Emily Rose, Elie Wiesel, Ron Garet, Anita and George Lasry, Gila Raumus-Rauch, David Gordis, Jeff Spitzer, Walter and Tova Reich, Ronit Meroz, Peter Stark, Shulamith, Hephzibah, Tiferet, and Haninah Levine.

1. *Tosefta, "Baba Metsia,"* Ch. 11; *Palestinian Talmud, "Nedarim,"* ch. 11; *Babylonian Talmud, "Nedarim,"* 80b–81a.

2. *"Baba Metsia,"* 62b.

3. Is it conceivable that this emphasis on endangerment could undermine the moral obligation of rescue in situations such as the Holocaust? It well might raise questions about the 1953 Israeli Parliamentary legislated definition of a "righteous gentile" that emphasizes the mortal risk taken by the rescuer as a qualification for particular approbation. Moreover, could it be that the Jews would maintain a double moral standard, as they were so often accused of doing by their enemies, in harboring expectations for self-sacrificial and heroic rescue from the "Town beyond the Wall" while advocating self-preservation and the most prudent risk taking where Jews are involved? In this particular discussion, there is no distinction being made between obligations to a Jew and non-Jew; where there is, the rabbis ultimately obliterate that distinction to advance concordial relations. It could be that the reticence towards self-sacrifice weighs so heavily, precisely in situations such as "two walking in the desert," where the threat comes from a *force majeure.* But in observing humanly perpetrated murder, the standard of obligation between human beings, even towards the murderer, is such that in order to stop the slaughter, the rescuer falls under different obligations. These might include the rules of preemptive response to the *"rodef,"* the person threatening another with violence or even an extension of the very few situations in which an individual is obligated to act self-sacrificially, in order to avert murder, where the rule "he must risk being killed but not transgress" applies.

4. While the rabbis narrowed the circumstances under which a person is obligated to surrender life for principle, the second-century religious persecutions, perpetrated by Roman rulers whom Akiva sought to defy, justified his self-sacrifice in the acceptable rabbinic terms.

5. This again was the situation in medieval Ashkenaz when the rabbis expressed reticence towards martyrdom. See Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance* (New York: Schocken Books, 1962), pp. 82–92.

6. See, for example, the study of Melanesian millennial movements by Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968).

NEHEMIA POLEN

Coming of Age in Kozienice: Malkah Shapiro's Memoir of Youth in the Sacred Space of a Hasidic Zaddik

Professor Elie Wiesel has shown us how to face with unblinking candor, with dignity and courage, the enormity of what has been lost. He has also shown us how to treasure that which survives, even if only in memory. He has been an illuminating teacher, a wise mentor, and an inspiring guide. It is a signal privilege to dedicate this essay in his honor.

CHILDHOOD AND THE RECOVERY OF SACRED SPACE

Childhood memories are intimately intertwined with our sense of self, our feeling of place in the world. Especially for the sensitive soul, the persons, locations, and moods of childhood continue to haunt us, to form and shape our perspectives on life, our ways of looking at and perceiving the lifeworld we inhabit.[1] But what if the place of one's childhood no longer exists? How does the mature individual continue to nurture a sense of one's place in the world when the locus of one's youth is no longer physically present? For some individuals this issue arises because the bucolic settings of childhood were overtaken by the encroachment of industry and technological civilization. But there are those for whom the question is even more painful, since the disappearance of the sites of youthful memories was caused by malevolent acts of willful destruction. For such individuals, the reconstitution of their childhood memories is not only retrieval of the early parts of the self; it is an act of conjuration, the recrea-

tion of a world destroyed, a religious statement of faith, an imaginative reconstruction of sacred space.

If this is so for individuals, it is, mutatis mutandis, true for nations and peoples, especially the Jewish people. The Bible can be viewed as the record of humankind's diverse and multifaceted relationship to place.[2] On the one hand, Genesis 1 emphasizes the protean universality of human dominance over the earth as a whole. But starting with Genesis 2, where God places the earthling in one particular location, from which in short order the human pair is exiled, the human condition is a story of the quest for home, for the place of one's origins. Abraham's journey from his homeland in quest of the land that God will show him is a reversal of the natural desire to live in one's birthplace and to embrace one's patrimony. At the same time, it enables Abraham and his descendents to replace a blood-and-soil ideology with a more spiritual notion of acquiring one's land in response to the divine Word. The entire narrative sweep of the Bible centers on this Land, but much of the action takes place outside of it: in Egypt, in Babylonia, in the desert.

