AND THE "WORLD VIEW" OF THREE LUBAVITCHER HASSIDIC INFORMANTS

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The concern of this study is with a portion of a system of beliefs possessed by Lubavitcher Hassidim. The core of the study consisted of many hours of taped interviews with three Lubavitcher informants. Following Redfield's distinction between "cosmology" and "world view," two kinds of data were elicited:

1. Information having specifically to do with the informants' knowledge of systematized cosmology which is part of Chabad theosophical doctrine.

2. Judgments which were elicited from each informant in the context of linguistic situations other than that of discussion of Chabad. The concern here was with the formulation of an area of informants' world view.
Both "cosmology" and "world view" refer to the way people view the universe. The term "cosmology," however, is used here to refer to an explicit, systematized set of ideas, whereas "world view" is implicit in people's behavior (including verbal behavior) and can be "derived by abstraction from ethnographic description." As it is used in this study, "world view" refers to principles of classification which underlie and organize people's experience of the world.

The area of Chabad cosmology dealt with in this study concerns that which distinguishes "man" from "non-man" as well as one kind of man from another. Two major categories of man, Jews and non-Jews, were found to be distinguished, and their distinguishing attributes were discussed.

Study of the world view of the informants focused on distinctions which they make between the terms 'Jew' and 'non-Jew' as well as 'Jewish' and 'non-Jewish.' Concern here was with the discovery of taxonomic relations of contrast and inclusion as well as of criterial attributes.

The ultimate objective of the study is to determine if there could be found in the world view of the informants some structural relationships which parallel such relationships found in Chabad cosmology. Such a parallel was indeed found. It was concluded, however,
that the inference of a causal connection between the relationship found in the cosmology and the one found in the world view is not justified by demonstration of a structural parallel alone. On the other hand evidence was summoned which suggests that, although it does not determine it, the cosmological relationship may influence the world view relationship.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The concern of this thesis is with a portion of a system of beliefs possessed by a particular group of orthodox Jews who follow a mystical tradition in Judaism which is known as Hassidism. There are a number of different Hassidic groups which are today represented primarily in major cities throughout North America, Europe, and in Israel. These groups share certain fundamental aspects of belief and practice. There are also, however, important differences. The group which is the object of the present study--the Lubavitchers--for instance, are notable among Hassidim\(^1\) for the strong emphasis which they place upon scholarly activity in the form of Talmudic study as well as (and this is particularly important to this study) a heavy emphasis on the mystical ideas of the Kabbala. In addition, it is my understanding that Lubavitch is the only Hassidic group which actively attempts to communicate with non-observant Jews, mounting vigorous campaigns which are aimed at persuading Jews to return to Judaism.

Hassidism is generally regarded to have begun in the middle of the eighteenth century as a movement of religious enthusiasm which developed within the orthodox
Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. Although today modern Hassidim are looked upon by non-Hassidic orthodox Jews "as the bulwark rather than the despoilers of orthodoxy" (Mintz 1968:144), i.e., as the preservers of the ideals of Eastern European orthodox Jewry, Hassidism began as a movement which developed customs, emphases in belief, "varieties of rabbinical allegiance, and social structure and organization" (Mintz 1968:25) which differed markedly from those which represented the established traditions of the times. These differences eventually brought about a repressive reaction to Hassidism from stalwart representatives of the established ways, the Mitnagdim, as Hassidism spread from Galicia through the Ukraine and into Lithuania and White Russia.

Among the features distinguishing Hassidism from the established orthodoxy of Eastern Europe was the great emphasis which the Hassidim placed on intensity of feeling and the expression of enthusiasm in the performance of prayers and other ritual obligations. Raphael Mahler describes the distinctive Hassidic attitude toward prayer and performance of ritual activities in this way:

Prayer without concentration of purpose was of no value, for if the heart was far removed from God, then prayer was only "service of the lips," while observance of precept without concentrated purpose was only "a commandment of men learned by rote" (Isaiah 29:13) . . . It was not the abundance of prayer, meticulous observance of the precepts or copious study of the Law that decided man's favor but the degree of ecstasy he attained in the worship of God (Mahler 1971:443),
This negative attitude toward arid formalism in prayer and ritual performance also manifested itself in the making of the hours of prayer more flexible, in the elimination of the services of the cantor so that "any righteous man could be called to lead the services," (Mintz 1968:26) and the introduction of dancing into the Sabbath services as an expression of joy and enthusiasm.

Enthusiastic religious devotion was not confined to formal settings. "The scope of Hassidic devotion extended to all aspects of life, infusing holiness in work, in eating, and in social intercourse" (Mintz 1968:26). This extension of devotion to mundane activities is related to what a number of scholars believe to be one of the central ideas of Hassidic belief, i.e., the idea that divinity "permeates and sustains" all things (Scholem 1961:347-348; Mintz 1968:26).

The nature of the leadership of the Hassidic community is particularly distinctive. The concept of the Rebbe or Tzaddic (also commonly spelled Zaddic) can be traced back to the man who is considered by all Hassidim to be the founder of Hassidism, Rabbi Israel Ben-Eliezer, or as he is commonly referred to, the Bal Shem Tov. According to Mahler, the Bal Shem Tov saw the Tzaddikim as "the sainted ones" of each generation:

The Tzaddik, who was linked with God in his devotion, was also the mediator between God and the world. The Tzaddikim were "heads of the generation," "the eyes
of the congregation". . . . In the same way as
the Tzaddik clung to the people, so every indi-
vidual clung to the Tzaddik, to learn ethics and
the awe of heaven from him, and be linked with

The Rebbe (or Tzaddik--I prefer to use the title
Rebbe for this individual because the term Tzaddik can be
used to refer to other people as will be seen later) is
the leader of a Hassidic community--both spiritual and
administrative. He is not, however, a leader of a Hassidic
community in the same way that the non-Hassidic orthodox
rabbi is the leader of his congregation or community. His
position is not simply based on the degree of his attain-
ment at Talmudic scholarship, but, rather it is based on
the idea that he has a special, mystical nature (Scholem

In the later stages of the Hassidic movement, the
mystical powers of the Rebbe were believed to be passed
down hereditarily from father to son and Hassidic commun-
ities came to possess at their centers dynastic lines of
Rebbes (Mintz 1968:28; Mahler 1971:496-497). Many of
these dynastic communities (they are commonly referred to
as courts) were founded upon or developed distinct brands
of Hassidism.

Some courts became famous for their talmudic learning,
their system of mysticism, their majesty, their vig-
orous prayer, their restraint, or perhaps their
refusal to concede a single point to the changing
times (Mintz 1968:28).
Lubavitch, as has already been mentioned above, is famous for the emphasis which is placed on study, both Talmudic and Kabbalistic.

The Hassidism embraced by the Lubavitchers, known as Chabad, was developed by Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the first Lubavitcher Rebbe. According to my informants, Chabad differs from other Hassidic philosophies primarily in that it places intellectual understanding above intensity of feeling and enthusiastic expression, although the expression of feeling and enthusiasm is also considered to be important. "The Tanya did not reject worship from the heart, but it did demand the precedence of 'mind over heart,' of reason over emotion" (Mahler 1971:485).

The Tanya is what one of my Lubavitcher informants referred to on one occasion as the "Bible of Chabad Hassidism." Included in the Tanya is a complex theosophical-cosmological system "which followed the lines of Isaac Luria's system of Kabbala" (Mahler 1971:484). The study of this system is an important component of the system of formal education in the Lubavitch community.

Customarily each Hassidic court was named after the town which was the seat of its dynastic line of Rebbes, and when some Rebbes came to the United States or to Israel (during and after World War II), establishing courts there, these names were retained. Lubavitch is the name of the town in Lithuania which was the seat of the dynastic line
of Rebbes which began with Shneur Zalman. Today the core of the Lubavitch community is in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, New York where the Rebbe moved in 1940. When the Rebbe arrived he found a Lubavitcher following which had already been developed by one of the Rebbe's adherents who emigrated to the United States fifteen years earlier (Mintz 1968:40). The community grew rapidly as people "trickled" in from Russia and as native born American Jews joined Lubavitch. It was estimated by one of my informants that about forty percent of today's Lubavitch population is made up of those who have joined.

As I mentioned earlier, the Lubavitchers are involved in programs, the aim of which is to persuade non-religious Jews to become more religious. As part of this attempt, branch outposts of Lubavitch have been established in many of the major cities of the United States. It is in the context of one of these outposts, Chabad House in West Los Angeles, that I collected the data for this study.

I said at the beginning of this introduction that this study was concerned with a portion of a system of beliefs. The beliefs which I am referring to are those which are found in Chabad. In the section which follows, I will discuss the way in which I intend to approach the study of these beliefs, i.e., in terms of their cognitive status with respect to my informants.
General Approach and the Delineation of the Problem

I have stated that Chabad doctrine includes within it a complex cosmological system. By "cosmological system" or "cosmology" I mean something very much like Robert Redfield's notion of an explicit, systematized "world view." Redfield defines "world view" as follows:

... the picture the members of a society have of the properties and characters upon their stage of action. ... Of all that is connoted by "culture," "world view" attends especially to the way a man, in a particular society, sees himself in relation to all else. It is the properties of existence as distinguished from and related to self. It is, in short, a man's idea of the universe. It is that organization of ideas which answers to a man the questions: Where am I? Among what do I move? What are my relations to these things? (Redfield 1962:270).

For Redfield, world view as defined here can exist in the form of: 1) explicit, often abstract, systematized sets of ideas which are the product of an intellectual formulator, or 2) "the set of cognitive orientations of the members of a society" which are not explicitly formulated but which are implicit in their behavior and can be "derived by abstraction from ethnographic description," (Wallace 1968:99-101). For the first of these two forms, Redfield preferred the label "cosmology," while he reserved the term "world view" itself to designate the second, (Redfield 1962:273-274).

The Redfieldian concept of "world view" (as opposed to "cosmology") is in some general respects akin to the
concept of "cognitive organization" or "cognitive system"
which has been developed (in slightly different ways) by
the proponents of a more recent trend in anthropology,
i.e., that which has been variously labeled "the new
ethnography," ethnoscience, cognitive anthropology, etc.
(Tyler 1969:5; Frake 1968:507-514). Cognitive anthropology 
(the term which I will be using from here on to designate 
this school) like the Redfieldian approach to "world view"
is concerned with arriving at formulations of the cognitive 
principles which underlie and organize behavior (Tyler 1969:3). Its approach, however, is much more rigorous and 
less impressionistic, and its object of study is much more 
highly specified.

The explicitly stated focal point of most cognitive 
anthropological programs is the explication of systems of 
classification which organize experience and behavior as 
well as the development of "discovery procedures," or the 
techniques necessary for such an explication:

The intended objective of these efforts is eventually 
to provide the ethnographer with public non-intuitive 
procedures for ordering his presentation of observed 
and elicited events according to the principles of 
classification of the people he is studying. To 
order ethnographic descriptions solely according to 
an investigators preconceived categories obscures the 
real content of culture: how people organize their experience conceptually so that it can be transmitted as knowledge from person to person and from generation to generation (Frake 1968:513).

These principles of classification have so far 
been sought primarily in the analysis of the linguistic
behavior of a people and in particular, their terminological systems. Major concerns have been with extensional meaning, i.e., listing objects to which terms refer; taxonomic arrangements, i.e., the way terms are grouped and arranged into relations of contrast and inclusion; and semantic features or criterial attributes, i.e., features which distinguish between contrasting terms or categories, the criterion by which an individual decides which term of a set of contrasting terms to apply to a particular item.

As has just been mentioned above, cognitive anthropologists have also been interested in the development of "discovery procedures." They have been particularly concerned with techniques of controlled eliciting. The center of concern here is with the formulation of questions and question sequences which will be successful in eliciting from informants the desired kinds of responses. As Black and Metzger have put it:

It could be said of ethnography that until you know the question that someone in the culture is responding to you can't know many things about the response. Yet the ethnographer is greeted, in the field, with an array of responses. He needs to know what question people are answering in their every act. (Black and Metzger 1969:141).

