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PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN A STRICT INTERPRETATION OF MONOTHEISM IN JUDAISM THROUGH THE EARLY CENTURIES OF THIS ERA AND IN JEWISH MYSTICISM THROUGH SABBATANISM

by

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ABSTRACT

Problems Involved in a Strict Interpretation of Monotheism in Judaism through the Early Centuries of this Era and in Jewish Mysticism through Sabbatianism

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The central tenet of contemporary Judaism is its monotheistic belief in one God, as exemplified in its central profession of faith, the Sh'ma. The status of the monotheistic concept as the sine qua non of Judaism is further evidenced by numerous Biblical statements asserting God's uniqueness and unity. Since contemporary Judaism is a descendant of Pharasaic/Rabbinic Judaism, the popular view often stereotypes the latter as being rigidly monotheistic and the only form of Judaism practiced during most periods of time.

Contrary to the above views, this paper endeavors to show that the rigid monotheism associated with Judaism was not the only form of Judaism practiced throughout the centuries. Rather, Judaism's strict monotheism has frequently needed "softenings" with various kinds of intermediaries and divine emanations (which at times appear to have more contact with man than God does) and even with additional creators and revealers. Examples of such "softenings," why man tends to adopt them, and how they were finally resolved (by themselves or by Rabbinic Judaism) are the main thrusts of this paper.

In selecting the examples of monotheistic softenings in Judaism, I concentrated on two basic areas: Judaism until the first centuries...
of this era and Jewish mysticism through Sabbatianism. In the survey of these periods of time, five factors were identified as having contributed to the development of these intermediaries, emanations, and additional creators and revealers:

1. Syncretism is found in Judaism from Biblical times to Sabbatianism as Judaism—for a variety of reasons—adopted and modified myths, symbols, divinities, etc. of the age.

2. The language and symbols used by man in describing God are sometimes unacceptable in later periods of time, causing, for example, anthropomorphisms to be interpreted as referring to intermediaries and emanations rather than to God Himself.

3. Judaism is founded on the premise that its God works in history. Thus, when seemingly inexplicable historical events occur, especially ones causing great suffering to God's "chosen people," there often occurs a re-evaluation of the reasons for the experience, leading to profound changes in the Jews' conceptions of God and Israel and even resulting in dualities and trinities in the Godhead.

4. Judaism's view of God as One, a Unity, has resulted in a variety of interpretations which often include intermediaries, etc. to possess some of the polarities of the characteristics encompassed by the Unity. For example, throughout Judaism one finds opposing views on whether this One includes both good and evil or only good, both transcendence and immanence (or which prevailed), etc.
5. Finally, from the survey of the time periods mentioned, it was discovered that man—with his insatiable desire to know about, understand, and emulate God—too often created God in his own image or for his own convenience, making Him into a macro-anthropos and man into a micro-cosmos and even giving God feelings that man possesses.

After the Sabbatian heresy in which a large segment of Jewish mysticism completely rejected monotheism, Judaism took special precautions to stifle anything that hinted of similar ideas.
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INTRODUCTION

The central tenet of contemporary Judaism is its monotheistic belief in one God. Such a belief is found in Judaism's central profession of faith, the Sh'ma, which states, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One." Numerous similar statements are found throughout the Bible. For example, Isaiah 44:6 states, "I am the first, and I am the last, and besides Me there is no God."; and Deuteronomy 32:39 reads: "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me; I alone kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal...." K. Kohler emphasizes that such conceptions allow no important place to be given to angels or spirits, much less for additional creators or revealers.

However, although contemporary Judaism is a descendant of Pharasaic/Rabbinic Judaism, the latter was not the only form of Judaism practiced throughout the ages, nor was it always as "monotheistic" as such a term might strictly imply. In other words, popular Jewish beliefs have given an important place to angels, intermediaries, and emanations; and Judaism has also had incidences of additional creators and revealers.

For example, G. F. Moore—in speaking of Judaism of the first centuries of the present era—affirms both Judaism's "inveterate monotheism" and the fact that there were of necessity isolated Jewish groups who believed otherwise.
...a dualistic solution of one kind or another was so widely accepted in philosophy and religion in the early centuries of our era in the East and West, that it is idle to attempt to identify the Jewish circles which adopted this solution. It must suffice us to know that there were such circles; that they tried to fortify their position with texts of Scripture; and that the Rabbis refuted them with their own weapons. It is certain also that, whatever leanings there may have been in this direction, Judaism, with its inveterate monotheism, was not rent by dualistic heresies as Christianity was for centuries.3

Although E. R. Goodenough has not found any direct evidence of dualism, his archaeological and literary investigations have shown that Judaism until at least the middle of the third century was by no means as "inveterate" as Moore imagined.

I have seen no evidence that Jews were worshipping other gods than Yahweh: hence in that sense no trace of syncretism has appeared. But there's a great deal of evidence that they ascribed to Yahweh Helios' rulership as charioteer of the universe, such saving power as that of Heracles and Ares, such gracious mercy as that offered by Aphrodite and the Nymphs...We must assume that there was a very Hellenized or Iranianized way of thinking at least to the middle of the third century when the synagogue was painted...In other words, there were two quite different forms of Judaism flourishing in the same city—a phenomenon that offers no novelty to Jewish historians of any period.4

Finally, Gershom Scholem, in his examination of the main schools of Kabbalistic thought, has shown that there are times in which Kabbalism has become dualistic.
Kabbalism in other words is not dualistic, although historically there exists a close connection between its way of thinking and that of the Gnostics, to whom the hidden God and the creator are opposing principles. It will not surprise us to find that speculation has run the whole gamut—from attempts to re-transform the impersonal En-Sof into the personal God of the Bible to the downright heretical doctrine of a genuine dualism between the hidden En-Sof and the personal Demiurge of Scripture.

A succinct example of the various kinds of monotheism one finds in Judaism can be seen in the variety of interpretations used by different Jewish groups for the first three words of Genesis: בָּרָא עַלְוֹ. Besides the traditional Biblical translation, "In the beginning God created," we also find such interpretations as that in the Palestinian Targum which replaces בָּרָא עַלְוֹ with בָּרָא לְגָדוֹל, and thus reads, "In Wisdom God created." The Midrash on the book of Genesis (Gen. Rabba 1:1ff., 3:5) states, "Through the לְגָדוֹל God created the heaven and earth, and the לְגָדוֹל is no other than the Torah, as it says 'the Lord created me as the לְגָדוֹל of His way.'" The Zohar 1, 15b, all the disciples of Isaac the Blind and Nahmanides, and the majority of the older Kabbalists interpreted the three words as follows:

וָאֶרֶץ בָּרָא—through the medium of the 'beginning,' i.e., of that primordial existence which has been defined as the wisdom of God; בָּרָא, created, that is to
say, the hidden Nothing which constitutes the grammatical subject of the word bara, emanated or unfolded Elohim, that is to say, its emanation is Elohim. Elohim, the name of God, is the object, and not the subject of the sentence. In other words, Elohim is the name given to God after the disjunction of subject and object has taken place, but in which this gap is continuously bridged or closed. The mystical Nothing which lies before the division of the primary idea into the Knower and the Known is not regarded by the Kabbalist as a true subject.®

As can be seen, although none of the groups nor sources cited would deny Judaism's central tenet of monotheism, they also have found varying degrees of additions or exceptions to this monotheism. In this paper I intend to show that indeed the "inveterate monotheism" has frequently needed "softening" with various kinds of divine emanations, intermediaries, and even second creators and revealers. I in no way mean to state that a softened form of monotheism is the correct or "true" form of Jewish worship. Rather, I will show the causes of such softenings, explaining why man tends to adopt them. How they were finally resolved (by themselves or by Rabbinic Judaism) will also be examined.

In narrowing the range of material to be examined for this thesis, I have eliminated any consideration of sects that do not consider themselves a part of Judaism. Thus, for example, Grant® mentions a passage in which the Basilidians stated that they were "no longer Jews, but not yet Christians." This paper would not deal with such a group that has already abandoned Judaism. More
appropriate would be the Jewish antecedents of such a group. Secondly, with several exceptions, I am concentrating on two basic areas: Judaism until the first centuries of this era and Jewish mysticism through Sabbatianism. Through my research I have found these areas to be most fruitful. Ideally, this paper will stimulate research for another one that will include the immense body of material presently omitted.
FOOTNOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. The Zohar II 38b, III 262a, II 43b, etc. interpret the Sh'ma as mirroring the divine unity in trinity; see below, p. 90.

2. K. Kohler, Jewish Theology, p. 181.


6. This type of exegesis goes back to Proverbs 8:22 which appeared to interpret resheet in the sense of a first principle and to identify this principle with Wisdom. C.H. Dodd, The Bible and the Greeks, p. 25; see below, p. 18 ff.

7. Similar statements are found in Mishnah Aboth III 14 and Sifre to Deuteronomy 48, ed. Finkelstein, p. 114; see below, p. 18 ff.

8. Scholem, Major Trends, p. 221.

CHAPTER I

BIBLICAL AND POSTBIBLICAL JUDAISM

A. The Bible

The Bible itself has continually been a prime source for those who would desire a doctrine of intermediaries and/or even second creators. In the first place, throughout the Bible— including sections of the creation of the world and the giving of the Law—is found the word דִּשְׁנָה, the plural form of the word for "God." Rabbinic tradition pointed out that this plural was always used with a singular verb. However, such Rabbinic refutations seem to indicate that other groups took this plural as evidence of a doctrine of two powers.

In addition to this plural form of God, the Bible uses other words to mean "God"; some of which are variations of the singular form "El," and others such as נְגוּד have no such connection to דִּשְׁנָה. Although the discrepancy between הָדוּם and נְגוּד has recently been explained to be a result of different literary strands in the Bible, in the past other explanations were needed. Thus, for example, Philo, the Midrash, and the Zohar explain the two names as reflections of God in His different attributes of mercy and strict justice.

As can be surmised, one of the most "troublesome" passages
of the Bible occurs in Genesis 1:26: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." This passage has been interpreted in various ways, but possibly the most frequent method—found in both Philo⁶ and the Midrash⁷—is that the plural was used to show that lesser beings helped God, thus acquitting God from the responsibility of evil. Ironically, frequently it is the pious who, desiring to associate God with good only, are attracted by the doctrine of intermediaries and/or second creators. Some of the other places in the Bible in which similar plurals are found include Genesis 11:7, 20:13, Joshua 24:19, and II Samuel 7:23.

The anthropomorphism and anthropopathism inherent in the Bible is another important aspect that has often led to a doctrine of intermediaries. For example, in the Hellenistic age no longer could one conceive of a God Who was "a man of war" (Exodus 15:3), whose voice walked in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:8), Who repented (Genesis 6:6, Exodus 32:14), etc. Thus, some sort of intermediary became necessary if the Bible was to be interpreted literally. As would be expected, this anthropomorphism became an especially acute problem to a sect called the Karaites who insisted on a literal interpretation of the Torah. It is no great surprise to find a distinguished Karaite leader in the middle of the ninth century, Benjamin ben Moses of Nahawend, credited with the opinion that the world wasn't created immediately by God. Rather, he said, God created an angel who in turn created the world and caused the
prophets to receive their inspiration. Nahawend's angel resulted from his need to find explanations for Biblical statements concerning God that—when interpreted literally—were somewhat offensive to pure monotheism. There was also a small sect who followed Nahawend's ideas.

B. Angels in Biblical and Postbiblical Judaism

The Bible often has angels (רֵעֵן, "messenger") of God which take limited part in the history. In general, they are "indistinct and colorless," a reflection of the popular ideas of the day. A difficulty arises, however, in the fact that frequently these angels are barely distinguishable from God Himself. Indeed, often the terms seem to be used interchangeably. For example, in Genesis 32:25-31 Jacob's angel is described both as a "man" (32:35) and as God (32:31). The angel in Genesis 31:11ff. also calls himself the God of Beth-el. Exodus 23:21 says that God's name is in His angel that goes before the Israelites. Other examples are found in Genesis 16:7-13, 22:11ff., Exodus 3:2ff., 14:19 as compared to 13:21, Judges 6:11ff., etc. In other words, in the earlier Biblical period the angels do not have a distinct personality apart from God nor do they seem to be created beings separate from God. Rather, they are distinct at times and then seem to blend into one with God. In this way they are used as a reverent periphrasis for
God when He is described in his closest manifestations to man. Thus, for example, in Genesis 21:17ff God hears Hagar, but it is the angel of God who speaks to her. This problem of God's transcendence vs. His immanence appears throughout Jewish history, and the blending of the angels into God's essence is not the only way to solve the problem.\footnote{11}

In the later parts of the Bible angels become more important. However, even in Ezekiel and Zechariah where they are the mediums or interpreters of revelation, they are still anonymous. Furthermore, in all Biblical passages with the possible exception of Zechariah 1:12, angels are messengers of God to man, not mediating from man to God. In the book of Daniel and in following Apocrypha books (and Josephus and Philo), they receive names and larger roles, giving them a personality separate from God. However, even in these post-exilic writings the belief in angels was not at all universal.

A more developed doctrine of created\footnote{12} angels is seen in the works of the Pseudepigrapha. For example, in I Enoch 89:59ff. it is stated that during the earlier period God was Israel's Shepherd, but after the destruction, He put seventy angels over them. In III Baruch there are three classes of angels who intercede for the three classes of men. Underlying this is an advanced conception of divine transcendence in relation to the anthropomorphism used to describe God previously. No longer was it believed that God might be seen or heard by human powers, so angels were needed to take God's place.
Furthermore, Persian influence with its vast hosts of angels is reflected in the Pseudepigrapha's angels which increase in number and splendor. These angels not only transmit revelation but also are instruments in providence, history, and the realm of nature. For example, there are angels for all aspects of the weather, guardians of nations and individuals, etc. However, in spite of the ubiquitousness of the angelic hierarchy, they are not meant to diminish God's omnipresence and omniscience. They result from a more transcendent view of God, from Persian influence, and from the desire to make God more like man's idea of a king who still keeps in constant contact with his subjects through his appointed representatives.

C. Syncretism

Syncretism is found in Judaism from the earliest times until the present day and would certainly be expected to play a part in a doctrine of intermediaries. Ancient Israel is sometimes described as "henotheistic" or "monolatrous." In other words, although she worshipped and "knew" only one God, she did not deny that other nations had other gods (Genesis 31:53, Judges 11:24, I Samuel 26:19), and she did not try to convert these nations. Thus, for example, the cementing of alliance by marriage involved some acceptance of the ally's divinities. This went into extremes in Solomon's reign where it is said in I Kings 11:4-8,
When Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not whole with the Lord his God...Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh the detestation of Moab...and for Molech...and so did he for all his foreign wives, who offered and sacrificed unto their gods.

Indeed, throughout the Bible there is a constant battle of the judges and prophets to eliminate the idol worship and worship of foreign gods by the people and even by most of the kings. In the time of the return from the exile, outlying colonies still worshipped a pantheon of at least five figures; and there is some evidence that the Jews of Elephantine worshipped Anath in addition to YHWH. In these cases syncretism resulted because of the influence of the neighboring peoples and the desire to be like them.

Another reason for syncretism is to avoid persecution when the nation was under the rule of another nation or when the Jews were in countries besides Israel. It was often much easier to accept other gods alongside of YHWH in order to be tolerated by the ruling nations and not experience such persecution as reflected in the books of Esther and Maccabees. On the other hand, some syncretism became advantageous in the Greco-Roman period in order for the Jews themselves to better proselytize.

Another very important reason for syncretism was to offset the lure of the other religions and philosophies. Thus, for example, the Bible and much of later Judaism adapted other nations' myths and
symbols, re-interpreting them to fit Judaism. Canaanite sanctuaries such as Shechem, Bethel, and perhaps Gilgal were rededicated to YHVH. In the Greco-Roman period the gods of other nations or cults were interpreted as angels or subordinate powers appointed by YHVH to rule the Gentiles. In addition, and this is significant, many of their characteristics were absorbed by YHVH. One example of such an absorption is seen in Elijah's emphasizing that YHVH (not Baal) was also God of agriculture, not only God of history and battles.14

One of YHVH's most lasting absorptions was the inclusion of a feminine sphere. A feminine element in YHVH reappears several times in Jewish history, causing Gershom Scholem to state that the addition of this characteristic "satisfied a deep-seated religious need" for the Jewish people.15 In the postbiblical period in which we are presently concerned, the addition of a feminine element was needed for another important reason: to offset the lure of the Babylonian worship of the female Isis and the popular Canaanite worship of the female Astarte.

Both of these female deities were very attractive to the Israelites. Indeed, throughout the Bible beginning with the period of the Judges (Judges 2:13, 10:6), one finds examples of Astarte worship practiced by the Jews, and the Bible contains words developed from the root "Astarte."16 The Israelites came into contact with the Isis worship much later, around 300 B.C.E., when Judea was a province of the Ptolemaic empire.17 The cult was attractive; and
although there was no systematic persecution of Judaism as a religion, there was the advantage of full citizenship and, thus, opportunities of advancement in public life to those who were initiated into these mysteries. To reduce the lure of these two deities, the female intermediary Wisdom was added to Judaism sometime in the second or third century, B.C.E.\textsuperscript{18}

The Bible had often used the concept of God's Word, and Greek philosophy had the Logos as a mode of the activity of God. Thus, one would have attributed the development of Wisdom to the contemporary philosophies if not for the fact that this Wisdom was personified as a female being, and it would have been much easier to develop the Logos concept at once rather than develop this awkward female Wisdom. Furthermore, in examining the texts in which Wisdom appears, we find that they still contain many anthropomorphic references to God and that God is described in very personal language. Thus, again we see that Wisdom's original purpose was not that of reducing anthropomorphisms nor of bridging a gap between man and a transcendent God, but rather of providing a feminine element to combat the Isis/Astarte worship.

Indeed, there are many similarities between Wisdom as portrayed in Jewish literature and the Isis/Astarte deities. For example, in Proverbs 8:22 and Ecclesiasticus 24:9 Wisdom is described as having been created "in the beginning," although she herself has no function in creation. In the Wisdom of Solomon 9:2 and the
Palestinian Targum she does take part in creation. Similarly, Knox states that Isis is described as the "eldest daughter of Cronos" and an agent of creation. Isis is also the divine power manifested in the maintenance of the cosmos, and the Wisdom of Solomon 7:23-25 is in close agreement when it describes Wisdom as "penetrating through all spirits...because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things...effects all things." Isis has the characteristic of precosmic light and so does Wisdom in the Wisdom of Solomon 7:26 and 7:29. Isis is the real intermediary between gods and the world of men, as through her men learned the knowledge of the gods and the methods of serving them. Similar statements are made about Wisdom in the Wisdom of Solomon 7:22, 27-28; 8:4; 9:10, 13-18, etc. Meanwhile, Astarte is the goddess of great cities and the mother manifested in the fertility of nature. In Ecclesiasticus 24:11 Wisdom is described as dwelling in the city of Jerusalem, and in Ecclesiasticus 24:13-21 she is linked in detail with nature's luxuriant verdure and produce.

As can be seen, Wisdom takes on qualities of both Isis and Astarte. According to Cook, these two deities had been practically merged into one another for centuries before this, with the particular quest of Isis ascribed to Astarte. Thus, these figures of Wisdom "appear to represent Isis in the character of Astarte or vice-versa, the ambiguous figure who appears on coins of Antiochus Epiphanes." In addition to characteristics of these two deities,
Wisdom also is portrayed in very feminine terms. For example, in the Wisdom of Solomon she is described as a mother (7:12), beautiful bride (8:2), living with God (8:3) and with the author (8:9), loyal (8:9, 11), giving companionship (8:16), giving encouragement in cares and grief (8:9), etc.

D. Wisdom as an Intermediary

In examining the texts in which Wisdom appears, one finds that her character is not a well-defined one nor does it remain so in the individual texts. For example, in the Bible Wisdom is mentioned in such places as the following: Psalm 104:24: "How manifold are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom Thou hast made them all."; Proverbs 3:13-24: "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth..."; Proverbs 4:5-13; Proverbs 7:4; Proverbs 8:1-9:12; and Job 28. According to Drummond, all of these passages describe Wisdom in poetic terms, not as a distinct being. However, one must be very cautious about such a judgment regarding Proverbs 8:1-9:12. It is true that throughout the Proverbs there is constant personification of qualities. Indeed, the stanza immediately following Proverbs 8:1-9:12 personifies the female Folly. However, in the same Proverbs Wisdom first speaks in the first person; is very accessible to men; says, "The Lord made me as the beginning of His way, the first of His works of old"; and was at God's side, playing before Him during creation. Thus, although I cannot disagree completely
with Drummond; nevertheless, I tend to favor Anderson (and Von Rad\textsuperscript{23} agrees) who states that here "Wisdom has a cosmic status. Wisdom is, or is moving toward becoming, a hypostasis—that is, a distinct entity."\textsuperscript{24}

In both Ecclesiasticus 24 and the Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-11:1, Wisdom suddenly appear, giving a eulogy of herself. In Ecclesiasticus she again speaks in the first person, and in Ecclesiasticus 24:9 she again describes herself as having been created before all things, depending on God for her essence. In addition, she is somewhat an emanation of God, for she "came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a mist."\textsuperscript{25} We read that she works with man, laboring for those who seek instruction. Someday she will again pour out her teaching like prophecy.

The largest role given to Wisdom is that in the Wisdom of Solomon, especially 6:7-11:1. Here Wisdom is described in the third person and appears to take part in creation in 7:22 ("Wisdom, the fashioner of all things") and 9:2 ("by thy wisdom hast formed man"); although 9:9 states, "Wisdom was present when Thou didst made the world." In addition, she appears to be more of an emanation from God than a created being. For example, in 7:24ff, we learn that "she pervades and penetrates all things, for she is a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty."

Wisdom takes part not only in creation, but also in the continuance
of creation, as follows: "In her is a spirit that is...all-powerful, overseeing all...she can do all things...renews all things...lives with God...an associate in His works." She mediates between man and God when she "passes into holy souls in every generation and makes them friends of God, and prophets...in kinship with her there is immortality...through her men were taught what pleases God, and thus were saved by wisdom." Furthermore, she took constant part in the Biblical history including the miracles, from her protection of Adam from his transgression to her causing the miracle of the Red Sea. It seems obvious that Wisdom—even though she emanates from God—is much more than an attribute of God.

As would be expected, these portraits of Wisdom were not taken over by Rabbinic Judaism. Rather, they assimilated her fairly naturally into Judaism in two ways: by identifying her with the Torah, an identification already latent in Proverbs I-IX; and by linking her with the contemporary Hellenistic philosophies of a divine element immanent in the cosmos.

If we re-examine both Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon, we will find both of the two choices stated above were used. In Ecclesiasticus 24:23 we are told that all of the previous personified description of Wisdom, including the detailed passages linking her with Jerusalem and luxuriant verdure, is really the Torah that fills men with wisdom. In the Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-11:1 the author intertwines two concepts of Wisdom: the personified
feminine Wisdom as described previously, and the more contemporary concept of Wisdom—much of which is found on page 18 of this chapter—that in many ways parallels the description of the Stoic divine principle that fills the cosmos. In addition, beginning with verse 11:2, one discovers what some scholars consider a "great change" in style, tone, and theology, no longer treating Wisdom seriously at all. No longer is God transcendent with the intermediary Wisdom as the principle contact with this world and man. Rather, interestingly enough, in respect to the fundamental points, one discovers that precisely the same acts and characteristics previously assigned to Wisdom are now assigned to God. Thus, for example, both God's and Wisdom's spirits are in all things (7:24 vs. 12:1); are the "craftsmen" or "fashioners" of what exists (7:22 and 8:6 vs. 13:1); and both are described in long, detailed passages as the guardians of Israel through all of her earlier history and the causes of all the miracles including that of the Red Sea (10-11:1 vs. 11:4-13, 16:15-23, 18:3-5, etc.). Thus, it appears that there has been more than one author involved in the writing of these sections.

