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CONTENTS

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# Abaris and the Extraordinary Abilities of the Hyperboreans

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*Abstract*

Hyperborea was an otherworldly paradise, a mythical utopia, which was both part of the mythical past and ever present in Greek literature. The Hyperboreans brought innovations to ancient Greeks culture and help in time of need. This study presents some of their extraordinary abilities and focuses on the most famous Hyperborean – Abaris. He came to Greece as an ambassador led by Apollo's arrow, and some claimed that he could fly on it. Abaris seems always to have been regarded as a spiritual or magical authority. Later we hear of him as a possible founder of sanctuaries and as a seer and prophet – he foretold and cured epidemics, wrote oracles. Whether he was legendary or historical (but even then, heavily overlaid by legend), he is an example of archaic wise man who possessed special knowledge of rituals, divination, and healing.

*Keywords*: Hyperborea, mythology, Abaris, Ancient Greece, history of religion.

## 1. Hyperborea

The mythology of Hyperborea, compared with other legendary places in Antiquity, had a significant specificity for the Greeks. If the Elysian Fields, the final resting place of the souls, belonged to an unearthly world, and the once rich and powerful Atlantis had long ago sunk into the ocean, Hyperborea, on the contrary, was a completely real, although extremely difficult to reach territory – "neither by ships nor on foot" (Pind. *Pyth.* 10.29).[1] Hyperborea was an otherworldly paradise, a mythical utopia, which was both part of the mythical past and ever present in Greek literature (Bridgman, 2005: 3). Pliny (4.26) describes this utopia and its inhabitants:

A happy race, known as the Hyperborei, a race that lives to an extreme old age, and which has been the subject of many marvelous stories. Here we find light for six months together, given by the sun in one continuous day, who does not, however, as some ignorant persons have asserted, conceal himself from the vernal equinox to autumn. On the contrary, to these people there is but one rising of the sun for the year, and that at the summer solstice, and but one setting, at the winter solstice. The gods receive their worship singly and in groups, while all discord and every kind of sickness are things utterly unknown. Death comes upon them only when satiated

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[1] For a full overview on the Hyperborean myth and its further development refer to my forthcoming paper *Hyperborea on Maps – Always to the North* (2023).

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with life; after a career of feasting, in an old age sated with every luxury, they leap from a certain rock there into the see.

> • Pausanias regarded Abaris as a possible founder of the temple of Saviour Kore.
> • According to Suda Abaris wrote Marriage of the river Hebros and Purifications and a Theogony in prose and Arrival of Apollo among the Hyperboreans in meter.
> • Iamblichus thought Abaris could predict earthquakes, and perform rapid expulsions of pestilences, and hurricanes, instantaneous cessations of hail, tranquilizations of the waves of rivers and seas.

Diodorus (2.47) claims that the goddess Leto was born in Hyperborea, and for that reason the Hyperboreans worshipped her son Apollo more than any other god. They were looked upon as priests of Apollo, players on the cithara, which play on this instrument in the temple and sing hymns of praise to the god, glorifying his deeds. Perhaps it was for this reason that the god of oracles, healing, music and arts, sunlight, knowledge, every winter left the Delphic oracle and flew to rest in the lands of the Hyperboreans – he wanted to be among the best poets, singers, philosophers. The godlike Hyperboreans seem to outshine the Greeks at every turn (Romm, 1992: 61).

Preserved inscriptions from the 4th century BC record that the temple of Apollo on the island of Delos received gifts, apparently symbolical sacrificial offerings, from somebody referred to as the Hyperboreans (Sandin, 2018: 14; see Coupry, 1972). Herodotus (4.32-36) also depicts individual Hyperboreans in ancient times bearing gifts to the temple of Apollo – the Hyperborean maidens. The historical reality of the gifts of the Hyperboreans was thus confirmed. But the debate about their homeland was by no means over.


2. Extraordinary abilities of the Hyperboreans

The Hyperboreans brought innovations to ancient Greeks culture, revealing the mysteries of the universe and helping in time of need. We learn about their extraordinary abilities during the most crucial and tense moments in Greek history – e.g., the defense of Delphi against the Gauls who intended to plunder the treasures of Apollo. According to Pausanias (1.4.4), in the midst of the battle, thunderbolts and rocks broken off from Parnassus were hurled against the Gauls and suddenly "terrible shapes as armed warriors haunted the foreigners" – two of them, Hyperochus and Amadocus, "came from the Hyperboreans", while the third was Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, the killer of Priam.[2]

We hear about the extraordinary abilities of the Hyperboreans even in Late Antiquity. One of the tall tales in Lucian's *Lover of Lies* (13) concerns a nameless Hyperborean sorcerer who is able to fly, walk on water, and cast spells of different kinds:

> …I thought that there was no way they could happen, yet when I first saw the foreign visitor fly – he came from the Hyperborean people, as he said – I came to believe and I was overcome, despite having held out for so long. For what was I supposed to do when I saw him travelling through the air in the middle of the day, walking on water and strolling through fire at a leisurely pace?… He had on brogue shoes of the sort that those people wear. Is there any need to recite his minor miracles, sending Erosdolls to get people, bringing demons up from the underworld, reanimating mouldy corpses, summoning Hecate herself before him to assist him, large as life, and calling down the moon? (Ogden 2007: 50).

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[2] Sandin (2014: 216) notes the story is later repeated by Pausanias (10.23.2), but Amadocus is called Laodocus instead. The warriors have been conjectured to originate in the poem of Boeo (Paus. 10.5.7), but the names may also connect them with the maidens Hyperoche and Laodice mentioned by Herodotus (4.33). The names are indeed absolutely consonant: Hyperochus/Hyperoche and Laodocus/Laodice.

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According to Kindstrand (1981: 18), "it is notable that when barbarians, known for their wisdom, arrive in Greece, they always come from the North and their wisdom is displayed in the religious sphere, connected in most cases with the cult of Apollo. We may here recall Orpheus who came to Greece from Thrace". Orpheus is much more than a talented singer and poet. He is a religious reformer, a priest and a teacher, who transmits valuable knowledge to humanity (Bondzhev 2022). His education in the secret mysteries grant him healing abilities. According to Pausanias (9.30.4), Orpheus "reached a high level of power because he was believed to have discovered . . . cures for diseases." Pliny (30.7) writes that Orpheus "made progress in superstitious healing." Orpheus' life had immense influence on Pythagoras and Plato. The roots of his teachings were so deep, that some missionaries of the new Christian faith had to use the image of Orpheus in their desire to baptize pagans.

Among the other teachers who came to Greece were Abaris and Anacharsis, who "were in fair repute among the Greeks, because they displayed a nature characterized by complacency, frugality, and justice" (Strabo 7.3.8).[3] But while he was reckoned by some ancient authors (Diogenes Laërtius, 1.41) as one of the Seven Sages of Greece, who preached a simple and modest life, Abaris is more famous for the miracles he performed.

### 3. Abaris

Pär Sandin (2014) published the most detailed catalog of the Hyperboreans, mentioned in ancient literature from Pindar and Herodotus to Byzantine grammarians and historians: each part begins with a list of sources regarding the corresponding Hyperborean character and continues with a biographical summary and comments on philological problems. This catalog will be an extraordinary help in the work of philologists, historians and philosophers interested in Hyperborea. There we learn, that to the Greeks, Abaris was the most famous Hyperborean. He visited Greece to renew the good-will and kinship of his people to the Delians (Diod. 2.47) carrying (in later versions riding on) a mystical arrow, associated with Apollo. His legend developed throughout the centuries, but he seems always to have been regarded as a spiritual or magical authority (Plat. *Charm*. 158b; Heraclid. Pont. 73-5) and an ascetic (Hdt. 4.36); soon we hear of him as a seer and prophet (Lycurg. 14.5, Iambl. *VP* 138, 221) and possible founder of sanctuaries (Paus. 3.13.2). As a priest of Apollo in Hyperborea, Abaris organizes a worldwide collection of gold for the temple of the god in his country (Iambl. *VP* 91). But he also brings his own offerings. He notably goes to Delos itself and reinstitutes the tribute.

According to Hippostratos (Harpocration, s.v. Abaris), Abaris came to Athens in the fifty third Olympiad (568 BC). Others (Harp., s.v. Ab.) dated Abaris in the twenty first Olympiad (696 BC). But Pindar (fr. 270), he adds, makes Abaris a contemporary of king Croesus of Lydia (585-546 BC). Which is more in harmony with 568 BC. If the lexicographer cites accurately, Abaris is then the Hyperborean individual mentioned first in known Greek sources, while at the same time being one of the youngest of the known Hyperboreans, belonging in the historical rather than mythical age. Herodotus (4.36) is the first to reveal concrete details of the legend, dismissing it as unworthy of his attention (cf. Gagné, 2020: 243):

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[3] According to Zhmud (2016: 9), in Strabo's account Abaris figures as Scythian and this is the first attestation of a tendency to transform Abaris from Hyperborean into a Scythian, in which capacity he was predominantly known in Late Antiquity. See also Himer. *Oratio* 23.4; Greg. Naz. *Carm. Mor*. 684.10; Procop. Soph. *Ep*. 58.15; Ps.-Nonnus, *Schol. mythol., or*. 43, *hist*. 7.10; Suda, s.v. Abaris; Phot. *Bibl*. 374a5-20. Cf. Meuli 1935.

