

**The Concept of the Ascent of Prayer by Sixteenth-century
Jerusalem Kabbalist, R. Joseph ibn Zayyah**

Thesis submitted for the degree of
"Doctor of Philosophy"

by

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Submitted to the Senate of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem
August 2011

This work was carried out under the supervision of
Professor Jonathan Garb

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Jonathan Garb, of the Department of Jewish Thought, Faculty of Humanities, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I appreciate his support and patience in helping me complete this project and his provision of clear-cut advice with profound insight and encouragement.

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Chapter One

Pre-Zayyah Patterns of the Ascent of the Prayer

Introduction

Jewish thought depicts a variety of entities ascending heavenward: the soul, thoughts, letters, sacrificial offerings, the smoke of sacrifice, corporeal bodies, and prayer.¹ Each of them has its own purpose: Sacrificial offering atones for the sins of the nation and of the individual²; an ascent of the soul and corporeal body brings solutions for earthly troubles³ or new knowledge; and prayer's rise heavenward has multiple purposes. These phenomena demonstrate the prevalence of the notion in Jewish thought that certain materials or spiritual entities ascend to the most solemn place or to heaven.

Scripture repeatedly states that God hears man's prayer,⁴ and Rabbinic Judaism continues to reinforce this concept. All prayer ascends to heaven. This notion has been firmly believed since the biblical period. How then does God

¹ According to the 13th century testimony of R. Ezra of Gerona, the ancient pious men knew how to raise their thought to its source. See Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 46. The second highest *Sefirah*, *Hokhmah*, is the source of thought, beyond which thought cannot ascend.

² *B. T. Zevahim*, 7b.

³ Moshe Idel, *Ascensions on High in Jewish Mysticism: Pillars, Lines, Ladders* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2005), 35.

⁴ Kings I 9:3, Kings II 19:4, Is. 37:4, Is. 38:5, Jer. 14:12, Ps. 4:2; 4:4; 6:10; 17:1; 39:13; 54:4; 61:2; 65:3; 66:19; 84:9; 102:2; 143:1; Prov. 15:29; 28:9; Neh. 1:6, Ch.II 6:19; 6:20; 6:35; 6:39; 7:12; 30:27.

hear human prayer? How does prayer, a worldly entity, reach God? The former question is God-oriented, and the latter investigates the human side of the act. Indeed, there is a view that God listens to all human words or thought without any effort on the part of man. In other words, God, in His omnipotence, does not require humans to enable Him to hear their prayers. This human-oriented view has dominated since the post-biblical period and is especially prominent in kabbalistic speculation. This concept reached its summit with the 16th century Jerusalem kabbalist, R. Joseph ben Abraham ibn Zayyah (1505-1573), one of the most important Kabbalists in this center.⁵ In this thesis, I will focus upon the latter human-oriented question, which will be a point of departure for understanding how the new tradition, the ascent of prayer, emerged and developed. I shall focus further here on one of the phenomena of the ascent of prayer found in *Perush le-Tefilah*, written by ibn Zayyah.

Zayyah's Life

R. Joseph ben Abraham ibn Zayyah lived in Jerusalem during the Golden Age of the Ottoman period in Eretz-Israel/Palestine.⁶ The economic crisis in

⁵ Moshe Idel, "Spanish Kabbalah after the Expulsion," *Moreshet Sepharad: The Sephardi Legacy* (Ed., Haim Beinart; Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1992), 2:176.

⁶ According to Abraham David, Zayyah was known to have lived in Jerusalem from 1518 or an earlier date. See Abraham David, *To Come to the Land: Immigration and Settlement in Sixteenth-Century Eretz-Israel* (Tr. Dena Ordan; London: The University of Alabama Press, 1999), 155. The precise date of birth and his lifetime were unclear but

Jerusalem forced him to move to an important Jewish economic and scholastic center, Aleppo (Haleb), in Syria.⁷ Sometime prior to 1560, Zayyah moved to Damascus. He was regarded as an important *posek* (decisor) and served as rabbi for the local Musta'rabim⁸ in Jerusalem and Damascus.⁹ His active role in the halakhic field is well known, and many of his responsa, written in Jerusalem

he was in Jerusalem till 1555 and then moved to Damascus. See Dotan Arad, "Rabbi Yoseph Ibn Sayah: A Profile of a Sixteenth-Century Musta'rib Sage," *Shalem* 8 (2008): 136. (Hebrew) (Hereafter cited as "A Profile.")

⁷ Idel, "Spanish Kabbalah after the Expulsion," 176; Jonathan Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah as the Source for the Understanding of Safedian Kabbalah," *Kabbalah* 4 (1997): 261 (Hebrew).

⁸ Abraham David, *The Immigration and Settlement in the Land of Israel in the 16th Century* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1993), 79 (Hebrew). Although he is said to belong to the Arabic speaking, indigent Jews, his origin is not explicitly mentioned but his name and his Arabic knowledge testifies that. See Arad, "A Profile," 145. According to Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 261, Zayyah served as Rabbi of the Musta'rabim in Damascus in 1578-1582.

⁹ According to Asaf, Zayyah was one of the important rabbis in Damascus and afterwards he was appointed as Rabbi in Jerusalem. S. Asaf, "On the Various Manuscripts; 3. Responsa of R. Joseph ibn Zayyah," *Kiryat Sefer* 11 (1934-1935): 492 (Hebrew). Yehudah Ratzaby, *Be'ur Tefillah* (Commentary on the Prayers) by Yosef Sayyah (?), *Kiryat Sefer* 68 (1998): 292 (Hebrew). Zayyah served *Beit Din* of the Musta'rabim in Damascus.

and Damascus, are extant.¹⁰ Some of his responsa are cited in the works of his eminent contemporaries, and others are found in a separate collection.

Relatively extensive information about his intellectual profile is preserved, unlike other kabbalists. However, scant information is found about his family background. We know that he was born in Jerusalem and he had at least one daughter.¹¹ On the other hand, Zayyah's relationships with his contemporaries are quite well known. Zayyah had a close relationship with R. Abraham Castro, the leader of the Jewish community in Egypt¹² who immigrated to Jerusalem and oversaw the construction of the walls of Jerusalem's Old City.¹³ Castro provided the financial support to Zayyah, and Zayyah dedicated two of his writings to him.¹⁴ Castro was also close to the other important kabbalists R. David ben Solomon ibn Abi Zimra (1479-1573), the first teacher of the prominent Safedian Kabbalist R. Isaac of Luria,¹⁵ and the sages in Safed,

¹⁰ Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 261; Ruth Lamdan frequently quoted from the response in order to demonstrate that Zayyah contributed to solving the halakhic questions and was in a strong position to rule the various regulations. Zayyah took a rationalistic solution or coercible way rather than entrusting independence will or self-direction for religious observation. [*A Separate People: Jewish Women in Palestine, Syria and Egypt in the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

¹¹ Arad, "A Profile," 140.

¹² Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 8, 261.

¹³ David, *To Come to the Land*, 2.

¹⁴ Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 261.

¹⁵ Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 261.

including R. Joseph Caro and R. Joseph ibn Tabul, who also belonged to the Musta'arabi community¹⁶ and corresponded with Caro on the issue on the tax exemption for scholars. Another important figure is R. Moshe ben Hayyim Alsheikh (1520-1593), a contemporary to Zayyah born in Adrianople, who later immigrated to Eretz Israel, settling in Safed. Alsheikh acts as a biblical commentator who studied under Joseph Taitazak and Joseph Caro in Salonika.¹⁷ Zayyah mentioned his name in his *Perush le-Tefilah*.¹⁸

Kabbalists who influenced Zayyah included the 13th century kabbalist in Aragon of Spain, Abraham Abulafia, a leading figure of prophetic-ecstatic Kabbalah¹⁹, and his student, the Castilian Kabbalist, R. Joseph ben Abraham Gikatilla (1248-1325), the contemporary of R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid, R. Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi,²⁰ and Jewish mystical-magical literatures.

¹⁶ But later he considered joining the Sephardi community.

¹⁷ He was inclined towards philosophical speculation. For his relationship with philosophy see *Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish philosophy* (ed., Daniel H. Frank and Liver Leaman; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 249.

¹⁸ For Alsheikh see the section "Introduction to *Perush le-Tefilah*." See also Ratzaby, "Be'ur Tefillah," 279-282.

¹⁹ Moshe Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia* (tr., Jonathan Chipman; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 195.

²⁰ For the relationship between Zayyah and Ashkenazi see Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 263, 289, 291. The relationship between R. David's *Commentary on Sefer Yezirah* (Ms. Cambridge Add.664/1 fol. 20a) and Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi's *Hakudamat ha-Rabad* (Ms. Jerusalem 404 8°) is noted by Gershom Scholem in "R.

Personages who were influenced by Zayyah vary in location and period, including the prominent Yemenite kabbalist, R. Yahya ben Joseph Zalah (1714-1806),²¹ and the Safedian Kabbalist, R. Hayyim Vital, R. Isaac Luria's principal disciple.

Zayyah's Writings

Zayyah wrote several works, including voluminous works of magic, but his works are still waiting to be studied and printed.²²

1. *Even ha-Shoham* is a commentary on the combination of letters (*hokhmat ha-seruf*) completed in Jerusalem in 1538.²³ This work is devoted to R.

David ben Yehudah he-Hasid as Grandson of Nahmanides," *Studies in Kabbalah* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1998), 158 (Hebrew); Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi, *A Kabbalistic Commentary of Rabbi Yoseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi on Genesis Rabbah* (ed. Moshe Hallamish; Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1984), 9 (Hebrew).

²¹ Moshe Hallamish, *Kabbalah: In Liturgy, Halakhah and Customs* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University, 2002), 221 (Hebrew). Zalah often mentioned the name of Zayyah in his *Siddur*.

²² See Moshe Idel, "The Relationship of the Jerusalem Kabbalists and Israel Sarug of Safed: The Sources of the Doctrine of Malbush by R. Israel Sarug" *Shalem* 6 (1992): 165-173. (Hebrew); Jonathan Garb, *Manifestations of Power in Jewish Mysticism: From Rabbinic Literature to Safedian Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2005) (Hebrew), 188.

²³ Scholem, *Kabbalah* (New York: A Meridian Book, 1978), 70; Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts (Kitvey-Yad be-Kabbalah)*, (Jerusalem: 1974), 89-91; Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 265; David, *To Come to the Land*, 155; Moshe

Abraham Castro, a major personality in the contemporary Jerusalem *kehillah*,²⁴ a *Nagid* in Egypt.²⁵ As Scholem put it, *Even ha-Shoham* is “the most detailed textbook on meditation into the mystery of the *Sefirot*” and introduces kabbalistic chiromancy.²⁶ The influence of Abulafia’s doctrine is prominent here.²⁷ Extant in manuscripts are Ms. Jerusalem 8 and Ms. Bar-Ilan 598.²⁸

Hallamish, *An Introduction to the Kabbalah*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 66; Ratzaby, “*Be’ur Tefillah*,” 279. For editorial technique of manuscript especially the Kabbalistic ones and accompanying problems see Daniel Abrams, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory: Methodologies of Textual Scholarship and Editorial Practice in the Study of Jewish Mysticism* (Jerusalem; Magnes Press, 2010), 429-443.

²⁴ David, *To Come to the Land*, 155; Abrams, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts*, 90-91; Abraham David, “The Office of Nagid in Egypt and its history of Abraham Castro,” *Tarbiz* 41 (1974): 335-36 (Hebrew); Eliav Shochetman, “Additional Information on the Life of R. Abraham Castro,” *Ziun* 48 (1983): 387-89; Garb, “Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah,” 261.

²⁵ Garb, “Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah,” 261; Jonathan Garb, “Trance Techniques in the Kabbalistic Tradition of Jerusalem,” *Pe’amim* 70 (1997): 48 (Hebrew); David, “The Office of Nagid in Egypt,” 325-337, A. Shochetman, 387-403.

²⁶ Scholem, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts*, 90-91; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 319, 371.

²⁷ Moshe Idel, *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah* (Jerusalem: Academon, 1990), 108 (Hebrew).

²⁸ Ms. Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, Heb. 8° 416; Ms. St. Petersburg Evr. II A 1 (F. 63936); Ms. Livorno – Talmud Tora 77 (49076); Ms. Bar-Ilan 598 (IMHM, no. 36544); Ms. Bar Ilan 1211 (22878).

2. *Zeror ha-Hayyim* ("Bond of Eternal Life") is a commentary to Todros Abulafia's (1220-1298) *Ozar ha-Kavod*, exegesis of the kabbalistic interpretation of *aggadot* in some Talmudic tractates. *Zeror ha-Hayyim*, also devoted to R. Abraham Castro,²⁹ is preserved in a few manuscripts,³⁰ one of which includes a visualization technique using colors.³¹
3. *She'erit Yosef*, written in Jerusalem in 1549,³² contains many tables with numerals and the sefirotic symbols and often reveals the secrets concealed by Zayyah in *Even ha-Shoham*.³³
4. Responsum in halakhah preserved in Ms. Jerusalem 1446 B196 is the only manuscript that preserves Zayyah's responsa.³⁴ The manuscript contains 350 large folios, written on paper, but many folios are missing.³⁵ Zayyah was one of the major *respondants* of his generation, and his contemporaries

²⁹ Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 261.

³⁰ Ms. London Montefiore 318 (F. 5262) PH. 147, Ms. Cambridge (Mass.) – Harvard University Heb. 29/65 [F. 34437].

³¹ Ms. New York Lehmann 131 [F. 24473].

³² Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 70; David, *To Come to the Land*, 155; Ratzaby, "Be'ur Tefillah," 279.

She'erit Yosef is preserved in Ms. Warsaw, Jewish Historical Institute, 229 (F.12006).

³³ Zayyah assured that he would reveal in *She'erit Yosef* the secrets he concealed in *Even ha-Shoham*. See Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 260.

³⁴ For halakhic activity of Zayyah, see Arad, "A Profile," 134-248.

³⁵ The first (290 responsa) and the last folios are missing. Thus it starts from the section 291 and ends with section 614. It is unknown how many section of responsa are missing in the end. In the middle, the section between 388 and 414 are missing.

cite Zayyah's responsa in their works.³⁶ Thus, he was regarded as a highly esteemed and respected scholar in his time.³⁷ The responsum deals merely with halakhic issues but for the mystical topic of questions, Zayyah responded with mystical kabbalistic ideas.³⁸ Zayyah demonstrates the integration between kabbalistic writing and mystical techniques and religious performance.³⁹

5. Tractates copied in *Perush on the Torah* of R. Ephraim ben Samson are preserved in Ms. E Damascus, copied in 1649, and in Ms. London Or. 10855/1 F. 8170.
6. *Zafenat Pa'anach*. This work is lost.⁴⁰
7. *Perush al Sefer Yezirah*.⁴¹ Zayyah mentions this work, but it has not been found.
8. *Perush le-Tefilah*, preserved in complete form in Ms. Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, Yah Heb. 94, written in

³⁶ Hayyim Hirschensohn, "Yediot Sefarim Kitvey Yad," 193ff. (Hebrew); Assaf, "On Various Manuscripts," 492-96. A responsum relating to the dispute on whether scholars should be exempted from taxes in Jerusalem and Safed has been published by Joseph Hacker, "The Payment of Djizya by Scholars in Palestine in the Sixteenth Century," *Shalem* 4 (1984): 105-117 (Hebrew)."

³⁷ S. Asaf, "On the Various Manuscripts," 492.

³⁸ Ms. Jerusalem 1446 fol. 206-207.

³⁹ See Garb, "Trance Techniques in the Kabbalistic Tradition of Jerusalem," 64.

⁴⁰ Scholem, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts*, 90.

⁴¹ On this work see Ratzaby, "Be'ur Tefillah," 279.

Sephardic-Mizrahic script, has 234 folios and fragments in Ms. Tel-Aviv Gross 229, fol. 9b-16a.⁴² *Perush le-Tefilah* contains liturgical texts with two commentaries, *Sefer Or Zaru'a* was written by R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid, and *Perush le-Tefilah* was written by Zayyah. Most of the liturgical texts are almost identical to Ashkenaz version. Ratzaby doubts the authorship of the *Perush le-Tefilah*. "It is surprising that the *Perush le-Tefilah* has no name and preface, nor is the author's name ever mentioned in the title page."⁴³ The acrostic of the poet in fol. 52b is considered to be the name of the author. Another testimony is that at the beginning of the poem there is a blurred Arabic stamp that can be discerned as "ibn."

Introduction to *Perush le-Tefilah*⁴⁴

Perush le-Tefilah is one of the most significant works of kabbalistic and halakhic commentary on liturgy. This writing is Zayyah's maiden work written at the age of thirteen if the date of composition is at all correct.⁴⁵ To date, the work

⁴² About Ms. Jerusalem Yah. Heb. 94, see Bibliotheca ; Ratzaby, "*Be'ur Tefillah*," 279-282.

⁴³ Ratzaby, "*Be'ur Tefillah*," 279. " המתמיה בפירושו על התפילה, שאין לו שם ואין לו הקדמה : " ואף שם המחבר לא פורש בשער הספר או בראשי הדפים

⁴⁴ Please note that this manuscript has two numbering systems, one in Arabic number, and other in Hebrew letters. The numbering of the folios we use here is according to the Hebrew number. For example, the first page of the manuscript in this paper is 52b instead of 50b written in Arabic character.

⁴⁵ "There is substantial confusion concerning Zayyah's biography." David, *To Come to*

remains in manuscripts. This work contains both *Perush le-Tefilah* of Zayyah and *Sefer Or Zaru'a*, kabbalistic commentary on liturgy, written by the 13th century Spanish⁴⁶ Kabbalist R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid along with texts from the *Siddur* on each folio.⁴⁷ The scribe identifies himself as R. Aaron ben Azuz and testifies that he copied them in Jerusalem in 1518 at the request of Zayyah.⁴⁸

the Land, 238 n.210. For Zayyah's biography, see also Hirschensohn, "Yediot Sefarim Kitvey Yad," 192-201, 255-59.

⁴⁶ There is no consensus on R. David's place of origin.

⁴⁷ *Sefer Or Zaru'a* quoted in the Ms. Jerusalem is quite similar to Ms. London 771.1. The manuscript of *Sefer Or Zaru'a* was recently published by Ben Zion ben Levi ha-Cohen though there are many spelling errors, needles space between a word and omit the most important symbol, a letter above the word.

⁴⁸ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 227b. "By hand of the youngest of the students Aharon ben Azuz I wrote the *Siddur* for the learned wise R. Joseph ben Abraham ibn Ziach in Jerusalem in *Alul*." See also *Manuscrits medievales en caracteres hebraïques: Bibliothèques de France et D'Israel* (ed., Sirat Collette, Malachi Beit-Ariah: Jerusalem, 1986), 3:68; Gershom

Scholem, *Kiriat Sefer* 4, 320-322; Ratzaby, "Be'ur Tefillah," 279. "עד כה עזרנו יי. וזכנו להשלים זה הסידור ובתחלתו ספר השם והוא שער להכנס] לסודות הסתומים. וחופף עליו פירוש נחמד על דרך הסוד שהוא מאיר עיני חיודעים חן והמשכילים יזהירו בזה הרקיע. ובין כתיביו שכן פירוש אחר על דרך פשט גם הוא טוב ויפה שמפרש החלות ויש בו חידושים וגימי' ונוטריקון" והרחמן יצילנו משגיאה. ויקרבנו לעבודתו הנוראה. ויוסיף יי ידו הנפלאה. לפדות קהלתו המדוכאה. ואז נאמרו יחד אשירה ליי כי גאה גאה : על יד צעיר התלמידים אהרן בן עזוז כתבתי זה הסידור למשכיל הנבון ר' יוסף בכר' אברהם אבן ציאה ישן] : בעיר ירושלים תיוב'בי' בחדש אני לדודי ודודי לי וים כ"ח בו שנת

Perush le-Tefilah begins with the declaration, "R. Joseph ben R. Abraham Ziah of blessed memory...interprets here the prayerbook of Rabbi Moshe Alsheikh of blessed memory."⁴⁹ This part of the manuscript is written in a different hand.⁵⁰ The text suggests the close relationship between Zayyah and R. Moshe Alsheikh. The text can be read as "the prayerbook of Alsheikh," or a base for *Perush le-Tefilah*, but whether such prayerbook exists is unclear. The text of the prayer inserted in the manuscript is mostly the Ashkenazic version currently used but some of the texts are interwoven with the Sephardic version. Zayyah probably refers to the work of Alsheikh, "*Tefilot al derekh Kabbalah* (Prayers by way of Kabbalah)."⁵¹

The other characteristic of Zayyah in *Perush le-Tefilah* is that he is poetic.

בעיר ירושלם תי'ביב' בחדש אני לדודי ודודי לי וים כ"ח בו שנת חמשת אלפים ומאתים ושמונה ושבועים.

⁴⁹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 44a. The spelling of his name has two versions, ציאה ציאה. It is unclear which one is the correct spelling. I will adopt the transliteration, "Zayyah" with two *yods*, according to Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah,"²⁵⁹. Source of his name is also discussed in Yehudah Ratzaby, *Be'ur Tefillah*, 280 and Arad, "A Profile," 136 that it is an Arabic language and its meaning is מכריז, כרוז, צעקני, קולני. Zohar Raviv, *Decoding the Dogma within the Enigma: The Life, Works, Mystical Piety and Systematic Thought of Rabbi Moses Cordovero* (aka Cordoveo; Safed, Israel, 1522-1570) (Berlin; VDM Verlag, 2008), 26.

⁵⁰ Ratzaby, "*Be'ur Tefillah*," 279. "written in quill by different hand in out of line."

⁵¹ Ms. Tel-Aviv Gross 164. I appreciate Mr. Bill Gross for allowing me to copy the manuscript.

The gate of the manuscript, located after the long introduction, is written with an acrostic, reading "I am Joseph ben Abraham Ziyah Hazak."⁵² The poem is composed of four verses. Each word ends uniformly and has no connection with an angelic liturgy found in Qumranic piyyut, heikhalotic piyyut,⁵³ or the famous poems of R. Eleazar ha-Kalir.

Of notable paleographical significance is the usage of colored ink. Some titles of the texts or names of prayer are decorated with outline drawings in red ink, and the holy name "YHVH" is written with red ink.⁵⁴ Hebrew manuscripts introduce such a custom, which consists of the two methods: usage of colored ink for writing letters and outlining letters with drawings. The former method in red ink for chapter and paragraph headings are found in *Moreh ha-Nevochim* (Spain, ca.1350),⁵⁵ Maimonides' Commentary on the Aphorisms of Hippocrates (Spain, ca.1400),⁵⁶ and chapter numbers and emphases in red ink in *Mishneh Torah* by Maimonides (Spain, 15th century).⁵⁷ The latter is found in *Sefer*

⁵² Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 52b.

⁵³ Meir Bar-Illan, *The Mysteries of Jewish Prayer and Hekhalot* (Ramat-Gan, Bar-Ilan University Press, 1987).

⁵⁴ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 208b. See also 53a, 69a, 92b, 96a, 97a, 131a, 157b for other letters using colored ink or drawings.

⁵⁵ *Books from Sefarad* (ed., Rafael Weiser; Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1992), 113.

⁵⁶ *Books from Sefarad*, 115.

⁵⁷ Ms. Jewish National Library Jerusalem Yah Heb. 8 printed in *Books from Sefarad* (14256), 106, 113.

ha-Yir'ah, an ethical treatise by R. Jonah Gerondi, completed in 1453.⁵⁸ All these instances demonstrate the utilization of colored letters or words functioning as the index or to emphasize the text. In addition to these usages, Zayyah uses the colored letters for the ineffable name.

According to Efraim Kupfer, it is popular to use red ink in the Arabic manuscripts as a heading, functioning as a bookmark, and for a supercommentary purpose, with the original commentary in red and the supercommentary in black.⁵⁹ Islamic custom demonstrates the usage of a variety of colors: gold ink for name of Allah and red for holy words. The usage of colored ink in the writing of Zayyah is similar to the Islamic custom at this point. Zayyah was a rabbi in the Jewish community of Arabic-speaking Jews, and as an Arabic speaker, he may have absorbed the Islamic customs of writing.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *Important Hebrew Manuscripts and Printed Books from the Library of the London Beth Din* (New York: Christie's, 1999), 154, 157, 158.

⁵⁹ This is according to Ephraim Kupfer of Department of Paleography in Hebrew University and National Library of Jerusalem. The department of Paleography undertakes the project of collecting and analyzing of Hebrew manuscripts written in red ink, lead by Tamar Leiter.

⁶⁰ P.S. Van Koningsveld and Q. Al-Samarrai, *Localities and Dates in Arabic Manuscripts* (Leiden, Brill, 1978), 148. It is "written in various Andalusí handwritings, using brown ink for the text and red ink for the vowels."

Survey of Research

Jewish liturgy in Kabbalistic literature has been one of the ignored fields in scholarly research, but commentaries on prayer have been one of the most popular and important themes in Jewish mysticism.⁶¹ The commentators of prayer prior to Hasidei Ashkenaz dealt mainly with halakhic questions: when or in which manner prayers should be recited. It was the 12th century Hasidei Ashkenaz who started to study the theological meanings. According to Joseph Dan, Hasidei Ashkenaz treated the prayerbook in the same way that Scripture was studied.⁶²

Later in 13th century, beginning with R. Judah he-Hasid's lost voluminous commentary, *Perushei Siddur Tefilah le-Rokeah* by R. Eleazar of Worms (c.1165-c.1230), and *Perush ha-Tefilah* by R. Azriel of Gerona (1160-1238), commentaries of R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid, R. Joseph ibn Zayyah, R. Isaac Luria, and other important commentaries were composed. Despite their popularity, most of the works are extant only in manuscript form, and there is not enough comprehensive research on the subject of hermeneutics on prayer.⁶³ An analysis of commentary on prayer creates a clearer picture of the history of

⁶¹ Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 29. However under such circumstances, we have the following exceptional works; Martel Govrin, "R. Azriel of Gerona: Perush ha-Tefillot" (M.A. Thesis, Hebrew University, 1984); Adam Afterman, *Reflections on the anonymous kabbalistic commentary on the liturgy* (Los Angeles; Cherub, 2004).

⁶² Joseph Dan, "The Emergence of Mystical Prayer," *Studies in Jewish mysticism* (Cambridge Mass.: 1982): 224.

⁶³ Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 200.

Jewish mysticism.

In addition, 16th century Jerusalem Kabbalah was also generally ignored until Moshe Idel amended the historical view of Gershom Scholem,⁶⁴ which disincorporated Jerusalemite Kabbalah from the history of Kabbalah.⁶⁵ Idel discussed the influence of Zayyah on the formation of the theology of the Lurianic circle, which included R. Hayyim Vital and R. Israel Saruk.⁶⁶ Jonathan Garb cast light upon the Jerusalem Kabbalist par excellence, R. Joseph ibn Zayyah, and focused on the magical, ecstatic, and astrological elements of his doctrine.⁶⁷ Garb demonstrates the sources of Lurianic theories found in Zayyah's teachings.⁶⁸

Scholars hold various opinions as to the reasons behind why prayer is considered to ascend to heaven. Arthur Green's theory focuses upon the reason

⁶⁴ Idel, "The Relationship of the Jerusalem Kabbalists," 165; Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 255.

⁶⁵ Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 176-180; Moshe Idel, *Introduction to the book of Aaron Zev Ashkoli* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1988), 26; Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 256.

⁶⁶ Idel, "The Relationship of the Jerusalem Kabbalists" 165-173; Moshe Idel, *Golem: Jewish Magical and Mystical Traditions on the Artificial Anthropoid* (Albany; State University of New York Press, 1990), 147-148.

⁶⁷ Besides the works of Jonathan Garb cited above see also his book focusing upon the mystical practices of Zayyah, *Shamanic Trance in Modern Kabbalah* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011).

⁶⁸ Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 255-313.

for automatic ascension while Farber's assertion explains the origin of the process of ascension. Green considers this to be an alternative phenomenon to the scent or smoke of the sacrificial offering ascending heavenward.⁶⁹ For Green, prayer is the substitute for the sacrificial offering. Asi Farber-Ginat treats the motif of descent to *Merkavah* as the prototype for the ascent of prayer in the writings of Hasidei Ashkenaz.⁷⁰ Both scholars treat the upper realm as the heavenly Temple,⁷¹ which is the ultimate destination of the mystic's visionary

⁶⁹ Arthur Green, *Keter: The Crown of God in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 163, 164. "I believe that the ascent of prayer...is itself a transference of the ascent of sacrificial offering." According to Heinemann obligatory prayer was seen parallel to sacrifice even during the Temple period but it was not seen as substitute of sacrifice. Both sacrificial service and prayer are worship for God and not offering. [Joseph Heinemann, *Prayer in the Period of the Tanna'im and the Amora'im – Its Nature and Its Patterns* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1964), 18 (Hebrew).] Cf.

Idelson who asserts prayer is a substitute for sacrificial service. [Abraham Zwi Idelson, *Jewish Liturgy and Its Development* (New York: Henry Holt, 1932), xviii.]

⁷⁰ Asi Farber-Ginat, "The Concept of the Merkavah in Thirteenth-Century Jewish Esotericism – 'Sod ha-'Egoz' and Its Development" (Ph.D dissertation; Hebrew University, 1986), n.40. See also quotation of Farber's statement by Green, *Keter*, 163.

"The ascent of the mystic or visionary to the *merkavah* is metathesized in the writings of Hasidey Ashkenaz into the ascent of prayer, symbolized by the flight of the crown."

⁷¹ According to Rachel Elijor, *Heikhalot* literature recognizes heaven as the upper Temple where angels perform the priestly ritual in which a priest in the lower world would officiate in the Temple. [Rachel Elijor, "Mysticism, Magic, and Angelology: The

ascent or the smoke of the sacrifice. The Temple was the place for people to assemble in order to offer sacrifices, prayer, and thanksgiving to God, and it was recognized as the place where the Divine Presence rests. Therefore, after the destruction of the Temple, the heavenly Temple became the site where prayer as a verbal offering ascends. The prominent characteristics of a visionary ascent as described in the *Heikhalot* literature include the presence of angels, which serve as a guide for the mystic to go through the next gate. Other angels function as an obstacle for the mystic who fails the test. These motifs – angels as a guide and as an obstacle – test for descendant to *Merkavah*. This should be found if the *Heikhalot* literature is indeed the prototype for the notion of the ascent of prayer as a crown. The question pertaining to the personification of prayer will be made clear in the later development of this concept in the circle of Hasidei Ashkenaz, which also discusses the reason for the automatic ascension of prayer.

Methodological Queries

Again, the historical connection of Hasidei Ashkenaz to Safedian Kabbalah has not been proven. Therefore, we must be aware of the difficulties in determining the interrelation between Zayyah's numerological interpretation and the prior speculations, which result from the lack of a historical link or interaction between Hasidei Ashkenaz and Spanish Kabbalah. I will examine the texts of these three trends that present parallels.

The methodology I shall adopt is a diachronic, synchronic-philological approach, for 16th century Kabbalah is considered a synthesis of previous

Perception of Angels in Hekhalot Literature," *JSQ* 1 (1993/94): 48.]

magical, theosophical, theurgical, and ecstatic traditions, besides rabbinical sources.⁷² Speculations derived from different historical and geographical backgrounds are incorporated into the above concept of prayer of Zayyah. Therefore, it is impossible to view such a stream of thought in opposing diachronical or synchronical terms as we do not find historical or geographical connections between the early Jewish mysticism, Hasidei Ashkenaz in twelfth-century Germany, and sixteenth-century Kabbalah in Jerusalem and Safed. Thus, each question is examined chronologically in order to make Zayyah's innovation clear by looking into pre-Zayyah literature and other questions diachronic-philologically.