In summarizing this section on Wisdom, we can say that the primary reason for her development was to combat the Isis/Astarte worship made more acute because of the absence of a feminine element in YHVH. In various places she is described alternately as an emanation of God, a created intermediary, and/or an additional
creator and revealer. In time, she was identified with the Torah in the manner in which it is personified in the Midrash. When Alexandrian Judaism came into contact with Alexandrian philosophy, they no longer needed the feminine figure to combat the Isis/Astarte worship. Rather, they wanted to show that Judaism also contained philosophical truths. Thus, they stressed Wisdom's feminine qualities less, identifying her more with the divine spirit or reason throughout the world.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. Genesis Rabbah 8:9


3. F.H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, ed. Philo, I, xix ff; cf. Philo, Quod Deus immutabilis sit 110 for one of many examples that could be cited of this.


5. Ernst Müller, History of Jewish Mysticism, p. 97; cf. Zohar III 65a, II 42b.

6. Philo, De Opificio Mundi 72 ff.


9. Guttmann, Philosophies of Judaism, p. 66 calls the sect Magaria, Maguria, or Magariba, depending on the sources. J. L. Blau, The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala, states that this might be the sect al-Magghariya which is called by Graetz "the Makaryites" or "Maghariyites"; cf. Graetz, History of the Jews, III, 150-151.


11. See below, p. 154 ff.

12. The angels—with the exception of Jubilees 2:2—were created on the second or fifth days, not on the first day, "in order that no one might say they helped God stretch out the canopy of heaven, which was the work of God alone; He had no partner in the creation of the world." Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, I, 381; cf. Genesis Rabbah 1,3, and Tanhuma, ed. Buber, Bereshit 12.

13. "It is possible that Ezra had not yet arrived from Babylon, and that the Judaism of Jerusalem was still of an unreformed type;
on the other hand, Ezra makes no reference to polytheism in the strict sense at Jerusalem and it seems unlikely that he would have ignored it. Perhaps it is more likely that the Jews of Elephantine were ignorant of the change of affairs at Jerusalem and that their appeal fell on deaf ears." Wilfred L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, p. 56. R. McL. Wilson, The Gnostic Problem, p. 2 agrees, but W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age, LIX, 286-287, challenges this interpretation.

14 I Kings 18:41ff.
17 Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, p. 58.
18 Knox, p. 58 sets the date about 250 B.C.E. based on Oesterly and Robinson, History of Israel, II, 201; and Nowach, "Proverbs," in Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible, IV, 142.
19 Knox, p. 58, p. 58 n. 6.
21 Knox, p. 61.
22 James Drummond, Philo Judaeus or The Jewish-Alexandrian Philosophy, I, 141.
23 Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, I, 444ff.
25 Ecclesiasticus 24:3.
26 Wisdom of Solomon 7:23.
27 Wisdom of Solomon 7:27
28 Wisdom of Solomon 8:3ff.
29 Wisdom of Solomon 7:27.
30 Wisdom of Solomon 8:17.

32 The Torah, in its identification with the cosmic Wisdom, was raised to the status of a cosmic power, the totality of all Wisdom. Similar to Philo's Logos, the Torah in Rabbinic theology became the divine pattern or plan of the world which had been used by God as His guide to creation. See above, p. 3; also see Gershom Scholem, On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism, p. 32ff.


34 Wisdom of Solomon 6:9-11:1 is treated as a unity by R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha, I, 521ff., but within it there are some contradictions, e.g. 7:15 as compared to 7:22.

35 See above, p. 14-16.

36 Ralph Marcus, "Hellenistic Jewish Literature," The Jews: Their History, Culture, and Religion, II, 1103, states that Wisdom of Solomon 7:22-23 has "a striking similarity to a list of the attributes of wisdom or virtue made by the Stoic philosopher Cleanthes."

37 R. H. Charles, Apocrypha, I, 518. Marcus, "Hellenistic Jewish Literature," II, 1101, disagrees, stating that there is an "undeniable unity of tone and vocabulary throughout the nineteen chapters." However, R. H. Charles is more convincing. Furthermore, it seems possible that a later editor would have deliberately used many of the same words of the author he was revising in order to portray God with the exact duties as had previously been given to Wisdom.
CHAPTER II

HELENISTIC AND EARLY RABBINIC JUDAISM

A. Hellenism

By the first century Judaism took for granted the presence of Wisdom, angels, demonology, magic, and even astrology to a certain extent, as will be specified later. Evidences of "Hellenism" in both Alexandrian and Palestinian Judaism could be found everywhere—in the concepts, philosophies, symbols, even in the Septuagint, the Bible's translation into Greek. Both Wilson and Knox state that Hellenistic beliefs in astrology were more easily introduced in Palestine, possibly because there was less danger of apostasy there. As Goodenough has demonstrated, there were many other types of Hellenistic Judaism existing alongside of and unreported in Rabbinic Judaism.

In several ways the Septuagint's God is not as personal as the God of the Hebrew scriptures. As we will see later, a more transcendent idea of God leaves a vacuum in His affairs with men that must be filled with intermediaries. In the Septuagint, for example, there is a frequent—though not uniform—change of anthropomorphisms. For example, Exodus 24:10 ("and they saw the God of Israel") was changed to read, "They saw the place where the
God of Israel stood." Exodus 15:3 ("The Lord is a man of war.") became "The Lord is one who crushes wars." Exodus 15:8 ("and with the blast of Thy nostrils") became "and through the wind of Thy wrath"; Exodus 4:24 ("and YHVH met him") was changed to "an angel of the Lord met him." As can be seen with the alteration of Exodus 24:10, some anthropomorphism still remains, and this is true in varying degree throughout the books of the Septuagint. However, the general consensus of scholars is that there "is a tendency among cultivated men to adopt a more elevated view of God..." and this tendency is seen in the Septuagint and also in the Targum of Onkelos. For example, regarding the latter, Exodus 24:10 (quoted on the previous page) was changed to read "They saw the glory of God," and Exodus 15:3 became "a Lord of victory in battles."

The Septuagint also elevated the concept of God by translating Leviticus 24:15, 16 ("...Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death...") to state that it is a deadly sin to curse God and to name the name of God. Possibly this translation resulted from the fact that the Hebrew verb קק can mean "to curse" and "to designate, specify, or call by name." Such an idea is also found in several parts of the Mishnah where one reads that it is a grave sin for anyone except the priests in the Jerusalem Temple to pronounce the Tetragrammaton (Sanhedrin 10:1, 7:5; Sotah 7:6). Knox states that this name was probably withdrawn from public
worship in the synagogue about the beginning of the present era since Philo still mentions both ways.  

Finally, with the translation of the Hebrew words for "God" into Greek, there occurred either "a far-reaching depersonalizing of the God of the Old Testament or a revitalizing of the abstract monotheism of Hellenistic philosophy."  

C. H. Dodd and Wolfson have a detailed examination of just what was changed in the Greek translation of God's names. For example, יְהֹוָה and אֱלֹהִים are used in Hebrew as singular nouns and are usually translated in Greek by ΘΕΩΣ, with or without the article. The latter means a "vague supernatural, a kind of unity of divine power...Thus, there is a weakening or loss of a sense of personality in the divine...God becomes immanent and impersonal, not like the יְהֹוָה of the Hebrew Bible." Another example is found in the Septuagint's translation of בְּנֵי and בְּנֵי ("my master") as ΚΥΡΙΟΣ. By eliminating the name of God, the impersonality of God was again stressed.

Besides the tendency to make God more transcendent, there was also much syncretism aimed at proving that the true doctrine of one God could not be found in Hellenism's divine principle which permeated the whole cosmos as fate, reason, or nature nor in the Hellenistic mysteries. Thus, as mentioned previously, Wisdom developed into a cosmic principle similar to Hellenistic ones. There was a tendency to identify the patriarchs, Joseph, and
especially Moses with other gods. For example, Goodenough gives a number of sources that identify Joseph with Serapis, Moses with Heliopolis, etc. Likewise, Artapanus or Pseudo-Artapanus in the second century B.C.E. states that Moses was called Musaeus by the Greeks, was the teacher of Orpheus, had given the Egyptians many inventions and elements of their culture; was named Hermes, i.e., the Egyptian Tat-Hermes, by the Egyptian priests; and had divided Egypt into nomes, establishing a god (cats, dogs, and ibisis) for each nome (!). Goodenough has shown that in making Moses the giver of all inventions, he is also very similar to Isis, Horus or Hermes, and Osiris.12

These identifications do not limit Judaism's monotheism. However, one cannot help wondering about the perils of identifying Judaism so closely with the mysteries, for such identifications make it

perfectly safe to produce 'Orphic' literature which presented the teaching of Judaism in an Orphic-Stoic dress and represented Orpheus at the same time as acknowledging the debt which he owed to the instructors whose assistance he had failed to mention in the versions of his writings current among the Gentiles. Thus, it is not surprising to find at least one considerable 'Orphic' fragment of Jewish origin and composition going back to a date earlier than Aristobulus in the second century B.C.E.13

One can certainly foresee inherent dangers to monotheism when a Jewish writer attributes the origin of Egyptian gods to Moses.
"Perhaps, as some scholars have suggested, Artapanus meant to pass off his work as that of an Egyptian priest."\textsuperscript{14}

There were other kinds of syncretism that also had potential dangers. For example, astrology was an accepted belief of the age, and the Jewish attitude was that the heavens and their movements—like the earth—were the work of the "powers" of God. Thus, they were supposedly reduced to harmless dimensions without completely denying the astrology of the age. In general, Alexandrian Judaism as represented by Philo portrayed the planets as angels that obeyed the will of God voluntarily and at most could foretell cosmic disasters. Genesis Rabbah 45:12 states that God had raised Abraham to the firmament of heaven so that he might look down upon the stars and he and his descendents would learn to despise them. The Palestinian Rabbis "were more secure and quite readily agreed that the Gentiles were subject to a fate that was determined by the hostile powers which ruled the heavens."\textsuperscript{15} All these beliefs, however, had potential dangers. For example, God who was capable of manifesting Himself in angels and other powers could also manifest Himself in the powers of the planets and thus in the general astrological scheme. The seven days of creation could be related to the seven planets, and the Jewish God could find Himself identified with Saturn: "Who could the 'most High' God be, whom the Jews worshipped every Saturday, but Saturn, the highest of the planets, the seventh from the earth?"\textsuperscript{16} Indeed, Tacitus in the \textit{Histories} 5:4
assumes that the God of the Jews is Saturn. Knox mentions "some curious contacts between paganism and Judaism found in later literature usually in connection with the fourfold aeon." Some, he continues, must have been by Jewish heretics. For example, there is a hymn (Saturnalia 1.18.20) in Macrobius where Iao takes the place of Adonis as the fourth manifestation of Helios-Aion. "Such speculations would enter Judaism more easily, since the sun was created on the fourth day..."

Occasionally Hellenistic Judaism itself did have what must be considered as a definite departure from strict monotheism. For example, Goodenough includes some Jewish fragments published by W. Bousset in 1915. One of them, besides including the Kedusha which is still used in contemporary Jewish services, also has the following passages: "choir...animals...trees...all which creatures, being made by Thy Logos show forth the greatness of Thy power." and "for Thou art the Father of Sophia, the Creator, as the cause, of the creation, by a Mediator." Furthermore, Goodenough's recent archaeological investigations have shown that a Hellenized Judaism—even though it was not mentioned in Rabbinic works—was omnipresent. For example, Helios was the favorite single device for Jewish mosaics in Palestine synagogues. "This does not mean that they worshipped Helios any more than they worshipped the omnipresent menorahs, but that they must have associated religious feeling with them. Both suggest cosmic worship." The Dura synagogue had pictures of
Aphrodite, the Three Nymphs, Moses the savior as the Greek Heracles, etc. Hellenistic symbolism "could even be read into the cultus of altar, candlestick, and incense, and Hermes could be called as a witness to the truth of the Torah." Oesterly and Robinson tell of Alypos' dedication of a synagogue to Cleopatra and Ptolemy XV as the "great gods who gave ear." "Such Hellenized Judaism seems witnessed from Rome and Tunis to Mesopotamia."

As a concluding thought to all this, Goodenough wonders how so much Hellenization has been lost to Judaism for so long. He answers as follows:

...from direct evidence we know nothing; but it would seem that the leaders of this Judaism from the sixth to the eighth centuries had a great change of attitude. They learned Hebrew, after more than half a millennium when Hebrew had been a dead language for all but the learned even in Palestine. As they did so they could for the first time learn to pray in Hebrew, to read the Scriptures in Hebrew, and to study the rabbinical writings...At the same time, they not only stopped using the symbolic vocabulary we have been discussing, but, wherever possible, destroyed it by clipping out the offensive forms, or, as at Sardis, by laying a plain mosaic over the old floor...The medieval Jews so neglected the great mass of literature such as Philo and Jewish apocalyptic books that Greek and Iranian-speaking Jews must have produced in the whole ancient world that from Jews we have no trace of it left at all.
B. Philo

Philo affords us an excellent opportunity to examine a variety of motivations at work in a man who lived in Alexandria about the same time as Jesus and was very interested in both Judaism and the Greek philosophy and mysteries. Since it is generally known that Philo's books include such emanations and intermediaries as angels, powers, ideas, divine attributes, logoi, and the logos, we shall begin this section with an examination of his motivations before examining his emanations and intermediaries.

Philo's main motivation for writing was to show both Jews and Gentiles that Judaism was the highest form of religion and philosophy. He did this by reading Greek philosophy and the Greek mysteries between the lines of the Hebrew Scriptures. With regard to the Jews, he finds fault with those who allegorize the Scriptures too liberally, and he condemns violently those apostates who had intermarried, assimilated, questioned Judaism, etc. With regard to the Gentiles, he has a sincere desire for proselytism. As is known, Judaism was very interested in proselytism in this period. It boggles the mind to recall that there were over one million Jews in Egypt at the time and that no less than 10 percent of the Roman empire was Jewish. Possibly one of the reasons that Philo's works did not have an appreciable influence on Rabbinic Judaism is—according to Moore—because the conditions for which he wrote no longer
existed for Judaism. Persecutions had increased, proselytism was
forbidden by imperial edict, and Judaism later vanished from the
ranks of the religions competing for supremacy.

In his desire to show that Judaism surpassed Greek philosophy
and in agreement with the tendency of a more elevated type of God,
Philo eliminated all forms of anthropomorphistic language associated with
God. The anthropomorphisms, he stated, were in the Bible only for
the "duller folk" who were not able to understand God in any other
way. The more intelligent realized that "God is not as man"
(Numbers 23:19) and that these anthropomorphisms were not to be
taken literally. Thus, as would be expected, Philo uses all types
of intermediaries to eliminate the anthropomorphisms.

Philo also follows Plato rather than Jewish exegesis in
stating that God is the cause of everything except material imper-
fection and evil. Thus, he explains Genesis 1:26 as showing that
lesser beings helped God create man, and they are responsible for
any evil in man. Furthermore, since God is the author of good only,
where He is said to "punish" His creatures, He does so only because
of their sins and—-with possibly one exception—only through His
powers. If one wants to know why God consulted His powers in
creating man, thus opening the door for evil and material imper-
fection, Philo replies that it was God's intention to give man free
will to choose between good and evil. Furthermore, had God im-
pressed His whole Being upon matter, the cosmos and ideal form
impressed on it would exhibit to the mind a single thought equal
to that of God. Thus, God's powers were also used in order that the
matter would receive a multitude of ideal forms and a multitude of
divine thoughts. In one place another reason is given:

When God produced all things, He did so without
touching matter Himself, since it was not lawful
for His nature, happy and blessed as it was, to
touch indefinite and confused matter, but instead
He made full use of the incorporeal powers, well
denoted by their name of ideas, to enable each
genus to take its appropriate shape.35

Now that man is created, God still touches man's soul only indirectly,
through His powers. This is really to man's advantage, because "so
great is our awe and shuddering dread of the universal Monarch and
the exceeding might of His sovereignty."36 Furthermore, the soul
might be blinded with the complete vision of God.

Disregarding the logic of these ideas, the point to be
stressed is that they exalt God until He rarely communicates directly
with man due to man's fear of God and to the possibility of His
blinding man. He is too good and holy to touch matter, etc. In
addition, we frequently find Philo stating such things as the fact
that "God needs nothing nor is any created thing competent to
bestow a gift in return."37 Furthermore, there are many parallels
between Philo's idea of God and that of the kings and courts of
the day. Goodenough states,
An immediate source of Philo in making his doctrine take the form it does seems likely to have been the conception of royalty of the Hellenistic Age, by which the king was deity, and deity king. The identification led to the most extraordinary mutual borrowing...Philo thus represents God as King with attendant powers.\textsuperscript{38}

For example, Philo gives the Logos duties such as "acting as ambassador of the ruler to the subject and pleading with the immortal as suppliant for afflicted mortality."\textsuperscript{39} However, in spite of this very transcendent view of God,

the ruling idea of Philo's theology is that while God is absolutely removed from us, incomprehensible, and only known as Absolute Being, He is also infinitely close to us, a Father Who cares, in fact at once transcendent and immanent. Philo solved this antinomy by postulating, as intermediaries between the created and uncreated, the Logos or Divine Reason, and also 'Powers' or 'Potencies,' the two chief of which are goodness and sovereignty.\textsuperscript{40}

Thus, Philo can say, "God can be said to be near through His powers but far in regard to His essence,"\textsuperscript{41} and "God sees and hears all at the same moment through His power."\textsuperscript{42}

Although the Logos is of prime concern to this report, I will briefly mention Philo's other mediating concepts. The "powers" are somewhat like emanations of God, and thus Philo often speaks of God's "stretching" His powers through the cosmos.\textsuperscript{43} Through them God is in constant contact with this world. They are immaterial,
unbegotten, infinite, and immanent in the universe, holding it together, and giving all parts their individual forms. God's two highest powers are those of goodness and sovereignty. The powers can also be "ideas," i.e., the ideal, incorporeal patterns after which all aspects of this perceptible world were modeled. Both the powers and ideas are located in the Logos. Philo also speaks of created angels who are "underservants of God's powers, incorporeal souls...with pure thought," and more personal than the ideas, powers, etc. This is a brief description, and the terms sometimes blend into one another in Philo, but the purpose of it is to show that there is no doubt that Philo includes both intermediaries and emanations of God in his philosophy, and these take part in creation and revelation.

As is well known, the most important mediating concept developed by Philo is that of the Logos. One notices that in many places this concept is very similar to that of Wisdom in the Wisdom of Solomon, although in general Philo's Logos is less personal than Wisdom even in her latest manifestations. Furthermore, Wisdom has a very minor role to play in Philo; and in most of the places in which Wisdom is mentioned, she is identified with the Logos. Such a replacement of Wisdom with the Logos is not surprising; for even if Philo had adopted Wisdom in her later development as a cosmic figure (such as in the Wisdom of Solomon), she still would have had traces of anthropomorphic, feminine associations. Thus, a new term was
needed, and the "Logos" was a fitting choice since it was used by both Stoicism and Judaism. The former used the term "in the sense of the immanent principle in the world, like a soul or mind"; however, they more often used the expression "soul of the world" or "mind of the world" than "Logos." Furthermore,

The term 'Logos' has also in Greek philosophy the meaning of 'word,' and it is used in the Septuagint as well as the Wisdom of Solomon as a translation of the term 'word' in the frequent expression the 'word of God.' Now the 'word of God' in Scripture is used in the various senses in which we shall find the term 'Logos' used by Philo, namely, as a means of the creation of the world, as a means of governing the world, and as a means of prophecy and in the revelation of the Law. With all this variety of usages of the term 'Logos' in Scripture, it was quite natural for Philo, whose purpose was not only to interpret Scripture in terms of Greek philosophy but also to interpret philosophy in terms of Scripture, to substitute the term 'Logos' for the term 'Nous.'

It is doubtful that this term had ever been used as an intermediary previously.

Wolfson—and Drummond might agree—has identified three kinds of existence of the Logos:

First, a Logos or Wisdom which is eternal and is identical with God's essence or rational nature; second, a Logos or Wisdom which is created as an incorporeal real being and is distinct from God's essence; third, a Logos or Wisdom immanent in the world. These three stages of existence are not successive ones; they are three kinds of existence which the
Logos has, so that even after the creation of the world, one kind of Logos is still part of God's essence, another is still a real incorporeal being, etc. 53

When Philo speaks of Wisdom and Logos as being unidentical, it is probably because he is not referring to them in the same manifestation.

Keeping in mind Wolfson's classification, we can give more meaning to the variety of characteristics of the Logos. Philo usually distinguishes the Logos from God, but Philo also states that we imperfect men sometimes see the Logos as a "second God." 54 God is the highest genus, and the second most generic thing is the Logos. Although the Logos flowed from God's essence, it is equated with God's Mind or Reason; thus differing from God as the part from the whole, and thus God rules over this rational nature. It also unites the two main powers of God—the regal and the good—often seeming to be a third power of God. It is an image of God, and as such it was both the living pattern after which the cosmos was created and the image of God after which man was created. We are told that "If we are not yet worthy to be called Sons of God, at least we are children of his eternal image, the most sacred Logos." 55 All things are an expression of the Logos, but the Logos is an expression of God alone. The Logos is also the one supreme, all-embracing thought of the soul.

In other places, following Wolfson's three types, the Logos is more separate from God's Mind, essence, and image. Thus, for
example, we read,

I stood between the Lord and you being neither unbegotten as God nor begotten as you but in the middle between the extremes, serving as a pledge to both. On the side of Him Who planted, as a security that the race will never wholly banish and depart having chosen disorder instead of order, and on the side of that which has grown, for a good ground of hope that the propitious God will never overlook His own work.56

Thus, the Logos "stands on the border, separating creature from creator, dividing universal being, separating and apportioning all of nature."57 The Logos is the location of the intelligible cosmos, and the perceptible cosmos was formed by impressing the Logos upon matter. In addition, when interpreting anthropomorphisms in the Bible, Philo often substitutes the Logos for God's or the angel's action. Thus, for example, Genesis 31:1ff. ("...angel of God...God of Beth-el") is explained with reference to the Logos,58 the pillar of cloud that separated the fleeing Israelites from the Egyptian armies covered the Logos,59 the angel of Numbers 22:31 is said to be the Logos,60 etc.

Finally, the Logos is God's immanent reason which governs and holds together the cosmos and is found in man. As such, the Logos can be linked with the laws of nature, ethical laws, etc. that reflect this reason. The Logos can be linked with Moses, the priests, prophets, etc. who illustrate right reason and/or right speech. The Logos is described as the inherent bond of all things
and the divine power at work throughout the cosmos.

As can be seen, Philo's Logos has a multitude of functions; thus at first glance one is tempted to exaggerate its role. However, quite the opposite deduction is made by Knox and Wilson.\textsuperscript{61} They state that the quantity of functions illustrates that the Logos's real purpose was simply to enable Philo to interpret Judaism in terms of the current philosophies. Indeed, the Logos did this in many ways—reducing anthropomorphisms, replacing the feminine Wisdom, replacing the Stoic Reason, becoming a "power" of God acting upon the world, solving the problem of God as both transcendent and immanent, etc. Other facts seem to support Knox and Wilson's opinion. For example, although the Logos has a part to play in creation and this role is mentioned in many scattered places, it is not to be found in Philo's book \textit{On the Creation}. In Knox's words,

\begin{quote}
\textit{The fact that Philo in the closing sections of De Mundi Opificio}\textsuperscript{61} (170ff.) summarizes the value of a cosmogony which is based on the Timaeus and Posidonius in terms of purely conventional Judaism which ignores alike the Logos and the divine pattern, seems a decisive proof that he did not really care about it.\textsuperscript{62}
\end{quote}

Furthermore, Knox points out that "the fact that the Logos and powers are practically duplicated shows how little Philo really means by either...None have any value as compared with the faith and practice of the synagogue."\textsuperscript{63} The very impersonality of the Logos and powers makes it necessary to include angels which do personally communicate
with individuals.

Indeed, Philo himself takes pains to show that the Logos is not a second God. As Goodenough states,

There is hardly a single treatise of Philo in which there is not at least a reference to God and the two Powers, whether with or without the Logos... Indeed it is just because Philo, and apparently the group he represents, consistently thought of God in these terms that Philo's very monotheism is in danger, and he must insist that God is still the One while represented in the Powers. And his purpose has also been made clear: the powers, etc. are rather grades, stages, of mystic ascent, than metaphysical realities. We mortals must be content that beams are borne into the human mind from the secondary existences, the Powers, in the hope that higher Existence may become apparent by means of the secondary illumination, since the human mind cannot bear the Stream as it comes directly from ... Philo's deity is notable because Philo refused to see the powers as anything but distinct flashes of the single divine nature as apprehended from the human point of view.

