# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION IN AMERICA

VOLUME I

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Editors



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environment for Celebrities and Scientologists." Travolta has personally endorsed the food and service and has appeared on the cover of a Scientology magazine titled *Celebrity*. In 2000, Travolta released the film *Battlefield Earth*, which was a screen homage, with a \$90 million budget, to one of L. Ron Hubbard's science fiction stories. To promote the film, Travolta appeared in bookstores signing copies of Hubbard's book, but the film failed at the box office.

# Celebrities as Religious Figures

While some religious figures became celebrities and others endorsed a religion or spiritual movement, devotion to some celebrities, such as Elvis Presley, took on quasi-religious dimensions. Even in life, Presley (1935–1977) was known as "the King," and he continued to defy death through countless "Elvis sightings" and celebrity impersonations. Numerous shrines have arisen, including the 24 Hour Church of Elvis, which began as an art project in Portland, Oregon, less than a decade after Presley's death. Churches and new religious movements have arisen around the lives of other famous musicians, as well; included among them are the Saint John Coltrane Church in San Francisco and the short-lived Church of Unlimited Devotion, a hippie cult that saw Grateful Dead guitarist Jerry Garcia as an avatar of God.

### Future Prospects

In the twenty-first century American religion and celebrity culture continues an exchange that began in the eighteenth century with George Whitefield taking out newspaper advertisements for his Christian revivals and continued into the new millennium with such Hollywood stars as Sharon Stone and Richard Gere promoting the Dalai Lama. Celebrity culture has no single effect on American religion. In some cases celebrity endorsements allow the promotion of minority faiths and exotic spiritualities—for example, the Beatles' pilgrimage to India or the decision by pop icon Madonna to embrace Jewish mysticism. In others the rise of religious celebrities such as Mother Teresa can inspire a return to more traditional forms of Christian piety. Celebrity fame is, by its very nature, ephemeral, while religious belief appears to be long-lasting. Cable television can raise up religious celebrities—for instance, Jim and Tammy Bakker and then destroy them with saturation coverage of the latest sex-and-money scandal. Over the past three centuries, techmological innovations in mass communication (newspapers, fadio, film, and television) have offered new ways to bring celebrity culture into religious life. That trend will no doubt

continue as computers and the Internet reshape the way Americans view themselves, society, and perhaps even their religious beliefs, practices, and communities.

See also Buddhism in North America; Canada: Protestants and the United Church of Canada; Devotionalism; Electronic Church; Film; Great Awakening(s); Internet; Krishna Consciousness; Music: Christian; Popular Religion and Popular Culture entries; Radio; Revivalism entries; Scientology; Television.

Don Lattin

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# Chabad-Lubavitch

The movement known today as "Chabad," "Chabad-Lubavitch," or "Lubavitch" grew out of the pietistic Hasidic revolution that swept through East European Jewry in the eighteenth century. The charismatic healer, preacher, and popular religious mystic Israel ben Eliczer Ba'al Shem Tov

("Master of the Good Name"), known by his acronym "the Besht" (c. 1700-1760) served as the central figure of this movement, which arose in response to such complex forces as the partition of Poland, anti-Semitic massacres, the stirrings of pseudo-messiahs such as Shabbetai Zevi and Jacob Frank, economic ruin, spiritual despair, and pietistic religious trends throughout the region. Hasidim defied traditional Jewish communal authorities and formed spiritual circles distinguished by their patterns of life and dress, their ecstatic religious practices, the mystical teachings that they communicated, their outreach to the poor and the illiterate, and their self-segregation. At a time when authority and prestige in Jewish life depended heavily upon Talmudic knowledge, early Hasidic masters insisted that God could also be approached through acts of love and devotional prayer.

# Hasidism after "the Besht"

The leading figure in the Hasidic movement following the death of the Besht was his disciple, the charismatic preacher (maggid) Dov Baer of Mezhirech (d. 1772). He helped to popularize Hasidism by sending forth emissaries to recruit followers from the Jewish masses throughout Poland, while his personal conduct set the pattern for the institution of the Zaddik, the benevolent "spiritual father"—type leader of a Hasidic sect. He also gathered around him a group of significant disciples who studied his teachings and mystical practices. These disciples, following his death, decentralized and diversified Hasidism. They spread through Poland, the Ukraine, and into Russia, establishing Hasidic courts of their own.

