

Gazing at the Head in Ashkenazi Hasidism*

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I. Myth and Ritual: Some Remarks on Spanish and Ashkenazi Predilections

Scholars of myth have focused upon the relationship between myths and the rituals that may accompany them. The relationship between the two may be described tentatively as involving three modalities: The recitation of a myth as part of a certain rite may sometimes be considered part of an organic affinity between the two elements of the performance. I propose to designate this type of the narrated myth as an 'explicit myth', standing as it is in direct relationship with the rite.

On the other hand, 'silent' rituals might also have been connected to mythologoumena, even if those are not explicitly mentioned during the performance of the ritual; nor may they be formulated separately, but implied, inherently, in the peculiar fashion rites performed or understood. This type of myth may be regarded as an 'implicit' myth. Unlike the next category of myths to be mentioned immediately below, here the myth may be congenital with the ritual, though a later development would separate them. In this category the recitation of the *mythos* is divorced from the ritual dromenon.

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Finally, there is a possibility that though a mythical motivation of a ritual exists within the framework of a certain culture it finds its expression separately from the rite it had motivated; I propose to call this category 'superstructural myths', because they are employed to explain the meanings of more than one ritual. Their recitation, even the awareness of their existence, is not necessary for the very act of performing rites. Such myths may stem from sources that may be independent of the phenomenon itself, even unrelated to it and only connected by way of association. Let me attempt to exemplify these three categories starting from Jewish examples.

In the first category we may include the recitation of the account of creation by the Ma'amadot during the performing of the sacrifices in the Temple. The relationship between the two components of the performance is obvious since the sacrifices are supposed to maintain the creation that is explicitly mentioned in the narrated text; they sustain or complement each other, forming an organismic coherence.¹ In fact, a certain description that may not have an overt mythical character, such as the Genesis account of creation, may nevertheless acquire a mythical nature in a ritual performance by its solemn and emphatic recitation.

In the second category, we may enumerate the silent performance of the sacrifices by the priests in what has been described as the "Temple of Silence", namely the view of the performance of Jewish ritual as conceived of by the Priestly layer of the Bible and described by Yehezkel Kaufman and more recently by Israel Knohl.²

The first Kabbalists in Provence and Catalunya have offered comprehensive, systematic and mostly mythical interpretations of the Rabbinic commandments, which would fall within the

¹ See M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (Yale University Press, New Haven, London, 1988), p. 171.

² Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence, The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1995); see also Jacob Neusner, "Ritual Without Myth: The Use of Legal Materials for the Study of Religion," *Religion*, vol. 5 (1975), pp. 137–148.

frame of the third category. This proclivity toward systematic presentations is, in my opinion, one of the characteristics of Sephardi thought in general.³ The major emphasis of the first Kabbalists was on repeatedly offering ta'amei mitzwoth, Kabbalistic rationales for the classical rituals as enumerated by Halakhic masters, that were interpreted as different modes of actions which have particular influences upon the deity and men. These rationales were founded upon myths about a plurality of divine and demonic forces, which will be understood in the following as explicit myths. Despite the fact that they are often quite explicit in Kabbalistic writings, the mythical aspect is not recited, but much more often contemplated or implied mentally by the performer. Though they elaborated upon some already existing forms of theurgy and magic,⁴ many of the early Kabbalists had contributed mostly to the emergence of more complex, sometimes systematic, and thus, often explicit forms of theosophy. Absent in their discussions of the rituals are the minhagim, those customs which did not enjoy, at least in the early 13th century Spain, a special status.⁵

On the other hand, Ashkenazi masters of late 12th century and early 13th century were less prone to expand upon their theological concepts, and to offer elaborate superstructural myths, neither were they eager to expose the inner, mystical rationales of the commandments in a systematic manner.⁶ Rather they sometimes

³ On the question of the rationales for the commandments among the early Kabbalists, the Geronese contemporaries of the Ashkenazi masters who will be discussed also below, par. VII, see Jacob Katz, *Halakha and Kabbalah, Studies in the History of Jewish Religion, its Various Faces and Social Relevance* (The Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 9–33 (Hebrew) and M. Idel, "Some Remarks on Ritual and Mysticism in Geronese Kabbalah," in *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy*, vol. 3 (1993), pp. 111–130. On the Sephardi tendency toward systematization see M. Idel, "Jewish Thought in Medieval Spain," in ed., Haim Beinart, *The Sephardi Legacy* (The Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1992), vol. 1 p. 262.

⁴ Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (note 1 above), pp. 173–199; Charles Mopsik, *Les grands textes de la Kabbale* (Verdier, Lagrasse, 1993).

⁵ On the customs of Hasidei Ashkenaz see the very important monograph of Israel M. Ta-Shma, *Early Franco-German Ritual and Custom* (The Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1992) (Hebrew).

⁶ See the studies mentioned below note 9.

expanded upon a number of para-halakhic practices and rites that are not part of the regular enumeration of the 613 commandments. So, for example, the techniques of creating artificial anthropoids, later known as the Golem practice, the rite of the transmission of the divine name, the rituals of Hosha'na' Rabbah and the initiation of the children in the study of the Torah⁷ are recurrent in both their halakhic and mystical treatises. This emphasis upon customs, anomian techniques and legendary genres of their own, distinguishes, *inter alia*, their writings from those of the early Kabbalists.

Most of those customs, techniques or practices are patterns independent of the normative religious behavior as set forth in the existent Jewish classical texts. They should be understood as separate entities and should be dealt with as such. Here an attempt will be made to deal with what seems to me to be a convergence of the rationales of some different practices or rituals. I would like to emphasize that I am not claiming that the ideological pole was originally connected to the sensory pole, namely the performance of the rituals. In fact, I am strongly inclined to see the rationales discussed below as superimposed upon independent customs or techniques. But it is precisely this imposition that demonstrates the Ashkenazi attempt to offer a *ta'am* for the practices they have been involved in or, at least, acquainted with. It is this move from the non-halakhic practice to a more complex entity of anomian praxis plus myth, an implicit myth, that is the topic of this study. It should be mentioned that unlike the explicit theosophical myths recurring in the Sephardi, theosophical Kabbalah, in the Ashkenazi literature the mythical aspects are less evident, either because the Ashkenazi masters conceived them to be quite esoteric,⁸ or because they played a less central role. Thus, while the Kabbalistic myths can be easily described and analyzed by scholars, the

⁷ Cf. respectively Idel [note 22 below], Elliot R. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1994), pp. 234–247 and Ivan Marcus, *Rituals of Childhood, Jewish Acculturation in Medieval Europe* (Yale University Press, New Haven, London, 1996).

⁸ See Elliot Wolfson, "The Mystical Significance of Torah Study in German Pietism," *JQR*, vol. LXXXIV (1993), pp. 45, 47.

Ashkenazi ones are dormant in their enigmatic hints, and much greater efforts should be invested in the interrogation of their texts.⁹ In any case, the practices to be discussed below, divorced as they were from the classical sources, were not accompanied by the recitation of an explicit myth, but performed without a reinforcing sacred text, though implicit myths could nevertheless be presupposed as part of the acceptance or the genesis of these practices. Interestingly enough, it is the Ashkenazi openness to alien rituals that are adopted *de facto*, that will become evident in the following, while the Spanish Kabbalists are much more concerned with alien thought, and concerned less with alien practices.

II. A Righteous Man Takes a Bath

Let start with a passage from the early 13th century *Sefer Hasidim* which, simple as it may appear for a *prima facie* inspection, may betray something broader and more significant when examined in detail:

"A certain Hasid was taking a bath, [hayah rohetz ba-'ambaty] and his wife was sitting with him¹⁰ and behold, a radiance on the head of the Tzaddiq, and in the water.¹¹ His wife said to him: 'What is [the nature of] this radiance?'"

⁹ See e.g. Wolfson, "The Mystical Significance," *passim*, *Through a Speculum that Shines*, p. 238 note 202; as well as his study referred to below note 98; Daniel Abrams, "The Literary Emergence of Esotericism in German Pietism," *Shofar*, vol. 12 (1994), pp. 67–85.

¹⁰ *Yoshevet 'etzlo*. This phrase may perhaps be understood in a somewhat erotic manner by an intertextual reading when compared to Nehemiah 2: 6, where this expression occurs in connection to the sitting of the queen with the king. The term for queen, *shegel*, has been interpreted in Rabbinic literature as pointing to a woman prepared to fulfill the king's sexual desire.

¹¹ The Hebrew versions of this sentence differ in the various redactions of *Sefer Hasidim*. I have preferred the version of Ms. Parma on the basis of the facsimile of this manuscript, as printed by Ivan Marcus, *Sefer Hasidim*, (Hotza'at Merkaz Shazar, Jerusalem, 1985), fol. 101a: *ve-hinneḥ zohar 'al rosh ha-tzaddiq u-va-mayyim*. On this point, Y. Wistinetzki and Y. Freimann's edition, (Verhman, Frankfurt am Main, 1924), p. 268, no. 1059, is faulty. According to this version, there was a double effect of luminosity: the divine ink

He said: 'God, when he writes the deed of a man, wipes the ink which remains on [His] pen upon the head of the righteous man, whose time to depart has arrived'. And the righteous man died in the same week."¹²

The content of this quote is obviously a legend, as it deals with a unique event: the alleged conversation between a righteous man and his wife about a very concrete case: the emergence of the radiance on the water, and subsequently the death of the righteous man. However, the explanation offered by the righteous man transcends the genre of a legend; it deals with an explanatory myth, which involves the interaction between God and men, or at least some kind of men, the righteous, and the implication of this type of relationship for the life – actually the death – of those men. From the divine perspective, this is a recurrent event, though this, obviously, is not the case for the righteous. Let us enter into some more detail, by analyzing the formulations found in this passage: God is writing down the deeds of men in general, and not only of the righteous, whose heads are affected by the divine wiping. His wiping is not the reason for the righteous' death; their time had already arrived: *she-higi'a zemanam lehiypatter*. Thus, the wiping is to be understood to be a sign, perhaps an omen, for the imminence of their predestined depart. This indication involves two different aspects: one, the very emergence of the radiance by the act of wiping; the other is the manifestation of that radiance, apparently absent beforehand, upon the head and the water in the bath. The way the passage expresses the radiance supports such a reading: *ve-hinneḥ zohar shel rosh he-tzaddiq u-va-mayyim*.

colored both the head itself, and the reflection of the head in the water. In another edition *Sefer Ḥasidim*, ed. Reuven Margoliot (Mossad Harav Kook, Jerusalem, 1964), p. 272, par. 370, the version is *hikkah zohar shel rosh ha-tzaddiq ba-mayyim* which means that the radiance of the head, hit the water. Thus, the explanation would be that the divine radiance hit the head, and the radiance of the head hit the water. In the earlier editions, Bologna and Basle, the version is *ve-hikkah zohar 'al rosh ha-tzaddiq ba-mayyim*, which may be translated 'and the radiance struck the head of the righteous man in the water.' In all the cases, the *zohar* and the 'head' are mentioned.