Letting Philo speak for himself, we find passages such as the following which states that God often appears to be three:

the middle one is the Father of the universe, who in the sacred Scriptures is called by a proper name the Self-existent, and those on each side are the oldest and nearest powers of the Self-existent, of which one is called Creative, and the other Regal.

However, he continues, stating that the appearance of three occurs when one does not completely understand and apprehends God through
His effects as either creating or ruling. The appearance of one God occurs whenever the soul, being perfectly purified, and having transcended not only the multitudes of numbers but even the duad which adjoins unity, presses on to the idea which is unmingled and uncomplicated and in itself wanting nothing whatever in addition. Now that the triple representation is virtually that of one subject is evident not only from allegorical speculation, but from the written word; for when the wise Abraham supplicates those who seemed like three wayfarers, he converses with them, not as three, but as one, and addresses them in the singular number, and again the promise is given by one as though he alone were present.

Many similar statements could be quoted.

As can be seen, Philo's beliefs included intermediaries and emanations that take part in creation and revelation, but not second gods. Possibly another reason can be found for his intricate system of superior beings. The three kinds of existence of the Logos as defined by Wolfson are also to be found in the powers or ideas. I.e., sometimes they appear as thoughts of God Himself, prior to the creation of the world some were created by God as real incorporeal beings, and with the creation of the world some were implanted by God to become immanent in the world. Thus, it would seem that they--like the Logos--can be closer and farther from God, depending on their manifestation. Philo says that the ideas were made as examples for man to follow in order to attain those ideas or ideals.
He even states that there will be a time when the boundaries between this perceptible world and the intelligible world will be broken, and man will have attained the beauty and perfection of that intelligible world. Thus, it seems that man should understand the example of the powers, ideas, and Logos and realize that he, too, is part of a cosmos which has the possibilities of becoming closer and/or farther from God. For example, those who can understand the mysteries that Philo teaches are closer to reaching and becoming their own "idea" that is located in the intelligible world. Philo states that after death most men (i.e., the immortal souls in men) will take their place among the angels in heaven, some (such as Isaac and Enoch) will go to the intelligible world to be among the ideas, and maybe others will go near the presence of God, above the intelligible world, to the place to which Moses went. At any rate, just as some angels are referred to as ideas (though not all ideas are angels) and just as some ideas are closer to God's essence than others, it would seem that man too will be taking part in this constant hierarchical state of becoming. Maybe there will be a time when what was once "man" will—as Enoch has done—reach the state of the ideas and, like the present ideas, take some part in fashioning a new creation:

It is true indeed that the Father of All has no need of aught, so that He should require the cooperation of others, if He wills some creative work; yet seeing what was fitting to Himself and
the world which was coming into being, He allowed His subject powers to have the fashioning of some things, though He did not give them sovereign and independent knowledge for completion of the task, lest aught of what was coming into being should be out of harmony.73

C. Early Rabbinic Judaism

Goodenough74 has shown that indeed much Hellenism existed alongside of and unreported in Rabbinic Judaism. For example, on the whole, although the Midrash is filled with stories of the angels, the Rabbis denied angelic intelligence or eternal existence, a belief that certainly wasn't shared by all Jews. The Mishnah even eliminates every reference to angels. A hint to the contrary is given by the Talmud when it states that one should address prayers to God rather than to His servants.75

The Mishnah and Talmud occasionally have statements about Minim or heretics. In particular we find mention of the most serious of heresies—that of the two powers or two authorities, נזיר, in such places as Talmud Berakhot 33b, Hagigah 15a, Sifre Deuteronomy 329 (32:39), and Mekilta Bahodesh 5 on Exodus 20:2. However, these passages are not clear whether they are referring to heresies within Judaism, to Jewish Christians, or to Gentile Gnostics. Scholem76 thinks that some very probably refer to Jews who had embraced a dualistic Gnostic doctrine of a great God and a God of Israel. However, there is no documentary proof of this
as yet. At any rate, we also find passages such as those condemning certain interdictions in prayer: M. Megillah 4.9 states that saying "Good men shall bless Thee" is a "heretical form of expression."
The nature of the heresy is not defined, but Jer. Megillah 75c finds it an implication of two powers. If the leader in prayer says, "Thy mercy extends even to the sparrow's nest, and because of good be Thy name remembered," he is to be silenced according to M. Berakot 5.3, Berakot 33b, etc., for such statements dwell on the grace of God at the expense of His justice, thus endangering fundamental principles of Judaism. "(We) thank, thank" is also suspected of acknowledging two powers according to the same sections mentioned above. We are also told that one should not speculate on what is above, below, before, and after nor read Ezekiel's passage on the cloud chariot unless he fulfills certain requirements. We are told that of four eminent scholars of the early second century who entered into these studies, only one survived without harm: Ben Azzai looked and died; Ben Zoma looked and lost his mind; Abuya ("Acher") cut down the plants (of Paradise); Akiba made his exit in safety. Regarding the last two, Akiba later stated that only those over 30 could read this section of Ezekiel; Abuya, who had been a revered teacher of the Law, became a Gnostic of the type that believed in dual gods. He thus received the name "Acher," as if he were "another" person, and in Jewish circles he was considered as the example of apostasy. Obviously, other examples of outright apostasy could be given; but, as
mentioned in the introduction, such is not the purpose of this paper.

The final area to be examined in this chapter is that of possible intermediaries such as Memra, Shekhinah, and Ruach Hakodesh which are used in Rabbinic writings. In the first place, there can be little doubt about the fact that the Memra is not used in the sense of an intermediary. Moore has shown that the word occurs only in the Targums, not in the Aramaic texts of the Midrashim nor in the Aramaic parts of the Talmuds. It always occurs with a genitive, i.e., "the word (Memra) of the Lord" or "My word," never alone ("the word...").

It is not the term employed where the 'word of the Lord' is the medium or instrumentality of revelation, and it is not the creative word in the cosmogony of Genesis...it is not the divine reason in the universe nor reason akin to divine in every man...it is not like Philo's Logos...It is used for more reverence precisely where God is personally active in the affairs of men.

Numerous other studies agree with Moore.

Just as Memra is a reverent circumlocution for God, Shekhinah (Hebrew) or Shekinata (Aramaic) is often used to reverently express God's presence ("glory") or omnipresence. It can be associated with inspiration, and it is found in the Midrash and Talmud as well as the Targums. Ginsburger's investigation of the Palestinian Targums shows that there is no personification of the
Memra or Shekhinah, to say nothing of "hypostasis." Moore agrees, explaining the Shekhinah as follows:

All worship demands a *praesens numen*. Men find it difficult to realize His specific presence in the particular place where they gather for religious service without some aid to faith or imagination. Thus, the teaching in Sanhedrin 39a that wherever ten men are met for prayer, there is the Presence... In other words, the Presence does not take the place of God but is a more reverent way of saying God.

Wolfson also concurs that neither the Memra, Shekhinah, nor Ruach Hakodesh are intermediaries in the creation of the world, although "there is indeed sometimes the undoubted implication that the latter two are real beings created by God whose function is confined to the inspiration of prophecy."

Kohler goes beyond Wolfson's words. He too denies that the Memra and Shekhinah are intermediaries: "Belief in intermediaries had waned in order to express an uncompromising belief in the divine unity... this belief also agrees with the Jewish idea of sin in which no mediators were needed, just their own sincere repentance."

However, he continues to state, "The only real mediator between God and man is the Spirit of God" or the Holy Spirit, Ruach Hakodesh. The Spirit of God is found in the Bible as a physical force which gives man superhuman powers, physical strength, leadership, etc. It developed into the concept of the Holy Spirit whose primary function was in regard to prophecy.
It seems, however, that certain abuses were caused by miracle-workers who disseminated false doctrines under the alleged inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the Rabbis restricted such claims to ancient times and insisted more strongly than ever upon the preservation of the traditional lore.  

Possibly for this reason Tos. Sotah 13.2, Yomah 9b, and Sanhedrin 11a state that when the last prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi) died, the Holy Spirit departed from Israel. Subsequent revelations were given by the bat kol, "echo"—again a reverent way of avoiding the suggestion that men heard the actual voice of God. "Obviously the Rabbis desired to avert the deification of either the Holy Spirit of the Word." Thus, the Spirit of God was an intermediary between God and man in the innocuous sense of an instrumental agency used by God to instill special powers in man or convey His revelation.
Footnotes to Chapter II

1. The Hellenistic age believed in magic, and Judaism was to some extent influenced by this belief. "Judaism was largely influenced by a demonology which inevitably involved a belief in the efficacy of magic; and while magic was repudiated there was a considerable measure of disagreement as to what was magic in a bad sense and what was legitimate medicine." Although in general magic was denounced, some things might seem like magic to outsiders, such as the phylacteries and mezuzoth. W. L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, p. 208ff.; also E. R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, XII, 58ff. gives interesting evidence of many charms and amulets used by Jews; cf. H. Danby, ed., The Mishnah Shabbath 6:10, p. 106 for Rabbi Meir's sanction of some forms of magic as opposed to the other Sages.

2. See below, p. 28-29.


5. James Drummond, Philo Judaeus or the Jewish-Alexandrian Philosophy, I, 161.

6. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles, p. 40; Philo, De Decalogo 19 (93, M.2.196) and Qvis Rerum Divinarum Heres 35 (170, M.1.497).


11. Ibid., p. 293.


17. Ibid., p. 48.

18. Ibid., p. 48 n. 4.


22. See Goodenough, Light, p. 98ff.


25. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols, XII, 197.

26. Ibid., XII, 198.


29. Philo, In Flaccum, 6 and 8 (II 523, 525); Josephus, Bellum Judaicum II 18, Chapter 7; Contra Apionem II 4; Antiquitates XII, I, Chapter 1.


32. Philo, De Somniis I, 237.
33 Martin Buber, Moses, p. 56ff. shows that YHVH has traditionally encompassed both good and evil in the world. See Deuteronomy 32:39.

34 Some of the "miracles" of the ten plagues were performed directly by God, according to Philo. In this sense the miracles are somewhat like punishments to the Egyptians. Philo, De Vita Moses I, 17.97, 23.130-24.139. Furthermore, Philo does not classify as "punishments" that which is in God's eyes for man's good. Wolfson, Philo, I, 382.

35 Philo, De Specialibus Legibus I, 60.329.
36 Philo, De Somniiis I, 22.142.
37 Philo, De Cherubim 34.123.
38 Goodenough, Light, p. 38ff.

39 Philo, De Abrahamo, 115 also states, "...angels...the servitors and lieutenants of the primal God whom He employs as ambassadors to announce the predictions which He wills to make to our race."

41 Philo, De Posteritate Caini 5-6 (I 228-9).
42 Philo, De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini 4 (II 254).
43 Drummond, Philo Judaeus, II, 111.
44 Ibid., II, 147; Wolfson, Philo, I, 374.
45 Philo, Monorch II, 1 (II 222).

46 Thus, some angels are described as powers, although not all powers are angels, etc; See above, pp. 41-42.
47 Wolfson, Philo, I, 253.
49 Psalm 147:18; 148:8.
50 Isaiah 2:1; Jeremiah 1:2ff.; Ezekiel 3:16; Exodus 34:27, 28; Deuteronomy 10:4.
51 Wolfson, Philo, I, 254.
52. Drummond, Philo Judaeus, II, 154, 273, agrees with the three progressive kinds of existence in regard to the powers. He treats the Logos as progressive forms of the Thought of God, but he eliminates Wolfson's second stage of existence for the Logos.

53. Wolfson, Philo, I, 290-1.

54. E.g. Philo, Fragmenta II, 625; De Somniis I, 39 and 41 (1655-6); Legum Allegoriae III, 73 (I 128).

55. Philo, De Confusione Linguarum 28 (I 427).

56. Philo, Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres 42 (I 501-2).

57. Ibid., 201-6, 234.

58. Philo, De Somniis I, 40-41.

59. Philo, Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres 42 (I 501).

60. Philo, De Cherubim 11 (et, M.1.145).

61. Knox, Pharisaism and Hellenism, p. 68; Wilson, The Gnostic Problem, p. 44.


63. Ibid., p. 27.

64. Goodenough, Light, p. 33.

65. Ibid., p. 27.

66. Ibid., p. 45.


68. E.G. Philo, De Sacrificiis Abelis et Caini 59, 60; see Drummond, Philo Judaeus, II, 89-96.

69. See above, p. 36-37.

70. Wolfson, Philo, I, 290.

71. Wolfson agrees, Philo, I, 272.

72. Philo, De Somniis I, 32 (185-9).

73. Philo, De Confusione Linguarum 34 (I 431).
52

74 See above, p. 2, 29-30.

75 Yer. Berakhoth 9; Sanhedrin 93a; Hullin 91b; Nedarim 32a; Genesis Rabbah VII, XXI; etc.

76 Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, p. 359 n.24. For an opposite viewpoint which is refuted by Scholem, see Marcel Simon, Verus Israel (1948) pp. 214-238 and Travers Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash (1903).

77 Also Tosafot on Megillah 25a, top; but a different explanation is given by Rashi; See Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, I, 365 n.3.

78 Moore, III, 117 n.112, states "Perhaps these are only the initial words of longer formulas which were interpolated in the recitation of the prayers of the congregation. The errors which are condemned in them are pointed out in the commentaries on M. Berakhoth 5.3."

79 Mishnah Megillah 4.10, Hagigah 2.1, Hagigah 12a-16a, also Tosafot Hagigah 2.1; Hagigah 14b is one of several places in which someone who expounds these mysteries is respected; i.e. he must have fulfilled the necessary requirements in being able to comprehend the mysteries correctly from the Talmud's point of view.

80 Tosafot Hagigah 2.3f; Hagigah 14b; Yer. Hagigah 77b.

81 See above, pp.4-5.


85 Moore, "Intermediaries in Jewish Philosophy," pp. 57, 58.

86 Wolfson, Philo, I, 287.

87 K. Kohler, Jewish Theology, p. 180.

88 Ibid., p. 200.

89 Numbers 11:6ff.; Judges 6:34, 11:29, 13:25, 14:6, 15:14; I Samuel 10:10, 11:6, 16:3; Exodus 31:3, 36:1; etc.
90 Kohler, Jewish Theology, p. 201.

91 See Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, pp. 421-22 for the translation of bat kol.

92 Kohler, Jewish Theology, p. 201.
CHAPTER XIII

MERKABAH MYSTICISM AND GERMAN HASIDISM

A. Merkabah Mysticism

Except for the Hasidic movement and its leaders since 1750 there has been a surprisingly small amount of self-expression and autobiographical writings of Jewish mystic experience. According to Scholem, this possibly occurs because the Jews "retained a particularly vivid sense of the incongruity between mystical experience and that idea of God which stresses the aspects of Creator, King, and Law-giver." In previous chapters I have given examples in which the image of God as King had some influence on the philosophy of Philo, the Pseudepigraphic writers, etc. This image comes to life, so to speak, most fully in the Merkabah period.

There are literary traces from this period for more than ten centuries—from the first century B.C.E. until the tenth century C.E.—and its center was Palestine. Merkabah mysticism, or throne mysticism, was based on a completely transcendent view of God as King. Books were written on His Hekhaloth, הַּכְּהַלּוֹת, the seven heavenly halls and "palaces" through which the mystic passed, and His Merkabah, מִרְּכָבָה, literally "carriage"; but never did the mystic get any closer to God, not even in the climax of mystical
ecstasy. The mystic's goal was to stand before the throne of God; there was no mystical union nor feeling of the immanence of God. The throne—parallel with the political and social conditions of the day—was filled with the aura of God's majesty and solemnity. Baroque-styled hymns were written about the Merkabah and the detailed journey to it.

With this image of the Transcendent God par excellence one would expect to find a need for some kind of mediating element or instrumental agency that would come in contact with man. Such "mediators" take the form of angels; the instrumental agencies are the throne and God's Glory.

It is interesting to note that there are some definite similarities between Merkabah mysticism and Gnosticism. For example, Merkabah mystics, like Gnostics, have a very negative attitude towards history and have strong apocalyptic motives due to persecutions by the Church. Furthermore, many scholars\(^3\) believe that an essential element in Gnosticism was provided in and by heterodox Judaism and that there are many curious contacts between Judaism and Gnosticism. For example, Gershom Scholem in *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* points out many examples in which Jewish Merkabah sources and Gnostic sources explain each other.\(^4\) In some Merkabah texts such as that of *Ma'aseh Merkabah* we find that Hebrew material that had found its way into the Greek
magical papyri now reappears not in the original Hebrew forms, but in transliterations of the Hellenized forms. However, we must remember that Gnosticism is an atmosphere, a Weltanschauung, which to some extent affected all religions and philosophies of the Greco-Roman world without their necessarily accepting all of its characteristics. Thus, for example, a primary difference between Merkabah mysticism and Gnosticism is that the former does not have a connection between its cosmogony and eschatology, due to the fact that the throne world was substituted for the Gnostics' pleroma.

This paper really deals with only one of Gnosticism's characteristics—that of its mediators and second creator. Merkabah mysticism, in contrast with Gnosticism, was definitely monotheistic in its extreme exaltation of God the King and its strict conformity to halachic Judaism. Indeed, even a hint of the contrary causes the mystic's dismissal from the throne. As for other dualistic heretical Gnostical groups within Judaism in this Merkabah period, Scholem states that such a question is at present unanswerable due to the absence of any documentary proofs.

In the previous chapters angels have played some kind of role, and the Merkabah period is certainly no exception. We read of Cherubim, Seraphim, Chayoth (ךד נ 'נ, "living beings"), Orphanim (י' ת ת), inseparably joined to the Chayoth, their name denotes some kind of wheel or revolving form), etc. In place
of the Gnostic rulers (archons) of the seven planetary spheres who were opposed to the soul's liberation, the Merkabah mystics have hosts of "gatekeepers" (many of whom hinder the mystic's journey) at the entrance of each of seven heavenly halls through which the soul must pass in order to arrive at God's throne. Scholem mentions that "Shemuel, the 'great archon,' stands at the window of heaven as a mediator between the prayers of Israel which rise from below and the denizens of the seventh heaven to whom he transfers them."\(^9\) Furthermore, besides the goal of receiving a vision of the Merkabah, some of the texts have as their goal the acquiring of perfect knowledge of the Torah without forgetfulness. In such cases, all attention is focused on only one angel: the Prince of Torah, נִנִּיתֵנָשׁ.

In Scholem's words,

> An angel who is delegated over the Torah cannot be an angel whose sole function is to keep the Torah in its heavenly archives, but one who is also responsible for distributing its knowledge among men ...

... When either Rabbi Ishmael or Rabbi Akiba describe his ascetic preparations and his performance in asking for the revelations of the Prince of Torah, he uses the same materials used by the Greater Hekhaloth in the description of the ascent ...

The more intricate the study of Halakhah and Aggadah became, the more such preternatural help was deemed highly desirable.\(^10\)

More difficulties arise from the fact that the same names are used for God and for the angels in different texts. For example,

there is a custom of the Merkabah mystics to add the
Tetragrammaton (יהוה) or one of its many substitutes to the names of the angels. Possibly this is due to Exodus 23:21 and several aggadic sayings that state that the angels bear the name of God imprinted on their hearts. On the other hand, there is a custom of lengthening God's name with titles usually given to angels. For example, one time in the Hekhaloth texts God is called 'Zoharariel, Lord, God of Israel.' Such names, of which only a few have a plausible etymology, may designate different aspects of the divine glory in its appearance upon the throne. They are particularly problematical in that they are not easily distinguishable from the names of the highest angels who are also called 'Lord God of Israel' from time to time in this kind of text.11

Another example in which confusion due to names could arise is that of Akatriel or Akhtariel, אקתראיאיל. In 3 Enoch the name is mentioned only once, and it is not even mentioned in the list of heavenly archons in chapters 17 and 18 of the book.12 However, some manuscripts have an additional chapter in which we find "Akatriel Jah JHWH of the Hosts" as one of the names of God as He appears on the throne. In a text called The Mystery of Sandalphon, Akatriel is described as an angel at the entrance to Paradise; and in a passage of a Hekhaloth text appearing in an Oxford manuscript (1531)13 but belonging to another composition, Akatriel is a secret name of God that is sealed upon His crown and engraved upon His throne. Thus, when Rabbi Ishmael in Berakhoth 7a states, "Akatriel Jah, the Lord of
Hosts, sitting on a high and sublime throne, and he spoke to me thus: 'Ishmael, my son, give me your praise.' It is impossible to know if he is referring to the angel Akatriel or to one of the names of God Himself as an appearance of His glory on the throne. Indeed, medieval commentators disagreed in their interpretations, and Rabbi Hananel mentions both interpretations in his commentary on Berakhoth.

Similarly, the word "'Azbogah," could become a source of confusion. In the earlier books of the Hekhaloth it is used for the name of God in the highest sphere; similarly, in a passage of the Lesser Hekhaloth texts, it appears with the Tetragrammaton; and in the Greater Hekhaloth texts it sometimes is used as a great "seal," i.e., as one of the two most important secret names of God to be used in the mystic's ascent. In other passages of the Lesser Hekhaloth it is the name of God's divine glory. In 3 Enoch its "status" is further reduced, for it is only the name of one of the archons or rulers; in later Hekhaloth texts it is the name of the eighth and highest heaven in the pleroma, similar to the Gnostic use of the word "ogdoad." As can be seen with these examples, though it is doubtful that the Merkabah mystics themselves understood the blending of names as a sharing of God's deity, it seems fairly certain that uninformed Jews and Gentiles would misinterpret the meaning. If, for example, the linking of the names and duties of Michael and Metatron could lead to the latter's being called Prince
of the World since the former was, it seems very likely that the linking of God's name with that of some of the angels could lead to a similar blending of duties, e.g., when invoking one or the other in prayer or praise, as suggested on the previous page of this report.

One of the greatest causes for misinterpretation would be the angel Metatron, הַמֶּטָּרְטָן. He is found in the Talmud with such duties as teaching the children who died in infancy and recording the good deeds of the Israelites; in Sanhedrin 38b it is stated that God's name is in him. In addition, he is identified with Michael, and Post-Talmudic literature frequently refers to Metatron as Sar ha Panim (literally, בְּנֵי הַפְּנֵי, 'Prince of the Face'), 'Prince of the Presence' or 'chief of the class of angels who have immediate access to God's presence. Kabbalistic speculation, however, made it 'the prince, or angel, who is the Presence.' Of even more interest is the description in 3 Enoch in which Enoch after death becomes the first of the angels, Prince of the Presence, servant of the throne of glory, namely Metatron; and in 3 Enoch 12:5 we are told that God proclaims that Metatron to be יְהוּדָא הַמֶּטָּרְטָנ, little or lesser God! The Hekhaloth literature of the Merkabah period also portrays Metatron as Lesser Yaho, the highest of all created angels, but inferior to and apart from God; and there is no doubt that the last mentioned name must have seemed blasphemous to outsiders. Indeed,
the term "Lesser Yaho" already appears in Coptic Gnostic literature at the end of the second century C.E.;\(^{20}\) the Babylonian Talmud mentions that the Jewish heretic Elisha ben Abuya thought there were two supreme powers—God and Metatron;\(^{21}\) and Christians have tried to identify Metatron with the second part of the Trinity.\(^{22}\) Furthermore, some later Jewish mystic speculation among other things placed him in the Sefirot world of emanations, identified him with the Shekhinah,\(^{23}\) and/or divided him into a supernal, uncreated Metatron (sometimes identified with the Sefirot or Shekhinah) and a lesser, created Metatron.\(^{24}\)

The Shiur Konah (literally, הַמֵּרֶץ מַעֲשֵׂה, "measure of the (Divine) body") is an example of anthropomorphism par excellence. It was written in the second century C.E.\(^{25}\) probably by heretical mystics who later blended with the Merkabah mystics who, as mentioned previously,\(^{26}\) tried to remain in the halachic tradition. Based on the Song of Songs which was interpreted as God's love for Israel, it proceeds to describe the enormous measurements of God's body along with their secret names which consist of seemingly nonsensical combinations of letters. The measurements are imaginary and enormous. Thus, for example, we learn that the Creator's height is 236,000 parasangs, and "the measure of a parasang of God is three miles, and a mile has 10,000 yards, and a yard three spans of His span, and a span fills the whole world, as it is written: Who hath
meted out heaven with the span." The authority of the book was strengthened by statements from Rabbi Akiba and Rabbi Ishmael, stating, "Every one who knows this measure of our Creator and the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He, Who is hidden from the creatures, is assured to be a son of the world-to come, provided he studies this mishna every day."