The book of Genesis retains traces of an archaic ideology of sacred place expressed by the Hebrew word *makom,* denoting a special location, typically a site of cultic activity.[3] The *makom* is a center of sacred energy, a window that opens to heaven.[4] Typically associated with events in the lives of the patriarchs, the *makom* invokes the memories of the great individual who lived or worshiped there, and enables his descendents to recall those memories and access that sacred energy.

A different notion of sacred place is developed in the book of Deuteronomy. There it is stressed that the place that is to be the central site of worship in the Land is sacred not because of any tellurian power or ancient associations, but because it is the "place that the Lord your God will choose to cause His name to dwell there" (12:11). That is, the chosen place (Jerusalem, as we will be told subsequently in Scripture) is unique not because of any inherent quality of place, but simply because God has chosen it. This philosophical notion is clearly in some tension with the

idea of *makom* in Genesis, which suggests that certain sites are endowed with essential sacred qualities.

Yet another perspective on sacred place might more properly be called "sacred space," and is not fixed to a particular location at all. Sacred space is movable, a portable domain created by partitions which are erected by human agency, eventually to be disassembled and reerected somewhere else. The prime example of this kind of sacred space is the desert Tabernacle of the Books of Exodus and Leviticus. Here too there is a contrast to the *makom* of Genesis, where a sacred spot is discovered, encountered, chanced or stumbled upon (consider Jacob at Bethel), but is never created by humans. On the other hand, Exodus and Leviticus largely avoid the word *makom,* but repeat again and again the word *va-ya'as* in its grammatical variations: he made, they made, Israel made, Bezalel made. It is humans who erect the partitions which circumscribe the boundaries of sacred space, and who fashion the utensils which furnish it.

All of these notions of sacred place/space converge in the biblical portrait of Jerusalem, and especially in the Temple erected by Solomon, which manages to combine aspects of deuteronomic theology of divine choice, with *makom*/place theology rooted in Genesis, along with a floor plan whose basic schematic design is modeled after the desert Tabernacle of Exodus and Leviticus. Given the cumulative force of these perspectives, combined with the theology of Davidic kingship, it is not hard to see why many people in Judea considered the Temple eternal and impregnable to attack, and why the events of 587 were seen as an incomprehensible disaster.

Along with the return to Zion and the slow and ultimately incomplete restoration of the Second Commonwealth, a new theology arose in which the notion of sacred space was projected, at least in part, onto the Torah scroll itself. By the time of the rabbinic period, it was clear that Jews dwelled in their sacred books as much as in their nominal places of residence. They settled in and built homes within the extraterritorial space provided by Scripture and tradition. If the content of their religion consisted

of the words inscribed in black ink on parchment and paper in scrolls and books, their geographical borders were the white margins surrounding the words.[5]

These diverse notions of sacred space/place are all part of the heritage of classical Judaism. The kabbalistic and hasidic traditions add one very significant feature to this picture: the idea of the zaddik as sacred center.[6] The hasidic master is the pivot around which the world turns, the bridge between heaven and earth, the channel through which blessing flows from its supernal origin to its human destination.

MALKAH SHAPIRO AND HER WORK

We have presented this brief survey of the history of ideas of sacred place/space in Jewish thought as a framework for analyzing the writings of Malkah Shapiro (1894–1971). Born Reizel Malkah Hapstein, Shapiro grew up in Kozienice, a small provincial town about fifty miles southeast of Warsaw, where her father Rabbi Yerahmiel Moshe Hapstein (1860–1909) was the incumbent Kozienicer Rebbe, in a line begun by the famed Kozienicer Maggid (d. 1814), one of the founding fathers of Polish Hasidism. In 1927 she left Poland and emigrated to Palestine. In the 1950s and 1960s several collections of her Hebrew writings were published in Israel. [7]

Much of Shapiro's work consists of autobiographical memoir describing her life in rural Poland at the beginning of the twentieth century. The narrative often unfolds from the perspective of a young girl at the threshold of maturity (11–12 years old) named Bat-Zion,[8] the author's literary persona. The members of Shapiro's family, women especially, are the major characters in her stories, and a major theme is the role of women in Hasidism. Women are depicted not only as performing acts of service, kindness, and charity, but also as scholars of Torah, transmitters of sacred traditions, and as spiritual beings who attain holiness and strive for elevated and sublime states of personal, inner piety.