Scholars have tended to emphasize the influence of the messianism of Jerusalem Kabbalah upon Safedian Kabbalah, but it appears that the influence of another, mystical element is more prominent than messianism.⁷³ The teachings of R. David and R. Zayyah may bridge the gap between the early Spanish Kabbalah and Safedian Kabbalah, Jerusalem Kabbalah, and Safedian views.⁷⁴ In other word, Zayyah inherited the doctrine of R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid, the late 13th century Spanish or German Kabbalist, and transmitted it to Safedian kabbalists.

⁷² Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 185, 188, 257.

⁷³ Idel, *Introduction to the book of Aaron Zev Ashkoli*, 26; Moshe Idel, "On Mishmarot and Messianism in Jerusalem in the 16th -17th Centuries," *Shalem* 5 (1987): 83-94; Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 299.

⁷⁴ Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 1, 189, 199.

The Structure of the Thesis

This study demonstrates the synthetic thought of R. Joseph ibn Zayyah's thorough discussions of angelology, linguistic theory, and numerological exegesis all relate to the topic of the ascent of prayer. I attempt to demonstrate the development of the concept of the ascent of prayer using two different approaches – chronologically and conceptually. In the first chapter, I will examine the oldest source we hold before the appearance of Zayyah, namely, the talmudic period and I will demonstrate the early kabbalistic views. Consequently, this study will adopt Idel's "panoramic" methodology rather than the "proximist" view that he opposes.⁷⁵ The second chapter deals with Zayyah's medieval predecessor, R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid, the most important kabbalistic influence on Zayyah. Chapter three deals with the ascent of prayer and angelological involvement. Chapter four focuses upon the theurgical magical power of the divine name and its effect on the ascent of prayer. It functions as the raiser and protector of prayer. In chapter five, I will discuss the relationship of the ascent phenomenon to the essential religious duty for prayer, *Kavvanah*. Chapter six concentrates on the principal numerological method Zayyah uses for the ascension of the prayer and for the other themes.

Characteristics of Zayyah's Writing

16th century Kabbalah was an amalgamation of many changes in speculation of geographical diversity since the emergence of the Kabbalah.

⁷⁵ Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 6-16.

After the expulsion, the Kabbalah spread mainly to Italy, Byzantine, Maghreb, and Egypt.⁷⁶ Out of this migration, a new strand of the movement, Renaissance Italian Kabbalah, fully emerged⁷⁷ In the Renaissance, a platonic and Neoplatonic corpus became available to Jews. Italian Kabbalah, which was inclined to philosophy, combined with a belief in magic to produce a new Kabbalistic tradition.

The central feature of Zayyah's writing is esotericism.⁷⁸ He keeps the secrets by scattering the doctrines in several of his writings. Zayyah's Kabbalah characterizes the combination of both ecstatic and theosophical Kabbalah although the theosophical character is less dominant in *Perush le-Tefilah*. His Kabbalah absorbed the divergent sources such as *Sefer Yezirah*; *Sefer Hasidim* by the Hasidei Ashkenaz master, R. Judah he-Hasid⁷⁹; Jewish magical literature; and *Heikhalot* literature. Zayyah demonstrates the adaptation of several interpretive methods. The most notable exegesis given to texts of prayer is a numerical calculation such as Gematria, a counting method, and other linguistic devices like *Notarikon*. The counting of words and letters of prayer is repeated

⁷⁶ Moshe Idel, "Major Currents in Italian Kabbalah between 1560 - 1660," *Italia Judaica* (1986): 350.

⁷⁷ This occurred at the end of the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th century. See Idel, "Major Currents in Italian Kabbalah," 345.

⁷⁸ Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 262. This is also applied to the characteristics of R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid.

⁷⁹ For the authorship of *Sefer Hasidim* see Elliot R. Wolfson, "The Mystical Significance of Torah Study in German Pietism," *JQR* 84 (1993): 46.

throughout the *Perush le-Tefilah*. Zayyah utilizes the numerical interpretation to reveal the divine names hidden in the texts of prayer. The persistent usage of the numerological hermeneutic method may induce the mystical experience, which was performed by the leading figure of Hasidei Ashkenaz, R. Judah he-Hasid.⁸⁰ Zayyah integrates the observation of halakhic rules with mystical prayer. The *Kavvanah*, essential to fulfillment of religious duty, is the condition for acceptance of prayer in heaven. Zayyah holds the view that divine names accompanied with *Kavvanah* possesses power to raise prayer to the divine realm. The divine name, especially the forty-two-letter name, plays an important role in the ascent of prayer.

⁸⁰ The focus on numerical calculation as a technique for mystical experience began in Ashkenazi circle.[Daniel Abrams, "From Germany to Spain: Numerology as a Mystical Technique," *JJS*, Vol. 47 (1996): 92.]

Chapter One

Pre-Zayyah Patterns of the Ascent of the Prayer

Chapter One: Pre-Zayyah Patterns of the Ascent of the Prayer:

Rabbinic Views, Hasidei Ashkenazic Views, and Early Kabbalistic Views

The pre-Zayyah literatures demonstrate the origin of the concept of ascent of prayer and its development. Some are profoundly interrelated to the concept in the writings of Zayyah. The concepts of the ascent of the prayer in the literature are divided into two categories: 1. Crown mysticism, in which prayer is transformed into the divine crown; and 2. Non-Crown mysticism, in which transformation of prayer into crown is uninvolved. Both of the sources are found in the Talmud.

Rabbinic Views

Jerusalem Talmud Sanhedrin 10:28 demonstrates the first indication of the ascent of prayer if the Talmudic literature always precedes the date of composition of the *Heikhalot* literature.

Now all the ministering angels went and closed the windows so that the prayer of Mennaseh should not reach upward to Holy One, blessed be he.⁸¹ The ministering angels were saying before the Holy, One, blessed be he, "Lord of the world, a man who worshipped idols and put up an image in the Temple – are you going to accept him back as a penitent?"

⁸¹ All these biblical passages use the Hebrew term אַרְבוֹת for window while the rabbinical literature uses חֲלוֹן *Halon* or *Halonot.s*

He said to them, "If I do not accept him back as a penitent, lo, I shall lock the door before all penitents." What did the Holy One, blessed be he do? He made an opening [through the heavens] under his throne of glory and listened to his supplication.⁸²

This text demonstrates the understanding of the Jewish authority in the Talmudic period towards the movement of prayer after utterance. Even a prayer of sinners reaches automatically to the entrance of heaven. However, entering into heaven and reaching God are limited to a prayer recited in righteousness. In the text above, angels prevent his prayer reaching God because of the sins Mennaseh committed (killing Isaiah and violation of idolatry). The transgression resulted in rejection of acceptance of a prayer in heaven. This account parallels the repentance of going "before the throne"; "there is a forgetfulness before the throne."⁸³

The last sentence of the text above comprises the two important themes,

⁸² J.T. Sanh. 10:28. English translation is quoted from *The Talmud of the Land of Israel: a preliminary translation and explanation* Vol. 31 Sanhedrin and Makkot (tr. Jacob Neusner; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982-1991), 336. See also *Midrash Deut. Rabbah* (Vilna), 2:20 and *Pesikta deRab haKahana*, 24; *Yalkut Shimoni Melekhim*, 2; *Ozar Midrashim* (Eizenstein), 364. " והיו מלאכי השרת מסתמין את החלונות שלא תעלה תפילתו של מנשה לפני הקב"ה והיו מלאכי השרת אומרים לפני הקב"ה רבונו של עולם אדם שעבד עבודה זרה והעמיד צלם בהיכל אתה מקבלו בתשובה אמר להן אם איני מקבלו בתשובה הרי אני נועל את הדלת בפני כל בעלי תשובה מה עשה לו הקב"ה חתר לו חתירה מתחת כסא הכבוד שלו ושמע תחינתו הדא היא

⁸³ B.T. Ber. 32b.

which may serve as the origin of the development of the ascent of prayer in the early Kabbalah of the 13th-century Spanish mystic R. Joseph Gikatilla and the later Kabbalah of R. Joseph ibn Zayyah. These themes are the form of prayer and the geographical path of prayer between heaven and earth. Whether the prayer in the text above refers to a voice or letters of prayer is uncertain, but it at least indicates the prayer as an entity that cannot go through the closed windows or the aperture God fashioned. Does this imply that a prayer cannot enter from the irregular opening? If prayer is allowed to enter only from the fixed entrance – namely, the windows of heaven – then we can assume that the geographical path of prayer between heaven and earth already existed during the Rabbinic period that will be discussed in chapter three.

Another important element in the text is the description of the windows and doors in heaven. Scripture tells us that the windows were opened when it rained for forty days (Gen. 7:11) and were closed when the rain from heaven was restrained (Gen. 8:2), contradicting our text above, and God opens the window to pour out a blessing (Malachi 3:10). Scripture maintains the description of the window as an output channel. On the other hand, Rabbinic literature describes it as an input channel to receive entities from the lower world. As regard to the account on the struggle of the death of Moses, *Midrash Deut. Rabbah* depicts the gates of heaven as an entrance for prayer.⁸⁴

The angel who is in charge of proclamation is called Akhzariel. When the Holy One, blessed be He, called hastily and said to the ministering

⁸⁴ *Midrash Deut. Rabbah* 11:10.

angels, "Go down hastily and lock all the gates of the heavens... His prayer was similar to a sword..."⁸⁵

The windows of heaven, which function as shields in the Sanhedrin text, are presented here as gates of heaven. Even God is described as being afraid of the prayer of Moses reaching heaven. The rejection of prayer in heaven in both *Sanhedrin* and *Midrash Deut. Rabbah* indicate that the prayer has a certain power to influence the celestial realm. The authors may intend to present the influence of sins of man upon the upper realm. Therefore, angels and God attempt to prevent the negative theurgic force—a voice of prayer of Moses possessing a destructive force—from entering into heaven. I assume that the aim of this text is to demonstrate the importance of observing the commandments and the nature of God as possessing mercy for sinners rather than emphasizing the phenomenon of the ascent of prayer.

Another trend of the ascent of prayer, the ascent of the crown, is found in *B. T. Hagigah* 13b:

He (Sandalfon) stands behind the Chariot and wreaths crown for his Maker... He pronounces the [Divine Name] over the crown, and it goes and rests on His head.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ *Midrash Deut. Rabbah* 11:10.

⁸⁶ *The Babylonian Talmud* (Tr., I. Epstein; London: The Soncino Press, 1969), Vol. 5

Hagigah. "ועומד אחורי המרכבה, וקושר כתרים לקונו... דאמר שם אתגא, ואזל ויטיב ברישיה."

See also Gershom Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Tr., Allan Arkush;

This passage demonstrates the power of the utterance of holy names of God. By means of the name, the crown ascends to the head of God.⁸⁷ Although the component of the crown is not depicted, the ascent of prayer in the form of crown was derived from this text. *Midrash Exodus Rabbah*, compiled sometime between the 7th century and the end of the 10th century, explicitly mentions the component of crown as a composition of prayer recited by man.

When Israel pray, you do not find them all praying at the same time, but each assembly prays separately, first one and then another. When they have all finished, the angel appointed over prayers collects all the prayers that have been offered in all the synagogues, weaves them into Garlands (crown) and places them upon the head of God.⁸⁸

Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), 175; Dan, "The Emergence of Mystical Prayer," 85-120.

⁸⁷ Farber, "The Concept of the Merkavah," 231.

⁸⁸ English translation is quoted from *Midrash Rabbah: Exodus* (Tr.; S.M. Lehrman, London: Soncino, 1961). " בשעה שישראל מתפללין אין אתה מוצא שכולן מתפללין כאחד אלא כל כנסיה וכנסיה מתפללת בפני עצמה, הכנסת הזו תחלה ואח"כ הכנסת האחרת, ומאחר שכל הכנסיות גומרות כל התפלות המלאך הממונה על התפלות נוטל כל התפלות שהתפללו בכל הכנסיות הכולן ועושה אותן עטרות ונותן בראשו של הקב"ה." Cf. Green, *Keter*, 34. Green interprets the text as "makes them into crown" and treats the text "no mention of such activity as "weaving" or "binding" the crown." The transformation of prayer into crown is also depicted in *Midrash Psalms* (Buber) 19:7, and 88:2 is obviously related to our text.

This verbose text (when compared to *Hagigah*) explicates the phenomenon of ascension more fully. This text provides a more phenomenon-oriented approach where the ethical observation is no longer at issue, focusing mainly upon the account related to the ascent of a crown⁸⁹ made from prayer. The new element, collecting prayer, is added to the function of angels. Where the angel collects the prayer is not specified, but it is likely to be within heaven. Prayers reaching from synagogue to heaven are collected and transformed into a crown.

Another midrashic text, apparently related to the text of *Midrash Exodus Rabbah*, shows that collecting prayer is the function of the angel.

R. Pinhas in the name of R. Abba says, "An angel who is in charge of prayer waits until the last Synagogue in Israel prays, and he takes all the prayers and makes them into the crown and places it on the head of the Holy One, blessed be He."⁹⁰

Both *Midrash Exodus Rabbah* and the above-mentioned text from *Midrash Psalms* are the first texts that clearly depict one of the paths of prayer, from synagogue to heaven. Public prayers are their object of collection and the material of the crown. An appointed angel transforms an abstract, unsubstantial

⁸⁹ This topic, the ascent of crown, is researched by Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, Green, *Keter*; Elliot R. Wolfson, "Hebraic and Hellenic Conceptions of Wisdom in *Sefer ha-Bahir*," *Poetics Today* 19 (1998): 157.

⁹⁰ *Midrash Psalms* Buber 88:2. See also 19:7.

entity – prayer of Israel – into a substance – the crown. Moreover, the place of activity of angels toward prayer remains unclear, whether the angel comes down to earth to collect the prayers or awaits the prayers in heaven. The absence of an adjuration of the divine name raises a question of whether the angel directly places the crown on the divine head. Although the word “place (*noten*)” is used here, it is uncertain whether it refers to the act of placing it directly on the head of God or placing it from distance followed by an ascent to God. The latter has greater potential as *Pesikta Rabbati*, considered to be compiled in 6th or 7th century,⁹¹ explicates the unknowability of God’s place.

It is said of Sandalphon...serves behind the chariot, and that he wreathes crowns for his Maker.⁹² Can it possibly enter your mind that the ministering angels know where God is? Has it not been long said [by them] *Blessed be the glory of the Lord wherever His place be* (Ezek. 3:12)? The truth is that even ministering angels cannot see His abiding place. However, Sandalphon so adjures the crown he has wreathed that it rises of its own accord and reposes on the head of his Maker... When the crown reached His head, He brings Himself to accept the crown from His servants.⁹³

⁹¹ *Pesikta Rabbati* (tr. William G. Braude; 2 vols.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 1:26.

⁹² *B. T. Hagigah*, 13b. He wreathes them “out of the prayers of the righteous.”

⁹³ English translation is taken from Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati*, 1:406. “ אמרו עליו על סנדלפון שהוא גבוה מחביריו מהלך חמש מאות שנה ומשתמש אחר המרכבה וקושר כתרים לקונו, וכי תעלה

This text maintains the unknowability of God's dwelling place more strictly than does the text in *Midrash Psalms* quoted above. The distance between God and the angel is retained by explicitly mentioning the ascent of crown "by its own accord." Although Sandalfon does not know His dwelling place, the crown knows how to reach His head.

The next midrashic literature in the early medieval period, *Midrash Kohen*, informs us as to the material of crown:

And it (Sandalfon) binds crowns to the master of glory out of the *Kedushah, Barukh Hu'* and '*Amen, Yehey Shemey Rabba* which the children of Israel recite in the synagogues; and it adjures the crown by the ineffable [divine] name, and it [the crown] gradually ascends to the head of the master. Therefore, the sages said that whoever nullifies *Kadosh, Barkhu*, and '*Amen, Yehey Shemey Raba* [thereby] diminishes the crown.⁹⁴

Midrash Kohen specifies that the exact words of prayer are the material of the crown. The specification of the material of the crown and a theurgical implication of prayer are emphasized here. Human action related to prayer

על דעתך שיודעים מלאכי השרת היכן הוא והלא כבר נאמר ברוך כבוד ה' ממקומו (יחזקאל ג' י"ב) ואילו מקומו לא ראו, אלא משביע את הכתר ועולה ויושב בראש אדונו... בא וראה שבחו וגדולתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא בשעה שמגיע כתר לראשו מחזיק עצמו לקבל כתר מעבדיו

⁹⁴ English translation is taken from Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 192.

influences the formation of the crown in the upper realm.⁹⁵

Concluding remarks

The two trends we have seen established the idea that every prayer ascends to heaven automatically. As Scripture states that God hears prayers of the Israelites, the Rabbinic literature considered the uttered prayers to move upward themselves. No external force is mentioned to accompany the prayer's ascension. The ascent of the prayer was treated as common knowledge; there was no question that the phenomenon occurred. This implies that the tradition of the ascent of prayer already existed at the time the texts were written.

Moreover, the angel takes an important role in this tradition, through the creation of the crown out of prayer and the protection of the celestial realm from unworthy prayer. However, the angel did not function as an intermediary of prayer; that is, the delivery of prayer between earth and heaven and any clear active movement of angels outside heaven were not illustrated. The angel merely awaits for a prayer to ascend. The binding and raising of the crown occurred only within the celestial realm. The concept of prayer developed in Midrashim presents a prayer as a collectable but invisible entity.

Heikhalot Literature

The *Heikhalot* literature, the mystical-piyyutical creation,⁹⁶ is the representative

⁹⁵ Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 192.

⁹⁶ Rachel Elior, "Between Earthly Heichal and the Heavenly One," *Tarbiz* 64 (1995): 341. (Hebrew).

compilation that demonstrates the priestly tradition⁹⁷ and the abundant examples of the visionary ascension.⁹⁸ As the dates of the composition of this literature vary between the 1st century B.C.E. and 9th century C.E.,⁹⁹ we are unable to determine if the texts in the rabbinic literature influenced the texts I shall quote below, or vice-versa.

The *Heikhalot* literature depicts the motif of binding the crown and the crowning without any restraint. The making of the crown is performed by both the angel and God, and the crowning is accomplished not only by the celestial king but also by the angels.¹⁰⁰ Although the wreathing crown appears in many places, it is depicted without mentioning its components.

⁹⁷ Rachel Elijor, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (tr. D. Louvish (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004).

⁹⁸ Elijor, "Between Earthly Heichal and the Heavenly One," 341.

⁹⁹ According to Joseph Dan it is known since the Tannaic period (B.C.E. 100~C.E.200) [*Jewish Mysticism – Late Antiquity* (New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1998), 1: 192] while Rachel Elijor suggests that it was written sometimes between 3rd and 6th century, Idel 3~8th centuries (*Ascensions on High*, 28).

¹⁰⁰ *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (ed. Peter Schafer; J.C.B. Mohr: Tübingen, 1981), §15 (God made Metatron a crown) §884. God is not the only one to be crowned. "All the princes of the kingdoms adorned with crowns" (*Synopse*, §20), "R. Joshua b. Levi also said: When Moses ascended on high, he found the Holy One blessed be He, tying crowns on the letters [of the Torah]" (*B.T. Shabbath*, 89a).

And when the time comes for angels to sing songs, Shemu'iel, the great archon, stands at the window of the lower heaven to listen to all the songs, which ascend from the world and from synagogues and Houses of Study (*Batei Midrashot*), announced before the firmament.¹⁰¹

Similar to the rabbinic examples, this text also notes that prayer ascends to heaven by itself. Human power or any effort is not involved in the process of the ascent. Most of the texts in *Heikhalot* literature hold that the weaving of the crown is the function of the angel and omits the material of the crown. On the other hand, 3 Enoch depicts the clear picture of weaving the crown. "They received the prayers of Israel and placed them as a crown on the head of the blessed Holy One."¹⁰² The exact function of the angel, Shemu'iel, which appears only in *Heikhalot* literature and later phases of Jewish mysticism,¹⁰³ concerning the ascent of prayer is inexplicit. Besides listening to the songs,

¹⁰¹ *Synopse*, §807 "כשיגיע זמן של מלאכים לומר שירה וזמרה לפני לפני הקב"ה שמועאל המלאך שר הגדול הנכבד והנורי עומד על חלוני רקיע התחתון לשמוע ולהקשיב כל שירות וזמרות ותושבחות העולות מארץ ומן כל בתי כניסיות ומדרשות להשמיע להן לפני ערבות רקיע." See also *Synopse*, §178, 179, 180, 527, 530, 787, 790, and 810.

¹⁰² 3 Enoch 15b quoted in Green, *Keter*, 65.

¹⁰³ In *Heikhalot* literature it is called Shemu'iel. *Synopse*, §807, Ms. Oxford 1531 f. 90a. See also §527, 530, 787, 790, 810, 178, 179, 180; Scholem, *Major Trends*, 62; *Beit ha-Midrash* (ed., Adolph Jellinek; Jerusalem: Bamberger & Wahrmann, 1938), 3: 161-163; Ms. JTS 828. For the angel called Shema'iel see *Sefer Raziel Mal'akh* in which he appeared as one of the angels, who protect gates.

whether it is either a deliverer or a mediator of prayer is not clear. However, Gershom Scholem interpreted the function of Shemu'el as a mediator of the prayer in a text found in *Pirkei Heikhalot* identical to the one above:

One of them, Shemu'el, 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.¹⁰⁴

The source of the text Scholem translated does not use the word "mediator" but *mashmia*, literally, to cause to hear or announce. It seems that the act of Shemu'el "listening to the prayer of Israelites and causing all heavens hear" is understood as an intermediary act. However, it is unclear that the word in the form of *hif'il* in our text signifies a causative (cause to hear) or an active verb (announce). If the word signifies the former, then it may mean that Shemu'el uses certain forces to change the component or form of human prayer into the audible or any other form that holy creatures can perceive. In case of the latter, it indicates that Shemu'el is in charge of announcing the time when angels pray. In another passage, God makes others be silent in order to listen to a prayer of

¹⁰⁴ English translation is taken from Scholem, *Major Trends*, 62 in which Scholem uses Ms. JTS 828 quoted in *Beit ha-Midrash* (ed., Adolph Jellinek) 3:161-163. "וכשמגיע זמן לומי" שירה שמעיי"אל השר הגדול הנכבד והנורא עומד על חלוני הרקיע התחתון לשמוע ולהקשיב קול שירות ותושבחות העולים מן הארץ מבתי כנסיות ומבתי מדרשות להשמיע לבני ערבות

Israel¹⁰⁵ because it is only after their prayer that angels can recite their prayers or songs or perform the angelic chorus together with the Israelites.¹⁰⁶ Thus, this text demonstrates the superiority of human prayer over the prayer of angels with respect to the right to pray first. This is why Shemu'el stands at the window to "watch" prayer. In this sense, Shemu'el may be called an announcer rather than a mediator. At this stage, we should distinguish the term mediator, or more precisely deliverer, by the location in which the intermediary act takes place. In other words, there are two meanings of the term: one is an act to raise prayer from the earth to heaven while the other mediates only within heaven. If we limit the meaning of the word "mediator" to the act that takes place in heaven, then the phenomenon such as ascent of the crown found in the rabbinic texts can be understood as mediation.¹⁰⁷ I should also distinguish between the

¹⁰⁵ *Seder Rabbah deBereshit* in *Batei Midrashot* (ed. Abraham Vertheimer; Jerusalem: Ktab Yad Wasepher, 1989), 1: 45-46. "אמר ר' ישמעאל כמה חביבין ישראל לפני הקב"ה יותר ממלאכי השרת שהמלאכים מבקשים לומר שירה תחתה ועושים כמו הרים של אש וגבעות של להבה ואומר להם הקב"ה החרישו עד שאשמע תחלה שירות ותשבחות תפלות ונעים זמירות ישראל דכתיב ברוך אלו מלאכי השרת וכל יחד כוכבי בוקר (איוב לח, ז) אלו ישראל ויריעו כל בני אלהים (איוב לח, ז) מלאכי השרת וכל מלאכי הרקיע כששומעין קול שירות ותשבחות שאומרין ישראל למטה מיד הם פותחים בקול רם ואומרים קדוש קדוש קדוש ה' צבאות וכשיגיע זמן של מלאכים לומר [שירה] וזמרה שמועא"ל המלאך השר הגדול הנכבד והנורא עומד על חלוני רקיע התחתון לשמוע ולהקשיב קול שירות ותשבחות וזמירות העולות מן בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות ומשמיע לבני רקיע וחיות"

¹⁰⁶ *Synopse*, §179, 528, 788; *Seder Rabbah deBereshit*, 1: 45.

¹⁰⁷ Asi Farber-Ginat considers that the ascent of crown to the head of God is intermediated by angels and magical practice with divine name. See Farber, "The

terms mediator and deliverer. 'Deliverer' is the clearer term for depicting the act of the angel transmitting the ontological reality. A mediator delivers prayer and functions in another act, which reconciles a problem between two parties. In our text, the mediation belongs to the latter category, the one occurring in heaven. Spatial movement of a mediator under the firmament is not present, but the angel descends to the lower world to restore peace.¹⁰⁸ We call a "deliverer" the one who takes prayer outside of heaven to the celestial realm.

The song of Israel, though Scholem translated as "prayer" in the above-mentioned text, ascends from synagogue and from *Beit-Midrash* to heaven. It testifies that the text was written in the period from which liturgical songs have come to be recited in a synagogue and *Beit-Midrash*, apparently after the destruction of the Second Temple. Therefore, in the *Heikhalot* literature, only song, not prayer, ascends.

Hasidei Ashkenazic Views

One of the circles of Hasidei Ashkenaz,¹⁰⁹ which operated in Germany in

Concept of the Merkavah," 231.

¹⁰⁸ *Synopse*, §181. The function of appointed angels here is to descend everyday to place peace in the world. When the time of reciting songs comes they ascend to heaven.

¹⁰⁹ The term Hasidei Ashkenaz, in broad sense, denotes a few circles or individuals flourished in Germany in the twelfth century; Unique Cherub circle, Kalonymus family flourished mainly in Rheinland, the author of the *Sefer ha-Navon* and the author of *Sefer ha-Hayyim*. Joseph Dan, *Heart and the Fountain: An Anthology of Jewish Mystical*

Experiences (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 23-25. In this paper we use the

the 12th century, led by R. Judah he-Hasid (c. 1150-1217), received the two categories of the tradition of the ascent of prayer probably derived from *B. T. Hagigah* and *J. T. Sanhedrin* that we saw in the preceding sections. Those who were active in the 12th century underwent the transition that overturned the existing religious principles and customs. The written text of the Talmud was created and the written prayer book entered circulation after the prohibition of writing down the prayer was released.¹¹⁰

term *Hasidei ashkenaz* denotes to the Kalonymus school. See Joseph Dan, "The Ashkenazi Hasidic 'Gates of Wisdom'," *Hommage a Georges Vajda* (1980), 183-189 and Dan, "The Book of the Divine Name by Rabbi Eleazar of Worms," *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 22 (1995): 27-28, for other *Hasidei Ashkenaz* circles completely independent of the Kalominous school such as the circle of "Special or Unique Cherub."

¹¹⁰ Talya Fishman, "Rhineland Pietist Approaches to Prayer and the Textualization of Rabbinic Culture in Medieval Northern Europe," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 11,4 (2004): 324-325; Ephraim Kanarfogel, "R. Judah he-Hasid and the Rabbinic Scholars of Regensburg: Interactions, Influences, and Implications," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 96 (2006): 17. The problem regarding the synagogue practice rose. The textualization of sacred texts caused the decline of the teacher-disciple relationship along with the social hierarchy especially within the synagogue. R. Natronai Gaon, in the gaonic period composed the first written prayer book, but it explicates the order of prayer rather than the whole siddur. (Dan, "The Emergence of Mystical Prayer," 224-225.) The prayer book formed into the style of which is tantamount to the present one is from the 16th century.

The members of the circle present a clearer picture of how prayer makes its way to the transcendent realm, which was unclear in the rabbinic and *Heikhalot* literature. Moreover, the movement of prayer in both upper and lower worlds is described in more detail compared to the preceding literature, and the rabbinic idea of linguistic power inherent in the divine name was also developed. Although Hasidei Ashkenaz adds new elements, the traditional concept of automatic ascension of prayer is juxtaposed. The new elements of the Hasidei Ashkenazic circle achieved a more detailed angelological description, or linguistic theory. The new elements of the activities of angels and an encounter of prayer with an obstruction may follow the assertion of Asi-Farber that the ascent of the prayer is the metathesis of visionary ascent to *Merkavah*.¹¹¹

Receivers of Prayer

R. Judah he-Hasid integrates the motifs of ascent found in rabbinic literature with an exact receiver of prayer in a more precise manner. The tradition belongs to the first category – transformation of prayers into crown – found in his *Sefer Gematriot*:

An angel appointed for one thousand eight hundred angels, which receive prayers that came from the heart, placed them upon the head of God of hosts. The appointed angel says to the rest of the angels to wait

¹¹¹ Farber, “The Concept of the Merkavah,” 231-244.

until they finish their prayer, which is directed from the heart and he receives and fixes the crown of glory out of their prayer.¹¹²

The motifs appearing in this text – waiting for the conclusion of prayer, collecting only prayer accompanied with *Kavvanah*, and transformation of prayer into the crow – are already seen in the midrashic texts. However, the specific number of angels who receive prayer is new to us. The source of the number of angels, one thousand eight hundred, is derived from the *Piyyut* of R. Eliezer ha-Kalir, the *paytan* of Eretz Israel who acted in 10th century Galilee.¹¹³ This account is reflected in the writings of disciple of R. Judah he-Hasid, R. Eleazar of Worms (1165-1230), who quotes both texts in his *Sodey Razaya*.

And when righteous persons (*zadikim*) pray with *Kavvanah*, one thousand

¹¹² *Sefer Gematriot of R. Judah the Pious* (ed; D. Abrams and Israel Ta-Shema, Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 1998), 40. “ מלאך אחד ממונה על אלף ות”ת מלאכים המקבלים תפילות מליבות באות יתנום בראש אלהי הצבאות ומלאך הממונה שומר לשאר מלאכים והמתין עד שיסיימו המתכוונים מלכם את תפילתם ומקבל ומתקן מתפילתם כתר הכבוד

¹¹³ *Kedoshtaot le-Rosh ha-Shanah, Melech beMishpat*; Ms. Genizah 100 Add. 3369.