¹² See the previous footnote. It should be noted that in the Parma manuscript this passage is found immediately after another discussion of the death of the *Tzaddiqim*, and their cleaning themselves by water in *preparatio mortis*. Nevertheless, in our paragraph the bath is not part of a ritual.

I assume that this reading expresses best the intention of the Ashkenazi author. It is not only an aura seen around the head of the righteous man, but rather its reflection in the water that is concerning the writer. This is why the terms water and bath are mentioned, in addition to the reference to the head of the person.

However, the significance of the manifestation of the radiance was, apparently, not a matter of common knowledge; the wife does not know it and she has to be initiated into the paramount meaning of this manifestation by her righteous husband. This fact seems to presuppose that the explanatory myth deals not only with a matter affecting the righteous persons, as is obvious in the text, but also describing a topic that is known only by the righteous man. This conclusion is, at least partially, corroborated by the similar Midrashic story about the ancient R. Shimeon the Righteous' ominous statement that the time of his death had already arrived.¹³ There can be no doubt that the radiance concerns only one part of the body: the head, and is to be understood as a close parallel to the aura of the saints in Christianity. The head is mentioned twice in this short passage, and the parallel in the *Midrash Rabbah* on *Exodus* strengthens this indication.

Let us attempt to point to the mythical status of the explanation offered to the legendary framework: the explanation involves the divine act of writing the deeds of men, of interacting with the righteous and thereby of letting them know that they are going to die. Though the particular event told in *Sefer Ḥasidim* does not allow us to generalize as to all the cases of death of the righteous men, the explanation of this *Tzaddiq* makes it plain that his is not a unique event but one more instance of a much more general sort of causality. On the basis of the great similarity to the Midrashic sources, the radiance of the head, as found in the passage

¹³ The identification of the *Hasid*, meaning someone belonging to the group of *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, with a *Tzaddiq*, has a double implication: it suggests, implicitly, the identity between the two, namely the righteousness of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, and their special knowledge of the occult.

See Joshua Finkel, "The Guises and Vicissitudes of a Universal Folk-Belief in Jewish and Greek Tradition," *Harry Austryn Wolfson Jubilee Volume*, English Section (Jerusalem, 1965), vol. 1 pp. 236–240, 242–243.

from *Sefer Hasidim* is to be seen as an attempt to draw an implicit comparison to Moses' status as a righteous man, because of the radiance of the skin of his face.¹⁴ However, just as in the case of Moses, the radiance is not the result of the immediate performance of a ritual activity; it may be the reward for the cumulative righteous deeds of the person, but done as a gift of God. Apparently, no single particular ritual is involved in the acquisition and manifestation of the radiance. I surmise that taking the bath in the above should not be conceived of as a ritual, but only as the setting for the manifestation: the water serves as the substratum for the reverberation of the radiance, and to this issue we shall return below. An important parallel to the above passage is found elsewhere in *Sefer Hasidim*, where it is said:

[a] In the very moment when the death of someone has been determined, in that same night or day his [personal] astral [angel]¹⁵ is darkened,¹⁶ and its eyes and mouth are closed when the verdict was promulgated, as if it is dead... This is also the case when the verdict is positive, when it is determined that he will

¹⁴ Exodus 34: 30; Finkel, *ibidem*, p. 251. On the reverberation of this biblical episode in Paul's discussion of Christ's face as reflecting the glory or splendor of God to the faithful see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., "Glory reflected on the Face of Christ (2 Cor 3: 7-4: 6) and a Palestinian Jewish Motif," *Theological Studies*, vol. 42, 4 (1981), pp. 630-644, who adduced also Qumran literature instances dealing with the illumination of the divine face. See also Alan F. Segal, *Paul, the Convert* (Yale University Press, New Haven, London, 1992), pp. 152, 154 and the interesting text found in the *Teachings of Silvanus*, 110, 14-19 on Christ: "For he is from the power of God, and he is an emanation of the pure glory of the Almighty. He is the spotless mirror of the working of God, and he is the image of his goodness. For he is also the Light of the Eternal Light." Cf. W.R. Schoedel, "Jewish Wisdom and the Formation of the Christian Ascetic," in ed., R.L. Wilken, *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity* (University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, 1975), pp. 191-192.

¹⁵ Mazzalo.

¹⁶ Nehshakh. See also the description of R. Eleazar in *Hilekhot Kavod* printed in Daniel Abrams, "Sod kol ha-Sodot, The Concept of the Divine Glory and the Intention of Prayer in the Writings of R. Eleazar of Worms," *Daat* vol. 34 (1995) p. 80 line 69 (Hebrew) where the dimness of the face, 'ofel 'al panai, is mentioned in the context of the prophetic mantics. For much more material on the faces on high, and their illumination see R. Eleazar of Worms' *Perushei Siddur ha-Tefillah* ed., M. and Y.A. Herschler (Jerusalem, 1992), vol. II pp. 387-388, 415, 418, 467, 548, 708, 713. See also below note 102.

have life, [then] the light from the face of God¹⁷ shines over him¹⁸ several times, as it is written¹⁹ 'The light of their faces [is] glory'. [b] And it is said that during the ten days between Rosh ha-Shannah and Yom Kippur, if someone lights a candle in a place where wind does not enter, if the candle is not extinguished [during that period], he will live during that year, as it is written²⁰ 'YHWH is on them, they will live'.²¹

Two different criteria are proposed here in order to check the negative decision: the darkness on the face of one's astral genius, and the closure of its mouth and eyes. The two criteria, though not contradictory, are, in my opinion, independent, as we shall attempt to show below. The simplest way of understanding this passage would be to see the angelic correspondent of man as the subject of those changes that reflect the divine decision. It is its face that is darkened, its mouth and eyes closed or, in the opposite case, its face that is shining with the light of the divine glory. The first case, namely the repercussions of the death verdict, will preoccupy us in a moment; nevertheless it should be noticed that in this last quote, in a manner somehow reminiscent of the first one, the divine decision is not immediately implemented. Though

¹⁷ Or *mi-lifnei ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu*. Though a literal translation would read "the light from before the Holy One, blessed be He," in this particular context, where the face is mentioned in the context of light, the proposed translation makes better sense than a literal one. See also R. Eleazar's *Sefer Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*, ed., N.E. Weiss (Benei Beraq, 1987), pp. 64, 67 where the expression 'or penei melekh hayyim recurs. For the biblical prooftexts for the view that the light of the divine face is a sign for redemption see e.g. Psalms 80: 4, 8, 17, 20. Whether there was an explicit link between the radiation of Moses' face and the luminosity of the divine face, a nexus which could clarify the later developments, is not clear. See above, note 14 and the sources dealt with by Dhorme [note 102 below]. Very important material dealing with Mandaean concepts of the face and their parallelism to later Jewish mystical concepts has been collected by Nathaniel Deutch, *The Gnostic Imagination: Gnosticism, Mandaeism, and Merkabab Mysticism* (Brill, Leiden, 1995), pp. 99-111. See also an important passage on the divine face, found in a context replete with Jewish motifs, in ed., Charlotte A. Baynes, *A Coptic Gnostic Treatise* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1933), p. 38 and below note 52.

¹⁸ Compare to R. Eleazar' view, *ibidem*, p. 64.

¹⁹ I did not find the verse which includes the locution 'or penei kavod.

²⁰ Isaiah 38: 16.

²¹ *Sefer Hasidim*, ed. Margoliot [note 11 above], pars. 547-548, p. 363; ed. Wistinetzki-Friemann, p. 370 par. 1556.

in the case of the second passage the face of the angelic power is immediately inflicted with the countenance of death, it seems that this is not so with regard to the corresponding human face. There is some time left between the decision and its execution, a span of time that varies, according to the two examples, from one week to a whole year.

In the second case, in part [b] of the quote, a certain practice has been established, a form of mantic device, related to the light of the candle, understood as the symbol of life. Thus, though in the first case we may correctly deny the existence of a structured praxis for divining the divine decision, in the second quote we confront a much more organized recipe.

III. Gazing at One's Head

The above passages are not isolated discussions in the Ashkenazi Hasidic literature. In different ways they are reminiscent of well-known rituals, mentioned, and apparently also cultivated, in the spiritual milieu of *Sefer Hasidim*. In a Provençal treatise composed around 1330, Rabbi Aharon ha-Kohen of Lunel's *Sefer Orbot Hayyim* the disciples of R. Eleazar of Worms reported that

if someone will open his mouth and will open his eyes over a vessel [full] of running water²² and if one of them [namely one of the above mentioned limbs] are [seen in the water as being] closed, he is in danger of his life.²³ And the Rabbi²⁴ said that he guesses that this is the case also with a mirror and whatever available water and whatever [sort of] vessel.²⁵

²² *Mayyim hayyim* literally 'living water'. For more on this concept, see in a ritual found in the Hasidei Ashkenaz literature, Moshe Idel, *Golem: Jewish Magical and Mystical Traditions on the Artificial Anthropoid* (SUNY Press, Albany, 1990), pp. 56, 62. On 'water' in another mystical ritual cultivated by the Hasidei Ashkenaz, see Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines* [note 7 above], pp. 239–241, as well as below par. V.

²³ *Be-nafsho hu*'.

²⁴ Apparently R. Eleazar of Worms, as we shall see below.

²⁵ *Hilekhot Tefillot ha-Mo'adim* (Florence, 1750) fol. 78; adduced by Y.D. Wilhelm, "Sidrei Tiqqunim" in *'Alei 'Ain: Schocken Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem, 1953), p. 130 (Hebrew).