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> Thus, much then, and no more, concerning the Hyperboreans. As for the tale of Abaris, who is said to have been a Hyperborean, and to have gone with his arrow all round the world without once eating, I shall pass it by in silence.[4] (Rawlinson, 1910)

Probably the most speculated aspect of Abaris is his arrow. Himerius (*Oratio* 18.1) claims that:

> Because of [Apollo's] arrow, the Scythian [Abaris] was transported about, not only across the Danube itself and the Tanaïs, but also to every land and sea; and, of course, Apollo's arrow is eloquence. (Penella 2007: 122)

Penella (2007: 122) makes a remarkable note that "Abaris rode the arrow, given to him by Apollo, like a witch on a broomstick."[5] Others make an Asian connection – an arrow was held in great esteem by the Mongolians (Moravcsik, 1936).[6] Origen (*Contra Celsium* 3.31) also found his own version, noting the ability of Abaris to run at the speed of a flying arrow. Which, according to him, is by no means a sign of divinity, as many would say:

> For with what object did the deity who bestowed upon this Hyperborean Abaris the power of being carried along like an arrow, confer upon him such a gift? Was it that the human race might be benefited thereby, or did he himself obtain any advantage from the possession of such a power? – always supposing it to be conceded that these statements are not wholly inventions, but that the thing actually happened through the co-operation of some demon.

A more detailed description of Abaris we find in *Oratio* 23.4, 23.7-8 (Penella, 2007: 226):

> *23.4.* They say that the wise Abaris was ethnically a Hyperborean, but a Greek in language, and a Scythian as far as his clothes and outer appearance were concerned. Whenever he opened his mouth to speak, one thought that his words were coming right from the Academy and from the Lyceum itself.

> *23.7.* Abaris came to Athens carrying a bow, with a quiver on his shoulder, and wearing a tightly fastened cloak. He had a golden belt around his waist and was wearing pants that stretched from his buttocks right to the bottom of his feet. He had pleasing eyes and a charming face, which revealed to those who met him that he had a Hellenic disposition. But when he entered the city, the council welcomed this speaker {of Greek, and} they examined his thinking {as well as} his speech, to see if it too was thoroughly Hellenic (?)...

> *23.8.* We find that, as with a lyre's harmony, everything one heard him say was completely in concord with what he thought. He was pleasant to meet; he could carry out a great deed quietly; he was sharp in seeing what lay before him, but also providently kept the future in mind. He always yielded to wisdom and was a lover of friendship. He entrusted few things to fortune, guaranteeing everything by his judgment.

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[4] Dodds (1973: 141) comments, that Abaris was so advanced in the art of fasting, that he had learned to dispense altogether with human food. Could we find a link with the orphic and later – ascetic practices? Macurdy (1920: 139) describes Abaris as a Sun-priest, like Orpheus. His magic arrow and his purity of life are the most striking points in the legend, and these may well bring him into connection with the Thracian Sun-worship, which produced Orpheus.

[5] See Origen *Contra Cels.* 3.31; Iambl. *Vita Pyth.* 19[91], 28 [135-136]; Greg. Naz. *Orat.* 43.21 [524b] Bernardi; Nonnus *Dionys.* 11.132–33; Suda A 18.

[6] Graf (2008: 40) comments on the influence of shamanism: if one insists on the term, one could claim that Abaris was somewhat influenced by Northern Eurasian shamanism; but the probability of such an influence is low indeed.

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According to the Athenian grammarian Harpocration (s.v. Abaris), during a plague that had arisen throughout the whole inhabited world, Apollo asked the Athenian people to make prayers on behalf of all; Abaris came as an ambassador from the Hyperboreans. Iamblichus (*VP* 92) informs us about the outcome: "Lacedemon, after having been by him purified, was no longer infected with pestilence, which formerly had been endemic, through the miasmatic nature of the ground, in the suffocating heat produced by the overhanging mountain Taygetus, just as happens with Cnossus in Crete. Many other similar circumstances were reported of Abaris."

Joseph Fontenrose (1978: 162, 294) interprets the events of the epidemics as follows: an Apolline oracle in Delphi informed all men that their woes would end if the Athenians should offer pre-plowing sacrifices (*proêrosia*) in their behalf. Abaris came from his northern land to Hellas in response to this oracle and made sacrifices to Apollo. It was then, according to the Scholiast on Aristophanes' *Knights* (729) that Abaris wrote down the oracles called *chrêsmoi* of Abaris and sometimes *Chrêsmoi Skythinoi* (*Scythinian Oracles*).[7] Most of these were probably ritual prescriptions. Abaris was one of the *iatromanteis*, like Aristeas of Proconnesus; and he was said to have traveled over the earth carrying Apollo's golden arrow, offering healing and purification.[8] Hence Fontenrose supposes that the Delphic oracle came originally from the oracles of Abaris. Only an Aristophanic Scholiast and Libanios clearly attribute it to the Delphic Apollo. Lycurgus, our earliest authority, says only that Apollo was speaker; and this is consistent with the story that Abaris gathered Apolline oracles. The Apolline oracle in Delphi belongs to the foundation legend of the Athenian *Proêrosia*, offered in behalf of all Hellenes.[9] This sacrifice appears to be an ancient institution, which probably antedates the Delphic Oracle and Abaris (or the time when he is supposed to have lived).

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[7] Suda (s.v. Abaris): he also wrote *Marriage of the river Hebros* and *Purifications* and a *Theogony* in prose and *Arrival of Apollo among the Hyperboreans* in meter.

[8] Peter Kingsley (1999) claims that an *iatromantis* could experience a fourth state of consciousness different from sleeping, dreaming, or ordinary waking: likens to the *turiya* or *samādhi* of the Indian yogic traditions.

[9] According to Bridgman (2005: 50), the implication here is that Athens is the center of the world. Moreover, the Hyperborean legend seems to have taken on more of an Athenian slant, or perhaps had been appropriated by Athens as propaganda comprising a mythical prehistory of the city and how the Hyperboreans helped Athens in its hour of need. One should not forget the Athenian goal to control the two major religious sanctuaries in the Greek world – Delos and Delphi (Bridgman, 2005: 44, 72). By the end of the 6th century, evidence for two strands of the Hyperborean myth had already appeared: the Delian one and the Delphic one. The Delian one portrays the Hyperboreans as individuals arriving at Delos from a distant land in the service of a local god, Apollo. It has no knowledge of the Hyperboreans as a people or community, and no interest in their origins or way of life. Delphic tradition, on the other hand, knows nothing of the individual Hyperboreans until a much later era, when certain named Hyperboreans are alleged to have founded the oracle at Delphi (Paus. 10.5.7). These two traditions do not seem conflicting, but rather relate how two different cult centers, among the most important in Greece, were founded under the auspices of the Hyperboreans. These two traditions could have evolved over time to explain the development of two cult centers using an invented mythical past perhaps from Mycenaean or Dark Age times, as the two were potentially rival oracle sites and both would be particularly coveted by the different political powers, especially Athens, during the history of ancient Greece (Bridgman 2005: 26-27). Cf. West 2003: 9-12 for the differences in the *Hymn of Apollo* – a combination of two originally separate poems: a Delian hymn, performed at Delos and concerned with Apollo's birth there; and a Pythian hymn, concerned with his arrival and establishment at Delphi. Strauss Clay 2006: 93 concludes that in the *Hymn to Apollo*, the tension between the local and universal manifestations of Apollo is resolved on the side of Panhellenism not only through the avoidance of local traditions and cults. The poet adopts a peculiar strategy that precludes all local exclusivity, by singling out not one, but two cult places: Delos and Delphi. Moreover, both sites are emphatically characterized as having no local traditions at all but being purely Apolline and Panhellenic.

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As priest of Apollo, the god of oracles, Abaris could also predict earthquakes and perform rapid expulsions of pestilences, and hurricanes, instantaneous cessations of hail, tranquilization of the waves of rivers and seas (Iambl. *VP* 135).

### 4. Conclusion

One of the most interesting and mysterious aspects in the history of the ancient world is Hyperborea, and after millennia of research, academia has more to add on the Hyperborean topic. Hyperborea has remained a legitimate subject of scientific interest in historiography, archeology and linguistics, despite all speculations and attempts to be appropriated by various racial and nationalist theories, ideologies and pseudoscientific doctrines (Palavestra, 2016: 121).[10] Sandin (2018: 30) concludes that "the myth of Abaris could originate in authentic memories of remarkable pilgrims from the north". Abaris was Hyperborean and a priest of Apollo, who regularly spent his winters in the north. He came to Greece led by Apollo's arrow, and some claimed that he could fly on it. He foretold epidemics, and in Sparta he performed sacrifices that kept them away for good. Classical Greece knew him as a writer of oracles and spells; later, there were epical poems under his name, including Purifications and Apollo's Coming to the Hyperboreans, as well as a prose theogony. Whether he was legendary or historical (but even then, heavily overlaid by legend), he is an example of archaic wise man who possessed special knowledge of rituals, divination, and healing and who has gained this knowledge through ecstatic experience (Graf, 2008: 39-40).

### Acknowledgements

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[10] For an overview of pseudoscientific doctrines see Edelstein (2006), Arnold (2018), Mosionjnic (2012: 81-86), Matveychev (2018), and Roling (2019).