Shapiro's work fills a gap left by almost all other collections of hasidic tales and traditions from Eastern Europe. In her stories we find a specificity of detail simply not to be found in most hasidic writings, which tend to focus on the anecdote, the wise saying, the Torah discourse or insightful comment, but do not provide sustained descriptions of people and places. With her richness of expression Malkah Shapiro recreates the taste and texture of Eastern European hasidic piety from within, presenting Hasidism as a devotional path. Her stress is always on the interior life and the cultivation of sublime states of awareness and reflection. She depicts all the members of her family, women and men, as attending to inwardness with loving, reverential care. In addition, her portrayal of rural Polish Hasidism and its male and female personalities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contains much material valuable for social and religious history: descriptions of family relationships, girls' education, Polish-Jewish interaction, local customs, folk healing practices, as well as an extensive exploration of the complex dynamics of a Rebbe and his community.

Shapiro's portrayal of the meticulous care which her family members shower upon matters of the spirit finds a parallel in her own loving attention to matters of style and language. Her stories are written in a poetic literary Hebrew which reveals broad knowledge of biblical, rabbinic, and kabbalistic sources. She obviously cared deeply about the literary and aesthetic value of her work, and placed as much emphasis upon the grace of her style as upon the substance of what she had to say.

While Malkah Shapiro's works received some favorable notice in the Hebrew press during her lifetime and at the time of her death,[9] they are today largely forgotten to Hebrew readers, and are almost entirely unknown to the English language reader. In Shapiro's day, Hebrew literary circles were often ambivalent about the efforts of women writers.[10] In the traditional hasidic circles of Shapiro's own community, such writing was virtually nonexistent. Apparently, neither secular literary critics on the one hand, nor her own hasidic community on the other, knew quite what to make of her. As someone whose very act of writing transgressed traditional boundaries, her work emerges as a bold and essentially unprecedented creative achievement. At a time when the history of Jewish women's spirituality and literature is

a subject of intense academic and popular interest, it is appropriate that the rich oeuvre of Malkah Shapiro be redeemed from obscurity and studied for its many riches.

KOZIENICE AND SACRED PLACE

While depicting her family and the Hasidism of her youth, Shapiro describes the place where she grew up—the town of Kozienice, whose Jewish community no longer existed when her books were published.[11] She traces with love the world of her childhood, a world of profound tenderness, exquisite beauty, and enveloping holiness, filled with individuals whose aspirations were directed entirely to the domain of the sacred.[12] In this world, the domestic and natural environment is not merely an arena for the unfolding of events, but rather a vital and active contributor to the story. Her home and surroundings are suffused with the rhythms of nature and the cycle of the Jewish sacred calendar. Kozienice not only reverberates with holiness, it yearns for it, coming alive in its own voice. The natural world in which the town is situated is alive with metaphysical and kabbalistic forces, so that humans and nature join together to celebrate the sacred days. Kozienice, in other words, is a sacred place with a personality and a soul. Our goal in this essay will be to explore this sacred place, which can fruitfully be compared to the modes of spatial sacredness in the Bible.

Let us begin with sacred place as *makom,* the biblical site associated with the life and deeds of a revered ancestor. In Shapiro's memoir, entitled *Mi-Din le-Rahamim* (From Justice to Mercy), *makom* is defined by locations associated with her famous ancestor, R. Israel Hapstein (d. 1814), known as the Maggid of Kozienice, a founder of Polish Hasidism. A master of Talmud and legal codes, as well as the practical and theoretical Kabbalah, he was sought out for blessings and amulets, which were reputed to assist barren couples in having children. His fame attracted Christian Poles as well as Jews, and prominent figures from the Polish nobility such as Adam Chartoryski, Josef Poniatowski, and Prince Radziwil came to seek his blessing. He used his influence and prestige in Polish ruling circles to mitigate the effect of pre-

judicial regulations and to protect his people from outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence. The author of twenty-three works in all areas of rabbinic literature, he was active in sponsoring the publication of kabbalistic manuscripts. He transmitted his teachings to scores of disciples, many of whom became leading figures of the hasidic movement in Poland and Galicia throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The Maggid of Kozienice thus combined in one person all the ideals of the early hasidic master: selfless devotion in service of God and other human beings; mastery of traditional rabbinic literature while cultivating an inner life of ecstatic prayer and mystical practice; a reputation for paranormal powers, especially the ability to grant efficacious blessings; and finally, saintly prestige and influence in the Gentile as well as the Jewish world, deployed for the benefit and protection of his community.