Database 640 of The Academy of the Hebrew Language. It is suggested by Professor Joseph Yahlom. The piyyut is adopted in the Ashkenazi version of prayer book. See *Mahzor le-Yamim ha-Noraiim* (ed., Daniel Goldschmidt; Jerusalem: Koren, 1970), 1: 86 (Hebrew.) “ ויצאו במ אלף ושמונה מאות המליצים יושר במשפט לנאות ויקבלו תפלות מלבות ” R. Nahman of Breslev, *Mahzor Rosh ha-Shanah with Interpretation Et Razon* (Brooklyn: Hasidei Breslev, 1996), 392.

eight hundred angels come forth to receive it (prayer), as the poet R. Eliezer ha-Kalir wrote: A thousand eight hundred went forth/And receiving prayers that came from the heart/ And placed them upon the head of the God of hosts.¹¹⁴

It seems that the prayer recited here refers to the *Amidah* (the Eighteen benedictions), the usual appellation in Talmudic literature. R. Eleazar explicitly mentions in his later writing, *Sefer ha-Shem* ("The Book of the Divine Name"), and *Perush Siddur ha-Tefilah le-Rokeah*, "[When] one prays the Eighteen benedictions with *Kavvanah*, a thousand eight hundred forth out to receive his prayer. And a thousand eight hundred go out there to receive prayers that came

¹¹⁴*Sefer Sodey Razaya Shalem* (Tel-Aviv: A. Brenzi, 2004), 80. The English translation is based on Green, *Keter*, 103; *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, 125; *Sefer ha-Shem* (ed., Eisenbach; Jerusalem, 2005), 15, 84 (in the CD Responsa Project); *Perush Siddur ha-Tefilah le-Rokeah* (Jerusalem: Machon ha-Rav Hirschler, 1992), 367, mention "one who prays the eighteen benediction with *kavvanah* one thousand eight hundred will forth out to receive his prayer. (שכל המתפלל בכל כוונת לבו י"ח ברכות חשוב כמלאכי השרת, ויצאו לקבל תפילתו י"ח). (מאות מלאכים)." R. Aaron ben Yakov ha-Cohen known as R. Aaron ha-Kohen of Lunel quoted in his *Kol Bo*, it demonstrates the influence of Hasidei Ashkenaz in the 14th century halakhist, who also lived in Spain and he may be the person who transmitted the teaching of R. Eleazar to the Spanish scholars. "וכשמתפלל הצדיקים בכוונה יוצאים י"ח מאות מלאכים ומקבלים אותה, כמו שפייט ר' אליעזר הקליר זצ"ל ויצאו ואלף שמונה מאות ויקבלו תפילות מלבבות באות, ויתנום בראש אלקי הצבאות."

from hearts.”¹¹⁵

“And he put it to the head of the God of Hosts.” The angel fixes and binds all praise and prayer that came from the heart and prepares them for the crown with splendor and glory, and [the crown] ascends to the head of glory. For one [who prays] with *Kavvanah* and with love... the angel makes the prayer of righteous fly, and makes prayer of other righteous fly afterwards ... The prayer ascends to the head of glory until the time of prayer.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵*Sefer ha-Shem*, 84. “לומר מי שמתפלל י”ח ברכות בכוונה יצאו אלף ות”ת לקבל תפילתו. ויצאו.” See also *Sefer ha-Shem*, 15; *Sefer ha-Hokhmah* Ms. Oxford 1812, fol. 60a, *Perush Siddur ha-Tefilah le-Rokeah*, 157, 367. (לומר (אלף ות”ת מלאכים יוצאים למתפללים י”ח ברכות בכוונה 1,800 (angels) with the eighteen benedictions influenced later Halakhic authorities such as *Tur Orah Hayyim*, 118 and Kabbalistic literature, such as the work of the Polish Kabbalist, Nathan ben Solomon Spira of Cracow (1585-1633), *Sefer Megalleh Amukot* (Cracow: 1637), 59b.

¹¹⁶ *Sefer Sodey Razaya Shalem*, 80. “ויתנם בראש אלהי הצבאות (מחזור ספרד לר”ה תפלה לשליח” צבור בקול) כי המלאך מתקן ומחבר כל שבח ותפילה שמלב באה ומכין לעטרה בהוד והדר, והולכת על ראש הכבוד, וכל שיר שהוא בכוונה באהבת שמים שבלבו, עושה המלאך טס אחד מתפילת צדיק זה, ומתפילת צדיק אחר טס אחר, והיא עולה לראש הכבוד עד זמן תפילה, ומעביר הראשונה מפני האחרונה, ומקבל בכל יום חדשה דכתיב (איכה ג, כג) חדשים לבקרים, והראשונה מצניע לצדיק, זהו (ישעי’ כח, ה) יהיה ה’ צבאות לעטרת צבי ולצפירת תפארה לשאר עמו.”

The motif, angel's power of making prayer fly, is already familiar to us. The account in the rabbinic literature states that Sandalfon raises or makes the crown fly to the head of God. These acts of angels occur only within heaven and do not belong to the category of "deliverer of prayer," raising prayer from outside heaven. Besides the one thousand eight hundred angels, other angels are granted a new function. These are the seven angels,¹¹⁷ Metatron, and the main angels, cooperating with Barkiel and Sandalfon.¹¹⁸ R. Judah continues to exposit the other functions of angels.

What do we have to seek for appointed [angels] to bring prayer in? The angels decide which prayer to raise, and they descend to listen to which prayers ascend from the heart. Angels of God ascend and descend here and there... The Holy One, blessed be He, overpowered them (angels of mercies and Satan) ... as they are not entitled to take in the prayer without permission...¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ כי ז' מלאכים שבז' רקיעים מקבלים הקול שברא הבורא לדבר כחפצו, והולך כח הדבור דרך חשמל ומחשמל בשר הפנים בלבו בשם

¹¹⁸ For Metatron see Ms. Oxford 1812, 60a, 65b, 72b; *Sodey Razay ha-Shalem*, 224, and also see Daniel Abrams, "The Boundaries of Divine Ontology: The Inclusion and Exclusion of Metatron in the Godhead" *Harvard Theological Review* 87:3 (1994): 301; for Barkiel Ms. Oxford 1812, 60a; for Sandalfon see R. Eleazar of Worms, *Perushei Siddur ha-Tefilah le-Rokeah* (Jerusalem: Machon haRav Hershler, 1992), 439-440.

¹¹⁹ *Sefer Gematriot* of R. Judah the Pious, 61. "וכתי שומע תפילה עדיך כל בשר יבואו מה צריכין [] לממונים להבנים התפילה אלא שהמלאכים מכריעין איזה תפילה להעלות ויורדין לשמוע איזה

Unlike in the Midrashim, the angel in this text seems to be empowered to select an appropriate prayer to bring into heaven. The purpose of angels' vertical movement in the above text is to distinguish the prayer recited from heart and "to unite the prayer in order to fix the crown and raise it by divine name."¹²⁰ Angels are not only standing at the window of heaven waiting for prayers, but they take an active part in collecting prayer. However, it is unclear whether they descend to the lower world or to the lower place within heaven where they can hear or see the prayer.¹²¹ In any case, these activities of angels regarding prayer have no precedent.

תפילות מלבנות באות והנה מלאכי אלהים עולים ויורדים בו כמו כהא [ח נחתינו וכדכתי' בספר זכריה שהשטן מתווכח עם המלאכים שמלאכי רחמים היו אומרים לשטן "יגער יי' בך השטן" (זכריה ג, ב) והשטן משיב לו אדרבה יגער יי' בך הבוחר בירושלים הלא זה אוד מצל מאש" (שם) ועדיין הם חוטאין והכריע הקב"ה ביניהם דברי ניחומים על ישר ומחמו למלאכי רחמים לבקש רחמים על ישר כי אינן רשאין להכניס התפילה בלא רשות והממונים אומי' למלאך "מזלו שלאדם להתפלל על האדם זהו טרם יקראו למטה ואני אענה למעלה למלאך מזלו וכת' עוד הם מדברים ואני אשמע וכת' "טרם יקראו

¹²⁰ *Sefer Gematriot of R. Judah the Pious*, 30.

¹²¹ The word "descend (יורד)" is used for both meaning; descent to the earth (*B. T. Hulin* 91b; *Perush Baalei Tosafot* on Gen. 28:13) and descent to the lower realm in the celestial world (Asher ben Yehiel (ca. 1250-1327), leading rabbi in Germany, immigrated to Toledo in Spain, *Perush al ha-Torah* Deut. 4:2 (Hannover, 1838), 163- (אמר (הקב"ה למלאכים לכו שמעו מה אומרין בני ויורדין ושומעין הקילוס וזהו חברים מקש

Automatic Ascension

The automatic ascension of prayers to heaven is the common view appearing in the rabbinic literature. The clearest explanation of the ascent from the earth to heaven in R. Eleazar's writing is a quotation from *Heikhalot* literature. In *Sodey Razaya* we read,

“Shemuiel the great archon, stands at the window of the lower heaven to listen to the voice of the songs, which ascend from the world and from synagogues and Houses of Study (*Batei Midrashot*), announced before the firmament.”¹²² Why do they stand in heaven? It is because the ministering angels do not have permission to recite songs in the celestial realm (literally, above) until the Israelites recite the songs below.¹²³

Shemuiel, the angel peculiar to the *Heikhalot* literature, functions as the watcher of the human prayer ascending from the lower realm. The other text of *Sodey*

¹²² Compare to *Synopse*, §807 (Ms. Oxford 1531 fol.90a) quoted in chapter 1, 50-51. The text is almost identical except the word “קול שירות” with *Sodey Razaya*. See also *Seder Rabbah deBereshit*, 47; *Ozar ha-Midrashim* (ed., Eizenschtein; Jerusalem: Or, 2002) 122-123.

¹²³ *Sefer Sodey Razaya* (ed., Shalom C. Weiss; Jerusalem: Shaarey Ziv Institute, 1988), 19.

“ושמעוא”ל המלאך השר הגדול הנכבד והנורא עומד על חלוני רקיע התחתון לשמוע ולהקשיב קול שירות ותושבחות וזמירות העולה מן הארץ, מכל בתי כנסיות ובתי מדרשות להשמיע אותן לפני ערבות רקיע. ומפני מה עומד על רקיע, מפני שאין להם רשות למלאכי השרת לומר שירה מלמעלה עד שיפתחו ישראל את פיהם בשירה תחילה מלמטה.”

Razaya describes the ascent of prayer only within heaven; the explicit manner of how prayer reaches heaven is not mentioned. The functions of angels we have seen were to select and receive prayers, weaving them into the crown. R.

Eleazar adds a new function to the angels – activities designate their names.

Sandalfon is called by name Sandal Fon that Israelites sing and he turns to receive the speech to fix the crown of splendor for king of the glory. Since he pulls the songs of Israel toward him he is called Nagdiel...When Sandalfon mentioned the name the crown immediately ascends to the head of Akatriel the Lord of Hosts.¹²⁴

When Sandalfon appears in the rabbinic literature, he was depicted as the angel appointed to wreath the crown and raise it on the head of God by adjuration of the divine name. This text describes more detailed acts of Sandalfon in regard to the usage of prayer to form a crown and may solve the question of how angels collect prayer. In the case of Sandalfon, he turns to a voice of prayer and draws it near him. Another function of the angel is related to the preparation of the reception of prayer in heaven.

¹²⁴ *Sefer Sodey Razaya Shalem*, 76; " על שם סנד"ל פו"ן שישראל משוררים ופונה " לקבל הדיבור לתקן עטרות למלך הכבוד, ולפי שמושך שירות ישראל אליו נקרא בכינוי נגדיא"ל, ולפי שחביבין לו תפילת ישראל נקרא שמו חביביא"ל, לפי שכשמזכיר סנדלפו"ן השם הכתר עולה בראש אכתריא"ל ה' צבאות מיד כ"ז מלאכי השרת אשר כסא הכבוד סבלם ונושא אותם כאבן השואבת את הקש."

When angels recite songs then the crown is made ...and when Israelites recite *Shemah* or *Kedushah* then Shemaiel the prince silences them until the prayer of the Israelites ascends. Therefore, *Shema Israel* is [composed of] the letters of Shemaiel Sar.¹²⁵ The crown, which is called Israel, then ascends. Thus said Shelomo, "Who is this that comes up?" (Song of Songs 3:6, 8:5). It is in *Gematria* one thousand¹²⁶ because one thousand groups of angels make the crown out of prayer, and out of the crown, *Tefilin*.¹²⁷

The angel, Shemaiel, orders celestial beings in heavens to be quiet until the arrival of the Israelites' prayers. This role was played by God in the *Heikhalot* text.¹²⁸ This ability of making them silent seems to be related to the linguistic element. By interchanging the letters in *Temurah*, the name becomes identical with "Shema Israel." Thus, Shemaiel is in charge of *Shema Israel* and other

¹²⁵ *Shemaiel Sar* ("שמעיאל שר") is a *Temurah* of "שמע ישראל".

¹²⁶ "שלמה מי זאת עולה" = 944. I cannot find the reason for the discrepancy. He may combine the several systems of *gematria*. It seems that R. Eleazar simply quotes the verse in order to relate the ascent and one thousand groups of angels.

¹²⁷ *Sefer ha-Hokhmah* Ms. Oxford 1812 fol. 60a; Oxford 1568 fol. 5a. "וכשמלאכי אומרים שירה אז נעשית העטרה כמין שפל וכשישראל אומרים שמע ישראל או קדושה אז שמעיאל שר משתקם עד שתפילת ישראל תעלה כי כן שמע ישראל אותיות שמעיאל ש"ר ואז העטרה שנקרא ישראל עולה למעלה ועל זה אומר שלמה מי זאת עולה גימ' אלף לפי שאלף מחנות מלאכים עושים מן התפילה כתר ומן הכתר תפילון."

¹²⁸ See p. 13 n.19. Shemaiel is appeared as Shemu'iel.

celestial beings follow him.

Kavvanah

Specific angels receive a prayer accompanied with *Kavvanah* that successfully reaches the transcendent realm. Whether any kind of mediator – human or angelic – is necessary is unmentioned. Both *Sodey Razaya* and *Sefer ha-Hokhmah* (“The Book of Wisdom”) assert the importance of *Kavvanah* during a prayer; otherwise, “Shemuel and the rest of gatekeepers do not allow the prayers to rise up but prayer with *kavvanat ha-lev* reaches before God.”¹²⁹ *Kavvanah* is a condition for prayer to be transformed into the crown.¹³⁰

But prayer with *Kavvanah* of the heart reach Him...Sandalfon selects words of [praise], which come from the heart and he fixes the crown... Sandalfon selects prayer for the crown as man selects silver, gold, and precious stones. This is the meaning of [the verse] “He will regard the prayer of the destitute.” (Ps. 102:18). And if the gatekeepers and angels see the appropriate prayers, they open the windows of prayer and the prayer ascends before the glory ... and the prayer descends from chamber to a chamber until it meets Sandalfon.¹³¹

¹²⁹ *Sefer Sodey Razaya Shalem*, 77.

¹³⁰ *Sefer Sodey Razaya Shalem*, 235.

¹³¹ *Sefer Sodey Razaya Shalem*, 78. “ אבל תפלה שהיא בכוונת הלב באה לפניו... וסנדלפון בורר ”
התפלה כאדם שבורר כסף וזהב ואבנים טובות לתקן לו עטרה כך הוא בורר איזה יכשר, זהו פנה אל
תפילת הערער (תהי קב, יח). ואם רואים השוערים והמלאכים את התפילה שהיא ראוי פותחין השער

Selecting a prayer is either the interpretation expanded from the text in J. T. Sanhedrin, permitting the entrance of only appropriate prayers into heaven,¹³² or based on the text of R. Judah he-Hasid in an explicit manner.¹³³ The other important issue here is the phrase “see the prayers.” Prayer is not only audible but visible. This account leads us to assume that angels and gatekeepers have a certain ability to see the prayer. However, this assumption is denied when we look into the preceding passage of the same section of *Sodey Razaya*. The author's intention was to give a ‘scientific’ explanation:

When Israelites pray with *Kavvanah* of heart Sandalfon selects words [of praise] that come from the heart, and he fixes the crown. The crown is alive (חי) because the breath of speech is [composed of] dew and wind of fire. You shall know that the voice of man emits wind, and speech is moistened when you see it before your mouth in the days of winter ... and also the speech is warm, therefore, the speech ascends. It is pleasant to heaven rather than the breath [emitted] from the mouth of appointed angels, which is torches of fire.¹³⁴

חלוני התפילה והיא עולה לפני הכסא הכבוד ומעבירה מלפניו ומלבישה אורה והתפלה יורדת מחדר
אחר חדר עד שפוגעת בסנדלפון.”

¹³² See pp. 2-3.

¹³³ See p. 19.

¹³⁴ *Sefer Sodey Razaya Shalem*, 77. “ כשישראל מתפללים בכוונת לבם סנדלפון בורר תיבות “

תהילות הבאות מן הלב ומתקן הכתר והכתר חי כי הבל הדיבור טל ורוח ואש, תדע שהרי קול האדם

The ascent of prayer depicted in rabbinic, *Heikhalot*, and Hasidei Ashkenazic literature does not necessitate any external force to aid the ascent of prayer to heaven. This text provides the answer to the question why prayer ascends by itself to the upper world. Based on scientific fact – though perhaps unknown in the early 13th century – R. Eleazar holds that the voice of the word of prayer man emits contains vapour and possesses heat, which causes an ascending current.¹³⁵ He seems to know that warm air ascends, so prayer, which is emitted with warm air, ascends as well. Moreover, R. Eleazar clarifies the question of why angels can select the prayer, which is invisible to the human eye. According to him, the voice becomes visible under low temperatures. Today we know that the breath of man contains vapour, a gas, which turns into liquid. Color is applied, and the surroundings reflect and make it visible when it touches cold air. It is natural that R. Eleazar had this idea, but he was not acquainted with science as the upper world was supposedly located in a place higher than the mountains, where the temperature is lower than on the ground. Although this assumption is incorrect, the word of prayer is seen as reified. He treats prayer as equivalent to absolute entities such as precious metals and

מוציא רוחוהדיבור מלוחלח כאשר תראה בימות החורף לפני פיד על העורה שלך, וגם הדיבור חם כן הדיבור עולה למעלה והוא עולה לשמים חבר כל השמים וחביב מהבל מלאכי השרת שמוציאים מפיהם לפידי אש

¹³⁵ R. Moshe ben Mordecai Zacuto (ca.1620-1697), *Perush ha-Ramaz on Zohar Deut*, 402 (DBS 14). “כך יפתחו להם ממטה למעלה להעלות תפילותם. כי הלא פיהם נתקדש בעניית אמן.” (DBS 14). “ובכוונה, ולכן הבל שלהם עולה ובוקע כל מסכים

stones, materials used for creating a crown. The 16th century Safedian kabbalist Moshe Cordovero also mentioned the relationship between vapour and the ascent of letter.¹³⁶

Obstacles to Prayer

The Obstacle as cooperater of God

In the Medieval period, R. Eleazar of Worms, a leading disciple of R. Judah he-Hasid of Ashkenaz, adds more concrete conditions to the account of the ascent of prayer.

Why does he (Sandalfon) stand behind the chariot and binds crowns? If man prays without *Kavvanah*, Shemu'el, the gatekeeper and the rest of keepers of the gate do not allow the prayer to rise up upward; only prayer [recited] with *kavvanat ha-lev* [intention of the heart] reaches God.¹³⁷

The passage in *Sodey Razaya* demonstrates another case that serves as an admonition to fulfill a religious duty. B. T. *Berachot* 31a mentions that prayer must be offered with special intention, *Kavvanah*; otherwise, it is considered improper. It is understood here that a prayer recited without

¹³⁶ The text is quoted in Chapter 5.

¹³⁷ *Sefer Sodey Razey Shalem*, 78. "למה עומד אחורי המרכבה לפי שאם יתפלל אדם שלא בכוונה למועיא"ל השוער ושאר שומרי השער אין מניחין לעלות אותה התפילה למעלה, אבל תפלה שהיא בכוונת הלב באה לפניו."

fulfilling one's religious requirement is considered unclean and harmful to heaven. Therefore, this type of account is designed to intensify the manner of observance of religious duty. Another important point to be mentioned is the geographical scene of accounts in which angels appear as an obstacle or protector of heaven depicted in the liminal position at the gate of heaven. As the phenomenon developed into a concrete concept, descriptions of various obstacles to prayer's ascent to heaven abounded.

b. Obstacle of prayer as an adversary to God

Yuri Stoyanov pointed out that the status of Satan was transformed, in the Achaemenid era, from an accuser who works under the authority of God (Job 1:6)¹³⁸ into an adversary, an entity opposed to God.¹³⁹ Accordingly, in our context of post-biblical literature, Satan never appeared as an agent of God. He is completely hostile to all beings. Again, it was Hasidei Ashkenaz, a circle of 12th century German Pietists, who first assigned the role of interrupting prayer's ascent to Satan.

¹³⁸ The conversation between Satan and God in Job 1.6 was ended with God allowing Satan to give Job adversity. God uses Satan to examine Job's faith in God.

¹³⁹ According to Stoyanov's theory on the history of evil Satan in the pre-exilic era was called an accuser then in the late Achaemenid era Satan was shifted to the role of an adversary. See Yuri Stoyanov, *The Other God: Dualist Religions from Antiquity to the Cathar Heresy* (New Haven, Conn., 2000), 56-60.

As it is written, "I am a father to Israel (Jer. 31.8), my firstborn (Exod. 4.22)." Therefore, it is appropriate to be a father from [the age of] thirteen, and [raising] a son is imposed on him until [his son turns] thirteen years old. This is [the meaning of] *abgy*. Therefore, the Holy One, blessed be He, has thirteen windows that correspond to the twelve tribes and Jacob, and to which prayer ascends. *Abgytz*,¹⁴⁰ Holy One, blessed be He, who is a father to the Israelite therefore, remembers thirteen entities of mercy of God... Satan stands against the prayer lest it ascend even if it comes from the heart...¹⁴¹

The two hermeneutic methods are applied to a part of the word made by acrostic, *Abgytz*. *Abgy* is decomposed by means of a linguistic hermeneutic and a numerological method; *ab* denotes a father and *gy* is the number thirteen. The number thirteen is equivalent to the numbers of a certain group of sons of God and the windows. The equivalency of the numbers is explained by the sonship concept. Moshe Idel demonstrates that the son and father relationship plays an important role in the Hebrew Bible and in subsequent literature.¹⁴² Sonship underlies the worshippers' aspiration, and it is their motivation to perform

¹⁴⁰ On this notion see chapter 1, page 60, 65, chapter 4, 166.

¹⁴¹ *Sefer ha-Shem* ed. Eisenbach (Jerusalem, 2005), 15, 84 (in the CD Responsa Project), 19 *Abgytz*. See also *Sefer ha-Hokhmah* Ms. Oxford Bodleian Library MS Opp. 506 1812 [IMHM #18104], fol.56a; *Sefer Sodey Razaya Shalem*, 223.

¹⁴² Moshe Idel, *Ben: Sonship and Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 2007).

religious activities and good deeds. In other words, man strives to assimilate with the higher world or with the higher son to become a son of God.¹⁴³ In the first part of our text, such an aspiration and the effort of man is absent; rather, a fatherhood, the obligation of father to son, occupies the first part of the text. The last part is devoted to the assimilation of prayer with the higher world instead of man's assimilation.

The description of sonship appeals to the close bond of father and son, reflecting the relationship between God and the Israelites. The concept involves not only the existing sons of God, represented by biblical figures, but also ordinary man, attempting to become His son by assimilating with the sons. In our text, twelve tribes and Jacob are treated as the sons of God, so-called the royal or national sonship. The text's "thirteen windows, which correspond to twelve tribes and Jacob," imply that there is a specific window for prayer recited by Jacob and for the each tribe as well, one window for each tribe. The motif – twelve windows for the twelve tribes – is found in the Lurianic tradition until 18th century Hasidism.¹⁴⁴ They are sons of God; therefore, they possess the windows corresponding to them in heaven. By belonging to the tribes, other ordinary men who are not sons of God enable the passage of their prayers through the gate of heaven. It is noteworthy to mention that J. T. *Rosh Hashanah* as well as *Midrash Exodus Rabbah* record that God created 365 windows in

¹⁴³ Idel, *Ben*, 1-2.

¹⁴⁴ The *Zohar* also mentions the motif but unrelated to prayer. See Hallamish, *Kabbalah: In Liturgy*, 106-113.

heaven.¹⁴⁵ But the usage and the allocation of the rest of the 352 windows may apply to the prayers of men who are not sons of God. The prayers that ascend to the thirteen windows are only those involving the word *Abgytz*.

In contrast to the previously quoted text of *Sodey Razaya*,¹⁴⁶ written before *Sefer ha-Shem*, R. Eleazar of Worms posits here that even a prayer accompanied with *Kavvanah* is liable to be interrupted by Satan. The phrase “even if it comes from the heart” indicates that observance of religious duty is no longer a primary condition of acceptance of prayer in heaven. Only improper prayer was the object of rejection in the abovementioned rabbinic text, whereas Satan here takes an entirely hostile attitude to any prayer. Regardless of the fulfillment of *Mitzvot*, Satan appears to preempt prayer before it reaches the gate of the celestial realm. The accounts of the ascent of prayer shift to the lower realm of the universe, the middle layer, between heaven and earth. Unlike in biblical texts, Satan is no longer depicted as standing before God but standing outside the realm where God dwells.¹⁴⁷ Satan is completely independent from God from both the geographical and authoritative points of view. There is no divine protection against the attack of Satan. Instead of the

¹⁴⁵ *J. T. Rosh ha-Shanah*, 2.28 “the Holy One, blessed be He created 365 windows that the world might use them.” See also *Midrash Exod. Rabbah* 15.22; *Sefer Sodey Razaya Shalem*, 223.

¹⁴⁶ See chapter 1, page 56.

¹⁴⁷ The verses in Job 1.6 and 2.1 mention that “Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord.” The distance between Satan and God may be unfathomable. But Satan is depicted as located within the divine realm.

physical counterforce, a linguistic power inherited in the divine name became the major protection. The theme is transformed into the counterforce to obstruction (by Satan) of prayer's ascent.

As previously mentioned, the holy creatures, angels, or gatekeepers behave as obstacles to protect heaven from the harm of unsuitable prayer. The protectors of heaven do not prevent the prayer from reaching the entrance of heaven, but Satan performs within the space between the lower world and the upper one to disturb a prayer's ascent to heaven.

Linguistic Magic Inherent in the Divine Name

According to Jewish tradition, language has a creative power. It was not originally a tool for communication but rather a tool for creation.¹⁴⁸ The divine name especially possesses a certain kind of power. Rabbinic literature considers that the power that raises a crown to the head of God is the divine name, Tetragrammaton. Hasidei Ashkenaz specifies the force of raising the crown as the forty-two-letter divine name in *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, which epitomizes the

¹⁴⁸ See Joseph Dan, "The Language of the Mystics in Medieval Germany, Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah" in *Ashkenazi Judaism: International Symposium held in Frankfurt a. M. 1991* (ed., Walter de Gruyter; Berlin: 1995), 8; Gershom Scholem, "The Name of God and the Linguistic Theory of the Kabbala" *Diogenes* 72 (1972): 59-80; Moshe Idel, "Reification of language in Jewish mysticism," in *Mysticism and Language* (ed., Steven T. Katz; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 42-79; Elliot R. Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being: Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination* (New York : Fordham University Press, 2005.)

doctrine of the school of his teacher, R. Judah he-Hasid,¹⁴⁹ written down by R. Eleazar of Worms. "And the crown sits on the Creator's head by the forty-two-letter name."¹⁵⁰ Within *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, we find material that Moshe Idel ascribes to R. Nehemiah ben Shlomo ha-Navi,¹⁵¹ active in the first third of the 13th century,¹⁵² one of the members of the movement of Hasidei Ashkenaz. R. Nehemiah, who is one of the sources of the concept of the ascent of prayer in *Zayyah*,¹⁵³ also specifies that the forty-two-letter divine name raises the prayer in a more developed way.

The place of the Atarah [diadem] is on the head of the Creator, in [or by the means of] the [divine] name of 42 letters...and when the 'Atarah is on the head of the Creator, then the 'Atarah is called Akatriel...¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ Joseph Dan, "The Ashkenazi Hasidic 'Gates of Wisdom'," 183. See also Joseph Dan, "The Language of the Mystics Mystics in Medieval Germany," *Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah* (1995), 8.

¹⁵⁰ Green, *Keter*, 125. Ms. Oxford 1568.

¹⁵¹ For the identification of the authorship see Moshe Idel, "Some Forlorn Writings of a Forgotten Ashkenazi Prophet: R. Nehemiah ben Shlomo ha-Navi," *JQR* 95 (2005): 183-196; Moshe Idel, "Interpretation of R. Nehemiah ben Shelomo ha-Navi on Piyyut," *Moreshet Israel* 2 (2006): 5-41.

¹⁵² Idel, "Some Forlorn Writings," 195.

¹⁵³ The source is based on the conversation with Moshe Idel.

¹⁵⁴ Ms. Oxford-Bodleian 1812, fol. 60b translated into English by Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 39. See also Daniel Abramson, "From

The specified divine name is mentioned as a tool for crowning God. In pre-Zayyah literature, most of the ascent of prayer by means of the divine name involves crown mysticism. Another text ascribed to R. Nehemiah found in *Merkavah Shelemah* demonstrates the theurgical impact of man upon God's actions, implying an association between the union of the divine name and the act of God.

Shofar in *Gematria* is "Prince of Throne," "God of prince," or "God of one gate"¹⁵⁵ as there is a door under the throne.¹⁵⁶ When the Holy One, blessed be He, receives our prayers, He goes and opens the door and the prayer enters before Him. Therefore, it is interpreted as the throne of God. When we unite His name, He opens the gate and receives their prayers... It is name of Holy One, blessed be He, that teaches. When He opens the door, the voice enters...and the voice reaches the Holy One, blessed be He, between his eyes. When the voice has ascended then ash

Divine Shape to Angelic Being: The Career of Akatriel in Jewish Literature," *The Journal of Religion* 76 (1996): 43-63 for the detailed analysis for Akatriel.

¹⁵⁵ The numerical value of these phrases אב אחד שער = אלוהים שר = שר כסא = שופר is equivalent to 586. For the last phrase see Yehudah Liebes, "The Angels of the Shofar and Yeshua Sar ha-Panim," in *Proceedings of the First International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism: Early Jewish Mysticism* (1987): n.43 (Hebrew).

¹⁵⁶ J. T. *Sanhedrin*, 65b may be the source for the motif. See Liebes, "The Angels of the Shofar," 173.

[of the ram] of Isaac¹⁵⁷ flies before the Holy One, blessed be He.¹⁵⁸

In contrast to what other texts of the Hasidei Ashkenaz circle mention, it is God Himself here who opens the window to receive prayer.¹⁵⁹ This is the first text that has God rather than angels perform the act, probably based on the verse in *Malachi* 3:10.¹⁶⁰ The union of divine name, most likely performed by a combination of letters of the divine name during ritual, causes God to open the gate. The theurgical force of man's deed is on the other hand indispensable for his prayers to reach God. In other words, the act of God toward human prayer depends upon man's deed. The divine name announces the arrival of prayer to heaven.

Another passage in *Sefer ha-Hokhmah* that is similar to the above-quoted text of *Sefer ha-Shem* presents the monadic understanding of the Hebrew

¹⁵⁷ See *B.T. Ber.* 62b.

¹⁵⁸ *Sefer Merkavah Shelemah* (ed., S. Musajoff; Jerusalem: Makor, 1972), 25. (Hebrew) The English rendering of the Hebrew text is my own. A part of the Hebrew text is quoted in Liebes, "The Angels of the Shofar," 173.

¹⁵⁹ Closing the window is also depicted in *Sefer Hasidim* by R. Judah he-Hasid (ed., Margaliyot; Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1957), 431. The window is closed for idolatry in a synagogue.

¹⁶⁰ "Says the Lord of hosts, If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it." (New King James edition)

language¹⁶¹ and gives a semantic and numerological interpretation. The preceding passage mentions that each letter of the six letters of *Abgytz* has an individual name – for example, *Adiron* for *Aleph* and *Bihariron* for *Beit*.¹⁶²

Therefore *Abgytz* is the patriarch who opens the thirteen upper windows to which the prayers ascend, as opposed to the twelve tribes and Jacob, their fathers. Here are thirteen therefore children of Jacob said “Shema Israel the Lord our God, the lord is one (Deut. 6:4)” which in *Gematria* thirteen¹⁶³ ... *Abgytz*: It means the patriarch at thirteen degrees. TZ (תץ) is a judgment and guards against Satan, who prevents the ascent of prayer.¹⁶⁴

R. Eleazar monadizes the forty-two-letter divine name, *Abgytz*, into three parts. The first two letters of the forty-two-letter name derive from the acrostic of the

¹⁶¹ Idel, *Kabbalistic Exegesis, Hebrew Bible/Old Testament I,2* (2000): 456-466.

¹⁶² Ms. Oxf.1812 fol.55b; *Sefer ha-Shem* 19. See other interpretation of *Abgytz* referring to angelic names, *Adiron*, *Bihariron*, *Gihariron*, *Yagbihayah*, *Talmiyah*, *Zatnitayah*... See Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia*, 17.