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# The First Hebrew Detective, David Tidhar, as a Freemason

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## Abstract

This article is about David Tidhar. He is an important character in Israeli History, the Hebrew first private detective who had become the first hero of Hebrew detective fiction and historian who was also an important Mason and a historian of Masonry in the land of Israel. The main points in the article are: Introduction. David Tidhar as the first Hebrew private detective; David Tidhar as the first Hebrew detective in the British Mandatory Palestine Police; His character in Hebrew Detective fiction at the beginning of the 20th century; The villain from Corfu; David Tidhar as a member of a secret fraternities; Barkai Lodge of Freemasons in Israel; David Tidhar as a member of Barkai Masonic Lodge; Conclusion.

*Keywords*: David Tidhar, Freemason, Hebrew detective.

1. Introduction: David Tidhar as the first Hebrew private detective

David Tidhar (1897-1970) was a detective in the British Mandate Police in Israel. After a career in the police, he opened a private investigation office. He is known as the first Hebrew detective. That is a detective whose entire work was conducted exclusively in the modern Hebrew language.

In addition to this, he was also the first Hebrew celebrity because, after he retired from the Palestine Police, he was the inspiration for a series of imaginary detective books written around his character. That is why he is sometimes referred to by the public as the "Israeli Sherlock Holmes".

Apart from that he was also an amateur biographer and historian. In this context, he wrote an entire encyclopedia documenting thousands of people at the beginning of the Zionist settlement in Israel, without whom they would have been completely forgotten. In addition, as an amateur historian, he wrote comprehensive historical records of the Barkai Lodge of Freemasons in Israel and the Yitzhak Yelin Lodge of the "Bnei Brit" order. In Israel, in September 1970, three months before his death, the World Association of Detectives awarded the association's annual award to David Tidhar for his activities in the field of detectives. The organization awarded him the prize for being the "father of Hebrew detectives" and the pioneer of Hebrew detective literature.

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At the beginning of the 20th century, being a senior police officer, Tidhar joined the Barkai Lodge No. 17 of the Freemasons. This Lodge had members who were considered the social, economic, and cultural elite of Tel Aviv.

### 2. David Tidhar as the first Hebrew detective in the British Mandatory Palestine Police

Tidhar worked for several years in the Palestine Police and had great success in capturing criminals. He even wrote a book *Criminals and Sins in the Land of Israel* in the twenties, which described various episodes of his plots against the world of crime in the Land of Israel. This book was the first of its kind in Israel describing the underworld in its various types in Israel.

Among other things, he described the different denominations of the inhabitants of the country and "ranked" their general propensity for crime (which would be considered today and certainly not politically correct). Despite this, and perhaps because of this, the book was very successful and was translated into English and even into Arabic. In 1926, after he left the British police, he opened the first private investigation office of its kind in the town (Zilberman & Geffen, 2001; Tidhar, 1924).

### 3. His character in Hebrew Detective fiction at the beginning of the 20th century

Tidhar was the person who perfectly suited the needs of the Ben-Israel comic writer in creating a character of a new "hero". He was a man who was known for his courage and his actions as a policeman and detective in the British police and as a result he was the example of the new "Jews of the Land of Israel" that the Jewish settlement in Israel wanted to develop as an antithesis to the European Jew, the economic merchant.

The stories written and published by the Israeli comic writer Ben-Israel in the "Detective Series" as 32-page booklets on which Tidhar's picture was brilliantly emblazoned were a great success and were sold in hundreds of forms at the cheapest price of five cents (the price of a serving of ice cream and a glass of soda or half a serving of falafel) which he said that the brochures were also within the reach of children.



Image 1.

The first booklet in the "Mysterious Murder" series sold 400 copies. The second booklet "In the Claws of the Human Monsters" has already sold 1,000 copies, and the fourth

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booklet "The Maharaja's Revenge" has already sold 4,000 copies! (And the "dramatic" names likely contributed a lot to the success). Some of the first booklets even came out in two editions, so great was the demand. … Ben Israel wrote the vast majority of the stories under various pseudonyms such as "A. Ben Sheva" "B. Habakkuk" "A. Shunami" and many more when he was occasionally helped by other writers such as the well-known journalist Uri Caesari. He wrote a story called "The Mysterious Wardrobe at the 1928 exhibition", with whom Ben Israel quarreled since he wrote a story in two booklets called "The Red Lantern" about a girl who became a prostitute, a story that Ben Israel initially did not want to publish. Another writer was the author of the textbooks for the future Menashe Dobshani who wrote stories such as "The Razor of Blood" and "The Flying Death". But usually, Ben Israel had trouble finding people to write detective stories according to his modest requirements, although he invited the public to send him detective stories and he received many manuscripts.

Tidhar appears in these stories as an all-powerful detective who, together with his assistants Saadia the Yemenite and Yeremiah (the real detective David Almog who served as Tidhar's assistant when he was a boy), solves various mysteries that the representatives of the Mandate Police are helpless against. There in the cities of Tel Aviv and Haifa he will speak fighting against cruel criminals like the "vampire" who came to Israel from the crime capitals of London and Paris and led chases after gold treasures and mysterious wills. And it's all here in the Mandatory Land of Israel in the cities of Tel Aviv and Haifa in streets that were well known to readers such as Ibn Gvirol and Tel Aviv beach as well as more exotic places such as remote mountains around Nablus, caves near the Dead Sea (but no, Tidhar did not discover the scrolls stored there…). There Tidhar faced his monstrous enemies.


4. The villain from Corfu

Like every great detective in literature, Tidhar also had his great "arch enemy". In his case, it was "the hangman from his core" a particularly cunning criminal and murderer, a Jew who converted to Christianity by the name of Jacob Parzel. He arrived in Israel and there he began a robbery and murder spree until Tidhar overcame him in a struggle that lasted for two whole books and handed him over to the British police.

But that was not the end of the story. Ben Yisrael published another story called "The executioner is alive!" which it turns out that Farzal, who was considered dead after the ship that transported him to her prison sank, managed to be saved and arrives in Chicago where he becomes a senior gangster in the service of Al Capone and again has to gallop to fight him and this time brings him to the electric chair. The name of Judaism in his crimes.

But even that was not the end of the criminal. The figure of the hangman from Corfu was so popular with readers that a competing series "The Volume Library" by David Karsik and Eliezer Karmi published a different story about his life and death called "The End of the Hangman from Korfo" by "Ezer Karmieli (Eliezer Karmi) in which the astonished readers discovered that Ferzel dies after a shootout with the police in Chicago. This is an extremely rare example of a criminal character who became almost as "popular" as the detective character until stories about him appeared in various publications.

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Image 2. The executioner is from Corfu as drawn by Uri Fink
in the book "The Golem: The story of Israeli comics"

The writing of the Detective Library stories was extremely standard.: In almost every pamphlet, standard passages appeared such as: "The detective (Tidhar) sat in his armchair, filled his pipe with tobacco and was enveloped in heavy clouds of smoke…" or: "Tidhar bent down, in a quick movement picked up a small shiny cuff from the carpet and secretly put it in his pocket (under the eyes of the police, of course)." At the end of the last episode, it always turned out that the object was nothing but a button from the criminal's coat or something similar that led Tidhar to the solution of the mystery.

The plots were almost always taken from stories produced abroad and adapted for local needs.

The readers read this with admiration, Tidhar became in their eyes a kind of giant from whom nothing could be stopped, a larger-than-life man. And the bizarre names of the stories like "Professor Koch's Bacteria" (which was written for an educational purpose to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the discovery of the cure for tuberculosis by a monkey), and "The Secret of the Death Rays," "Bombs on Mount Carmel," "The Altar of Blood," "The Living Dead," "The Factory for the Dead," "Headless Man," "Hell's Car," "Vampire of Horrors," "Vampire's Revenge," and "The Blue Man (Mysteries of the Yarkon Sorcerer)" contributed to this.

And the brochures achieved their goal. They have become extremely popular reading material. to a nationwide "plague". Boys and adults devoted every free moment to following with devotion the new adventures of Tidhar. In many cases, students stopped reading any other literature and even read under the table during school. The teachers confiscated any such booklet that was discovered. Sometimes to read them themselves at home. There was almost no child in the Land of Israel of the time in whose home there was not a pile of thin booklets and usually in a hidden corner for fear of the "evil eye" and their confiscation by angry parents. Also, a lively trade of exchanging pamphlets with friends developed, and thus children read an average of five such pamphlets per week.

An inevitable result was that critics were outraged by the attack in literary journals such as "Moznaim" against these popular pamphlets and defined them as "nausea-inducing vomit pills" or "poison pills". But they also had defenders like Avigdor Meiri who claimed that detective stories can be used to educate the public to be vigilant and to maintain security against the violence of the Arab enemy with the detective skills it imparts to readers (Zohar & Shavit, 1983).

Tidhar himself also came out to defend the stories about his plots from the wrath of the critics, among other things he mentioned a series of well-known personalities who liked to read detective stories such as Jabotinsky, Haim Weizman, and even the national poet Bialik. He emphasizes the importance of the pamphlets in teaching the reader the theory of self-defense. "When the children are educated to be good Jews and healthy detectives, they will bring benefit to the country … in detective theory, they learn self-defense just in case. The theory of heroism, orientation in times of confusion, and zero advice," stated Tidhar. Detective riddles were often added to the booklets of the "Detective Series" whose function was to sharpen the reader's detective sense and to give him, as Ben Israel wrote, "detective education, which is the key to the

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citizen's heart, the sense of detectives and the talent for criminal investigation and the sense of public responsibility." These reasonings were also used by the other detective libraries that arose in the 1930s as an imitation of the original detective library of Ben Israel and Dahar.