Shneur Zalman (1745–1812/1813), one of Dov Baer's disciples, settled in Belarus, establishing a Hasidic court in the town of Lyady. With his broad learning, he developed a new school of Hasidism that placed greater emphasis on scholarship, study, and contemplation. He wrote a pathbreaking volume of spiritual guidance, known as the *Tanya*, and sought to impart formerly restricted and esoteric Hasidic teachings throughout all levels of society. Shneur Zalman developed a three-part system of intellectual contemplation, connected to three rungs of the esoteric ten "spheres" (sfirot) described by Jewish mystics: "wisdom," "understanding," and (through a union of these two) "knowledge." The Hebrew acronym of these three words is Chabad, the name by which the movement came to be known.

Following the death of Shneur Zalman, his son, Dov Ber, settled in the town of Lubavitch, where he became the

movement's dynastic leader. As was Hasidic custom, followers of Dov Ber and his descendants became known by the town's name, the home of its central Hasidic court. Chabad also developed centers elsewhere in Russia, generally led by other members of the dynasty.

# Emigration to America and Rabbi Joseph Schneersohn

Chabad Hasidim, like many other fervently Orthodox Jews, feared emigration to America. They considered it a "non-kosher land" where Judaism could not properly be observed. Nevertheless, in the face of persecution, some followers emigrated to America in any case. One of the first to arrive was Rabbi Chaim Yaakov Widerwitz (1835–1911), an ordained follower of the Rebbe ("grand rabbi") of Lubavitch, who was expelled from Moscow in 1891 and became a rabbi in the United States. Subsequently, as conditions for Jews in Russia worsened, others emigrated, some of whom continued to maintain contact with their Rebbe from afar. Synagogues named "Anshe Lubavitch" or named in memory of one of the Chabad Rebbes began to appear on the American scene.

Following World War I and the Bolshevik revolution, the Chabad movement in Russia, along with many other religious groups, was actively persecuted, and more followers emigrated, including Rabbi Israel Jacobson, who arrived in America on December 22, 1925. The fact that many Chabad followers were rabbis made it possible for them to enter the United States outside quota restrictions. Jacobson subsequently helped to bring other Chabad followers to the United States and played a major role in building the movement in North America and raising funds to send back to Chabad headquarters in Europe.

The Sixth Lubavitcher ("of Lubavitch") Rebbe, Rabbi Joseph I. Schneersohn (1880–1950), who became Rebbe upon his father's death in 1920, took a special interest in his growing band of American followers. He corresponded with them, and in 1923 he established an organization of Chabad Hasidim in the United States and Canada (Agudas Chasidim Anshei Chabad) to raise funds, promote Jewish learning, and spread the teachings of the Chabad movement. Following his imprisonment by the Communists, who allegedly sentenced him to death for promoting Judaism underground, and his subsequent expulsion from the Soviet Union in 1927, Rabbi Schneersohn personally visited the United States from September 17, 1929, to July 17, 1930. He toured Jewish communities, raised funds, lectured about Hasidism,

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Mon Men Rabi and the laws of family purity, and met with Justice Louis Brandeis and President Herbert Hoover. Unlike many other European rabbis, he expressed optimism concerning American Jewry and its future, believing that young American-born Jews would experience a religious revival. He even considered settling in America. Later, he continued from afar to encourage his American followers, dispatching personal emissaries to promote Chabad and raise funds for the movement.

Rabbi Schneersohn, confined to a wheelchair, was at the Yeshiva (Talmudical academy) that he had established in

spoke out concerning the importance of Jewish education

Rabbi Schneersohn, confined to a wheelchair, was at the Yeshiva (Talmudical academy) that he had established in Otwock, Poland, when the Nazis invaded in 1939, and he soon made his way to Warsaw. There he was caught up in the German bombing and in the suffering experienced by the city's Jews once the Nazis came to power. Thanks to the efforts of his American followers, leading American political figures, and sympathetic Nazi officials (one of whom had a Jewish father), he and his household were saved. They arrived in the United States on March 19, 1940. His daughter, Chaya Mushka, and her husband, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902–1994), followed a year later from France, which had likewise fallen under Nazi control.

As leader of the Chabad movement, Rabbi Joseph Schneersohn settled in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, reestablishing his movement's world headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway. In the midst of war, and working from the premise that the United States was "no different" from European communities in its potential for Jewish life, he established a yeshiva, a network of Jewish all-day and supplementary schools, Jewish summer camps, a publishing house, and other institutions aimed at transforming America into the "new center for Torah and Judaism," replacing Europe. Where other Hasidic leaders who settled in America during and after the war followed an enclave strategy, seeking to secure their followers against dangerous outside influences, Rabbi Joseph Schneersohn advocated an outreach strategy aimed at spreading his movement's mission to all Jews, affiliated and unaffiliated alike, in an effort to strengthen their religious consciousness and commitments in the face of the European catastrophe.