¹⁶³ The numerical value of the Hebrew word for “one (אחד)” is 13.

¹⁶⁴ Ms. Oxf.1812 fol.55b-56a. “ לפי שהוא אב לכן י”ג שנה לכך אבג”י האב פותח יג חלוני למעלה. שהתפילה עולה בהן נגד י”ב שבט”י ויעקב אביהן הרי י”ג ולכך אמר בני יעקב שמע ישראל יי אלהינו יי אחס שהוא גימ’ י”ג וכן האב [ל ישראל י”ג מיות רחמים יי יי אל רחמים. אבגיתץ פי הא”ב בזכות י”ג מידות ת”ץ המשפט(?) ושומר מן השטן העומד לקטרג בתפילה שלא תעלה

prayer “*Ana beKoah*”,¹⁶⁵ אבג, and are associated by R. Eleazar with patriarchs. *Abot*,¹⁶⁶ or יג, is interpreted as the number thirteen that *Sefer ha-Shem* refers to as the number of tribes of Israel in addition to Jacob.¹⁶⁷ These correspond to the thirteen windows in heaven.¹⁶⁸ The last letters derive from the last two words of the first line, אבג, and appear to possess a talismanic element inherent in the Hebrew letters’ role in keeping Satan away, who disturbs the ascent of prayer. This linguistic interpretation may be the source of the writings of R. Joseph ibn Zayyah, which we discuss in chapter 4. R. Judah he-Hasid already mentioned the linguistic repercussion that the specific words of prayer and influence upon the appurtenance of the celestial world. “When Moshe recited prayers in Minyan and [at the prayer of] ‘I would appeal’ gates of the prayer¹⁶⁹ were locked.”

Sefer ha-Shem, written after *Sodey Razaya*, presents the linguistic theory combined with the ascent of letters to heaven.

Because voice cause (!) to raise a voice “It is the voice of my beloved! He

¹⁶⁵ See Chapter 4 for more details of the Divine Name derived from the text of prayer *Ana be-Koah*.

¹⁶⁶ See also *Sefer ha-Shem* (Eisenbach), 19, which mentions that ABG implies the three (ג) patriarchs (אבות).

¹⁶⁷ *Sefer ha-Shem* (Eisenbach), 19.

¹⁶⁸ Ms. Oxf.1812 fol.55b. “ יג שני לכך אבגיי האב פותח יג חלונוי למעלה שהתפילה עולה הבן נגד ”
 “ ייב שבט ויעקב אביהן הרי ייג ולכך אמר בני ”

¹⁶⁹ B. T. *Baba Mezhiah*, 59a.

knocks" (Song of Songs 5:2)¹⁷⁰ and all voice will obtain favor of God. The combination of letters, such as voice (קול): voice [is composed] of [letters] *kuf*, *vav*, and *lamed*. *Lamed* is higher than all the letters; [there is a drawing] like a *vav* upon his shoulder, after the name like *Shofar*, "lift up thy voice" (Is. 58:1), "and cried to heaven" (Ch. II 32:20), "they cried, and their cry came up (unto God)" (Ex. 2:23), "(the cry of) the city went up to heaven" (Samuel I 5:12) to *Kuf*. *Kuf* is deeper than all letters; like *Vav* underneath, which does not touch the roof as the cries of supplications (*Tachnun*) ascends to make them listen...¹⁷¹

Why does a voice raise a voice? The Talmud notes that the letters ascend on high,¹⁷² and all the voices of prayers of man ascend automatically. However, R. Eleazar seems to claim that that the Hebrew letters for "voice" (קול) raise an actual voice. It is based on the idea that the shape of the letter signifies its character. By applying the theory which is probably derived from *Midrash Gen.*

¹⁷⁰ New King James Version.

¹⁷¹ *Sefer ha-Shem* (Eisenbach), 184. "ועשה ק' בתחלת תיבה בקול כי קול גורמים להרים קול, (ב), ויפק רצון האל הכל קול. וצירוף האותיות כגון קול קול קו"ף ו"ו למ"ד. ל' גבוה מכל האותיות משכמו ולמעלה כמין ו"ו על שכמו, על שם כשופר הרם קולך (ישעי' נח, א), ויזעקו, השמים (דברי הימים ב, לב כ), ותעל שועתם (שמות ב, כג), העיר השמים (שמואל א ה, יב) לקו"ף. ק' עמוק מכל האותיות כמין ו' תחתיו ואינו נוגע בגו, כי קול צעקת תחנונים עולה למעלה להשמיע במרום קולכם. וישמע מהיכלו קולי (ש"ב כב, ז), וכתוב (תהלים יח, יד) ועליון יתן קולו. ק' עלה למעלה למעלה."

¹⁷² *B.T. Pes. 87b, Avodah Zarah, 18a.*

Rabbah 1:10, which describes the structure of the letter *bet*,¹⁷³ R. Eleazar sought to support the contention of the ascent of voice to heaven.

To conclude, the phenomena of the ascent of prayer in rabbinic, *Heikhalot*, and Hasidei Ashkenazic literature all demonstrate two parallel notions: prayer that directly reaches God without changing its form and prayer that reaches God in the form of a crown. Moreover, all premises depict the ascent of prayer without any intermediaries as a commonly known phenomenon, a fact developed in the kabbalistic literature where angels appear as an intermediary of prayer. All uttered prayer – even that of a sinner – ascends to the border of earth and heaven without aid. Its entering heaven depends upon permission of angel; normally, the prayer of the righteous with *Kavvanah* is allowed. The tradition we have seen became the basis of the later development of the ascent of prayer in the kabbalistic literature interwoven with angelology, magical-linguistic theory, and numerological exegesis.

Early Kabbalistic Views

Provençal Kabbalah

The early Provençal kabbalists such as R. Abraham ben Isaac of Narbonne (c.1110-1179), R. Jacob ha-Nazir, active in the last half of the 12th century, R. Abraham ben David of Posqueires (c.1125-1198), R. Judah ben Yakar,

¹⁷³ “Furthermore, the letter bet had other desirable features. ‘Just as the bet is closed on all sides and open in front, so we have no right to inquire what is below, what is above, what is back, but only from the day that the world was created and thereafter’ (Gen. R. 1:10).

and R. Isaac the Blind (1160-1235) do not mention the ascension of prayer. Neither does the first kabbalistic book, *Sefer ha-Bahir*, which appeared in the same period. There are two possibilities: They had no chance to encounter their contemporaries, Hasidei Ashkenaz, who developed the concept, or they received the doctrine but did not reveal it.

It is the next generation that first exhibited or revealed the phenomenon. *Sefer Kol Bo*, ascribed to R. Abraham Jacob ha-Kohen of Narbonne (13th-14th century), who lived in Provence, Spain, and Majorca, demonstrates the text that deals with the receiver of prayer.¹⁷⁴ His oft-quoted text obviously reached Jerusalem Kabbalah.

Zohar and the Castilian Kabbalah

The *Zohar*, a collection of works, demonstrates little influence on Zayyah, however it describes most of the phenomena pertaining to the ascent of the prayer presented in the previous literature. The *Zohar* presents the ascension of non-liturgical words uttered by man: a new word of *Torah* or an innovated word of *Torah* (1:4b), light (1:8a), spirit (1:19b), and ascent offering (1:70a).¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ See chapter three for his text.

¹⁷⁵ "The words of a new interpretation of *Torah* ascend to the Holy one." *Zohar* 1:4b; "The words of man ascends regardless of prayer... The words of a new interpretation of *Torah* ascends (!) to the Holy one. (Matt interpreted it as *Tiferet*) When the new idea was formulated in the field of esoteric wisdom, it ascends and rests on the head of the "Zaddik." See Elliot R. Wolfson for rabbinic understanding of word of *Torah* (davar shel torah); "Iconic Visualization and the Imaginal Body of God: The Role of Intention in

The ascent of the words of new interpretations of *Torah* is new to us, for God listens to the voice of those who occupy themselves with *Torah* and every word innovated in *Torah* by one engaged in *Torah*.

At the moment when a man expounds something new in the *Torah*, his utterance ascends before the Holy One, blessed be He, and He takes it up and kisses it and crowns it with seventy crowns of graven and inscribed letters.¹⁷⁶

An innovated word of wisdom ascends and is crowned by God. The movement of the new word of *Torah* is similar to a prayer that both of them ascend to the divine realm and finally sit upon the head of God as in other crown mysticism. The classic type of ascent tradition, crown mysticism, and the new understanding of ascension with theosophical interpretation all coexist in the *Zohar*. The former is profoundly involved with the identification of prayer as the offering.

When prayer is being offered, all the words that a man has emitted from his mouth during his prayer mount aloft and cleave their way through ethers and firmaments until they reach their destination, where

the Rabbinic Conception of Prayer," *Modern Theology* 12 (1996): 140.

¹⁷⁶ *Zohar* 1:4b. English translation is based on Soncino 1:18. See also Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar* (London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1989) 3:1128 (41).

they are formed into a crown on the head of the king.¹⁷⁷

The purpose of the ascension of prayer in this text is the coronation. Rabbinic literature demonstrates the adaptation of crowning rather than anointing with oil, which was the central method of inauguration for a king in ancient Israel.¹⁷⁸ Both of the methods never appeared in Bible (where they would be offensive) whereas rabbinic literature seems to treat them as inoffensive.¹⁷⁹ *Zohar* adopts the rabbinic theology and does not consider the crowning of God as theologically offensive.¹⁸⁰ The prayer here is considered the substitute for sacrificial offering, which ascends by itself. Elsewhere, the *Zohar* mentions that a prayer itself possesses the ascending force; it “ascends by means of that prayer.”¹⁸¹ Therefore external force is unnecessary.

All the words that a man utters through his mouth in that prayer

¹⁷⁷ *Zohar* 3:260b. English translation is based on Soncino 5:342.

¹⁷⁸ Green, *Keter*, 8, 10.

¹⁷⁹ Green, *Keter*, 10.

¹⁸⁰ *Zohar* 3:260b. (tr. Soncino 5:342.) “When prayer is being offered, all the words that a man has emitted from his mouth during his prayer mount aloft and cleave their way through ethers and firmaments until they reach their destination, where they are formed into a crown on the head of the king. The Companions have agreed that the prayer directed by man to the Almighty should be of the nature of supplication. (*B.T. Ber.* 28b)”

¹⁸¹ *Zohar* 2:250a.

ascends, and split the atmosphere and firmament, until they reach the place that they reach, where they form a crown upon the king's head, and a crown is made from them."¹⁸²

The form of prayer that ascends is seen as the pronounced words of prayer as in the rabbinic, *Heikhalot*, and Hasidei Ashkenaz literature.¹⁸³

The angel no longer plays a role in the *Zohar*. The previous literature claimed that the prayer ascended to the gate of heaven, where angels became intermediaries of prayer. If prayer ascends directly to God, then the involvement of angels is unnecessary. Elsewhere in the *Zohar*, mediation by angels parallels the automatic ascension to God. "Metatron opens the gates of hidden wisdom and receives and raises a prayer"¹⁸⁴ and "he takes a hundred blessings every day, and ties knots for his Master."¹⁸⁵ The performance of Metatron was in heaven; he was stationed at the gates and received the prayer ascending from the earth as depicted in the *Heikhalot* literature. The two

¹⁸² *Zohar* 3:260b quoted in Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:956.

¹⁸³ The view that the entity that ascends is speech, is presented by R. Eleazar of Worms. The *Zohar* repeats the idea that the entity that ascends is speech. "Every single word of prayer emitted from man ascends aloft and splits firmaments, and enters the place that it enters." *Zohar* 3:55a quoted in Tishby, 3:956. See also for ascent of the words of *Grace after Meal*, *Zohar* 2:218a (English translation Soncino 4:242.) "The words of the benediction pronounced by a man after eating and drinking ascend on high."

¹⁸⁴ *Zohar* 1:37b.

¹⁸⁵ *Zohar* 1:37b quoted in Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:629 (52).

contradictory accounts can coexist without conflict. The previous literature depicts angels as helpers in the last step of the ascension of prayer in heaven whereas the *Zohar* holds the opposite view that prayer has a greater power than angels, even in heaven.¹⁸⁶ However, the angel plays an important role in the context of the obstacle to prayer.

Obstacle to Prayer

The celestial being is a chief figure that interrupts prayer to protect heaven. According to the *Zohar*, “heavenly powers detract unworthy prayers”¹⁸⁷; “guardians of the gates on high do not allow the prayer to enter.”¹⁸⁸ In the *Zohar* the word “split” recurs. “All these words of man’s prayer splits atmospheres, splits firmaments, opens doors, and ascends aloft.”¹⁸⁹ Tishby asserts that the recurrence “implies the existence of obstacles that prayer encounters and has to overcome.”¹⁹⁰ Other texts describe the desert as full of demons.

¹⁸⁶ Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 956-957. “The firmaments and halls become unified and ascend together because of the power of the prayers that pass through them, and even the angels that assist the prayers to ascend are themselves helped by them and are raised higher.”

¹⁸⁷ *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* (tr. Daniel Matt; Stanford University Press, 2003), 1:202b; Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* (2005), 3:242.

¹⁸⁸ *Zohar* 1:19b.

¹⁸⁹ *Zohar* 2:201a quoted in Tishby, 3:956. See also *Zohar* 3:260b, 3:55a.

¹⁹⁰ Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:956.

As soon as Sabbath departs, countless forces and companies fly, roaming through the world. So the song against maleficent spirits (*shir shel pga'im*) was instituted to prevent their ruling the holy people...they fly away, roaming until they reach the desert.¹⁹¹

The Castilian kabbalist R. Joseph ben Abraham Gikatilla, widely held to be associated with the author or authors of the *Zohar*, also presents a similar idea.¹⁹² Based on the theological view derived from the *Midrash Tanhuma Mishpatim*,¹⁹³ Gikatilla claims that the pathway of prayer to heaven is full of physical obstacles such as impure creatures.¹⁹⁴

All these entities mentioned are gangs who dwell between heaven and earth. Thus, a person praying is just like someone travelling through

¹⁹¹ *Zohar Haqdamah*, 1:14b.

¹⁹² Yehudah Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993): 117-118.

¹⁹³ *Midrash Tanhuma*, 25b states "The whole world is full of evil spirits and *mazzikim*".

¹⁹⁴ R. Joseph Gikatilla, *Sha'are orah* (ed. J. Ben-Shlomo; 2 vols. Jerusalem: 1981), 1:53-54. English translations are based on, R. Joseph Gikatilla, *Gates of Light* (tr. Avi Weinstein; San Francisco: 1994), 12. "There are no open places from the earth to the heavens; every place is filled with legions and hordes. Some are full of mercy and loving-kindness. Others beneath them are impure creatures who seek to detract and do harm; some are stationary and others fly in the air. And there is no open space between the earth and the heavens because every place is crowded with them..."

perilous terrain; his prayer has to pass among these groups and then ascends to the heavens. If he is worthy, the robbers will not harm his prayers; and if he is not worthy, the destructive forces by the way will be numerous and formidable... Thus, King David, peace be with him, initiated the psalms to clear the way so the prayers could ascend unimpeded; for all these forces are like a cloud which prevents the ascension of prayer.¹⁹⁵

The angels of destruction obstruct only the blemished prayer in order to protect heaven.

The angels of destruction, agents of *sitra ahra*, lie in wait for prayers on the pathways they take in their ascent, and if there is some blemish in them they are liable to be snapped up by the powers of uncleanness.¹⁹⁶

This text demonstrates the rabbinic trends of obstacle to prayer. It aims to

¹⁹⁵ *Shaarei Orah*, 54. *Gates of Light*, 12. Gikatilla influenced Zayyah on the concept

“*Zinorot*” but without the ‘hydraulic’ concept. See Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 189.

Garb claims that the term *Zinorot* in Zayyah is derived from the theurgical speculation of R. Joseph Gikatilla. The term ‘*Zinorot*’ expresses the pathway between the powers of sefirot, without hydraulic implication. Further on the drawing and flowing power from the path see Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 189, n.36.

¹⁹⁶ Quoted in Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 956; 3:260b, 243a (*Raya Mehemna*), *Zohar Hadash, Tikkunim*, 108a; *Zohar* 1:23b, 2:248b, 250a.

protect heaven. The pure obstacle, which interrupts any prayer's ascension, does not appear in the *Zohar*.¹⁹⁷ One of the recurrent motifs in the *Zohar* is the prayer of poor man, which is also seen in *Perush le-Tefilah* by Zayyah.¹⁹⁸

When he (poor man) prays, He opens all the windows of the firmaments, and all the other prayers that are ascending are overtaken by the poor man who is brokenhearted... It covers up all the prayers in the world, and they do not enter until his prayer enters. The Holy One, blessed be He, says: Let all the prayers be covered up, but let this prayer come in to Me... David saw that all the windows and gates of heaven were ready to be opened for the poor man, and that there was no prayer in the whole world that the Holy One, blessed be He, would respond to as quickly as to the prayer of the poor man... a man who is praying should make himself poor, so that his prayer may enter with the generality of the poor, for all the gatekeepers allow the poor to enter far more easily than anyone else, for they enter even without asking permission. And if a man makes himself poor and adopts the approach of a poor man, his prayer ascends and meets the prayers of the poor, and joins them and ascends with them, and it enters as one of them and is received willingly by the holy King.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ *Zohar* 1:23b should be understood as the protector of heaven. "An angel of destruction interrupts prayers' ascent."

¹⁹⁸ For example see *Zohar* 1:23a, 1:168b. The *Zohar* emphasizes that prayer of 'the poor man' overcomes all the detractions and goes through the door or gate of heaven.

¹⁹⁹ *Zohar* 3:195a, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1048-1049.

The account of the poor man recurs, especially with regard to his relationship with God, through prayer and sacrificial offering.²⁰⁰ The prayer of the poor man is “worthy than any other, even that of Moses and David.”²⁰¹ This is in opposition to the midrashic text, which notes the equality of all prayer, whether the person is rich or poor or woman or slave before God.²⁰² The *Zohar* asserts that God favors the poor man’s prayer, which therefore “overcomes all the obstacles in the path of its ascent: It breaks down gates and doors,”²⁰³ and “ascends to the King’s Throne of Glory and adorns His head.”²⁰⁴ The poor man’s prayer possesses the theurgical effect that overcomes obstacles.

Gikatilla states an effect similar to the poor man’s prayer in the specific

²⁰⁰ Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1429.

²⁰¹ Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1429.

²⁰² *Midrash Ex. Rabbah* 21:4 states the equality of all prayers regardless of rich or poor, or woman or slave, before God. “‘Who hears prayer’ – R. Judah bar Shalom reported in the name of R Eleazar: A human being, if a poor man comes to say something to him he does not listen to him; if a rich man comes to say something-he immediately listens and receives him. But the Holy One blessed be He is not so, but all are equal before him-women and slaves and the poor and the rich...this is prayer and this is prayer: all are equal before God in prayer” quoted in Meir Bar-Ilan, “Prayers of Jews to angels and other mediators in the first centuries CE,” *Saints and Role Models in Judaism and Christianity* (ed., M. Poorthuis, J. Schwartz; Leiden; Brill, 2004), 94.

²⁰³ *Zohar* 1:168b quoted in Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1429.

²⁰⁴ *Zohar* 2:86b quoted in Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1429.

prayer. The *Psalms* have the power to disperse the obstruction of prayer. A prayer accompanied by *Kavvanah* also prevents any hindrance to prayer being answered by God.

The song of the morning stars consists of the ZeMiRoth that are chanted in the morning service. These psalms have the power to disperse and enfeeble all B'nai ELOHIM, the harsh masters of judgment ... Therefore a man must concentrate during his prayer and direct his thoughts properly so that his prayer will not be hindered and his requests return unanswered.²⁰⁵

It seems the subject here is the physical hindrances rather than inflicting mental harm. The “*zemirot*” recited in Morning Prayer possess the power to “disperse Satan.”²⁰⁶ There is another merit attached to reciting Psalm 145,²⁰⁷ according to the Talmud: “Whoever recites [the psalm] Praise of David three times daily, is sure to inherit the world to come.”²⁰⁸ Therefore, starting a day by reciting *Pesukei de-Zimra*, which protects the pathway of prayer, and reciting the *Shema* while donning *Tefilin* opens the gates of prayer. The order of prayer is significant in reaching God. According to the *Zohar*, “those words of *Torah* that

²⁰⁵ *Gates of Light*, 13; *Shaarei Orah*, 55.

²⁰⁶ The English translation is according to Green, *Keter*, 125.

²⁰⁷ *Ashrei* (“Happy are they.”)

²⁰⁸ *B. T. Ber.*, 4b. English translation is taken from *The Soncino Talmud on CD-ROM*.

he (King David) utters all ascend to be adorned before the blessed Holy One."²⁰⁹

Gates of Prayer

Zohar claims that prayer ascends within the path of prayer. Except for communal prayers, prayer encounters hindrances,²¹⁰ but this exception is limited to the prayers recited in *Eretz Israel*. "There are many forces who disparage and vilify" even a communal prayer recited in the diaspora.²¹¹ "There is no way for their prayers to ascend" when one is in exile "for the gates of heaven reside in Israel alone."²¹² Gikatilla expands the rabbinic idea of the direction of prayer. The geographical pathway of prayer is linked from *Eretz Israel* to heaven. "The prayers in the diaspora can only ascend if they are directed from there to Jerusalem, for it is from Jerusalem they are dispatched to the heavens."²¹³

²⁰⁹ *Zohar* 1:4b-5a.

²¹⁰ "Communal prayers, however, cannot be halted by any sentry or appointee. For when the community prays, the prayers are always accepted." (*Gates of Light*, 110; *Shaare Orah*, 141.)

²¹¹ *Gates of Light*, 111, *Shaare Orah*, 142.

²¹² *Gates of Light*, 111, *Shaare Orah*, 142.

²¹³ *Gates of Light*, 112, *Shaare Orah*, 143. See also Joseph Gikatilla, *Sefer Sha'arei Zedek* (Cracow, 1881), 15 that the geographical path of prayer is located above the head of Jerusalem. "כשהיו ישראל בירושלים היו מתפללין בבית המקדש תפלתן עולה עד למעלה בלי." "מעכב ומונע" "When Israel is in Jerusalem and pray in *Beit Mikdash* their prayer ascends on high without any obstruction."

In the doctrine of Gikatilla, the ascent of prayer to the chambers of heavens, which we have seen in the rabbinic and Hasidei Ashkenaz literature, is interchangeable with theosophical interpretation.

The attribute EL CHaY is like an examiner and the junction for receiving the prayers from ADoNaY. Many guards and soldiers stand in this Shrine who examine and enjoin all the prayers that enter the Shrine of ADoNaY. It is in this Shrine the prayers, the pleas and the cries are examined. When an individual prays, his prayer enters through the Shrine of ADoNaY and it is examined there. If it is fit to enter through the attribute EL CHaY, then the sentries accept the prayer and place it where it will reach YHVH, Blessed be He. If, God forbid, the prayers are not appropriate, then that prayer is considered PaSuL (foul) and all the words of that prayer are considered PSiLim (idols). Thus the herald calls out, "Don't allow this prayer before YHVH" ...

In contrast to the theory presented by R. Eleazar of Worms, in the text of Gikatilla, even an inappropriate prayer is allowed to enter into the last *Sefirah*, *Malkhut*, where all prayers are examined. Unacceptable prayers are eliminated by pushing "away with the gate locked in its face."²¹⁴ However, inappropriate prayer is pushed to the outer layer of the firmament but is given a chance to be accepted by God.

²¹⁴ *Gates of Light*, 108; *Shaare Orach*, 139.

God gives them a place to enter. For God created the heavens and gave them sentries and guards, and all these inappropriate prayers are gathered there. If an individual who had uttered inappropriate prayers which now stand on the outer layer of the firmament, if that person said another prayer that was done with great fervour (*Kavvanah*) and the prayer was correct and complete, then that prayer chases all the inappropriate prayers out of the outside layer and brings them, together with itself, before God, thus assuring that none of that individual's prayers fall astray.²¹⁵

Appropriate prayers bring the prayers rejected due to inappropriate *Kavvanah* back to the right path depending on one's deeds. Each individual prayer recognizes one who prayed. A correct and complete prayer with appropriate *Kavvanah* leads the prayer to ascend within the attributes of God, and it advances toward the higher attributes of God. "One should therefore pray with great fervour and weep, if he wants his prayers to be accepted."²¹⁶

Deliverer of Prayer

It is the *Zohar* that first depicts the deliverer of prayer. The four animals or even God are depicted as those who carry prayers to heaven.

When he opens his mouth to utter the evening prayer an eagle comes

²¹⁵ *Gates of Light*, 109.

²¹⁶ *Gates of Light*, 109-110; *Shaare Orach*, 141.

down on the weekdays to take up on its wings the evening prayer. This is the angel called Nuriel when coming from the side of *Hesed* (Kindness), and Uriel when coming from the side of *Geburah* (Force), because it is a burning fire. For the morning prayer also a lion comes down to receive it in his winged arms: this is Michael. For the afternoon prayer an ox comes down to take it with his arms and horns: this is Gabriel. On Sabbath God himself comes down with the three patriarchs to welcome his only daughter. At that moment the celestial beings who are called by the angel of the Lord exclaim "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be exalted, ye everlasting doors,"²¹⁷ and straightway the doors of seven palaces fly open.²¹⁸

The quotation of the verse proves that the author intended to note that the prayer is taken from outside the gate of the palaces. It is still unclear where the doors of the seven palaces are located and where the angelic beings and God come down to pick up prayer. If the palaces are located outside heaven or on the border between the celestial realm and the lower world, then this is the first case of the deliverer of prayer being outside heaven. We will see a more precise description of the structure of heaven in the text below.²¹⁹

The 14th century anonymous work, *Berit Menuhah* ("Order of Calmness") illustrates the structure of angelic world, some angelic being belong to the blaze,

²¹⁷ *B.T. Sanh.*, 107b.

²¹⁸ *Zohar* 1:23b. English translation is taken from Soncino, vol. 1 96.

²¹⁹ See *Zohar* 2:250a in the following section "Theosophical Interpretation."

or *Cherubim, Seraphim, Hashmal, Ofanim* descents. These twenty-six angels, beginning with Metatron and Prince Shemu'el, help each other to activate their power and raise prayer.

Those angels who take the prayer from gate to gate and entrance to entrance bring the prayer to prince Metatron. He sacrifices the prayer and offers it to prince Shemu'el. He burns the incense to the Holy one, blessed be He.²²⁰

In Shemu'el's trip to the first heaven, he ascends through the places with heavenly voice, spark, brilliance, splendor, and elegance. Prayer here is treated as a sacrificial offering. Shemu'el burns the incense after Metatron sacrificed prayer for Shemu'el.

The phrase "inserts the prayer from gate to gate" indicates that the angels are responsible for prayer entering into a certain gate. Is the phenomenon the first indication of ascent of prayer by angelic force? A similar phrase is found in the *Zohar*. "Sandalfon inserts the prayer in the seventh heaven."²²¹ Neither text indicates that those angels carry the prayer from the earth to the gate of heaven but instead that they "insert prayer" in gates or the seventh heaven. I assume that the phenomenon in *Berit Menuhah* occurs within

²²⁰ *Berit Menuhah* 29 quoted in Oded Porat, (M.A. Thesis, Hebrew University, 2007), 126. "ואלו הם המכניסים התפילה משער לשער וממבוא למבוא ומחצר לחצר עד שמגיעים אותה." "אל השר מטט"רון והוא מקריב אותה אל השר שמוע"אל והוא המקטיר את קטורת הסמים לפני

²²¹ *Zohar* 2:202b. "סנדלפון הוא המכניס את התפילה ברקיע השביעי"

heaven. The angels cooperated with each other in passing the prayer from the first gate of heaven to the next one until it reaches Metatron. It is reminiscent of the *Heikhalot* literature, in which angels stand at the window of heaven to announce the other angels. *Berit Menuhah* noted that the announcement is not verbal communication but a physical passing of the ontological prayer from an angel located in the lower heaven to the higher.

Theosophical Interpretation

In the account of the *Zohar*, prayer usually ascends by itself and gives a more specific explanation of where the prayer reaches. The rabbinic, Midrash, and Hasidei Ashkenaz literature all depict the as world centered on an angelic realm while theosophical kabbalists tend to concentrate upon the divine pleroma.

They (prayers) enter all the heavens and all the palaces until the gate of the upper opening [i.e. the *Shekhinah*] and that prayer enters before the King to be crowned.²²²

The crown mysticism is methathesized with the theosophical connotation of the crown. An appropriate prayer enters “all the heavens,” indicating the existence

²²² *Zohar* 2:250a cited in Elliot R. Wolfson, “Forms of Visionary ascent as ecstatic experience in the Zoharic literature,” *Gershom Scholem’s Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism 50 Years After* (ed., Perter Schafer and Joseph Dan; Tübingen J.C.B. Mohr, 1993): 221.

of numerous numbers of heavens until *Shekhinah*, the lowest or tenth *Sefirah*. The structure of the upper worlds according to this text involves heavens, palaces, and Gates of *Shekhinah* below the sefirotic realm. In order to reach the first gate, prayer must go through all of these places. The multiple worlds view is prominent in the *Zohar*, but rabbinic literature also uses the plural term for windows, which probably derives from the number of windows discussed in J.T. *Rosh Ha-Shanah*, discussed in chapter 1. The *Heikhalot* literature, on the other hand, has a single window as a single angel guards the gate. Through theosophical treatment, sacrificial service causes the sefirotic union.²²³ Sacrificial offering ascends and unites the *Sefirot* and then ascend to the Beyond.²²⁴ Prayer is considered a substitute for sacrifice; therefore, both prayer and sacrificial offering function to unify and repair the *Sefirot* – the former through speech, and the latter through act.

²²³ Matt, vol.3, 100, 1:181b, see also *Zohar* 1:19b.

²²⁴ See Matt, *Zohar* 1:380 n. 286 (1:65a).

Chapter Two

Ascent of Prayer in the Theory of R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid

Chapter Two: Ascent of Prayer in the Theory of R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid

R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid was one of the most important kabbalists in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. Little is known about his background, and there is no scholarly consensus regarding his place of origin²²⁵ or his parentage.²²⁶ R. David is counted by some scholars as one of the

²²⁵ Scholars such as Solomon Mayer Schiller-Sziinessy (1820-1890), who compiled the *Catalogue of Hebrew Manuscripts*, Cambridge, no date, printed but unpublished, Abraham Epstein, Gershom Scholem and Moshe Idel recognize him as a Spanish kabbalist. See Scholem, "R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid as Grandson of Nahmanides," 138-139 (Hebrew); Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 61, 104; and Abraham Epstein, "Das talmudische Lexikon יחסי תנאים ואמוראים und Jehuda b. Kalonzmos aus Speier" *MGWJ* 39 (1895): 450-51. While Arthur Marmorstein ["David Ben Jehuda Hasid," *MGWJ* 71 (1927 Jan.-Feb.): 41] and Hallamish (*An Introduction to the Kabbalah*, , 165)) view R. David as an Ashkenazic kabbalist. Because several manuscripts of R. David's works were found in North Africa, Hallamish claims that R. David also lived there [Moshe Hallamish, *The Kabbalah in North Africa- A Historical and Cultural Survey* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2001), 14].

²²⁶ There is a dubious tradition that has long history of debate since the eighteenth century that R. David is a son of the prominent mystic of Hasidei Ashkenaz, R. Judah he-Hasid. The testimony of R. David appeared on *Sefer Or Zaru'a* Ms. London 771 fol. 98a, b. Another striking genealogy is that R. David is a grandson of Nahmanides. For more detail see my "Secrets of the One Hundred Blessings and of the Washing of Hands in *Sefer Or Zaru'a* by R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid" (M.A. thesis, Rothberg

members of the composition group of *Sefer ha-Zohar*.²²⁷ His Kabbalah is heavily dependent on a theosophical and numerological interpretation of prayer, demonstrating the influence of the writings of Hasidei Ashkenaz and *Zohar*.