This brings me to the delineation of the problem that is dealt with in this study. I am making a distinction similar to that made by Redfield between "cosmology" and "world view"; however, I am using the term "world view"
in the cognitive anthropological sense, i.e., to mean principles of classification which underlie and organize behavior (in this case verbal behavior).

The study was carried out with the aid of three Lubavitcher informants who are associated with Chabad House which is located near the U.C.L.A. campus. My informants are what might ordinarily be called religious specialists. Two of them are rabbis and one is a Yeshiva student (rabbinical student), and all have gone through years of intensive formal indoctrination and are possessors of a systematic theology and cosmology. They are however, also members of a community with a distinct way of life—a way of life in which all activities are "balanced on the scale of religious values," (Mintz 1968).

The reason why I qualify the designation of my informants as religious specialists (I said that this is what they might ordinarily be called) is that I do not wish to imply that there is in the Lubavitch community a broad gulf between an elite possessing of esoteric knowledge and the rest of the community which understands very little of the systematic doctrine. To the contrary, Talmudic study and the study of Chasidus (Chabad mystical and cosmological ideas) are considered by Lubavitchers to be among the most highly valued activities for every Jew, and every Lubavitcher goes some distance in this direction. Those to whom I have referred as religious specialists are those
who go farther in this direction and have reached a particularly high level of knowledge.

Specific Focus of Investigation

The core of the study consists of many hours of taped interviews. In the course of the interviews, I was concerned essentially with two kinds of data:

1. Information explicitly having to do with Chabad cosmology--I asked questions about the kinds of beings which exist in the universe; how the universe was created, the place of man in this system (the area of concentration most important to this study), definition of terms, etc.

2. Judgments elicited from my informants in the context of linguistic situations other than that of discussion of the Chabad cosmological system. I was interested here in a part of what I am labelling the "world view" of my informants. That is, I was interested in eliciting judgments in which I might discover taxonomic relations of contrast and inclusion and criterial attributes in a small area or domain. The area of inquiry involved here is related to topics dealt with in the portion of Chabad cosmology which was elicited from my informants (specifically those concerning differences which exist within mankind). However different kinds of eliciting questions provided different contexts or situations in which judgments could be made.
What I am ultimately interested in investigating here, is the nature of the relationship if any between the cosmological data and the elicitations of my informants which I refer to as "world view."

The Chabad cosmological system is an explicitly systematized set of ideas which is also part of a religious ideology. My question is about the cognitive status of this system of beliefs: Can there be found in the situational judgments of my informants some structural relationships which parallel distinctions and relationships found in Chabad cosmology? If such structural parallels were to be found, what significance could be ascribed to them? What I specifically mean by "structural parallels" will become apparent in the analysis of my data.

Data Gathering

I have just given a general description of the kinds of data which I gathered. In addition, I stated that I used different kinds of eliciting formats in order to provide different contexts or situations in which judgments were made by my informants. In the case of the data on Chabad cosmology the eliciting format consisted of general questions directed at my informant's understanding of the content of Chabad cosmology. Whereas these questions are not presented in the ethnographic record, the eliciting formats which provide the other contexts for my informants' judgments necessarily are. In these cases
therefore, the basic data gathering method as well as the data itself are in full view as represented in the question-answer format. More will be said about these questions and answers in my introductory remarks to the "world view" section of this paper.

At this point I would like to make a few additional remarks about my informants, the nature of my relationship with them and the nature of the interviewing situation. As I have already mentioned, each of my three informants has had years of intensive formal study in Chabad thought. It is my impression that Chabad thought is something they discuss often, not only with other Lubavitcher Hassidim but, because of the nature of their job, with any other, even non-observant, Jews (perhaps especially with these) who inquire. When I say "because of the nature of their job," I am not just referring to their 'teacher' role as rabbis, but in addition, to their belief in the duty of a Jew to instruct other Jews if he is capable of doing so. The fact that I am Jewish, and the fact that they understood that I was during the time of my research, quite probably had a good deal to do with the quality of the co-operation which I received from my informants. These are extremely busy people with very full schedules. Yet, not only did they find the time to discuss Chabad cosmology with me (something which I feel they did with great pleasure), but they even put up with my questions as an
anthropologist. Indeed, all three informants actually seemed at times very interested in my "world view" questions, to the point that lengthy self interrogations occurred at times which I have included as part of the eliciting format.
Chapter 2

MAN IN CHABAD COSMOLOGY

This part of my study will consist of a discussion of that part of Chabad cosmology which deals with the nature of man. By "nature of man," I mean that which distinguishes 'man' from that which is 'non-man' as well as one kind of man from another.

The system which is presented here is more or less a composite construction from the material given to me orally by my three informants. Much of the material elicited from each of my informants is on the same subject matter and I was, here, able to cross check one account against another for any lack of uniformity, consistency, or for contradictions. In some cases, however, information about different aspects of the cosmological system was elicited from different informants. This is lamentable, for I would have liked to cross check every topic of major importance. However, I feel that the degree of uniformity of understanding in the areas I was able to cross check is great enough to warrant the working assumption that, in these other areas too, uniformity of understanding is probably the same. At any rate, those areas of the cosmological system which bear most importantly on that area of 'world view' which is the ultimate concern.
of this study, are those in which material has been elicited from each of the three informants.

Perhaps the best way to begin a discussion of Chabad cosmology is at the beginning, i.e., with the cosmogony or creation of the cosmos. It is not only a convenient place to begin but, as will be seen, it is difficult to discuss many aspects of the Chabad cosmos and the differences between these aspects without bringing into the picture, the process by which these things were and are created.

Each of my informants, at one time or another, either made reference to the notion of "The Four Worlds of Creation" during the course of discussion of some part of Chabad cosmology, or discussed this subject directly. What is the meaning of this phrase? According to my informants, the universe consists basically of four "worlds." Hebrew and English names were on different occasions used to refer to these "worlds": The first world, Hebrew--Atzilus, English--Emanation; the second world, Hebrew--Briyah, English--Creation; the third world, Hebrew--Yitzirah, English--Formation; the fourth world, Hebrew--Asiyah, English--Action. The nature of these worlds and how they differ one from another is usually discussed by my informants in the context of the cosmogony, for, in addition to being four different places or realms presently existing in the universe, they represent four major steps or stages
in a process which ended in the establishment of this world. Beginning with Atzilus and ending with Asiyah, there are four worlds which differ from one another in their increasing degree of concreteness or materiality (or in their decreasing degree of spirituality if viewed from the opposite end of the scale). In addition, beginning with Atzilus and ending with Asiyah, these worlds represent stages of development in a process in which, as one of my informants put it (informant #2), "nothing becomes something." "Each world is more of a something than the one above it."

This process is here conceived in terms of a series of steps in which an infinite being--God--creates a finite universe by reducing "the intensity of his godliness." The term "tzimtzum" is used to refer to this "reduction." The term literally means "contraction." God contracted himself, producing the "potential for dimension." The emergence of each of the four worlds was preceded by a tzimtzum--a major tzimtzum out of which came the first world, "and then there was another, minor, tzimtzum, a second world, a third world and a fourth world," (informant #2).

Inhabitant Beings of the Four Worlds

According to my informants, the above described process of creation was not simply an occurrence, i.e., it was not something which just happened to take place the way
it did. Rather, it was part of the plan of a purposing--
an intending--creator:

God had to create a physical world. God is a spiritual being, and God had to create physical from spiritual which are two opposite realms. And God could have created with a "big bang" and made, from spiritual, physical. But God wanted that a person should understand what creation was. And God manifested himself in the higher levels and in the lower levels, and in the lower levels until it became a world--a physical world, (informant #3).

This world, Asiyah, then, is the intended goal of the Creator as he worked through the process of creation; and although the physicalness or materiality of each world is a relative matter, each world being a material one when compared to the one above it, a dichotomy is usually drawn and Asiyah is often spoken of as "the material world" or "the physical world." The other member of the dichotomy, the other three worlds, is often referred to as "the three spiritual worlds." In the context of this dichotomy, each member possesses inhabitants of a kind which is exclusive to itself as well as inhabitants of a kind which is common to both.

In the Chabad cosmological system, the inhabitants of "the material world" which are exclusive to itself are arranged into four basic orders of beings: 1) inanimate objects (earth, rocks, tables, chairs, etc.), 2) vegetable life, 3) animal life (exclusive of man, i.e., they are living things which move about but which lack the ability to speak), and 4) Mankind.
Just as the fourth world of Asiyah has its "material" inhabitants which are exclusive to that world, the "spiritual worlds" have their spiritual ones. In this area of Chabad cosmology, it seemed to me that the knowledge which my informants had right at hand--off the tops of their heads so to speak--was very sketchy. Resort to a book was sometimes necessary in order to answer questions of a detailed nature. This may have been due to the possibility that this is a highly esoteric area of knowledge, or perhaps it is knowledge which is of insufficient interest to my informants to require that they retain it in memory even though they have been exposed to it in depth at one time or another. Whatever is the case, what is definitely known by each of my informants is this: Inhabiting the other three worlds are beings which roughly parallel human beings here on the fourth world. These beings are what my informants call "angels." All that I was able to learn about the nature of angels was that they are less concrete, less material, more spiritual counterparts of the human beings which inhabit this world. Being more spiritual, and closer to the essence of God, they possess a greater immediacy of awareness and comprehension of God than do human beings. Human beings, because they are farther away from God's essence and are so encased in materiality, must work much harder for this awareness and comprehension. While angels are inhabitants of the "spiritual worlds" only,
each of the three spiritual worlds possesses its particular kinds of angels. 

Although the four kinds of beings who inhabit the material world are spoken of by my informants as "material beings" when contrasted with the inhabitants of the other worlds, they are ordered in such a way as to represent different degrees of materiality when they are related to one another. 'Inanimate objects' are more material in nature than the three categories of animate beings: 'vegetable life,' 'animal life,' and 'mankind.' The last three categories, in turn, represent increasing levels of spirituality. The more animation an order of beings exhibits, the greater the level of spirituality it is deemed to possess. (Men are considered to be more animate than animals because men can think and speak and animals cannot. Thought and speech are considered to be very high levels of animation.) The connection between animation and spirituality will be discussed in the following section.

Memalle and Sovev

In Chabad theology, 'light' is perhaps the predominant symbol of 'spirituality' or 'godliness.' Different levels of spirituality are very often symbolized by different kinds of light. A very important example of this is the distinction between what my informants call in Hebrew 'memalle' and 'sovev.' Memalle is usually translated as 'the permeating light' or 'the light that fills.' Sovev
is usually translated as 'the light which encompasses' or 'the light which surrounds.' Memalle and sovev are two kinds of light which represent two different levels of 'godliness' which "influence and create the worlds" (informant #1). Memalle was described to me as light which emanates from the essence of God and which permeates, or is contained within, all that has been created.

Memalle does not permeate everything to the same degree, however. There is a connection between the degree of animation which a being exhibits and the amount of memalle that it possesses. Another translation of memalle was given to me by informant #1 as "revealed godliness." The greater the animation the greater the amount of "revealed godliness." In this sense, vegetable life is on a higher spiritual level than 'inanimate objects,' 'animal life' is on a higher level of spirituality than 'vegetable life,' and 'mankind' is on the highest level of spirituality of all the categories of beings inhabiting Asiyah.

Sovev, I find to be a more difficult topic to deal with. The difficulty of this concept seems to me to stem from paradoxes which it creates. Whereas memalle exists in varying degrees in different beings, sovev in one sense does not, but, in another sense does. In the sense that it does, another paradox is created, i.e., beings which exhibit lesser amounts of animation--those which are considered to be more material--are said to have "a higher
level of godliness in them" than do more animate, less
material things.