The fame of the Maggid continued in succeeding generations. Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, the small and otherwise undistinguished provincial town of Kozienice was celebrated as the home of the Maggid. Christian residents of the town as well as Jews revered his saintly memory. The street he lived on, and upon which his house still stood, was named Magitowka in his honor.

The Maggid's shtibel, his personal room which had been left just as it was during his lifetime, one hundred years earlier, was revered as a shrine. As Shapiro describes it,

> The canopied bed, upon which the Maggid slept; the upholstered chair upon which he sat; the high and narrow table, upon which he wrote the amulets and Torah esoterica: these all were still in their places. Silently they absorbed the laments of people who came to pour their hearts out in this sacred place.[13]

The Hapstein family and the hasidim apparently believed that the spirit of the Maggid was still present in the room. On the eve of Shabbat, Shapiro's father would enter the room with great respect, say "*Gut Shabbos,*" and leave. At the end of the Sabbath, he would come with his violin and play the special Kozienitzer

melody for *Eliahu Ha-Navi.* During times of illness, the room would be used for prayers and the chanting of Psalms.

Another place associated with the memory of the Maggid was his *bes-medresh,* or study hall, which was used for study, prayer, and other sacred activities. This is Shapiro's description of an evening Hanukkah celebration led by her father, Rabbi Yerahmiel Moshe Hapstein (1860–1909), the incumbent Rebbe of Kozienice in the days of her childhood:

> Midnight. The songs began to ring out from the old bes-medresh of the Maggid that was filled with veteran hasidim. The Rebbe kindled the lamp in the Hanukkah candelabrum; with the old silver tongs, he kept adjusting the wick. He began singing psalms and songs of praise, to which the hasidim joined in responsively. The wick from the Holy Land, which had been fashioned to the accompaniment of esoteric contemplations, rose in flame from the pure oil. The bes-medresh was afire in songs of praise, in melodies, and in the glow of the candies affixed in silver candlesticks on the long tables. Under the beams of the low ceiling poured out the notes of the Great Hallel and psalms. They stretched out and enveloped the courtyard, its buildings, its rooms and its trees seized by slumber. . . .
>
> The ambience of the bes-medresh, bathed in an ancient light and saturated with melodies drawn from the font of the Primordial One, warms the spirits of the hasidim, who stand crowded in, breaking out responsively to the verses. . . . The Master begins playing a melody on the violin. The notes tremble and shake, they flow out like the current of a river that has burst its dam, enveloping the room uniting with holy longing in the song that bursts out of the heart of the hasidim: "A PSALM, A SONG OF DEDICATION." The room reverberates, as if singing of its own accord. The notes of the melody combine with the pounding of feet as the hasidim join hands and begin to dance, swept away by the spirit. The dancers circle round, chained hand in hand. The eyes are closed; only the heart is open. The Master puts down the wondrous violin. With the silver tongs he adjusts the Hanukkah lamp. He begins dancing; he leaps with the others; his mouth utters songs of praise incessantly. The shadows of the dancing hasidim prance on the whitewashed walls, which, worn out from age, tell stories of bygone times. (ML, pp. 29–30)

In Shapiro's depiction, Hanukkah is being celebrated not only by the master, her father; by the hasidim, his disciples; but also by the bes-medresh itself, which bears and reverberates with the spirit of all the sacred melodies that ever were sung there, as far back as the days of the holy Maggid.

Perhaps the most important of all the *makom*/locations is the Maggid's sepulcher. Known as the *Ohel* ('Tent'), the Maggid's burial place would be visited for petitionary prayer and during Yahrtzeits, the anniversary dates of the passing of the saintly family members interred there. Shapiro describes one such occasion, a visit around the time of the Yahrzeit of Rabbi Elimelekh of Grodzisk, her grandfather. The Ohel is being visited by her father, Rabbi Yerahmiel Moshe, by her mother and grandmother (the two Rebbetzins), and by other hasidim.

> The Rebbetzins stayed a long while in the holy sepulchre, as they followed the intense outpouring of spirit that emanated from the Rebbe's heart. He was dressed in a sable Shtreymel, standing totally absorbed in contemplative communion with the spirits of his ancestors. His pale, noble face was illumined by the light of hundreds of candles lit in this sepulchre of his holy ancestor the Maggid and his holy descendents, generation after generation, who rested here in the cemetery between the pine trees in back of the great synagogue. (ML, p. 122)

In this scene of prayer and reverential devotion, there is a communion, a touching of the spirits of the current members of the dynasty, with earlier generations, going back to the founder, the Maggid himself. Direct contact with the souls of the deceased is greatly facilitated by one's physical presence at the location where their bodily remains are buried.