R. David wrote several kabbalistic treatises, such as commentaries to *Ma'aseh Bereshit* and *Ma'aseh Merkavah*,²²⁸ which are, according to Daniel Abrams, based on R. Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi's reworking.²²⁹ *Sefer Or Zaru'a*,²³⁰ composed by R. David, is one of the most significant works of kabbalistic commentary on liturgy through which R. David exhibits the structure of the *Sefirot*.²³¹ The work presents a commentary on daily and

School for Overseas Students, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2003), 4-8.

²²⁷ Judah Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 133; Moshe Idel, "The *Zohar* Translation by R. David b. Yehudah he-Hasid and His Commentary to Alphabet," *Alei Sefer* 8 (1980): 60 (Hebrew).

²²⁸ Daniel Abrams, "Ma'aseh Merkabah as a Literary Work: The Reception of Hekhalot Traditions by the German Pietists and Kabbalistic Reinterpretation" *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 5 (1998): 343-344.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ The title "*Or Zaru'a*" is derived from the Scripture Ps 97:11 and the word "*Zaru'a*" appears in Jer 2:2.

²³¹ The date of composition varies according to scholars. Marmorstein suggested that it was written between 1270 and 1300 (Scholem, "R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid as Grandson of Nahmanides," 137) while Matt rejected the 1270 as too early, for the work draws heavily on the *Zohar*, the main body of which circulated only in the late 1280s. If R. David obtained the main body of the *Zohar* only after it became public, Matt's dating

holiday prayers for the entire year, and without reference to sources, contains a large number of citations both from halakhic prayer books as well as from several books of the *Zohar*. The hermeneutic method and interpretation in the work had a profound influence on the 16th century kabbalistic treatises on prayer,²³² particularly those by the prominent Safedian kabbalists, R. Moshe Cordovero and R. Isaac Luria.

Introduction to *Sefer Or Zaru'a*

Sefer Or Zaru'a demonstrates the extent to which the development of kabbalistic prayer was based on halakhic materials and terminology as well as the degree to which these instruments are important tools in the analysis of kabbalistic prayers. The commentary demonstrated the influence of R. David on the 16th century Kabbalah center in Jerusalem.

In the end of the manuscript Ms. Jerusalem Yah. Heb. 94, the scribe, Aaron Azuz, designates one of the interpretations as "*al derekh ha-sod*" and the other as "*al derekh peshat*." Aaron does not explicate which exegetical method refers to which manuscript. The way of *Peshat* refers to plain or literal

would be convincing. But if R. David were among the zoharic circle and participated in the composition of the book, he could have been aware of its contents well before it was in public circulation. [See my "The Secrets of the One Hundred Blessings and of the Washing of Hands in *Sefer Or Zaru'a*," 16.]

²³² Moshe Idel, "Kabbalistic Prayer and Colors," in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times* 3 (ed. D. Blumenthal; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 19.

interpretation.²³³ The difference in characteristics of both writings does not provide a clue. *Sefer Or Zaru'a* mainly gives a theosophical-numerological exegesis while Zayyah rarely mentions theosophical terminology and speculation in his *Perush le-Tefilah*. However, both R. David and Zayyah frequently use the numerological interpretation that deserves the appellation frequently given to Hasidei Ashkenaz, heavy users of *Gematria*.²³⁴ In Ms. Oxford Bodleian 1624, written in the 16th century in Sephardic Mizrachit script, the scribe Aaron Azuz mentioned that this manuscript was copied for he who understands and is wise, R. Joseph ibn Zayyah. The title reads, “ פרוש תפלות על ” דרך הסוד הנקרא אור זרוע”. The statement *derekh ha Sod* refers to *Sefer Or Zaru'a*. If so, then *Perush le-Tefilah* should refer to *Peshat*. This evidence may support Zayyah’s contention that *Sefer Or Zaru'a* is the composition of the secret doctrine, but I assume that the interpretation of Zayyah is obviously not the plain interpretation.

The influence of R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid upon Zayyah is known. Nevertheless, R. David’s influence upon Zayyah’s kabbalistic thought is not revealed and limited. Zayyah ignores the zoharic symbolism R. David uses in his *Or Zaru'a*. R. David adopts the theosophical interpretation, applying a

²³³ Boaz Huss, “NiSAN-The Wife of the Infinite: The Mystical Hermeneutics of Rabbi Isaac of Acre” *Kabbalah* (2000): 155; Frank Talmage, “Apples of Gold: The Inner Meaning of Sacred Texts in Medieval judalsm” in *Jewish Spirituality: from the Bible through the Middle Ages* (ed., Arthur Green; Crossroad, New York, 1987), 319.

²³⁴ Joseph Dan, “The Ashkenazi Hasidic Concept of Language,” *Hebrew in Ashkenaz: A Language in Exile* (ed., Lewis Glinert; New York: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1993), 21.

Sefirah to each word of prayer. This hermeneutic method is traced back to one of the first kabbalists in Provence, R. Isaac the Blind, who mechanically refers to a word of prayer as a *Sefirah*.²³⁵ Both manuscripts are copied on the same folio, demonstrating a close relationship between the two writings. Editing in this way may demonstrate either antithesis toward R. David or reflection of *Or Zaru'a*. In either case, Zayyah's innovative interpretation is more understandable than when only *Or Zaru'a* is read. Therefore, the major concern in this chapter is to comprehend Zayyah's comparison of the interpretation of R. David and his definition of *Peshat* and *Sod*.

The usage of color symbolism is one of the innovations and characteristics of *Kavvanah* that R. David achieved. R. David restricted to direct one's heart upon the color surrounding a *Sefirah*. This text is only preserved in two among the manuscripts of *Or Zaru'a*.²³⁶

Ascent Traditions

In his *Or Zaru'a*, R. David demonstrates a variety of ascent traditions: visionary ascension, ascent of letters, ascent of voice, and ascent of prayer. The visionary ascension, the prominent feature of the *Heikhalot* literature, is introduced in the commentary to the blessing. "There are kabbalists who ascend from the lower world to the upper world and draws (!) down the influx

²³⁵ See Moshe Idel, "Midrashic versus other forms of Jewish hermeneutics: some comparative reflections" in *The Midrashic Imagination*, (1993), 53.

²³⁶ The extant manuscripts of *Sefer Or Zaru'a* are at least 14. This text is preserved in Ms. Cambridge 505, and in Ms. Jerusalem fol. 96b. On the analysis of the *Kavvanah* see Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 103-108; Idel, "Kabbalistic Prayer and Colors," 17-27.

till *Atarah*.”²³⁷ This text indicates that R. David is not among the practitioners, but he is acquainted with those who practiced the ascension on high whose purpose was to activate the divine attributes. Similarly, Zayyah frequently quotes the *Heikhalot* texts, but visionary ascension does not appear.

The ascent of voice or letters of prayer occurs during the recitation of prayer. According to the liturgical act, prayer ascends in two different forms. *Amidah*, for example, must be recited completely silently. “Control the voice so that one should not raise his voice during his prayer but rather he should pray silently.”²³⁸ R. David explicates that the prayer ascends to multiple layers of heaven in the form of voice.²³⁹ But it is limited to the appropriate and clear voice that reaches “the place” before the *Pargod*. For recitation of the other prayers, “all the words (of prayer) uttered by man ascend aloft”²⁴⁰ and the letters of prayer fly in the air and ascend until *Malkhut*.²⁴¹ The notion of

²³⁷ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 91a “ ויש מן המקובלים שעולים מלמטה למעלה וימשוך השפע עד לעטי ” וזהו הנכון.”

²³⁸ Ms. London 771, fol. 8a. “השויית הקול שלא יגביה קולו בתפלתו אלא יתפלל תפלתו בלבו.” R. David opposes to the standard halakhic ruling, as in Maimonides who mentioned in his *Mishneh Torah Hilkhoh Ahavah* 5:9 to not to raise voice nor should he pray in silent during his prayer but he should pronounce the words with his lips.

²³⁹ *Sefer Or Zaru'a*, Ms. London, fol. 3b.

²⁴⁰ *Sefer Or Zaru'a*, Ms. London fol. 4a “ כי כל הדברים היוצאים מפיו הם עולים למעלה ואם ” ר. Meir ibn Gabbai copied large part of *Sefer Or Zaru'a* including this text in his *Tola'at Ya'akov*.

²⁴¹ Ms. London 771, fol. 5b. “ ואותה התפלה שהוא מתפלל מצטרפים האותיות הפורחות באויר ”

ascending letters is an idea recurring in some ancient and medieval Jewish texts, which assert that vocalized words of prayer, generally the divine name, ascend to the divine realm. This idea is understood as a theurgical operation, an act that affects the divine realm.²⁴² R. David's depiction of the ascent of prayer is theosophically oriented and unparalleled in the rabbinical or heikhalotic description of the celestial world, where gates are protected by angels.

Theosophical Interpretation of Ascent of Prayer

The theosophical-theurgical and numerological-theosophical exegeses are the major methods R. David uses, Zayyah only infrequently uses the theosophical interpretation. On the interpretation of *Peskei deZimra*, Zayyah abundantly quoted the text of *Tikkunei ha-Zohar*.

”ועולין עד למלכות.”

²⁴² Idel, “Reification of Language in Jewish Mysticism,” 66.

<i>Perush le-Tefilah</i> ²⁴³	<i>Or Zaru'a</i> ²⁴⁴
<p>"Amen" in Gematria is [equivalent to] Adonay YHVH. This [signifies] the four letters name.</p>	<p>"Amen" in Gematria is [equivalent to] Adonay YHVH, the former is the name when it is called and the latter for written. Therefore one who calls "Amen" is as if he calls ineffable name. Another interpretation: "Amen" in Gematria is 91, which is equal to the numerical value (<i>minyan</i>) of YHVH</p>

²⁴³ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 88b. "אמן בגימ' אדני יהוה זהו שם של ג' אותיות ולכך גדול העונה אמן מן המברך. העונה אמן יותר מן המברך בגין דמתחברן תמניא אתוון כחדא (תיקוני זהר כה ע"ב) כמנין אמן יארי דונה וכד ישראל אמרי שמע ודאי חוויין שמטין גדפייהו כאן אתר בכנפי מצוה דאית בהו על ארבע כנפות כסותך אשר תכסה בה (דברים כב יב)."

²⁴⁴ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 88b. "ד"א אמן בגימ' אץ כמנין יהוה אדני וכל האומר אמן בכל כחו הוא מייחד כל העולמות פיי קוץ היוד רומז לכ"ע והיוד רומז לחכמה. ה' רומז לבינה. ו' רומז לשש קצוות. אמן עולה בגימ' אדני יהוה שהוא השם הנקרא " Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 89a. "שהם גימ' נה"י והנכתב ועל זה מי שמזכיר אמן כאלו מזכיר שם המפורש ועל זה אמי רז"ל כל העונה אמן יותר מן המברך. ולא עוד אלא שפותחין לו שערי גן עדן הה"ד ויבא גוי צדיק שומר אמונים (ישעיה כו, ב) אל תקרי אמנים אלא אמנים (רבינו בחיי על שמות יד, לא: מקור בבלי שבת קיט ע"ב בבלי סנהדרין קי ע"ב אל תקרי שומר אמונים אלא שאומר אמן) ועל זה אמרו כל העונה אמן בכל כחו (בבלי שבת קיט ע"ב) פיי בכל כוונתו פותחין לו שערי גן עדן (בבלי שבת קיט ע"ב) ועל זה כיון שבאמן רמוז בו שם המפורש צריך האדם להזכירה בכל כוונתו באימה וביראה: ברתת ובזיע כדי שיעלה תפלתו לפני המלך:"

	(26) Adonay (65).
Therefore "Greater is he who answers, "Amen" than he who says the blessing?" ²⁴⁵ He who responds 'Amen' is greater than one who says blessing ²⁴⁶ since they unite the eight essences in one." ²⁴⁷	He who says <i>Amen</i> with all his might unites all the worlds. It means that the point of [letter] <i>yod</i> implies <i>Keter Elyon</i> . The <i>yod</i> implies <i>Hokhmah</i> . <i>Heh</i> implies <i>Binah</i> . <i>Vav</i> implies the six extremities... ²⁴⁸ <i>Heh</i> implies <i>Malkut</i> , which is <i>Adonay</i> . <i>Amen</i> . <i>Alef</i> implies <i>Keter Elyon</i> called <i>Alef</i> . <i>Mem</i> implies <i>Tiferet</i> , which is open <i>mem</i> . Simple <i>Nun</i> implies the <i>Yesod</i> , which is <i>nun</i> . It is found that one who says <i>Amen</i> as if he unites all those attributes in one and unites the image of the chains. You should understand that.
"Amen" in Alef, Mem, Nun in Gematria	Therefore our Rabbis of blessed

²⁴⁵ B.T. Ber. 53b.

²⁴⁶ B.T. Ber. 45a.

²⁴⁷ *Tikunei ha-Zohar*, 25b; Isaiah Horowitz, *Sefer Shenei Luhot ha-Berit ha-Kodesh Shaar ha-Otiyot Emek Berachah*, 72.

²⁴⁸ According to the Bahiric tradition six extremities indicate *Sefirah Hesed*, *Gevurah*, *Nezah*, *Hod*, *Yesod* and *Malkhut*. (R. Asher ben David inherited this order, the Bahiric tradition. See Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 141.

<p>[is equivalent to] “Creator” and he brings redemption...</p>	<p>memory said: “he who responds ‘Amen’ is [greater] than he who says the blessing.”²⁴⁹ Moreover “the gates of Paradise opened for him”²⁵⁰... “He who responds with all his might”²⁵¹ means that with all his <i>Kavvanah</i> “the gates of Paradise opened for him” ... therefore the holy name is alluded in [the liturgical word] ‘Amen’ that one must mention with all his <i>Kavvanah</i> “in dread and fear and trembling and quaking”²⁵² in order to raise his prayer before the king.</p>
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Regarding the commentary to the Mourner’s *Kaddish* “Amen, May His great Name be blessed,” R. David explains how to achieve the unification of the worlds of the *Sefirot*. First, by means of *Gematria*, R. David and Zayyah associate “Amen” with the divine names, YHVH and *Adonay*, which correspond to a

²⁴⁹ B.T. Ber. 53b; Nazir. 66b.

²⁵⁰ B.T. Shabbat, 119b. “Resh Lakish said: He who responds *Amen* with all his might, has the gates of Paradise opened for him.”

²⁵¹ B.T. Shabbat, 119b.

²⁵² B.T. Ber. 22a; Moed Katan 15a.

Sefirah, according to R. David. The utterance of “*Amen*” with special intention upon the related divine name unites *Keter Elyon*, *Hokhamh*, *Binah*, and the six extremities. R. David already asserts the close relationship between the divine name and the liturgical texts. This understanding is obviously derived from the Talmud. The association of *Amen* with the divine name was already suggested in the Talmud by R. Haninah as “אל מלך נאמן (God, faithful King)” an abbreviation of the letters of *Amen*.²⁵³ Prayer ascends by means of responding to the word analogous to the name of God – “*Amen*” – with awe. Cohen used to pronounce the ineffable name of God until the destruction of the Temple. The other worshippers do not have authority to pronounce the name; therefore, they say *Amen* instead. Because *Amen* is numerically equivalent to *Adonay* or YHVH, pronouncing *Amen* is tantamount to calling the divine name.

Rabbinic sages argued which is greater: responding *Amen* or saying a blessing. In the argument in *Berachot*, Rabbis concluded that they who say a blessing and *Amen* are equally important, but he who blesses receives a reward before one who says *Amen*.²⁵⁴ R. David adopted the saying of Resh Lakish in *B.T. Shabbat* that responding *Amen* is more important as the word *Amen* has force in the celestial realm. The teaching of Resh Lakish supports the theurgical significance of the word *Amen*. As R. David quoted, the rabbinic version of the theurgical impact rends open the gate of paradise.²⁵⁵ R. David understood the

²⁵³ *B.T. Shabbat*, 119b.

²⁵⁴ *B.T. Ber.*53b. “Only he who says the blessing is more quickly [rewarded] than he who answers, *Amen*.”

²⁵⁵ *B.T. Shabbat*, 119b.

word of the sage in the Talmud: One who responds with the *Kavvanah* will receive a theurgical impact. R. David further notes the power of the divine name in prayer. R. David asserts that the efficacy of the response “*Amen*” has an impact upon the ten *Sefirot* while Zayyah mentions the “eight essences,” alluding to the eight *Sefirot*, by quoting the text of *Tikkunei ha-Zohar*.

The early Provençal school of R. Isaac the Blind identifies the Great Name with *Tiferet*.²⁵⁶ With this, Zayyah agrees.²⁵⁷ However, R. David holds that the name refers to *Atarah*.

Zayyah	<i>Or Zaru'a</i>
<p>ד"א יתגדל ויתקדש מדבר עלה תפארת : כל שתעלה אצילותו עד האצילות הגדול.</p>	<p>יתגדל רומז לבניה הה"ד כי גדול מעלה שמים מסדך : ויתקדש רומז לחכמה הנקי קדש קדשים : שמיה שהוא כ"ע רבא. רומז לעיי העיי שהוא גדול על כל אלהים : בעלמא די ברא כרעותיה פי' בעולם שברא אותו ברצונו העליון : וימליך מלכותיה כי הוא ימליך מלכותו לעתיד שהו' מלכות</p>
<p>שמיה רבא. הוא התפארת. בעלמא</p>	

²⁵⁶ Haviva Pedaya, *Name and Sanctuary in the Teaching of R. Isaac the Blind* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2001), 186 (Hebrew).

²⁵⁷ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 88a. “His Great Name is *Tiferet*.”

דברא. העולם העליון :	
<p>Another interpretation: “Exalted and sanctified...” ascends <i>Tiferet</i>. Everyone raises his emanation to the great emanation. “His great Name” is <i>Tiferet</i>. “In the world that He created” refers to the upper world.</p>	<p>“Exalted” alludes to <i>Binah</i> ... “And sanctified” alludes to <i>Hokhmah</i> called Holy of Holies. “His name” alludes to <i>Keter Elyon</i>. “great” alludes to <i>Illat ha-Illo</i>t, which is greater than all other gods. “in the world that He created as He willed” means in the world he created with his will. “He gave reign to his kingship” that he reigns his kingdom for future.</p>

According to R. David, *Amidah* corresponds to the 18,000 worlds that consist of the source of emanation. As a result, the recitation of *Amidah* renders the descent of influx from the 18,000 worlds – more specifically, from the spring that is within the “world.” The spring seems to be located within *Elyon*, of which the influx goes out until *Malkhut*. Each world contains the *Sefirot*, within *Keter*, the source of emanation, or spring, is located. 18,000 worlds could be the appellation for the sefirotic world or could allude to other realms. The multiple sefirotic system – or *Sefirot* within *Sefirot*, to borrow the designation of Scholem – is characteristic and first appeared in R. David.²⁵⁸ The *Zohar Hadash* (a later compilation of zoharic manuscripts), on the other hand, demonstrates that “the eighteen thousand worlds” allude to the nine *Sefirot* where Holy One,

²⁵⁸ Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 113-114.

blessed be He goes every day.²⁵⁹

In *Or Zaru'a* the relationship between the *Amidah* and the 18,000 worlds is noted:

The eighteen benedictions correspond to 18,000 worlds, that spin in *Keter Elyon*... Another interpretation is that within each of the 18,000 worlds there is a fountain. Here are 18,000 fountains, drawn from the fountain of river, which is the secret of all secrets... they are drawn down and go out to the worlds. As it is said, "The river goes out of Eden." All the worlds receive from the 18,000 fountains.²⁶⁰

R. David depicts here the structure of *Sefirot* and its theurgical process. The 18,000 worlds refer to 18,000 *Sefirot* located within *Keter Elyon*, above which there is a source of fountain. Idel notes that it is unclear what R. David's interpretation truly meant – either an instruction of *Kavvanah* or something else. How *Amidah* corresponds to the 18,000 *Sefirot* seems to be a highly esoteric matter. R. David does not say that 18,000 worlds are the object for *Kavvanah*

²⁵⁹ *Midrash ha-Ne'elam, Ahare*, 49c. "שית נקודין לבושין אליו, אשתכחו תרין דאינון באמצעיתא ... דנקודין, על כל חד אלף עלמין, אשתכחו תמניסר אלף עלמין, דאזיל בהו קב"ה בכל יומא

²⁶⁰ Ms. London 771, fol. 4a-4b. "ואצ"ל כי שמנה עשר ברכות כנגד י"ח אלף עולמוי הסובבים ... ד"א י"ח אלף עולמות ובכל עולם ועולם יש לו מבוע בפני עצמו והרי י"ח אלף מבועות הנמשכי' מן מבוע של הנחל שהוא סתימא של כל הסתימות וטמירא של כל הטמירין הן הנמשכין ויוצאין אל העולמות כלן הה"ד ונהר יוצא מעדן וכל העולמות הם מקבלין מאותן י"ח אלף ... ברכות."

during the recitation of *Amidah*. In the next text, R. David teaches on which *Sefirah* one should concentrate at a specific time.

“Master of Wonders”²⁶¹ alludes to *Keter Elyon*, which owns the segment since it (*Keter Elyon*) is concealed. Afterwards it descends from *Illat ha-Illot* and draws down the influx till *Atarah*. This is true. The fifty words are fixed in this prayer as correspond to fifty gates of *Binah*. This is why *Binah* renews the existence by the power of *Keter Elyon* and brings out of the power to the revealed God. Therefore we say that [Master of Wonders] in order to draw down the light of life from the *Binah* to us.²⁶²

R. David notes the aim of the recitation of the Master of Wonders in the last phrase. The liturgical words are recited to draw down the influx. The depiction of descension of influx may indicate the instruction of *Kavvanah*. However, this text may indicate the movement of the word of prayer after an utterance. According to the widespread rabbinic view of prayer, it ascends to heaven when uttered. R. David added the movement of prayer after it enters heaven, to the most sacred place, the godhead.

²⁶¹ *Pesukei d'Zimra*.

²⁶² Ms. Jerusalem fol. 91a. “ אדון הנפלאות. רומז לכ״ע שהוא בעל הפלח בשביל שהוא נסתר ונעלם : ואח״כ יורד מן עי׳ העי׳ וימשוך השפע עד לעט׳ וזהו הנכון : ותיקנו כאן נ׳ תיבות כנגד נ׳ שערי בינה : בשביל שהביה הוא מחדש הנמצאים מכח כ״ע ומוצאין מן הכח אל הפועל : ועל זה אנו אומרים זה כדי להוריד לנו אור החיים מן הבינה.”

The Change of the Personal Pronoun

A problem involving the declension of the subject in the blessing has been debated for centuries. A similar idea appeared in *Sefer ha-Bahir*, the *Zohar*, and in commentary on the liturgy of an anonymous kabbalist who is likely a contemporary or predecessor of R. David.²⁶³ Both R. David and Zayyah provide the explanation for the mystery of the change of the personal pronoun. R. David considered this part of the blessing describing the anabatic movement of influx whereas Zayyah illustrates the katabatic movement.

Zayyah ²⁶⁴	<i>Sefer Or Zaru'a</i> ²⁶⁵
The blessing begins with "Blessed are You, Lord." "Blessed (<i>Barukh</i>)" is not	"He who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us."

²⁶³ See Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:200; Daniel Abrams, *The Book Bahir* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 1994), 209, Section 125; and Adam Afterman, "Reflections on the anonymous kabbalistic commentary on the liturgy" (M.A. thesis, The Hebrew University, 2002), 86.

²⁶⁴ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 53a. "והברכה מתחלת ברוך אתה יי ברוך אינו לשון פעול אלא כמו רחום והנון שהוא עצמו מקור הברכות ואינו מקבלן מאחרים אשר קדשנו שהמשיך לנו כח קדוש המקודש והמתקדש מכל כח וכח. ולכך אמ' קדשנו ולא אמ' קדשתנו."

²⁶⁵ Ms. London 771 fol. 9a. "וזהו תימין[ה] והלא תחלת הברכה מדבר בנכח ברוך אתה ועתה מדבר בנסתר כגון אשר קדשנו^ה היה צריך לומי[נר] אשר קדשנו במצותיך וצויתנו מיבעי ליה אלא ברוך אתה רומז למדת התפי' שהוא נוכח אשר קדשנו מדבר בעולם הנסתר והנעלם שהוא עולם הבינה ועל זה התחיל בנכח וסיים בנסתר והבן זה."

<p>the passive vowel but it is like [the words] “merciful and gracious.” (Ex. 34:6, Ps. 84:15; 103:8) <i>Barukh</i> itself is the source of the blessings and “<i>Barukh</i>” does not receive from others.</p>	<p>This is surprising. For the beginning of the blessing speaks in the second person of “Blessed are You” whereas now it speaks in the third person of “he who has sanctified us.” It should have been said: “you who have sanctified us with Your commandments and You who have commanded us.” But “Blessed are You” alludes to the <i>Sefirah Tiferet</i>, which is present and written in the second person.²⁶⁶ “Who has sanctified us” speaks of the concealed (the third person) and hidden world, which is the world of <i>Binah</i>. Therefore it (the blessing) started with the second person and ended with the third person. Understand this.</p>
<p>“He who has sanctified us” that it draws down to us the holy sanctified power from all the power. Therefore</p>	

²⁶⁶ The Hebrew word *nochach* (נוכח) means both “present” and “second person” of the grammar.

<p>we say “He has sanctified us” and not “You have sanctified us.” “With His commandments” since we (!) to receive his commandments; “and he has sanctified us” with hidden power.</p>	
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R. David explains that the blessing, “*Netilat Yadayim* (the washing of hands),” demonstrates anabatic and katabatic movement. This movement may illustrate a theurgical effect of the former and a magical effect of the latter part of the blessing.

The beginning of the blessing, “Blessed are You,” is expressed in the second person singular, addressed to God Himself. The following sentence, “Our God King of the Universe he who has sanctified us,” is “expressed in a relative clause using the third person singular of an active verb in the perfect tense.”²⁶⁷ R. David interprets the beginning part of blessing as an allusion to *Sefirah Tiferet* and the next one as an allusion to *Sefirah Binah*. Moshe Idel designates this system of *Kavvanah* as Binary *Kavvanah* for prayer that addresses the two powers of God.²⁶⁸ This signifies that the first part of the blessing affects or ascends to the sixth *Sefirah Tiferet* and then to the second *Sefirah Binah*. The problem of the declension of the verbs in this prayer is explained in terms of the

²⁶⁷ Joseph Heinemann, *Studies in Jewish Liturgy* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1983), III.

²⁶⁸ Moshe Idel, “Prayer in Provencal Kabbalah,” *Tarbiz* 62 (1993): 268-72 (Hebrew).

effect on the upper world. The change of the verb in the second part of the prayer to *nistar* (the third person) is neither a mistake nor the result of ignorance as the prayer ascends or affects the *nistar* (concealed) while the other text expresses the katabatic movement of influx, “Blessed,” implying *Keter*, “are You” *Tiferet*.” “*Olam ha-nistar ve ne’elam* (concealed world)” in *Or Zaru’a* indicates the world of *Binah*. The aim of *Kavvanah* is to activate the sefirotic realm and receive influx from it. The language functions as a vehicle for the mystical prayer and makes an encounter between man and the sublime possible.

The text in *Nefilat apayim* has also been a subject of discussion as to why the names of God – “merciful and gracious” – are written in a passive form.²⁶⁹ The 16th century biblical commentator, R. Judah Abravanel, states “why the one forth of names and attributes of God are written in active voice and the three forth in passive form of which are ‘merciful and gracious long suffering’ (Ex. 34:6).”²⁷⁰ Abravanel continues quoting the discussion of Nahmanides:

“Merciful and gracious long suffering.” Therefore it is not said, “He has mercy on them and is gracious and long suffering because God is passive

²⁶⁹ This verse has been explicated by, Meir ben ibn Gabbai, *Sefer Tola’at Ya’akov*

(Jerusalem: Shevile Orhot ha-Hayyim, 1996), 15. “ברוך פירשו בו (בסי החינוך מצוה תל, בחיי “ (Jerusalem: Shevile Orhot ha-Hayyim, 1996), 15. “פרי עקב ועוד) כמו רחום וחנון, ואינו לשון פעול חלילה, שהוא עצמו מקור הברכות ואינו מקבלם מאחר, וכן צריכה לפרש בא ברוך ה' (בראשית כד, לא), ברוך בני לה' (שופטים יז ב), שלא לחלק, “ולכאורה נראה שאין זה נכון” Abravanel, Commentary on Exodus 34:1-10 and more.

²⁷⁰ Abravanel, Commentary on Exodus 34:6.

to those attributes. And I do not know his path and his sayings; I do not have permission to ask those questions.

Zayyah applies this interpretation for the liturgical word "*Barukh* (Blessed)," quoting *Tola'at Ya'akov*, a work of Byzantine kabbalist R. Meir ibn Gabbai, completed in 1506. He holds that it is not the passive form for He himself is the source of the blessings and never receives from others. We must interpret "*Barukh Adonay* (you blessed of the Lord)" (Gen. 24:31) and "*Barukh Benei leAdonay* (Blessed be you of the Lord, my son)" (Jud. 17:2) in this way. The interpretation given by *Tola'at Ya'akov* is very similar to that of Zayyah.

The comparison between the interpretation of the washing of hands by Zayyah and by R. David testifies of no affinity or similarity between them. Why Zayyah placed the two texts on the same folio is a great question as far as this text is concerned. On the other hand, Byzantine Kabbalah demonstrates profound affinity with Zayyah.²⁷¹ Zayyah expresses his knowledge upon the writing of R. Meir ibn Gabbai, *Tola'at Ya'akov*, completed in the Byzantine area when ibn Gabbai was 26 and Zayyah was only 1 year old.²⁷²

²⁷¹ *Perush le-Tefilah* Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 54a. " הנוטל ידיו צריך להגביהם לסוף למעלה כדי " שיזובו המים מידי ו בבקר צריך לשפוך ג פעמים מים עליהם ולאכילה שני פעמים ומים אחרונים רק שמגביה ידיו לרמוז אל העשר לפתוח המעיין להמשיך האור ממקור הכל, לפי שהמים " פעם אחד רומזים רחמים ושפע, ועל זה נאמר ואשא כפי אל מצותיך, כי שם מקום המצוות ושם נתנו, ובהגבהתו יברך ברוך אתה מכוין להמשיך הברכה ממקור ההויה דרך המלך עד בית מלכותו, וזהו את ה', והסוד והמלך שלמה ברוך (מ"א ב, מא)"

²⁷² Israel Zinberg, *A History of Jewish Literature: The Jewish Center of Culture in the*

Ottoman Empire (tr. Bernard Martin; New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1978), 40.

Chapter Three

Ascent of Prayer by Angel

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The angel has achieved an indispensable status in accounts of the ascent of prayer. Since the beginning of the tradition in talmudic literature, the angel has received, selected, and transferred prayer to the crown. In the previous chapter, we dealt with the important roles of the angel, such as in filtering the inappropriate prayer to protect heaven and God and assisting a prayer's ascent to heaven. The prayer man emits does not directly reach God but does so through angels. These activities of angels imply the changeability of God. God is considered to be an entity influenced by man's prayer; thus, an angel must protect Him from such negative forces. Physical and spiritual impurities are a menace to the celestial realm. Over time, prayer no longer ascends by itself. Prayer has conditions placed upon it, and other interferences caused a change in the place where angels act. In rabbinic literature, the angel is depicted as abiding in the realm of heaven, but from the 12th century onward, the angel appears in the middle stratum, between the upper and the lower strata.