On the basis of the second passage from *Sefer Hasidim* we may assume that the angelic face, which reflects the negative verdict, is seen by means of gazing in the water. Thus, someone does not examine his own lower countenance, the shape of his corporeal face, but rather the discrepancy between it and that of his angelic ethereal correspondent on high. If so, someone is encountering in the water his higher self, in a manner reminiscent of several later Kabbalistic experiences.²⁶ Again, water serves as the substratum of contemplation in order to examine a feature related to the head: eyes or mouth, as an omen for the imminent death. However, here it is not an incident that provokes the observation of the change, but a tradition whose details were disputed in the very religious milieu of *Sefer Hasidim*. For the time being, I have been unsuccessful in locating the precise source of the tradition of R. Aharon of Lunel in Ashkenazi texts, though there are very good reasons to accept R. Aharon of Lunel's testimony as reliable, on the basis of comparing some of the details here to other issues related to R. Eleazar's authentic writings, as we shall see below.²⁷ From the formulation of the quote, it is quite conspicuous that though the master disputes the matter of the special vessel with his disciples, he does not object as to their assumption that it is the vision of the head that is sought by those who gaze into the water. This is reminiscent of the above quoted legend, as well as of some texts of R. Eleazar himself, as we shall see below in some detail. It should be emphasized that the Lunel tradition, like that of the

²⁶ On the encounter with one's higher self as part of a paranormal experience see Scholem, *The Mystical Shape*, pp. 252–256; M. Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia* (SUNY Press, Albany, 1988), pp. 88–92. Scholem mentions elsewhere some of Eleazar's views on the *tzelem*, *ibidem*, pp. 260–261, 266, but did not elaborate on the importance of the nexus between the Ashkenazi view of the *tzelem*, which he describes solely as if it is an archetype that does not reveal itself to the person, and the later Kabbalistic views. Similarly, Joseph Dan, *The Esoteric Theology of Ashkenazi Hasidim* (Mossad Bialik, Jerusalem, 1968), pp. 224–229 (Hebrew) denies any role for the *tzelem* in the constitution of man, with the exception of its describing the divine providence. Compare, however, *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh* [note 17 above], pp. 80, 103–104 and the material adduced by Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines*, pp. 209–210.

²⁷ See below the passage from *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*, p. 106.

anonymous righteous person in *Sefer Hasidim*, does not mention any specific time for the examination of the shape of the head.

IV. On the *Hosha'na' Rabbah* Ritual

Much more famous is, however, a full-fledged praxis, which is also directly related to the name of R. Eleazar. I refer to the rite performed, according to most of the Hebrew versions of this practice, at the night of *Hosha'na' Rabbah*, a ritual that has already attracted the attention of several scholars.²⁸ According to most of the versions, someone is supposed to expose his naked body to the light of the moon and examine, in the vein of the earlier passages, the shadow of the head. Y. Wilhelm, who devoted one of the most extensive studies to this ritual, has preferred to treat it as a rite which, in his opinion, had been influenced by similar alien practices, which he repeatedly designated as superstition, 'emunat shav, cultivated in Germany by the gentiles.²⁹ Wilhelm – with the very significant contribution of manuscript sources pointed out to him by Gershom Scholem – and Israel Weinstock independently, have presented a rather comprehensive picture of the development of this practice since the Ashkenazi Hasidism until late in the 18th century. However, no detailed attempt has been made to deal with the rationales for this rite. In order to better understand the explanation, or to use Turner's term, the 'ideological pole' related – correctly or not – to this ritual, let us turn to some of the quotes already adduced by Wilhelm and others, but let us cite them at somewhat fuller length. This will, in my opinion, provide a least one of the rationales. In his *Hilekhot Nevu'ah* R. Eleazar of Worms, indicates that

²⁸ The most important studies are those of Wilhelm, "Sidrei Tiqqunim" (note 25 above), Yisrael Weinstock, *Studies in Jewish Mysticism and Philosophy* (Mossad Harav Kook, Jerusalem, 1969), pp. 249–270 (Hebrew); Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar* (Jerusalem, 1961), vol. II pp. 90–93 (Hebrew); Finkel (note 13 above), pp. 248–250, Efraim Gottlieb, *The Kabbalah in the Writings of R. Bahya ben Asher ibn Halawa* (Qiriat Sefer, Jerusalem, 1970), pp. 178–179 (Hebrew), Dan, *The Esoteric Theology* [note 26 above], p. 225.

²⁹ "Sidrei Tiqqunim," p. 136.

Just as the name [of God] is [found] on the angel, so also the *tefillin* [are found] on the hand and, likewise, on the head; 'And with the shadow of my hands I have covered you.'³⁰ He safeguards the righteous, so that the prophet sees, so that he may know who was upon me,³¹ and who safeguards by means of the shadow of his hand. This is just as it is now, in the night of *Hosha'na' Rabbah*: whoever has a shadow, will live, but whoever has no shadow, and his head is small, without a neck, he will die within the same year, since He then decides in relation to water. And³² the prophet sees the glory, that has been created in order that he will see in accordance to the divine will.³³

Some details of this passage should be compared to what we have found in the previous texts: here, as in the two other texts, the focus of the examination is the head; Again, it is a reflection of the head, either in water or on the ground. Here too, the issue of the time of death is explicit. However what seems to be fresh in this passage is not only the rationale, to which we shall turn in a moment, but the more autobiographical note, implied in the use of the first person: "who was on me", and the 'now', 'atah. If the version of the Parma manuscript is correct, and in other cases it is not always so, the mentioning of the first person implies more than a personal

³⁰ Isaiah 51: 16. It should be mentioned that the Hebrew word *tzal* stands also for protection, and this meaning seems to be found also in Assyrian sources. See Leo Oppenheim, "The Shadow of the King," *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research*, vol. 107 (1947), pp. 7–11; Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* [note 1 above], pp. 173–181.

³¹ According to Ms. Parma, de Rossi 1390: *Mi she-hayah 'alai*. If this version is the correct one, an issue that is not self-evident [see note 33 below] then we have here a rare confession in first person of a mystical experience; for a similar statement see R. Eleazar's passage from *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, cited and discussed by M. Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia* tr. Jonathan Chipman (SUNY Press, Albany, 1988) p. 17. On the larger question whether the Hasidei Ashkenaz literature was a theological or a mystical one see e.g. *ibidem*, pp. 16–17, *idem*, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* [note 1 above], pp. 27, 91–92, 98, and 323 note 171, Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines* [note 7 above], pp. 190–192.

³² The following sentences recur often in the writings of R. Eleazar. See e.g. *Hilekhot Nevu'ah*, Ms. Parma, de Rossi 1390, fol. 77a.

³³ *Sadei Razzaya*, *Hilkhot Nevu'ah*, ed. Israel Kamhellar (Jerusalem, 1936) p. 49 corrected, in some cases, according to Ms. Parma 1390, fol. 76b; The version of this manuscript, copied in 1286 in Italy, includes also some errors, which have not been indicated here; see also Wilhelm, "Sidrei Tiqqunim" p. 134. On other partial parallels to this view, see Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines* [note 7 above], pp. 197–198.

confession of R. Eleazar as being protected by the shadow of the hand of God; it also assumes that someone else, the prophet, may be able to see the protective divine aura which surrounds his head.³⁴ In any case, it should be emphasized that this 'personal' reading of the passage is supported by the use of the adverb 'now', as mentioned above. Let us dwell for a while on the possible importance of the above quote: together with two other passages of R. Eleazar³⁵, it may bear witness not only to the experiential dimension of R. Eleazar's writings and thought, as has been duly recognized in recent scholarship³⁶, but also may answer the question of to what extent this master had himself experienced what he has more often described in an objective mode. The image of the religious performer, who dons the phylacteries on his head and hand is reverberated, according to the above text, when dealing with the divine protection, where the divine hand covers the protected person, while the head is mentioned in the context of the shadowless head. Is the removal of the divine hand tantamount to, or even connected with, the shadowless head? Though this proposal is suggestive, the meaning of the above passage may be better understood starting from the first sentence quoted above: just as God and the angels have divine names on their heart,³⁷ so also have the Jews who don the phylacteries.³⁸ The protection is apparently related to the apotropaic power of the

³⁴ The possibility that a copyist has altered an original version where the first person was not mentioned is not very plausible; what copyist would impose a personal confession on a revered master?

³⁵ See the text quoted in Idel, *The Mystical Experience* (note 26 above) p. 17 and a report related to the contemplation of the radiance of the *Hashmal* in water or oil, by both R. Eleazar and his master, R. Yehudah, in the former's *Commentary on the Merkavah*, Ms. Paris BN 850, fol. 47b, discussed by Wolfson, *Through a Spectrum that Shines* [note 7 above], pp. 266–267 and Abrams, "Sod kol ha-Sodot," [note 16 above], pp. 65–66 note 25. Compare, however, the suggestion of Dan Merkur, *Gnosis, An Esoteric Tradition of Mystical Visions and Unions* (SUNY Press, Albany, 1993) pp. 158–159, 312 note 21.

³⁶ See the summary of Wolfson's view of the whole topic in *ibidem*, pp. 268–269.

³⁷ See Gershom G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkavah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (JTS, New York, 1960) p. 71. See also Idel, *The Mystical Experience* [note 26 above], p. 157 note 137.

³⁸ See especially *Sefer Hasidism*, par. 362 p. 268.

divine names found also in the Biblical texts, included in the phylacteries. Is the divine name removed in the context of the removal of the shadow? Is the shadow none other than the divine name present within, or on, the anthropomorphic human body?

V. Tzelem and Water

In his *Hokmat ha-Nefesh* Rabbi Eleazar of Worms compares the four Biblical occurrences of the term *tzelem* in verses related to the creation of man, to the four turning moments during the year, *tequfot*, namely the two equinoxes and the two solstices; In the nights of the *tequfah*, R. Eleazar says, the gentiles

are gathered in one place and were looking into the water in order to see the 'reflected image'.³⁹ And see how the looker opened his mouth and opens his eyes and looks into the water to see his likeness.⁴⁰ And one of them was contemplating his likeness and saw that his likeness has the eyes and mouth closed, in the reflection of his image. And he asked a sage and he said [to him] that he will not live out this year, and will not see the four *tequfot*. And whoever has seen his likeness [having] closed eyes and mouth in the reflection [of his image: *bavu'ah*] in the water is a sign that he will die that year.⁴¹

The similarity between this passage and that quoted by R. Aharon of Lunel is evident, though the two texts are, by no means, identical.

³⁹ *Bavu'ah*. On this term and its Talmudic sources see Finkel, "The Guises," [note 13 above], pp. 247–248, Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, [note 28 above], vol. II p. 92 note 18. See also the occurrence of this term in a very important context, that reflects stands of Hasidei Ashkenaz, found in R. Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi, a late 13th century Kabbalist, ed. Moshe Hallamish, *Kabbalistic Commentary of Rabbi Yoseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi on Genesis Rabbah* (The Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1984), p. 149 and compare to p. 275 *ibidem*. This is one of the many examples for the transmission of Ashkenazi views outside the Ashkenazi lands, already in the 13th century.

⁴⁰ *Demuto*. This is one of the texts where it is plausible to assume that the *demut* refers, mainly, to the face. See also below note 114 as well as Wolfson, *Through a Spectrum that Shines* [note 7 above], p. 199 note 43, 211.

⁴¹ p. 106. On the concept of *tequfah* in a text of R. Yehudah he-Hasid, the master of R. Eleazar of Worms, see Joseph Dan, "A Fragment from *Sefer ha-Kavod* by R. Yehudah he-Hasid," *Sinai*, vol. 71 (1972), pp. 118–120 (Hebrew).