# Movement's Growth under Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson

Rabbi Joseph Schnecrsohn's death in 1950 set off something of a leadership crisis in the Chabad community. The Rebbe

left two learned, eloquent, dynamic, and competing sons-inlaw-Rabbi Shmaryahou Gourary and Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson-but no clear heir. Rabbi Gourary was older and had accompanied his father-in-law for some forty years. Rabbi Schneerson had attended university in Berlin and Paris, was more modern in outlook and dress, had assisted his father-in-law in Europe, and had, in the United States, achieved great success as head of the movement's publishing arm (Kehot Publication Society) and educational and social services arms (Merkos L'Invonei Chinuch and Machne Israel). Rabbi Schneerson's lectures and scholarly writings won him renown among Chabad Hasidim in the United States. Thanks in part to their lobbying, he eventually emerged as victor and was formally installed as the seventh (and, as it turned out, the last) Lubavitcher Rebbe in 1951. Some members of the Gourary branch of the family, especially Barry S. Gourary, the son of Rabbi Shmaryahou, never fully acquiesced. In the 1980s, Barry Gourary fought and lost a widely publicized legal battle against his uncle over ownership of the Chabad library.

Under Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Chabad movement grew in numbers, wealth, and influence. and became a significant force in American Jewish religious life. Chabad emissaries—"the Rebbe's army"-spread through every Jewish community in the United States and also across the world. Chabad became the best-known Hasidic movement in America and among the fastest-growing postwar religious movements of any kind in the United States. While the movement maintains no membership figures, it bills itself as the largest Jewish organization in the world, with institutions in more than seventy countries and forty-eight states. It boasts several hundred thousand active devotees in New York (mostly Brooklyn) and other major Jewish communities, and a much larger number of friends who participate in some of its educational and religious programs and contribute to its work.

#### Modernizing Hasidism

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson made clear, soon after he assumed his position, that he appreciated modernity. Having himself studied mathematics and engineering, he encouraged his followers to utilize new technologies to strengthen their movement and Jewish life in general. Television, satellite communications, and the latest computer gadgetry all, in time, became part of the Chabad arsenal. Today Chabad.org and Lubavitch.com declare that their mission is to "utilize internet technology to unite Jews

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worldwide, empower them with the knowledge of their 3300 year old tradition, and foster within them a deeper connection to Judaism's rituals and faith." But modernity still has its limits. The Rebbe insisted that the biblical view of creation was correct and opposed both the theory of evolution and scientific claims concerning the antiquity of the world.

Significantly, the Rebbe abandoned the distinctive fur hat and long Hasidic caftan that had been his father-in-law's uniform. He dressed in the somewhat more modern fashion to which he had grown accustomed in Europe, with a black Borsalino felt fedora. This became the uniform for Chabad Hasidic men, distinguishing them both from other Hasidim and from their American neighbors. Chabad women, though always modestly dressed, likewise made more concessions to modern fashion than most of their Hasidic counterparts, without compromising their understanding of what Jewish law demanded.

Rabbi Schneerson possessed deep Jewish learning, and was viewed as brilliant, charismatic, energetic, and a skillful administrator by many of his followers. His literary output fills dozens of volumes, comprising his regular weekly discourses on a range of subjects, occasional lectures, thousands of published letters, scholarly notes, and more. Followers considered his every word and action to be holy and maintained careful records of his activities and conversations.

Rabbi Schneerson devoted the bulk of his energies to strengthening the Chabad movement and Jewish life in general. He initiated a wide range of formal and informal educational and religious endeavors, including well-publicized and sometimes controversial campaigns, to promote the observance of individual commandments, such as the lighting of Sabbath candles by women, the donning of phylacteries (tefillin, small boxes containing verses from scripture) by men, and the public celebration of Chanukah by Jews. Chabad frequently borrowed military metaphors to promote these activities, perhaps appropriately given the movement's strict hierarchic organization. Emissaries drove around in "mitzvah tanks," reaching out to the unaffiliated, and children were registered at a young age as "soldiers" in Tzivos Hashem, the Rebbe's "army of the Lord."