In *Perush le-Tefilah*, Zayyah presents the angel as a messenger working under the authority of God and depicts the physical and spiritual distance between them. In contrast to the rabbinic literature, there is no discourse between angels and God. There is only a one-way conversation between God and angels.²⁷³ One of the themes characterizing crown mysticism, the concept of the unknowability of God, has been maintained in the Jerusalem model of ascent of prayer. In this section, the integration of mystical and non-mystical discourse of Zayyah's predecessors proves the numerological harmony in

²⁷³ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 77b, 135a.

heaven.

Angel as a Receiver of Prayer

18,000 Worlds / 1,800 blessings and 1,800 angels

The significant talmudic motif, the transformation of prayer into the crown, endured even into 16th century Jerusalem. However, it appears merely as the paraphrase of the midrashic motif.²⁷⁴ Most of the classic models

²⁷⁴ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 136b. See *Midrash Kohen* quoted in Chapter one, p. 32. *Even ha-Shoham*, Ms. St. Petersburg, fol. 100b demonstrates the motif with Byzantine influence. "He (*Ofen*) talks about Sandalfon, which is, according to his interpretation, "hated and impoverished turns" for example "Israel who is hated and impoverished who turns to their prayer" in order to raise them before God that it is "the angel who reaches the place where it can be heard..." " ומה שאמ' אופן אחד בארץ הוא אומ' על סנדלפון " אשר פירושו סנוי דל פונה כלומ' ישראל שהוא סנוי ודל הוא פונה לתפלתם כדי להעלותה לפני השי"ת כי זה המלאך הוא מגיעה למקום הנשמע ומלת אופן היא מגזרת דבר דבור על אופניו ומלת "בארץ היא קרקעית גלגל הלנבה כדמתרגמי' מלרע לרום כי יש אופן אחד בארץ סנדלפון ופי' סנוי" ד"ל " פונ"ה ר"ל ישראל שהוא סנוי ודל פינה לתפלתם וזה המלאך מגיע למקום הנשמע Sandalfon changes according to his function. For example, when he draws down the song of Israel to him he is called Nagdiel, Sandalfon when Israelites sing and he turns to receive the speech in order to fix crowns for King of the glory. Compare to *Sodey Razaya*, 76. " ונקרא סנדלפון על שם סנד"ל פון " ופני שמושך שירות ישראל אליו נקרא בכינוי נגודיא"ל, ולפי שחביבין לו תפילת ישראל נקרא שמו חביביא"ל, לפי שכשמוזכר

interweave with and imposed duty upon angels. The *piyyut* ascribed to R. Eleazar ha-Kalir, developed during the course of transmission, reached Zayyah through Hasidei Ashkenaz and *Sefer Kol Bo*. The table below proves that Zayyah obviously knew the text of Hasidei Ashkenaz. *Sefer Gematriot*, *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, *Sefer ha-Shem*, and *Sodey Razaya* all note that eighteen hundred angels receive *Amidah*. This motif is based on the piyyut written by R. Eleazar ha-Kalir.²⁷⁵

<i>Sefer ha-Shem</i> ²⁷⁶	<i>Siddur ha-Tefilah</i> <i>le-Rokeah</i> 66	<i>Sefer Kol Bo</i>	<i>Perush le-Tefilah</i> ²⁷⁷
לומר מי שמתפלל י"ח ברכות בכוונה יצאו אלף ות"ת לקבל תפילתו. ויצאו בס אלף ושמונה מאות המקבלים תפילות מליבות באות.	שכל המתפלל בכל כוונת לבו י"ח ברכות חשוב כמלאכי השרת, ויצאו לקבל תפילתו י"ח מאות מלאכים	ראשי תיבות של י"ח ברכות עולין י"ח מאות כנגד י"ח מאות מלאכים הממונין על התפלה	ר"ת של י"ח עולים בגימ' אלף ות"ת כמעין המלאכים שמקבלים תפלותיהם של ישראל

סנדלפו"ן השם הכתר עולה בראש אכתריא"ל ה' צבאות מיד כ"ו מלאכי השרת אשר כסא הכבוד סובלם ונושא אותם כאבן השואבת את הקש

²⁷⁵ For more details on his poet see Chapter 1. " ויצאו בס אלף ושמונה מאות המליצים יושר " במשפט לנאות ויקבלו תפלות מלבות נאות ויתנום בראש אלהי הצבאות

²⁷⁶ *Sefer ha-Shem* (ed., Eisenbach), 84. See also Chapter 1, f.n. 34.

²⁷⁷ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 103a. The English rendering of the Hebrew text is my own.

One who prays the <i>Shemonah Esreh</i> with <i>Kavvanah</i> 1,800 forth out to receive his prayer. “and 1,800 angels forth out to receive the prayers recited from heart.	All who prays with all the kavvanat ha-lev 1,800 blessings is important as ministering angels and they forth out to receive the prayer of 1,800 angels.	The Roshey Tevot of the <i>Shemonah Esreh</i> are 1,800 as correspond to 1,800 angels, which are appointed for prayer.	The Roshey Tevot of the <i>Shemonah Esreh</i> in Gematria is [equivalent to] 1,800; it is the number of angels, who receive prayer of Israel. ²⁷⁸
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Most of the texts in these writings merely mention that 1,800 angels receive prayer as Kalir mentioned whereas *Sefer ha-Shem* indicates that 1,800 angels receive “Eighteen blessings.”²⁷⁹ As Daniel Abrams states, R. Eleazar of Worms demonstrates the two rules to the revelation of the secrets in his writings. He does not reveal them all at once but scatters them in several

²⁷⁸ One may wonder whether the term “eighteen” or “eighteen blessings” truly indicates *Amidah*.” In the talmudic literature, it denotes *Amidah*; in R.David’s *Or Zaru’a* “eighteen blessings” indicates the actual 18 blessings between the *washing of hands* to *Giver of the Torah* and called *Amidah* “*Tefilat Amidah*.” The other text of *Sefer ha-Rokeah* 18 blessings denotes *Amidah*.

²⁷⁹ See also *Siddur ha-Tefilah le-Rokeah* 66 for other example for 1800 angels receiving 18 blessings.”

writings.²⁸⁰ This is also the method R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid and Zayyah adopted.

Zayyah's interpretation of *Amidah* is most akin to that which *Sefer Kol Bo* ascribed to R. Abraham ben Jacob ha-Cohen of Narbonne (13th-14th century). The only difference is that the word "receive" is absent in *Sefer Kol Bo*. Zayyah adopts the wordings of *Kol Bo* and integrates the text of R. Eleazar. The total of the initial letters of each *Amidah* in *Gematria* is 1,800²⁸¹ according to the Ashkenazi version of siddur while the Sephardi version counts 1,501. It indicates that the prayer book Zayyah uses is the Ashkenazic version; therefore, the term "eighteen" refers to *Amidah* and the number 1,800 is a multiple of *Amidah*.²⁸² What Zayyah intended to emphasize in this text is the numerological harmony between liturgical texts and the divine world. How many angels are assigned to receive them is determined according to the

²⁸⁰ Daniel Abrams, "Secret of the Secrets: The Concept of the Kavod and the Kavvanah of Prayer in the Writings of R. eleazar of Worms," *Da'at* 34 (1995): 62. (Hebrew).

²⁸¹ $2+1+1+1+5+60+200+200+2+400+5+6+70+6+1+300+200+40+300=1800$. The number probably related to this account is found in 136b, the 18,000 worlds, where God roam with the throne.

²⁸² Most of the texts Zayyah quotes are the Ashkenaz version and other quoted texts slightly differ from both Ashkenaz and Sephard versions we use nowadays. The reason may be derived from R. Alsheikh's writings. It may be derived from *Sefer Kolbo* by R. Abraham ben Jacob ha-Cohen of Narbonne (13-14th century)/R. Aharan (Ahrn) ben Yaakov ha-kohen of Narbonne. "ראשי תיבות של י"ח ברכות עולין י"ח מאות כנגד י"ח מאות" "מלאכים הממונין על התפלה"

numerical value of the initial letter of nineteen sections of *Amidah*; “Magen Abraham,” the first prayer of the *Amidah*, needs two angels, and the tenth prayer of the *Amidah* 400 angels. The greater positive numbers parallels to the greater workload of angels receiving prayers. The greater number signifies a greater amount of quantity or size already in the ancient period when mathematics in the full sense was yet unborn.²⁸³ In the previous passage, Zayyah depicts the other examples for numerological correspondence: *Amidah* to the *Mizvot*, and the other liturgical phrase to Tetragrammaton.

The number eighteen or its multiple appear in numerous texts in Scripture and in *Perush le-Tefilah* although the meaning of the number is not always unique.²⁸⁴ The number 18,000, for example, denotes the number of the world. The notion “Eighteen thousand worlds” appears mostly in late midrashic and kabbalistic literature.²⁸⁵ The simple usage of the notion is derived from the verse in the Psalms: “The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place” (Ps. 68:18), discussed in B.T. *Avodah Zarah*:

And what does He do by night? If you like you may say, the kind of thing He does by day; or it may be said that He rides a light cherub, and floats

²⁸³ Morris Klein, *Mathematics in Western Culture* (tr., Nakayama; Tokyo, Sousha, 1966).

²⁸⁴ The numbers appear in Scripture may follow the rule of Boolean lattice. With this assumption I will deal elsewhere.

²⁸⁵ *Seder Rabbah de-Bereshit* (*Batei Midrashot*, 1: 22-23) describes that God created the 18,000 worlds by means of six letters.

in eighteen thousand worlds; for it is said, The chariots of God are myriads, even thousands *shinan*. Do not read *Shinan*, [repeated], but *she-enan* [that are not].²⁸⁶

From this passage emerged the activity of God with his throne. The Holy One, blessed be, controls the 18,000 worlds described,²⁸⁷ and it is where He roams with His throne.

In the last [phrase of] *Kedushah*, the Holy one, blessed be He, roams throughout the 18,000 worlds with the throne therefore they (angels) do not see the throne. They say the words [of *Kedushah*], “his glory fills the world” in the third person (literally concealed).²⁸⁸

In the interpretation on the Ashkenaz version of *Kedushah*, Zayyah logically explains the absence of God and the throne. The throne functions as His vehicle. God is away; therefore, the angels do not see Him. This text, however, mentions “see[ing] the throne” and not “see[ing] God.” God is considered unseen and unknowable, even to the angels. Only God knows His essence and His place,²⁸⁹ and “if they would approach to the Holy One, blessed be He, they would

²⁸⁶ B.T. *Avodah Zarah* 3b. See also *Yalkut Shimoni* on Ps. 68.

²⁸⁷ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 89b.

²⁸⁸ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 136b. “ובקדושה אחרונה הקב”ה משוטט עם הכסא ביח אלף עולמות”
“ואינם רואים הכסא ולכך אומרים כבודו מלא עולם בלשון נסתר”

²⁸⁹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 142a.

immediately be burned.”²⁹⁰

Another important theme in the quoted text is the structure of heaven. On the same folio is the introduction to the *Kedushah*, recited “as an imitation of the praise of God by angels.”²⁹¹ Immediately after the declaration of Zayyah of the secret tradition regarding *Kedushah*, revealed here as authentic,²⁹² Zayyah wrote on the structure of the divine world and the angelological function.

[The word of *Kedushah*]: ‘Then (Az)’ is in *Gematria* [equivalent to] eight, which is the name of the Holy one, blessed be He, who sits upon seven heavens and on the earth, which are eight... ‘With voice’ in *Gematria* is [equivalent to] ‘portion’ as the angels collect groups [of voices] and divide them. Israel is also called the portion of the Lord. As it is written, “For the Lord's portion is his people.” (Deut. 32:9)²⁹³

²⁹⁰ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 136b. This account appears in *Midrash Ber. Rabbah*. According to the following sentence the word “they” refers to *Seraphim*. “ואם היו מתקרבים אצל” הקב"ה מיד היו נשרפים : והם מתרחקים לו רבבות פרסאות שני שרפים עומדים ממעל לו (ישיעה ו, ב).”

²⁹¹ Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy- A Comprehensive History* (tr., R. P. Scheindlin; Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1993), 57.

²⁹² Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 136b. “I will write you the secret of *Kedusha* as I received.”

²⁹³ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 136b. “אז בגימ' ח והוא שמו של הקבה שיושב על ז' רקיעים ובארץ הרי ח' : בקול בגימ' חלק כי המלאכים מאספים כתות ונחלקות זה כנגד זה וכן ישראל ג"כ נקראו חלק ח' : בשם שני כי חלק יי עמו (דברים לב, ט).” The anonymous author of the thirteenth-century Commentary to Prayers also interpreted the word “Az” as the technique of *Kavvanah*

The numeral eight symbolizes the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, that dwells (literally sits) on the seven heavens and the earth. The liturgical word in *Kedushah* is also interpreted as it relates to the privilege of circumcision, which is on the eighth day.

The dwelling place of God must be the secret Zayyah received. The other texts on this folio written before the declaration emphasize the unknowability of God, but the text after the declaration explicates where God lives. Revealing the activity of God does not belong to the esoteric knowledge, but the dwelling place of God does as the former was already mentioned in the Talmud. It is noteworthy that the second text indicates the form of prayer the angel receives. It is verbal, the voice of *Kedushah*, and not in the form of written words.

The structure of heaven expressed by R. David is theosophical. In *Sefer Or Zaru'a*, the 18 blessings correspond to the 18,000 springs, and the *Amidah* also corresponds to the 18,000 worlds.²⁹⁴ The 18,000 worlds and the 18,000 blessings are analogous to him. As mentioned above, the 18 blessings, according to R.

during prayer. Adam Afterman, *The Intention of Prayers in Early Ecstatic Kabbalah: A Study and Critical Edition of an Anonymous Commentary to the Prayers* (Los Angeles: Cherub Press, 2004), 74. (Hebrew)

²⁹⁴ In *Or Zaru'a* Ms. London 771 fol. 4b-5a the relationship between the *Amidah* and the eighteen thousand worlds is mentioned: "ואצ"ל כי שמנה עשר ברכות כנגד י"ח אלף עולמו'... (א5) ד"א י"ח אלף עולמות ובכל עולם ועולם יש לו מבוע בפני עצמו והרי י"ח אלף מבועות הנמשכיין מן מבוע של הנחל שהוא סתימא של כל הסתימות וטמירא של כל הטמירין הן הנמשכין ויוצאין אל... העולמות כלן הה"ד ונהר יוצא מעדן וכל העולמות הם מקבלין מאותן י"ח אלף ברכות..."

David, indicate the blessings between the *washing of hands* to *Giver of the Torah*. The prayer is one of the three specific prayers producing the theurgical or magical forms of repercussions upon divine attributes, namely, *Sefirot*.²⁹⁵ In addition, the 18,000 worlds are located in the highest *Sefirah*, *Keter Elyon*. The *Midrash ha-Ne'lam*, on the other hand, demonstrates that the 18,000 worlds allude to the nine *Sefirot* where the Holy One, blessed be He, goes every day.²⁹⁶ Zayyah demonstrates the multiple sefirotic system in his *Zeror ha-Hayyim*: “[I]t alludes to the *Hesed*, which is within the *Gevurah*.”²⁹⁷

Through this account, we can surmise that Zayyah sought the grounds for the number 18,000 in the liturgical phrase, “Life-giver of the world (literary eighteen worlds)”²⁹⁸ and emphasized the theology and the cosmological structure. But R. David focused upon the very divine attribute, *Keter*, in which 18,000 worlds are present.

Metatron and Shemaïel

Traditional beliefs about angels include their independence, corporeality, vice-regency, and intermediary status between God and man, the last of which Maimonides found hard to accept.

Metatron, *Sar ha-Panim* (Prince of the Countenance), has appeared since

²⁹⁵ The other two groups of prayer are one hundred blessings and the *Amidah*.

²⁹⁶ *Midrash ha-Ne'lam*, *Ahare*, 49c. See also n. 261.

²⁹⁷ Ms. New York Lehmann 131 (24473); Ms. Montefiore 318, 1a. “שהוא רומז לחסד שבתוך הגבורה.”

²⁹⁸ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 89b. See Chapter 5 for the text.

Talmudic literature and attracts attention from many perspectives.²⁹⁹ Metatron is the angel who is said to be turned from Enoch after taken by God³⁰⁰ and who appeared as a heavenly scribe, a receiver of prayer,³⁰¹ brother of Sandalfon,³⁰² the angelic High priest, the Prince of the Presence, and the Prince of the Hosts of God.³⁰³ Daniel Abrams contributes the new phase on the historical development of the definition of the figure, Metatron.³⁰⁴ In the 13th century,

²⁹⁹ Scripture has no mention of Metatron and *Talmud* mentioned only three places. *B.T. Sanh.38b* "Come up unto me! It was Metatron [who said that], he replied, whose name is similar to that of his Master," *Hag. 15a*, and *Avodah Zarah 3b*.

³⁰⁰ *Targum Yonatan ben Uziel Bereshit 5:24; Targum Yirshalmi Gen. 5:24*. See the analysis by Daniel Boyarin, "Beyond Judaisms: Metatron and the Divine Polymorphy of Ancient Judaism" *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 41 (2010): 333-336.

³⁰¹ *Sodey Razaya Shalem, 94*. "1,800 and Metatron forth out to receive prayer." *Sefer ha-Hokhmah 65b, 72b*. See also Abrams, "The Boundaries," 301.

³⁰² *The Soncino Talmud B.T. Hagigah* (Soncino Press, 1990), 13b n.10.

³⁰³ For the angelic High priest, the Prince of the Presence, the Prince of the Hosts of God appeared in Geniza text see Lawrence H. Schiffman, Michael D. Schwartz, *Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Geniza: Selected Texts from Taylor-Schechter Box K1* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 36.

³⁰⁴ Abrams, "From Divine Shape to Angelic Being: The Career of Akatriel in Jewish Literature," 44-45, "When these texts were received in the circles of the German Pietists and shortly thereafter among the first Kabbalists, Metatron was identified with the *Shi'ur Qomah*, in effect bridging the gap between the descent of the divine into the human world and the ascent of man into the sphere of the divine world." See also

theosophical interpretation was applied to Metatron, symbolizing a divine attribute. Abrams suggested that “he may be the final destination of the prayers”; therefore, he may have been identified with the last *Sefirah*.³⁰⁵ Indeed, Nahmanides as well as R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid treated Metatron as a symbol, the lowest *Sefirah*.³⁰⁶ The student of Nahmanides first explained the transition of the nature of Metatron. The angelic figure of Metatron and the last *Sefirah* are related to Metatron’s task of receiving influx and inheriting the world. He is a messenger; therefore, it is “logical” to assume that he is connected to the place where efflux is flown into from *Illat ha-Illo*.³⁰⁷ This theory avoids the heretical idea and retains Metatron’s status as angel.

The dual nature of Metatron as a symbol and as an angelic figure

Moshe Idel, “Enoch is Metatron,” *Immanuel* 24/25 (1990): 220-40;

ibid., “Metatron-Comments on the Development of Jewish Myth,” *Myth in Jewish Thought* (ed., H. Pediah; Ber Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press, 1995), 29-44 (Hebrew), where he terms the upward and downward movement, respectively, as “apotheosis” and “theophany.” See also the tradition recorded in *Midrash Bereshit Rabbati* (ed., Chanoch Albeck; Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1940), 41, where Prov. 30:4 (“who ascended into heaven and descended”) is understood to refer to Akatriel.)

³⁰⁵ Abrams, “Boundaries,” 304.

³⁰⁶ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 108b. For the influence of the esotericism of the Kabbalah of Nahmanides, see Garb, “Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah as the Source for the Lurianic Kabbalah,” 12.

³⁰⁷ Abrams, “Boundaries,” 313.

continued until the 15th century.³⁰⁸ Metatron denotes only a symbol. In *Perush le-Tefilah*, Zayyah revived the Ashkenazic or heikhalotic understanding of Metatron; the symbolic interpretation of Metatron is absent in *Perush le-Tefilah*, but in his theosophic-magic work, *She'erit Yosef*, he maintains the symbolic meaning of Metatron.

In contrast to Metatron, Shemu'iel attracts less scholarly attention. Shemu'iel has appeared since the time of *Heikhalot* literature. Functions of Metatron and Shemu'iel are clearly distinguished but are often intermingled in the writings of Zayyah. Jonathan Garb already mentioned that *Heikhalot* literature is one of Zayyah's sources. The following text is written based on the *Heikhalot* text interwoven with the Hasidei Ashkenaz view.

Heikhalot ³⁰⁹	<i>Sefer ha-Hokhmah</i> ³¹⁰	Zayyah 93b
כשיגיע זמן של מלאכים לומר	וכשישראל אומרים שמע	<u>שמע ישראל אותיות שר</u>
שירה וזמרה לפני לפני הקב"ה	ישראל או קדושה אז שמעיאל	<u>שמעיאל</u> בכל יום עומד שר
שמועאל המלאך שר הגדול	שר משתקם עד שתפילת	שמעיאל ומכריז לכל מחנה
הנכבד והנור' עומד על חלוני	<u>ישראל תעלה כי כן שמע</u>	ומחנה לישתוק לפני ישראל
רקיע התחתון לשמוע	<u>ישראל אותיות שמעיאל ש"ר</u>	להשמיע קולן של ישראל
ולחקשיב כל שירות וזמרות	ואז העטרה שנקראי ישראל	שאומרים שמע ישראל : וזהו

³⁰⁸ Abrams, "Boundaries," 315.

³⁰⁹ *Synopse*, §807.

³¹⁰ Ms. Oxford 1812 fol. 60a; Oxford 1568 fol. 5a. See chapter 1, page 48 for full translation.

<p>ותושבחות העולות מארץ ומן כל בתי כניסיות ומדרשות להשמיע להן לפני ערבות רקיע.</p>	<p>עולה למעלה ועל זה אומר שלמה מי זאת עולה גימ' אלף לפי שאלף מחנות מלאכים עושים מן התפילה כתר</p>	<p>שייסד הפייט שמעיאל משמיעין בכוחו :</p>
<p>When the time of angels uttering songs before Holy One, blessed be He, Shemuiel, the great archon stands at the window of lower heaven to listen to all the songs, which ascend from the world and from synagogues and <i>Batei Midrashot</i> to heaven.</p>	<p>When Israelites recite <i>Shema</i> or <i>Kedushah</i> Shemai'el the prince silence them until the prayer of Israelites ascends. Therefore <i>Shema Israel</i> is [composed of] letters of Shemaiel Sar³¹¹ and then the crown, which is called Israel ascends on high. Therefore Shelomo said "who is this who</p>	<p><i>Shema Israel</i>. [The transposed] letters [of them are] <i>Prince Shemaiel</i>.³¹² Prince Shemaiel stands everyday³¹³ and announces to all the hosts to be silent before Israelites in order to make heard voices of Israel uttering <i>Shema Israel</i>. And this is the [meaning of] <i>niyyut</i></p>

³¹¹ *Shemaiel Sar* ("שמעיאל שר") is a *Temurah* of "שמע ישראל".

³¹² The liturgical phrase "*Shema Israel*" is transposed by means of *Notarikon*. This association is already mentioned in *Sefer ha-Hokahmah*, 60a.

³¹³ *Sodey Razay* pt. 1, 8. "Shemuiel, the prince of great angel stands at the windows of heaven below listen to voice of service and songs that ascend from the earth, from all synagogues and Beit Midrashot to make them listen before the heavenly animals."

	<p>said “who is this who comes up (from the wilderness)” (Song of Songs 3:6, 8:5) is in Gematria <i>Alef</i> (111) since 1,000 hosts of angels create crown out of the prayer...</p>	<p>[meaning of] piyyut fixed as “Shemaiel make [!] them heard (announce) with his power.”</p>
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The most prominent difference between *Heikhalot* literature and Hasidei Ashkenazic literature is the usage of numerology. The numerological hermeneutic method is not found in the former whereas the abundant use of Gematria is the prominent characteristics of the latter. Generally, the *Heikhalot* literature is more inclined to the praxis.³¹⁴ Zayyah took the association of “*Shema Israel*” and *Sar Shemaiel* from *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*,³¹⁵ transposing the liturgical phrase “*Shema Israel*” by means of *Notarikon*. Shemaiel or Shemuil standing at the gate of heaven is also a heikhalotic motif found in writings of

³¹⁴ They were written as the instruction for potential ascenders who need the specific words, behavior and knowledge of heavenly world. Martha Himmelfarb, “Heavenly Ascent and the Relationship of the Apocalypses and the Hekhalot Literature,” *HUCA* 59 (1988): 93-94.

³¹⁵ *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, 60a.

both R. Eleazar and Zayyah.³¹⁶ The other difference between the quoted texts is the appellation of the angel. Zayyah obviously took this spelling from *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, calling “שמעיאֵל” whereas “שמועאל” in the *Heikhalot* text.

There are two traditions in the origin of the liturgical phrase “Shemaiel make them heard with his power,” which Zayyah quoted from the *Piyyut* in the *Siddur* Sephard and Ashkenaz versions. R. Eleazar of Worms recognized the 7th century Poet R. Eleazar ha-Kalir as the author,³¹⁷ but the other tradition tells us that the poet R. Shimeon Bar Izhak, born in 950 in Mainz, is the author.³¹⁸

Shemaiel is involved in mediating prayers to be heard by heavenly creatures. The phrase “make them heard” connotes many possibilities: (1) Human prayer is not discernable to all heavenly creatures other than Shemuiel. Therefore, Shemaiel possesses a certain power to change the form of human prayer into audible or discernable forms. (2) The text suggests the hierarchy of the angelic worlds in which the celestial beings wait for the announcement is under the control of Shemaiel.³¹⁹ Shemuiel has authority to make others quiet and make

³¹⁶ The quoted text does not mention the motif but in *Sodey Razay* pt. 1, 8 we read; “Shemuiel, the prince of great angel stands at the windows of heaven below listen to voice of service and songs that ascend from the earth, from all synagogues and Beit Midrashot to make them listen before the heavenly animals.”

³¹⁷ *Sefer Sodey Razaya Shalem* (ed., Eisenbach), 80. See also *Kolbo* 11:5.

³¹⁸ Dan, *Studies in Ashkenazi-Hasidic Literature* (Ramat ha-Gan, 2006).

³¹⁹ “Although no systematic angelology was developed in *Hekhalot Rabbati*, there can be no doubt that the hayyot stand at the top of the angelic hierarchy.” Peter Schafer, *The Hidden and Manifest God: Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Tr., Aubrey

them heard. (3) Human prayer is physically unable to reach all creatures, some of which are located at the end of the world. (4) Heavenly creatures are not concerned with human prayer. Therefore, it is necessary to make all the heavenly creatures pay attention. (5) Shemaïel distributes prayer to them to make them heard. The question is whether Shemaïel plays an indispensable role in the ascent of the prayer. Shemaïel possesses a certain power to change human prayer into a form that holy creatures can discern.

On the interpretation of the *Kedushah* in *Sabbath* morning, Zayyah describes the meaning of the phrase, “make them heard.”

In the celestial chamber, one must sing *Kedushah* out loud. This is the meaning of ‘the day of Metatron.’ It means that when they sing at the gate, there is a tribe to which Metatron orders them to sing. This is [the meaning of] “he makes heard a voice.”³²⁰ Metatron in *Gema[tria]* is [equivalent to] ‘the leader of the world.’³²¹ Most of the radiant shut their mouths and sing and flap their wings as man closes his mouth in water and waves [his arms in] the air. “He makes heard” in *Gema[tria]* [is equivalent to] 500. This teaches that their voice goes from the end of

Pomerance; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 24.

³²⁰ This phrase “משמיע” is often translated as “announce” however I would adopt the translation used in *The Complete Artscroll Siddur* (tr., Nosson Scherman; New York: Mesorah Publications, 1998), 459 “make heard the voice” that in this context the text has connotation of causative verb.

³²¹ The numerical value of both ‘Metatron’ and the liturgical phrase is 314.

the world to the end, which is 500.³²² “Raising themselves (מתנשאים)” in Gema[tria] is ‘Zag’el silenced.’³²³ This is the name of *Sar ha-Panim*, who silences them. This is what the poet signifies by Shemaïel the prince making them heard because of his power to keep them long silence. Shemaïel is appointed under Metatron, who orders him to perform.³²⁴

Metatron is a leader of who sing *Kedushah*. Making the celestials be quiet in order to listen to the prayer of Israel is now the role of Metatron. According to Hasidei Ashkenazic tradition, Shemuïel used to play this role.³²⁵ Zayyah

³²² J.T. Ber. 63a.

³²³ The numerical value of ‘מתנשאים’ and ‘Zag’el silenced’ is equivalent to 841. According to Zayyah Zag’el is another name of Sar ha-Panim, Metatron. The angel called Zag’el is not found in rabbinic and Jewish mystical literature but Zagzag’el, who is a prince of *Torah* and a prince of wisdom, possessing horn of glory. [Midrash Deut. Rabbah, 11:9; Reuben Margaliyot, *Mal’achei Eliyon* (Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rav Kook, 1988), 54.]

³²⁴ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 136b. “ וזהו של יום מטטרון ופי' שבאותו השער כשמזמרים יש למטטרון שבת מצווה להם ומזרזם וזהו משמיעם בקול מטטרון בגימ' המנהיג כל העולם ומרוב זהרורית הכבוד סוגרים פיהם ומרננים בכנפיהם כאדם הסוגר פיו במרחץ ומניף הרוח כך זה : משמיעם בגימ' תק. מלמד שקולם הולך מסוף העולם ועד סופו שהוא מהלך תק : מתנשאים בגימ' זגאל שתק וזהו שם של שר הפנים הוא משתק המון מעלה וזה שעשה הפייט שמעיאל השר משמיעם בכוחו לשתק המון מעלה אותו השר ממונה תחת מטטרון והוא אומר לו לעשות

³²⁵ See Chapter 1.

assigned this role to both Shemu'el and Metatron.³²⁶ The lack of consistency is not derived from the Zayyah's sway between the view of Hasidei Ashkenaz and of the other; instead, it reveals his reconciliation. Zayyah attempted to prove the association between Metatron and the liturgical "makes them heard" by means of *Gematria* and concluded that it is the power of Metatron by which Shemu'el makes others quiet. Physically, Shemu'el performs the order, but the power of Metatron hidden within the phrase is in effect. The power embedded in the prayer text is the divine name, which we will see in chapter four. In this sense, Zayyah may treat Metatron as the second divine. Indeed, Metatron is involved in the controversy in *B. T.* noting that he is a second deity.³²⁷ Rabbinic literature and *Heikhalot* literature present the angel Metatron as a vice-regent to God and fail to "draw sharp boundaries between the angels and God," particularly the case of Metatron.³²⁸ The ambiguity of the boundaries between the angel and God is also seen in Hasidei Ashkenazic texts as well as in Zayyah.

³²⁶ See Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 93b.

³²⁷ The question whether Metatron is an angel or second deity is derived from the account of tanna Elisha ben Avuyah in *B.T. Hag.* 15a. Elisha's statement; "he saw Metatron sitting and probably there are two powers" suggests the heretic idea. Elisha's recognition of Metatron as second deity was treated as heresy. For detailed discussion see Abrams, "The Boundaries of Divine Ontology," 293-298; Moshe Idel, "Enoch is Metatron," *Immanuel* 24/25 (1990), 220-240; Eitan Fishbane, *As Light before Dawn: The Inner World of a Medieval Kabbalist* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 282; Boyarin, "Beyond Judaisms," 323-365.

³²⁸ Fishbane, *As Light before Dawn*, 269.

Zayyah pointed out the contradiction between the Scriptural and midrashic understanding of Exodus.

According to Joseph Dan, “to keep the angel silent” is based on the *Heikhalot* text that the angel must wait for the Israelites to start singing (*Kedushah*). In our case, Shemaïel has power to make them silent to hear Israel’s uttering because the superiority of human prayer is mentioned elsewhere in *Perush le-Tefilah*. The superiority of man over the angel is often depicted in biblical and post-biblical literature.³²⁹ The preference of human prayer over the angelic liturgy is especially significant in *Pirkei Heikhalot*.³³⁰ In *Perush le-Tefilah*, competitions between man and angel are often seen but mostly relate to the order of prayer. “When we pray to Holy one, blessed be He we are more important than angels, who utter song after our prayers.”³³¹ The superiority of man over the angels is the reason why Shemuïel stands at the window.