Both of them apparently deal with common people, gentiles and, apparently, also Jews, who perform a mantic practice, which is not restricted to some time and place, as it is not restricted to the elite alone. Moreover, the description here is corroborated by R. Eleazar's statement, quoted by R. Aharon of Lunel, to the effect that there is no need of a special water, or of a special vessel in order to practice this mantic praxis. In fact, the mentioning of the gentiles in the plural, who look together into water, complicates the possible assumption of his disciples as to using a special vessel. In short, this is an exoteric practice. Though this seems to be the case, I find it still perplexing why R. Eleazar made the remark that the living water and a special vessel are not necessary in order to attain the contemplation of the reflection. I am not sure that there is here a real polemic between the master and his disciples, but his negations invite a more thoughtful analysis of the pertinent material. It seems that he attempts to de-ritualize the praxis, which in itself is conceived to be effective.

VI. Face of Man, Face of Angel, Face of Glory, Face of God

However, the above practices and rituals should be understood against certain theological and mystical backgrounds, which assume the existence of a variety of faces on high. So, for example, R. Eleazar remarks that there are two kinds of *tzelem* "because the faces of all men are on high."⁴² I take this statement to deal with the lower *tzelem*, which is part of the human spiritual being, and its presence on high, the upper one, standing for the upper angelic being; both the human and the higher configurations are designated as faces. Hence it is rather obvious that the *tzelem* is part of the human constitution here below.⁴³ This view of the

⁴² *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh* [note 17 above], p. 39 (mentioned by Dan, *The Esoteric Theology* [note 26 above], p. 229.) See also *ibidem*, p. 134 where R. Eleazar elaborates upon the facial mode of existence of angels on high.

⁴³ See also *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*, p. 134. Compare, however, Dan's view, *ibidem*, p. 224 which negates the existence of this view in Ashkenazi Hasidism.

relation between the lower and the higher is presented emphatically in *Sefer Hasidim*, where it is quite clear that what the lower face does has a certain impact upon the upper face:

The angels are glad when the soul is harmonious⁴⁴ with them, namely that we would be on earth, we would be like this soul, which has been with us and went down to dwell on earth. And because the soul is on high he has made a body in the likeness of 'Elohim and created it in the image of 'Elohim. As long as someone does not transgress, and does not enjoy whatever his eyes see, on high the angels of mercy and angels of peace are similar to the righteous; and if someone does not embellish his face so that people would desire him, and is careful not to ruminate [sexually] in the thought of his heart then He causes the brilliance to fall⁴⁵ on the face of that [entity] which has been made on high in their likeness. And so long as those faces are luminous, no demonic power is able to harm him. And it is said⁴⁶ 'He was similar to an animal, became like [them].' And our sages have said⁴⁷ that 'No beast or demonic power can have a power over man, until he becomes like an animal', namely an animal like it is. And this is [the meaning of] what has been said⁴⁸ 'The image⁴⁹ has been removed from them'. However, when someone sins and is enjoying his transgressions, then the faces of the pernicious angels are delighted⁵⁰ because of them [the sins] and the faces of anger are in front of them and smoke is [dwelling] on them. And the

⁴⁴ In Hebrew *shavah* means, more literally, identical.

⁴⁵ *mazriah*. This verb stands here for the relationship between two entities on high, and this relation depends upon the deeds below. From this point of view, this text represents a view very close to the phenomena that were designated in the scholarship of Kabbalah as theurgy. In any case, other discussions of R. Eleazar are even closer to Kabbalistic theurgy; see e.g. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, [note 1 above], pp. 160–161, 192–196 and the additional cases adduced by Elliot Wolfson, *Along the Path: Studies in Kabbalistic Hermeneutics, Myth and Symbolism* (SUNY Press, Albany, 1995), pp. 170–171 note 307, and note 74 below. Compare, however, J. Dan's different opinion as expressed in his *Esoteric Theology* [note 26 above] p. 129, and in his "A Re-evaluation of the Ashkenazi Kabbalah" in ed., J. Dan, *The Beginnings of the Jewish Mysticism in Medieval Europe* (Jerusalem, 1987), pp. 138–139. (Hebrew) See also below note 110. For the use of the noun *zeriḥah* as emanation of the brilliance of the Glory on mirrors within the supernal worlds see the text quoted by R. Moshe Taku – apparently from an Ashkenazi source – as adduced in R. Abraham ben Azriel's *Sefer 'Arugat ha-Bosem*, ed., E.E. Urbach, (Jerusalem, 1939), vol. I p. 201. The verb *mazriah* recurs also in many cases as part of the revelation of the divine here below. On mirrors see also above note 14, and below note 102.

⁴⁶ Psalm 49: 13.

⁴⁷ *Shabbat*, fol. 151b.

⁴⁸ Numbers 14: 9.

⁴⁹ *Tzelem*. In fact, the original significance of *tzilam* is 'their shadow'.

⁵⁰ 'ultzu.

faces that are in the likeness of the righteous are like the faces [found] in the front of the faces standing before the Glory,⁵¹ as the gladness is there.⁵²

Looking on one's own face below in order to prognosticate the future is quite reminiscent of some other passages in the Hasidei Ashkenaz literature, where it is the Face of the Glory on high that is examined. So, for example, we learn from one of R. Eleazar of Worms' discussions about the correspondence between the positive thought of the father and the appearance of the son who is then conceived. According to his view, there can be no discrepancy between the two since:

'The expression of their faces was betraying them'⁵³ because the face accords to the thought and wisdom. And the sages who are experts in matters of the faces of man⁵⁴ knew what are the matters of his thoughts, because the Creator

⁵¹ ke-panim she-li-fnei ha-Kavod. This phrase can stand for, in an elliptic manner, those faces which exist in the presence of the Glory. See Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines*, pp. 205–206.

⁵² *Sefer Hasidism* [note 12 above], pp. 566–567, no. 1136. On the 'body' on high see Asi Farber-Ginat, *The Concept of the Merkabah in the Thirteenth-Century Jewish Esotericism – 'Sod Ha-'Egoz and its Development* (Ph.D. Thesis, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1986), p. 416 (Hebrew). Compare also to the Ashkenazi material adduced by Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, pp. 209–210 and in his *Along the Path*, especially p. 174 note 323. A very important parallel to the Ashkenazi way of thought as expressed in this and many other Ashkenazi passages, some of them to be adduced below, is found in ancient sources which may reflect ideas found already in Jewish circles. See especially the Christian Aramean treatise from Edessa entitled *Testamentum Domini* where it is written that "For every soul the Image [salma] or type is standing before the face of God, even before the foundation of the world", quoted by Gilles Quispel, "Genius and Spirit," *Essays on Nag Hammadi Texts*, ed., M. Krause (Leiden, Brill, 1975), p. 159. See also the *Gospel of Thomas* logion 84 and Macarius' *Homilies* quoted *ibidem*, pp. 159–160 and also p. 163. For the possible Philonic background of the theory of the human image on high, which predates that below, found in the *Gospel* see Meyer in *The Gospel of Thomas*, tr. and intr. Marvin Meyer, interpretation Harold Bloom (Harper Collins, San Francisco, 1992), p. 100. On the Philonic and Christian views of the heavenly man, see Thomas H. Tobin, "The Prologue of John and Hellenistic Jewish Speculation," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 52 (1990), pp. 252–269. See also note 17 above.

⁵³ Isaiah 3: 9.

⁵⁴ Beq'im bi-fnei 'adam. This is the correct version, while the older edition, as well as the newer one, read here be-dinei ha-'adam, which is conspicuously an erroneous version. See also Gershom Scholem, "Hakarat Panim ve-Sidrei Sirtutin," in *Sefer Assaf* (Jerusalem, 1953), p. 466 note 27 (Hebrew).

wanted that [the faces of] the good men will be improved while those of the wicked will be bad, since men are known by their faces... And the Glory, in accordance to the matters of the decrees, 'His lips are full of anger, and His tongue as a consuming fire.'⁵⁵... and in accordance with the visions of the Glory, the angels and the prophets know the 'supernal knowledge'^{56, 57}

The comparison of those experts in physiognomy, who are able to fathom the thoughts of men from the expressions on their faces, to angels and prophets, who are able to read the divine decree on the visions of the Glory, points to the possibility that the Glory manifests the inner contents of divine thought by means of a supernal face. This conjuncture is corroborated by the verse quoted in this context, where the lips and tongue of God are mentioned. This hermeneutics of facial revelation is even more explicit in another passage of R. Eleazar:

Every issue that has two aspects⁵⁸ like a prosecutor and a defender, if the prophet sees the vision in both aspects he knows that the decree⁵⁹ has not [yet] been determined. If the prophet sees two visions,⁶⁰ which are identical, namely [both being] dark, he will know that [the decree] has been finalized negatively.

For more on ancient Jewish metoposcopy see Scholem, "Ein Fragment zur Physiognomik und Chiromantik aus der Tradition des spaetantiken Juedischen Esoterik," in *Liber Amicorum: Studies in Honor of Prof. Dr. C.J. Bleeker* (Brill, Leiden, 1969), pp. 175–193; Peter Schaefer, *Hekhalot-Studien* (J.C.B. Mohr, Tuebingen, 1988), pp. 84–95. In Hasidei Ashkenaz metoposcopy is understood as a technique for achieving knowledge of the thought of man, just as prophecy attains the knowledge of the divine mind and decrees. See also Farber-Ginat, *The Concept of the Merkabah* [note 52 above], p. 417.

⁵⁵ Isaiah 30: 27. On the concept of the 'face of Glory' see also R. Eleazar's *Hilkehot Kavod*, in Abrams, "Sod kol ha-Sodot," [note 16 above] pp. 79, 80; Dan, *The Esoteric Theology* (note 26 above), pp. 134–136; Wolfson, *Along the Path*, pp. 51, 174 note 323.

⁵⁶ da'at 'elyon. See Abrams, *ibidem*, p. 80.

⁵⁷ *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh* [note 17 above], p. 130, corrected according to Ms. Parma, de Rossi 1390, fols. 70b–71a. On the similarity between prophets and angels see also *Sodei Razayya'* p. 122. See also the similar passage from *Sefer ha-Shem*, Ms. London, British Library 737, fol. 378a translated by Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines* [note 7 above], p. 217.

⁵⁸ Middot.

⁵⁹ Gezerah.