Sovev is first of all a kind of divine light which
exists at a higher spiritual level than does memalle. It
is, as informant #1 put it, "the light of God that is
closest to the essence of God." In one sense it "surrounds
everything equally." "Like the four walls encompass every-
thing that is in the room, whether it is inanimate or ani-
mate, (in) the same way, so that's the way the light of
sovev makes everything live and influences everything the
same way"(informant #2). If I understand my informants
correctly, however, much of what exists in this world has
its "roots" or origin in sovev (i.e., that which is very
low on the scale of animation--those things which are con-
sidered to be very material in nature). In this sense
things which are very low, in that they are very material
and therefore very distant from the essence of God, possess,
at the same time, a very high level of godliness of spirit-
uality by virtue of the fact that their origin is in a
province which is extremely close to God's essence. The
following analogy was used on a number of occasions by two
of my informants in order to illustrate this notion:

For instance, if you have a wall and the wall falls
down, the stone that is on the top row of the wall
will fall the lowest (informant #2).

In Chabad cosmology, not only are inanimate objects
in one sense more spiritual than any of the other orders of
beings of this world by virtue of the fact that they are rooted in sovev, they are also said to possess more "sustaining power" as a result, i.e., the power which maintains things in existence. Each of the other orders of beings depends ultimately on the order of 'inanimate objects' for its sustaining power: 'vegetable life' depends on the contents of soil and water, 'animal life' depends on 'vegetable life' or other animals, and 'mankind' depends on 'vegetable life' and 'animal life.'

There is, then, in Chabad cosmology, an apparent dualism: spirituality/materiality. In this world, "the material world" which is the goal of creation, for instance, animate beings are more spiritual, less material than inanimate beings in that they (animate beings) possess more memalle--more "revealed godliness." This dualism seems to be abolished, however, when the concept of sovev is brought into the picture. Here the scale is reversed. The lowest becomes the highest. The least animate beings come to possess a higher level of spirituality than the most animate beings. The most material becomes the most godly or spiritual.

Souls

Earlier in this paper I mentioned that in the Chabad cosmological system each of the 'four worlds' possesses both inhabitants which are exclusive to that world as well as inhabitants which are common to all of
them. I have already discussed, to some extent, the inhabitants which are exclusive to the "material world" of Asiyah as well as those which are exclusive to the "three spiritual worlds." Included in this section will be a discussion of those beings which are common to all of the worlds. I will be dealing here with the concept of 'soul' in Chabad cosmology, and, as will be seen, it is a special kind of soul which is thought to inhabit all of the worlds in common.

According to my informants, there are a number of different kinds of souls. First of all, there is the sense of the term in which it is used broadly to mean a kind of vitalizing force or agent:

When you say the word 'soul,' it's a very broad term. Even this chair can have a soul. A soul means life giving power in something. Take the body itself. When a person dies, the body doesn't disintegrate like this (snaps his fingers). The body still exists. The soul has left it. But the body has also its own soul—its life giving power. Everything that gives life to something can be called a soul (informant #2).

In this statement, informant #2 gives the impression that, in at least one sense of the word 'soul,' even inanimate objects have souls. Informant #2 made this point more explicit when I asked him whether animals have souls:

In a sense, they have souls. The godliness permeating them—the permeating light, that's their soul. Memalle . . . the same thing as (is true of) animals, or trees, or stones even—inanimate objects.

Memalle, then—"the permeating light"—is a kind of soul. It is a vitalizing force which exists in all of the
beings of this world in different amounts. Since even inanimate objects possess this kind of soul, there is a sense in which it could be said that even they possess the attribute of life.

In the case of the souls of human beings, things become a little more complicated. Here I was informed of the existence of at least three different kinds of souls: the 'non-Jewish soul,' the 'animal soul' of a Jew, and the 'divine soul' of a Jew. I should begin by explaining that it was only late in the course of my research that any of my informants mentioned the distinction between the 'animal soul' of a Jew and the 'divine soul' of a Jew. Most of the time only the distinction 'Jewish soul'/'non-Jewish soul' was made. I was eventually to discover, however, that it was almost always the 'divine soul' which my informants meant by 'Jewish soul.' Therefore, from here on the term 'Jewish soul,' when found in the context of transcribed interview material, should be interpreted to mean the 'divine soul' of a Jew unless I indicate otherwise.

On the subject of the nature of the 'divine Jewish soul' and its relationship to the kind of soul which is possessed by animals, plants and inanimate objects, i.e., memalle, it is clear that, first of all, for my informants these two kinds of soul are qualitatively different:

... They're two different things. The soul (divine Jewish soul) is part of the essence of God--part of the essence. And memalle is a level of godliness--a
level of divine influence. And soul is unadulterated essence of God... a divine being (that is, the soul is a divine being; informant #2).

Secondly, not only is there an important qualitative difference between memalle and the 'Jewish divine soul,' but this difference is importantly related to the difference between the 'Jewish divine soul' and the 'non-Jewish soul.' While the 'divine Jewish soul' originates in and is considered to be part of the essence of God, non-Jewish souls originate within memalle, a much lower level of 'godliness.' In this view, it seems that the non-Jewish soul, unlike the 'divine Jewish soul,' is basically of the same nature as the souls of animals, vegetable life, and inanimate objects. Like the souls of these beings, the non-Jewish human soul is the life giving, animating force called 'memalle.' This is not to say that Jews do not also possess memalle. To the contrary, as has been discussed above, in Chabad cosmology all of the beings of this world contain within them some amount of it:

You have a world and there is 'godliness' revealed into the world. From this perspective, Jews are more memalle than, let's say, a table (informant #1).

In addition to the 'light' symbolism of memalle and sovev, souls and the differences between them are also discussed in terms of what are called the "klipot" in Hebrew, or, in English, the "shells." Like memalle and sovev, the "shells" represent different levels of spirituality or "godliness." Here, as I understand it, souls come
either from the essence of God, the one translucent shell, or the three opaque shells. As has already been stated, only the "divine soul" of a Jew originates in the essence of God. The "klipot" are the sources of both the "animal soul" of a Jew and the "non-Jewish soul":

The first soul is the animal soul. The animal soul is a lower level of God (than the second or "divine soul"). The animal soul comes from . . . the one translucent shell, not from the three opaque shells that a goy's (non-Jew's) soul comes from . . . this (the three opaque shells) is the lowest level of godliness. It's like the extremity--the external part of God. So it has to be a very low level--the coarse level of godliness. . . . (informant #2).

Although there is a tri-partite distinction between soul sources which represent three different levels of "godliness," a more fundamental "dual" distinction is represented here. Whereas the translucent and opaque klipot apparently differ from one another basically in terms of degree (i.e., in quantitative terms), that which has the essence of God as its source or origin is considered to be qualitatively different from that which comes from the klipot, whether it be the translucent klipah or the opaque klipot. The phrases "the side of holiness" and "the other side" are often used to express this dichotomy:

Well one (the animal soul) comes from klipah, "the other side"--not "the side of holiness," and the divine soul comes from the essence of God. One is sanctity and one is the opposite. . . .

And the non-Jewish soul is . . . from "the other side," not "the side of holiness." It's even further away (than the 'animal soul')--opaque, not translucent (informant #2).
The "divine soul" of a Jew, then, is radically different from any other kind of soul. Only the Jewish "divine soul" has as its source, and is a portion of, the essence of God. All of the other kinds of souls have their origins in what is generally spoken of as much lower "levels of godliness," which are symbolically designated in various ways, e.g., memalle, klipot, "the other side," etc. In addition, only Jewish "divine souls" inhabit the other three worlds as well as this one.

What is the nature of this habitation? According to my informants, Jewish "divine souls" enter this world via the three other worlds. Each soul, on its way down from its source in the essence of God, stops over for some length of time on each of these three worlds. The consequences of these stopovers for the souls are very important. They are responsible for differences between "divine souls" once they are born into this world:

Well all (divine Jewish) souls in their source are the same, but when they come down in this world there are differences, because it goes through all these levels. Some stop off longer at different levels . . . and get more of that level than different levels. In actuality, all (divine Jewish) souls are the same, but in the clothing they take on they become different (informant #3).

Here is informant #2 on the same subject:

. . . Now all the souls go from the essence of God through all four worlds, 'til they come down to this world. It depends how long they stop over in each world. Let's say it's the Bal Shem Tov's soul. Supposed to have been, first of all, a new soul that was never reincarnated here--a very, very pure soul. His soul, let's say, came from the first world, the
highest spiritual world. It went through the other worlds—it fleeted through. The other worlds didn't exercise any of their influence on the Bal Shem Tov's soul. His soul, in other words, came from the highest spiritual world.

Informant #2 is here giving a partial explanation of the special status of the founder of Hassidic Judaism. His divine soul was of a special nature, differing from the souls of most other Jews in (among other things) the amount of "influence" the upper worlds were able to exercise upon it. On its way down to this world it spent very little time in any of the other worlds and took on very little material "clothing" from them. This is, in part, the reason why the Bal Shem Tov was such an especially holy man.

The differences in the amount of material "clothing" possessed by Jewish "divine souls" when they enter this world, are considered to be manifested in differences between the individual Jews possessing these souls in the effort required to avoid sin and to fulfill "mitzvos" (divine commandments). This brings me to some terms used by my informants which relate to this point: 'rusha,' 'behneni,' and 'zaddic.' These terms represent what might be called levels of the 'attained spirituality' (my own phrase) of a Jewish person. They do not refer to the status of a Jew's 'divine' soul in the sense in which I have just been discussing it, i.e., in the sense of the amount of materiality in which it is enclothed when it enters this world. Rather, they seem to refer primarily...
to the behavior of a person, i.e., whether or not a person commits any sins, or, to put it another way, how well he keeps the mitzvos. These categories mark the progress of Jews in their struggle against what was called by one of my informants "the evil inclination." I came upon this concept when I asked this informant whether there existed a notion of the 'devil' in Chabad:

Well there is a devil . . . a person is given a choice between bad and good. This is "the evil inclination" and the "good inclination." The devil is "the evil inclination" a person has. The whole idea of "the evil inclination" is that "the evil inclination" was put there to test a Jew. Not that he should follow "the evil inclination." The whole idea of it is that it's a test. A person should have two ways to go. If a person has one way, I mean, there's no telling if he really means what he is doing . . . If a person has two ways to go and he chooses the right way, this proves that a person is really a person (informant #3).

A 'rusha' is a person who gives into sin at least some of the time. He struggles with his evil inclination but is not successful in overcoming it. According to my informants, 'rusha' is the status possessed by the great majority of Jews, even some of the most observant Hassidim. A 'behneni' does not sin at all. He wins in his struggle with the "evil inclination." 'Behnenim' are extremely rare but they do exist. The 'zaddic' represents the highest level of attained spirituality. Unlike the other two categories, the status of the 'zaddic' is a gift. A Jew who becomes a 'zaddic' does so through his own personal accomplishment or struggle only up to the point of his
becoming a high level of 'behneni.' Once this level has been attained, an individual may or may not receive as a gift from God the status ('condition' is probably a better choice of terms) of a zaddic.

What does this status entail? As one of my informants put it, a zaddic "changes over evil for good." His evil inclinations are replaced by good inclinations. The behavior of both the behneni and the zaddic, it seems, is the same, in the sense that they both do not sin at all. The main difference between them is that whereas the behneni does not sin because he is victorious in his struggle against the "evil inclination," the zaddic does not sin because he no longer has the evil inclination. He no longer has to struggle.

As has been indicated above, differences in the amount of material clothing which 'divine' souls gather as they descend through the upper worlds and into this world do not determine whether the people who become possessors of these souls will be 'rushas,' 'behnenim,' or 'zaddicim.' These differences between souls do have some bearing on the matter, however. In principle, any Jew can become a 'behneni' or ultimately receive as a gift the status of 'zaddic.' What these differences between souls are responsible for are the degree of effort required to achieve these statuses.
The concept of the 'zaddic,' as it turns out, involves a few more complications. In addition to the fact that there are many levels at which an individual Jew can be a zaddic, there is one kind of zaddic which is an exception to what has been said above about this category, in that it is importantly connected with a special kind of 'divine' Jewish soul. This kind of zaddic is called a Rebbe. A Rebbe is considered to exist at the highest level of spirituality possible for a human being. It is not the case with a Rebbe, as it is with other kinds of zaddic, that anyone who has reached a high level of behneni can receive this status as a gift. As was the case with the Bal Shem Tov, all Rebbes are thought to be born with 'divine' souls which are said to be particularly pure, in that they pass through the upper 'spiritual' worlds very quickly, and, therefore, take on very little material clothing. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, the 'divine' soul of a Rebbe is what is referred to as a "general soul":

He is called a (Hebrew phrase), a 'general soul' which has many parts. And the Hassidim of this Rebbe, in other words, have part of his 'general soul'—they have particular parts of his 'general soul.' So they tell the story that there was one Hassid who came to the Lubavitcher Rebbe and said: "I want to be a Hassid." So the Rebbe said, "I see that your soul doesn't belong to me. You have to go to another Hassidic Rebbe and be his Hassid, not mine," (informant #2).
Jews and non-Jews, in the Chabad cosmological system, possess different kinds of souls, and this difference is associated with a notion of special sort of division of labor. Jews and non-Jews have different missions in life.