These booklets by Shlomo ben Yisrael about David Tidhar from 1931 are the beginning of "real" Israeli literature. These were the first stories that continuously and unapologetically dealt with the Jewish settlement in Tel Aviv and beyond and described the people of the settlement as heroes of the Land of Israel who are not connected in all their parts to their place of origin in the Diaspora.

At the end, Tidhar had ended the series at the end of 1931. He later said that he was tired of the hundreds of boys and girls who came to his office just to see the "Israeli Sherlock Holmes" as well as the adults who disturbed his routine for the same reason, when he walked down the street people would point at him with admiration or follow him with fascinated eyes, followed by the famous detective and hero. He was tired of being "on display" or what we would call today a "celebrity", a phenomenon that was unknown at the time in the town and Dahar was (along with the national poet Bialik) the first example of it. It is also possible to wonder how much the difference between the prosaic and not always successful reality, in which he lived a reality in which he conflicted with the British police on which he wrote various critical articles, and the pamphlets in which he was presented as an all-powerful hero fighting international criminals in full cooperation with the police, affected Tidhar. It is possible that the difference was such that he finally could no longer tolerate it. He continued to work as a private detective and at the same time fulfilled secret tasks for the settlement.

At one point he hired as an assistant a young boy named Uri Avneri. The aforementioned future investigative journalist and editor of "Ha'Olam Hez" learned a lot about matters of investigation and detective work from his work with Tidhar and learned several things at the same time about the ability of the media (in this case detective brochures) to turn a person into a revered "celebrity" and will apply these lessons to the future in his magazine where created celebrity as a mass phenomenon in Israel.

Tidhar's place as the hero of the stories was taken by his former assistant David Almog. In the first book, Almog was introduced as "Yeremiahu" the not-so-smart assistant of the great detective Tidhar. Now he was presented as an all-powerful detective with the former assistant of the Yemeni Tidhar Saadia and also … Yeremiahu. He was presented as a more active and active character than Dadar and among other things he had the honor of "dying" several times during the series including in the story called "The Death of Detective Almog." Of course, the death was to mislead the various criminals and spies who were supposed to breathe a sigh of relief and lose their caution when they thought that the great coral was no longer following them. The real Almog of course continued to live.

But for some reason, Almog turned out to be a much less popular character than Tidhar, perhaps the original Almog did not have the strength of personality that Tidhar had, the man who was very active in various settlement matters, and this hindered the success of the series.

In all these stories, it did not appear as the sane Land of Israel of the kibbutz and the moshav and the provincial cities as the readers knew it, but as a land where mad scientists, famous actors from Hollywood, spies, communists, gangsters from the USA, archaeologists haunted by a curse, women traffickers, refugees from every corner of the world are infested in droves, and much more. The underworld is Israel. He was presented there as having a brave connection to crime capitals in the USA and Europe including not only Tel Aviv and Haifa but also Alexandria, Damascus, and Beirut. In these stories, the Hebrew detective has close ties with the Mandate Police, who constantly help him recognize his superior skills in the fight against the world of crime, the Arab gangs, and the communist spies who all try to undermine the order of the Mandate.

Image 3. A Yiddish story about David Tidhar

At the end of the thirties, Ben Yisrael moved to the USA and began to publish in the well-known magazine "Farbarts" new stories about the adventures of Tidhar and Almog in Yiddish for an audience no less enthusiastic than the one in Israel. But, this time they were not short stories like in pamphlets but full-length detective novels. At least Eight pamphlets were published about Tidhar plots in Yiddish, bearing his picture.

In Hebrew, Tidhar and Almog appeared together one more time in a full-length book published by Ben Israel in the 1940s called "The Cursed House" in which Almog together with his three assistants Saadia the Yemeni, Yeremiahu (who in the first original stories was himself…) his accomplice Sander, and a wolf-dog named "Gabor" investigate a particularly complicated mystery of the disappearance of a woman and of a house that seems to be haunted. A mystery is finally solved by a horse that appears out of nowhere.

In the last pages, it is not mentioned at all during the book. It was the first (and last) time that the two detectives were presented as collaborators (at least in the Hebrew language). Q. Ben Israel said that when Tidhar started publishing the encyclopedia for the settlement's history, he asked Ben Israel to stop using his name at all in his stories and Ben Israel agreed and described how Tidhar the great detective decided to stop.



Image 4. "Ged Magen" a series imitating the series about
the detectives Tidhar and Almog from the mid-1940s

But, with the establishment of the Jewish state, it seemed that the Hebrew detective finished his job, and stories about him stopped appearing for many years, why is it difficult to say:

maybe the public was now more interested in the adventures of the Hebrew warrior and the Hebrew detective is no longer seen as such an exotic type as it was in the 1930s.

However, Tidhar reappeared in popular literature in the late 1940s, in a children's magazine called "Mickey Maoz", the first comic magazine in Hebrew, edited by the poet Yehoshua Tan Pi, who published cartoon stories by Walt Disney and also a story about "Detective David" which began as a comic and ended as a regular written story and dealt with the exploits of Detective David (clearly Tidhar) in capturing another gang of criminals (Eshed & Pink, 2003).

5. David Tidhar as a member of a secret fraternities

Apart from all these occupations Tidhar somehow found free time to be a senior and prominent member of various organizations "Maccabi" "Bnei Ha'aretz" and as a Freemason in the "Barkai" lodge and a member of the "Bnei Brit" order in the Yitzhak Yelin lodge. He was not only a member of these organizations, but he was also their documenter and published various books and pamphlets about them.

On the Barkai Lodge of Freemasons, he published the pocketbook Barkai Lodge number 17 of the Ancient and Accepted Freemasons in the Land of Israel, arranged and edited by David Tidhar, published by the "Barkai" Lodge, 1945. Includes the internal regulations of the Lodge.

Nevertheless, despite his many writings, there are only a few details regarding his activities in the Freemasons and Bnei Berit. Although he was an important figure, he never reached the rank of president of a Lodge he was not considered that important.

Tidhar was a member of the oldest Hebrew v active to this day – "Barkai Lodge" (Hashar) which was established back in 1906 and was based on a French Lodge in Jaffa which was established as early as 1891 (Tidhar, 1945, 1938, 1961).
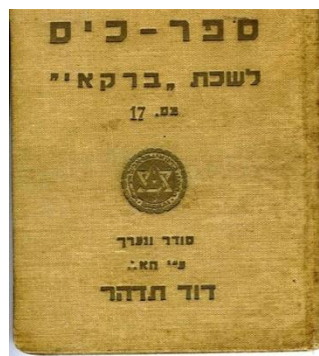


Image 5. The Pocketbook of Barkai Lodge

6.  Barkai Lodge of Freemasons in Israel

The Barkai Lodge is a Masonic Lodge operating in Tel Aviv-Yafo. This lodge is under the auspices of the Grand Lodge for the State of Israel of Ancient and Accepted Freemasons. The number of the Lodge is 17. The Barkai Lodge is the oldest among the Lodges active in Israel in the first decade of the 21st century.

In August 1891, workers from France, who participated in the construction of the Jaffa-Jerusalem railway, established in Jaffa the first lodge of Freemasons in the Land of Israel – the lodge "The Gate of King Solomon's Temple" (Le Port du Temple de Salomon), under the

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presidency of Brother Gustave Milo. In the lodge, which was subordinate to the "Misraim" order, there were Jewish, Muslim and Christian members from the Jewish community in Jaffa.

In 1905, a member of the lodge (brother) Moshe Sheinberg initiated the establishment of a new lodge in the Land of Israel, within the framework of the Grand Orient de France (Le Grand Orient de France). On 2 April 1906, the Supreme Council of the Grand Orient in France approved the foundation of the Lodge, which was previously called "The Gate of King Solomon's Hall", and the Lodge was established in East Jaffa, with the number 3077 and its name "Barkai" which means "Light the Dawn".

The source of the Lodge's name is the daily order of work in the Temple. The activity meetings of the Lodge in its beginnings were held at the house of Brother Yaakov Elhanan Litwinsky in Jaffa, under the presidency of Brother Alexander Piani – who was the first president of Barkai.

In 1914, with the outbreak of the First World War, the work in the office was stopped – some of the brothers left the country and others were exiled by the Ottoman authorities. The then-incumbent president of the Lodge, Brother Kesar Araktinci was exiled by the Turkish authorities to Central Anatolia. At the beginning of 1919, President Araktinji returned from his exile and found the Lodge hall – empty. The Turks looted the equipment, the furniture, and everything the house contained. Araktinji restored and rearranged the Lodge Hall in his home in Jaffa, and the Lodge operated until the outbreak of the Jaffa events in 1921 when it was necessary to close the Lodge. At the end of 1924, the Lodge began to operate again, and the number of its members increased. As the third president of the Lodge, the brothers of the Lodge chose brother Dr. Julius Froelich and later, Dr. Yona Ron. Ron emphasizes regularity and permanence in the work of the office, active participation of the brothers, and the multiplication and absorption of highly cultured brothers while paying attention to the spiritual and moral quality of the candidates. Ron also established the Hebrew language as the working language in the office, even though he did not yet know how to write the letters of the language, and he wrote in Hebrew – in Latin letters.