If the places associated with the Maggid of Kozienice and his descendents determine the *makom*-sacredness of Bat-Zion's world,

there was also a sacredness of domestic residence, like the Tabernacle of the Bible, defined by partitions and home to the Shekhina, the tenting-Presence of the divine. In this case it was the family compound, a complex of buildings which housed the Rebbe's immediate and extended family, as well as a much wider circle of workers, household staff, hasidim in permanent residence, guests, and visitors. The large numbers of hasidim who would visit during holy day periods required a permanent staff of cooks, domestic workers, service personnel of various kinds, who in turn required overseers and managers. Ultimate responsibility for the workings of the household and the staff rested with Bat-Zion's grandmother Sarah Devorah, and to a lesser degree, her mother Bracha Tzippora Gitl. Here too one can trace an analogy to the biblical tabernacle, with its large staff of Levites to maintain the House of God, and a cadre of priests to supervise the Levites and engage in the sacred service which provided, as scripture puts it, "the food of God." One might consider this analogy a bit strained, given that much of Shapiro's description revolves around domestic activity: cleaning, cooking, sewing, embroidering. But precisely these activities were considered sacred in Exodus and Leviticus. And Shapiro's reverent and finely detailed descriptions of the work of the household make it clear that she views it all as consecrated activity, genuinely sacred work in every sense of the word.[14]

The family compound had two courtyards, an outer and an inner. Significantly, the outer courtyard was "open," that is, not entirely fenced in, whereas the inner courtyard was completely closed off, accessible only by a wooden gate that was always kept shut. As Shapiro describes it,

> The open courtyard is near the large kitchens which were constantly in use for preparing food for large numbers of people. There was a small garden planted with cedar trees—between the servants' rooms and the woodshed. (ML, p. 127)

Not far from the kitchens were a wine cellar and the horse stables. The open courtyard led through a small gate to the inner, closed courtyard, defined by a few modest buildings: the residence of

the Rebbe and Rebbetzin; his study; and residences for the boys and girls of the family. In the center of the courtyard was a copper sundial on a small pedestal, which testified to the Rebbe's interest in astronomy as a religious discipline.

The courtyards are living personalities resonating with spirit. This is Shapiro's description of how sunset fell upon the courtyard on the eve of Hanukkah:

> The courtyards of the Maggid, surrounded by ancient buildings—in which dwell his descendent and heir Rabbi Yerahmiel Moshe and his family—are intoxicated with the flaming elixir of the sunset, and are veiled in the deepest secrets. . . . The shrubs in the garden are bedecked with crimson fire, as if they have stolen a whiff of the mysteries. . . . (ML, p. 18)

The two courtyards correspond to two nested domains of association: the outer circle of guests and staff, and the inner circle of family and veteran hasidim. The inner domain was hidden to casual view. An intimate place of delicacy, grace, and familial love, it was protected and isolated from the winds of change.

The two courtyards were deployed for the household's communal preparations for Passover, a task which took many weeks and which involved all members of the community. Most activities took place in the outer courtyard and the surrounding buildings. These included grinding Passover flour, preparation of barrels to store raisin wine, and making the kitchens and their many vessels kosher for Passover. The inner courtyard was used for airing out clothing, linens, and the many sacred books. In the context of these Passover preparations, Shapiro conveys the symbolic meaning of the two courtyards and their spiritual relationship in the following words:

> The tumult of the workers, the chirping of the birds, the rustling of the trees, which announced in the open courtyard the coming of spring and of freedom: all these were concentrated in the inner courtyard, condensing in a mantle of sound which bespoke holiness. From that sublimely ethereal mantle, the Passover burst forth on all sides. (ML, p. 126)

That is, the inner courtyard was a lens of holiness which absorbed the pastoral energies of the outer courtyard, intensifying and transmuting them at the pulse of sacred time known as Passover.