Jews are considered to be more spiritual than non-Jews primarily by virtue of their possession of the 'divine' soul. Although the 'animal soul' of a Jew is also considered to represent a higher level of 'godliness' than does a non-Jewish soul, it seems to be the possession of the 'divine' soul which makes for the greatest difference between Jews and non-Jews. It is by virtue of their possession of this soul that Jews have a "spiritual mission" in life. Non-Jews are considered to possess a "mission in life" as well. This mission, however, relative to that of Jews, is a non-spiritual or worldly one.

The spiritual mission of a Jew is basically to live in accordance with the laws of the Torah--the revealed word of God. The world of the Torah is the world of the Jews. Non-Jews are not bound by its laws. More specifically, Jews are obligated to fulfill 613 mitzvos or divine commandments which comprise the core of the Torah. These mitzvos involve proscriptions and prescriptions which govern just about every aspect of life. The fulfilling of mitzvos is associated with a notion which I have heard my
informants refer to alternatively as "the making holy of the everyday" or "spiritualizing the material." Actually both of these phrases I find refer to two different but very closely connected ideas. In one sense these phrases refer to the idea that by performing a mitzva a Jew actually "elevates" a material or mundane thing to a spiritual level:

Chasidus says that God gave materialism and the idea of making that materialism spiritual. How do you do that? Make a blessing over it. You take tfilin.  
What are tfilin? Tfalin is only the skin of a cow. Something to make shoes with. (But I use it) for a holy purpose. So I've elevated (the skin) in a spiritual sense, in that (the skin) has become holy. Because the power that God gave to a Jew, that by doing these things, he can elevate these properties--these materialistic properties--that the world has, and make them spiritual (informant #3).  

By performing the mitzvos and thereby making material things spiritual, Jews are considered to be performing actions which have very important cosmic consequences. The establishment of 'the material world,' this world, as it exists in the present, it seems, is not considered the final stage in the process of creation. The world as it now exists is incomplete. It is called the world of 'Tikun' (Tikun literally means 'fixing' or 'repairing' ). A Jew in fulfilling mitzvos participates in the completion of the creation:

... We're in the world of Tikun, but there's a lot of things to be "tikuned" yet ... everything you do ... for instance when you put on tfilin, so the spark that is lying in the physical, material, skin of the animal is being 'fixed'--is being redeemed from evil and being elevated to complete
holiness. So this is the world of Tikun, but yet there are many things that have remained unfixed as yet. The mitzvos that you do with material things are the acts which make the physical world become fixed--actually achieve this completion of Tikun.

What about the other sense of the phrases under discussion? Here, the idea discussed above is extended in the following way. Ordinary everyday activities and the material things involved in those activities are made holy or are elevated to a high spiritual level when these activities are performed with the proper intent, i.e., when they are connected with the performance of mitzvos. Ideally a Jew ought to attempt to perform as many of his everyday activities as possible with the proper intent:

One of the phrases that Hassidim use a lot is a verse from the Bible: "(in Hebrew) In all your ways you should know him." Maimonades was the first one that really emphasized this phrase, this verse in the Bible. And he said, "in all your ways--the way you walk, the way you eat, the way you drink, the way you talk to someone. . . . The way you sleep. . . with what you eat. You make it holy . . . it's the intent. In other words, if you eat because you're hungry--to satisfy a physical need--a necessity, or you eat, you have in mind that the strength you're going to get, the energy you're going to get from the food will enable you to do another Jew a favor, or to pray, or to study Torah, or to do another mitzva. . . ." (informant #2).

Non-Jews have their mitzvos to fulfill as well, although they are only seven in number. As has already been mentioned, the mission of the non-Jews is a non-spiritual (relative to that of the Jews), or worldly one. It might be said that their role is the material complement to the spiritual one of the Jews. This is just the
way the relationship between Jew and non-Jew was represented to me by my informants, i.e., not as an opposing, or conflicting relationship, but rather ideally as a relationship of complementary functions. The idea is that the Jew has his mission, the non-Jew his--both are necessary. On a number of occasions one of my informants would illustrate this relationship through the use of the anatomical analogy of the complementary roles played by, say, the heart and the brain in the functioning of the human body.

Informant #1 summed up the relationship in this way:

Jews are responsible for revealing the fact that the Creator is One in the world. Non-Jews are responsible for creating civilization--making sure that civilization is stable and there are courts of law and things like that.

Another illustration of the different roles of the Jew and the non-Jew was given by informant #2:

Jewish Scriptures belong to the Jewish people. We're expected to learn the Torah. One of their (non-Jews) commandments isn't to study the Torah (that is, they don't have a commandment to study the Torah)--it's the Jewish Torah. So their intelligence would rather be used for other wisdoms: technology, science, medicine, inventions....

The subject of these differences in the roles of Jews and non-Jews should be noted here. It will come up again later in the discussion of structural parallels.

At this point, I would like to point out what seems to me to be an interesting resemblance between the Jew/non-Jew role relationship and the sovev/memalle relationship. As was previously mentioned, sovev is possessed in
its greatest amount by things that are most material. These things are said to be farthest, in this world, from the essence of God, but have their origin in sovev, the level of "godliness" which is closest to God's essence. This is said to be responsible for the fact that they possess more "sustaining power" than do the less material things which depend upon these more material, less animate beings for their sovev. Memalle, on the other hand, is "revealed Godliness" which is possessed in its greatest amounts by the most animate of beings. In the sense that these beings possess more "revealed godliness," they are more spiritual than less animate beings. This seems to me to parallel (although perhaps the resemblance is only superficial) to some degree the relationship between the spiritual and spiritualizing role of the Jew and the complementary worldly, civilization creating and stabilizing role of the non-Jew.

In Chabad cosmology, Jewish man and non-Jewish man are distinguished by the possession of different kinds of souls--souls which are biologically inherited, i.e., Jews are born with Jewish souls and non-Jews are born with non-Jewish souls. This is true with the possibility of a few exceptions. I am referring, of course to the possibility of a non-Jew becoming a Jew via conversion. I say possible exceptions because I was told of at least two views as to what really occurs during the conversion. One theory is
that non-Jews who convert are actually not non-Jews at all, but are in fact "hidden Jews" or "lost Jews" who are finding their way back and through conversion are accepting their true identity. In this case there would be no real exceptions. All Jews, in this case, are Jews by birth.

According to the other theory, non-Jews actually do convert and become Jews. Here it is believed that during the process of conversion a new part is added to the soul of the non-Jew--a Jewish part. In this case, there can be and are a few Jews who are not Jews by birth (at least not biologically speaking--perhaps they are in a spiritual sense, however).

For the most part, then, 'Jew' is considered to be a biologically inherited identity. By virtue of being born with a Jewish soul he has an attachment to the Torah. He may, however, be an individual who doesn't believe in the doctrines of, or participate in, the practices of Judaism. He is still considered to be a Jew. He is a Jew even if he doesn't know that he is a Jew.
Chapter 3

JEW AND NON-JEW: AN ASPECT OF WORLD VIEW

In the cosmology elicited from my informants, two categories of mankind are distinguished, i.e., Jews and non-Jews. In addition there is a rather detailed discussion of the nature of the attributes which distinguish these two categories.

This part of the study is divided into two sets of questions. In the first set, I asked my informants questions intended to elicit terms which contrast with the terms 'Jew' and 'Jewish' other than the general terms 'non-Jew' and 'non-Jewish.' In other words I was interested in how the categories non-Jew and non-Jewish are subdivided. I also asked questions which were intended to elicit terms which designate higher level categories under which the terms 'Jew' and 'Jewish' are classified.

The second set of questions was intended to elicit from my informants some judgments about 'Jewish culture.' The kinds of questions which I put to my informants here, I hoped would elicit responses from which I could discover some features which distinguish for my informants that which is 'Jewish' from that which is 'not-Jewish.'

My question formats were not tightly structured here. Although many of the more important questions were
put to each of my informants in much the same way, they were never framed in exactly the same way. I had to learn in the case of each informant how to frame questions which would elicit the kinds of information which I was seeking. In addition, many of my questions, as has already been mentioned in the introduction to this paper, stimulated a good deal of self interrogation on the part of the informant. This self interrogation in many cases consisted of questions and answers which were appropriate to the kinds of information which I was seeking, and I therefore consider these instances to be part of the eliciting format.

Informant #1

Interviewer: What would you contrast the category 'Jew' with besides the general term 'non-Jew'? Does it contrast just with other religions like Christian, Buddhist and so on, or would you contrast it with other nationalities?

Informant #1: I'd be more inclined to contrast with nations . . . races of people.

Interviewer: Races? Biological categories?

Informant #1: It's very difficult. It's a whole mixture of many, many different . . . racial, so to speak . . . I don't know if it's racial. Perhaps Caucasoid, but you find Jews who are Black . . . It's a spiritual thing, being a Jew. It's not a physical thing. Because he has a Jewish soul, he
has accepted upon himself his role in God's Torah, which is given to the Jewish people. It originated originally as coming from one man and his wife and their children and their grandchildren and branched off like that; however, some new converts also gets [sic] a Jewish soul.

Interviewer: Well, let me ask this question: Take a Jew who lives in Russia--a Russian Jew. Is this Jew both a Russian and a Jew? Or . . .

Informant #1: As far as I'm concerned, he's Jewish.

Interviewer: He's Jewish. In other words, when he leaves Russia, he's no longer . . .

Informant #1: He's a Jew living in Russia.

Interviewer: As opposed to a non-Jewish Russian who is a Russian and if he left Russia, what would he be?

Informant #1: He would be a Russian who left Russia and is now living in . . .

It is clear that informant #1 is less inclined to contrast 'Jew' with what I called in my first question "other religions" (i.e., 'Christians,' 'Buddhists,' 'Moslems,' etc.) than he is with terms which fall under some other general category. He finds it quite difficult, however, to identify this category. His first inclination is 'nations.' He then shifts from 'nations' to 'races of people.' As examples of racial categories he designates
'Caucasoid' and 'Black,' but finds that he cannot include the category 'Jew' in a contrast set along with these terms: "Perhaps Caucasoid, but you find Jews who are Black." Here he rules out the idea that Jews are a race, in this sense, because in this case, Jews cut across racial lines.

It is perhaps not an ungrounded assumption to make, that informant #1's inclination to classify the category 'Jew' under that of 'race' is due to his notion that 'Jew' is an inherited identity, not just in the sense that a Jew inherits group membership, but, in addition, because membership in this group entails that he inherits a spiritual entity, i.e., a Jewish soul. If, therefore, Jews are a race, they are not a race in the sense of possessing common 'physical' characteristics. Rather, they possess a common inherited spiritual characteristic. This, however, evidently caused my informant to question his original inclination to classify Jews as a 'race of people.' Race for him seems to involve the feature of 'physical' trait as well as that of inheritance. In addition, he reflects on the possibility of someone who is not a Jew by birth becoming a Jew by way of conversion—a situation in which a person acquires a Jewish soul instead of inheriting it.

Informant #1 cannot specify with certainty the general category under which the category 'Jew' is
classified when asked to do so. He does, however, respond initially to a question about such a category with certain inclinations, i.e., 'nation' or 'race' is more like what a Jew is than just 'religion.' As has just been discussed, he eventually decided against 'race.'