At that time, a group of Barkai Lodge brothers organized themselves and founded another Lodge in Israel – the Moriah Lodge. The events of 1929 once again prevented the continuation of the regular activity of the Lodge. The Arab brothers left the Lodge, and only a few of them returned to it when the riots ended.

The fourth president of the lodge, Brother Haim Harari, later the editor of the newspaper "The Freemason", increased the cooperation with other lodges, and with the great national lodge that was founded during his tenure. The bloody events in 1936 disrupted the regular work which was stopped again for a short period. Brother Jacob Michlin, the fifth president of the Lodge, hosted in Tel Aviv the Grand President of the Grand Oriental Order of France, Brother Arthur Grossier, one of the heads of the World Masonic Alliance and the President of the Parliament in France.

In 1938, Brother Michlin was sent as a delegate on behalf of the Lodge to the conference of the Grand Orient in France, where the protest of Grand Master Arthur Grossier against the desecration of humanity by Nazi Germany and against the torture of the Jews for not wronging them in the name of racial purity was emphasized.

On 20 January 1942, Barkai Lodge received the sponsorship of the largest national Lodge in the Land of Israel and received the number seventeen – 17 (in gematria: 12). The sixth president of the Lodge, brother Naftali Yitzhak Yelin, devoted the best of his energy and talent to the transfer of the Eastern Lodge in France to the national Lodge in Israel, and to translating the workbooks and much other material into the Hebrew language.

Between the years 1944 to 1946, the years of office of the seventh President Brother Aryeh Oren, and the eighth President Brother Moshe Ophir, additional members joined the ranks of the Lodge and its work. This is not the only Lodge that operates in the city of Tel Aviv. For example, in 1969 the "Ahava" lodge was established, and its president was Meir Shilat (Barkai Lodge Official Website).

7.  Conclusion: David Tidhar as a member of Barkai Masonic Lodge

At the beginning of the 20th century, being a senior police officer, Tidhar joined the Barkai Lodge of the Freemasons. This Lodge had members who were considered the social, economic, and cultural elite of the city of Tel Aviv.

Barkai means "light the dawn" and originates from the Yom Kippur service in the temple egg with a constant sacrifice of dawn, a name which, according to Tidhar, was offered by Yosef Feinberg of the recreations.

Most of our information about Tidhar's joining the Masonic order comes from his autobiography. He tells in his autobiography *In the Name of the Motherland* (p. 320) that he was initiated into Freemasonry on 26 February 1926, when he was a senior police officer in Jerusalem. The Lodge was then in a period of reconstruction after being re-established in 1924. And since then and probably until his death he was a brother in the office, and usually served as secretary in the Lodge.

But, as mentioned, with all his activity, he did not reach the position of president of the Lodge, perhaps also because he did not have time for it. He says that for a certain period, he served in the role of "charity collector". He says that he was one of the initiators of the creation of "Kupat Haim" named after the former married brother, the late writer Haim Harari, to give interest-free loans to brothers who are in need at the office.

His most important activity was the initiation and editing of books documenting the activities of the Lodge. He published three of them and included in them a complete list of all the names of the brothers, the internal regulations, and the treasury regulations, the others were recognized by the former president of the Barkai Lodge of Freemasons and Yitzhak Yelin Lodge of Bnei Brit.

For the fiftieth jubilee year of establishing Barkai Lodge, he published a book called "The Jubilee Album" in which there are many details of the Lodge's plants and its jubilee celebration. Also, a detailed and rare description of a special event held in honor of the well-known author and poet Jacob Cohen *one of national poet* Bialik's friends.
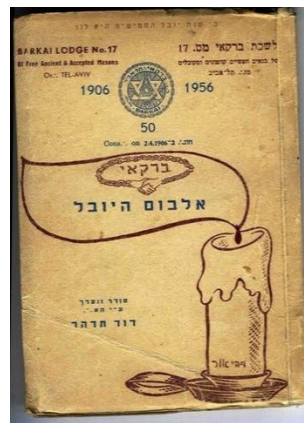


Image 6. The cover of The Jubilee Album of Barkai Lodge

At the same time, as mentioned, he is a member of the Bnei Brith Lodge "Yitzhak Yelin" named after a colleague in Bnei Brith who a member and president of the Barkai Lodge was also. It was Tidhar who organized the above-mentioned Lishka in early 1949 at the initiative of a friend – Judge Shalom Katan. There, too, he was responsible for donations and established a brothers' fund for loans to brothers in need.

He says that he published two fine monthly magazines on the affairs of the Lodge and Bnei Brith ideas and also published in them a quarterly financial report of all income and expenses. And, about this Lodge, he published three special booklets about the history and members of the Lodge (Tidhar, 1945, 1956, 1938, 1961). And this make Thidhar one of the important historians of Masonship in Israel.

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# Intersection of Identities in Personal Stories about Reincarnation in the Druze Community in Israel

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*Abstract*

Belief in reincarnation in the Druze community exceeds the bounds of the official religion, and its personal story gains significance among the secular community members. Though this belief is responsible for marking the boundaries of religious, national, and gender identity, and serves as a cohesive and comforting social factor, it also raises social and psychological tensions among families and individuals who find themselves living a double life story. This study attempts to investigate these aspects among the Druze society by analyzing a collection of personal stories of men and women about their experiences of reincarnation, which I collected from members of the Druze community in Israel. These stories are called among the Druze "alnutq" / النُّطق (speaking), a concept that expresses the soul's ability to recall and talk about its past life in the previous incarnation. By collecting the stories from people mentioned in the previous incarnation, I concluded that they are saturated with internal tensions and provoke objections, and their acceptance is almost always controversial. At the same time, the stories, the beliefs, and the values they are based on have a role in maintaining the borders and organization of the Druze community.

*Keywords*: "alnutq", community, identity, incarnation, reincarnation, religion, tuqya.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 *The Druze in the Middle East*

Unlike other minority groups in the Middle East, the Druze minority has maintained its relatively stable and consolidated social character for nearly a thousand years. The reasons for this are attributed to the foundations of the Druze religion, which since 1042 has not allowed foreigners to join it, not even through intermarriage. Besides the geographical conditions of the Druze settlement areas have made it difficult for foreigners to reach them, and thus, strengthened their separatism.

The Druze minority in the Middle East is concentrated in three neighboring countries: Syria, Lebanon, and Israel, but today there are quite large communities of Druze living abroad including in the United States, Canada, and Australia. An estimate of the size of the Druze population is about one million in the Middle East. About half a million in Syria and about four hundred thousand in Lebanon (Halabi, 2002: 19).

*1.2 The Druze in Israel*

It is not possible to accurately determine the date of the Druze settlement in the Land of Israel since the information we have is insufficient. There are two conflicting traditions in this regard. According to the first, the Druze have lived in Israel since the establishment of their religion in 1037. According to the second, which is accepted to this day as a more proven historical tradition, the Druze settlement in Israel began only in the 15th century (Falah, 1983: 16).

Upon establishing the State of Israel, about 14,500[1] Druze lived in Israel. In 1957, the Druze in Israel was officially recognized as a religious community, which they were not granted in any other country. Since that year they have served in the IDF under the compulsory law service.

*The Druze population*

Today, the Druze population in Israel is concentrated in two large villages on Mount Carmel: Daliat al-Carmel and Osfiya, which have become established cities over time, as well as three blocks that include 16 villages in the Western, Central, and Upper Galilee. Some of the villages are also inhabited by Christians, and some by Christians and Muslims alike (Falah 1983: 15).

The Druze population in Israel is estimated at 120,000, and they constitute about 2% of the country's population. In terms of language, the Druze speak Arabic like the Arab Muslims and Christians. Even though the Druze population in Israel is considered by many to be a religious minority within an ethnic-Muslim minority, Israeli law defines the Druze as a separate unique community (Rabah 2003: 14). Most Druze in Israel define themselves as Arabs (71%) and the rest define themselves as Druze or Druze-Arabs (Nissan 2010).

Towards the end of the 19th century, and especially at the beginning of the 20th century, social changes began to take place among the Druze community in Israel, including changes in the fields of employment and cultural changes that were caused by the processes of modernization (Shakib, 1989: 225-233) (Galily, Schwartz, Gurstein, Abu-Jama & Khalid, 2018).

*The Druze question of identity*

Questions about the identity of the Druze community in Israel arose in the early 50s, and over time they have even intensified until they turned into issues of disputes that still storm the community to this day.

These issues relate to two central tension axes that characterize the Druze identity in Israel: One tension axis concerns the community's loyalty to the Druze religion in the face of secularization and modernization trends, and the other tension axis relates to the community's loyalty to the Israeli state despite its connection to the competing Arab nationalism.

On the one hand, the Druze in Israel strive to maintain their unique Druze identity in terms of religion, faith, tradition, and customs; to preserve and even develop the community's connection to the Arab population in Israel and to the culture with which they share language and customs, such as the family structure, the clan, clothing, food, music and more (Halabi, 2006: 24-25).

On the other hand, against the background of the tension that has always prevailed between the Druze and the Muslims, the Druze in Israel expresses an ideological and cultural closeness to the Jewish religion and the Jews. This closeness relies on similarities between the two religions, such as the connection between the important prophets of both religions: Moses and Jethro (Prophet "Shuaib" in the Koran), or the similarity between the national narrative of the Jews and that of the Druze.