Regarding the question of the owner of the body being described, Scholem (and Muller agrees) states,

Going a step further, we may ask whether there did not exist—at any rate among the Merkabah mystics to whom we owe the preservation of the Shiur Komah—a belief in a fundamental distinction between the appearance of God the Creator, the Demiurge, i.e. one of His aspects, and His indetectable essence? There is no denying the fact that it is precisely the 'primordial man' on the throne of the Merkabah whom the Shiur Komah calls Yotzer Bereshith, i.e., Creator of the World—a significant and, doubtless, a deliberate designation. As is well known, the anti-Jewish gnostics of the second and third centuries drew a sharp distinction between the unknown, 'strange,' good God, and the Creator, whom they identified with the God of Israel. It may be that the Shiur Komah reflects an attempt to give a new turn to this trend of thought, which had become widespread throughout the Near East, by postulating something like a harmony between the Creator and the 'true' God ...in which the Demiurge becomes, by an exercise of mystical anthropomorphism, the appearance of God on the 'throne of glory,' at once visible and yet, by virtue of His transcendent nature, incapable of being really visualized...i.e., the Shiur Komah referred not to the 'dimensions' of the divinity, but to those of its corporeal appearance.
Thus, the Merkabah mystics who adopted the Shiur Komah still considered God to be indescribable. Their book was aimed at His "glory," His appearance on the throne which could take the form of the primordial man, Creator of the World, as seen in Ezekiel 1:26. Indeed, already the Lesser Hekhaloth interpret the Shiur Komah's anthropomorphisms as representations of God's "hidden glory." For example, they have Rabbi Akiba state, "He is like us, as it were, but greater than everything; and that is His glory which is hidden from us."32 The same idea is expressed in the "Alphabet of Rabbi Akiba" when it is stated that the subject of the Shiur Komah was "the body of the Shekinah," i.e., the body of God's glory.33

However, in spite of that less heretical interpretation, it is not surprising to find that the Shiur Komah led to other interpretations by both Jews and Gentiles. For example, there is a close parallel to the Shiur Komah found in the Gnostic Markos' description of the "Body of Truth," written in the latter part of the second century. Scholem postulates that "the Gnostic Markos took the variant of the Shiur Komah that he used for his doctrine of the 'Body of Truth' from sources of strictly Jewish character."34 Altmann35 cites examples in which Moslems in the eleventh to fifteenth centuries criticized the Jews of anthropomorphism, likening God to man, on account of the Shiur Komah. He also gives one example of Christian attack on Jewish anthropomorphism that was possibly based on the book.36
The Jews themselves have continually denounced, rationalized, and apologetically explained the book. Thus, for example, the Targum on the Song of Songs seems to contain "rejoinders" to some of the passages, according to Raphael Loewe. The Gaonim Sherira and Hai in the tenth century stated that the book obviously could not be taken literally about God, and thus it must contain profound mysteries that they were not capable of understanding. The Karaites used the work probably somewhat contentedly to point out the "theological backwardness of the Rabbanites." Abraham Ibn Ezra (circa 1092-1167), similar to his own belief in God, interpreted the book somewhat panentheistically: "The One is the foundation of all numbers while itself no number...Every number too is composed of ones...The intelligent will be able to know the One in so far as the All is attached to it." That is, he believed that the book referred to the dimensions of the parts of the created world which ultimately were attached to God in a way similar to the presence of the number one in all numbers.

Maimonides (1135-1204), parallel to his rejection of anthropomorphism, completely denied the book's authenticity. Saadia (882-942) also had preferred to think of the text as a spurious one. He did leave open the possibility of its being genuine, in which case he stated that it referred to God's created glory. A similar but more complicated interpretation was given by the German Hasid Eleazar of
Worms (circa 1160-1230) who stated that God Himself was infinite; thus, he says, the measurements do not refer to the Creator, but rather to the created visible glory which was distinct from God's inner glory. Menahem Recanati (about 1300) points out that such an interpretation disagrees with the text which constantly refers to the Creator's measurements. However, he does no better in stating that the measurements refer to created Sefiroth which are instruments of God and distinct from His essence. In addition, he gives a method of interpretation that in my opinion epitomizes the delicacy of all interpretations of the Shiur Kamah:

Know thou that whenever the Sages, of blessed memory, speak about the Sefirot and say something that is fit to be said only about the Creator, blessed be He, they do, in fact, speak about the Creator Who dwells in them...Finally, whenever you find them saying about the Sefirot things which are not fit to be said about the Creator, blessed be He, as, for example, 'the measure of the body' and suchlike matters, it all refers to the Sefirot...42

Later Kabbalists of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries agreed that the Shiur Komah referred to the Sefirot which were part of God's essence, for they interpreted the measures as divinely imposed limitations on the Sefirot's power. They also considered the measures as including both a masculine and feminine aspect or figure.43 One other interesting interpretation can be mentioned: Jehuda Hayyat's commentary on the work Sefer Ma'areket ha-Elohut (circa 1300) states that the author of that work44 believed the
Shiur Komah to refer to the supernal Metatron, the Metatron of the world of emanation, who is of a Divine nature and identified with the **Sefiroth**, in contradistinction to the "small Metatron" who is created.⁴⁵

In conclusion, one sees that although the **Merkabah** mystics would have staunchly defended any charges to the contrary of monotheism, they did employ a number of instruments and intermediaries to "soften" this. We have found them invoking angels such as the Prince of Torah for knowledge. We have seen examples in which their blending of the names for God and those for the angels led to others not knowing to whom a name in a text referred. We have learned of the "little" or "lesser YHVH" who not only was interpreted as blasphemous by outsiders, but also later developed into two—a supernal, uncreated Metatron and a created one. We have seen how the pre-existent **Merkabah** was the goal and theme of the **Merkabah** mystics and was described with baroque detail; and how God's appearance or Glory on this throne—already an omnipresent term in the **Merkabah** hymns⁴⁶—became a vivid anthropomorphism distinct from God's essence and subject to the utmost of controversy in the **Shiur Komah**.
B. German Hasidism

It is not unusual to find counter-reactions to tendencies in history, leading, for example, to an Age of Rationalism following the Romantic Age. In some ways the same is true of German Hasidism (strongest approximately 1150-1250) as contrasted to Merkabah mysticism. Contrary to the latter's disinterest in an ethical side of mysticism, the former holds up an image of the devout Hasid who is ascetic and thoroughly altruistic or selfless. Contrary to the Merkabah mystics' solemn, majestic awe in describing God as King ("Majesty, Fear, and Trembling")\(^\text{47}\), the German Hasidim are filled with a passionate love for God Who is also their Friend. And contrary to the Merkabah's theme of the transcendent God Who is enthroned high above the world without the least suggestion of immanence, the German Hasidim have a strong tendency towards a mysticism of divine immanence, leaning towards panentheism. We read in the "Song of Unity" which is part of their liturgy, "Everything is in Thee, and Thou art in everything. Thou fillest every thing and dost encompass it...before everything was created, Thou wast everything."\(^\text{48}\) Such a doctrine provoked criticism from a disciple of Jehudah the Hasid who feared that the heathen could justify their idol-worship by pointing out that God was in the idols too.\(^\text{49}\) Later criticism of it was given by men such as Rabbi Solomon Luria (16th
century) and Rabbi Elijah of Vilna, the "Gaon of Vilna" (18th century). 50

In addition, God still retains His qualities of being immeasurably infinite and hidden, thus making Him both the nearest ("closer to any of His creatures than the latter to itself"51) and the farthest (supramundane, transcendent). As would be expected, such a broad description of God "begs" for clarification, for a doctrine that would better reconcile the opposite traits in God; and such doctrines are to be found.

Before continuing with German Hasidism, however, we should mention briefly some of the individuals who—with their doctrines that included some kind of intermediaries—influenced the German Hasidim. The Karaites52 were a "back-to-the-Bible" movement that wanted to eliminate the Rabbinic commentaries. As would be expected, in concentrating only on the Bible, they ran into difficulties in explaining many of the difficult passages.53 Thus, one of their greatest leaders, Benjamin ben Moses of Nahawend (mid ninth century), stated that God created an angel that in turn created man and revealed himself to man. Thus, the anthropomorphisms, etc. of the Bible refer to that angel. There was a sect on the fringes of Judaism that followed his ideas.54 In direct rebuttal to Nahawend and the primary cause for the Karaites' loss of influence in the tenth century is Saadia Gaon (882-942).55 In his opinion Biblical passages
in which God is said to have revealed Himself in the figure of a man or in a manifestation of light refer to God's created Glory (also called Shekhinah or ruach hakodesh), not to an angel. Although both are created and are of light and both can cause prophetic revelations, angels rank below the Glory. Furthermore, Biblical passages stating that "God speaks" refer to a created speech that exists only during the actual revelation.\footnote{56}

Whereas Nahawend and some Jewish adepts of the Metatron doctrine allowed dualistic implications to enter their theology, Saadya is emphatic that Kabod is not co-existent with God in the sense of Yah Katan, but is a creation, though the first Creation of God.\footnote{57}

German Hasidism—as opposed to the Merkabah's theme of God as Creator and King—was interested in a more personal view of God, namely God as Revealer. They were interested in knowing how the transcendent and immanent God could reveal Himself in the anthropomorphic manner described in the Bible. From the remarks mentioned previously about the German Hasid Eleazar of Worms,\footnote{58} it is evident that they borrowed from Saadiah, and we shall see that they also have adopted some of Nahawend's ideas.

They stated that God does not speak nor reveal Himself. Rather He does so through an inner glory (כבוד ה' וnoon) and a "visible"glory (כבוד ה', literally "external glory"). The former is identical with the Shekhinah and ruach
hakodesh, and it communicates with man as a voice rather than as a form.

There is some overlapping between the definition of God and that of the Kavod Penimi, as when the qualities of omnipresence and immanence are in one place attributed to God and in another only to the Shekhinah. Occasionally this inner glory is identified with the divine will, the 'holy spirit,' the word of God, and inherent in all creatures.59

Furthermore,

The real object of the mystical contemplation, its true goal, is the hidden holiness of God. His infinite and formless glory, his Shekhinah, where from there emerges the voice and the word of God... And in fact we read in one of the fragments from Samuel ben Kalonymus' work, 'the creatures praise the Shekhinah, which is itself created; but in the world to come they will praise 'God Himself.'60

The visible glory, on the other hand, is identified with a cherub who communicates with man as a form which changes to suit the particular revelation. This visible glory/cherub is the subject of the Shiur Komah;61 its human form was the model used by God to create man. Though--unlike Nahawend's angel--it did not take part in the creation of finite things, it becomes almost a second God like that of Lesser YHWH or Philo's Logos sometimes appeared to be.62

In other words, the German Hasidim pictured an infinite, attribute-less God. In order that man could in some way speak of
God's attributes and in order that man could come into contact with God through revelation and mystical vision, they adapted and modified both Nahawend's created angel and Saadia's created Glory, developing these into very personal intermediaries.
Footnotes for Chapter III

1 Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, p. 16.

2 See above, pp. 11, 33-34.

3 E.g. by R. M. Grant, A. D. Nock, G. Quispel, R. McL. Wilson, G. Scholem.

4 E.g. in the Excerpta ex Theodoto, a collection made by Clement of Alexandria from the writings of a student of the Gnostic Valentinus, the Demiurge is called "the Space." Such a term is a Greek translation of מֵהָל מני, one of the most outstanding Jewish designations of God in general use in the first century B.C.E. Other similarities are found in Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition, pp. 34ff. Scholem, p. 34, adds that the second century was one of much strain between the synagogue and church, thus making it doubtful that such parallels are the result of a Jewish borrowing from Christianity. Rather, he believes similarities are explained as follows: "Initially, Jewish esoteric tradition absorbed Hellenistic writings." This occurred "before Christian Gnosticism as a distinctive force came into being. Later those elements which had been within and in the manner of a distinctly Jewish esotericism were taken over into Christianity and into early Gnostic circles...by the steady stream of converts from Judaism into Christianity."

5 Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, p. 76; e.g. at the beginning of the Lesser Hekhaloth we read יאַה, 'Jao,' the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew 'Jaho.'

6 Ibid., p. 10ff.

7 See above, p. 52 n. 76.

8 The Ophanim relate to Ezekiel's vision in Ezekiel 1:26.

9 Scholem, Major Trends, p. 62.

10 Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, p. 13.

11 Ibid., p. 59.

12 Ibid., p. 52.

13 Ibid., p. 53.
All sources for Azbogah can be found in Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, p. 66ff.

The same is true of Metatron's being identified as High Priest, p. 50ff.

The identification with Michael can be traced to at least the third or fourth century C.E. according to Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, p. 44. In many mystical texts their duties are the same (e.g. both are heavenly advocates for Israel and are described as High Priests); in various Palestinian sources the name Michael occurs where parallel passages speak of Metatron (G. F. Moore, "Intermediaries in Jewish Theology," Harvard Theological Review, XV (1922), 74); in the Visions of Ezekiel Metatron is a secret name of Michael (Scholem, p. 46); and in the late apocalyptic book Sefer Zerubbabel Michael's name accidentally occurs in a passage linking Metatron with many duties similar to his (Moore, p. 72ff., esp. p. 75).

E.g. they interpreted Exodus 33:14, "My Presence shall go with thee," as referring to the angel who is His Presence. Moore, "Intermediaries," p. 72.


Tosafot Hagigah 2.3; Hagigah 14b-15.

Moore, "Intermediaries," p. 77ff.

Tbid., p. 85 n.84.


Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, p. 36ff. bases his date on a passage in Origen.

See above, p. 56.

f.38a cited by Scholem, *Major Trends*, p.64.

29 Ernst Muller, History of Jewish Mysticism, p. 56.

30 This term is found throughout the Hekhaloth hymns; see Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, p. 26ff.

31 Scholem, Major Trends, pp. 65-66.


33 Scholem, Major Trends, p. 66.

34 Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, p. 41.

35 Altmann, Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies, pp. 228-229.

36 Ibid., p. 229 refers to Bishop Agobard's letter to the Emperor Ludwig the Pious that could refer to the Shiur Komah or to an Anglo-Saxon writing of the eighth century.

37 A. Schmiedl, Studien über jüdische insbesondere jüdischearabischene Religions-philosophie (1869), pp. 249-51, cited by Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, p. 36.


39 Altmann, Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies, p. 228.


41 Altmann, p. 230.

42 Menahem Recanati, Ma'areket ha-Elothut, 39b; quoted by Altmann, pp. 234-5.

43 Ibid., p. 238.


45 Altmann, Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies, p. 239.

46 E.g. Scholem, Major Trends, p. 67ff; Jewish Gnosticism, p. 26ff. Thus, we often read passages in the hymns that speak of "God and His Glory."

47 Scholem, Major Trends, p. 57.


See above, pp. 8-9.

See above, pp. 7-9, which explain some of the Bible's inherent difficulties.

See above, p. 21 n. 9.


Alexander Altmann, *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism*, pp. 155ff. goes into more detail, explaining how this created speech—although directly created by God—still speaks only through the created Glory.


See above, pp. 64-65.


See above, p. 65.

CHAPTER IV

THE KABBALAH

A. En Sof and the Sefirot world

Maimonides (Moses ben Maimon, 1135-1204) stated that since God was totally different from man, man could not presume to give attributes to Him or to the suprasensual world in general. Thus, Maimonides believed that man could only know what God is not, not what He is. God created this world and communicated with the prophets, but all anthropomorphic language in the Bible was of necessity metaphorical, containing a hidden meaning. Maimonides even denied a share in the world to come to those who conceived of God's corporality. God had a rigorous unity, but man could not even state that God is One without admitting that this One-ness is different from any similar one-ness in human affairs.\(^1\)

Kabbalism followed a different path from that of Jewish philosophy as seen by Maimonides. Agreeing that God in relation to Himself is completely hidden and unknown to man, the Kabbalists went even further than Maimonides' "God who is not..." by calling Him En Sof, \(\text{תנורא מונד} \), "infinity," or other terms such as "Root of all Roots," "Great Reality," "Indifferent Unity," "That which is not conceivable by thinking," etc.\(^2\) However, the Kabbalists' conception
of God does not stop with this En Sof Who is hidden in Himself. Rather, they state that any knowledge of God must result from God in relation with His creatures. It is this manifestation of God (not En Sof) Who is described in the Bible and Whom the mystics seek to communicate with; and the Kabbalists describe His realm of attributes (or Sefiroth, נְסֵפָרוֹת, world) with much detail. Although these two forms of God are one unity, it is not surprising to find an anonymous writer around 1300 stating that the hidden God by His very nature is not the God of revelation, the Bible, and Rabbinic tradition. In the Zohar II 64b which interprets Exodus 17:7 ("Is the Lord among us or not," literally קְרֵן, "nothing"), we read,

...the Israelites wished to ascertain whether the manifestation of the Divine which they had been given was of the Ancient One, the All-hidden One, the Transcendent, Who, being above comprehension, is designated קְרֵן [nothing] or whether of the 'Small Countenance,' the Immanent, which is designated יְהוָה. Therefore for the word קְרֵן [not] we have here the word קְרֵן [nothing]. One may ask, why then were the Israelites chastised? The reason is that they made distinction between these two aspects in God, and 'tried the Lord,' saying to themselves: We shall pray in one way, if it is the One, and in another way if it is the Other.

Similarly, the Zohar I 15b and the majority of the Kabbalists such as the disciples of Isaac the Blind and Nahmanides interpret bereshith bara Elohim to mean that En Sof created God as known by the name Elohim. In spite of such an interpretation, God's unity is still stressed as the true essence above the manifestations.
The detailed description of the Sefiroth enabled the Kabbalists to conceive of a supposedly inconceivable God. However, as will be seen, too often the Sefiroth made God appear to be "reachable" by man. Thus, later sections of the Zohar adopted an idea found in other Kabbalistic works in which the Sefiroth are duplicated in each of four worlds which emanate from one another. Man's physical world corresponds to the fourth world, thus farther removing En Sof and the first Sefirah world from the immediacy of this earth. This scheme had an additional advantage in corresponding with the "current philosophical cosmology which conceived of the universe as a descending series of cosmic strata."  

The Sefiroth are described as attributes ("spheres") of God, and each one is given one of the Biblical names of God. They are presented individually as successive stages in God's Self-manifestation. Thus, through them God acquires a gradation of qualities from those of a transcendent, inaccessible King (in the first Sefirah or first Self-manifestation—Kether) to those of an immanent, loving parent (in the last Sefirah—Malkhuth). Man can meditate on each of the Sefiroth with its appropriate divine names and symbols and thus gradually attain to higher and higher spheres in God. One immediately notices that such a scheme can lead to the mystic's invoking the individual Sefirah as it is being meditated upon. Furthermore, the Sefiroth become more than processes of life in God as they begin developing personalities of their own. Although the Kabbalists are
constantly trying to reconcile this with monotheism, Scholm feels that the problem is inherently insoluble. The theosophic world of Sefiroth is so real to the author of the Zohar as to be, according to him, perceptible in almost every word of the Bible. 

The Sefiroth are as follows:

1. **Kether**, קֶּדֶר, "Crown," is the first emanation from En Sof, and all nine other emanations come from it. It is also called "the Aged," (as distinguished from "the Aged of the Aged," which is used to refer to En Sof) "the White Head," "the Long Face," "the Source" ("The 'Crown' is the source from which streams forth an infinite light: hence the name En Sof, infinite..." Zohar II 42b), etc. In the Zohar and later Kabbalistic works Kether is treated so similarly to En Sof that it too becomes inaccessible. Thus, many Kabbalists fused it with En Sof, not considering it one of the manifestations. To attain the mystical number of ten Sefiroth, Da'at, sometimes identified with the sixth Sefirah Tifereth, would be treated as an independent Sefirah between Hokhmah and Binah. In the sixteenth century, especially in Safed, such a view became heretical as it seemed to insinuate a double element in En Sof.

2. **Hokhmah**, חָכְמָה, "Wisdom," is the masculine and active Sefirah that first proceeded from Kether.
3. Binah, נביה, "Intelligence," is the feminine and passive third Sefirah. She can be called "Supernal Mother," and is also identified with the divine Who, יהוה.

In the end, meditation reaches a point where it is still possible to question 'who,' but no longer possible to get an answer; rather does the question itself constitute an answer... Binah represents God as this mystical Who, the highest plane which meditation can reach at all... and even this knowledge can be no more than an occasional and intuitive flash...\[14\]

Since Binah, the third Sefiroth, is the highest that man can reach towards, it is understandable why Kether was sometimes identified with En Sof.

These first three Sefiroth (Kether uniting the masculine Hokhmah with the feminine Binah) make up the first triad. Then Hokhmah (the Father) and Binah (the Mother) unite, and from their union the other pairs of Sefiroth successively emanated (Zohar III 290a) as King and Queen, Son and Daughter. "Dimly we perceive behind these mystical images the male and female gods of antiquity, anathema as they were to the pious Kabbalist."\[15\]

4. Hesed, חסד, "Mercy" or "Love," is also called "Greatness."

It is the masculine, active Sefirah of the second triad.

5. Din, דין, "Justice" or "Judgment," is also called Gevurah, גוראה, "Judicial Power." It is the feminine, passive
Sefirah of the second triad.

6. **Tefereth**, יהת, "Beauty," is more commonly called **Rahamin**, רחמים, "Compassion" or "Mildness"; and it is the uniting Sefirah between the two previous ones (justice and mercy), thus completing this second triad.

7. **Netsah**, נצח, "Lasting Endurance" or "Firmness," is the masculine, active Sefirah of the third triad.

8. **Hod**, חסד, "Splendor" or "Majesty," is the feminine, passive Sefirah of the third triad.

9. **Yesod**, יסוד, is the "Basis" or "Foundation" of all active forces in God. It is the seat of the Messiah, the unifying force of the third triad, contains the procreative life forces, and as such combines both masculine and feminine forces. With the exception of one passage regarding Moses and the Shekhinah (Zohar 21b-22a), the Zohar does not speak of sexual relations between man and the divine. However, it does contain sexual relations between the various parts of the Divine. For example, there is much phallic symbolism used in connection with speculations on this ninth Sefirah (e.g., Zohar I 162a; II 128 a,b; III 5a,b; III 26a).

10. **Malkhuth**, מלך, "Kingdom," or Shekhinah, שתחנ, is also called "Princess," "Matron," "Queen," "Bride," and "Daughter"
of God, and represented by such terms as the "Sabbath," "Peace," and the "Community of Israel." This Sefirah holds a very important place in Jewish Kabbalism different from any previous interpretation of her in the Talmud and Midrash. In the first place, as the Sefirah closest to man, she plays a central role both in the upward movement of mystical ascent and in the downward movement of God's creation, revelation, and self-manifestation. Sometimes we read that lower worlds are emanations from the Shekhinah just as the higher Sefirot emanated from Kether and then from Hokhmah. She is called the "I" of God (Zohar I 85a), the presence and immanence of God in the whole of creation. This "I" is a feminine element and is described in sexual imagery as uniting with the "You," the "Holy One, Praise be to Him," as the masculine element of God to produce a sacred union that forms the true unity of God beyond His various manifestations. "This gives expression to a basic and inescapable sense that somehow the universe cannot exist without the union of male and female." Indeed,

The fact that such a dualism obtained recognition in spite of the obvious difficulty of reconciling it with the conception of the absolute unity of God, and that no other element of Kabbalism won such a degree of popular approval, is proof that it responded to a deep-seated religious need...the conception of the Shekhinah as the feminine element in God was one of the main stumbling-blocks for the philosophers and strict Talmudists in approaching the Kabbalistic system. It says something for
its vitality that, despite the opposition of such powerful forces, this idea became part and parcel of the creed of wide circles among the Jewish communities of Europe and the East.  