I asked him some questions which were intended to determine whether or not he contrasts the term 'Jew' or 'Jewish' with terms which I would ordinarily include under the more general category 'nation' or 'national' identity—things like Russian, German, Italian, Japanese, etc. My questions here dealt with Jews as part of the population of various countries throughout the world. Here, informant #1 quite definitely contrasts 'Jews' with terms which designate what I would call national categories. For him a Jew living in Russia, for instance—a Russian Jew—is not a 'Russian' but a 'Jew.' "He is a 'Jew' living in Russia," as opposed to the non-Jewish Russian who is a 'Russian.'

Informant #2

Interviewer: There are people who are Jews, and also people who are not Jews. Can you identify or label some peoples other than Jews? What are the names of some other than Jewish peoples?

Informant #2: Jewish peoples or non-Jewish peoples?
Interviewer: Non-Jewish people. To contrast with Jewish peoples.

Informant #2: You mean like Russian or Chinese and stuff like that? Actually, it's hard to say really, because I don't know, as far as words and definitions and semantics, how you define a Jew or a non-Jew in terms of people, a nation, a race, creed, whatever. But Chinese--maybe comes to mind, Chinese or things like that. But then you can have Chinese Jews. Russians and Jews? But that's not right because you can have Russian Jews, American Jews. There's no country in the world that doesn't have Jews in it, so you can't divorce the Japanese people from Jewish people, say Japanese are non-Jewish and Jews are not Japanese, because they are Japanese--I mean there are Jews that... you know, it's hard to tell. Even Blacks... are Falashes. There are Falashes that are Blacks. Ethiopian Jews that are called Falashes that are Blacks, and they are also Jews. So it would be very hard, as far as 'peoples,' to say one is a non-Jewish people. You know. Is the Russian people a non-Jewish people? Not really. There are three million Russian people, who were born in Russia and whose parents were born in Russia, that are Jews. It's hard to define a non-Jewish people really. I would be hard put to
say that the Australian people is a non-Jewish people or something like that. . . . The definition of Jewish is very simple: One born of a Jewish mother, converted to Judaism according to Jewish law. That's it, fine. . . . As far as peoples, there are the Jewish people, then, I guess, Christians. But is that a people? The Christian people?

Later in the interview.

Interviewer: But there does seem to be the tendency for some Jews (referring to another informant)--not all--but some people who are Jewish. . . . When you talk about contrasting Jews with other people, there is this tendency to start thinking about things such as Russians, Germans, and so on and so forth--not just other religions such as Christianity or Buddhism or something like that.

Informant #2: But how can you say that a Russian or a German is a non-Jew. That's a country--Germany. People who live in Germany are Germans, fine. They could be Jewish Germans, or German Jews. People who live in Russia are Russians. I'm born here, . . . we're born in America, we're American. That doesn't define me completely. There's a question of loyalties or priorities, whether you are first Jewish or American. I am first and foremost--first, last, and middle--Jewish. America happens to be a land where I am sojourning--the land of my exile. I just happen
to have been born here. I have no inner essence that has allegiance to the country that I'm born in.

Okay, maybe some people. But to me, you know, right away, as soon as you think . . . we're so involved with Jewish people and Judaism, that when you say 'German,' that doesn't negate 'Jewish' for me right away. Just the opposite. When I meet somebody, for some reason I'm curious. I'm interested. You know. Where are you born? I want to know. Are you German? Are you Russian? Are you Litvak? By the way, are you Jewish? (answer) 100%. What tradition do you come from? Are you Hassidic? Are you Sephardic? Are you born in North Africa? Are you a Syrian Jew? This means something to me. Egyptian. There are Egyptian Jews. Alexandria was the largest synagogue in the world ever. . . .

Interviewer: But are Jews who are sojourning . . . you used the term sojourning, as if there are some people who are more essentially part of a nation and some people who are sojourning in that country. Do you personally have a feeling that there is a contrast between (for instance) the German who is not Jewish and the German Jew? Are they both equally German? Let's put it that way. Are they equally German?

Informant #2: No. Not at all. Even the German Jew who has a long history of living in Germany.
They've lived there for generations, and he's a very loyal and patriotic German. And he is very assimilated. So much so to the fact that he considers himself a German first and foremost and to be of Jewish persuasion or to have Jewish blood in him or whatever. He doesn't practice anything related, (or) to identify (with) anything Jewish. Whether he knows it or not, or is conscious of it or not, he's still a Jew in exile in Germany. Exiled two thousand years ago from his homeland, Israel. And he's a stranger in a strange land. And the proof of the pudding . . . I mean it's not a nice thing, but it's poetic justice unfortunately, when a tragedy, a catastrophe happens and Jews who were Spaniards for generations in . . . Spain, all of a sudden expelled from their beloved homeland. They thought that their homeland was Spain. The same thing in German. Hitler took a look and saw if your great, grandmother on your left side or your second cousin was Jewish, or something like that, then you're not German anymore. You're Jewish. Well, a non-Jewish German is definitely more German than a Jewish German. By essence of the soul. Besides soul--I mean it's always a bad word. Being. A person's 'being' is connected definitely with his people more than the land that he lives in, and with his homeland. The only reason that a Jew happens to find himself in
Germany, even if it's for a thousand years, is because of the dispersion that took place and of all the prophecies that came true that said that the Jews would be dispersed over the face of the earth. That's why we find ourselves where we are, even if we're here since 1700 in America. (If) We're sixth generation Americans, the only reason we find ourselves here is because of the historical fact that happened which proved all the prophecies that came true--that we were exiled from the 'holy land.'

As was the case with informant #1, informant #2's first inclination, here, was not to contrast 'Jew' with terms which designate 'other religions'; although, in his case I did not ask him directly to give me a more general category under which he would classify 'Jew' as I did do in the case of informant #1. I began my questioning by asking him if he could identify or give names to some peoples other than Jews. He began his answer by tentatively throwing out some terms which first came to mind as terms which might contrast with 'Jew': "You mean Russian or Chinese and stuff like that? Actually, it's hard to say really, because I don't know, as far as words and definitions and semantics, how you define a Jew or a non-Jew in terms of people, nation, race, creed, whatever. But Chinese--maybe comes to mind, Chinese or things like that."
He goes on to interrogate this notion, finding contradicting premises, e.g., there are Chinese Jews, Russian Jews, American Jews, Japanese Jews, etc. He then considers contrasting "the Jewish people" with 'Christians,' but finds some difficulty with that: "But is that a 'people?' The Christian 'people'?' Something of considerable importance should be noted here. Informant #2 questions contrasting "the Jewish people" with 'Christians' because he questions the idea of 'Christians' being a 'people.' Here, then, is a general category under which informant #2 places 'Jew,' i.e., 'a people.' Jews are a 'people,' Christians are not. Although I didn't know it at the time, it seems that when I asked informant #2 to name some people other than Jews, I had established a particular context in which he would discuss the terms which contrast with 'Jew.' As a matter of fact in my question my wording was such that I used the phrase "other peoples" as well as "other people." As will be shown later on in this paper there is another context in which informant #2 does contrast 'Jew' and 'Christian.' The important point here, however, is that there is a context in which they do not contrast.

The factor of context, I think, is very important to an understanding of the direction taken by informant #2 in the above section of interview. After he dealt with the possibility of contrasting "the Jewish people" with
"Christians," I asked informant #2 a question in which I reintroduced the idea of contrasting 'Jews' with such terms as 'Russians,' 'Germans,' etc. His response here was definitely negative: "But how can you say that a Russian or a German is a non-Jew. That's a country--Germany. People who live in Germany are Germans, fine. They could be Jewish Germans, or German Jews. People who live in Russia are Russians." Although we have here a rather firm statement of the non-contrastiveness of the term 'Jews' with such terms as 'Germans,' and 'Russians,' later on in this same section of the interview, he indicates that there is something more to this. He states that there is "a question of loyalties or priorities." Here, using himself as an example, he says that in this regard he is 'Jewish.' He is an 'American' only in that America is the place of his birth--the land where he is "sojourning" and in "exile."

Following these remarks I wondered if this meant that some people are more essentially a part of a nation or country than are others. More specifically, are non-Jewish people of a particular nation (e.g., Germany, Russia, Italy, etc.) and the Jews of these nations equally German or Russian or Italian or whatever it may be? To this his answer was definitely "no." A non-Jewish German, for example is definitely more German than a Jewish German. This by essence of the soul, informant #2 says; although
he amends this, saying 'soul' is a bad choice of words. He chooses 'being' as a better word: "A person's 'being' is connected definitely with his 'people' more than the land that he lives in, and with his homeland."

During the course of the interview, there were a number of shifts of context which account for a situation in which in one case 'Jew' does not contrast with terms like 'German,' 'Russian,' 'Japanese,' etc., and in another these terms are contrastive. In the first case, the context is a discussion of places or regions in which populations of people live--places, regions or political states, where people "come from." In this context a German is a person who lives in (was born in and/or was a longtime resident of) or comes from Germany. A Russian is a person who lives in or comes from Russia. Therefore, if there are Jews living in such places, particularly if they have been existing there for generations, they are considered by informant #2 to be Jews who are also Germans, Russians, Italians, Japanese, etc.

The other context involves a discussion which focuses on the people per se who live in these places, or regions, or political states. In this context when informant #2 talks about 'Germans,' 'Russians,' 'Japanese,' etc., he is speaking in terms of what he calls 'peoples,' i.e., the 'German people,' the 'Russian people,' the 'Japanese people,' etc. In this context 'Jew' does contrast with
'German,' 'Russian,' and 'Japanese.' Throughout the above section of the interview with informant #2, he seems, in both contexts, to mean 'the Jewish people' when using the term 'Jew.' In other words, the shift of context has not to do with whether or not he is using 'Jew' in the sense of a 'people,' but rather with whether he is discussing 'Jews' (i.e., the Jewish people) as the residents of various 'lands' or 'countries' (i.e., Russia or Germany, etc.) or in relation to other 'peoples.'

'Peoples' is a rather vague concept for informant #2. Basically it seems to be a named group the members of which are related to one another by some very fundamental but not clearly definable factor. He designates this factor with terms like 'soul,' or, for him, more preferably, 'being': "A person's 'being' is connected more with his 'people' than with the land he is born in." There is also the notion that a 'people' is connected in some essential way with a geographical region (i.e., a homeland), even when the 'people' or a part of the 'people' is actually residing elsewhere. There are, therefore, some people who are residing in a particular 'land' or 'country' who are less properly connected with that land than are others. In this context, Germans, for example, are the 'people' of Germany, while German Jews are that portion of the 'Jewish people' that are residing in the 'land' or 'country' of Germany. They are that part of 'the Jewish
people' that are in exile in Germany from their own homeland, i.e., Israel.

Informant #3

Interviewer: There's the Jewish people and there are other peoples of the world. Can you identify--give names to--people other than Jews?

Informant #3: What do you mean . . . I mean as far as Jews are concerned, there's Jews and non-Jews. There's really no difference . . . the only difference, I mean, as far as Jews is concerned--I mean there's a Jew . . . and there's a Zionist. Now take before the inception of the Jewish nation, which officially came into being at the beginning to the Torah. Right? So that all people of the world at that time—even like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob technically had the laws from the (Hebrew phrase) "the Sons of Noah." They had to keep eight commandments. That was before such a term 'Jew' existed. Right? The nation, how the Jew came into existence, had 613 commandments. (Other people) had eight commandments. I mean as far as technical Jewish thinking, there's just either a Jew or you're a non-Jew.

Interviewer: But do you consider Jews a nation?

Informant #3: Oh, Jews are definitely a nation, but Jew is a religion. Now, there are two extremes here. A Jew can be born a Jew, and from the day he
is born to the day that he dies, not keep one single commandment. He's still a Jew. Because a Jew is an inherited thing that you're born into. On the other hand, Judaism is just... a Jew in the heart, or you have to be a committed Jew also. You have to have both things together, in other words. So the idea that Jew is a nation is a Zionist approach—that a Jew is a nationality... it has nothing to do with religion. You can be Jewish and not have a religion. You can be Jewish and have a state of Israel, that's enough. That's called Jewish—forget about religion. That's not true. A Jew is a religion, is a way of life, besides a nation. It's many things.