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[1] The Druze population in Israel – a collection of data on the holiday of the prophet Shuaib. www.cbs.gov.il.

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Among parts of the Druze community, there is a desire to develop and strengthen their Israeli identity. This aspiration is expressed in the fact that the Druze who declare their loyalty to the State of Israel are willing to integrate into the military service and seek for themselves social equality. This is in addition to their belief in separate religious definitions and cultural connections to the Muslim religion.

The Government of Israel, which grants members of the community judicial autonomy and a recognized legal status, responded to the requests of the Druze and gave them unique self-determination and institutional validity by applying the IDF draft law, recognizing the Druze society as an independent religious community in 1957, and establishing a Druze religious council, and Druze religious courts. In 1962, there was even a change in the registration of residents, and some of the Druze were registered as a nation (Rabah, 2003: 26).

This reflects the desire among the members of the community to establish their status by presenting their heritage and explaining it. Researchers such as Makarem (1966), Firro (1979), Blank (1985), Shakib (1989), Ben-Dor (1992), Falah (2000), and Tali (2001), contributed to their work to get to know the Druze community and a thorough understanding of its identity. This research work also stems from a personal drive to study and expand the discussion of Druze folklore, a discussion that has received almost no academic attention.

### *The Druze belief in reincarnation*

The belief in reincarnation in the Druze community is called "Taqammuss/التقمص" in Arabic, which means that the human soul "wears" a new "qamis/shirt/ body", and the body serves as a kind of "qamis" (garment/shirt) that holds the soul/ قميص للنفس او الروح.

This belief reflects and expresses the main principles of religion and community, such as "the love and preservation of the brothers", which means that every Druze must take care of their community, since reincarnation may be a time for any Druze family to meet with their neighbor or member of the community in the framework of their next incarnation (Falah, 1983: 15).

According to the Druze belief, humanity was created with a certain number of souls, and this number is constant and does not increase or decrease. The soul passes only to humans and not to animals or plants (Tali, 2001: 121; Granot, 1982: 29-28) and thus, the soul receives its reparation. There is no transition of the soul between the genders – a soul that abandons a male body will enter a male body, and a soul that deserts a female will enter a female body (Makarem, 1966: 122). Moreover, a Druze remains a Druze, that is, only he who has accepted Madhahb al-Tawhid مذهب التوحيد ("The Doctrine / Religion of Monotheism") can be reborn as a Druze (Halabi, 2006: 17).

Thus, this belief maintains the order of society and the boundaries of Druze identity, and the personal stories about it may reflect the tensions that Druze society faces every day, tensions arising from its competing affinities to the Arab world and Israeli society, tradition, and modernity.

Belief in reincarnation is accompanied by another belief among the Druze, which is not anchored in the religious books, and it is not known when it began to be widespread. Yet, it is common, and it is related to "Alnutq" – the ability to remember and talk about the previous incarnation.

Already here, religious, and social tension is emerging, because the Druze religion is as stated "secret," and therefore, it is not acceptable to speak of the "Alnutq" experience, which exposes one of the principles of the Druze faith and life. From here, this belief can be linked to the fields of "popular religion" and Druze folklore.

Yoder (1974: 14) defines "popular religion" as a religion that embodies the "cultural popular dimension of religion", which includes its additional interpretations, influences, and external practices. Popular religion is therefore the total sum of the religious views and behaviors that characterize individuals and not just a collective within a complex society and coexists alongside the activities of the official religious institutions.

Alongside the difficulty of exploring the main tenets of a secret religion and society that consistently protects its borders, the issue of "Alnutq" has been explored in the Western world in various contexts (Tali, 2001; Dwairy, 2006). Scholars such as Nabwani (2004: 80-81) and Hassoun (2003: 71) referred to the phenomenon of "Alnutq" as the embodiment of divine justice since it is impossible to judge and convict a person by his behavior during a single life course.

Some other scholars have investigated cases of recollection and speech such as Stevenson (2013), who has studied the issue of reincarnation around the world, including among the Druze, and has documented 20 cases in the Druze community.

So far, the researchers have dealt with describing the place of faith as part of the Druze religion and some of its recurring characteristics, but not in its cultural and psychological roles and its contribution to the search and marking of identity boundaries – topics that I would like to discuss and present in this article.

## 2. The purpose and significance of this study

The *purpose* of this study is to investigate one of the most important issues for the Druze community, namely, their "belief in reincarnation." The *significance* of the study lies in its treatment of the Druze belief in reincarnation in a scientific way by relying on meeting people who have lived through this experience.

Before conducting the practical stage of interviews, the researcher had read many studies written by Druze and non-Druze researchers, who focused in their works on the belief of "Alnutq" and reincarnations such as the book by Raja Said Faraj: *Reincarnation* (2006) and Akram Hasson's book: *Reincarnation in the Druze Vision* (2003). However, these books do not deal with the folkloric analysis of the stories, which is based on a comparative study of these traditions in their cultural, literary, and psychological context, as this study does. The collection and study of traditions may illuminate new aspects of the Druze identity in Israel and may even help the Druze community better understand and contain the social tensions which it faces.

The reincarnated people and their amazing stories are closely related to the Druze religion and to the belief in reincarnation, the foundation of the Druze religion. The stories also play an important role in establishing the identity of the Druze community and maintaining its borders and in the struggle for the social and political status of the community within Israeli society.

## 3. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach that uses a questionnaire to get results about the quality of the attitudes of the participants.

### 3.1 *The participants*

The participants are a group of interviewees, whose ages range from 15-45, and they come from all kinds of people. Most interviewees defined themselves as secular or traditional, but not religious, even if they maintained a traditional lifestyle.

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### 3.2 *Procedure*

The writer of the article conducted *fieldwork* in which she recorded her interviews with people who had experienced recollection of information, events, and facts from a previous life (incarnation).[2]

During the interviews, the participants of the "Alnutq" (speaking) event were asked to talk about the previous incarnation. The interviews were fully transcribed, but the research mainly relates to the personal stories, which were taken out of the whole life story.

### 3.3 *Data analysis*

The data that were collected from the recorded interviews constitute folkloric stories, which were analyzed through a comparative study of the traditions in their cultural, literary, and psychological context. The stories can shed light on new aspects of the Druze identity in Israel and may even help the Druze community better understand and contain the social tensions it faces. Three basic concepts should be clarified, which will be used in the following discussion.[3]

### 4. Discussion of the personal stories

*The personal story* is legitimate, and it is desirable to first be solved as a story for everything. The creation of a personal story involves a process of constant choice, to reach the seemingly final version of the representation of the narrator's life. The personal story is an instrument that defines one's identity to reach the seemingly final version of the representation of the narrator's life. In the process, the story undergoes a process of changes.

As said before, the personal story is an identity-defining mechanism. The author of the story reflects on his life and reassembles a multi-faceted identity that is cast into textual materials. The author of the story reflects on his life and reassembles a multi-faceted identity that is cast into textual materials. The personal story usually has a recipient, so, it can be seen as a dialogic delivery device of how the narrator perceives himself and the world, and how the world responds to his/her creation.

Zava-Elran (2002: 69) notes in her essay "The Personal Story as a Rescue from Forgetfulness" that the detailed personal story expresses the voice of the furbished individual in the community. He fulfills the need to perpetuate events in their collective cultural context, on the one hand, but from the individual perspective of the narrator, on the other.

*The personal story* therefore reflects the unique world of the narrator and the cultural and moral world he assimilated during his life and became an inseparable part of his identity (see also Rosen, 1994: 13). These tensions join the tensions of other designers, who characterize the furbished who are recorded in this study, who are affected by changes in the social organization of the Druze society, and the double life story of a person who remembers his previous life and talks about it.

The personal story here – the story of the soul's previous life, and its integration into the present story of life – grows as a part of a certain life history, from which it can be explained

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[2] The names of the people who tell their stories of "reincarnation" will only be given in initials, in order to maintain their privacy, and the reference here is to Alnutq – the ability to remember the previous incarnation and talk about it.

[3] This article was written according to the research work I am writing, under the supervision of Dr. Tzefi Zava-Elran.

(Zava-Elran 2002: 75). Through it, the interviewees reorganize their lives in a way that reflects their beliefs, and their religious, ideological, social, and personal beliefs and perceptions.

With the formulation of a sense of identity, a new view is created toward the persona, which provides a continuous inner feeling of the personal and stabilizes values and goals. Personal stories and "double" stories as stories of reincarnation often involve searching for identity, clarification of social tensions, and formation of subjective and individual voice design. In this context, the Druze identity is characterized by having a dynamic changing identity that reflects challenges of various kinds.

As for the *subjects of the stories* in the study, all of them are also religious-based belief narratives based on Druze belief in reincarnation. These stories are usually based on popular beliefs that are prevalent in the periphery of religious life, such as belief in characters and supernatural cases, and are often in tension with the main representatives of the official religion (Yoder, 1974: 8).