⁶⁰ Mar'ot. This term is crucial for the Ashkenazi view of revelation which accentuates the importance of the visual representation of the divine decrees by the means of the Glory and its continuous changes that point to the future events. See the important discussions in the treatise apparently belonging to

But if both are identical, pure and luminous, [then] it has been finalized positively ... and the speech does not come from the vision, but from the darkness of the decree, which is enwrapped in the vision. And within the vision the decree is recognized, [which is] the thought of the Creator."⁶¹

The visual part of the revelation is quite evident, though it is not the only means of communication, as the speech also comes from the divine instance and is not derived from the vision,⁶²

'laughing face corresponds to Haggadah, welcoming face – to *Talmud*⁶³ awful face – to *Miqra*', and they [the faces] are not similar to each other ... 'face to face has the Lord spoken'⁶⁴ and it is written 'out of the fire'⁶⁵ and it is written 'out of darkness', see how the visions are differentiated [from each other].⁶⁶

In the same vein we learn from *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, that the Torah enlightens its devoted students, and

whoever darkens himself, day and night, in the light of the Torah,⁶⁷ [He] will enlighten his face, and he will have a splendor and ornament of the Glory, 'the

R. Yehudah he-Hasid, named *Sefer ha-Kavod*, Ms. Oxford 1566, fol. 38a. On this term see Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines* [note 7 above], e.g. pp. 200, 206, 207 and his *Along the Path*, [note 45 above], p. 155 note 219. For more on *mar'ot* and *mahazot* see the important discussions of Farber-Ginat, *The Concept of the Merkabah* [note 52 above], pp. 402–414, 417–418, 653 who has adduced the pertinent bibliography on this topic, and discussed the differences between *dimyonot*, *mar'ot* and *tzelem*.

⁶¹ *Sodei Razayya*, p. 127. See also *Hilekhot Kavod*, in Abrams, "Sod kol ha-Sodot", p. 80, where the concordance of the visions reflects an irrevocable verdict.

⁶² See also R. Eleazar, "Sha'arei ha-Sod, ha-Yihud ve-ha-Emunah" ed., J. Dan, *Temirin*, vol. I (Jerusalem, 1970), p. 150: "the speech is not united with the vision." It is conspicuous that a prophet can decode the outcome of the divine deliberation from the nature of the vision he is contemplating. But what seems to me crucial for the present discussion is the fact that the divine thought, *maḥashevet ha-Bore* is externalized and hypostatized in the form of a vision, not only as speech. The form of the externalization is mentioned in the above quote as both vision and speech. However, in the immediate continuation of this passage, the affinity between vision and face has been made explicit: "the visions correspond to the speeches".

⁶³ In print *talmid*, which is a error.

⁶⁴ Exodus 33: 11.

⁶⁵ Deut. 4: 12.

⁶⁶ *Sodei Razayya*, p. 127.

⁶⁷ The phrase 'Orah shel Torah in a very similar context, but without mentioning the face, occurs in R. Yehudah Barzilai of Barcelona's *Commentary on*

crown of the Beloved⁶⁸ ... as it is said⁶⁹ 'The wisdom of man will enlighten his face'.⁷⁰

The Torah is, however, expressly viewed by R. Eleazar as tantamount to the face of the *Shekhinah*.⁷¹ Therefore, the study of the Torah – and of the Talmud according to another view – enables the student to become more similar to the supernal, luminous face of the Glory. An important text from the same book takes us a step forward in a better understanding of the affinity between the human and the divine face. Just as Moses, when receiving the Torah, had met God, whose face is conceived of as luminous, so also the medieval student of the Torah may be conceived of as meeting the light of the face of the Glory or of God. Discussing the impact of the righteous' prayer, R. Eleazar comments upon a verse in Proverbs 15:30 according to which God listens to their prayer and, then, the 'light of the eyes will delight the heart'. The Ashkenazi master attempts to find a causal relation between these two parts of the verse:

Because [the righteous] illuminates the eyes of the Glory on the prayer⁷² by the light of the face of the living King, [and] this is the reason why the light of the eyes will delight the heart of man below.⁷³

Sefer Yetzirah, ed. S.Z.H. Halberstam (Berlin, 1885), p. 25, discussed in the context of other views of R. Eleazar by Wolfson, "The Mystical Significance," [note 8 above], p. 65.

⁶⁸ 'Ateret Tzevi

⁶⁹ Ecclesiastes 8: 1.

⁷⁰ Printed in R. Eleazar's *Perush ha-Torah*, ed., Chaim Konyevsky, (Benei Beraq, 1986), vol. I pp. 31–32. Later on in the same book, pp. 45–46, R. Eleazar writes as follows: "The [study of] the Talmud causes an ornament to man, and the 'countenance of his face' [*qelaster panav*] is bright like the splendor of the radiance of the great light, as it is said by the sages 'Whoever studies the Torah, a thread of mercy is drawn onto him'. See also the text from Ms. Oxford 1567, fol. 71b, in the name of *Sefer ha-Kavod*, printed by Dan, *The Esoteric Theology* [note 26 above] p. 90.

⁷¹ See his *Commentary on Liturgy*, Ms. Paris BN 772, fol. 84a adduced by Wolfson, "The Mystical Significance," [note 8 above], p. 61 note 70.

⁷² 'al ha-tefillah. It seems that an hypostatic understanding of the prayer is presupposed here. See also a similar stand in R. Eleazar's *Commentary on Prayer*, [note 16 above], pp. 414, 440.

⁷³ *Hokhmah ha-Nefesh* [note 17 above], p. 22.

I am not so sure that this version can be explained in one convincing manner. Is there, for example, a difference between the light of the face of the living king and the Glory? And is this passage better understood as advancing a theurgical operation, ascribing to the righteous' prayer a power to illuminate the eyes, and, by extension, I assume, also face of Glory. If this is so, then we have three faces, that of the person who prays, that of the Glory and that of God, which are related to each other by the impact of the prayer, which causes the illumination of the two lower faces by drawing light from the highest one.⁷⁴ Elsewhere in the same treatise, in the context of the discussion of the image and likeness, we find that

Every man has a zodiacal sign in the lower firmament, which receives power from the higher.⁷⁵ When the angel is in [full] light, which he receives from the Glory, then [the corresponding] man is alive, because if the light is great, his health is strong and great.⁷⁶ If not, it⁷⁷ changes its face⁷⁸ on high and it sends it⁷⁹ on below.⁸⁰ [This is similar to] a wick that has extinguished and [its] smoke [still] ascends. If you put the extinguished [wick] under a burning candle, the flame will ascend⁸¹ by the path of the smoke and the wick will be lighted. Just so does the zodiacal sign receive from the Glory. And the soul draws⁸² from above: 'Let the Lord shine His face upon thee'⁸³ ... 'and the light of Your face, if you have desired'^{84 85}

⁷⁴ This triple series is a recurrent issue in Ashkenazi Hasidism. On the theurgical implication of the relations between corresponding structures in other Ashkenazi texts see Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, p. 210 note 83.

⁷⁵ min ha-'elyon.

⁷⁶ See a similar formulation in *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh* [note 17 above], p. 134 where, in lieu of mazzal the author uses the term 'face'.

⁷⁷ Namely the angel.

⁷⁸ Meshanneh panav. See also *ibidem*, p. 134, where the change of the face is mentioned in connection with the death of the lower man.

⁷⁹ namely, the change.

⁸⁰ Dan, *The Esoteric Theology* [note 26 above], p. 227 note 17 suggests that this is based on Job 14: 2.

⁸¹ As Dan, *ibidem* p. 228 note 21 has remarked, there is a problem with the direction of the ascent.

⁸² Sho'evet. See *Genesis Rabbah* XIV: 9, ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 134.

⁸³ Numbers 6: 25.

⁸⁴ Psalm 44: 4.

⁸⁵ *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh* [note 17 above] p. 70. and see also *ibidem* p. 80 as well as R. Eleazar's *Commentary on the Prayer* [note 16 above] p. 708. See also Dan, *The Esoteric Theology* [note 26 above], pp. 227–228 and the very important remark of Mopsik, *Les grands textes* [note 4 above], pp. 200–202, who has

The references to the divine face could raise some theological questions, of which R. Eleazar was aware, because he asks in the same context, after adducing the anthropomorphic verses from the first chapters of Genesis and Ezekiel:

But the Creator has no likeness, as it is said: 'What likeness would you figure out for me'⁸⁶ and it is said that 'in comparison to the face of the [divine] Presence, Adam was like the ape is in comparison to the face of Adam'^{87 88}

R. Eleazar does not really cope with the discrepancy between two ways of describing the divine: the non-iconic and the anthropomorphic. Interestingly enough, he adduces the Talmudic dictum where the face of Adam is compared to that of the *Shekhinah*. This move implies a more anthropomorphic stand than in other discussions of this author, one of which will be adduced immediately below. Indeed, in another book R. Eleazar distinguishes between ten corporeal components of the body given to man by God, and ten spiritual ones, which I indicate here:

Likewise, the Holy One, Blessed be He, has given me ten things of His [own]⁸⁹ and they are Soul, the Countenance of His Face, and the hearing of the ear, and

pointed out the Neoplatonic and theurgical sources of a view very similar to that presented here, and compared it to later, Kabbalistic parallels. I hope to treat this issue in more detail in a study in preparation. See meanwhile Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar* [note 28 above], vol. II pp. 200–201. Tishby proposes that the source of the Zoharic view is a treatise entitled *Sefer ha-'Atzanim* spuriously attributed to R. Abraham ibn Ezra. But Tishby was not aware of the faulty attribution. As is by now evident, this book of magic is a translation from Arabic which was done, apparently, sometime in the 14th century and thus could serve neither as the source of the *Zohar* or, even less, of R. Eleazar of Worms. Mopsik, on the other hand, who pointed to the Neoplatonic source, was not aware of Tishby, who pointed to the Ashkenazi source and to the pseudo-ibn Ezra. Thus, it is possible, as I shall attempt to do elsewhere, to question what the Neoplatonic source of R. Eleazar was, in my opinion a text of Proclus, and then ponder on what was the influence that is more plausible, that of the Ashkenazi master or the Neoplatonic source.

⁸⁶ Isaiah 40: 18.

⁸⁷ *Babba Batra* fol. 58a.

⁸⁸ *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh* [note 17 above], p. 70. A very similar text is found in R. Eleazar's *Sefer ha-Shem* Ms. British Library 737, fol. 378a, translated by Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines* [note 7 above], p. 217.

⁸⁹ Yod devarim mishelo.

the seeing of the eye, and the smell of the nose, and the speech of the lips, and the custom of language, the use of hands and the walk of the feet, wisdom and understanding.⁹⁰ Because He has given me all these out of His love, I shall see Him with all my heart.⁹¹

This is a quite remarkable passage for a variety of reasons. Theologically speaking, these ten things are conceived in a rather explicit manner as divine attributes conferred also on man. This is quite different from the more anti-anthropomorphic stands of most of the spiritual masters belonging to Hasidei Ashkenaz.⁹² Moreover, as the last sentence makes clear, R. Eleazar indicates that because of his reception of the ten things, he seeks to see God, 'ere' Bo, again a declaration that implies a more anthropomorphic divinity. However, I am less interested here in the theological aspects of this issue, as my main concern is the anthropological one: Man – and in our case R. Eleazar speaks in the singular about himself as the direct recipient of the ten divine things – shares with God at least one thing, conceived to be both spiritual and explicitly attributed to God in this passage: the Countenance of the Face: the Hebrew formulation does not leave any place for misunderstanding: *qelaster panav*.⁹³

However, while the possessive suffix is interesting in itself because it directly points to the divine, as it is the single case in the whole list where it occurs, what concerns me even more is the very inclusion of the item 'the countenance of the face' in a list of spiritual things. One would expect a certain function related to the face, just as we have in many of the other cases in this list. Hence, we are confronted with two possible readings of the phrase: either 'the countenance of the face' has been singled out as a special case which, anthropomorphic as we may assume it is, has been

⁹⁰ I assume that the last two 'things' are to be enumerated as one, in order to have a list of ten and not eleven.