Interviewer: Well would you say that it's a way of life that's connected with a nationhood—a sense of being a people as apart from other people?

Informant #3: Sure. Right. I mean that Jews are like one body. Each Jew is responsible for the other Jew. That sometimes a Jew can get hurt because of what another Jew does. Even in a spiritual sense. Because if you do something wrong it could be you're conscious of what somebody else does. Because Jews together are like one big body. So... if you get hurt in the foot, it hurts your head too, eventually.

Interviewer: But, let's take Jews that are living within particular countries, particular nations—within
the context of particular nations (i.e.), Germany, Poland, Russia, Italy, China. Are these Jews properly also Russian, or Polish, or Italians?

Informant #3: A Jew is a Jew. I mean, there are Italian Jews—it depends where he's born. If I'm born in Boston, I'm a Bostonian. If I'm born in New York, I'm New Yorkian, a Californian, or whatever it is. I mean, it makes no difference really. It doesn't change your Jewishness in any way. You're no more a Jew by being born in Poland or born in Italy, or by being born in France, or whatever it is.

Interviewer: Take Russian Jews. Are they less Russian than non-Jewish Russians?

Informant #3: I know what you mean. I mean, you're asking if a Jew is more loyal to his own country than to Judaism or something like that? . . . Is a Russian Jew more Russian than a Russian non-Jew?

Interviewer: Let's take the Russians not just in the sense of people living in Russia, but in the sense of being some kind of an ethnic-national group of people. Are Russian non-Jews more Russian in that sense than Jews living in Russia?

Informant #3: I see what you mean. No, I think Jews are Jews first and whatever it is later. That's really the way the world has made them. I mean a Jew in Russia is a Jew . . . in Russia. A Jew in Italy
is a Jew in Italy. Not an Italian Jew. He is a Jew in Italy.

Interviewer: Whereas a Russian is a . . .
Informant #3: Is a Russian.
Interviewer: When the Russian Jew leaves Russia . . .
Informant #3: He's a Jew who has left Russia.
Interviewer: He's no longer a Russian?
Informant #3: When you say a Russian Jew, an Italian Jew, I think that the world . . . I mean, it would be nice if there would be Italian Jews and Russian (Jews). The Jews wouldn't stick out like . . . but . . . the way the world looks at it, Jews seem like a sore thumb, whatever he is. It's his fault with this and his fault with that and his fault with this and the Jews did this. I mean that's what the world has made of (Jews). Jews have been expelled from every country imaginable, probably. The world has made them Jew first, and whatever it is second.

From the above section of interview it can be seen that, for informant #3 the term "Jew" is part of a rather complex taxonomic system. He classifies the term 'Jew' under two general categories, i.e., 'nation' and 'religion.' Associated with 'Jew' as a national category is the notion that it is an inherited identity: "A Jew can be born a Jew, and from the day he is born to the day that
he dies, not keep one single commandment. He's still a Jew, because a Jew is an inherited thing that you're born into." As a religious category, on the other hand, the term 'Jew' involves the idea of a commitment to a religious faith, i.e., Judaism. In this sense 'Jew' is an identity associated with the obligation to keep religious commandments. "A Jew is a religion--is a way of life--besides a nation. It is many things."

A Jew is many things, but it seems that, as far as Jewish identity is concerned, it is the factor of inheritance that counts. According to informant #3 (and my other informants as well) a Jew is born a Jew and remains a Jew even if he never participates in religious observance. This Jewish identity, is equivalent to a national one. It is important to point out here, however, that it is not informant #3's view that because a particular Jew does not observe the religious practices of Judaism or believes in any of its beliefs, that this person's Jewish identity is a national identity only and not a religious identity. As will be shown later, one entails the other in the thinking of each of my informants.

When informant #3 says that 'Jews' are a nation, what does he mean? Does the term 'Jew' contrast with terms which designate what I would call nations, i.e., Germans, Poles, Russians, Italians, Chinese, etc.? The responses of informant #3 on this subject are much like
those of informant #2. Whether or not these terms contrast depends on the context in which they are being discussed, As is the case with informant #2, 'Jew' does not contrast with these terms when the context is "where people reside" or "where people come from": "A Jew is a Jew, I mean, there are Italian Jews--it depends where he's born. If I'm born in Boston, I'm a Bostonian. If I'm born in New York, I'm New Yorkian, a California, or whatever it is." Also, as was the case with informant #2 the context shifted when I asked informant #3 whether Russian non-Jews, for instance, were more Russian than Jews living in Russia. In this context 'Jew' does contrast with 'Russian,' 'Italian,' 'German,' etc.: ".. I think Jews are Jews first and whatever it is later. That's really the way the world has made them. I mean, a Jew in Russia is a Jew in Russia. A Jew in Italy is a Jew in Italy. Not an Italian Jew. He is a Jew in Italy." Whereas a Russian is a Russian, an Italian is an Italian and so on.

If my analysis of informant #3's responses to my questions is correct, then for him, 'Jews' are a nationality, like 'Russians,' 'Italians,' 'German,' etc.

General Discussion

Each of my informants contrast the term 'Jew,' at least in one context, with such terms as 'Russian,' 'Italian,' 'Japanese,' 'German,' i.e., such terms as I would include under the major heading of 'nationality' or
'national-ethnic identity' or some such term. For informant #3 'nationality' is also the term which he uses to designate the general category which is subdivided by these terms. Informant #2 uses the term 'people' or 'peoples.' Although informant #1 seems unsure as to the general category under which to classify 'Jew,' his first inclination is to use the term 'nation.' He then jumps to 'race,' or rather 'races of people,' which he then retracts because race for him implies sharing common physical traits which he believes is not the case for Jews. At any rate he does contrast the term 'Jew' with those terms which for my other two informants fall under the general category of 'nations' (nationalities) or 'peoples.' In the case of informants #2 and #3 it was found that 'Jew' does not always contrast with 'Russian,' 'Italian,' 'Japanese,' 'German,' and so on. This I have suggested is due in both cases to the fact that there are different contexts in which these terms are discussed and related. One of these is the context of a discussion of places, regions, political states, etc., where populations of people live or where people come from. In this context a Russian is a person who was born in and/or was a longtime resident of, or comes from the 'land' or 'country' of Germany; and so on. In this context, the population of Jews who have resided in, for instance, Russia for generations, or who have resided in Germany for generations are
respectively Russians and Germans as well as Jews. The context in which 'Jew' does contrast with these other terms is, of course, the one discussed at the beginning of this summary, i.e., a discussion of what informant #2 calls 'peoples,' and what informant #3 calls 'nations' or 'nationalities.' Here we have 'the Jewish people' or 'nation' to be contrasted with 'the Russian people' or 'nation,' 'the German people' or 'nation,' etc. (See Figures 1 and 2.)

In this set of interviews, only informant #3 explicitly classified 'Jew' under the general category 'religion' as well as that of 'nation.' Informant #1 actually stated an inclination to opt for 'nation' when offered the choice of either 'religion' or 'nation' as a general category under which to place 'Jew.' Informant #1 considered the contrasting of 'Jew' with 'Christian' but questioned this contrast because it seemed strange to speak of the Christian 'people' (i.e., Christians as a 'people'), and in this instance what informant #2 meant by 'Jews' was 'the Jewish people.'

As will presently be shown, this does not mean that only informant #3 considers 'Jews' to be a religious group as well as a national group or a 'people.' Indeed, informant #1, although he says in the above interview section that he is inclined to contrast 'Jews' with other 'nations' or "races of people" rather than "other religions," and although he demonstrates his tendency to contrast 'Jews'
### 'PEOPLES' OR 'NATIONS'

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<th>JEWS</th>
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**Figure 1.**

### PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN OR COME FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, REGIONS, STATES

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<th>Russians</th>
<th>Germans</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Italians etc.</th>
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<td>Jews</td>
<td>Non-Jews</td>
<td>Jews</td>
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**Figure 2.**
with terms such as 'Russians,' indicates that, in fact, he does define 'Jews' as a religious group when he says: "It's a spiritual thing, being a Jew. It's not a physical thing. Because he has a Jewish soul, he has accepted upon himself his role in God's Torah, which is given to the Jewish people." In the next section of this study, it will be demonstrated that for all three informants, Jews are a special kind of 'nation' of 'people' as well as a special kind of religious group.

WHAT IS JEWISH CULTURE?

During the course of interviewing with each of my informants, I found myself at one time or another involved in a discussion about "Jewish culture." I found that by getting my informants to discuss this subject, a good deal of light could be thrown on the way in which they view Jews as a 'nation' or 'people' as well as the way in which they view Jews as a religious group. In this section, I will present portions of my interviews on this subject with each of my informants followed, as was the case in the last section, by discussion and analysis.

Informant #2

Informant #2: What is actually Jewish and what isn't? Is culture Jewish? Is there such a thing exists as Jewish culture? Is it something we thought up because we wanted to be like other people, and have
a status and be proud? So we say we have Jewish culture, we have Jewish dance, we have Jewish art. Is there such a thing as Jewish art? Was there ever? You have to look at what is Jewish, not what was in Europe a few hundred years ago. You're talking about Jewish. You're talking about something that's 3000 years old. You have to take a look where's the precedent for this. If the precedent was once upon a time, it lasted for a hundred years and then it disappeared, is that a valid precedent? It's come and gone like all the rest of the non-Jewish 'cultures.'

Later in the interview.

Informant #2: As far as beliefs and values, I can see that as something valid, an existing Jewish thing. If you want to call it ethnicity. But anything else (e.g.), homeland, language, culture . . . In other words common ambition, goals--anything that binds a people together, Jews haven't got. Take a Jew from China, a Jew from Germany, and a Jew from America. What do they have in common? Different language, different culture--they live differently. Take a look at them. What's the resemblance? I mean even physically. What ties them together? They're Jewish. So everyday they get up and they put on tfilin. Once a year they all cry over the destruction of the holy temple. But as far as culture . . . to me always meant
art and music and costume, dress, things like that . . .

If you listen to the Yemenite Sabbath, it sounds Arabic. The "Rabbi's Sons" records from New York sound like a rock group. Israeli or Balkan . . . I don't know if there is such a thing as Jewish music or Jewish art or Jewish costume or dress. What do we have in common? . . . Why should there be any feeling between a Jew in Israel and a Jew in America? I'm born in Jersey. Why should I have any feeling for Israelis? I've met many Israelis. I think that there's definitely a different personality--character--of a Israeli from an American. We're talking about two Jews. Definitely.

Later in the interview.

Interviewer: So being a Jew, or Jewishness, is not a cultural thing from your point of view, although you would use the term 'yidishkeit.' That would have more of a cultural type of definition (wouldn't it)?

Informant #2: Well, yidishkeit to me means study of Torah and observance of mitzvos. That's what means yidishkeit. Then at the same time, I'd say a warmth and a vitality . . . from the Hassidic point of view, let's say. A Hassidic yidishkeit would be the enthusiasm for the particular life style. But yidishkeit is the same all over. You go into every schul, they've got the same book, the same Torah, the same tfilin.
There's no difference there. Same Holidays. The same history that's studied in Hebrew schools all over the world in whatever language. But it's observed differently. There's traditions and customs that are different. Culture, I would say, is different from one country and the next. The "Jewish" culture is different (that is). It's hard for me to say that it comes from Jewish culture. I would say it's more Bukharian culture (for instance). There's a province in Russia called Bukhara. The Bukharian Jews... on Passover, they have a lot of customs--lot of customs--lot of different customs which are very colorful. But the Hagadda is the same. I mean, the book, you know, that you read from. And they've got the same six symbols, and they tell the same story, and it's the same words, only... A little boy knocks at the door with a backpack, and he's dressed up like a non-Jew and they're asking him, "Where are you going?" And he says he's incognito, he's going to Jerusalem... A whole thing over there. And the women scream in a high pitched voice. It's very colorful, very different...