Furthermore, we are told that Adam did not realize the true unity of the Shekhinah with God's other Sefiroth, and thus he worshipped the Shekhinah alone. Among other things, this caused a mysterious separation in the life and action (not in the substance) of the Divinity which resulted in the Shekhinah's "going into exile" from the other Sefiroth. "Even as the sun seeks for the moon, so does the Holy One seek for the Shekhinah; but He finds her not, for the sins of men separate them." Just as man's sins produce demons that separate the Holy One or King from His Shekhinah; so man's study of Torah, practice of good deeds, sincere prayer, etc. help mend the separation. Every true marriage is also a symbolical union of God and the Shekhinah. As can be seen, man's religious devotion to God takes on a cosmic significance in trying to unify the Shekhinah with the other Sefiroth. Indeed, before performing any of the commandments, the Kabbalists state the following:

For the reunion of the Holy One, blessed be His name, and His Shechinah, I do this in love and fear, in fear and love, for the union of the name YH with VH into a perfect harmony! I pronounce this in the name of all Israel! The Zohar explains that, of course, God is able to unite the
Shekhinah and the other Sefiroth; however, He does not want to diminish man's free will. At the time of redemption, this unity will be restored as before. By emphasizing man's role in uniting God, such a doctrine led to disaster in later Kabbalism.28

By combining the Shekhinah's qualities of a feminine element in God who is in exile, she becomes identified with the community of Israel that was also in suffering and exile. Various Kabbalists saw her in visions, weeping because of her separation from her husband and because of the plight of her children Israel.29 Thus, she becomes a symbol of "eternal womanhood, occupying a place of immense importance and appearing under an endless variety of names and images."30

There were numerous different Kabbalistic views on the relation of En Sof and the Sefiroth besides the traditional one just presented from the Zohar.31 For example, some thought the Sefiroth were the very substance of God, others thought they were merely instruments of God, and Cordovero (1522-1570) and previously Menahem Recanati (circa 1300) said they were both: the emanations were tools through which the Godhead acted. In this way, they hoped to remove the offensive hint of plurality in God. Others, however, disagreed, for the Sefiroth thus seemed to lose their essential character. More speculations developed as some Kabbalists combined Kether with En Sof.32 Only if the two were not identical could the Sefiroth be considered as instruments or garments distinct from En Sof. Once this
is admitted, some Kabbalists wanted to admit of ideal prefigurations of these instruments within the hidden recesses of En Sof. And so the speculations and differing opinions continued, showing the arbitrariness that results when man presumes to conceive of God.  

It has been pointed out that the Sefiroth are divided into three triads. The first triad is later known as the Intellectual World, קדושה, the second triad represents the Feeling World, מпресс, and the third triad represents the Nature or Material World, הממשל. In addition, the Sefiroth are diagrammed in the form of a tree (קיסל or "Tree of Life," ת.WEST) and in the form of the archetypal man. In both diagrams the Sefiroth are arranged so that the three masculine Sefiroth are on the right side and form the Pillar of Mercy, the three feminine ones of the left side form the Pillar of Judgment, and the four uniting Sefiroth are in the center, forming the Middle Pillar. All the righteous of Israel are divided into the three principles expressed by the three pillars, with Abraham representing mercy; Isaac, representing justice; and Jacob, the uniting pillar (Zohar I 146a, 148b). Furthermore, due to the important position they occupy, three of the four uniting Sefiroth are also used to represent the three worlds mentioned above. Thus, Kether alone can be used to designate the Intellectual World; Rahamin, the Feeling World (and as such is called the "King" or "Sacred King"); and Malchuth, the Material World. In this way, "within the trinity of triads is created
a higher trinity [the three Sefirot just mentioned] which represents the potencies of all the Sefirot."

The frequent mention of triads and the number three in the Sefiroth groupings occasions statements such as the following in the Zohar: "Just as the Sacred Aged is represented by the number three, so are all the other Sefirot of a threefold nature" (Zohar III 288b). Müller, after remarking that the ten divine names corresponding to the ten Sefirot are only different sides of the divine essence, not independent divine beings, states,

There is, however, also another way in which the rigid monotheistic conception seems to be infringed, namely, through a trinitarian element, which cannot be explained away, in the Godhead itself. There is mysterious mention in the Idra of 'three heads of the Holy Ancient,' which in truth are after all only one (III 288a). In the system of the Sefiroth also Chokhmah and Binah are opposed to one another as 'Father' and 'Mother,' or more precisely as 'Upper Father' and 'Upper Mother.' Similarly in Kether or Chokhmah the 'Long-faced' (Arich Anpin) is presented to us as 'Father,' and in Tefereth the 'Short-faced' (Ze'er Anpin) as 'Son,' while the maternal principle, under the title of 'Lower Mother' or 'Matron' (in Aramaic Matronita), appears in another guise in the Shechinah, that is, entwined within the tenth Sefirah. That a distinction is also made between 'Son' and 'Daughter' further complicates these very puzzling relations.

In addition, confusion later arose because the traditional Jewish aggadic view of God mentions thirteen divine attributes. In an attempt to reconcile these with the ten Sefirot, the Kabbalists
found an apocryphal responsum attributed to Hai Gaon (939-1038) in which the thirteen middoth are defined as the "branches" of an even higher supernal set of thirteen forces. Thus, the ten Sefiroth of the Kabbalists were combined with the thirteen supernal forces, leaving three supernal lights (sahsahoth). Obviously, this responsum of Pseudo Hai was prompted by the desire to solve the contradiction between the ten Sefiroth and the thirteen attributes of Talmudic theology. However, once formulated, this doctrine of the three supernal lights above the Sefirah Kether acquired an independent genuinely Kabbalistic significance by introducing a kind of 'trinity,' an element of plurality and potential differentiation into the very sphere of En Sof... Later Kabbalists have taken different viewpoints, some still not solving the trinity problem. For example, Cordovero's Pardes Rimmonim states that the three supernal lights are the hidden archetypes within En Sof of the three highest Sefiroth. These three are also prefigured in Kether and in their turn become the source and origin of the three lights from whom the whole Sefiroth structure emanates. Joseph Karo's way of reconciling the attributes and Sefiroth had less potential for heresy. Whereas Cordovero said that only the three supernal lights were in En Sof (insinuating a trinity despite his attempts against this), Karo finds all thirteen middoth in En Sof. For all practical purposes, these thirteen are identical with En Sof.
Throughout the Zohar the style is one of metaphors and personalification of everything, including the individual Sefirah. For example, whereas others might deny the Biblical anthropomorphism, the Kabbalists augmented it somewhat in the manner of the Shiur Komah, stating that the earthly man was created in the image of the archetypal heavenly man which is identical with the Sefiroth. Thus, when the Bible speaks of God's arm, it is speaking of an underlying reality corresponding to the Sefirah that represents the arm in the diagram of the heavenly man. Indeed, one section of the Zohar—the Idra Rabba, נב ננדנ, or "Great Assembly" (Zohar III 127b-145a)—includes a description of the form and gigantic organs and members of God (His head, beard, nose, etc.); God in His two aspects of the Aged נני and the Young נני; and the mystical figure of the Deity in the symbol of Primal Man. Parts of this are vividly repeated in the Idra Zutta ("Small Assembly"), and we also find it employed in passages such as the following:

He who transgresses against even one of the commandments of the Torah is as though he transgressed against the 'Body' of the King...as it were, against My very self. Woe unto the sinners who break the words of the Torah—they know not what they do. (Zohar II 85b)

But when He had created the shape of supernal man, it was to Him for a chariot, and on it He descended, to be known by the appellation YHVH, so as to be apprehended by His attributes and in each particular one, to be perceived...However, woe to the man who should make bold to identify the Lord with any single
attribute, even if it be His own, and the less so any human form existent, 'whose foundation is in the dust...' (Job 4:19). (Zohar II 42b)

Such descriptions of the Deity with metaphors, personification, in human relationships, and love relations with the various Sefiroth are found on every page of the Zohar. This, with the description of the Triad elements in En Sof and the Sefiroth, would seem to lead some to speculate that the Sefiroth were more independent than the Zohar intended them to be. Thus, Abraham Abulfia (1270–circa 1390), the famous exponent of "prophetic Kabbalism," stated, "Some of the Kabbalists differ but little from Christians, inasmuch as they substitute a decade for the triad, which they identify with God...."

Ginsburg mentions that a large number of Kabbalists have at times become Christians; there is no doubt that numerous Jews despised the Kabbalah for its ideas that "lead others to heresy"; and some Christians such as the philosopher Count Giovanni Pico di Mirandola (born 1463) and Johanes Reuchlin even wrote to the Pope, proving that Kabbalism agrees more with Christianity than with Judaism.

On the other hand, the Kabbalah has caused some Christians such as Johann Jacob Spaeth (end 17th century), a follower of Jacob Boehme, to convert to Judaism.

As to be expected, and similar to that found in Philo, the Zohar is constantly reminding us that God must be worshipped as a unity. "The appearance of a multitude of manifestations in God is
due to the medium of the finite creature that perceives the divine light in its own way." However, sometimes even the arguments for God's unity leave room for speculation:

We have already remarked in several places that the daily liturgical declaration about the divine unity is that which is indicated in the Bible (Deut. 6.43, the Sh'ma) where YHVH occurs first, then Elohehu, and then again YHVH, which three together constitute a unity, and for this reason he (YHVH) is in the said place called one. But there are three names, and how can they be one? And although we read 'one,' are they really one? Now this is revealed by the vision of the Holy Spirit, and when the eyes are closed we get to know that the three are only one. This is also the mystery of the voice. The voice is only one, and yet it consists of three elements, fire, air, and water, yet are all these one in the mystery of the voice, and can only be one... And this is indicated by the voice which man raises (at prayer), thereby to comprehend spiritually the most perfect unity of the En Sof for the finite, since all the three (YHVH, Elohehu, YHVH) are read with the same loud voice, which comprises in itself a trinity. And this is the daily confession of the divine unity which, as a mystery, is revealed by the Holy Spirit. This unity has been explained in different ways, yet he who understands it in this way is right, and he who understands it in another way is also right. The idea of unity, however formed by us here below, from the mystery of the audible voice which is one, explains the thing. (Zohar II 43b)

and

There are three degrees, and each degree exists by itself (in the Deity), although the three together constitute one, they are closely united into one and are inseparable from each other. (Zohar III 65a)

and

The only aim and object of the Holy One in sending man into this world is that he may know and understand that Hashem, signifying En Sof, is Elohehu. This is the sum of the whole mystery of the faith,
of the whole Torah...all together forming one unity. (Zohar II 161b)
B. Kabbalistic Microcosm/Macrocosm

I have previously mentioned examples in which man's perception of this world affected and molded his conception of God and the heavens. This phenomenon which is common to man⁴⁷ is often found in a more developed form in mystics: namely, in the belief that man and this world are microcosms of God and the heavenly world. Thus, it is not surprising to find such a conception espoused by the Kabbalists.

In the Zohar we are told that

The process of creation, too, has taken place on two planes, one above and one below, and for this reason the Torah begins with the letter ב (Beth), the numerical value of which is two. The lower occurrence corresponds to the higher; one produced the upper world (of the Sefiroth), the other the nether world (of the visible creation). (Zohar I 240b)

"Both differ only in that the higher order represents the dynamic unity of God, while the lower one leaves room for differentiation and separation."⁴⁸

Furthermore, on every plane in each of the four worlds,

Creation mirrors the inner movement of the divine life. The 'vestiges' of the innermost reality are present even in the most external of things. Everywhere there is the same rhythm, the same motion of the waves.⁴⁹
Thus, it is logical to state that this continuity between the divine and all of creation (all four worlds, including our physical one) causes each to affect the other, just as a tug on the links of a chain will affect the entire chain. We often read, for example, that the lower waters (a symbol of our physical world) can affect the upper waters; that "the impulse from below calls forth that from above." (Zohar I 164a, etc.) Such happened when Adam sinned, for not only did the physical world become a world of separation, but also the cosmic world acquired an element of separation in that the action of the Shekhinah was separated from that of the other Sefiroth. Indeed, the Shekhinah's "being in exile" is similar to Israel's present state of galut. At the time of redemption, the Shekhinah will be reunited with the other Sefiroth, and this world will also once again be the unity it was previously. This idea that the lower waters can affect the upper waters later (not in the Zohar or this period of Kabbalism) became conducive to a doctrine of two creators. For example, if man can affect God as easily as Adam did, then this Creator is not perfect, and there must be a higher God above it.

Similarly, man himself was created in the image of God in several ways. First man's soul: "Thus the human soul also reproduces its divine prototypes, in which three powers form a single essence." (Zohar I 205b-206c, 83b) The highest of the three powers of the soul is a spark from the divine itself—from the third Sefirah Binah.
Secondly, man's body was originally made of light, similar to the Sefiroth. However, Adam's sin caused it to be darkened with the addition of matter. Even so, it still mirrors the Sefiroth as they are symbolized by the divine archetypal man—Adam Kadmon. Thus, it is stated that "The heavenly Adam (i.e., the ten Sefiroth) who emanated from the highest primordial obscurity (i.e., En Sof), created the earthly Adam." (Zohar II 70b) We are told in various ways that the organs and members of earthly man mirror those of the Sefiroth in their association with this heavenly Adam. For example,

...Yet all these bones and sinews are formed in the secret of the highest wisdom, after the heavenly image. The skin represents the firmament, which extends everywhere, and covers everything like a garment...the flesh represents the deteriorated part of the world;...the bones and the veins represent the heavenly chariot, the inner powers, the servants of God...But these are the outward garments, for in the inward part (soul) is the deep mystery of the heavenly man. Everything here below, as above, is mysterious...The mystery of the earthly man is after the mystery of the Heavenly Man. And just as we see in the firmament above, covering all things...so there are in the skin, which is the cover of the body of the son of man, and which is like the sky that covers all things, signs and features which are the stars and planets of the skin, indicating secret things... (Zohar II 76a)

and

Man is still the presence of God upon earth, and the very form of the body depicts the Tetragrammaton, the most sacred name YHVH. Thus the head is the form of the '... ', the arms and the shoulders
are like the , the breast represents the form of the , whilst the two legs with the back represent the form of the second .
(Zohar II 42a)
C. Speech, Language, and the Name

Throughout Judaism one finds a recurring theme of the importance of speech, the Hebrew language, and the divine names (especially YHVH). Obviously, this theme is based on the Biblical use of speech as a tool of creation, revelation, and inspiration.\(^{53}\) We have already discussed Philo's Logos and the figure of Wisdom. Another example of the importance of the word and language is found near the beginning of the Merkabah text of the Lesser Hekhaloth:

"Before God made heaven and earth, He established a vestibule to heaven to go in and to go out. He established a solid name to strengthen (or design) by it the whole world. He invited man...to combine letters, to say names..."\(^{54}\) In chapter 41 (and chapter 13) of the Hebrew Book of Enoch, we are told that Metatron said,

> Come and behold the letters by which heaven and earth were created...the letters by which the planets and zodiacal signs were created...by which the throne of glory and the wheels of the Merkabah were sustained...and these letters are graven with a flaming style on the throne of glory...\(^{55}\)

And in the mystical document the Book of Creation, Sefer Yetsirah, written between the third and sixth centuries,\(^{56}\) we learn that all of creation was made from the twenty-two Hebrew letters and the ten elementary numbers (Sefiroth).\(^{57}\) A similar statement is found in the
Talmud referring to Bezalel, the builder of the Tabernacle, who knew "to combine the letters by which heaven and earth were created."  

In addition, in this time period from the apocrypha through Merkabah mysticism, we find an increasing importance given to God's name, causing it to be removed from public speech and attain a kind of magical power. Thus, it was used in numerous variations on amulets for the purposes of driving out evil spirits, healing, etc.; and we find the divine name throughout the apocryphal and pseudepigraphic writings in such statements as "For in the Lord of Spirit's name the righteous are saved." (I Enoch 48:7) Secret divine names became part of the magical formulas used by the Merkabah mystics in their ascent through the heavens; and these Merkabah mystics also had a ceremonial, somewhat magical practice called

'the putting on, or clothing, of the name,' in which the magician impregnates himself, as it were, with the great name of God, i.e., performs a symbolic act by clothing himself in a garment into whose texture the name has been woven.

The German Hasidim practiced the pronunciation and/or meditation of holy names in order to go into a holy trance that lasted until "the power of the name receded." Joseph Blau mentions that, in spite of Judah the Hasid's vigorous renunciation of self-power, he survived "in legend as one who succeeded in achieving magical power because of his mastery of the ineffable name of God."
Furthermore, there is a kind of Logos mysticism in German Hasidism that seems to be related to Philo's use of the Logos.\textsuperscript{64} Thus, we find the "inner glory" being identified with the divine will, holy spirit, and word of God; and the "visible glory" and cherub appear to be very similar to the Logos, according to Scholem.\textsuperscript{65}

Extreme importance was given to the letters as the elements that make up the name of God by Abraham Abulafia (1240–circa 1291) in his "prophetic Kabbalism." For example, in his opinion, more important than the doctrine of the Sefirot was concentration upon seemingly meaningless combinations of letters in order to reach the Name, the true object of concentration\textsuperscript{66} that reflects the hidden meaning and totality of existence: "All things exist only by virtue of their degree of participation in the great name of God."\textsuperscript{67} Methods used by Abulafia include endless combinations of letters, giving them numerical values (gematria), pronouncing them with certain modulations of the voice and bending and turning movements of the body. The goal of such practices was a new sense of consciousness in which the soul left the body to be near God, resulting in an ecstasy tempered with prophecy.

In the period of the Zohar, speech again has immense importance. We read that the world was created out of sounds and letters belonging to the name of God (Zohar I 306b).
All creation—and this is an important principle of most Kabbalists—is, from the point of view of God, nothing but an expression of His hidden self that begins and ends by giving itself a name, the holy name of God, the perpetual act of creation.68

The Sefirot are the creative names which God called into the world, the names which He gave to Himself... The world of divine emanation is one in which the faculty of speech is anticipated in God...69

It is stated that the Torah consists of nothing but transpositions and numerals of divine names; and numerous methods were devised to analyze the Torah in this way.70 In addition, the highest of the three elements of the soul is called the "speaking part"; because with this capacity of speech (that is also composed of three elements), it mirrors the divine nature and creation. (Zohar III 48a, 46b-47a) This connection between human and divine speech "is one of the most intimate connections of man with the divine origin...speech reaches God because it comes from God."71 In Lurianic Kabbalism all the disunity of the world is symbolized by the fact that VH has been torn from VH. All of man's actions should be directed towards the reunification of the divine as symbolized by the divine name.

With one exception in the examples just mentioned, speech, language, and the Name are tools or instruments—albeit magical instruments at times—used by God in forming the world and to be used by man in unlocking the secrets thereof. The inner and visible glory
of the German Hasidim are indeed more like an intermediary and emanation than a mere tool; however, they are such in their own right, and not because they also encompass some of the qualities and duties of the word and Logos.
Footnotes to Chapter IV

1 Julius Guttmann, Philosophies of Judaism, p. 163; Salo W. Baron, "Moses Maimonides," Great Jewish Personalities in Ancient and Medieval Times, p. 218. Maimonides does relent in his rigid view that man can only state what God is not; for in his "Thirteen Principles," he states truths such as God's eternity, unity, knowledge of all the deeds of man, etc.

2 The last phrase is used by Isaac the Blind. All are found in Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, p. 12.

3 In the Book of Creation, Sefer Yetsirah, from which this term originally appeared, Sefirot meant "numbers" and referred to the ten elementary or primordial numbers. However, by the time of the Zohar, its meaning had changed to "spheres" or "regions," referring to divine powers and emanations.

4 Scholem, Major Trends, p. 11 n.8.


6 See above, pp. 3-4.

7 See above, p. 89 ff.

8 The four worlds are described in the "Tractate on the Emanations," Masekheth Atsiluth, supposedly written by Rabbi Isaac Nasir in the first half of the twelfth century. However, such ideas seem to be older than the medieval period according to Ernst Müller, History of Jewish Mysticism, p. 79. Cf. V. Ehrenpreis, "Die Entwicklung der Emanationslehre in der Kabbala des 13. Jahrhunderts"; also R. J. Zvi Werblowsky, Joseph Karo, Lawyer and Mystic, p. 210ff.

9 The four worlds are the Atsiluth world of emanations, Beriah world of creation, Yetsirah world of formation, and the Asiyah world of action or making that includes man's physical world. These are described in detail with variations given to them by other Kabbalists by Werblowsky, Joseph Karo, p. 207ff. and Christian Ginsburg, The Essenes: The Kabbalah, pp. 106ff., 191ff.

10 Werblowsky, Joseph Karo, p. 208.

11 Scholem, Major Trends, p. 225.
Hokhmah, a feminine word in Hebrew, is represented as having two parts: one, masculine in respect to Binah; the other feminine in respect to Kether and "Lesser" with respect to the other masculine Hokhmah; Zohar III, Idra Zutta, chapter XXI, quoted in Epiphanius Wilson, Hebrew Literature, p. 360 n.2.


Abraham ibn Ezra, p. 227.

Muller, History of Jewish Mysticism, p. 97.

However, there are some beautiful love passages (without sexual relations) between man and the Divine throughout the Zohar. E.g. Zohar II 96b we read—concerning the destiny of righteous souls after death—"the Lord discerns each holy soul, and taking each in turn to himself, embraces and fondles her, 'dealing with her after the manner of daughters,' even as a father acts toward his beloved daughter, embracing and fondling her, and presenting her with gifts."

Scholem, Major Trends, p. 228.

Scholem, Major Trends, p. 229, and see above, pp. 45-46.


Scholem, Major Trends, p. 229.

E. g. the Fall also caused man's body which was previously made of light to be darkened; see above, p. 93.

Zohar II 41b, 216b; II 77b.

Blau, Jewish Philosophy, pp. 115-16.

There are always divergent opinions by individual Kabbalists. The views being presented are from the Zohar and accepted by the majority of Kabbalists in that time. However, for example, Joseph Karo—the author of the Shulchan Aruch who is also known for his personal maggid—learned from his maggid that all of the Sefiroth were male; the Shekhinah was not the tenth Sefirah, but a secondary emanation of all previous ten Sefiroth; thus, the Shekhinah was below the ten Sefiroth and was the only female element in God. He then applied the Zohar's Interpretation of the Fall—that this lower Shekinah was separated from the Sefiroth. Others state that only Tefereth needs to be united with the Shekhinah.

28 See above, pp. 93, 116, 134.

29 E.g. Abraham Halevi, a disciple of Isaac Luria, saw her weeping at the Wailing Wall (circa 1571).

30 "Eternal womanhood" is from Zohar I 228b; the passage is from Scholem, Major Trends, p. 230.

31 See above, p. 102 n. 26.

32 See above, p. 79.

33 See below, p. 160 ff.

34 Muller calls this the "Soul or Feeling-World," History of Jewish Mysticism, p. 96; Ginsburg calls it the "Moral or Sensual World," The Kabbalah, p. 98.

35 Muller calls this third triad the "Nature World," History of Jewish Mysticism, p. 96; Ginsburg calls it the "Material World," The Kabbalah, p. 98.

36 Ginsburg, The Kabbalah, p. 102.

37 Muller, History of Jewish Mysticism, pp. 97-98.

38 Werblowsky, Joseph Karo, p. 191.

39 At other times Karo did not mention the 13 middoth at all; rather, he just spoke of the ten Sefiroth. In Werblowsky's words, "Karo's maggid was always ready to admit of alternate possibilities." Werblowsky, Joseph Karo, pp. 193ff.

40 Thus, personification is used for such things as the individual days (Zohar I 221b) and the Torah which in numerous places is treated as a living organism; Zohar III 152a states, "The Torah it was that created the angels and created all the worlds and through Torah are all sustained. The world could not endure the Torah if she had not garbed herself in garments of this world." For a detailed analysis of similar passages in the Zohar and throughout Jewish mysticism, see Gershom Scholem, On the Kabbalah, pp. 32-86.

41 Ginsburg, The Kabbalah, p. 197.

42 Ibid., p. 143.
Numerous examples could be mentioned, including H. Graetz; Leo di Modena who wrote several works against the Zohar, showing it was of Gentile origin, rejected by the great Jewish leaders of the past, etc.; and the Rabbis mentioned by Isaac ben Immanuel de Lates in his epistle to the Zohar. See Ginsburg, p. 218ff.

Ginsburg, p. 205ff. gives a very colorful account of Mirandola, one of whose Theses was "No science yields greater proof of the divinity of Christ than magic and the Kabbalah." Among Reuchlin's works we find that he used the Kabbalistic method of notarikon (a method in which each letter of a word is used as an initial or abbreviation of a separate word) to prove Christianity. Thus, he interprets the second word of Genesis—ץascar, "created," to form the three words י, י, and י, namely "Son," "Spirit," and "Father."