The ascent of prayer of man has been mainly depicted out of the vertical

³²⁹ See for example, ibn Gabbai quoted in Elliot R. Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond: Law and Morality in Kabbalistic Mysticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 110. For Hasidei Ashkenaz view see for example *Sefer Sodey Razaya Shalem*, 217 “Hayot shall not sing until Israelites pray.” *Merkavah Shelemah*, 25a describes the reason why angels must be silent because of the order of prayer that Israel first, angels next.

³³⁰ See chapter 2, pages 36-37.

³³¹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 53a, “ברוך אתה נוכח ואח”כ אשר קדשנו נסתר וי”ת כשאנו מתפללין” “להקב”ה אנו חשובי יותר ממלאכים שהן אומי שירה אחר תפלותינו כל צבאיו זה ישראל והקדים שבח של” “מלאכים קודם תפלת ישראל משום דהתחיל בשמים אמר על הסדר מלאכים קודם ישראל.”

worldview. The above quoted text depicts the movement of *Kedushah* of the celestial being in heaven, in which “their voice goes from the end of the world and till its end.” According to J. T. *Berachot*, their prayer goes horizontally in the upper world and does not descend to the lower realm. The prayer takes vertical movement in the earth and after it reaches a certain point in heaven, it moves horizontally.

Angelic Liturgy

Another motif recurs in *Perush le-Tefilah*: the angelic liturgy. The discussion on the angels singing in heaven is found in many places in Talmud and *Heikhalot* literature.³³² The well-known angelic liturgy is the *Kedushah* by Seraphim described in Isa. 6:1-3, the origin of angelic liturgy.³³³

³³² See Fishbane, 266-268. For *Heikhalot* literature see for example *Hekhalot Rabbati* in *Synopse*, § 179. The forty-three angels utter “Holy, Holy, Holy” after Israel recites. *Beit ha-Misrasch* (ed Jellinek) 3:3. “ומפי חיות הקודש שפותחין פיהם לומר קדוש בשעה שישראל” § 71 V228, M22 All Hayot in *Merkavah* open their mouth with honor and with glory the name of Holy One, blessed be He “Blessed be the name of his glorious kingdom forever and ever.”

³³³ For angelic liturgy in Qumran see J. Strugnell, “The Angelic Liturgy at Qumran-4Q Serek Sirot Olat Hassabbat,” *Suppl. To VT*. 7 (1960): 318-345. “The scrolls discovered in Qumran take the style of annotation, more descriptive and not a liturgical form known as “blessing.” The Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice (Serek Sirot Olat Hassabbat.” See also Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), 41, 183.

It (Sandalfon) turns to their prayer in order to raise them before God.” It is the angel, which reaches the place where the prayer is heard...-And all the heavenly host stand before *Pargod*... when Israel recite[s] “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts (Is. 6:3),” the *Ofannim* sing as if they are in the dance, and say “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts (Is. 6:3).”³³⁴

Ofannim sing *Kedushah* with joy. In other writings, Zayyah provides a theosophical exegesis of the location of *Ofannim*, stating that they are located above the tenth *Galgal* in which eight Cherubim are present. Zayyah associates the three phases of *Galgal* with the three upper *Sefirot*, which is the secret of the world called KHB, the abbreviation for *Keter*, *Hokhmah*, and *Binah*.³³⁵ It seems that there is at least one world parallel to *Sefirot*. It reminds us of the multiple sefirotic world appearing in R. David’s speculation.³³⁶

Besides *Kedushah*, most angelic liturgy that Zayyah mentions is *Shemonah Esreh*, though incomplete. “The ministering angels utter ‘Blessed are you, Lord, who has redeemed Israel,’³³⁷ ‘Blessed are You, Lord, the gracious One Who pardons abundantly,’³³⁸ and more.³³⁹

³³⁴ *She’erit Yosef*, Ms. Warsaw, 3a.

³³⁵ *She’erit Yosef*, Ms. Warsaw, 3a.

³³⁶ Moshe Idel, “The Image of Man above the *Sefirot*”, *Da’at* 4 (1980): 42 (Hebrew).

³³⁷ *B.T. Pesachim* 116b, 7th *Amidah*. “מלאכי השרת ואמרו באיי גאל ישראל:”

³³⁸ “המרכה לסלוח מלאכי השרת ואמרו באיי חנוך.”

³³⁹ The rest of the *Amidah* is 5th-6th (fol. 99a), 9th (fol. 100a), 10th (100a), 11th (100a),

Angels deliver their praise to Israel. The interaction between the angelic world and the mundane world is depicted.

“*Shema* Israel, O Lord.” The second letters [of each word] are MSH (Moses). “*Shema* Israel, O Lord.” The ends of the words are ALH (ascent). This means, “when Moses ascended on High”³⁴⁰ he heard the ministering angels’ praise: “Blessed be the name of his glorious kingdom forever and ever”³⁴¹ and they take [the praise] down to Israel.³⁴²

In contrast to the phenomenon of human prayer, this text depicts the katabatic movement of angelic prayer. After man utters *Shema* it is the angels’ turn to utter. The ministering angels take down their praise recited as a response to the “*Shema* Israel” to the world.³⁴³ The angelic liturgy thus descends to the lower world. This vertical movement of prayer expresses the exchange of angelic

14th (100b), 15th (101a), 16th (101a), and 17th *Amidah* (101b).

³⁴⁰ B.T. *Bava Mezia*, 86b.

³⁴¹ M. *Yoma*, 3:8,4:1,4:2,6:2.

³⁴² Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 93b. “שמע ישראל יהוה: אותיות שנייות משה: שמע ישראל יהוה. ס״ת.”
“עלה. כלומי כשעלה משה למרום שמע שמלאכי השרת היו מקלסים בשכמלו והורידו לישראל.”

³⁴³ On this formular of response see Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 21. As mentioned in B.T. *Pesachim*, 55b-56a, this formular “was accepted as a custom in many communities in Israel already in Mishnaic period.” *Ha-Siddur ve ha-Tefilah*: vol. 2 (Tel-Aviv: Miskal, 1994), 21 (Hebrew).

prayer and human one, which indicates that both of them are indispensable.

Angel as a Deliverer of Prayer

It is the Kabbalistic literature which first depicted the ascension of prayer by an angel. The appearance of the deliverer indicates that the realm of angels is expanded to the outside of heaven in regard to the ascension of prayer³⁴⁴ and may indicate that prayer lost the power to ascend to heaven by itself. In later phases of Jewish mysticism, Metatron has a new role as a deliverer of prayer. In *Zohar Hadash*, Metatron “carries the prayers of Israel up to the firmament and deposits them there in order to arouse the compassion of the Holy One, blessed be He.”³⁴⁵ Zayyah implies that the angel delivered the prayer.

All men shall fix a regular place to pray. He shall not change the place, as it is written, “And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord.”(Gen. 19:27)³⁴⁶ ‘Standing’ means nothing else but prayer. For it is said, “Then Pinhas stood up and prayed.”(Ps. 106:30)³⁴⁷ The angels raise his prayer. They (angels) do not

³⁴⁴ In other occasion, not related to the ascent of prayer, there are cases in which angels come down to the earth.

³⁴⁵ *Zohar Hadash*, Bereshit, 10b (MhN) paraphrase quoted in Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*, 2:629 (51).

³⁴⁶ The verse is understood by most of the Jewish sages and scholars as to indicate Abraham prayed at the same place every morning.

³⁴⁷ See also *B.T. Ber.* 6b.

have the right [to go] all over the world. Therefore, if [there were only] a single path or single way from heaven to the place where he recites and if he were not at that first place, then his prayer would not ascend before God...“While I was uttering my prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had previously seen in the vision at the beginning (being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation).” (Daniel 9:21) The ends of the words are *Dirah shel Rinah* as Daniel fixed the place for prayer. In this place, Daniel saw an angel raising his prayer.³⁴⁸

Since antiquity, Gen. 19:27 has been understood to prove that there is a fixed place for prayer. Not only Abraham but also Isaac had a fixed place.³⁴⁹ The Talmud also repeats the importance of a fixed place for prayer: “Whosoever has a fixed place for his prayer has the God of Abraham as his helper,”³⁵⁰; “If a man has a fixed place for his prayer, his enemies succumb to him.”³⁵¹ The Talmud

³⁴⁸ Ms. Jerusalem fol. 53b. “ וכל אדם יקבע מקום לתפלתו בתדירות ולא ימיר את מקומו שני ”
וישכם אברהם בבקר אל המקום אשר עמד שם (בראשית יט, כז) ואין עמידה אלא תפלה שני ויעמוד
פנחס ויפלל (תהי קו, ל) כי המלאכים המעלים תפלתו אין להם רשות בכל העולם כי אם שביל ודרך
אחד מן השמים עד מקום תפלתו וכשאינו במקומו הראשון אז תפלתו אינה עולה לפני השם ורמוז
בעל הסוד בדניאל ועוד אני מדבר בתפלה והאיש גבריאל אשר ראיתי בחזון בתחלה (דניאל ט, כא)
ס״ת דירה של רינה כי דניאל קבע מקום דירה של רינה ותפלה ובמקום שראה המלאך כדי להעלות
תפלתו.”

³⁴⁹ Gen. 24:62.

³⁵⁰ B.T. Ber. 6b.

³⁵¹ B.T. Ber. 7b.

notes this prayer's merit whereas Zayyah sought support in the angelological theology.

Zayyah vaguely mentions that there is a single path of prayer between heaven and earth. If a man does not pray at a fixed place, prayer does not reach God "since the angels raise his prayer." Angels are allowed to act within "the path" between heaven and earth, through which they come down and raise prayer. The descent of Gabriel to Daniel is understood as the angel coming down to raise prayer. This text demonstrates that man must consider the realm where angels act in order that his prayer is taken to heaven. Whether his prayer ascends or not is relied upon the mediation of angels. This reliance of man on angel means that the prayer no longer ascends to heaven by itself.

Geographical Path

The account of delivery of prayer suggests that there is a geographical path of angels and prayer between earth and heaven. One who prays must pray at the fixed place based on the activity of angels. Their place of activity is limited and they have no right to go wherever they wish.³⁵² Their limitation of activity as a motif appeared in rabbinic and kabbalistic literature such as *Pesikta Rabbati* and the late 13th century Castilian Kabbalist, R. Joseph Gikatilla's *Sha'arei Orah*.³⁵³ On the other hand, a Geonic responsum states, "There are

³⁵² Ms. Jerusalem, fol 54b.

³⁵³ *Pesikta Rabbati: Discourses for Feasts, Fasts, and Special Sabbaths* Vol.1 (Tr. William G. Braude; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 406, Piska 20. "And so he [Hadarniel] walked before him [Moses] until he reached the fire of Sandalphon. Then

many acts which angels can perform of their own accord, without a special order from above."³⁵⁴ However, the continuous text asserts, "But when they are acting as messengers of the Lord, they carry out only one mandate at a time. Many of them have specific functions or fields of activity, and the orders which fall within their scope are of course assigned to them."³⁵⁵

Prayer no longer ascends; therefore, architectonic knowledge of the universe is indispensable. Prayer, therefore, must be offered at the same place, going through a fixed path; otherwise, the angels are unable to go and deliver the prayer to God. Although it is not clearly mentioned, the angel comes down either to earth or to the certain place in the middle layer of the worlds. Gikatilla instructs that prayer should ideally be in Jerusalem; otherwise, the prayer encounters hardship in reaching God.³⁵⁶

Obstacle to the ascent of prayer

The germ of an existence of the obstacle to the ascent is found in the text in which the ascent of prayer first occurred. But it was performed to keep heaven from a prayer of a transgressor. Talmudic and midrashic literature all demonstrate that an angel performed under the order of God as a defender of

Hadarniel said to Moses: "Thus far I have permission to go. But from here, I have no permission to go on. In my way is Sandalphon's fire-O that it burn me not!"

³⁵⁴ Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (Jerusalem: Sefer Ve Sefer Publishing, 2004), 75.

³⁵⁵ Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic*, 75.

³⁵⁶ *Shaare Orah*, 142-143. The gate of heaven is located only above Israel.

heaven rather than as an interrupter of prayer. It was during the 12th century that the change in the concept of Satan was discerned and the first pure obstacle to the ascent of prayer appeared. As we discussed in chapter one, such obstacles appeared in Hasidei Ashkenazic literature. Zayyah maintains the angel's function as a protector of heaven and Satan as a pure obstacle. The unintended interference of prayer is derived from the linguistic cognitive ability of angels. The ministering angels lack the capability to understand Aramaic.³⁵⁷

Because they do not understand Aramaic, therefore we utter "May [His great name] grow exalted and sanctified" in Hebrew... and the third word in Aramaic... When Israel start [uttering] *kaddish*, the angels had problems raising *Kaddish* on high, therefore we recite it in Aramaic lest the angels hinder them. We recite the praise in Hebrew immediately afterwards.³⁵⁸

From a few examples derived from the talmudic dictum, Zayyah

³⁵⁷ B.T. *Sotah*, 33a. See also B.T. *Shabbat*, 12b. "If anyone prays for his needs in Aramaic, the Ministering Angels do not pay attention to him, because they do not understand that language!"

³⁵⁸ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 89a. "וכששומעיי ורואין מלאכי השרת שהעצב רב וגדול למעלה לפניי הקב"ה מזדעזעים ונרתעים כי אינם יודעים על מה העצבין הזה בא למעלה ולפי שאינם מכירים לשון ארמי ולכך אנו מזכירים יתגדל ויתקדש בלשון עברי על סדר הפסוק שני וכשישראל מתחילין קדיש יהיו המלאכים מבלבלין ומערבבים מלעות למעלה הקדיש לכך אומר"י אותו בלשון ארמי כדי שלא יהיו המלאכים ולא יעכבוהו מיד אחרים ואומרים השבח בלשון עברי."

explicated that the angels do not understand Aramaic but instead Hebrew. Aramaic and Hebrew use the same Hebrew alphabet when written. In this case, angels actually hear the prayer, and prayer in the form of the voice ascends to heaven. Although Zayyah determined that the voice ascends, he seems unconcerned with the shape of the prayer in heaven. Whether prayer ascends in the form of letter or voice is unimportant.

The recitation in Aramaic will hinder the ascension of prayer to heaven. Therefore, Zayyah says to pronounce his name as “שם יה” instead of “שמיה” so the ministering angels are able to listen. Elsewhere, Zayyah emphasizes the liturgy being written in Aramaic. “If *Kaddish* were written in Hebrew, the angels would be astonished and the prayer would be unaccepted... Therefore we recite it in Aramaic.”³⁵⁹

Satan is sometimes congruent with the Angel of death. Talmud, however, distinguishes between the two.³⁶⁰ Zayyah notes that according to Resh Lakish,

³⁵⁹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 111a. “יתמהו המלאכים ויאמרו וכי זה תפלה ביקשו אלו שאומי שתהיה ותפלתם מקובלת והלא לא אמרו כי אם שבח יתגדל וכי לפיכך אנו אומרים אותו בלשון ארמי” For angels and *Kaddish* see Yehudah Liebes, “Hebrew and Aramaic as Languages of the Zohar,” *Aramaic Studies* Vol. 4 (2006): 50-51. Similar idea is introduced in *Ozar Hayyim* by Isaac of Acre: “For God concealed the translation, that is, Aramaic, from the ministering angels, who are man’s accusers, and when the *kadish* is recited in a language [Aramaic] that they do not understand, they will not be roused to denounce us...”

³⁶⁰ See *B. T. Ber.* 51a. See also *B.T. BB*, 16a; “A Tanna taught: [Satan] comes down to

Satan and the Angel of Death are identical.

As our Rabbis of blessed memory said, "Satan, the evil instinct, and the Angel of Death are all one."³⁶¹ He harms and kills those who removed themselves from community. The Holy One, blessed be He does not watch them and they are like an abandoned field with no possessors.³⁶²

Zayyah repeats the effect of the holy name of God to disperse Satan, who interferes with prayer ascending to heaven.³⁶³

earth and seduces, then ascends to heaven and awakens wrath; permission is granted to him and he takes away the soul...And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold he is in thine hand: only spare his life. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord and smote Job etc."

³⁶¹ *B.T. BB*, 16a; "Resh Lakish said: Satan, the evil instinct, and the Angel of Death are all one. He is called Satan, as it is written, 'And Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.' (Job 1:12)." Compare to *Sefer ha-Peliah*, 59a. " וכשהוא עולה ומלמד חובה נקרא " שטן וכשניתן לו רשות להרוג נקרא מלאך המות זהו שארז"ל הוא יצר הרע הוא השטן הוא מלאך המות."

³⁶² *Ms. Jerusalem*, fol. 174a. " כמו שאמרו רז"ל הוא שטן הוא יצר הרע הוא מלאך המות " (בבלי ב"ב טז ע"א) שהוא מזיק וממית לאותם שהוציאו עצמן מן הכלל. והקב"ה אינו משגיח בהם והם כמו שדה של הפקר שאין לה בעלים מה שרוצה בן אדם להחזיק בה ולעשות בה עושה."

³⁶³ *Ms. Jerusalem*, fol. 53b, 90b, 96b, 97a, 101b, 133a.

Counterforce to Satan

In post-talmudic literature, especially Kabbalah, the counter to obstacles of prayer becomes a more prominent theme than the discussion of the obstacle itself. A demonic power or Satan in the context of ascent of prayer first appeared in 12th century Hasidei Ashkenaz writing. In other religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam, demons or Satan appear to hinder enlightenment and other states of perfection.³⁶⁴

There are two types of counterforce: The first one is designed to counteract prevention of the ascent of unworthy prayer by an evil entity or angels, as explained in the first section. As their target is an impure prayer, fulfillment of religious rules will normally constitute a counterforce as stated in both rabbinic literature and Hasidei Ashkenaz literature. In other words, reforming one's deeds and living as a decent person will diminish the risk of a detractor assaulting one's prayer. This type of counterforce demonstrates the case in which even unworthy prayer is redeemable. The second model is a

³⁶⁴ For demons interrupting the path leading to God in Christianity see Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony, "Demons and Prayers: Spiritual Exercises in the Monastic Community of Gaza in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries," *Vigiliae Christianae* 57 (2003): 212. On the demonic power or personification of evil, *Māra*, in Buddhism see *Samyutta Nikāya* and the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, for example, *Buddha Akuma tono Taiwa: Samyutta-Nikāya II* (Discourses of the Buddha with Demon) trans. H. Nakamura (Tokyo, 1986); James W. Boyd, *Satan and Māra: Christian and Buddhist symbols of evil* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 78 "Māra much more frequently addresses the Buddha and has discourse with him than does Satan with Jesus."

counterforce designed purely and simply against Satan, who attacks any prayer, even of a worthy person. Whether Satan is an adversary or agent of God seems less relevant.

The role of counterforce is mainly played by the usage of divine name, especially the forty-two-letter name of God. We will discuss in chapter four the ascent of prayer by the divine name. The other figure that plays a role similar to the protector of man is the angel, *Yohach*, the prince of escort, who destroys all the evils and protects the *Zadikim*.³⁶⁵

“For he shall give his angels charge over you, (to keep you in all your ways.)” (Ps. 91:11) The ends of the words are *Yohach*, who is the prince of escort. It is also implied in [the verse in] *Torah* “And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.” (Ex. 4:18) escort.”³⁶⁶

The similar function is found in Psalm 91, which is “considered the psalm of protection against harmful visitations.”³⁶⁷

³⁶⁵ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 81b. “ואת כל הרשעים ישמיד יוהד אותו המלאך שר של לוייה ושומר”
“הצדיקים ברכך ומאד הרשעים : ואנחנו נברך יְהוָה כמנין יְהוָה אנו

³⁶⁶ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 72b. For *Yohach* see also 81b.

³⁶⁷ *Shaarei Orah*, 54; *Gates of Light*, 12. See chapter 1, page 71.

Chapter Four

Ascent of Prayer by Divine Name:

Forty-two-letter Name

Chapter Four: Ascent of Prayer by Divine Name: The Forty-Two-Letter Name

Generally speaking, Jewish literature depicts that divine name as possessing enormous power.³⁶⁸ *Sefer Yezirah*, written probably in the 8th century, acknowledged the massive power of the letters of the divine name, the power that created the world. In the context of the ascent of prayer, adjuration of the name or even numerological equivalency to the name in the words of prayer has theurgical or magical effects.³⁶⁹ Rabbinic literature already presents the association of the pronunciation of the divine name by angels and its effect in achieving the last stage of the ascent of the crown. In the medieval period, the hidden divine name in Scripture was considered to possess magical power; it was the same in liturgical texts.³⁷⁰ The divine name plays an important role also in the classic model of the ascent tradition. When the phenomenon of the ascent of prayer became more dominant than the ascent of the crown among the various phenomena of ascension on high, a new function was added to the divine name, a counterforce. The name itself and the name embedded in the

³⁶⁸ Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 142-173; Trachtenberg, 90; Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages-Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1975), 124-134, 395-397.

³⁶⁹ The recitation of divine name was developed as the technique to attain ecstasy and to gain the magical result in the circle of Abraham Abulafia. Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia*, 14.

³⁷⁰ Trachtenberg, 108. On the power of divine name in rabbinic literature see Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 42; Moshe Idel, "Jewish Magic in the Middle Ages," *Angels and Demons* (ed., Vukosavovic; Jerusalem: 2010), 22.

prayer texts were understood to raise prayer not only from lower heaven to the highest heaven but also from the lower world to heaven. Moreover, they disperse Satan on the way to heaven. The operator of the divine name has been changed to a man who achieves raising prayer and dispersing Satan through recitation of prayer but without any intention to cause the effects.

In most cases of the early ascent tradition, prayer ascends by itself. It does not need any external force. In chapter three, we saw the angel playing a role in raising prayers in addition to collecting them. Prior to the transition of an activity of an angel, the adjuration of the divine name has been the principal method of raising prayer. More precisely, prayer transformed into the crown is raised by the divine name only within heaven.

Several questions are raised regarding the relationship between man and the ascent of prayer by means of the divine name. Is it a purely exegetical purpose or designed for praxis or instruction for *Kavvanah*? Is a human power involved? Does it require the acknowledgement of the divine name? Is a worshipper required to recognize the divine names embedded in the liturgical texts? Does the worshipper perform the numerological extracting method during a prayer? This chapter answers the above questions regarding the two major functions of divine name: as an ascending force and as a counterforce to Satan.

This chapter is based on the assumption that the entire siddur is a continuum of the divine name. This idea was originated by Hasidei Ashkenaz, who held that any change would destroy the numerical harmony between

prayer and heaven.³⁷¹ Zayyah inherited this idea and developed it in tandem with more mystical-magical aspects of phonetic prayer. Zayyah relates almost all words of prayer to the divine name using various numerological methods.³⁷² It is the tradition of Hasidei Ashkenaz that the numerological interpretation discloses the connection of the prayers with certain names of God and other things such as formulas and biblical verses with numerological values.³⁷³ Zayyah adopts the theory that prayer is composed of holy names of God that possess power to dispel negative force and raise prayer to heaven. The ascent of the divine name is based on either the belief that prayer is indispensable to God or to the Neoplatonic concept that the divine name in written form returns to its source. Zayyah's idea persisted until 18th century Hasidism. With what Idel calls "linguistic immanence," the 18th century Hasidism treats the sacred text as divine "since the divinity is immanent within its letters."³⁷⁴

³⁷¹ Hasidei Ashkenaz also views the *Torah* as the divine names. See Wolfson, "The Mystical Significance of Torah Study," 43-77. Wolfson further asserted that the body of God as well as Torah is "constituted by the letters of the Hebrew alphabet." (Elliot R. Wolfson, "Iconicity of the Text: Reification of Torah and the Idolatrous Impulse of Zoharic Kabbalah," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 11 (2004): 223-224).

³⁷² See for example Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 191 n.50.

³⁷³ Gershom Scholem, "The Concept of Kavvanah in the Early Kabbalah," *Studies in Jewish Thought: An Anthology of German Jewish Scholarship* (ed., A. Jospe; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981), 163-164.

³⁷⁴ Idel, "Hermeneutics in Hasidism," *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament* 2 (2008): 948.

Forty-Two-Letter Name

The notion of the forty-two-letter name was likely known during the Talmudic period.³⁷⁵ *Babylonian Talmud Kiddushin* 71a preserves the esoteric implication of the name, that it was transmitted to the limited persons who fulfilled the conditions. The term “forty-two-letter name” is multilateral with several traditions as its origins. The first tradition is that the name is composed of the initials of the verses in the hymn *Anna be-Koah*, ascribed to the second half of the first century Tanna, R. Nehunya ha-Kanah³⁷⁶ *Anna be-Koah* is recited during daily morning and afternoon prayer and on the Shabbat eve before the hymn *Lekhah Dodi*. Each of seven verses contains six words, of which initials form the forty-two-letter holy name of God and the significant amalgamation, *Abgytz Kara Satan* (tear up Satan). The other tradition denotes as the full fillings of אדני הויה אהיה יהוה.³⁷⁷ An Aramaic magic bowl text preserves the other form of

³⁷⁵ Lawrence H. Schiffman, “A Forty-two Letter Divine Name in the Aramaic Magic Bowls,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Jewish Studies* I (1973): 98-99. The notion of forty-two-letters name was known to *Tosafot Hagigah* 12b (אין דורשין- במעשה בראשית פי') however, it belongs to the name derived from the verse of Genesis, the words between the first letter of Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 1:2. See *The Early Kabbalah* (ed. Joseph Dan; Paulist Press, New York, 1986), 55.

³⁷⁶ Samuel S. Cohen, “The Name of God, A Study in Rabbinic Theology,” *HUCA* 23 pt.1 (1950-51): 596.

³⁷⁷ I.e. אלה דלת נון יוד הא ואו יוד הא אלף הא יוד הא יוד הא ואו הא. See Cohen, “The Name of God,” 597.

the forty-two-letter name as the three units of fourteen letters composed of seven repetitions of the name *Yud Heh*.³⁷⁸ This form was utilized to banish demons from the home.³⁷⁹

The function of the name as a protector of its holder is well known in Geonic and Medieval mystical literature.³⁸⁰ The function as mediator and protector of prayer was prominent in medieval mystical literature, namely Hasidei Ashkenaz and early Kabbalah (such as Isaac of Acre). It continues to at least 16th century Jerusalem and Safedian Kabbalah.

Zayyah shows an angel to be a receiver of prayer and uses numerological exegesis in the interpretation of the 19th *Amidah*.

The number of words of *Amidah* is 587, and the verse “Let the words of my mouth” (Ps. 19:15) has ten words, four words of “*Shalom le...*” and twelve words of “*Oseh Shalom.*”³⁸¹ Here are twenty-six [words] as the

³⁷⁸ It is written on an Aramaic bowl. See Schiffman, “A Forty-two Letter Divine Name,” 97. See also William H. Rossell, *A Handbook of Aramaic Magical Texts* (New Jersey: Shelton College, 1953), 80f; “One of the Aramaic Incantation texts has been found at Erech, writing on a clay tablet and dating from Seleucid period.”

³⁷⁹ Schiffman, 97.

³⁸⁰ For example divine name is written on an amulet, which protects holders. See the section of Protector below.

³⁸¹ The liturgical phrase; “May He Who makes peace in His high places make peace for us and for all Israel, *Amen*” is based on Job 25:2. English translation is taken from Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 54. “עושה שלום במרומיו הוא יעשה שלום עלינו ועל כל ישראל. ואמר.”

number (*Gematria*) of the Tetragrammaton. The total [words of all liturgical texts] is 613, which corresponds to the 613 *Mitzvot*... The numeral 112 is [equivalent to] that of “I will be the Lord, YHVH (אהיה) and to the numeral of the Holy One, blessed be He (אדני יהוה)”.³⁸²

The total number of the words of the three prayers – concluding prayers of *Amidah* “Let the words of my mouth”³⁸³; “*Oseh Shalom* (Establish Peace),” included in both 19th *Amidah* and the concluding prayer; and the unknown prayer “*Shalom le...*” – is equivalent to the numerical value of Tetragrammaton. What is the relationship between these texts and the name of God? Adding the divine name to the *Amidah* eventually makes the number equivalent to the number of *Mitzvot*. The siddur is not merely a continuum of words but numerically associated with the divine name and divine ordinance as is the principal teaching of Hasidei Ashkenaz. The number 587, therefore, was not a coincidence. It is “a pre-established harmony,” to borrow Leibniz’s term. The

”אמן.

³⁸² Ms. Yah Heb 94 fol. 103a. “מנין כל התיבות של י”ח ברכות תקפ”ז ובפסוק יהיו לרצון אמרי פי יש עשרה תיבות : וארבעה תיבות של שלום לשמאלי³⁸² וגוי וי”ב תיבות של עושה שלום הרי כ”ו כמנין שם הַהוּיָהּ. סך הכל תרי”ג תיבות כנגד תרי”ג מצות. ר”ת של י”ח עולים בגימ’ אלף ות”ת כמנין המלאכים שמקבלים תפלותיהם של ישראל. מנין קי”ב כמנין אֵהיָה אֲדנִי יְהוָה וכמנין הקב”ה. ”וכמנין תיבות עלץ לבי ביי רמה קרני באלהי וכו’ (שמואל א ב,א) עד סוף ההפסדה

³⁸³ R. Yohanan recommends that the *Amidah* should conclude with a biblical verse since it begins with a biblical verse. Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 53-54.

whole prayer book is numerically harmonized with the divine world. Then why are those verses related to Mitzvah? Are these three prayers related to any doctrine of Mitzvah? Are these prayers selected because of the sum of the number of words, which is exactly what Zayyah was looking for? In order to make it to 613, Zayyah needed a prayer of 26 words. The other liturgical texts in additional prayers of *Amidah* have combinations adding up to 26.³⁸⁴ It is not entirely clear why he chose these three prayers. However, Zayyah probably deliberately chose them because among the prayers after the conclusion of *Amidah*, the combinations of prayers with 26 words are numerous.

However, we still cannot deny the possibility that the liturgical texts Zayyah used may omit the other texts in addition to *Amidah*, or contained only the quoted texts.³⁸⁵ Now we have to clarify the siddur Zayyah used. As mentioned in the preface of *Perush le-Tefilah 44a*,³⁸⁶ “*Tefilot al derekh Kabbalah*” of R. Moshe Alsheikh seems to be the key to solving the riddle.

It is noteworthy that the critic Zayyah wrote on the usage of certain divine names. “I saw some people reciting those names ‘הייה ונאי הדיה ונאי’³⁸⁷ in

³⁸⁴ The numbers of words of other prayers according to Ashkenaz version that we use today are 20, 9, 16, 8, 4, 18, 12, 6, 15, 7, 9 respectively. In terms of number of words, there are other combinations, which make 26. For the additional prayer of *Amidah* see Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 53-54.

³⁸⁵ The verse “*oseh shalom*” is already found in *Mahzor Vitry* and in Ashkenaz and Sepharad.

³⁸⁶ See Introduction.

³⁸⁷ *Sefer ha-Peliah*, (Prezemysl; 1884), 52b-53a.

Shomea Tefilah"³⁸⁸ These names appeared in *Sefer ha-Peliah*. "Some people" Zayyah mentions are obviously Byzantine kabbalists. Zayyah continues after the numerological explanations of the names: "But I received from people who practice (*anshei maaseh*) that those names are inappropriate to be used since *Yeshu* used to use them."³⁸⁹ The oral transmitted teaching he received differs from its Byzantine Kabbalah to which Zayyah is in opposition; however, whether the names are truly used by Christians is unknown. In any case, this is an interesting testimony on Christian kabbalistic magic written during a Muslim area.