At the same time, it is important to note that from the point of view of the interviewees, the memory and experience of the previous life as part of the current life are in line with their identity and religious belief: "*I was born a Druze and I will die a Druze and will return, far it be!*" one of the interviewees repeated and stated several times." This is a clear example of the strong affinity for the Druze community as a religious community, an affinity that transcends the limitations of the body, time, and place. In the story added in the body of the article, one can also find faith in miracle cases. In other words, the foundations of the Druze religion and the faith of the narrators, as well as the narrative traditions that they convey, are part of a single identity, even if complex.

5. Analysis of the stories

The analysis of the stories is based on the contextual school of folklore research, which is based on the concept of the "speech event" as an artistic communication that takes place between a narrator and an audience. I will refer to the embodiment of tensions that characterize the Druze society in the stories, and to the embodiment of tensions that are related to the specific biographical context of the story and the specific speech events in which I participated (Ben-Amos, 1973; Hazan-Rokam & Alexander, 2000; Dundes, 1964).

The analysis is also based on comparing parallel narratives about reincarnation, from those I recorded and from those I found in the research literature and Israeli Folktale Archive. The comparison is based on the structure and characteristics of the story, on the identification of binary opposites and their role in the construction of the world and the narrative message (Lévi-Strauss, 1975), on the use of the narrator by rhetorical and performative means (Hazan-Rokam, 1988; Alexander & Govrin, 1985), and the use of language and accent – exchange of codes (Held, 2009) and their role.

In the following words, I will briefly discuss an example from my interviews based on the structure of the story and its narrative foundations, the use of the narrator an expression, particularly in the body and objects, in language, in the design of space and time, and binary opposites.

5.1 *Between the narrator and the story*

*The biographical, cultural and social context of the personal story*

The narrators that I interviewed in the study represent a random selection from within the research population, and naturally, there was no uniformity in the level of their education,

their age, their fields of occupation, and more. However, I did find a common denominator in their religious beliefs and their connection to the Druze society, even though all the narrators are secular. This matter is essential in principle, because reincarnation is one of the principles of the Druze faith and life, and the choice to take part in its revelation, and to talk about it despite the opposition of the clerics testifies to the common need for narrators to define the borders of identity. The stories that were collected in the framework of the study are an element that further strengthens their connection to the Druze community, and this belief in reincarnation, as the narrators have reported, makes the members of the community members of one large family. For the narrator, the interview therefore provides an opportunity to tell his story under conditions that he largely determines.

Another important parameter in the relation of the narrator to the story is the degree of readiness for exposure in terms of gender and age. Gender has had a big impact on participation.

From the narrator chart, I managed to record only three female narrators, and this reflects the fact that the Druze community is a conservative and patriarchal-style community. Women traditionally do not participate in such initiatives, which come from outside the community, and they have a role in representing them. Second, the age has also been affected. The narrator belongs to different age groups. There is a young age group and there is an older age group, and the influence is evident in the speech ability, the quantity, and the type of memories. The young narrators had a limited vocabulary, and their stories were characterized by short, and local references.

Of course, the stories reflected the unique world of each interviewee, male or female, and emphasized the complex identity of the "Alnutq" (speech) seeking to bridge both worlds: Past and present.

Before discussing the *structure of the story*, I will present the essence of the plot and the details of the narrator, which I would like to discuss here, with a concise reference to examples from other stories.

### 5.2 *Elements of the plot story*

*The female interviewee* says that she remembered her previous incarnation at a relatively late age when she was 15. She said she was married, a mother who had two children; her husband was a military man, and during the war, he had to leave the house to take part in the war. Since it was a time when there was no media available, he had to come home from time to time and demand safety for his wife and children. The last time, the enemy followed him, and while he was at home, soldiers came and killed him.

*The female narrator* and the children were forced to flee with the help of friends and immigrate to the United States, where they tried to adjust and live a normal life. The son found a job helped his mother and set up a business for her that she named after her husband.

*The female narrator, A.*, is fifteen years old from Galilee, a high school student, who was born in a secular family, to a mother who was a housewife and a father who works in the local council. The family is relatively small, and both parents have a high school education. The interview was recorded continuously in Arabic after a preliminary meeting with the interviewee at a high school where she is studying. The conversation throughout the meeting was relaxed and the interviewee expressed a sense of trust and partnership: "It's a good thing you're a Druze because you'll understand me and understand what I've been through." Although we did not have an early acquaintance, everything took place as if we had been acquainted with each other and we had a friendly relationship.

*Common plot elements*

Most of the stories are based on a template that includes three components: Crisis, followed by recalling and revealing details of the past life, a complication or a difficulty that is related to this life, and acceptance of the situation. These steps are parallel to the plot parts of Labov (1975): Beginning, Middle, and End, and they may also include an extract, an orientation, a complicated action, an evaluation, a result or a resolution, and a coda.[4]

Most of the interviewees talk about the background from which they came and present significant selected moments in their lives. These are mainly the first years when they began to talk about the ages of 2-5, a period that is characterized by the declaration of the "alnutq," awakening of memory while detailing the "conditions" in which the memory of the previous incarnation awakens. Often, the recollection begins with a dream when one of the family members, especially the mother, dreams of a particular person, who sends a message to him and informs him that he will soon come to see him, or in another case, when the narrator sees in a dream a character related to his previous life and hints at the coming events. After that, the restoration of the life story sometimes involves searching for the previous family members, of course, if they have discovered who they are and if they can be contacted. By providing this information, the listener is already inserted in the opening statement or the opening paragraph to the intensification of the events. Thus, for example, in the story of H. from the village of Daliat al-Carmel, the story begins with the sentence: "It all started when I was on our porch here at home, and my wife was walking down the street and I recognized and ran to my mother; I was a little boy, and I told her that this woman was my wife." That's how the narrator aroused my attention and curiosity and then told me about what happened next.

Many of the stories do not have long openings and therefore all the details described are important. In most stories, the exposition is characterized by time, space, the main characters, and the relationships between them.

Most of the narrators indicate that when they remembered; they were encouraged by the family members in the current incarnation and were recognized by the family members from the previous life, and then physical contact was created between the two families, and they raised more details. At this point, stability takes place in the story.

This is even though personal stories do not always end in a balance like folk stories, and they are echoed by the difficulties and the unintelligible in the story.

This is even though personal stories do not always end in a balance like folk stories, and in them, difficulties and unintelligible parts are echoed. Besides, some of the stories I recorded did not end in balance, but in many questions, marks relating to the identity of the interviewee, many difficulties in dealing with the cause of death from the previous incarnation, or the inability to contact the previous family. In the attached story of interviewee A., the conclusion was characterized by balance, acceptance of the situation, and the desire to search for family members from the previous incarnation.

Ilana Rozen (1994: 87), who divides in her research personal stories into groups, distinguishes, among other things, between stories controlled by the narrator and which are characterized by a broadsheet, a logical order of events, dates, and place names, and between stories that often evade the control of the narrator, and which are characterized by a relatively short sheet, in accepting contradictions and in the presence of issues and events charged on the side of their camouflage, or suppression or absence from the text.

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[4] Each story has a different length and unique characteristics, such as extensions, other climaxes in the story and more, but in this context, I want to discuss stories together.

The stories I have recorded are of two models. The story of A. is "controlled" by her. It has a structured and logical order of events, dates and timelines, names of places, and a message of religious values – to believe in reincarnation and to maintain the connection to the previous identity. This issue is shared by some of the stories that were collected in the "באסע" (*Base*) and also by the stories collected by Faraj (2006).

There were also unintelligible stories, but fewer. These were by the young narrators. These stories were characterized by jumps in the order of events. For example, in the story of *Y.* from Kufr Yassif village: The story begins with his visit to Horefish village, continues with a story about a dream he had before he even remembered a previous incarnation, and only then in response to the question: "Was that the first time you remembered?" He chose to speak about his mother who asked him why he loved the other mother more. It is likely that the stories of this young age group were not told much and did not come together as the stories of the older age group.

*Design of space and time*

*Space*

The reference to space and place in stories is interesting and important because it reflects a social situation and sometimes also a spiritual one. In all the stories, the central place where everything begins is the home, which is described in brief or detail. In the attached story, the narrator describes the place through the feelings he evoked in it.

This story and another story "Alnutq" take place in two central spaces: In this incarnation, the space is the tombs of the prophets, and the very fact that the (she-) narrator visited the tombs of prophets emphasizes that belief in holiness is a central thing to the community consciousness and the religious practices that accompany it. The second space is the home in Syria, in a small Druze village. Although this is a hostile country from an Israeli point of view and living under the shadow of war, the narrator excitedly describes her life and talks about her husband and the circumstances of their acquaintance.

In this passage, her facial expressions changed, and her tone of voice changed because, despite the shaking experience, it was probably a good memory. Immigration to the United States is remembered without specifying how it happened and when exactly. The avoidance of eye contact at this stage and various cues have led me to speculate that migration in the incarnation was illegal.

Just like this example, most of the recorded stories begin in the space of the house or near the house, and then the memory and events that lead to the transition to the second space and the continuation of the plot. After the description of the house and the moment of remembrance, the narrator can move to the second space, which is characterized by difficulties related both to the previous life circumstances and to the acceptance of the story in the present.

An important and interesting aspect that is reflected in the story is that the house becomes a place of lack of belonging and doubt and undermines the sense of identity of the narrator. These feelings drive the narrator to seek an answer to the problem of identity in the second space, which characterizes the previous incarnation.