But to say that this is Jewish culture. Okay, it's a culture. It's used in a Jewish circle. But to say flat out that it's Jewish culture, you can't, because this isn't Jewish culture--we don't do that here in America. I would say that this is the way Jews behave
in Yemen, or in Bukhara, or in Georgia. You can't say
this is really Jewish culture. It's hard for me to
relate to the word 'culture' altogether.

Interviewer: That's interesting. The word culture
in itself is hard for you to relate to?

Informant #2: Yeah, when it comes to Jewish culture,
because I can't really understand. What does it mean?
What's Jewish music? Cantorial? In the Talmud there's
no such thing as cantorial. Hassidic? Hassidism is
200 years old. Israeli is from 1948. European? You
listen to a folk song in Jewish and a folk song in Hun-
garian and I think there's a lot of similarity. They're
talking about the same thing, only in different lan-
guages. As far as costume and dress, the long coat that
I wear is a Prince Albert. You find many non-Jewish
people (who wear the same coat). Tzitzis¹³ is differ-
ent. Tzitzis is not culture. It's not that they wear
it in one country and not in the next. It's not Jewish
culture, it says in the "Good Book." If culture is
dictated by Torah—if our religion is culture—I can
relate to that. But culture, the way I understand it,
is probably music, art, dress, mode of living. That,
I can't really see. Yemenites wear a black cap, . . .
and they sit on the floor, and the music is different.
That's why it's hard for me to relate to 'Jewish cul-
ture.' I mean it's hard for me to say that the Jews
have a culture. They only have a religion. And maybe the religion has in it things that you could call culture, because of their dress, let's say a beard, or the tsitsis, or a yarmulka. . . . But it comes from the religion. Why is culture substituted for the word religion. . . . That's why it's hard for me to relate to the word culture.

Informant #2 begins by asking the rhetorical questions: "What is actually Jewish? Is culture Jewish? Is there such a thing as Jewish culture?" His answer to the last two questions is "no," unless we speak of the Jewish religion as culture, i.e., that which "is dictated by the Torah."

He seems to use the word 'culture' in roughly the same way as it is used by many anthropologists, although, of course, even as an anthropological term it is very controversial and is used in different ways by different anthropologists. At any rate, he enumerates a number of kinds of things which he would include under this label, e.g., the mode of dress, the musical and art styles, the dance associated with particular groups of people; he also uses the phrase 'mode of living.' Language and even personality seem to be included by informant #2 under 'culture,' or at least associated with it in some way. Again, he uses terms like 'traditions' and 'customs' in association with the term 'culture.'
For informant #2, the above kinds of things—'cultural things'—are not 'Jewish things.' A number of ideas are expressed here. He is saying first of all that there is no 'culture' common to the Jewish 'people.' Secondly, things which some people associate with Jews as 'Jewish culture' are actually aspects of the culture of the people in whose country the Jews are living. Thirdly, anything 'Jewish' must be that which is "dictated by the Torah"—that which derives from the Jewish religion. This alone is what is common to Jews all over the world. He concedes that there are some things which are derived from the religion which might be characterized as 'cultural,' i.e., things like certain elements of dress—"let's say a beard, or the tzitzis, or a yarmulka." Even so, he is not comfortable with such a characterization. 'Jewish religion' and 'culture' are terms which, for him, refer to two different realms.

Informant #3

Interviewer: Is there such a thing as Jewish culture?

Informant #3: You might find different ways of dressing—Italian Jews, French Jews, Russian Jews. They're different ways of dressing. They definitely are. I mean, the laws have never been changed, but certain things have nothing to do with laws at all, like dressing or things like that. I mean, within the
dress code of Jewish law, you know, nothing immodest (must be worn). But, I mean, as far as that you wear a black coat with a split in the back or you wear a black coat without a split in the back . . . or you wear those fur hats, they all wear those fur hats (Jews and non-Jews). That depends on which part of the world you're from.

Interviewer: So that in itself is not . . . in other words, the fur hat, the Hassidic . . .

Informant #3: Is not a law—it is not an express law. You don't wear it, but a lot of people wear it. It's a custom already—picked up from the nobility in whatever part of the world the Jews lived.

Interviewer: Would you consider it properly Jewish culture then, or would you consider it part of Russian culture, say, or Polish culture that has been taken on.

Informant #3: Well it's been taken on, but it became Jewish, I mean, because the great Jewish leaders have taken it on. Again, laws have never been taken on from strange countries, because a law is a law is a law. But as far as, you know, these outward things that have nothing to do with law at all . . . the law was the law no matter where you live—in Russia, in France, in Italy. But like the mode of dress . . .

Interviewer: What about food? Things like that?

Informant #3: Well as far as Jewish cooking and dishes . . . I mean that's done in each country. Again,
I mean, sure, a Jew born in Italy is different from a Jew born in America, and a Jew born in Israel is different from a Jew born in Russia. A Russian has its culture or its ethnicity or whatever you want to call it. I mean, a person is born in that environment, he's just got that environment. But a Jew never changes as far as the same (Torah?) is given in Russia and Italy and all over the place.

Interviewer: But these different things that in some people's minds are associated with Jewish culture--(e.g.) maybe some people have only been exposed to Ashkenazic Jewish culture . . . that for them is Jewish culture. Lox and bagels, you know, things like that. Or special manner of dress and so on. Do you consider that to be authentically Jewish culture or do you consider that to be of the other culture that has been . . .

Informant #3: I mean, it's definitely taken from the other culture, no question about it. But it becomes Jewish. I mean, you can't say lox and bagels is Jewish. You're talking about, let's say, a way of dress. I'll give you an example. Lox and bagels, I mean, that's not Jewish. I mean, Jews, they like lox and bagels but not . . . Like say the black coats we wear. We wear black coats specifically with a split up the back. You have other Hassidic groups who wear without the split up the back. It hasn't been adopted
into the Jewish code, but it has become part of Jewish life... Not that there would be something wrong with wearing something without a split up the back. Nobody would excommunicate a Lubavitcher Hassid who was wearing a thing without a split up the back. But the custom is that we have the split up the back.

Interviewer: But the only thing that you would consider authentically Jewish...

Informant #3: Would be the Torah, Laws.

Interviewer: Everything else is innovations of...

Informant #3: I wouldn't say everything else. I mean, that's a very broad term to use, 'everything else.' There are certain things that have been incorporated into the Jewish culture more or less... I mean, it doesn't have anything to do with any type of law or any type of custom that has been handed down the generations and hasn't been changed--because we went to a different country.

Informant #3 doesn't have as clearly defined a notion of 'culture' as does informant #2. He uses the term itself only once in the interview, although he responds to my questions about "Jewish culture" in ways that indicate that he understands the word to mean at least some of the things which it means for informant #2. He doesn't give many examples. As a matter of fact he keeps reverting to the one example of 'modes of dress.' However, he uses this
as an example of those kinds of things which have nothing to do with Jewish law. 'Custom' is a word he uses for these things, as when he says, "(The fur hat) is not an express law. You don't wear it, but a lot of people wear it. It's a custom already--picked up from the nobility in whatever part of the world the Jews lived."

Again, things like this, e.g., customs, "outward things which have nothing to do with law (Jewish) at all," are considered by informant #3 to have been 'taken on' from the peoples in whose countries the Jews reside: ". . . , a person born in that environment, he's just got that environment. But a Jew never changes as far as the same Torah is given in Russia and Italy and all over the place." This is in accord with informant #2's view. Informant #3, however, adds that this "taken on" culture "becomes Jewish." "It hasn't been adopted into Jewish code, but it has become part of Jewish life." This, on the face of it, seems counter to the point of view of informant #2. For him, that the adopted custom becomes part of 'Jewish life' in a particular country does not qualify it to be considered 'Jewish.' For him 'only' that which comes from the religion--that is part of Jewish code--is what is 'Jewish.'

On the other hand, informant #3 does say that what he considers to be authentically Jewish is that which comes from the Jewish religion--"Torah, laws." It seems, here, that the difference between informants #2 and #3 on what
they would consider to be 'Jewish' is only superficial. For informant #3 the cultural items which are taken on by different groups of Jews living in different countries become part of the 'Jewish life' of these groups. These items, customs, or whatever, therefore become 'Jewish' in informant #3's view, but only in a sense. They are not 'authentically' Jewish. This ('authentically Jewish') only applies to Jewish religious tradition "which has been handed down the generations and hasn't been changed," and is the same for Jews in every part of the world. The "taken on" items become Jewish "more or less." Informant #2 uses 'Jewish' only in the sense of what is common to Jews throughout the world, and therefore excludes from this category elements of borrowed culture which becomes part of the way of life of a particular Jewish group. For informant #3 'Jewish' can mean what is peculiar to a particular group of Jews as well as what is common to all Jews. However, in addition he looks upon only that which is common to all Jews, i.e., that which comes from the Torah, as authentically 'Jewish.' Here, I think, is where the disagreement between these two informants dissolves.

Informant #1

Interviewer: Is there such a thing as Jewish culture?

Informant #1: Sure. Comes from the mitzvos.
Interviewer: But that's all . . .?

Informant #1: There's no culture except from the mitzvos.

Interviewer: There are other things that some people might call Jewish culture, such as lox and bagels, and . . . they call it Ashkenazic Jewish culture . . .

Informant #1: The only real Jewish culture comes from the mitzvos. The rest is just considered to be lost as soon as they leave the place they're in . . . Unless it becomes a way to honor the Shabas (Sabbath) or something like that. For example, you have gefilte fish. The reason you have gefilte fish is because Jews are not allowed to separate non-eatable food from eatable food. So they took the bones out for the Shabas and made this fish cake . . . So that's a cultural thing which came out of the mitzvos. That's the only thing that'll last.

Interviewer: Well, take some of the clothing . . . for instance the fedora hat or the . . .

Informant #1: That's just for the times, because in Russia they had a wide brimmed hat.

Interviewer: So it's just a matter of tradition.

Informant #1: If the Rebbe wears this kind of hat most Hassidim wear it. It's not a very deep thing. Many Hassidim don't wear it. They wear just this regular wide brimmed hat. I'm sure twenty years ago
they didn't even wear those. They wore different types of hats.

Interviewer: But is that a case of borrowing something from another culture, making it a regular part of the habit, or does it become Jewish?

Informant #1: Nowadays it's become Jewish. You know, nobody else does it anymore. A Jew has to have a hat. Whatever hat he is going to have... It's the most practical for the Hassidim to wear this type of hat, I suppose. They continue wearing them. The long black coats are for modesty. A long cloak, a long garb. It's for modesty.

Interviewer: Is there some kind of notion of the cultural borrowings from other countries that Jews take on... that this culture is material and therefore not Jewish, whereas the actual mitzvos which is Jewish culture is spiritual?

Informant #1: Jews have to use the materials at hand to do their mitzvos. If the materials at hand are a function of the non-Jewish culture around them, they will use non-Jewish culture to perform their mitzvos. In other words, a Jew has to dress modestly. If the modest dress is a Prince Albert coat, the person has to wear a Prince Albert coat. If it's an Arab robe, they wear an Arab robe.
For informant #1 there is no equivocation. There is such a thing as Jewish culture. He is really not taking an opposing view to informant #2, however. He is actually saying the same things; for, in his view "it (Jewish culture) comes from the mitzvos," i.e., from the religious commandments of the Torah. This is the only real Jewish culture. Everything else which might be referred to by some people as Jewish culture, e.g., dress styles, "Jewish food" (lox and bagels, knishes for example), "Ashkenazic Jewish culture," etc., he says "is just considered to be lost as soon as they leave the place they're in." Again, "Jews have to use the materials at hand to do their mitzvos. If the materials at hand are a function of the non-Jewish culture around them, they will use non-Jewish culture to perform their mitzvos. In other words, a Jew has to dress modestly. If the modest dress is a Prince Albert coat, the person has to wear a Prince Albert coat. If it's an Arab robe, they wear an Arab robe."