If the courtyards are sacred, the ambience inside the family's rooms is even more sacred:

> The light projected by the stained glass in the nickel oil-lamp covered the palpable silence. The double windowpanes, etched in frost, . . . sealed out the tumult of the outside world. Even the tall cedar trees, which banged against the windowpanes, appeared as if attempting to break into the room, but remained outside in the frozen garden, behind the window. Here in this cozy pensive space, wrapped in murmuring silence, here was the goal and purpose of the universe. (ML, pp. 28–29)

All of this brings to mind the desert Tabernacle (and the Jerusalem Temple), with courtyard, Sanctuary, and Holy of Holies. The Holy of Holies was the energy center for the entire system, the point where the divine Presence erupted into the realm of the physical, as well as the focal point for all acts of Israelite sacred service. Its position at the inner core of nested rectangles assured its complete hiddenness, and protected it from desecration or encroachment by interlopers.

Let us now turn to examine the metaphoric significance of Shapiro's descriptions from a biographical perspective. Born in 1894, Shapiro is eleven years old in 1905, the year in which her memoir is set. The time is one of crisis for all Jews living in Imperial Russia. 1903 is the year of the Kishinev pogrom, an event which shook Russian Jewry and aroused the conscience of the world. While the pogrom of Kishinev is the most well known, it was only a foretaste of a much wider wave of anti-Jewish violence associated with the First Russian Revolution of 1905. The events of 1905, which forced Nicholas II to promise basic political rights to the Russian people, adumbrated the fall of Imperial Russia in the next decade. Thus 1905 could be considered a watershed year, where the incipient collapse of the old order could already be foreseen. For Jews this meant the disappearance of the shtetl and its way of life, a process which would soon be accelerated by

the Great War and its aftermath. To be sure, the new century held out much hope, but the dangers of the new age, both physical and spiritual, were already very much in view. For Kozienice specifically, these events had already brought stagnation and the seeds of decline, which would accelerate in the decades to come, as more and more Jews left either for the economic opportunities of large cities such as Warsaw, or emigrated to Palestine in a wave of Zionistic idealism. The sacred memory of the Maggid of Kozienice had surrounded the town with a protective field, largely shielding it from hostile activities motivated by anti-Jewish sentiments. The ongoing shelter of the Maggid's memory had held firm for over a century, but eventually it too would not be able to overcome the overwhelming cultural and political forces which assailed it, and the sheer military brutality which would soon sweep the town away.

Parallel to these forces besetting the sacred space of Kozienice were the changes taking place for young Malkah ("Bat-Zion") herself. Standing at the threshold of maturity, she is deeply embarrassed (her memoir tells us) by the biological changes that are taking place in her body. She notices men looking at her. She is about to lose the private inner space of childhood. In fact, by age fourteen the author was to marry her first cousin, Abraham Elimelekh Shapiro of Grodzisk (who was about the same age at the time of the wedding). Not long after, she moved to Warsaw to escape the ravages of World War I. In the densely settled and diverse religious culture of Warsaw she encountered and studied with figures such as Hillel Zeitlin, a religious seeker and mystic fully acquainted with the diversity of both western and eastern spirituality.[15] By 1927 she is in the Holy Land, first in a tiny hasidic settlement near Haifa founded by her brother, and later in Jerusalem. Most members of her family who remain in Poland are eventually killed in the Holocaust. Malkah Shapiro never returns to the site of her childhood. By the time of World War II, the town as she knew it ceases to exist. The implicit question posed in her work is how to situate all the memories of sacred space/place—which by their nature are seemingly immutable, eternal, indestructible, and not transferable—in a circumstance

where their physical referent is inaccessible, and in some sense no longer exists. The question is adumbrated in the work by the emphasis placed on the issue of building a new mansion to replace the elegant family home which was destroyed in a fire around 1900. The issue is a major point of contention between Bat-Zion's grandmother, Rebbetsin Sarah Devorah, and her son—Bat-Zion's father—Rabbi Yerahmiel Moshe Hapstein, who is the incumbent Kozienicer Rebbe. R. Yerahmiel Moshe believes that it is improper to build elaborate edifices outside of Eretz Yisrael; even when hasidim specify that donated funds should be used for his home, he immediately distributes the funds to the poor. Eventually the new house does begin to rise, due to Sarah Devorah's indefatigable marshaling of architectural, financial and managerial resources.

Yet there is a sense in which the Rebbe was right to oppose the construction. Perhaps he foresaw that the days of Kozienice, and the kind of irenic rural hasidism it embodied, were numbered. As we have noted, in the next few decades most of his own descendents were either to emigrate to Eretz Yisrael or were to die in the Holocaust. The dynastic center of the House of Kozienice was to become a kingdom of memory.