Scholem, Major Trends, p. 238.

Ibid., p. 224, based on Zohar II 176a; III 141a,b.

Psychologically it is seen in man's judging others similar to the way in which he judges himself. This familiar phenomenon has caused some to question whether God created man or man created God in his image. This paper will present the microcosm/macrocosm views without attempting to evaluate them.

Scholem, Major Trends, p. 222. However, throughout the Zohar (e.g. I 241a) we read that underlying the separation of this world, all is revealed as one. Such a doctrine seems to lessen the unity of the Deity, for God is described in the same manner as this world—as having an underlying unity different from the powers or forces comprising it.

Scholem, p. 223.

See above, pp. 116, 124-134.

The term י, י, י, itself is not used in the main parts of the Zohar but only in the Tikkunim. The Zohar usually speaks of י, י, י, Other terms used are given by Scholem, Major Trends, p. 400 n.31.

See above, pp. 88-89.

See above, p. 36.

Gershom Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition, p. 77-78.

Scholem, Jewish Gnosticism, p. 79.
56. Scholem, Major Trends, p. 75.
57. See above, p. 101 n. 3.
60. Such amulets were used during a time period from the early centuries of this era (cf. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period) until after Maimonides in the twelfth century. (Thus, Maimonides denounced the practice. cf. Ginsburg, The Kabbalah, p. 186.)
61. Scholem, Major Trends, p. 77.
62. Ibid., p. 102, quoting from Moses Taku or Tachau, a follower of Judah the Hasid.
64. Poznanski, Revue des études juives, vol. 50, 1905, pp. 10-31 shows that although there are few traces of Philo's influence in Rabbinic thought, it is found as late as the tenth century in Persia and Babylonia.
65. Scholem, Major Trends, p. 114; see above, p. 70.
66. This is similar to the Hindu use of Om as the beginning of meditation that leads to a state of consciousness of unity.
67. Scholem, Major Trends, p. 133.
68. Ibid., p. 77.
69. Ibid., pp. 215-16.
70. E. g. notarikon, mentioned above, p. 104 n. 44; gematria assigning a numerical value to each letter; etc. cf. Ginsburg, The Kabbalah, p. 131f.
71. Muller, History of Jewish Mysticism, p. 103; Scholem, Major Trends, p. 17.
72. See above, pp. 69-71.
A. Introduction to Lurianic Kabbalism

The Merkabah mystics were content to go as far as God's throne world: the German Hasidim took a step farther in describing God's Glory; the Zohar went inside this Glory to describe God Himself in relation to His creatures.

"Historically Jewish mysticism (and also Rabbinic tradition) has tended to carry this process ever further, striving to detect successively new layers in the mystery of the Godhead, pushing on conclusions beyond those that become filled with allegory to new symbols and more detailed allegories."

It is as if man's egoism has a desire to understand, describe, and thereby partially control the Godhead. Thus, man finds himself conceiving of what he has previously stated is inconceivable and often doing so with God in his image. After the Zohar, Kabbalism follows such a path to such an extreme that its radical symbols and microcosm/macrocosm allegories finally cause their own destruction.

During the sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries, Lurianic Kabbalism, based on the teachings of Isaac Luria (1534-1572), was an extremely popular force in Judaism, "the influence of
which became preponderant among all sections of the Jewish people and in every country of the diaspora, without exception."  

Previously, Jewish mysticism had made a conscious effort to remain inside Judaism and not be treated as heresy by the Rabbis. Thus, although Jewish mysticism might give new meanings to halakhah, it by and large kept the Jewish laws and rituals. However, in the sixteenth century Rabbinism and Jewish mysticism achieved the closest contact ever to be found in Judaism, with Kabbalism gaining control of Jewish thought. We find such men as Joseph Karo, the author of the brilliant code of Rabbinic laws, the Shulchan Aruch, also an ardent Kabbalist with a personal maggid or angel that communicated with him and guided him. Karo is one of many Rabbis who also were Kabbalists, and Werblowsky shows that his maggid was by no means a unique phenomenon of the time. It is somewhat ironic that such closeness between Rabbinic and Kabbalistic Judaism gave the latter a "free rein" to develop antinomian tendencies that it had never dared to express before its acceptance by Rabbinic Judaism. As would be expected, the development of such tendencies in the seventeenth century led the Rabbis to later take precautions that such a closeness between Jewish mysticism and Rabbinism never developed again.

It is not surprising that Kabbalism gained such popularity in the sixteenth century. This was a time of intense suffering for the Jews, and they needed mysticism as an escape from the present
and a hope for better times. In Italy the first ghetto was established in Venice, economic activities were restricted, Hebrew books were censored, and persecutions occurred. In the late fifteenth century the Germanic provinces had started expelling Jews, and about 150,000 had been expelled from Spain and Portugal in 1492 and 1498 respectively.

From a historical point of view, Luria's myth constitutes a response to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, an event which more than any other in Jewish history down to the catastrophe of our time gave urgency to the question: why the exile of the Jews and what is their vocation in the world?
B. Lurianic Kabbalism

Isaac Luria modified the Zohar in three basic ways: with his doctrines of Tsimtsum, Shevirah, and Tikkun. Tsimtsum, תִּיסְתּוּם, means "contraction" or "concentration"; although in Luria's use of the word, it is better translated as "withdrawal" or "retreat." With such a process Luria changed the Zohar's creation by emanation into one of creation by contraction first and then emanation.

Luria begins by asking...How can there be a world and things which are not God if God is everywhere? How can God create the world out of nothing if there is no nothing? The solution according to Luria is that God was compelled to make room for the world by, as it were, abandoning a region within Himself, a kind of mystical primordial space from which He withdrew in order to return to it in the act of creation and revelation.

Thus, different from the Zohar's eternally simultaneously existing hidden God and God Who revealed himself, Luria states that there is a God Who contracted Himself deep into Himself, after which proceeded the God Who revealed Himself. In addition, Luria has an unresolved conflict between a part of God that has not participated in Tsimtsum and thus remains eternally hidden, and a personal God that existed before Tsimtsum.

To be sure, this view was often felt, even by those who gave it a theoretical formulation, to verge on the blasphemous. Yet it cropped up
again and again, modified only ostensibly by a feeble 'as it were' or 'so to speak.'

Already in this doctrine of Tsimtsum thus far presented, one sees three characteristics that will continue throughout Luria's teachings. In the first place, Lurianic Kabbalism is filled with Gnostic myths. Parallel to Tsimtsum, the Gnostic "Book of the Great Logos" speaks of God's withdrawing Himself into Himself and stresses that such a withdrawal precedes all emanation. Secondly, Lurianic Kabbalism—deeply affected by the expulsion of the Jews from Spain—is continually preoccupied with finding a deeper meaning for the Jews' exile than just regarding it as a punishment. Regarding the Tsimtsum, "the Kabbalists do not say so directly, but it is implicit in their symbolism that this withdrawal of the divine essence into itself is a primordial exile or self-banishment." Thirdly, we are told that every new manifestation and every stage of being is founded in Tsimtsum followed by an outflowing emanation. Thus, already we see that Luria's description of life in God has surpassed the Zohar's in complexity and detail.

Luria's second major modification of the Zohar deals with the origin of evil and can be called Shevirath Ha-Kelim, הַשְׁפִּירה הָּ-קָלים, "the breaking of the vessels (instruments)." Jewish philosophy tended to explain evil as the absence of good. The Zohar, among other explanations, had stated that evil resulted when the
left negative side of the Sefiroth, and especially when the Sefirah Din, "Judgment," of that side, tried to put itself in the place of the right positive side, especially of the Sefirah Hesed, "Mercy." In other words, evil occurred as a by-product because of an excess of the Sefirah of judgment. However, by the sixteenth century Jews had seen too much evil around them to accept such passive explanations of evil. Thus, Luria stated that evil had a very real existence and resulted from the very structure of the Divine. As would be expected, some found such an idea blasphemous, suggesting a dual aspect in God. Coupled with this idea, Luria's explanation of Adam's sin differed from that of the Zohar. The latter stated that Adam had thereby destroyed the original unity of God, separating the Shekhinah from the Holy One, Blessed be He. Instead, Luria showed that there was an inherent schism in the Divine unity even before Adam's sin.

Briefly, Luria's explanation of the evil and the schism inherent in the Divine nature is as follows: He states that the first manifestation of the Divine after Tsimtsum took the form of Adam Kadmon, the "primordial man," who radiated with the divine light. Next, in preparation for the creation of the finite world, the Sefiroth were supposed to act as individual vessels and receive this divine light. The three highest Sefiroth were able to do this; however, "when the turn of the lower six came, the light broke forth all at once and its impact proved too much for the vessels which were
broken and shattered. When the vessels were broken, everything fell out of place; all the divine sparks were scattered; and the last Sefirah, the Shekinah, fell into exile.

Although this breaking of the vessels occurred through flaws in the Sefirot, Luria stresses that the process was an orderly one that followed specific rules intended by the Divine in order to purify it from the "shells" (Kelipoth, מְלִיפָה) of evil that existed in it, especially as found in the waste products of the Sefirah of judgment. Thus, Luria states, the breaking of the vessels loosened and removed the shells of evil from the divine nature and gave them a separate, independent existence in another realm. As has been mentioned, such a view was considered blasphemous by many, and it was rarely stated explicitly.

Furthermore, since the divine world is mirrored by the earthly world, the breaking of the vessels of the primordial Adam is mirrored in the earthly Adam's original sin. The effect of the latter was again a great exile for the Shekinah; man—who was once a purely spiritual figure, a great soul—and this world fell into the material realm of the evil shells; and man's soul was shattered, the sparks of which also fell and became dominated by the evil shells.

Again the use of Gnostic myths is evident in this explanation of the Shevirah, for exile has become an element in God's own essence. Also, similar to the Gnostic view of the world, there is a mirroring of cosmogony, theogony, and anthropogony. Furthermore,
"the mythology of the Gnostic systems recognizes in the pleroma
dramatic processes in which particles of the light of the aeons are
driven out and fall into the void."\(^{17}\) In both Shevirah and Gnosticism
man is estranged from his true being, so to speak.

The process of Tikkun, \(\text{םיקננ} \) ("mending" or "restoration")
takes place by and in both God and man. It is a restoration of all
things to their original contact with God, eliminating the evil
Kelipoth. The first acts of Tikkun take place within God Himself as
He reorganizes the disorganized Sefirot to form Partsufim, "counten-
ances," \(\text{תל"כ} \).\(^{19}\)

In each Partsuf the entire personality of God be-
comes apparent, if always under the aspect of a
distinctive feature. The God Who manifests Himself
at the end of the process represents a great deal
more than the hidden En Sof. He is now the living
God of religion, Whom Kabbalism attempted to por-
tray... In reading these descriptions one is easily
tempted to forget that for Luria they refer to
purely spiritual processes. Superficially at least,
they resemble the myths through which Basilides,
Valentinus or Mani tried to describe the cosmic
drama, with the difference that they are vastly
more complicated than these Gnostical systems.\(^{18}\)

There are five primary Partsufim,\(^{19}\) and these in particular
attain personalities of their own. Thus, for example, we find a
description of the birth of one of the Partsufim (Zeir Anpin, \(\text{ע"כ} \)
\(\text{יינע} \), "Small Face," meaning "Impatient") in the womb of another
Partsuf (Imma, \(\text{ו"כ} \), "Mother"), his childhood, developed personality,
etc. "By and large Zeir Anpin corresponds to the God of revelation
in traditional Judaism.20

Luria's description of Zeir Anpin is something very much like a mythos of God giving birth to Himself... The conflict here is latent by incapable: Is En-Sof the personal God, the God of Israel, and are all the partsufim only His manifestations under various aspects, or is En-Sof the impersonal substance, the deus absconditus, who becomes a person only in the partsufim?... There is a long chain of events leading up to the development of Zeir Anpin. The more dramatic the process in God becomes, the more inevitable is the question: Where in all this drama is God?... En-Sof has little religious interest for Luria. His three hymns for the three Sabbath meals are directed to the mystical configurations of God: the "Holy Ancient One," the Zeir Anpin, and the Shekhinah... In these hymns, then, Luria appears to address the partsufim as separate personalities. This is an extreme attitude.21

Furthermore, just as the Zohar often spoke of the "Holy One, Blessed be He" who was exiled from the Shekhinah, Luria speaks of the partsuf Zeir Anpin (composed of the six lower sefirot and equivalent to the masculine element) who is exiled from the partsuf Rachel (equivalent to the tenth sefirah, the Shekhinah, and the feminine element in God). When the tikkun is completed, these two will be reunited.

The second plane of tikkun takes place within and by man. In the first place, man must try to "restore his primordial spiritual structure"22 that has not only fallen into the material world and is surrounded by evil shells, but also the soul of which is subject to endless transmigrations until it is finally redeemed.23 The
restoration can be accomplished by fulfilling all of the 613 commandments which correspond to the supposedly 613 parts of the human body. If a man does this, the soul still will not be united with Adam's soul until a general restitution has taken place. Thus, in the second place, man must try to uplift all the divine sparks from the evil shells in the world through religious acts.

And this is the secret why Israel is fated to be enslaved by all the Gentiles of the world: In order that it may uplift those sparks which have also fallen among them... And therefore it was necessary that Israel should be scattered to the four winds in order to lift everything up.24

In the deepest sense, all of Israel's "uplifting," all of her obeying the commandments, praying, and asceticism is meant to reunite Rachel with Zeir Anpin, to reunite the letters "YH" with "VH" in the divine name.25 For when God's essence is united, man too will be restored to his original contact with God. The coming of the Messiah will signify that man (not the Messiah) has completed this restoration.

In other words, in Lurianic Kabbalism even more than in the Zohar26 an enormous task is given to each Jew towards accomplishing Tikkun. Through every single religious act the day nears in which man will be spiritually perfected, the world will be free from evil, and God will be re-unified. Thus, almost a magical importance is given to the influence of such things as deep, spontaneous prayer in accomplishing Tikkun. Man's task is more than merely obeying the
commandments, for he becomes a real partner of God. Israel's exile not only reflects the divine exile and the fallen nature of man, but also becomes a symbolic mission that will help in gathering up the fallen sparks.

As can be seen, Lurianic Kabbalism has a multitude of inherent qualities which could (and, indeed, did\textsuperscript{27}) lead to a doctrine of two powers. These can be summarized as follows:

1. Luria postulates microcosm/macrocosp theories to such an extent that the revealed God becomes a macro-anthropos and man is treated as a micro-cosmos. Furthermore, Luria shows that evil was inherent in the divine nature, and thus God caused the Shevirah. Now God's restoration depends largely on man's Tikkun. After all this, one begins to wonder how "perfect" such a God really is.

2. Luria's description of God before and after Tsimtsum and before and after Shevirah includes the greatest amount of anthropomorphic thought ever postulated in Jewish mysticism. As we have seen in the past, too often such anthropomorphism leads to scepticism and rationalization that can even take the form of postulating a lower creator who is identified with the anthropomorphic language in order to keep the "true God" elevated above it. Indeed, after reading Luria's baroque details of the continual dramatic processes occurring in God, one begins to wonder exactly which description of God is the "real" God.
3. As has been shown, Lurianism is filled with Gnostic themes, mythology, and a similar outlook.

Sometimes it appears as if the great mystical upsurges were inspired or abetted by non-Jewish influences. The precariousness of the transformation was demonstrated more than once by the inherent capacity of these mystical ideas to explode the frame of Judaism into which they had been fitted and to lead straight into antinomianism and heresy. 28

And "in large parts of the Kabbalah the vengeance of myth against its conquerors is perfectly evident, and this is the source of countless inner contradictions in its symbols." 29

4. The time was one of much suffering and questioning of the reason for the suffering and exile. The Jews longed for hope of a better world, and Luria's doctrine gave it to them, stating that man himself would bring about Tikkun and the coming of the Messiah. Indeed, man's role was so important that his every single act could help or hinder Tikkun. "It seems to be in the nature of such doctrines that the tension they express demands a sudden and dramatic relief." 30

5. Lurianic Kabbalism has a constant linking of external, historical, and objective reality (e.g., the Jews' physical exile throughout the world) with inner, psychological, and subjective experience (e.g., man's feeling of exile or estrangement from his true
spiritual being). Indeed, in time the physical exile was relegated to the position of a mere symbol of the very real spiritual exile. The latter was to be mended, and then the former would result as a consequence of this mending. This diminished importance of the objective realm led to shattering consequences as it became impossible to objectively judge whether inner redemption had really occurred.

C. Introduction to Sabbatianism

The seventeenth century brought no relief to the Jews from the sufferings of the sixteenth. Indeed, Ruppin states, "The period of the Thirty Years' War (which ended in 1648) marks the time when Judaism had reached its lowest ebb." 31 The people, longing to escape from the harsh realities of life, placed their trust in miracles, wonder cures, amulets, etc. Kabbalism was still the powerful force of the previous century, studied by Jews everywhere; and "a belief in magic had already by underground channels penetrated deeply into the popular consciousness." 32 Such beliefs were not limited to the Jews. In this century the Bishop of Würzburg executed nine thousand witches and wizards; superstition, delusions, and mystic sects were rampant throughout Europe among Catholics and Protestants alike; 33 and "A contemporary, Friedrich Brekling, enumerates one hundred and eighty visionaries of that century, men and women, who were millenarian dreamers and eschatologists, and all were filled with
apocalyptic intoxication."^34

In Judaism there was a rash of Messianic speculation which was accentuated by calculations by the Zohar and subsequent teachers stating that 1648 would be the date of his arrival."^35 Joseph Sambari, one of the calculators of this date, mentions that there were "nigh universal expectations entertained" for that year;^36 and Silver shows that the rabbis included new prayers in the worship service for the imminent redemption. However, ironically, the year brought instead the beginning of the persecutions of Bogdon Chmielnitzky in which 100,000 Jews died in Russia and Poland in the years 1648-58. Nevertheless, the Jews, desperately searching for hope, regarded the persecutions as the birth-pains of the Messiah. "Now, at last, every single person knew beyond any doubt: the Messiah is coming, for he must come."^38

D. Sabbatai Zevi and the Sabbatian Theology

Sabbatai Zevi was born on the Ninth of Ab, the day of mourning for the destruction of the two temples, 1625. He died on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, 1676; for "because of him, much of Israel sinned, but God forgave them, for they sinned in error."^39 Scholem states that there is a large amount of documentary material to prove that he was suffering from a mental illness for the majority of his life that took the form of extreme periods of depression (in
which he could not even read) and elation (in which antinomian acts that he otherwise would not have committed became sacramental rituals). Thus, by 1652 he had performed such scandalous acts as not consummating two marriages on the ground that the brides were not destined for him, reciting the name YHVH out loud at the synagogue, and announcing himself as the Messiah in 1648.

However, Sabbatai's latent antinomianism and Messianic aspirations would have remained uninfluential had it not been for Nathan of Gaza (1644-1680).

If the expression be permitted, he was at once the John the Baptist and the Paul of the new Messiah, surely a very remarkable figure. He had all the qualities which one misses in Sabbatai Zevi: tireless activity, originality of theological thought, and abundant productive power and literary ability. He proclaims the Messiah and blazes the trail for him...and with his successor, the former Marrano Abraham Miguel Cardozo, are the great theologians of classical Sabbatianism.

With Nathan of Gaza, Sabbatai vigorously renewed his Messianic efforts in 1665-6, and the movement—although never a mass movement such as Lurianism—spread throughout Jewish communities from Cairo to Hamburg, Salonica to Amsterdam.

Glickel of Hamelin, the Judeo-German diarist, describes how the belief in Sabbatai as the Messiah caused entire Jewish communities to sell their belongings in preparation for their gathering in Israel. Pepys mentions that several Jews were betting
exorbitant sums of money that Sabbatai was the Messiah. Furthermore, extreme penitence was practiced by the Jews, "the like of which," states a contemporary of the period, "never was seen before, nor will be again until the true redemption comes." In Smyrna, Salonica, etc., business and trade—conducted chiefly by Jews—ceased, evening curfews were disregarded, etc., attracting the attention of the Sultan. Rabbis in Smyrna who did not believe in Sabbatai were forced to flee for their lives or feign acceptance. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising to find some Christians more than passively interested in the affair.

Obviously, Sabbatai's fame could not last forever without his proving his worth and/or the Sultan's trying to bring conditions back to normal. Nathan of Gaza had predicted that Sabbatai would dethrone the Sultan in 1666, after which numerous predictions for the "end of days" would take place. However, when Sabbatai finally met the Sultan and was given the choice of conversion to Islam or death for himself and bloodshed for the Jews of Turkey, he chose the former. Even after his conversion, he continued to frequent synagogues, telling the Jews that he converted in order to bring the Moslems back to Judaism; and all the while telling the Sultan that his real purpose was the opposite. After approximately five years, he was sent to Albania, where he died two years later.
The main theological modification to Lurianic Kabbalism made by Nathan of Gaza concerned the Messiah. Lurianism had said little about the Messiah with the exception that he would come after redemption was accomplished by man, somewhat as a symbol of Tikkan. Nathan, in an attempt to explain Sabbatai's paradoxically antinomian moods, stated that the Messiah's soul had been captured in the realm of evil since the beginning of creation. Here it had been constantly tormented and tempted, and only after its perfection did it come to earth in a human form, namely as Sabbatai Zevi. Even now, he must continuously wrestle with the evil,

and this refers to the days of darkness which are the days of his depression; but when the illumination came over him, in the days of calm and rejoicing, then he was in the state of which it is said 'and eschewed evil'; for then he emerged from the realm of the Kelipoth among which he had sunk in the days of darkness.52

"In this interpretation, the metaphysical and psychological element are one."53 Though it is extremely similar to Gnostic myths of the fate of the redeemer's soul, we find hints and antecedents of such a philosophy throughout Kabbalism. Thus, for example, in the Zohar I 83b we read:

Then seeing that he (Abraham) must put himself to the test, and pass through the grades, he journeyed into Egypt. There he resisted being seduced by the demonic essences, and when he had proved himself, he returned to his abode; and, actually, he 'went up out of Egypt' (Gen. 13.1),
his faith was strong and reassured, and he attained to the highest grade of faith...and of the world he became the right hand.

Indeed, after Sabbatai's Messianic announcement with Nathan of Gaza in 1665, we find him going into Egypt ostensibly to raise money for the Palestine Jewish community and spread his Messianism, but symbolically to descend into the Kabbalistic Hell (Egypt) and then emerge into the light, so to speak. As his mission spread throughout northern Africa, Europe, and eastern Europe, his antinomianism was seen in intermittent changes to Jewish law such as the following: the Ninth of Ab—his birthday and previously a day of mourning and fasting—was to be a day of rejoicing; musical instruments, previously forbidden in the synagogue, were now to be played there; prayers for the sovereign were now to be said for Sabbatai; women were to be on equal par with men and, thus, to be called up to read the Torah; Jesus was to be considered as one of the prophets whose predictions were now fulfilled with Sabbatai's being the Messiah.

There is a gradual change in Sabbatai's status as he refers to himself in higher and higher terms. Thus, instead of merely pronouncing the Tetragrammaton as he did in his younger days, he now states, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Expanding Nathan's idea of the existence of the Messiah's soul since the beginning of creation, the beginning of a
proclamation that contained some of the aforementioned changes in
the Jewish law states, "The only and first-born son of God, Sabbatai
Zevi, Messiah and Redeemer of Israel, to all the children of Israel,
peace." Other manifestos sent out during Sabbatai's life in-
sinuate that Sabbatai was an incarnation of God, but Scholem
stresses that only the most radical of Sabbatians accepted this,
and Sabbatai himself did not.