Here he is in agreement with my other informants in the view that that part of Jewish life which does not come from Jewish religious tradition are actually aspects of the culture of the people in whose country the Jews are living. These things are not "really" Jewish. So far, I think it is clear that the only difference between the views of informant #2 and informant #1 is that informant #1 finds no difficulty in calling things which come from the
Jewish religion "culture." In addition, as is the case with informant #3, informant #1 is not as strict with the use of "Jewish" as informant #2 is. Something which is borrowed from another culture can become "Jewish": "Nowadays it's become Jewish. You know, nobody else does it anymore." As is the case with informant #3, however, this kind of "Jewish" thing is not a "real" or "authentic" "Jewish" thing. What is really Jewish is that which is common to all Jews throughout the world--that which is not "lost as soon as they leave the place they're in," i.e., the Jewish religion.

**General Discussion**

I think that it can now be safely said that each of my informants views Jews to be a 'nation' or a 'people,' the nationhood or peoplehood of which cannot be separated from the Jewish religion. Conversely, the Jewish religion is viewed as something which only the 'nation' or 'people' called Jews can possess. In this view, Jews are both a special kind of religious group as well as a special kind of 'nation' or 'people.'

The Jewish religion is the only factor that, for my informants, binds the Jews together as a 'people.' Jews are born into the Jewish religion and remain Jews, in a religious sense, even if they are not believing, practicing Jews.\(^{14}\) On this view, there can really be no such thing as a secular Jew, i.e., a Jew who, say, is a
Jew 'ethnically' or 'nationally,' etc., but not religiously. This is because Jews are 'ethnically' or 'nationally' Jews by virtue of their spiritual relation to the Torah alone. Anything else that is associated with Jews, is considered to be conditioned by the various regions in which Jews live. These things (customs, art, musical styles, dress, etc.) are thought not really or authentically to be Jewish. They really belong to the people in whose region or country the Jews are living. They have been taken on--borrowed--from "strange countries" as informant #3 put it. If there is anything which can really be called Jewish culture, it is derived from the commandments of the Torah. (See Figure 3.)

In the world view of each of my three informants, then, the Jews are a special 'people' or 'nation' which has a special relationship with other 'peoples' or 'nations.' As informant #1 eloquently put it, "Jews have to use the materials at hand to perform their mitzvos. If the materials at hand are a function of non-Jewish culture, they will use non-Jewish culture to perform their mitzvos."

The structure of this relationship in the world view of my informants is important to note. Its significance with respect to that part of Chabad cosmology which deals with the distinction between Jews and non-Jews and their respective roles, will be discussed in the conclusion to this study.
### Elements of the Way of Life or "Culture" of a Jewish Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JEWISH (or authentically Jewish)</th>
<th>NON-JEWISH (or not authentically Jewish)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All that is part of or dictated by the Torah and only that.</td>
<td>All that which is not dictated by the Torah. Tends to be thought of as &quot;taken on&quot; or adopted from the non-Jewish 'people' in whose country Jews are living. Includes such things as manner of dress, musical forms, dance forms, architecture, cooking styles, even personality traits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Figure 3.
Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

As was stated in the introduction, the major objective of this study is to determine whether there can be found in what I have termed the world view of my informants, any structural relationships which parallel relationships found in Chabad cosmology. In the course of the development of this study, such a parallel has become discernible. I would now like to explicate these parallel structures after which I will discuss their possible significance.

First of all, it has been demonstrated that in the "world view" of my informants, the term 'Jew' belongs to a contrast set which includes terms like 'Germans,' 'Russians,' Japanese,' etc. This contrast set subdivides a more general category which my informants label 'nations' or people,

i.e., 'Jew' is treated here as an ethnic category. It has also been demonstrated that my informants classify 'Jews' as a religious group. The Jewish religion, however, is viewed to be the embodiment of Jewish 'peoplehood' or 'nationhood,' i.e., the Jews are a 'people' or 'nation' by virtue of their common connection with the mitzvos of the Torah. In the world view of my informants, this fact distinguishes 'Jews' as a 'people' or 'nation' from all other 'peoples.' The peoplehood or nationhood of
all of the other 'peoples' which are designated by terms which are contrastive with 'Jews,' i.e., Germans, Italians, Russians, Japanese, etc., is embodied by some feature or set of features other than common connection with the mitzvos of the Torah. I wasn't able to elicit responses from my informants from which I was able to discover exactly what those other features are. However, as will be discussed momentarily, it has been demonstrated that there are certain kinds of things which are considered to be properly associated with 'peoples' other than Jews in that these kinds of things originate with them. Related to this point is the relationship between the 'Jewish people' and the 'non-Jewish peoples' which has been shown in the above section to exist in the world view of my informants. This relationship, I think, parallels in an interesting way the structure of the relationship between the role of the Jew and the role of the non-Jew in the cosmological system.

In the cosmology, the spiritual mission of the Jews and the material worldly mission of the non-Jews form a complementary relationship. Jews fulfill the mitzvos and spiritualize the material world and non-Jews "are responsible for creating civilization--making sure civilization is stable." In the world view of my informants the relationship between the Jewish people and the other peoples of the world involves a parallel complementary relationship. I am
referring to the tendency of my informants to consider only that which "comes from the religion"—that which is derived from the laws of the Torah—to be 'authentically' or in a 'real' sense, 'Jewish.' Anything else which might be part of Jewish life, i.e., mode of dress, art, music, dance, cooking styles, language, even personality traits, is considered to be "taken on" or adopted from the "culture" of the people in whose country the Jews are living. It might be said to "become Jewish" in the sense of becoming part of Jewish life, but it is not "really" Jewish. It is more Russian, or German, or Yemenite, etc.

Although there seems here to be a strikingly close fit between an area of the cosmological system and an area of the world view of my informants, such a fit doesn't, in itself, justify the inference that there is a causal relationship between the two. That is, it cannot, it seems to me, be inferred from this demonstration of a structural parallel alone that the relationship found in the cosmology determines or molds the relationship found in the world view. As a matter of fact, there may be many Jews (and non-Jews for that matter), both religious and non-religious, who have never been exposed to Chabad ideology, but whose world views might exhibit a structural relationship which is identical with the structural relationship which has just been shown to exist in the world views of my informants. It may well be that
my informants possessed these elements in their world views even before they had any exposure to the cosmological system.¹⁶

I cannot dismiss the suspicion, however, that the cosmological system does at least have some influence on this aspect of their world view, i.e., that it at least has a reenforcing effect. There is some evidence in the interview record to justify this suspicion, i.e., there are a number of cases in which ideas which are definitely elements of the cosmological system show up in the responses to 'world view' questions. As an example, informant #3, when he dismisses an initial inclination to classify 'Jews' under the more general category, 'race,' says this: "It's a spiritual thing, being a Jew. It's not a physical thing. Because he has a Jewish soul, he has accepted upon himself God's Torah, which is given to the Jewish people." Another example is when informant #1 says: "Well a non-Jewish German is definitely more German than a Jewish German. By essence of the soul."

I do not consider these instances to support an hypothesis that, with respect to the particular structural parallels which I have been discussing, the cosmology is determining the world view. They are, however, cases of the use of elements of the cosmological system as criterial attributes in the situational judgments of my informants and therefore, in accordance with the definitions given
at the beginning of this paper, they constitute some evidence that elements of the cosmology play a part in the organization of at least some part of the world views of my informants. When this evidence is added to the demonstration of parallel structures, the idea that the cosmological system influences the 'Jewish people'/other peoples' relationship in the world view of my informants, it seems to me, receives some support.
FOOTNOTES

1 The -im suffix is a Hebrew morpheme indicating plurality.

2 Chabad is an acronym made of the first letters of the words "chochmah," "binah," and "das." These words designate what are called the three "intellectual soul powers."

3 Luria was a great 16th century Kabbalist.

4 Names for some of these angels were mentioned, however; the informants with whom I discussed this subject were unable at the time to tell me which world possesses which angel. The following names of angels were reported to me: "Fiery Angels," "Abstract Intellects," "Holy Animals."

5 The relationship between sovev and these two kinds of souls remains somewhat unclear to me. Neither of these two souls originate in sovev, although the "divine Jewish" soul was said to come through sovev and to become "enclothed" within memalle after originating in the "essence of God." The "non-Jewish" soul, as has just been discussed, originates in memalle. This seems to indicate that the "divine Jewish" soul possesses a closer relationship to sovev than does the "non-Jewish" soul; however, the "divine Jewish" soul was not said to be any more a part of sovev than is the "non-Jewish" soul. It will be remembered that the "essence of God," "sovev," and "memalle" represent levels of "godliness": the "essence of God" is the highest level of divinity--pure, unadulterated "godliness"; sovev is the next level in the hierarchy--the level which is closest to "God's essence"; and then comes memalle. An apparent problem here is that, according to my informants, that which is hierarchically lower in this world, i.e., that which is most material, least spiritual, originates within a realm which is closer to "God's essence." However, it is also stated that the "divine Jewish" soul is, in this world, more spiritual than is the "non-Jewish" soul.

6 Another interpretation of the phrase "changes evil for good" was offered by one of my informants. According to him this phrase refers to a persons utilizing an impulse or behavioral trait, which is in itself evil, for some good purpose.
The Rebbe as the spiritual leader of a Hassidic has been briefly discussed in the introduction.

Hassidic mystical philosophy.

Tfilin are leather cases containing quotations from the Pentateuch (the Five Books of Moses). They are worn on the forehead and on one arm. To put on tfilin is considered a mitsvah.

This does not mean that Jews are not supposed to participate in these fields, but rather that if they are to be dealt in at all, they are only of secondary concern. The first concern is the wisdom of the Torah.

See footnote 5.

Earlier these commandments were said to number seven. I am not sure what this discrepancy means.

Tzitzis are ritual fringes worn by orthodox Jewish males on the corners of a short jacket-like under garment.

Although in the above portions of the interview only informant #3 explicitly mentions this idea, in fact, this is a matter of doctrine which is well understood by each of my informants. It is an idea that was expressed on a number of occasions by one informant or another.

The reader should be reminded here that these contrastive relations between 'Jews' and terms such as 'Germans,' 'Russians,' etc. are not present (at least for two of my informants) when the context of discussion is the geographical region or country in which people live or from which they come.

I will present here some important respects in which this area of my wife's world view differs from the one described in this study. My wife describes herself as a non-religious Jew.

A) My wife contrasts 'Jews' with the terms 'Italians,' 'Poles,' 'Irish' when she subdivides the higher level category termed 'ethnic groups in America.' When discussing 'Jews' living in other countries (Germany, France, Russia, Italy) however, her tendency is not to contrast 'Jews' with the terms 'Germans,' 'French,' 'Russians,' 'Italians,' even when she is using these terms as ethnic or cultural designations. For example, she classifies both 'Jews' and 'Frenchmen' as ethnic groups,
but French Jews are no less French than non-Jewish Frenchmen.

B) Jewish ethnicity, for my wife, is not embodied by a spiritual attachment which Jews have with the Torah, as is the view of my Lubavitcher informants. Rather, it involves identification with what she calls Jewish "cultural heritage." This "cultural heritage" includes Jewish religious beliefs and practices in addition to many other things which are equally 'Jewish.' Jewish ethnicity here is not viewed to be a particularly different order of thing than, for instance, French ethnicity, German ethnicity, Russian ethnicity, or Italian ethnicity. For my Lubavitcher informants, on the other hand, Jewish ethnicity does appear to be viewed as having a special nature.

C) She does not view some elements of Jewish culture as being "really Jewish" or authentically Jewish while others are not; although she does view a great many elements of Jewish culture to have been adopted from non-Jewish cultural traditions. If, for instance, certain dance forms which she classifies as 'Jewish'; or, if certain Yiddish melodies are based on the melodies of Russian drinking songs, they are still fully 'Jewish.' Things such as these my wife sees as no less a part of Jewish culture than are Jewish religious practices and beliefs and therefore as no less 'Jewish.' She does not see the Torah as being the source from which all that is 'really' Jewish is derived. The distinction is not made between that which is inherently Jewish and that which is made Jewish.
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