⁹¹ *Sodei Razayya*, p. 19.

⁹² On the importance of the anthropomorphic theology in Hasidei Ashkenaz see e.g. Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Schocken Books, New York, 1967), pp. 86–87; Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines* [note 7 above], pp. 192–195, 219, 230–232 and the pertinent bibliography cited there and note 100 below.

⁹³ On this phrase see above note 70.

conceived by the Ashkenazi author as being spiritual or, alternatively, the term *qelaster* is to be understood in this phrase as pointing to a function of the face. This last possibility may seem more reasonable in order to create a more coherent list, and at the same time a less anthropomorphic conception, but it cannot be sustained philologically. On the other hand, the more materialistic reading of the *qelaster panim*, which is the more simple one from the semantic point of view, is endorsed by a discussion found on the same page of this book, where the *qelaster panim* is expressly mentioned in the context of the emergence of the human physical features in the fetus⁹⁴ while the spiritual attributes of man, now seven, did not include the countenance. The assumption that the author has added the *qelaster* to the other spiritual qualities in a rather mechanical manner in order to have two lists of ten seems to me quite implausible, because many other spiritual things, like *ruah*, for example, could easily be added to the list. To sum up the discussion of this passage: there is no significant doubt that despite the anthropomorphic meaning of the countenance of the face, which is in fact fostered by other anthropomorphic expressions found in R. Eleazar's books⁹⁵ this is also a spiritual entity, which stands close to the soul and to the various functions of the human limbs. Elsewhere in R. Eleazar's writings we read as follows:

But the Creator, His Unity will not vary, neither will change or had changed but in accordance to the topic [God would like to teach] he displays His Glory. He shows everything by means of the radiance of His great fire. If He is angry, He shows as an angry face [*ke-panim zo'afot*]. Everything is in the cloud of His Glory, which is vis-à-vis of Him.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ *Sodei Razayya*, p. 19.

⁹⁵ See e.g. the phrase *Rosh ha-Bore* namely the head of the Creator, in the text printed in Dan, *The Esoteric Theology* [note 26 above], p. 120. On the other hand, there are plenty of passages in his writings, where any anthropomorphic expression is strongly denied insofar as God is concerned. See e.g. R. Eleazar's reduction of *Tzelem* and *Demut* to ways of pointing out similarities between two beings, rather than anthropomorphic expressions, in a passage printed by Joseph Dan, *Studies in Ashkenazi-Hasidic Literature* (Massadah, Ramat Gan, 1975), p. 86. However elsewhere *Tzelem* is expressly understood as *partzuf panim* of the angels in *Siddur Rabbenu Shelomo mi-Germaiza*, ed., M. Hershler (Jerusalem, 1971), p. 287.

⁹⁶ *Sodei Razayya*, *Hilekhot Kavod*, p. 37, Dan, *The Esoteric Theology* [note

I would like to emphasize the parallelism between Glory and Face. Like the glory, which is a modicum of revelation, so also the supernal face reflects the divine intention. Both Glory and Face externalize the divine intention which can be seen by the prophet, who can extrapolate from the nature of this vision the hidden message. Important for another point I would like to make elsewhere is the mention of 'the radiance of the great fire' as another mode of revelation; This expression is palpably identical to the 'radiance of the Glory' and this parallelism seems to point not only to a manifestation within the structure of the divine glory as reflecting the divine intention, but as an emanation from this divine fire.⁹⁷ As in the case of the radiance seen in the bath by the wife of the Hasid, emanating from the head of her husband, so also the radiance here is related to the face, the Glory.

The hierarchy of faces, which is an interesting example of a chain of being that unites God's and man's faces by the intermediary of the Glory and the angelic powers, reflects much earlier traditions, which have received due attention more recently; Wolfson's,⁹⁸ Fishbane's,⁹⁹ and Friedman's¹⁰⁰ studies as well as a study of mine

26 above], p. 84. The mention of the cloud has something to do with the role of water as reflecting the higher entities. The phrase *panim zo'afot* is reminiscent of Midrashic discussions that deal with the reciprocal relationship between God and man, by using the same expression. See Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* [note 1 above], p. 175.

⁹⁷ I hope to deal with the variety of expressions like *Tzelem*, *Zohar* or the Tetragrammaton that point in Hasidei Ashkenaz writings to ontic continua between God and man, in a separate study. See, meanwhile, the term *zohar ha-Bahu*, namely 'the radiance of the Holy One, blessed be He' found in early esoteric material analyzed by Farber-Ginat, *The Concept of the Merkabah* [note 52 above], p. 553 and below note 123, as well as Wolfson, who mentioned the term *zohar* in his *Through a Speculum that Shines*, see for example, p. 229 note 166.

⁹⁸ "The Image of Jacob Engraved upon the Throne: Further Reflection on the Esoteric Doctrine of the German Pietists", in his *Along the Path* [note 45 above] pp. 1–62.

⁹⁹ Michael Fishbane, "Some Forms of Divine Appearance in Ancient Jewish Thought" in eds., J. Neusner, E.S. Frierichs, N. Sarna, *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism, Intellect in Quest of Understanding: Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox* (Scholars Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1990), vol. II pp. 261–270; idem, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1983), pp. 329–334.

¹⁰⁰ Shama Friedman, "Graven Images", in *Graven Images, A Journal of Culture, Law, and the Sacred*, vol. 1 (1994), pp. 233–238. Friedman's suggestion,

in print,¹⁰¹ reevaluated the importance of the metaphysics of the Face, whose origins are biblical.¹⁰² The Hasidei Ashkenaz are, therefore, the inheritors of a much older way of thought which might have been elaborated and even changed because of the encounter with the philosophical ways of thought. Against such a background, one of the more important developments in 13th century Kabbalistic theosophy, the Zoharic doctrine of divine configurations, 'Arikh 'Anppin and Ze'ir 'Anppin, may be easier explained as part of a more organic evolution in medieval Jewish thought.¹⁰³ Insofar as the modern philosophy of Face, as

that Jacob's face on high represents, in fact, the face of God, made in the context of late antiquity Jewish texts, is particularly important for the suggestion of the author adduced here, and for the argument of the need for both a more anthropomorphical and ontological reading of Hasidei Ashkenaz's theology, much beyond what has been already done in modern scholarship. See above, note 92.

¹⁰¹ "Metatron: Remarks on the Evolution of Myth in Judaism", ed., Haviva Pedaya, *Myth in Judaism, Esbel Beer Sheva*, vol. 4 (1996) pp. 29–44 (Hebrew). In this study I emphasize the anthropomorphic significance of the expression *Sar ha-Panim*, or *Mal'akh ha-Panim*, namely "angel of Face" related to Metatron. According to this proposal, Metatron is to be understood, at least in some cases, as appointed upon, or depending on the divine face, just as other angels are in relation to other divine organs.

¹⁰² P. Dhorme, "L'emploi metaphorique des noms de parties du corps en Hebrew et en Akkadien", *Revue Biblique*, vol. 30 (1921), pp. 374–399; Walter Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, tr. A.J. Baker (SCM Press, Bloomsbury Street, London, 1972), vol. II pp. 35–40. It should be noticed that despite the biblical resort to both facial descriptions and metaphors, the more concrete aspects of the biblical expressions have been appropriated by the Ashkenazi sources rather than by the Sephardi ones. For a strong reliance on facial descriptions see R. Eleazar of Worms' *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*, p. 134. On a relatively early resort to facial imagery in Spain see the text printed by Ezra Fleisher, "Addenda to the Paytanic Legacy of R. Isaac Ibn Mar-Shaul," *Tarbiz*, vol. LXIII (1994), p. 423 (Hebrew), where God is described as putting dust on the faces of ten marot, a term which has no sense in Hebrew, but which can be amended by reading *mar'ot*, namely mirrors. See above note 60. Nine mirrors or specula, are a leitmotif in Midrashic sources. Thus, reflection of the divine in the faces of the nine mirrors, was dimmed because of the mourning related to the destruction of the temple. See also note 16 above.

¹⁰³ See also Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* [note 1 above], pp. 119, 133–136; idem, "The World of Angels in Human Shape", *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* = eds., J. Dan-J. Hacker, *Studies in Jewish Mysticism, Philosophy and Ethical Literature Presented to Isaiah Tishby* (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 26–34 (Hebrew) as well as Yehuda Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar* (SUNY Press, Albany,

represented by Emmanuel Levinas' thought is concerned, it is still an open question to what extent it also continues medieval tendencies or draws solely from the biblical accent on the experience of the Divine Face.¹⁰⁴

Another issue that may be extrapolated from some of the discussions above is the kind of hermeneutics which may unify the various forms of revelation in Ḥasidei Ashkenaz: either by looking at the face of the Glory, or by looking at the face that is reflected within water, or at the shape of the body at the night of Hosh'ana' Rabbah, someone is able to guess the decrees on high. This preoccupation with the knowledge of the will of God should be associated with learned attempts to guess the larger will of God through inspecting a canonic text.¹⁰⁵ In all these cases, surfaces, which are from time to time also faces, serve as the locus of the revelation of the divine, an issue found already in Jewish texts in late antiquity, as well as in the resort by Ḥasidei Ashkenaz to mantic techniques.¹⁰⁶ The various facial changes of the divine, which reflect

1993), pp. 104–114, 211–212 note 178. See also note 43 above.

Prof. Wolfson has kindly drawn my attention that he too – apparently independently of the above references – has more recently claimed the influence of a discussion of R. Eleazar of Worms, where two *partzufim*, a smaller and a greater one are mentioned, on Kabbalistic masculine and feminine hypostases. See his *Along the Path*, p. 175 note 329, discussing a text of that Hasidic master translated previously on p. 33. Whether or not that text of R. Eleazar can be interpreted as dealing with masculine and feminine potencies, or as pointing to two different ontic aspects in the upper world, as claimed there, is, in my opinion, an issue that transcends the limited framework of this note. If my guess is correct, and the quoted text does not lend itself to such a reading, my former modest suggestions as to possible sources of these specific aspects of the Zoharic anthropomorphism may remain the most pertinent comparisons to the Zoharic view. Indeed, the theory of the faces within the Ashkenazi theory, which presupposes a vertical type of relationship between the higher and the lower faces, differs from the theory of the two *partzufim*, which are related to the two cherubim, and presuppose a more horizontal type of relationship.