E. The Sabbatian Heresy

Sabbatai's apostasy caused a variety of reactions among the
Jews. Although gradually the rabbis tried to bring conditions back
to normal and to ignore the extreme humiliation they were ex-
periencing from Moslems and Christians, not all Jews nor all rabbis
were prepared to commit themselves to this harsh verdict of history.
For one year they had experienced an inner salvation that was too
great to deny, even though objective events might appear to contra-
dict it. Lurianism had taught them that more important than man's
physical exile was his spiritual, inner exile; and that the former
would follow the latter. The Messianic fervor of the years had con-
vinced them that a Messiah had been due to arrive in 1648 and 1666.
Nathan of Gaza's previous explanation of Sabbatai's depressions as
a constant struggle against evil forces had prepared them to simi-
larly rationalize even this most radical departure by Sabbatai.
Thus, these determined believers used the Kabbalistic methods of notarikon and gematria to show that Sabbatai's conversion was part of the Messianic plan. Some such as Mordecai Ashkenazi stated that only a phantom of Sabbatai had converted; he was taken up to heaven by God and would soon return. Others believed that Sabbatai, like Queen Esther and Moses, had to live among those of an alien culture in order to uplift the fallen sparks among them; he would then lead them into Judaism. Some took a more universal view that it was necessary for Sabbatai to assume all faiths in order to unite them in the end. Nathan of Gaza had always compared Sabbatai to Job and to Deutero-Isaiah's Suffering Servant. Thus, many believed that it was necessary for Sabbatai to suffer and take shame upon himself in order to atone for the sins of Israel and prevent Israel from having to do the same. This last theory is stated in a letter by Nathan:

...you wished to know what had happened to our Lord...
...But all those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, and a heart to understand, must know who he is...For does not the Zohar say of the true prophet, that he would be sad and unrecognized, that he would be subjected to terrible suffering, and would seem to most men no more than a stinking dog?...He shall be poor, says the Zohar, and will ride upon an ass. 'Poor' here means of poor and blemished apparel, and the blemish is the turban. The words do not mean poor in money; for, after all, he came to make the world richer; but poor in the light of the Torah, poor in the light of its precepts...
The Sabbatians that persisted in believing in the paradox of an apostate Messiah apparently did not have any difficulty in adopting other paradoxical theories. One of these theories, "the mystery or secret of the Godhead," was common even among so-called moderate Sabbatians. In general, this "secret" stated that there were two parts of the Godhead: the unknown God, First Cause, God of reason and of the philosophers; and the revealed God, First Effect of the First Cause, God of Israel. Unlike the Gnostic dualism, however, the Sabbatians depreciated the former and believed that since the latter was the cause of this world's creation, revelation, providence, etc., it alone should be worshipped. Indeed, Israel had been in error for having worshipped the God of Reason rather than this God of Revelation, stated the Sabbatians.

After this basic view had been established (especially by Nathan of Gaza's successor, Abraham Cardozo), numerous variations developed, even including various kinds of trinities of God. These often consisted of the unknown God, God of Israel, and the Shekhinah—a logical choice from what has previously been said about Kabbalism. Some believed that there would be a separate Messiah for each of the three parts, with a female Messiah for the Shekhinah. The goal of prayers was to unite the God of Israel with the Shekhinah, again reminiscent of the Zohar and Lurianic Kabbalism. The most radical Sabbatians believed in a trinity that included the Messiah as one of the three aspects of God, sometimes as the incarnation of the divine
Furthermore, the moderate and radical Sabbatians are distinguished in their opinion of whether or not Sabbatai's actions were meant to set an example for man. The moderate Sabbatians stressed that only Sabbatai, the Messiah, was capable of descending into the realm of evil and taking upon himself suffering and shame for the Jews. However, the so-called radical Sabbatians tried to emulate Sabbatai's actions.

The reasons for the radical Sabbatians' emulation of Sabbatai took two forms. One group stated that just as Sabbatai had to descend into evil in order to conquer it, so should every man. More specifically, by committing evil actions, licentiousness, etc., man is really doing good and holy things, becoming— in Scholem's words—the "paradox of the holy sinner." Remnants of this philosophy are found in the Zohar and Lurianic Kabbalism, e.g., in the idea that Abraham descended into Egypt in order to rise above it. In a passage by Chaim Vital, the leading disciple of Isaac Luria, we read

Once the devotee has risen to the highest height and knows himself to be encompassed in the divine name, which he has 'unified,' he is supposed to leap into the abyss of the 'other side' (realm of evil), in order, like a diver, to bring up sparks of holiness, there held in exile. 'But only a perfect Zaddik can accomplish this meditation...If anyone else sends his soul down among the kelipoth, he may well prove unable to raise up the other fallen souls, or even to save his own, which will remain in those realms.'
Obviously, these words were not heeded by these radical Sabbatians.

The other radical Sabbatian group came to the same conclusions, but for different reasons. Throughout the Zohar and Kabbalist works (as well as paradoxical statements in the Rabbinic writings) we read that the literal meaning of the Torah was originally (before the fall) more spiritual and that after redemption the original meaning will again be valid. The Torah itself will not become invalid; rather, our present Torah that is governed by the laws of our sensual world of Beriah will again be manifest in its original state which was from the highest world of Atsiluth. Extending these ideas, this radical Sabbatian group stated that Sabbatai's Messiahship and latent antinomianism proved that the new era of redemption had already begun in which there was a new Torah permitting all forms of things previously forbidden. They were in a new age with a new spiritual law beyond the restricting laws of the past. With a twist of words attributed to Sabbatai himself, they changed "Praise be to Thee, 0 Lord, who frees those who are imprisoned" to "Praise be to Thee, 0 Lord, who allows that which is forbidden."

Both of these groups of radical Sabbatianism have the tendency to make all external action and conduct appear unreal, and to oppose to it an inner secret action which is the counterpart of true belief. The radical Sabbatians, the nihilists, were agreed that just as redemption had so far become only intrinsically real and not
yet visible, so the true belief must be held only in secret, while external behavior must conform to the power of evil in the world of the Galuth. Everyone must in some way share the fate of the Marranos; one's heart and one's mouth may not be one.  

Although the majority of the radical Sabbatians fulfilled the above within Judaism, it is not surprising that there were two large-scale conversions.

These Sabbatians were especially effective from 1700 to 1760, meaning that the Sabbatian movement lasted over one century. Highlighting some of the leaders after Sabbatai's apostasy and death gives an added insight to some of the motivations at work. For example, Abraham Cardozo (approximately 1630-1706), treasurer of the movement during Sabbatai's life and Nathan of Gaza's successor, wrote extensively on the "Secret of the Godhead," mentioned previously. He had been a Marrano, and Scholm stresses that the Marranos—having lived a double life and harboring guilt feelings about this—played a large role in propagating the Sabbatian heresy.

...even those who returned to the fold after they or their children had fled from Spain, particularly in the seventeenth century, retained something of this peculiar spiritual make-up. The idea of an apostate Messiah could be presented to them as the religious glorification of the very act which continued to torment their own conscience. There have been Marranos who tried to find a justification for their apostasy, and it is significant that all the arguments which they were wont to put forward in defense of their crypto-Judaism, recur later on in the ideology of Sabbatianism...I doubt whether
without this spiritual disposition on the part of numerous Sefardic communities the new doctrine would have taken sufficient root to become an important factor in the disintegration of the ghetto...it is no accident that the leading propagandist of this school, Abraham Miguel Cardozo, was himself born as a Marrano...

After Sabbatai's death his last wife pretended that her brother Jacob Keredo (later called Jacob Zevi) was her son in whom Sabbatai's soul had transmigrated. Taking note of the Talmudic saying, "David's son comes only in an age which is either completely guilty or completely innocent," these two decided the former was easier to attain. When the rabbis of various Turkish cities protested against their sensuality, they emulated Sabbatai and became Moslems, forming the sect called Donmeh, "apostates," in 1683 in Salonica. When Jacob died, his son Baruch Kunio (better known as Berahya or Berochia; circa 1695-1740) became leader of the sect. He also was regarded as the embodiment of the original soul of the Messiah, the incarnate deity. Scholem considers him to be "the most radical," inspiring Jacob Frank. The Donmeh sect at one time numbered over 15,000, was found as far as Prague and Frankfort, and supposedly retains some followers in Turkey today.

Nehemiah Hayun (1650-1726) wrote books on the trinity-in-unity of God which were recommended by the Rabbinate of Venice and rabbis in Prague and Berlin and were circulated in Germany, most of which was probably due to ignorance, according to Graetz. He was
later excommunicated by numerous Jewish communities, but one of his means of protection consisted of his telling Christians that he believed in the Trinity and could convert Jews. Johnathon Eibeschutz (1690-1764) was a prominent orthodox rabbi for many years before it was revealed that he wrote amulets stating that Sabbatai was the Messiah. This caused a long series of vigorous feuds between those for and against Eibeschutz, including several trials before King Friedrich the Great. A publication by a professor and pastor stated that his controversial amulets really referred to Jesus. Eibeschutz did not deny this; he was pardoned by the king and was reinstated as a rabbi of the German community.

Jacob Frank (1726-1791) preached that transmigration of God's incarnate soul had occurred in King David, Elijah, Jesus, Mohammed, Sabbatai Zevi, Berochia, and now himself. He believed in the trinity of the "Good God," the "Big Brother who stands before the Lord" and is also called the "King of Kings," and the Shekhinah or "the Virgin." Among other things, he lived lavishly and licentiously from the gold and silver received from his numerous followers, converted to Catholicism with a relatively small number of them in Galicia in 1759, had the king of Poland as a godfather, lived in the radical Sabbatian manner of sin, and caused the only burning of the Talmud in Poland by stating that it advocated the murder of Christians and use of their blood. In the Polish Book of
the Words of the Lord, consisting of his teachings as recorded by his disciples, one finds a doctrine of "mystical nihilism." Thus, one reads statements in it such as the following:

Christ, as you know, said that he had come to redeem the world from the hands of the Devil, but I have come to redeem it from all the laws and customs that have ever existed. It is my task to annihilate all this so that the Good God can reveal Himself.

As would be expected, Frank was excommunicated by the rabbis, and it was forbidden to marry a Frankist follower.

As seen, Rabbinic Judaism—although sometimes not completely successful—used such methods as excommunication and public trials in order to destroy the followers of Sabbatai, Frank, etc.

In the closing half of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Messianic movement in Judaism ceased to be a compelling historic actuality... Even in the East, where Medievalism would hold sway longer, a recoil from the Kabbalistic Messianic obsession was inevitable... The study of the Lurianic Kabbala was finally prohibited by the Council of the communities of Southern Poland, which met in Brody in 1756, to all men under 40, and the study of the Zohar and the works of Cordevero to men under 30, and then only if the student had first made himself fully proficient in Talmudic studies.

However, there is no doubt that the Sabbatian movement and after effects played some part in Judaism's subsequent age of Haskalah ("Enlightenment"). The Sabbatians, never having been adherents of
strict, orthodox observances, "reappeared as leaders of Reform Judaism, secular intellectuals, or simply complete and indifferent skeptics." \cite{88} Sabbatai's latent antinomianism had disrupted the strict Talmudism and ghetto existence of the Jews. For example, his wife, \cite{89}

contrary to custom, frequently showed herself in public... and Jewish women, who had hitherto been living in the strictest Oriental seclusion, began to follow her example, and took an interest in the evergrowing religious movement that was swelling to its culmination in those years. \cite{90}

In Scholen's words,

The important part played by religious and mystical movements in the development of eighteenth century rationalism is today a generally accepted fact so far as the Christian world is concerned\cite{91}... Also with the Sabbatians, the attempt of a minority to maintain, in the face of persecution and vituperation, certain new spiritual values which corresponded to a new religious experience facilitated the transition to the new world of Judaism in the period of emancipation... When the outbreak of the French Revolution again gave a political aspect to their ideas, no great change was needed for them to become the apostles of an unbounded political apocalypse. The urge towards revolutionizing all that existed no longer had to find its expression in desperate theories, like that of the holiness of sin, but assumed an intensely practical aspect in the task of ushering in the new age... As late as in the middle of the nineteenth century, Leopold Loew, the leader of the Jewish reform movement in Hungary who in his youth had come in touch with the Sabbatians in Moravia, wrote that in their circles much was done to propagate and encourage the new rationalist movement.\cite{92}
F. Conclusions

The closeness of Rabbinism and mysticism in the sixteenth century, largely due to the suffering and experience of exile of the Jews, resulted in Lurianic Kabbalism's being accepted by Jews everywhere as being on at least equal par with Rabbinism. And the Sabbatian movement would not have come about without Lurianism and the mysticism leading up to Lurianism. For example, it is Lurianism that made God into a macro-anthropos and man into a micro-cosmos, an idea steps away from the radical Sabbatian's speaking of the incarnation of God. Secondly, throughout much of Jewish mysticism there is a double aspect of God: one hidden, unknown; the other revealed and described in detail by the mystics. Lurianism—due to similar psychological feelings of exile—incorporated what was extremely similar to Gnostic myths; and the radical Sabbatians combined these double-God ideas from Jewish mysticism with the Lurian-Gnostic myths, developing them to their final consequences, namely separating the Creator God of the Bible from the remote, "unconcerned" God.

Furthermore, Judaism is founded on the premise that its God works in history. Thus, a profound historical experience of necessity causes a re-evaluation of the reasons for that experience and can lead to profound changes in the Jews' conceptions of God and Israel. The destruction of the Temple and Babylonian exile led to
the interpretation of Israel as God's suffering servant. The recent holocaust has led some to postulate that either there is no God or that He is not concerned with the affairs of this world. Similarly, Sabbatai's apostasy begged for an interpretation of why God would have deceived the Jews with the appearance of redemption.

Although Messianic development since the destruction of the second temple had become more universal in scope, Lurianism further diminished the national, historical, objective elements in making them only a symbol of the real, inner, spiritual redemption. Thus, the radical Sabbatians—for one year having felt the exultation and inner redemption that must occur with the belief that the Messiah has finally come and in their own generation—went a few steps further than the Lurianic view by completely replacing the objective elements with the spiritual ones. Such a replacement was also facilitated by "the unhappy dualism of the Marranic mind" in which external and internal events are split and guilt results. This pathological splitting of external and internal actions also enabled Nathan of Gaza's explanation of Sabbatai's split manic-depressive mind and antinomian acts as representing an internal struggle against the evil realm. The radical Sabbatians continued the split interpretation in their belief in a Messiah who externally commits apostasy, but internally is really committing a holy act in the continual struggle against the evil realm. The ultimate step of splitting apart the God of reason and the revealed God now appears
almost "logical" when viewed with respect to this Marranic and Sabbatian outlook. Similarly, E. R. Doods, in describing Gnosticism, stresses that psychological factors played an important role in the belief in two Gods:

The splitting of God into two persons—a remote but merciful Father and a stupid, cruel Creator—seems to reflect the splitting of the individual father image into its corresponding emotional components. The conflict of love and hate in the unconscious mind is thus symbolically resolved and guilt is appeased.95

Another psychological motivation at work in the radical Sabbatian mind was that of compensation: the lack of revolutionary objective evidence accompanying their redemption caused them to compensate with new revolutionary spiritual knowledge, namely that a new Torah was now in effect and that the Jews had all the time been worshipping the wrong God when they worshipped the God of reason.

Sabbatianism developed from within Judaism, and just as it did not consciously adopt Gnostic myths, it was not consciously influenced by Christianity. However, there are some obvious similarities with Christianity. For example,

both owe part of their emotional appeal to their very paradoxicality... Both defy history and turn the rational stumbling block into a cornerstone...

In Sabbatianism, because the Messiah 'abdicated' so unexpectedly, there grew the belief in his resurrection and return and later his reincarnation.96
Other similarities include the fact that both occurred at a time which was viewed as the beginning of a new era, in which "every moment was considered as potentially the last." In addition, some Sabbatians explained Sabbatai's apostasy by referring to the suffering servant: Sabbatai had condemned himself in order to prevent Israel from having to do the same. Furthermore,

In both cases the destruction of the old values in the cataclysm of redemption leads to an outburst of antinomian tendencies, partly moderate and veiled and partly radical and violent; in both cases you get a new conception of 'belief' as the realization of the new world of Salvation, and in both this 'belief' involves that latent polarity of even more startling paradoxes. In both cases, finally, you get in the end a theology of some kind of Trinity and of God's incarnation in the person of the Savior.

Perhaps there is something about supreme paradoxes—especially for the Jews, who were taught to trust in history—that makes one feel he is not in the hands of the ultimate God or that there is more than one aspect to that God.
Footnotes to Chapter V


2. Ibid., pp. 285-86.


4. Columbus' discovery of the New World caused speculation that the Messianic age was about to occur, and the Jews hoped that the Ten Lost Tribes would be found there. Thus, there were three false Messiahs of the sixteenth century: Asher Lammlein, David Reubeni, and Solomon Molko. See A. H. Silver, History of Messianic Speculation in Israel, pp. 110ff., 143ff.

5. Ibid., p. 111.

6. Ibid., p. 110.


9. Ibid., pp. 260-261. "This paradox of Tsimtsum—as Jacob Emden said—is the only serious attempt ever made to give substance to the idea of Creation out of Nothing."

10. Ibid., p. 261.

11. Ibid., p. 264. Other parallels between Tsimtsum and Gnosticism are also given on that page.


13. Scholem, Major Trends, p. 236ff. gives some of the variety of explanations of evil given in the Zohar.


15. Ibid., p. 266.

16. "Only Luria's second most important disciple, Joseph ibn Tabul, reiterated it... Most Kabbalists reinterpreted it to render it harmless." e.g. We find some stating that evil wasn't inherent in the Divine, but developed after Shevirah, due to the scattered fragments. Others compare Shevirah with organic laws: "Just as the seed must burst in order to sprout and blossom, so too the first bowls had to be shattered in order that the divine light, the cosmic seed, so to speak, might fulfill its function." Ibid., p. 268.
17 Ibid., pp. 267-268.

18 Ibid., p. 269.

19 These are Arikh Anpin ("The Long Face," meaning "The Long-Suffering"), Abba ("Father"), Imma ("Mother"), Zeir Anpin ("The Small Face," meaning "The Impatient"), and Rachel. Ibid., p. 270.

20 Scholem, On the Kabbalah, p. 114.

21 Scholem, Major Trends, p. 271. However, again we find numerous Kabbalists who reinterpret Luria, make En Sof personal, and render the Partsufim harmless.

22 Ibid., p. 278.

23 This doctrine of transmigration (Gilgul) is found in the Zohar only for those who have committed extreme sins such as adultery. Luria develops the idea so that every man's soul transmigrates until it is spiritually perfected. The idea was extremely popular in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries. See Zohar I, 186b; III 7a.

24 Scholem, Major Trends, p. 284; cf. Sefer Ha-likotim f. 89b.

25 The idea that God's name has been split into two with the exile of the Shekhinah from the other Sefiroth is also found in the Zohar. See Christian Ginsburg, The Essenes; The Kabbalah, p. 121.

26 Antecedents of this philosophy are seen, for example, in the Zohar's idea that "the lower waters can affect the upper waters." See above, pp. 92-93.

27 See above, pp. 126, 134 ff.

28 Werblowsky, Joseph Karo, pp. 290-291.


30 Scholem, Major Trends, p. 284.


35 Silver, *Messianic Speculation*, p. 151. Also p. 185 ff. shows how this date was reached and by whom.


41 Schnur, *Mystic Rebels*, p. 179, states that Sabbatai—in answer to the Rabbis' protest of his Messianic ambitions and pronunciation of YHVH—says, "You and your like have always failed to recognize, and misunderstood, the true prophets of God. Would you treat me as you treated the Nazarene?"


Pepys writes this in his Diary for the dates of February 12-20, 1666. Silver, Messianic Speculation, p. 181 quotes the passage.

Silver, Messianic Speculation, p. 182 ff.

Scholan, Major Trends, p. 181. The penitence even took the form of lying naked in the snow, etc. Schnur, Mystic Rebels, p. 195.

Ginsburg, The Kabbalah, p. 221; Schnur, Mystic Rebels, pp. 195, 205.

Schnur, Mystic Rebels, pp. 199, 200-201; H. Graetz, History of the Jews, V, 136, 144.

E.g., Schnur, Mystic Rebels, p. 229 reprints a document found in English and German in which Sabbatai is said to be a prophet, miracle-worker, and healer who teaches that Jesus is the real Messiah, trying to convert the Jews "and other Infidels." Graetz, History of the Jews, V, p. 151, and Schnur, Mystic Rebels, p. 205, give examples of Christians who were affected by Sabbatai.

E.G., for nine months after dethroning the Sultan, Sabbatai would disappear, after which he would return with Moses, his fourteen year-old daughter, the ten lost tribes, etc. The Temple would arise, but the wars of Gog and Magog would be fought, after which there would be a resurrection of the dead and Messianic age of peace. Schnur, Mystic Rebels, p. 196; Graetz, History of the Jews, V, 131-132.

He was first put into "prison" where he lived an elegant life surrounded by friends, visited by thousands of followers, etc.


Scholan, Major Trends, pp. 297-298.
The Zohar states that in the time of the Messiah, mourning will be changed to rejoicing.

Isiah 14:14 ironically continues: "Yet thou shalt be brought down to the nether-world. To the uttermost parts of the pit."

(Preserved in an Italian translation) cf. John Evelyn, The History of the Three Late Famous Impostors, etc. (London, 1669). Also Schnur, Mystic Rebels, p. 198; Graetz, History of the Jews, V, p. 143.


Scholem, Major Trends, p. 422 n. 79.

See above, p. 105 n. 70.

Such methods were used both by those for and those against Sabbatai. Silver, Messianic Speculation, p. 251 ff. and Schnur, Mystic Rebels, p. 228 n. 43 give examples.

Schnur, Mystic Rebels, p. 213.

Kastein, Messiah of Ismir, p. 309.

See above, p. 81 ff.

Scholem, Major Trends, p. 324.

Kastein, Messiah of Ismir, p. 319; Schnur, Mystic Rebels, p. 207.

Scholem, Major Trends, p. 293.

Scholem, On the Kabbalah, p. 133.
Scholem, Major Trends, p. 317.

Scholem, On the Kabbalah, p. 71 ff.

Scholem, Major Trends, p. 421 n. 70.

Scholem, Major Trends, p. 319.

See above, pp. 130, 131.

Silver, Messianic Speculation, p. 161, mentions that the Frankist movement died out approximately 1816, thus extending the effect of the Sabbatian time-range considerably.

See above, p. 126 f.


Sanhedrin 98a.

Scholem, Major Trends, p. 321.

Schnur, Mystic Rebels, p. 219.


David Frederick Megerlin was the pastor, professor. Graetz, History of the Jews, V, 270.


Scholem, Major Trends, p. 421 n. 69.

Scholem, On the Kabbalah, p. 28.


There were some years, such as 1840, which were laden with Messianic hopes and previous Messianic speculation. Silver gives details, Messianic Speculation, p. xix ff.

Ibid., p. xix.

Scholem, Messianic Idea, p. 140.

Sara, his wife, has an interesting life in her own right. She had stated that she would marry only the Messiah long before her knowledge of Sabbatai. She was known for her free morals, dress, etc.

Schnur, Mystic Rebels, p. 191.

However, the connection between Sabbatianism and the Jewish Enlightenment was hidden by both orthodox and Reform Jews, the former not desiring to publicize such humiliating occurrences in Judaism and the latter not desiring to call attention to its connection with Sabbatianism. Scholem found that almost all documents of Sabbatianism have been destroyed. Major Trends, p. 300.

Ibid., pp. 301, 320.


Scholem, Major Trends, p. 310.

E. R. Dodds, Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety, p. 20.


Ibid., p. 107.
Sabbatian writings are noticeable for their use of "emunah," belief. In the Sabbatian usage of the word it is more similar to the Christian passive "pistis" than the Jewish active "trust" as interpreted by Martin Buber, *Two Types of Faith*, pp. 170-173.

Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 307. Obviously, this passage is not meant to gloss over the enormous differences between Christianity and Sabbatianism. Among others, Scholem points out that Sabbatai had none of Jesus' personality, integrity, etc.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

A. Syncretism

In looking over the variety of times and ways in which Judaism's strict monotheism has been relaxed with emanations, intermediaries, and even second creators, one can identify some common reasons for these divergences. One of the most obvious reasons for any kind of intermediary would be that of syncretism. In the Biblical and postbiblical periods, Hellenistic age, and even in Jewish mysticism, Judaism readapted myths and symbols of the age with the purpose of thereby gaining control over them and reducing their attractiveness. Thus, for example, one finds the gods worshipped by other nations treated as angels subordinate to YHVH, the feminine Wisdom developed to reduce the attractions of Isis and Astarte, numerous hosts of angels working under God the King, the Bible containing subtle changes in the Septuagint, Philo reading Greek terms and philosophies between the lines of the Hebrew Bible and including the Logos as a Jewish intermediary, gods of the mystery religions mentioned as having been taught by Moses, Helios being an omnipresent picture in Palestinian synagogues of the early centuries of this era, etc.—all to show that Judaism encompassed the
characteristics of other religions and was superior to them. In the late Hellenistic and early Roman ages, such syncretism took place not only to prove Judaism's superiority to Jews, but also to prove it to Gentiles, i.e., for proselytism. In addition, syncretism could be a method of increasing the tolerance and/or acceptance of the ruling or neighboring peoples. We find the Bible mentioning that the Hebrews wanted to "be like the other nations;" and during the early centuries of this era sizeable numbers of Jews found no wrong in adapting Greek customs and symbols. Such examples of syncretism for whatever reason were primarily part of the natural course of things and meant to strengthen Judaism rather than undermine it.