Shapiro faces the challenge by shifting the focus to the Holy Land, an exile from the sacred space of Kozienice and Polish Hasidism, which is a homecoming to the sacred land of the Bible. In a story entitled "Ambience of Eretz Yisrael,"[16] a visitor tells the family that the souls of the Seer of Lublin, of the Holy Jew of Pshyshche, and of the zaddikim of the dynasties of Kozienice, Stolin, and Chernobyl have been seen at the Western Wall and other holy places. These visions no doubt adumbrate the historical reality: the hasidim who revered and made pilgrimages to the sacred sites of Polish Hasidism, and many of the sites themselves, were to be swept away. Only by a spiritual move to the Holy Land would the souls of the zaddikim find their true home; only by a physical move to the Holy Land would the living hasidim be spared the destruction.

This return to the Holy Land in Shapiro's work (as well as in

her life) expresses a hard fact: for all that the Hapstein family, beginning with the Maggid himself, had vested the town of Kozienice with sacredness, in the end it was not enough to prevent the cataclysm. By virtue of the saintly personalities who made it their home, Kozienice had indeed been endowed with the qualities of sacred place/*makom*. For generations its boundaries and partitions had also created a protected domain where a quiet and unhurried hasidism could flourish, luxuriating in a sacred space far from the pace and pressures of urban life. But Kozienice could never become "the place that the Lord your God will choose to cause His name to dwell there." In the nature of things, there could only be one such place, one Eretz Israel and Jerusalem. Shapiro herself wrote in mandatory Palestine and the State of Israel; she knew her life was saved by her decision to leave Poland in 1927. Thus the love of her birthplace, so much in evidence in her writing, must have competed with a still greater love for the Holy Land, which was not only the land of biblical Israel, but the land where she found refuge, raised her own family, lived most of her adult life; where she was to die.

The saintly figures of Shapiro's family now live in her own works. The sacred space of Kozienice, like the memory of biblical Israel, is inscribed in the word. But here the parallel breaks down: unlike the Bible, Malkah Shapiro's stories capture a sacred place which, on the stage of history, will never be recovered. For Kozienice, there will never be a return from the Babylonian exile.

For the delicate, spiritually sensitive child Bat-Zion, the sacred space of Kozienice once enabled her to commune with her deceased ancestors. It provided an entry into the world of hasidic holiness; it afforded a measure of protection from the terrors without (hatred and political instability in Imperial Russia and Poland) as well as the terrors within (the changes brought about by the onset of adolescence and her forthcoming marriage at age fourteen). But for the empirical author Malkah Shapiro, in the image of Sefer Yetzirah, letters are stones. Memory inscribed as text creates a domain of the sacred which can never be destroyed, but lives eternally.

NOTES

This essay is part of a larger work which aims to produce a literary biography of Malkah Shapiro, situating her in the context of Polish Hasidism, with special focus on the role of women in the hasidic movement. The project involves translation of a significant portion of her work into English. All translations that appear herein are mine.

1. Cf. Louise Chawla, *In the First Country of Places: Nature, Poetry and Childhood Memory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

2. Cf. Michael Fishbane, "The Sacred Center: The Symbolic Structure of the Bible," in *Texts and Responses: Studies Presented to Nahum N. Glatzer on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday by His Students,* ed. Michael A. Fishbane and Paul R. Flohr (Leiden: Brill, 1975), pp. 6–27.

3. Cf. Nahum Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), p. 116.

4. See Gen. 28:10–22.

5. Cf. Emanuel Maier, "Torah As Movable Territory," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 65, no. 1 (1975): 18–23; N. Wieder, "'Sanctuary' as a Metaphor for Scripture," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 8, no. 4 (1957): 165–76.

6. Cf. Arthur Green, "The Zaddik as Axis Mundi," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 45, no. 3 (1977): 327–47.

7. These include *Sheneinu Be-Maginim* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1952); *Be-Lev ha-Mistorin* (Tel Aviv: Netzah, 1956); *Mi-Din le-Rahamim* (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1969). Shapiro's poetry is collected in *Shiri Li Bat Ami* (Tel Aviv: Netzah, 1971).

8. The name Bat-Zion was added during childhood at a time of critical illness. See *Mi-Din le-Rahamim* [= ML], pp. 35–37.

9. See, e.g., A. Sharvit, "Be-Ma'agalei ha-Hasidut ve-ha-Musar," *Mabu'a* 7 (1970): 141–49; M. Ungerfeld, "Le-zikhrah shel Meshoreret ha-Hasidut," *Ha-Do'ar* 51 (March 17, 1972): 293.