¹⁰⁴ See e.g. Susan A. Handelman, *Fragments of Redemption* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1991), pp. 208–214.

¹⁰⁵ Haym Soloveitchik, "Three Themes in the Sefer Ḥasidim", *AJS Review*, vol. 1 (1976), pp. 311–325. See above notes 70–71 for the occurrence of the Torah in contexts related to revelations of God. For the view of the Torah as water, which occurs in the context of the revelation of God face to face, see *Siddur R. Shelomo mi-Germaiza* [note 95 above], p. 219.

¹⁰⁶ Ithamar Gruenwald, "The Aspaqlariyah and the technique of

the inner decrees, may be learned from their reflections on high, on the face of the Glory, or on below, on the water or earth. Reality is mirroring, on different ontic levels, the hidden decrees of the Godhead, and the way to learn them is an extended hermeneutics of refractions onto surfaces.¹⁰⁷ The interface between the different faces is based upon what Claude Levi-Strauss has once designated as 'propriété inductrice' a structural correspondence between different levels that allow the effective interaction between them. Therefore, the facial structure of the variety of the different images is not only a matter of a certain type of theology, an anthropomorphical one, and not only a matter of a type of continuum, that allows a linkage between the divine and human face, but also a matter of both influencing the higher by operations done on the lower level, and the transmission of the decrees on high to the specialists in reading then on the intermediary faces. The structure described above allows a better understanding of how the different forms of activities, theurgical, magical, prophetic, may be integrated into a more cohesive structure that operates on the principle of sympathies between parallel levels of reality.

Last but not least: the integration of the gentile practice, or the cultivation of an already existing praxis despite its recognized similarity to the custom of the gentiles should be seen as part of the effort by Ḥasidei Ashkenaz to integrate the 'natural' phenomena as part of their worldview. Their eagerness to adopt the 'findings' of their Christian neighbors is attested also from other instances.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, what seems to me important in our case is the absorption of an alien custom which is integrated into

Prophetic and Apocalyptic Vision", *Beit ha-Miqra*, vol. 40 (1970), pp. 95–97 (Hebrew); Dan, *Studies* [note 5 above], pp. 34–43 (Hebrew); Moshe Idel, "On the Metamorphosis of an Ancient Technique of Prophetic Vision in the Middle Ages", *Sinai*, vol. 86 (1979), pp. 1–7 (Hebrew), Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines* [note 7 above] pp. 239–243.

¹⁰⁷ On the human face described as a book see Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, tr. Willard R. Trask (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1983), p. 316 where a text of Henry of Settimello, following Alan of Lille, is adduced, to the effect that man's face is a book that can be read in order to find out the thoughts.

¹⁰⁸ See Israel Ta-Shma, "Quntres Zekher 'Asah le-Nifle'otav", *Qovetz 'al Yad*, (NS) vol. 12 (1994), pp. 123–146 (Hebrew).

a more general worldview, that of the reflections of the faces on the various ontological levels, which offers a theoretical support for the specific forms of practices as mentioned above.

VII. Types of Deaths

In the legend quoted above from *Sefer Ḥasidim*, the divine touch, which invests the righteous with a radiant aura is the omen for an imminent death. In the *Hosha'na' Rabbah* rite it is a removal of the divine that fulfills a similar function. Are these two different, or even opposite views? Such a conclusion is possible, though not totally necessary. If we stress the fact that the examination of the shadow is practiced by everyone, while the reception of the radiance is restricted to the righteous, we may assume that the two views as presented above are not contradictory visions concerning the end of life, but rather different options, open to different kinds of persons. Death of a regular man will mean a distancing of God's presence from him, while in the case of the pious or the righteous, the moment of death constitutes, in fact, a moment of augmenting the divine presence. While in the first case we deal with an exoteric topic, in the latter a rather esoteric, or at least elitist approach is revealed. The righteous will enjoy a state reminiscent of Moses' radiance, a momentary enhancement of power; the common person will, however, experience a diminution of his power. Indeed, a text of R. Eleazar seems to corroborate at least part of this inference; in his *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*, he writes that

when the soul exits [from the body] it dresses itself with the radiance of the [divine] glory,¹⁰⁹ if it was preoccupied with the commandments, either by

¹⁰⁹ *zohar ha-kavod*. This term is very important for the theosophy of the Ashkenazi Hasidism. According to a certain tradition, the term was already in use at least two generations before R. Eleazar, as he testifies that he has received an oral tradition from R. Yehudah he-Ḥasid, who received it from his father, R. Shemuel; see Ms. Parma de Rossi 1390, fol. 78b, R. Abraham ben Azriel, *Sefer 'Arugat ha-Bosem* [note 45 above], vol. I p. 200. *Zohar ha-kavod* – and sometimes 'or ha-kavod – is a typical phrase in R. Eleazar's writings. See also below note 122.

studying them or by keeping them¹¹⁰ since 'the commandment is a candle but Torah is light'^{111, 112}

The mentioning of the term *zohar* in connection with the death, and the link between this radiance and the performance of the commandments, is quite reminiscent of the passage from *Sefer Ḥasidim* about the *Tzaddiq*. Moreover, in an Ashkenazi writing entitled *Sefer ha-Hesbeq* it is written that on the elevation of Enoch:

he had two likenesses¹¹³; at the beginning he had the likeness of a man¹¹⁴ and, at the end, the likeness of an angel ... so that when He has chosen a prophet in order to worship him¹¹⁵ He will elevate him¹¹⁶ by means of the radiance of the glory, [to sit] upon the seat of glory.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰ See also R. Eleazar's *Sefer ha-Hokhmab*, printed in his *Commentary on the Torah*, vol. I p. 31, where he claims that the primordial light, which has been hidden from man, is nevertheless 'renewed in proportion to the deeds of men.'

¹¹¹ Proverbs 6: 23.

¹¹² *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh* [note 17 above], p. 12. See also *ibidem*, p. 85 where it is written that the righteous men receive the light of the glory, because they will be like the four beasts, the carriers of the divine chariot. This is, again, an eschatological statement. See also *ibidem*, p. 77.

¹¹³ *Shetei demuyyiot*. In some Ashkenazi sources the phrase *demut* occurs in connection to the theory of Glory: see e.g. R. Eleazar's *Hilekhot Kavod*, in Abrams, "Sod kol ha-Sodot" [note 16 above], p. 79; Wolfson, *Through a Speculum*, pp. 233, 237.

¹¹⁴ This view implies that one of the two likenesses belongs to the terrestrial man. On the issue of *demut* in Ḥasidei Ashkenaz see Haym Soloveitchik, "Topics in the *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*," *JJS*, vol. 18 (1967), pp. 75–78, Dan, *The Esoteric Theology* [note 26 above], pp. 224–225.

¹¹⁵ The Hebrew is not quite clear here and my translation is an approximation; in the original it is written: *ka'asher ivhar be-'avadat ha-navi'* and I assume that the better version is '*avodat ha-navi'*'.

¹¹⁶ *yarimehu*. This form is found in the long version of *Sefer ha-Hesbeq*, and sounds better than the meaningless version *Yermiyahu* apparently influenced by the occurrence of the term 'prophet' beforehand – as quoted by Dan, (see the following note). Maybe it is a scribe error for *yare'hu*, i.e., He [God] has shown to him [namely to the prophet]. However, the sequence *be-zohar kevodo* fits the phrase *yarimehu*, and not; *yare'hu*. Moreover, the verse Psalm 112: 9: *Qarno yarum be-kavod* whose words are reminiscent of the situation dealt with here, can be translated as "his horn will be exalted with glory". For a reading of this verse as pointing to the ascent of the soul, see below, the passage from R. Ezra of Gerona, as well note 117 below. Moreover, the ascension of the prophet, which is signified by *yarimehu*, fits the discussion which immediately precedes this quote where the two likenesses are described as one pointing to

The ascension of Enoch by the dint of the radiance of the glory seems to complement the text of R. Eleazar, who speaks about the garment of the divine glory. In *Sefer ha-Hesheq*, this garment seems to function as a vehicle which would bring the soul of the righteous to his ultimate place in the after world. Here, again, the protagonist is not everyman, but a prophet. It should be

the status of man, the other to Enoch's status of angel, thus implying the translation, and thus the ascension, of the patriarch.

¹¹⁷ *Sefer ha-Hesheq*, ed. Y.M. Epstein (Lemberg, 1865), fol. 4a. Dan, *The Esoteric Theology* [note 26 above], p. 223, brings, in lieu of the verb discussed in the preceding note, the form *Yermiyahu!* See also M. Idel, "Additional Fragments from R. Joseph of Hamadan's Writings", *Daat*, vol. 21 (1988), p. 51 and note 26. Wolfson, *Through a Speculum that Shines* [note 7 above], p. 223 translates this passage, using the phrase 'he sees the splendor of the glory', apparently on the basis of several manuscripts, with the version of *yare'hu* (which means He [God] shew him [the prophet] 'the splendor of the glory' as the correct reading. However, if the *yarimehu* version is indeed the correct one, this passage reflects a pattern of apotheosis, already found in much earlier forms of Jewish mystical literature; See Peter Schaefer, *The Hidden and the Manifest God* (SUNY Press, Albany, 1992), pp. 165–166; M. Idel, "Enoch is Metatron", *Immanuel*, vol. 24/25 (1990), p. 225 note 18, and the study of Elliot R. Wolfson, "Yeridah la-Merkavah: Typology of Ecstasy and Enthronement in Ancient Jewish Mysticism," in ed. R.A. Herrera, *Mystics of the Book, Themes, Topics, and Typologies* (Peter Lang, New York, 1993), pp. 13–44 and in a more general manner Geo Widengren, "Heavenly Enthronement and Baptism, Studies in Mandaean Baptism," *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Honor of Ervin Ramsdell Goodenough*, ed. J. Neusner (Brill, Leiden, 1968), pp. 551–582, idem, "Baptism and Enthronement in Some Jewish-Christian Gnostic Documents", *The Saviour God*, ed. We S.G.F. Brandon (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1963), pp. 205–217. However, what is crucial here is the precise terminology, namely *zohar ha-kavod*, found only in the circle of the Ashkenazi authors of middle 12th and early 13th century, and in their Spanish Kabbalists contemporaries. See above note 109.

See also R. Eleazar's *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh* [note 17 above], p. 23 where it is said that when God wants to elevate the soul to be stored under the throne of Glory, "He shows her the splendor of His Glory" which then attracts the soul as a magnet, while in *Sodei Razayya* ed. Weiss, p. 135, the recipient of the secrets of the *Merkavah* is enthroned like Adam, and see also *ibidem*, p. 138 where the process of angelization is mentioned. For additional examples of ascent by means of a ray that brings the soul to the upper world see M. Idel, "In the Light of Life", in eds., Y. Gafni, A. Ravitzky, *Qeddusbat ha-Hayyim* (Merkaz Zalman Shazar, Jerusalem, 1992), pp. 209–211 (Hebrew).