B. Language

Language is a second important cause of various "softenings" in Judaism's strict monotheism. One reason for this is that man describes God in the language and symbols that he is accustomed to using, and sometimes the style of one age is unacceptable to another. For example, Reinhold Niebuhr states that "God speaks in the Bible, but through men, hence in men's language and in human terms." This is certainly true of the anthropomorphic and anthropopathic style found in the Bible, and this style was unacceptable without explanation in later ages. Thus, we even find a Jewish sect posing that the anthropomorphisms apply only to an angel that created the
Various other groups from Philo to the Kabbalists interpreted the anthropomorphisms as referring to lesser beings or to emanations of God. To avoid speaking of God in anthropomorphic situations or situations in which God personally deals with humanity, even the rabbis used reverent periphrases (Shekhinah, Ruach Hakodesh, etc.) that sometimes seemed to be thought of as intermediaries vaguely separate from God. Often the apparent simplicity of the Biblical stories caused Jewish philosophers as well as mystics to postulate an underlying, even hidden meaning which also gave rise to intermediaries and second creators (e.g., in Sabbatianism). When the Bible was translated into Greek, the connotations of the Greek word for God (theos), the forbidding of the speaking of God's name, and the frequent reduction of anthropomorphisms made the Jewish God into a more impersonal being, opening the way for personal intermediaries. In books such as the Shiur Komah of the Merkabah period and the Idra Rabba of the Zohar, one finds mystical language describing God in the most anthropomorphic of terms, causing one to ask exactly what (Who) is being described. Such language—even if not misleading for those who knew its inherent meanings—brought about an attempt to explain the anthropomorphisms as referring to God's Glory, highest angel, etc., causing these to become more than innocuous emanations and intermediaries.

Not only the style of writing, but even individual words could lead to discrepancies of interpretation. For example, the plural
form of God and different names of God found in the Bible gave opportunity for a variety of interpretations, some of which involved intermediaries.\(^5\) Throughout Merkabah mysticism the fact that the names for God and those for the angels were often identical (e.g., Akatriel), or similar (e.g., Yah Katan—"little God") caused one to wonder which was really being invoked at times. When Jewish mystics tried to resolve the traditional mystical view of God Who has ten Sefiroth with the traditional philosophic view of God Who has thirteen attributes, some postulated a trinity in En Sof above the ten Sefiroth.

C. Jewish God of History

Judaism has always stressed that its God works in history. Thus, inevitably, when seemingly inexplicable events occur in history, especially events causing much suffering to God's "chosen people," there often follows a period of disbelief and re-evaluation of the reasons for the events, even leading to profound changes in the Jews' conception of God and Israel. For example, after the destruction of the Temple and the Babylonian exile, Deutero-Isaiah interpreted Israel's position as that of the suffering servant of God. He further believed that the return of the exiles brought in the new age of redemption and that the Jews were therefore on the verge of experiencing God's redemption in history. Possibly through disappointment when this prophecy did not come true (but instead the
Jews experienced even more persecutions in the coming centuries), "eschatology tended in a more transcendental, dualistic, and apocalyptic direction. The world seemed hopelessly 'fallen,' in the grip of evil powers, and under the sway of evil men. It could not be bettered... but only radically transmuted, i.e., destroyed and renewed."  

A similar re-evaluation of God has taken place due to the attempted genocide of the Jews in the second world war. Many Jews can no longer accept the idea of the suffering servant, for it has been carried to an extreme never imagined possible. There is a widespread, if still somewhat latent, feeling that God does not exist or, if He does, is completely transcendent and unconcerned with the affairs of the Jews and this world. Thus, for example, Richard Rubenstein, a contemporary Jewish scholar, contemplated on the significance of the second world war and came to the conclusion that God could not be active in history and Judaism must not be a religion based on history. Instead, he poses the "true" God as the God of Nothingness ("We are alone in a silent, unfeeling cosmos." 7) and the true Judaism as one that returns to nature as its center.  

Needless to say, Sabbatai Zevi's apostasy was another such historical backslap on the Jews, and it begged for an interpretation as to why God had deceived the Jews with the appearance of redemption. With the groundwork of the Kabbalah and Lurianism which relegated the objective realm to the subjective realm, 8 the Sabbatian
interpretations resorted to a complete denial of the objective, historical plane of life. Sabbatai's apostasy was not a true fact, not to be accepted literally, but part of a pre-ordained plan for redemption that could only be understood subjectively. In addition, the objective, historical return to the land of Israel that has always characterized Jewish redemption was rejected for a completely spiritual redemption. In this way, the problem of the Jewish God of history Who did not perform in the expected manner historically was solved by denying the importance of history and, thus, dramatically changing the conception of the Jewish God. As explained previously, the new conception of God included the idea of two Gods and even a trinity in God.

D. Problems of Opposites

It is easy enough to state that God is One, a unity; but the simplicity of the statement belies its implications, for man is not accustomed to viewing as a unity the polarities that God encompasses. Thus, throughout Judaism one finds opposing views on whether this One includes both good and evil or only good, whether it includes being both immanent and transcendent (or which prevails), whether He is both passive as well as active, compassionate and just, masculine and feminine, omnipotent yet giving man free will, etc. It is not surprising to find contemporary writers speaking of the God of the Old Testament as being "schizophrenic," and it is less surprising to find
the strict unity of God posing innumerable difficulties of interpretation and leading to the need for intermediaries, etc. to possess some of the polarities of God's characteristics.

For example, Solomon ibn Gabirol (c. 1020-1050, possibly 1070), a Jewish poet and philosopher from Spain, speaks of the will of God as opposed to His essence, the former being the principle of divine activity, "an impossible intermediate position between an aspect of the divine essence on the one hand and a full-fledged hypostasis emanating from God on the other." The will is an intermediary between God and the created world, allowing God to also encompass dynamic activity. The Zohar also recognizes a need to specify active and passive elements in God. It states that Kether—the highest Sefirah—begins the dynamic process of God's unfolding from the latency of En Sof to the ten Sefiroth. The Zohar further specifies three others of the ten Sefiroth as active, masculine and three as passive, feminine. Isaac Luria also distinguished between the unknowable En Sof and His dynamic Partsupim ("countenances"). Luria goes into great detail, describing the countenances and the manner in which God gives birth to the revealed God. His philosophy includes so much activity and change in God that it is difficult to pinpoint the "real," somewhat invariable God.

Throughout Jewish history a variety of intermediaries have been developed which allow God to encompass a feminine as well as a masculine element. This psychological need for a feminine element is
identified by Gershom Scholem. During the Biblical and post-biblical period it became especially important due to the lure of Isis and Astarte, and Judaism met the challenge with the feminine Wisdom which was sometimes an emanation, sometimes a full-fledged hypostasis, and later reduced back into harmless dimensions.

Both the Zohar and Lurianic Kabbalism give very important roles to the feminine element. The former divides the Sefiroth into three feminine (one of whom, Binah, is called "supernal Mother"), three masculine, and three uniting Sefiroth. In addition, the last Sefirah—the Shekhinah—is called "Princess," "Matron," "Queen," "Bride," and "Daughter" of God; and is described in sexual imagery as uniting with the masculine element of God to produce a sacred union that forms the true unity of God beyond His various manifestations. R. Patai and G. Scholem would agree, states that the Shekhinah in the Zohar becomes a "true mythological deity. There could be very few Kabbalists who, while reading or hearing about her uninhibitedly described exploits, could still consider her as nothing but an aspect of the manifest nature of the one and only Deity." She plays a vital psychological role as a feminine comforter of her people, since both she and the Jews are in exile from God and from Jerusalem. Luria's philosophy accepts these feminine elements and augments them with two feminine (of five) Partsufim: Imma ("Mother") and Rachel (similar to the Shekhinah). Furthermore, he stresses the division between Rachel and the God of revelation
(Zeir Anpin), stating that every prayer and every religious and righteous action of man should be directed towards unifying these two. The true unity of God rests on the unity of the masculine and feminine. It is not surprising to find the Shekhinah appearing as one of the three parts of God's Trinity in the Sabbatian heresy.

God's transcendence vs. His immanence is a polarity that has evoked a multitude of opinions trying to solve the problem of God's having both at once. The Biblical anthropomorphism and anthropopathism made God very immanent, although there is a definite gradation in this from the Pentateuch to parts of the Hagiographa. This immanent view of God conflicted with the transcendent Hellenistic view, and the result in Hellenistic Jewish literature, apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, and Merkabah mysticism was the development of God as a King enthroned high above the world. In order that God still retained some immanence (even indirectly) throughout the world, He had hosts of angels at His command who performed a multitude of duties with regard to mankind and the created world. Philo's view of God also included both transcience and immanence: "God is both the nearest and the farthest: God can be said to be near in regard to His powers but far in regard to His essence." 19 In other words, Philo postulated angels, ideas, powers, logoi, and the Logos—all of which enabled the transcendent God to simultaneously remain immanent in this world through many emanations and intermediaries.
Jewish mysticism has also tried to keep both elements of transcendence and immanence in God's realm, although it often stressed one over the other. Thus, it has been mentioned that in the Merkabah period God was envisioned as being so transcendent that man could not even glimpse a vision of Him during mystical ecstasy. As a King enthroned high above the earth, God again had numerous angels so that in some way there would be divine contact with man.

Jewish Kabbalism (including Lurianism) tried to solve this problem of God's transcendence and immanence by postulating that the hidden, transcendent God emanated ten rays of light that emanated ten similar rays of light throughout another world, and the process continues until the fourth world is that in which man participates. Such a scheme made God sufficiently transcendent and removed from man while simultaneously making Him immanent in this world through His emanations. Before Adam's sin God and man were not in separate worlds. After the sin God became more transcendent as man was exiled from His realm; however, the tenth Sefirah, the Shekhinah, is a direct source of God's presence and immanence throughout this world. "She is the keypoint both in the downward movement of divine self communication, creation, and revelation and in the upward movement of mystical ascent."20

Related to this problem of God's transcendence and immanence is the one that was central to the Kabbalists: how the unknown God
could reveal Himself and become known as the Creator. This was solved by postulating \textit{En Sof} as the hidden God Who reveals Himself through ten emanations, the ten \textit{Sefirot}. The separation between the unknown God and the revealed God was always an inherently precarious one, especially as the latter was given increasing manifestations and personality. The Sabbatian heresy took the final step of splitting apart the two polarities in God, making them two gods.

As would be expected, the problem of both good and evil in God is another source of emanations and intermediaries, some of whom are additional creators. For example, there have been those who postulated that God is only the source of good, and such ideas as this often result in a doctrine of two powers—one of good and one of evil. There are references to such a doctrine in the Talmud, in which a simple statement such as, "May Thy name be remembered for the good which Thou has done,"\textsuperscript{21} is interpreted as the most heinous of heresies, insinuating that God is only the source of good and another power is the source of evil. On the other hand, Luria was daring enough to postulate that evil had its root in an imperfection in God Himself, a theory that was only hinted at by the Zohar and most Kabbalists, for it was also considered to be blasphemous by many. Philo finds the world too evil to have been the product of the supreme God only, so he states that for various reasons\textsuperscript{22} God allowed lesser beings to assist Him in creating the
world, thus opening the door for evil to enter. Even punishment of man for his sins is done by God's powers rather than by God.²³

Related to the problem of good and evil in God is that of His compassion vs. His justice. Philo, the Midrash, and the Zohar allow God to have both attributes, and they interpret the two principal names of God found in the Pentateuch as representing Him in His various aspects of mercy and justice. The Zohar also includes both aspects as the individual Sefirah of Hesed ("mercy," "love") and Din ("justice," "judgment"), and it frequently states that

...the semblance of difference between God's compassion, wrath, etc. exists only in the mind, but not in the objective reality of God's existence...However, it is impossible to escape from the conclusion that such formulae, ingenious as they are, do not entirely correspond to the essence of the particular religious feeling which has found its expression in the doctrine of the Sefirot.²⁴

And related to this problem is one posed by the Kabbalist Moses Cordovero:

...although he insisted on the limitation of the Divine emanations to the number of ten, neither more nor less, he also raised the purely theoretical question whether God's power was able to emanate more or whether God was inherently limited to ten emanations. The question is more subtle than appears at first glance: if we declare God to be benevolent, as the Jewish tradition does, we must recall that 'it is of the nature of His benevolence to overflow outside Himself,'
provided, of course, that He has power to do so. If we declare, further, that His power is infinite, then His benevolence should have produced 'thousands of millions of emanations.' Once again we find Cordovero raising a difficulty that he is unable to resolve. Are we to sacrifice God's infinite power or His infinite goodness?25

The unity of God vs. the multiplicity of this world has been discussed in a variety of ways. Philo again uses intermediaries to explain this, for if God alone had created the world, it would have possessed only one thought without individuation. Furthermore, Philo took the basic contradiction and gave it to the Logos rather than to God. The Logos is both the one supreme all-embracing thought of the soul (like God) and the source of man's individuation. In other words, the Logos is an expression of God alone; and, in addition, all things are an expression of the Logos.

The Zohar does a better job of solving the problem with its theory of emanations. The unity of En Sof is unquestioned, and there is a gradual hint of multiplicity in the Sefiroth emanations (although they are considered to make up the "world of unity"), from the first Sefirah Kether which is barely distinguishable from En Sof to the second Sefirah Hokhmah in which is found the undifferentiated essence of all that exists, to the third Sefirah Binah in which one finds differentiation of all things, but "they are still preserved in the unity of the divine intellect which contemplates them in itself,"26 and finally to the last Sefirah, the Shekhinah, which some
interpretations state is a combination of all the other Sefiroth and stands on the borderline between the Sefiroth world of unity and the lower worlds of separation. In spite of the gradual differentiation within the Sefiroth themselves, the Zohar continually stresses that they are a dynamic unity. The lower worlds which mirror the ten Sefiroth are worlds of separation, but even here the Zohar states, "If one contemplates the things in mystical meditation, everything is revealed as one." Thus, this theory of emanations—emanations of ten Sefiroth which then emanate through three other worlds—causes En Sof's total unity to become a dynamic unity in the ten Sefiroth and a somewhat diffused unity throughout everything in the lower worlds.

However, the previous paragraph describes the unity of En Sof before man sinned.

Following the trespass of Adam, however...the creature became detached from the Creator, the male from the female, our universe from the world of unity, even the Shekhinah or the tenth Sefirah from the upper Sefirot.

In time to come God will restore the Shekhinah to its place and there will be a complete union. 'In that day shall the Lord be One and His Name One' (Zech. 14:9). It may be said: Is He not now One? no; for now through sinners He is not really One. For the Matrona is removed from the King...

In other words, the Kabbalists speak of both God's and man's unity before Adam's sin, and both God's and man's disunity afterwards.
The Shekhinah was more than an emanation of God, and, as mentioned previously, she develops into one of the three parts of God's Trinity in the Sabbatian heresy.

E. In Whose Image

Finally, possibly the most important reason for adding emanations, intermediaries, and additional creators to Judaism is that too often it is man who creates God in his own image or for his own convenience. As stated by Joseph Kastein, "Nothing so disfigures God's countenance as religion." One reason for man's doing this has already been mentioned: that man describes God in the language and symbols that he is accustomed to using. Thus, for example, in Hellenistic Judaism, apocryphal Judaism, and Merkabah mysticism we find a transcendent God described in the manner of the kings of the day who had a multitude of servants (in this case angels and other intermediaries) who performed various tasks. Philo even mentions that the Logos "acts as ambassador of the ruler to the subject and pleads with the immortal as suppliant for afflicted mortality." Furthermore, "All worship demands a praesens numen...Men find it difficult to realize God's specific presence in the particular place where they gather for religious service without some aid to further imagination." Thus, throughout religious history there have been intermediaries, emanations, etc. in order that God may seem to be close to man.
Furthermore, man has an insatiable knowledge to understand (and thereby control?) and emulate God. This is especially evident when one looks at the history of Jewish mysticism. In Merkabah mysticism (and in the apocalyptic literature) God is too holy, majestic, and transcendent to begin to describe. Not even in the midst of ecstasy does the mystic get a glimpse of God. Rather, his entire aim is to stand before God's throne, and he describes in detail the route one has to follow to attain this, including the variety of intermediaries met on the journey.36 The German Hasidim go one step further than God's throne, concentrating on God's appearance or Glory. Although God is not yet described, they go into detail describing His two types of glory, their characteristics, man's desire to communicate with them, etc. The Zohar and Kabbalistic Judaism go another step further: still stating that En Sof cannot be described, they go into enormous detail describing En Sof as He has revealed Himself to man in His ten emanations. Almost every word of the Bible reflects this Sefiroth world.

Lurianism takes another step in describing God and His personality by stating that in addition to En Sof and the Sefiroth, the latter arrange themselves into five Partsufim, one of whom is born and becomes what could be called the God of revelation. All of this is described in much detail. The radical Sabbatians postulate a "secret of the Godhead" that splits God into two (a revealed God who works in history vs. an unknown God of the philosophers) or a
trinity (unknown God, God of Israel, and Shekhinah; or unknown God, God of Israel, and incarnate Messiah; etc.). As is evident, Jewish mysticism historically has shown a gradual progression in describing and "detecting successively new layers in the mystery of the Godhead."37

Furthermore, not only does man increasingly try to understand and describe God, but also he tries to make himself like God, and, thus, God like him.38 The idea of God as a macro-anthropos and man as a micro-cosmos is found in the Zohar, and it is of central importance to Lurianism and Sabbatianism. In these, man and this world are part of a chain, and every movement from below affects a corresponding movement from the upper worlds, including God.39 Thus, Adam's sin and resulting exile into the world of separation is mirrored in the Shekhinah's being torn apart from God and going into exile. Furthermore, even man's body is reflected in the Sefiroth, with each part of his body corresponding to a part of the Sefiroth, and his shape representing the letters in the name YHVH. In addition, God's reunification is largely dependent upon man. Based on a God Who has imperfections like man and based on a view of man who was very like unto God and would help in re-unifying God, the radical Sabbatians did not have difficulty in stating that certain men (including Sabbatai Zevi) were the incarnation of God.

Philo's philosophy offers a different way in which man has
the possibility of becoming closer to God, and again intermediaries and emanations are part of his plan. Just as the powers and the Logos have different manifestations, some of which are closer to God than others; just as some angels are referred to as "ideas," and some ideas are closer to God than others; just as Enoch in Genesis 5:24 was taken by God to be with Him; so do men have the power to develop and become angels, to develop further and reach their own archetype or idea located in the intelligible world, and possibly some day go near the presence of God, above the intelligible world, and join Moses. In this type of philosophy there is no limiting of God's power. However, there is much importance given to man's potential, and there is a need for intermediaries and emanations to point out the way that man can grow.

Somewhat like the concept of pathetic fallacy, man—in making God into a macro-anthropos—also gives him emotions that he himself possesses. For example, the Sabbatian heresy revolved around the dualities of Sabbatai Zevi with his manic-depressive states of mind and the duality of the Marranic mind. The God developed by the Sabbatians was as fragmented as the personalities of the men who founded the view.

The feelings of estrangement from being one's real self, of alienation from this world, etc. are also very commonly transposed to God. The Gnostics did this, and both Lurianism and Sabbatianism are based on this. The Jews had suffered from endless persecutions
and—in Luria's time—had recently been banished from Spain; correspondingly, Luria states that God too had experienced exile both before creation (by having withdrawn or exiled part of Himself from Himself in order to make room for creation) and after creation (in the exile of the Shekhinah). This theory gave man comfort in knowing that even God was alienated from Himself; but whenever God becomes too much like man and too fallible, one begins to question that God and, in this case and in Gnosticism, postulate that there is another God or power above this God.

In summary, this paper has examined Judaism through the early centuries of this era and Jewish mysticism through the Sabbatian heresy. As has been shown, Judaism's monotheism has not been so rigid that it did not admit intermediaries, emanations, etc., which played a very important role in Jewish beliefs and at times had more contact with men than God did. The reasons for such "softenings" of monotheism include syncretism, language, the inclusion of polarities in God, the problem of the Jewish God of history, and man's creating God in his image or for his convenience. After the Sabbatian heresy in which a large segment of Jewish mysticism completely rejected monotheism, Judaism took special precautions to stifle anything that hinted of similar ideas. In addition, the ages of rationalism, Darwinism, and
technology probably had influence on ending such speculations.

A brief word might be mentioned about the future. The time is again one in which man feels alienated from himself and from the technological world which not only has not brought about the expected "salvation," but is heading toward destruction. The Jews in particular—with the exception of a handful—have not yet digested the events of the century: the failure of democracy (and assimilation) and technology to accomplish Reform Judaism's Messianic Age; the failure of the God of history to objectively reveal Himself during the Holocaust; and the establishment of the state of Israel corresponding to the national, historical, objective plane of redemption without as yet producing the corresponding religious, spiritual, universal redemption. The latter two events can once again lead to the need for a complete denial of the objective realm—a precarious situation in Judaism. One wonders if—when the significance of these events begin to settle in the mind—the Jews will follow a path near that of Richard Rubenstein's God of Nothingness who is based on a rejection of the God and religion of history (due to the Holocaust) and a feeling of self-alienation very similar to that of Luria. If this results, one cannot help agreeing with R. J. Z. Werblowsky, who states:

"One may well wonder what is more terrible: 2000 years of galuth (exile), or 2000 years of galuth in vain, the self-alienation which insists on destroying the meaning of galuth suffering by counting its fruitfulness [return to the land of Israel] as nothing."43
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER VI

1 E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, XII, 187. It is interesting to postulate the conclusions an archaeologist would come to were he digging up the remains of American Reform synagogues in which the American flag, not the Israeli flag, is an omnipresent symbol.

2 I Samuel 8:20.


4 See above, pp. 8-9.

5 See above, pp. 7-8.


8 See above, pp. 117-118.

9 See below, p. 165, for this same problem occurring in contemporary Judaism.

10 See above, p. 126.


12 See above, pp. 133-114.

14 See above, pp. 14-20.


16 Gershom Scholem, Major Trends, p. 230.

17 Patai, "Matronit, Goddess of the Kabbala," p. 57.

18 See above, p. 84.

19 See above, p. 50 n. 41.


21 M. Berakhoth 5.3, Berakhoth 33b, etc. See above, p. 44.

22 See above, p. 32 ff.

23 See above, p. 50 n. 34.

24 Scholem, Major Trends, p. 224.


26 Scholem, Major Trends, p. 219.

27 See above, pp. 101 n. 9, 102 n. 26. Also Blau, Jewish Philosophy, p. 111.

28 Zohar I 241 a, etc.


30 Zohar III 77b.

31 See above, pp. 126-127.
32. Joseph Kastein, *The Messiah of Ismir*, p. 332. This statement and this section do not insinuate that man has created God (i.e., death of God theology), but that he too often has a tendency to portray God like himself.

33. See above, p. 147 ff.

34. See above, p. 50 n. 39.

35. George F. Moore, "Intermediaries in Jewish Philosophy," *Harvard Theological Review*, XV, 57. Sanhedrin 39a illustrates this idea, stating that wherever ten men gather for prayer, there is the Presence.

36. See above, p. 54 ff.

37. See above, pp. 106, 138 n. 1.

38. However, with the exception of Hasidism, there are almost no autobiographies of Jewish mystics. Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 15 ff.

39. Zohar I 164 a, etc.; also see above, pp. 92-93.

40. See Teilhard de Chardin for parallels.

41. See above, pp. 119-120, 135-136.

42. See above, pp. 132, 144 n. 91.

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