### Rabbi Schneerson and the Public Square

While many American Jews believed that the public square should be devoid of religious symbols based on the principle of church-state separation, the Rebbe insisted that public displays of religion were both constitutional and compatible with U.S. tradition. He justified his efforts to promote nonsectarian prayer in the public schools on the basis that Congress opens with a prayer. He promoted Chanukah in the public square according to the same legal basis that justified Christmas trees. Of course, his larger goal was to gain access to secular Jews whose faith he hoped to strengthen. "Where Chanukah lamps were kindled publicly," he exulted in a letter, "the results have been most gratifying in terms of spreading the light of Torah and Mitzvoth [commandments], and reaching out to Jews who could not otherwise have been reached." The United States Supreme Court in Allegheny County, City of Pittsburgh and Chabad v. ACLU (1989) strengthened Chabad's hand, ruling that the public display of a menorah did not violate the First Amendment to the Constitution. Thereafter such displays became widespread across the country. By contrast, efforts on the part of Chabad to promote nondenominational prayers and "moments of silence" in the public schools, and to win state aid for parochial schools, failed to win court approval.

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Late in his life, Rabbi Schneerson reached out beyond the Jewish community to "influence the nations of the world." While eschewing conversionism, he argued that non-Jews needed to observe a basic moral code set forth in seven laws that, according to Jewish tradition, God commanded Noah to observe following the flood. Chabad's hope for imminent messianic redemption of the world may have sparked this unusual universalistic campaign. An unknown number of non-Jews committed themselves to observing the Noahide laws, some calling themselves "children of Noah."

Rabbi Schneerson became a strong supporter of the state of Israel. His father-in-law, like many fervently Orthodox rabbis of the time, had once opposed Zionism, fearing that secular nationalism would replace religion as the central core of Jewish identity. About a year after the establishment of the state of Israel, however, Kfar Chabad ("Chabad Village") was established in Central Israel as the movement's Israeli headquarters. Over time, Chabad became a force in the country, particularly since the Rebbe's message of tolerance and love for every Jew contrasted with the more insular views of other fervently Orthodox groups. Rabbi Schneerson won thousands of followers in the Jewish state, and without ever traveling there, he exerted substantial influence—so much so that many Israeli leaders visited him in Brooklyn. Throughout the years, he advocated an amendment to Israel's Law of Return so that only Jews by birth and those converted according to strict Jewish law (and not-

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he state thodox ing that central ishment bad Vilement's force in of tolere insular ichneerate, and al influ-I him in amendby birth (and not by non-Orthodox rabbis) might claim citizenship. Following the Six Day War, he opposed the Camp David accords and the return of any territory to Israel's Arab neighbors. He encouraged Israel's leaders to imbue the country with Jewish values and to ensure the security of the land. He also encouraged his Israeli followers to serve in the military, which most fervently Orthodox Jews did not. While he often disagreed with the direction of Israel's secular leaders, particularly its Labor governments, he remained a revered figure among his followers and was admired by many Jews from Arab lands who came to appreciate his spirituality, warmth, and leadership.

# Messianism and the Death of Rabbi Schneerson

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson was a fervent messianist. Not only did he consider the messiah's coming to be imminent, he also believed that Jews, through their own active efforts, could induce the messianic coming. Many Lubavitch faithful had understood the catastrophe of World War II to be the "last labors prior to the arrival of our Messiah" and took solace from the movement's counsel to "be ready for redemption soon!" When that prophecy failed, they experienced grave disappointment. The Rebbe, through his lectures and outreach efforts to Jews around the world, his widely publicized pronouncements, and his interpretation of modern Israel's role in the divine plan, rekindled messianic hopes, spurring his followers to years of selfless commitment as foot soldiers in campaigns to "force" redemption, to bring "Moshiach [messiah] now." Many of these efforts focused on the observance by Jews of a single commandment and returning "lost" Jews to the fold. Personal emissaries (shluchim) dispatched by the Rebbe to set up institutions around the world wherever Jews lived or visited, served, in effect, as lifelong missionaries for his cause. In accordance with Hasidic teachings concerning selfabnegation, they established Chabad centers in communities large and small and modeled a fervently Orthodox lifestyle, often at personal sacrifice, so as to strengthen Jewish religious consciousness and hasten the messiah's coming.

Substantial numbers of Lubavitch followers concluded, as time passed, that the Rebbe himself was the not-yet-revealed messiah, a belief fostered by his childlessness, the rapid worldwide growth of the movement he headed, and, according to some, hints concealed in his public utterances. Rather than dampening these speculations, the Rebbe's death, in 1994, only heightened them, some believers insisting that "our Master, Teacher and Rebbe, King Messiah"

remained alive and would in time be revealed. Some Orthodox critics condemned these beliefs as alien to Judaism, and in time the mainstream leadership of the movement distanced itself from those who refused to declare the Rebbe dead. The messianist minority was also expelled from the movement's Brooklyn headquarters.