It may be that the versions in some ancient manuscripts, with the verb *yare'hu* as the basic version, reflecting the shorter version of the *Commentary on the Seventy Names of Metatron*, as adduced by Wolfson, *ibidem*, reflects too an apothecotic approach, because the vision of the glory may attract the soul on high. In any

mentioned that in R. Moshe of Taku's *Ketav Tammim* it is said that "the soul of the righteous shines"¹¹⁸ Such statements are, however, not exceptional in Jewish mystical texts; a contemporary of R. Eleazar, the Kabbalist R. Ezra of Gerona, indicates that

The performance of a *mitzwah* is [itself] the light of life. One who acts below maintains and sustains [*meqayyem u-ma'amid*] its power [*koḥah*] [on high] as it is said: "The commandment is a candle but the Torah is light"¹¹⁹ and he walks in the ways of light, and he does not depart from it, and he is immersed in it. When the soul is detached from the body, that light draws the soul, being like a magnet¹²⁰ to that soul, as it is written¹²¹: 'He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor, his righteousness endures for ever', because that divine manifestation draws her as it is written¹²² 'his horn shall be exalted with honor' namely the radiance of the soul¹²³ ascends and

case, there is one more case in *Sefer ha-Hesheq*, when the author mentions a throne given to a human being, namely Enoch. See *ibidem*, fol. 4b.

¹¹⁸ *Otzar Nebmad*, vol. III (1860), p. 88.

¹¹⁹ Proverbs 6: 23.

¹²⁰ The concept of magnet as a theological metaphor is found several times in R. Eleazar's *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh* [note 17 above], pp. 23, 31–32, 39, and this issue is discussed in Idel, "In the Light of Life" [note 117 above], pp. 205–206.

¹²¹ Psalm 112: 9. See also above note 116.

¹²² *ibidem*. Honor here translates *kavod*, which means also Glory. See above 109 above.

¹²³ The Hebrew original is *zohar ha-neshamah*. This phrase occurs already in Shelomo ibn Gabirol's *Keter Malkhut* (See Idel, "In the Light" [note 117 above], pp. 207–208 note 90.) and also in the context of the divine glory, in a manner quite reminiscent of the writings of R. Eleazar of Worms. See also in the quote from the anonymous Ashkenazi author adduced above. Moreover, in a text which perhaps belongs to the close companion of R. Ezra, R. Azriel of Gerona, the phrase *Zohar ha-kavod* is mentioned. See Ms. New York, JTS 1887, fol. 38a, Ms. New York, JTS 2194, fol. 38: "The Shekhinah receives the radiance of the inner Glory [*zohar ha-kavod ha-penimi*] by the means of the holy sefirot which are above her." It should be mentioned that expressions like 'the radiance of the soul' or the 'light of the soul', found in Geronese Kabbalah, point to an acquired capacity, which depends on the performance of the commandments, a view that is much more evident in the book of the *Zohar*. See Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar* [note 28 above], vol. II pp. 15–16. Moreover it is quite possible that the recurrence of expressions which connect soul to radiance influenced the Zoharic concept of the highest spiritual capacity named *Zihara*'. In any case, Moses de Leon resorted to the expression *zohar ha-neshamah*; see Ms. Cambridge Dd. 4.2.1, fol. 35a. while in *Zohar Hadash* ed., R. Margoliot (Mossad Harav Kook, Jerusalem, 1978), fol. 69ab in *Midrash Shir ha-Shirim ha-Ne'elam*, the expression *zihara' de-nishmeta' 'ila'ah* occurs. On the other hand, the phrase *nehiru di-neshamah* is also found in the *Zohar*, II fol. 142b. If resort to the term *zohar*

stands in a supernal and intimate place, within the glory¹²⁴ of the Blessed Holy One.¹²⁵

The resemblance between the two claims, related as they are to the effect of the performance of the commandments is quite interesting, as both also adduce the motif of the Glory as the place for the rest of the soul, and the metaphor of the magnet. It should be emphasized that the Catalan Kabbalist stresses the commandments as the only avenue to be drawn upwards by the divine ray.

VIII. Some Conclusions

If my guess as to the possible impact of the Ashkenazi theology of faces on the Zoharic theosophy is correct, and such a transition of esoteric material from Ashkenaz to Castile included also the more speculative explanations related to the alien rites - the practice itself has been known both in Catalonia, Castile and Italy, as the writings of Nahmanides, Bahya ben Asher, Moses de Leon

in the book of the *Zohar* is influenced by the Geronese resort to the term, which in its turn may reflect an influence of, or recourse, to sources shared by Ashkenazi Hasidism, then the contribution of the study of Hasidei Ashkenaz for the understanding of the Spanish Kabbalah may well be greater than suspected. See also above note 97. On the phrase kavod penimi, namely the 'inner glory', which occurs in the above quote from the Geronese manuscript in the Ashkenazi literature, see the sources mentioned by Abrams, "Sod kol ha-Sodot" [note 16 above], p. 65 note 23, Farber-Ginat, *The Concept of the Merkabah* [note 52 above], p. 407.

¹²⁴ **Kavod.** The recurrence of different concepts of Glory in R. Ezra's writings, as well as in those of Nahmanides', may point to a common theology shared by the early Kabbalists and the Hasidei Ashkenaz, who drew from an earlier common source, which is not necessarily restricted to the philosophical discussions found in R. Sa'adiah Gaon and R. Sabbatai Donnolo. See also Moshe Idel, "On the Concept of Zimzum in Kabbalah and Its Research," in eds., Rachel Elior, Yehuda Liebes, *Lurianic Kabbalah* (Jerusalem, 1992), pp. 65-68 (Hebrew).

¹²⁵ See *Commentary on Taryag Mitzvot*, printed at the end of R. Ezra's *Commentary on Songs of Songs*, attributed to Nahmanides, printed in *Kitvei ha-Ramban*, ed. Ch.D. Chavel (Jerusalem, 1964), vol. II p. 524. For more on this text see Idel, "In the Light of Life" [note 117 above], p. 193, and idem, "Some Remarks", [note 3 above], pp. 118-121.

and the book of the *Zohar* in Spain, and R. Menahem Recanati in Italy, demonstrate¹²⁶ - we may have in this example an interesting case of theological transformation of a ritual and its rationale, into a major Kabbalistic theosophical topic.¹²⁷ The analysis of the evolution of the ritual of examining the shade, and of the ideological pole mentioned in that context, shows that the Ashkenazi literature and practices influenced the Sephardi and Italian discussions concerning these issues. As in many other cases, a proper understanding of the history of Jewish mysticism should take into consideration the mediating role of the Ashkenazi phase in the transition of earlier customs and ideologies from some centres of Jewish life toward the Spanish and Italian soils. The arrival of Ashkenazi texts and masters from the middle of the 13th century to the new environments is by now well-documented and their impact becomes more evident in the last quarter of the 13th century both in Spain and Italy.¹²⁸ In some cases, the Ashkenazi practices, customs, concepts and, eventually, some of their myths, were adopted and adapted by the Spanish and Italian Kabbalists, becoming crucial components of their mystical systems. However, we should be cognizant of the fact that sometimes the rudimentary elements of the later Ashkenazi myths are found already in plenty of biblical verses which supplied raw material for the elaboration of the discussions of the illumination of the faces both as part of a

¹²⁶ See Wilhelm, "Sidrei Tiququnim" [note 24 above] pp. 133, 137; Weinstock, *Studies* [note 28 above] pp. 251-253.

¹²⁷ For other, later, influences of Hasidei Ashkenaz on Kabbalah see Y. Dan, "The Vicissitudes of the Esotericism of the German Hasidism", *Studies in Mysticism and Religion presented to Gershom G. Scholem* (The Magnes Press, Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 87-100 (Hebrew) as well as the studies of Farber-Ginat and Wolfson, mentioned in Idel, "In the Light of Life" [note 117 above], p. 207 note 89, and now also E. Wolfson, "Hai Gaon's letter and Commentary on 'Alenu: Further Evidence of Moses de Leon's Pseudepigraphic Activity", *JQR*, vol. LXXXI (1991), pp. 365-410. For the importance of many other Ashkenazi customs for some discussions found in the book of the *Zohar* see Israel Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar* (Tel Aviv, 1995) (Hebrew). See also above notes 45 and 85 and the next footnote.

¹²⁸ See Israel Ta-Shma, "Rabeinu Dan Ashkenazi" in *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* = eds., J. Dan-J. Hacker, *Studies in Jewish Mysticism, Philosophy and Ethical Literature Presented to Isaiah Tishby* (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 385-394 (Hebrew) and see above note 33.

prophetic experience and as a symbol for the future. The existence of discussions in the late antiquity we have pointed out above,¹²⁹ is a strong indication of the fact that, at least insofar as this topic is concerned, Ḥasidei Ashkenaz often relied on ancient sources which were transmitted, elaborated, adapted and changed in the new cultural environments of the 12th and 13th centuries in Europe.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ See notes 17 and 52 above.

¹³⁰ See more recently, Peter Schaefer, "The Ideal of Piety of the Ashkenazi Hasidim and its Roots in Jewish Tradition", *Jewish History*, vol. IV (1990), pp. 9–23 and Idel, *Golem* [note 22 above], pp. 54–95.

Coronation of the Sabbath Bride: Kabbalistic Myth and the Ritual of Androgynisation

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Historians of religion have long noted the intricate nexus of myth and ritual: The function of ritual is to instantiate a particular myth, which in turn provides the symbolic narrative that informs and organizes the practitioner's behavior in the world. Through ritual performance, therefore, the individual inscribes the mythic belief in the spatio-temporal world. One may challenge the universal application of this nexus to different religious societies, but it is beyond question that the relationship between myth and ritual as delineated above can be applied legitimately to the history of kabbalistic speculation in which the supreme importance accorded normative halakhic practice is upheld.¹ Even the antinomian tendencies, latent in some early sources and actualized in the Sabbatian and Frankist heresies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are dialectically related to the nomian impulse: Abrogation of the law was perceived as the ultimate means to fulfill it.² As a number of scholars have pointed out in recent years, in the literature of theosophic kabbalah the traditional commandments

¹ The point was well recognized by Gershom Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York, 1969), pp. 132–133: "the Kabbalists strove from the very first to anchor the ritual of Rabbinical Judaism in myth by means of a mystical practice" (author's emphasis).

² See Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1954), pp. 293–294; R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, "Messianismus und Mystik," in *Gershom Scholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism 50 Years After: Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism*, eds. Peter Schäfer and Joseph Dan (Berlin, 1993), pp. 20–21.