10. For attitudes toward women's literacy in Yiddish, Hebrew, and other languages, in the context of Eastern European Haskalah, see Iris Parush, "The Politics of Literacy: Women and Foreign Languages in Jewish Society of Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe," *Modern Judaism* 15 (1995): 183–206; Shmuel Finer, "The Modern Jewish Woman: A Test-Case in the Relationship Between Haskalah and Modernity," *Zion* 58, no. 4 (1993): 453–99; Shaul Stampfer, "Gender Differentiation and Education of the Jewish Woman in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe," *Polin* 7 (1992): 63–87. For the situation in Palestine during the first two decades of the twentieth century, see Dan Miron, "Why Was There No

Women's Poetry in Hebrew Before 1920," in *Gender and Text in Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literature,* ed. Naomi B. Sokoloff, Anne Lapidus Lerner, and Anita Norich (New York and Jerusalem: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), pp. 65–91, which argues for the overwhelmingly suppressive influence of male stars, especially Bialik. In the same volume, the introductory essay by Anita Norich is very informative and helpful. Note for example her remark that the world of modernity and its literature "emerge from a complex relationship to tradition, which eventually opened the cultural world to women but which, paradoxically, may have initially left them with less of a footing in a coherent cultural universe then they had previously been able to claim" (p. 13). See also Deborah S. Bernstein, ed., *Comments on Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Woman in Pre-State Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992). It is interesting that a work by David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past: European Jewish Intellectuals and the Zionist Return to History* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), which focuses on the intellectual climate at the Hebrew University's Institute of Jewish Studies, where Shapiro sat in on courses, hardly makes mention of women at all.

11. Extensive information on the history of the Jewish community of Kozienice, including the period of the Holocaust, can be found in Barukh Kaplansky, ed., *Sefer Kozienice* (Tel Aviv, 1969) [Hebrew and Yiddish]. This memorial book includes photographs, personal reminiscences, as well as much material about the family of Malkah Shapiro.

12. It is notable that Shapiro displays an overwhelmingly positive attitude toward her childhood, family members, and community. In contrast with many other memoirists who emerge from the world of the shtetl into modernity, she is concerned to stress continuity rather than discontinuity. It is illuminating to compare her work with those discussed in Alan Mintz's *"Banished from their Father's Table": Loss of Faith and Hebrew Autobiography* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989). Shapiro wishes to show, among other things, that despite the geographical and existential distance she has traveled from Kozienice, she was not "banished from her father's table." Shapiro's fully embracing appreciation of the world of her childhood distinguishes her from other writers deeply rooted in the world of tradition such as S. Y. Agnon, whose attitude, as Arnold Band has put it, stood "between nostalgia and nightmare." Shapiro's effort to link herself to the world of her childhood in an apparently unconditional manner sets her apart from another woman writer who left the shtetl, Devorah Baron. See Anne Lapidus Lerner, "Lost Childhood in East European Hebrew Literature," in *The Jewish Family: Metaphor and Memory,* ed. David Kraemer (New York and

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 95–112. See also Anita Norich's remarks on the autobiographical writings of Esther Singer Kreitman—sister of Isaac Bashevis Singer, in "The Family Singer and the Autobiographical Imagination," *Prooftexts* 10 (1990): 91–107.

In light of this material, Malkah Shapiro appears to be quite exceptional, giving support to her own view expressed in her memoir, that her parents—with special emphasis on her father—truly encouraged the daughters of the family to become accomplished scholars of Hebrew and the classics of Judaism. On the broader issue of attitudes towards women in Hasidism, see Nehemia Polen, "Miriam's Dance: Radical Egalitarianism in Hasidic Thought," *Modern Judaism* 12 (1992): 1–21.

13. *Be-Lev ha-Mistorin,* pp. 119–20.

14. A clear exposition of the perspective on domestic life which emerges implicitly from Shapiro's writing may be found in Kathryn Allen Rabuzzi, *The Sacred and the Feminine: Toward a Theology of Housework* (New York: Seabury, 1982). See esp. chapter 1, "Home As Sacred Space."

15. See Arthur Green, "Three Warsaw Mystics," in *Rivkah Shatz-Uffenheimer Memorial Volume II* ed. Rachel Elior and Joseph Dan (Jerusalem 1996), pp. 1–58.

16. "Avira de-Eretz Yisrael," ML, pp. 52–61; the specific passage is on pp. 56–57.

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STORIES, ESSAYS, REFLECTIONS

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