With the death of the Rebbe, his gravesite in Queen's, known as his Ohel (a "tent" built over the resting place of a righteous sage), became a site of pilgrimage. Daily, and especially on commemorative days, people come to recite psalms, light candles, and seek the deceased Rebbe's heavenly intercession. A visitor center, meditation area, and study hall have been erected close to the gravesite, and those in need are encouraged to write the Rebbe a letter. The Web site of the Ohel promises that faxes, e-mails, and ordinary letters "are brought to the Ohel shortly after their receipt."

## Chabad after the Rebbe

Some predicted, following the Rebbe's death, that the Chabad movement would split asunder or decline. Few Hasidic groups have historically been able to thrive without a living Rebbe to guide and direct them. Chabad, however, has continued to grow, led by its army of more than four thousand full-time emissary families who oversee Chabad houses in far-flung communities around the world and on more than one hundred college campuses. These emissaries—"dedicated to the welfare of the Jewish people worldwide"—guide, teach, provide hospitality, lead religious services, engage in charitable work, serve addicts, minister to those in jail, and reach out to Jews of every sort.

In recent years, Chabad has created a synagogue movement in the United States that claims the involvement of hundreds of thousands of Jews, most of them not themselves fully observant. In the former Soviet Union, where Chabad's roots lie, it plays a major role in Jewish life on both the local and national levels. In Australia, South Africa, the Far East, and some European countries, its rabbis now lead a significant number of the community's major synagogues. Chabad has also established a popular program of adult Jewish education, known as the Jewish Learning Institute, and claims to be "the largest provider of adult Jewish education in the world."

The economics of Chabad, like those of many centrally driven, highly organized, and fiercely independent proselytizing movements, are somewhat mysterious. Much of the funding is thought to come from Jews outside the

movement who have come to respect Chabad's work and achievements. Chabad emissaries are responsible for maintaining their own operations and are encouraged to be entrepreneurial. While campus centers receive some start-up funding, every Chabad House is, in time, expected to fend for itself. What keeps the emissaries going is a strong sense of esprit de corps fostered by the movement, coupled with the deep-seated belief that they are carrying forward the Rebbe's work, serving and strengthening the Jewish people, and hastening the coming of the messiah.

See also Anti-Semitism; Architecture: Jewish; Canada: Pluralism; Hasidism; Holocaust; Judaism entries; Music: Jewish; Religious Thought: Jewish; Torah; Women: Jewish; Worship: Jewish; Zionism.

Jonathan D. Sarna

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# Charismatics/Charismatic Movements

The word *charismatic* characterizes any Christian in any church tradition who exercises one of the postconversion gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts, listed in Romans 12:6–8 and 1 Corinthians 12–14, include, but are not limited to, the ecstatic religious experience of speaking in tongues, the

interpretation of tongues, prophecy, healing, and miracles. The term is derived from the Greek word charisma, meaning an unmerited gift of grace. The Holy Spirit manifests himself through these gifts for the common good of the body of Christ. Charismatics differ greatly in church background and doctrine but are united in a common experience—the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The Charismatic movement is a global spiritual renewal over the past one hundred years that has been described by some as the "New Pentecost." Pentecostals believe that the postconversion experience of baptism of the Holy Spirit is available for all believers and is evidenced by glossolalia (speaking in tongues). The "New Pentecost" has spread the Pentecostal beliefs and practices to mainline Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and nondenominational traditions.

#### Three Waves

Charismatic Christianity has no one founder, no one system of theology, no particular type of church government, and no defining liturgy. While scholars differ on which groups should be included in this category, they generally agree that the revival/renewal movement began at the turn of the twentieth century and consists of three phases or waves of the Spirit.

# The First Wave: Classical Pentecostalism (1900-Present)

Numerous revivals marked the turn of the twentieth century around the world; the Welsh Revival of 1904, a revival in India in 1905, and several revivals in the United States between 1901 and 1906. Most scholars identify the 1906 Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, California, as the launching pad for the First Wave of the Spirit in the modern era and the catalyst for the extraordinary missionary activity that followed. Few events have influenced modern church history as much as the three and one half years of this revival. It became a magnet that drew people from many racial, ethnic, and denominational backgrounds to Los Angeles to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, 25 evidenced by speaking in tongues. When the participants returned to their home churches to share their experiences, they faced rejection by their denominations. Forced out on their own, the Classic Pentecostals eventually formed the first Pentecostal denominations such the Church of God in Christ, Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee), the Assemblies of God, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, and others. Theologically, most Classic Pentecostals to sp th tha

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