We can see that in most of the narrators, there is no detailed description of the house, and there are no expansions, but when they talk about the other space, they expand, or detail things related to it. So, for example, in the story of *H.* from Daliat al-Carmel, the house is described briefly: "It all started when I was on the porch at our home…" But when the narrator begins to describe his home in a previous life, he expands: "There was a basket in the house where we used to put pens. We had an unsafe staircase in our house, and the children always fell because of it." Thus, the narrator establishes the credibility of the story and anchors his experience with tangible details.

*Time*

The design of time in the story is anchored in both collective and personal events. So, for instance, in the attached story, interviewee A. talks about two periods of time: this incarnation is about the period of preparation for the holiday of the Sacrificing Day – an important period among the members of the community from a religious perspective, because this period, which is called the "Ten-Day-Nights" period of fasting and praying. In this period, they also donate a lot to those in need. The circumstances of the commemoration thus indicate the Druze culture and customs of the community.

The second period of the previous incarnation is the 80s to the 20th century, a period in which Syria suffered from wars, and the Druze community in particular suffered persecution from Muslims, mainly because of the support of the members of the community at the time to President Assad. However, the story does not mention or describe the details of the war: Who is the enemy and what kind of war it is exactly. The she-narrator only mentions that her husband was murdered by the enemy. This passage was characterized by the seconds of silence that also testify to the nature of the society that tells, who maintains the commandment of "al-Tuqia / التقية" (self-guarding), according to which, hiding the truth is allowed to protect the members of the community and the believers from hostile Muslims and/or Christians. Because of the war and persecution, the family built a cubicle underground to hide during wars. It is presumed that the trauma of persecution and the murder of her husband in front of her eyes caused the narrator to avoid talking about her circumstances. Whether one way or another, the two central timelines in the story tie the narrator to the Druze community and strengthen her historical connection to it.

*The conflicting elements of the story*

The personal stories I recorded are often based on a system of binary opposites (according to Levi-Strauss, 1975). The binary opposites common to the stories I recorded are the contrasts between life-death, past-present, religious-secular, or modern, young-old, women-men. The attached story evokes a lot of tension, resulting from the comparison between the two incarnations. At the beginning of the story, when the (she-) narrator notes that everything began during the holiday preparations, the contrast between illness and cure and science and religion arises. When she went to the doctor for treatment, this did not work, so she had to seek help from the prophets.

Two main characters in the interviewee's life embody another set of fundamental opposites: between a secular figure outside the family and a religious figure inside the family. On the one hand, she describes the educator who is not religious, and she is portrayed as an inclusive and supportive figure. On the other hand, she describes the religious aunt who did not agree to let her tell what she had gone through. She also prevented a structure, which also recalls a previous life, to talk and talk about his previous life. This tension between secularism and religion is also connected to the tension between the official religious leaders, who are always trying to prevent those who are mentioned in their incarnation from telling and sharing.

The third tension is between generations. When the interviewee was asked to answer the question: "How was the reaction in your environment? Parents, relatives, and school?" She noted that at first, it was difficult for her in school, the students (the younger generation) ridiculed her until the educator (representing the older generation) intervened and helped her. Then her classmates began to accept her, and even try to help her in search of the previous family members. The members of the older generation support this case and help more than the narrator's contemporaries.

A fourth tension is between genders. In the first part, the character of the husband is a key figure that protects the family. After his disappearance, the figure of the son appears, taking the place of the father. He protects his mother and makes decisions for her: "My son didn't agree

that I go to work." Dependence on men reflects the patriarchal nature of Druze society – the woman usually depends on her husband; he protects the land and the family honor.

The Narrator tries to resolve these tensions using her role as a mother: She didn't break down after her husband's death; she started a business and took care of her sons, after adjusting to a new and foreign environment. This is also evident in the stories of other women in Faraj (2006), Hasson (2003), and in אסע"י (I will travel). Women cling to their role as mothers and in the areas of female occupation in the Druze society such as cooking, to bridge times, spaces of life, and personal destinies.

It is important to note that there are clear differences between the genders – there are certain types of behavior and hobbies that are constant for men and unique behavior that is legitimate for women! Here too, the story maintains a certain "social order" – gender-specific.

In conclusion, the story has a religious character because in the infrastructure, the idea is embodied, and the high power forces the rules.

In the two parts of the plot, which are connected to the two life cycles of the narrator, is the motive of accepting God's decree and belief in the uniqueness of the community character. In the background, there is a glimpse into the history of the Druze, who are constantly at war with their neighbors, especially the Muslims (Dana, 1998: 33). The main purpose of the story from the point of view of the woman-interviewee is to expose her identity and bridge between two worlds of the past and the present.

### Use of language and accent

The language of the stories is considered one of the keys to deciphering the means of expression of the narrating society. Heled (2009: 308) notes that according to Fishman, language is content, and the medium is at least partially the message. Even in the stories I recorded, language is a personal expression of a reality that has a profound emotional significance. The narrator in the attached story combined expressions and concepts from her previous incarnation, and in this case, from English, when she mentioned the names of foods she had prepared in her previous incarnation, and she still remembers them. Other interviewees usually used this purpose in Hebrew, mixed with Arabic, and even dialects of different villages, which linked them to the villages from which they came in a previous incarnation. For example, the proverb that the narrator *V* from Kfar Rama said, when he referred to his homeland in a previous incarnation, life – Syria: "The roots of the love of homeland are rooted in faith." This is a Syrian and Lebanese proverb. Heled (2009: 68-69) focuses on her article: "Mother, Madre, or Mama?"

In the phenomenon of exchanging codes. A code is a type of language used to communicate in a particular group. It brings the words of Gomperetz, who identified the phenomenon of code exchange as an element of contrast or collision. This is not only a clash between two modes of speech belonging to different syntactic systems, but also between two paths of discourse that reflect an internal conflict between polarized emotional positions.

Integration of languages and dialects as 'codes', may tell how blurred the interviewees' integration and identity are, and even divided. This aspect ties them to more than one group. This aspect may also reflect another tension that is characteristic of the Druze community, namely, the tension between the community and the state: To what extent the language of the state expresses the narrators, and how much they must adopt other languages and dialects to tell their story.

Language also refers to the way things are told, namely, direct speech, the use of quotes, images, and metaphors, what use the narrator makes in his voice (high, low, loud, etc.), and body gestures. The woman-narrator here and other narrators whom I interviewed used their voices. When they spoke of the moment of death, their voice was sharp and firm, and when they

spoke of family members from the previous incarnation, their voice was characterized by a low, calm tone.

*Use of body and objects*

Integration of objects in the stories also performs a function of validation. The literal reconstruction of life becomes a part of life itself through the objects that validate the story and the identity of the narrator who creates it (Held: 310). In most stories, the "Natiq" (speaker) already at his first meeting at his home or with one of his previous family members speaks of a particular object that he had hidden in a previous incarnation and/or identifies an object.

In one of the interviews I recorded, the narrator mentioned *N*. from Moghar village, that the first thing he looked for in the room when he visited was the hunting vessel he had, and in another story (Faraj, 2006: 47), the interviewee noted that he remembered his military weapon. It can be observed that men had "masculine" objects, compared to women who in most cases were remembered as people who were central in their lives like a husband or a child, or in the operation of some machine that was used for the narrator in a central role in her life, such as a sewing machine.

According to Bar-Yitzhaq (1981), the subject of reincarnation as a belief, experience, and story is thus connected on one side to one's religion and society (as a potential family member of each member of the Druze society in Israel and abroad), and sometimes it is his only connection to this society.

## 6. Conclusion

Belief in reincarnation in the Druze community exceeds the bounds of official religion, and the personal story about it is held precisely among the members of the secular community. This belief is responsible for marking the boundaries of religious, national, gender, and other identity, and for crossing other boundaries, such as time and place boundaries.

This belief is responsible for marking the boundaries of religious, national, gender and other identity, and for crossing other boundaries, such as time and place boundaries. It serves as a cohesive and comforting social factor, but it also engulfs social and psychological tensions among families and individuals who find themselves living a double life story. Against this background, contextual and comparative examination of the phenomenon may provide explanations for popular beliefs, behaviors, and expressions among members of the Druze community and understand the foundations of its identity, as reflected in the folklore.

The personal story of the genre with which I deal is first a personal expression, and second, the social perceptions of their creator, come to complete their perception of their Ego/ I itself. Thus, indirectly, we learn from these perceptions of the communities and societies that create the stories, but it is the "I" who is at the center of the popular work that stands in front of us in this article.

Finally, I quote Franz Rosenzweig,[5] who saw in the personal experience a point of origin and a fundamental principle of philosophical thought, reflecting this position. His words

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[5] Rosenzweig, F (1921). Star of Redemption. Translated from German by Y. Amir, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, p. 51. In an article by M. Heled (תשס"ז). "Tongue, object, place: Personal stories of Spanish-Jewish popular Narrators speaking Jewish-Spanish (Ladino) as identity glasses." *Judaism - Issues, Pieces, Faces, Identities*, Beersheba: Published by Ben-Gurion University Press, pp. 305-334.

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shed light on this research, on which this study is based, and on the questions of identity that are derived from it.

"And so is man-made, not any man, but a certain man in his privacy, a Master of Philosophy […] Man in the absolute privacy of his being in the reality defined by first name and family name, has deviated from the world which he knew himself as a thinking world, has deviated from the rule of philosophy. The human being's experience is his experience in his privacy."

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