Divine Name as Ascending force of Prayer

The divine name encompasses three powers of raising prayer: adjuration, pronunciation, and recitation. The two former methods, the direct command to the object and pronunciation of divine name, are mostly found in the account of the ascent of the crown; the latter is prominent in the account of the ascent of the prayer. The mystical technique by means of recitation of divine name is the major characteristic of Abraham Abulafia. Although Abulafia was influenced by Hasidei Ashkenaz, his technique contradicts to its Zayyah.³⁹⁰ The major differences in the three traditions are geographical conditions and the phrase

³⁸⁸ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 101b. "וראיתי קצת אנשים שמזכירין בשומע תפלה אלו השמות "לאי הדיה ונאי הייה

³⁸⁹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 101b. " אבל אני הצעיר קבלתי מאנשי מעשה ששמות אלו אין ראוי "להשתמש בהם לפי שישו היה משתמש בהם

³⁹⁰ Garb, "Trance Techniques in the Kabbalistic Tradition of Jerusalem," 64-65.

for utterance. The adjuration and pronunciation are performed by an angel in heaven; therefore, the ascension of prayer in the form of the crown takes place in heaven whereas the pronunciation is performed by humans on the earth. The pronunciation is mostly limited to the name of divine and the recitation refers to the text of prayer in which the divine name appears. The linguistic force of the divine name in the words of prayer enable the prayer to rise from the earth.

The Classic Model: The Ascent of the Crown

The classic model dates back to rabbinic and *Heikhalot* literature and continued to the 12th-century Rhineland pietist writings. The crown has several different ways of ascending to God's head. The most prominent is achieved by adjuration of the divine names. It is mostly performed by angels and sometimes by God himself, according to Hasidei Ashkenaz tradition.³⁹¹ This tradition, however, rarely appears in *Perush le-Tefilah* even though Zayyah was heavily influenced by Hasidei Ashkenaz. The commentary on the *Kedushah* of the morning service on Shabbat in *Perush le-Tefilah* demonstrates the classic model combined with numerological exegesis.

“Seraphim.” The seraphim fly in the world. “Seraphim” in *Gematria* [is equivalent to the word] crown.³⁹² These are the letters that Metatron adjures. Then the crown ascends and sits upon the head of the

³⁹¹ God places the crown on his head. See Chapter 1.

³⁹² It can also be read in Aramaic as “as two.”

Creator.³⁹³

Metatron adjures the crown while man articulates the liturgical word “Seraphim”; then the actual crown ascends to God. The crown is composed of the letters of the prayer text; therefore, adjuring the letters is tantamount to adjuration of the ontological crown. Zayyah claimed that human prayers reach heaven in the form of letters. The ascent of letters is clearly presented in R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid’s *Sefer Or Zaru’a*: the letters of prayers fly in the air and ascend to *Malkhut*. “ואותה התפלה שהוא מתפלל מצטרפים האותיות”³⁹⁴ “הפורחות באויר ועולין עד למלכות.

One of the most unsolved problems is the discrepancy in the number. The numerical value of *Seraphim* in *Gematria* is 630 while the *Keter* is 620. The script after the word *Keter* may be *yod* or simply a stain. If it is “כתרי,” the numerical value would be exactly 630. It can also be read in Aramaic as “as two.” This is not the only case of a numerical discrepancy in Zayyah’s writings.³⁹⁵ The difference of ten was likely not a major concern for Zayyah.

In the writings of Hasidei Ashkenaz as well as in rabbinic literature, coronation is the central theme of the concept of ascent of the crown whereas

³⁹³ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 136b. “שרפים והשרפים פורחים בעולם. שרפים בגימטריא כתרי. והם”
“אותיות שמשביע מטטרון הכתר בהם ועולה ויושב בראש קונו

³⁹⁴ Ms. London 771, fol 5b.

³⁹⁵ Another example is found in the same folio, 136b. “ממקומו בגימ' אל יה על כסא פי' אי”
“From his place (232)' (Ex. 16:29) in *Gematria* [is equivalent to] God (31) Lord (15) on (100) throne (81)=(227). Where is his place on the throne?”

for Zayyah, the ascent of crown or coronation is less dominant. His central theme is the linguistic force of the divine name inherent in the words that enable prayer to rise from the lower world. The crown is mentioned, but it is not the central subject.³⁹⁶ The forty-two-letter name as dispersing Satan, who attempts to confuse the prayer of Israel, recurs in Zayyah's writing.³⁹⁷

The Medieval Model – Ascent of Prayer by Divine Names

Following Hasidei Ashkenazic tradition, Zayyah accepted as true that the words of prayer are the divine name itself and developed it into the wider semiotic-numerological interpretation. The new perspective of prayer influenced the later generation. The ascent of prayer by the divine name is achieved with the cooperation of the worshipper. The worshipper seems to recite the specific name of God indirectly and undeliberately. In the rabbinic literature, the angels adjured the prayer to ascend by the power of the divine name whereas the worshipper in *Perush le-Tefilah* has no intention of raising it. The letters that composed the divine name and its numerological equivalent are depicted to have power to raise prayer.

Moreover, rabbinic literature notes that angels first raise prayer; then the divine name takes over during the last stage, to the head of God. Zayyah describes an opposite picture: The divine name elevates the prayer and the angel then acts. Out of many divine names, Zayyah employs the forty-two-letter name as the mediator of prayer.

³⁹⁶ See Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 93a in Chapter 6.

³⁹⁷ For example Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 90b.

This begs the questions: If the divine name causes a prayer to go upward, then is the power of the angel superfluous? We will see whether the divine name recited by man is the only case that enables prayer to rise to the entrance of heaven.

The power of linguistic magic, words, letters, or even numerals equivalent to the divine names in the prayer text affect the divine realm. Recitation of certain blessings containing the numerals of the divine name disperses Satan and raises prayer. *Shema* and *Shemonah Esreh* have such power.

‘Blessed are You, Lord.’ The *Amidah* begins with [a Hebrew letter] *beit* and ends with [a letter] *mem*. This implies the forty-two-letter name, which confuses Satan and raises the prayer of Israel.³⁹⁸

As Zayyah mentioned, the first and the last letters of the *Amidah* for both weekday and Shabbat services constitute the name of God. Zayyah uses well-calculated linguistic theory. The prayer text is not only composed as the result of literal activity but also as the result of the harmonious world between the heaven and earth. Zayyah holds that each letter or each word and their arrangements in prayer text are configured according to the function of the divine name. Placing the letter *beit* in the beginning and *mem* in the end of *Amidah* functions as protection and also as an ascending force of prayer.

It was one of Hasidei Ashkenaz who already depicted the

³⁹⁸ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 96b. “ברוך אתה יי שמונה עשרה מתחיל בבייית ומסיים במי”ם”

”רמז לשם של בם שמבלבל השטן ומעלה תפלה ישראל.”

forty-two-letter name as a tool to raise prayer. Within *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, R. Nehemiah ben Shlomo ha-Navi,³⁹⁹ specifies that the forty-two-letter divine name raises prayer.⁴⁰⁰ In his case the depiction appeared in the account of the ascent of crown by pronunciation of the name while in Zayyah's the account does not involve with the adjuration of the name by angels but the monadic linguistic interpretation of the name. Even a part of the divine name embedded in prayer disperses Satan and raises prayer. The last sentence indicates the order of the effect. The forty-two-letter name first encounters the obstruction of prayer then raises prayer. This event takes place somewhere between heaven and earth as Satan has no dwelling place in heaven.⁴⁰¹ Satan probably accuses prayer immediately after it is uttered. Again, in the previous literature, the divine name was used to raise the crown made from prayer after the prayer reaches heaven. The main parts of the interpretation of prayer related to the ascension of prayer in *Perush le-Tefilah* imply that prayer lost its ascending force.

³⁹⁹ *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, Ms. Oxford-Bodleian 1812, fol.60b. See English translation in Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 39. We find the material, which Moshe Idel ascribes to R. Nehemiah ben Shlomo ha-Navi.

⁴⁰⁰ See Chapter 1, p.39.

⁴⁰¹ In the Scripture Satan was a co-operator of God. The verses in Job 1.6 and 2.1 mention that "Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord." Although it is uncertain the distance between God and Satan, the verse indicates that the Satan dwelled or was able to present in the divine realm. But after Exilic era Satan became completely independent from God and no longer appears in front of God. See Stoyanov, *The Other God*, 56-60.

The divine name is not the instrument but the name embedded in the liturgical texts possesses the power.

Numerological Exegesis

In *Perush le-Tefilah*, there is an abundant usage of “free inventiveness of mathematical interpretations,” which Nahmanides restricted.⁴⁰² Prayer is semantically, semiotically, and numerologically associated with the divine name. Recitation is tantamount to the adjuration of the crown by the divine name. For example, the blessing “who has formed man in wisdom”⁴⁰³ comprises, according to Zayyah, 43 words and is associated with the name of God.⁴⁰⁴ His interpretation of prayer by means of *Gematria* and counting is an act of finding the divine names hidden in prayer. We can thus conclude that he holds that the entire prayerbook is an integration of multiple divine names.

Out of many versions of the forty-two-letter name, Zayyah refers only to the initials of the verses in the hymn *Anna be-Koah* as representative of the name. The extraction methods Zayyah uses are threefold: *Notarikon*,⁴⁰⁵ *Roshey Tevot*, and the counting method. The term *Notarikon* overlaps with the term *Roshey Tevot* as the former uses the latter. *Notarikon* creates a word or words out of initial letters or sometimes middle or last letters. The other method of *notarikon*, which disassembles a word and relates it to the new words, is not found in the

⁴⁰² Idel, *Absorbing Perfections*, 323.

⁴⁰³ *B.T. Ber.* 60b.

⁴⁰⁴ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 55a.

⁴⁰⁵ *Mishnah (Shab. 12:5)* already uses the word *Notarikon*.

context of counterforce in Zayyah.

The Medieval Model 2: Counterforce

Another medieval model parallel to the model of “ascent by divine name” is the counterforce. The divine name has been known to have a power to protect a man from Satan or any other evil spirit. One of the most prominent devices is writing as an amulet. The texts found in Geniza demonstrate the divine name written on an amulet compels the demons,⁴⁰⁶ which does not involve the spoken pronunciation of the name.

Either the name of God or of the angels has an apotropaic function. The forty-two-letter name derived from the text of prayer *Ana be Koach* is also the name written on an amulet. Hanging it around the neck of a person attacked by an evil spirit will cure the person.⁴⁰⁷ The holy name of seventy-two was used on an amulet in the writings of Hasidei Ashkenaz.⁴⁰⁸ Representative of the verbal form of the name of God is prayer. The magical efficacy caused by the invocation of the names of gods was already widespread and was practiced in the ancient world - in Babylonia-Assyria and Egypt.⁴⁰⁹

The abstract entity that possesses the power of creation functions as a counterforce to the interferer, Satan. As already stated in chapter three, Satan used to work under the authority of God in the early biblical period but now he

⁴⁰⁶ Schiffman and Swartz, *Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Geniza*, 37.

⁴⁰⁷ Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic*, 95.

⁴⁰⁸ Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 365.

⁴⁰⁹ Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic*, 87.

is a complete opposite and adversary to God. The forty-two-letter name is almost the dominant name that Zayyah withdraws by numerological extraction. In addition to the forty-two-letter name, *abg*, that consists also of the forty-two-letter name, is the main name in the context of counterforce of prayer. Must the recitor search or acknowledge the hidden divine name in the text of prayer beforehand or pay attention to the hidden names and always attempt to reveal the name by numerology to protect the ascension of prayer to heaven? Is there any condition for causing the effect of the divine name as a protector of prayer? If not, does the divine name possess a mystical power that does not involve the recitor's intention? Does the worshipper merely recite the prayer without any intention of finding the numerical equivalence to God in the text? The answers are in this model that uses the counting method and *Roshey Teivot*.

Counting Method

Counting either the number of letters or words is frequently used as the hermeneutical method in *Perush le-Tefilah*.

In the blessing [of *Amidah, Avot*] there are forty-two words, which correspond to "I am that I am" (Ex. 3:14) and the forty-two-letter name. The initial letters of the three patriarchs are AYY (איי). There are forty-two-letter in the verse "and I will bless those who bless me (Gen. 12:3)," which corresponds to the forty-two-letter name that uplifts prayer and disperses Satan lest he raise and accuse prayer.⁴¹⁰ Therefore, anyone who

⁴¹⁰ This verse has 41 letters. I cannot explain the discrepancy but it may suggest that Zayyah uses a different version of this verse.

adds or subtracts from these [letters] and words is as if he damages the holiness of Merkavah.⁴¹¹

The name of the patriarchs often appears in prayer as the divine name is contained in them. Pronouncing the patriarchs' names is similar to calling the divine name. "Holy one, blessed be He takes part of his name in name of the patriarchs therefore we pray and remind the patriarchs in our prayers."⁴¹² Reciting the blessing and mentioning their ancestors' name is also the key to receive merits.⁴¹³

The association of "Ehyeh" and the forty-two-letter name in *Gematria* is also found in the writing of Safedian Kabbalist, Moshe Cordovero's *Pardes Rimonim* (Pomegranate Orchard). Cordovero, as a contemporary of Zayyah, was well acquainted with the *Perush le-Tefilah* of Zayyah as *Pardes Rimonnim*

⁴¹¹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 97a. "בברכה זו יש מ"ב תיבות כנגד אהיה אשר אהיה (שמות ג יד) וכנגד שם של ב"ם ור"ת של ג' אבות אי"י ומ"ב תיבות בפסוק ואברכה מברכך ונגד השם של מ"ב אותיות שמעלה התפלה ומגרש השטן שלא לעלות לקטרג עליו לכן כל המוסיף וגורע מאלו ותיבות כאילו פוגם במרכבת הקדש."

⁴¹² Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 53b. "אברהם יצחק יעקב ר"ת אי"י : ור"ת של וחומשין עולן כ"א בראשית ואלה שמות ויקרא וידבר אלה הדברים הרי א"כ שהקב"ה שיתף שמו בשם האבות ואנו מתפללין ומזכירין האבות בתפילתינו"

⁴¹³ George B. Stevens, *Weber on the Soteriology of the Talmud, The Old and New Testament Student* 9 (1889): 19. Elijah was immediately answered when he offered the recitation to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

was written later.⁴¹⁴ Cordovero relates the above quoted interpretation of Zayyah to the text in the 14th century *Tikunei ha-Zohar*.⁴¹⁵

The first blessing of the silent *Amidah* prayer, *Avot*, has an identical number of words to the forty-two-letter name. For Zayyah, the numerical parallel is more than coincidence. Each word of prayer is profoundly associated with the divine name in the form of numbers or letters. This view is prominent in Hasidei Ashkenaz, who prohibited any change in the prayer book for this reason.⁴¹⁶ Zayyah expands the Hasidei Ashkenazic view to claim that a destruction of numerical harmony causes the loss of the effectiveness of prayer against Satan. According to R. Judah he-Hasid, the word or letter counting during prayer is the first state of the practice, which “detaches prayer’s words and letters from their semantic contexts.”⁴¹⁷

Zayyah does not explicate in *Perush* whether counting practice is involved during recitation or preparation for prayer. Counting letters or words during recitation requires a highly qualified technique. The above-mentioned texts demonstrate merely an interpretation of prayer and no instruction or

⁴¹⁴ Garb, “Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah,” 274, 308; Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 194-198.

⁴¹⁵ *Pardes Rimonim*, 107b. “אהייה אשר אהייה כשעוה על הכתב דא אבגית״ץ וכו׳ עכ״ל״(תיקני “ הזהר קד ע״א). הנה צירוף שם מ״ב עם שם בן ד׳ והוא מקור העליון וממנה נובע אהיה וכן שני פעמי״ .” אהיה עולה מ״ב וכן גם כס יצטרף שם אהייה כשם יהויה

⁴¹⁶ Dan, “The Emergence of Mystical Prayer,” 225. Any change in prayer book would destroy the numerical harmony.

⁴¹⁷ Fishman, “Rhineland Pietist Approaches to Prayer,” 318.

phenomenon of theurgical or magical power of man.

What then is the purpose of extracting the divine name out of the text of prayer by counting words? When does it take place? The answers are twofold in the case of Zayyah's theory. There is a mere hermeneutical purpose; counting words is not utilized to induce mystical experience, unlike the praxis prominent in Hasidei Ashkenaz.⁴¹⁸ Thus, no element of praxis is performed during the recitation of *Amidah*. It could be for the instruction of *Kavvanah* (I.e., it indicates on which part of prayer one who recites must especially concentrate).

Notarikon, Roshey Tevot

Notarikon – a word-creating method using *Roshey Tevot* – reveals the parts of the divine name, *ABG*.

“[All of them are] beloved, [all of them are] pure, [all of them are] mighty.”
[This verse] implies the name of *abg* that raises the prayer of Israel and disperses Satan lest he confuse the prayer.⁴¹⁹

The quoted text demonstrates the extraction of the hidden divine name. Zayyah focused on the initials of the words “beloved (אהובים), pure (ברורים), mighty (גבורים),” found in the liturgy *Seder Yozer* in Morning service. The initial letters of

⁴¹⁸ Fishman, “Rhineland Pietist Approaches to Prayer,” 318.

⁴¹⁹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 90b. “אהובים ברורים גבורים רמז לשם כל אבג המעלה תפלת ישראל.” See also fol. 133a. “אפס בלתך ג' אלינו ר"ת אבג רמז שם של.” “מ"ב המבלבל השטן ומעלה התפלה

the verse in Hebrew indicate the letters *alef*, *beit*, and *gimmel*, which are the first parts of the forty-two-letter name. The forty-two-letter name is one of the Holy Name of God derived from the daily morning prayer “*Ana be-koah*,” whose *Notarikon* rends Satan. The theurgical power latent in this divine name is already known in rabbinic literature,⁴²⁰ and the letters of a divine name are a well-known protection from angelic harm according to Merkavah mysticism.⁴²¹ Medieval Jewish mysticism extended this notion to the forty-two-letter name as possessing a force to raise prayer and disperse Satan.⁴²² The source of the behavior of Satan is probably derived from one of the writings of R. Eleazar of Worms, *Sefer ha-Shem*.⁴²³ This version of the holy name is known to early kabbalists and the late Safedian kabbalists such as R. Isaac of Acre in his commentary to *Sefer Yezirah* and Moshe Cordovero.⁴²⁴ Zayyah frequently uses this form of the forty-two-letter name.⁴²⁵

⁴²⁰ *B.T. Hag.* 13b; *Midrash Kohen* quoted in Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 192.

⁴²¹ Scholem, *Major Trends*, 50; Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, 106-107. For protection from non-angelic forces hostile to man see Elliot Wolfson, “Circumcision and the Divine Name: A Study in the Transmission of Esoteric Doctrine,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 78 (1987): 83.

⁴²² *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, Ms. Oxford 1812 [IMHM #18104], fol.60b. See Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 39; Green, *Keter*, 125.

⁴²³ See *Sefer ha-Shem* (ed., Eisenbach) 15, 84 quoted in Chapter 1.

⁴²⁴ For R. Isaac of Acre see his commentary to *Sefer Yezirah* and for R. Moshe Cordovero see *Pardes Rimmonim*, Gate 2 part 3.

⁴²⁵ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 53b, 110b.

Zayyah provides another linguistic interpretation of *Yozer Or* (Creator of Light), a benediction recited before *Shema* in the morning service:

“Be a stronghold for us” of which *Roshey Tevot* are *m b*. It alludes to the forty-two-letter name that disperses Satan, who wishes to confuse the prayer of Israel. “Blessed God, great (in knowledge)” implies the forty-two-letter name, which begins with *abg*, “honor for His Name.” *Torah* begins with *beit* and ends with *lamed*, which is [equivalent to] the number of “honor (*Kavod*).”⁴²⁶

The two hermeneutical methods are applied to disclose the forty-two-letter name embedded in the morning prayer. The initial letters (*Roshey Tevot*) of the part of *piyyut* “be a stronghold for us,” *mem beit*, are numerically associated with the forty-two-letter name of God. The alphabetical acrostic of the beginning of the prayer “Blessed God, great,” originating after the mishnaic period, similarly demonstrates the holy name.⁴²⁷ Like Hasidei Ashkenaz, as another “heavy user” of *Gematria*, Zayyah interprets almost each word of prayer by numerical hermeneutics. Their usage demonstrates the coherence

⁴²⁶ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 90a. The numerical value of the word *Kavod* is equivalent to 32.

משגב בעדנו. ר"ת מב : רמז לשם של מב המגרש השטן הרוצה לבלבל תפלת ישראל : אל ברוך גדול
: רמז לשם של מב המתחיל אבג כבוד לשמו. התורה מתחלת בבית ומסיימת בלמד כמנין כבוד :

⁴²⁷ For the date of composition of this blessing see Hananel Mack, *Introduction to Jewish Liturgy* (Tel-Aviv: Misrad ha-Bitahon, 2001), 32 (Hebrew). According to Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 18, it is originated at the earliest at the talmudic period.

of the prayer with the rule ordained by the early amoraim in the 3rd century according to which a prayer must contain the name of God.⁴²⁸ Revealing the hidden divine name is the way of proving that the prayer book is full of divine names.

Utterance of prayer, which contains, in this case, the letters *mem* and *beit*, has then the power to disperse the obstacle to prayer. The two letters are identified as having an effect similar to the forty-two-letter name. Even the initial letters have such power. *Torah* also begins with the letter *beit* and ends with *lamed* (tantamount to the numerical value of the word *Kavod*). Elsewhere, Zayyah notes that the initial *mb*, which implies the forty-two-letter name, disperses Satan.⁴²⁹

We must ask again whether the worshipper must acknowledge the divine name embedded in prayer in its indiscernible form. Concerning the knowledge of angelic names, R. Eleazar of Worms listed all the seventy names of Metatron as “the knowledge of these names bring[s] us to perform anything we wish.”⁴³⁰ Zayyah also considers such a magical element of the names of the angel as the liturgical texts are composed of the names of divine and angels. For the relationship between the recognition of the divine name and its effect Zayyah argues that

⁴²⁸ Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 6.

⁴²⁹ See Ms. Jerusalem, fol.90a.

⁴³⁰ *Sodey Razaya Shalem*, 217. For more on this subject see Moshe Idel, “From Italy to Ashkenaz and Back: On the Circulation of Jewish Mystical Traditions,” *Kabbalah* 14 (2006): 69-88.

“Because he knows My Name.”(Ps.91: 14) It is not said, “he calls my name” but “he knows” because man must ascertain the power of the divine name and divine acts to obtain the divine power and afterwards recite “He will call upon Me and I will answer him.” Then his prayer is accepted.⁴³¹

In this context knowing and pronouncing are in two different categories. The former is the cognitive performance, but not merely a cognitive event, as it involves a psychological process; the latter involves a physical process to the praxis accompanied by both mental and physical practice. Knowledge of divine name is the pathway to obtain the power of God and is an essential condition for acceptance of one’s prayer. Zayyah implies that recognition of the hidden divine name is necessary. In other words, during recitation, one who recites must remember where the divine name is embedded.⁴³²

Another text in the Ms. Jerusalem notes that

⁴³¹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 72b. “ כי ידע שמיי (תה' צא יד) יזכיר שמיי לא נא מ אלא ידע שחייב אדם ”
לידע כח השם יי"ת ופעולתיו כדי שיוכל להשיגו ואחר כך אמ' יקראני ואענהו ואז תפלתו מקובלת

⁴³² Magical effect of divine name is already mentioned in Scripture. As the verse Ps.91: 14 continued “therefore I will save him; I will set him on high, because he knows my name.” One who is entitled to receive the protection depends upon his knowledge on the divine name.

“[For] His righteousness [He] magnifies the law [teaching].” (Is. 42:21)
 The initial letters [of the verse] are “*tsyt*,” which are the last parts of the forty-two-letter divine name. The sages fixed at the beginning of the prayer [in the *yotzer* section, which begins the morning prayer proper after the recitation of Psalms] the first part of the name, “The blessed God, Who is great (El Barukh Gadol)” “*abg*,” and in the end of the prayer, “*tsyt*.”⁴³³ For it is the name that confuses Satan, who accuses prayer, and from the power of it (the name), our prayer ascends to will.⁴³⁴

By the name of the God, prayer ascends to *Keter*. However, we do not know whether only the letters of the divine name ascends or all the prayer containing the divine name ascends. R. David clearly states in *Or Zaru'a*, preserved in the same folio of the manuscript juxtaposed with *Perush le-Tefilah* of Zayyah, that

⁴³³ It is unclear which prayer Zayyah had in mind and obviously not the “*ha-Meir* (He who illuminates).” The text in question is devoted to the interpretation of “A redeemer shall come to Zion,” a prayer recited before a full *kaddish* in a morning and it ends with “righteousness, that the *Torah* be made great and glorious. This phrase is also recited each end of the *Pirkei Avot*. I suppose this is the verse he intended to mention and there is no prayer in our hand that indicates both the last one and “*El Barukh Gadol*” in the same section.

⁴³⁴ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 110b. “ צדקו יגדיל תורה (ישיעה מב, כא) ר"ת צית זהו השם האחרון משם ” של מ"ב וחכמים יסדו בראש התפלה השם הראשון אל ברוך גדול : אבג. ובסופו צית כי זה השם מבלבל השטן העומד לקטרג התפלה ומכח זה עולה תפלתנו לרצון.”

we recite *Aleinu Leshabeach* because it is numerically equivalent to the divine name; thus, the prayer ascends to heaven. R. David expanded the numerological exegesis in a more radical way.⁴³⁵ In his *Sefer Or Zaru'a*,⁴³⁶

Another interpretation: "*Aleinu Leshabeach* (It is our duty to praise the Master of all)" is in *Gematria Abgytz*. It implies that *Abgytz* raises the prayer of Israel; therefore, we recite it in the *Aleinu* prayer.⁴³⁷

The numerical value of the liturgical phrase *Aleinu Leshabeach* is equivalent to the value of the holy name, *Abgytz*. Even the numerical equivalent to the divine name possesses the effect of raising prayer. The prayer book is numerically harmonized with the force of the divine name. The motif of Satan as interrupting prayer ascending to the upper realm is based on the image of the descent to Merkavah, which appeared in Heikhalot literature. The visionary ascent of man is replaced with prayer.

Magical linguistic power inherited in the divine name and its theurgical

⁴³⁵ See Idel, "The Relationship of the Jerusalem Kabbalists" for the influence of Hasidei Ashkenaz on Zayyah.

⁴³⁶ The interpretation of prayer on weekday and holiday prayers, through which R. David exhibits the structure of *Sefirot*.

⁴³⁷ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 215b. "ד"א עלינו לשבח בגי אבג ית"ץ רמז שהוא מעלה תפלת ישראל" ולכך ולכך אנו אומרים אותו בתוך התפלה This interpretation relating to *Aleinu Leshabeach* in *Gematria*, *Abgytz* recurs in the writings of one of Hasidei Ashkenaz master. See above R. Nehemiah ben Shlomo ha-Navi. (Idel, "From Italy to Ashkenaz and back," 47-94.)

force may be derived from the source of the letters, the divine itself. Therefore, it returns to heaven. We will examine the origin of the letters and magical linguistic effect in the concept of the ascent of prayer.

Neoplatonic concept versus Traditional concept

Zayyah considers the power of divine name, more precisely the forty-two-letter name, to be the motivating force for the ascent of prayer. This new concept of ascent of prayer is an antithesis or new interpretation of the automatic ascension of prayer from the rabbinic, *Heikhalotic*, and Jewish mystical literature, which held that prayer ascended to heaven by itself. But Zayyah discovered or revealed the tradition he received that ascension occurred not simply automatically but through the ascending force imminent in the liturgical texts. Zayyah understood that the phenomenon of automatic ascension of prayer was performed with the aid of the divine name embedded in prayer. In ancient Jewish mystical sources we find the view that each and every letter is a divine name in itself.⁴³⁸ This theory of automatic ascent conflicts with the existence of angels who deliver prayer from the earth to heaven. This divergence may result from the mosaic of traditions. The Oral traditions and the written traditions Zayyah received were likely multiple. Through those traditions Zayyah established his own understanding and interpretation of prayer texts. His purpose is based on the idea that it is important to pray without changing any word of the texts and realizing the power of divine name, the effect of the recitation of prayer. Prayer ascends

⁴³⁸ Idel, "Reification of language in Jewish Mysticism," 59.

because the recitor prays with the divine name; therefore, mechanical prayer must be avoided.

Why does the letter ascend? Zayyah would say it is because the divine name is the ascending force. Prayer, which contains the divine name, ascends to heaven. Not only the prayer but the name rises to heaven. Why then is heaven the destination for the divine name? Either the Jewish traditional view or medieval Jewish Neoplatonic thought mediated through kabbalistic writers influenced by this stream on the divine name underlies the concept of ascension of the divine name. Neoplatonism is famous for its theory of “return” to its source. Should the ascent of prayer be understood as “returning” to its source? Idel asserts that because the sefirotic realm is the source of language, words of prayer accompanied by *Kavvanah* reach the sefirotic realm.⁴³⁹ The sefirotic realm is depicted as the source of language. The Neoplatonic interpretation of the language exactly fits why prayer ascends to heaven.

Zayyah used the term “source (*makor*)” as related to *Sefirot* in *Perush le-Tefilah*.⁴⁴⁰ Also in *Even ha-Shoham*, “source” refers to the sefirotic realm: “source of the upper blessing” from which the influx multiplies,⁴⁴¹ “source of all the blessings (fountains),⁴⁴² and *Makor ha-Elyon*.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁹ Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 103-104.

⁴⁴⁰ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 53a.

⁴⁴¹ Ms. St. Petersburg Evr. II A1 F63936, fol. 20b.

⁴⁴² Ms. St. Petersburg Evr. II A1 F63936, fol. 118a.

⁴⁴³ Ms. St. Petersburg Evr. II A1 F63936, fol. 170b.

The letter *yod* in the beginning of the name implies the Ten *Sefirot*, which never be erased. This is the *yod, heh-vav-heh*, and *Elohan eloah Elohim* ...the source of names Ten *Sefirot* are *Ehieh Yod hahe Adonay*. All of them branch out from the secret of the source of name.

Zayyah enumerates the creation of the worlds by the letters of Tetragrammaton.⁴⁴⁴ Moreover, “prayer returns” is absent, and the relationship between the divine name or prayer and the celestial world is not depicted.⁴⁴⁵

The “return” theory, according to Alfons Puigarnau, in Neoplatonism pre-existence is the key to the “return” to God. In Christianity, the entity originating from God is the key.⁴⁴⁶ The human soul is the key issue in his discussion whilst both Neoplatonism and Christianity hold the opposite view.⁴⁴⁷ The Christian view is derived from the belief in *Creatio ex nihilo*, as

⁴⁴⁴ For example this world was created with the letter *heh* and the world to come with letter *yod*. The reversed order of the name is used because the world to come was created before this world. See *She'erit Yosef* (Ms. Warsaw, fol. 5a, 6a.)

⁴⁴⁵ However Zayyah mentioned that the every creation has its antipodes or other extreme. Zayyah extracts the pair passages in *Torah*. The reason why pair passages exist in the scripture is that “All God created are pairs; heaven and earth, Gehnom and *Gan Eden*, wicked man and *Zaddikim*,.. and Holy one, blessed be He and Israel.” (Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 93a)

⁴⁴⁶ Alfons Puigarnau, “Creatio and Freedom in Ancient Neoplatonism: A Road to the Middle Ages,” *ARS Brevis* (1998): 250.

⁴⁴⁷ According to Platonism and Neoplatonism the human soul exists prior to creation

believed by Jewish sages. The creation out of nothing is one of the principal doctrines of Judaism. Nothing existed before the creation by God as Rabban Gamaliel denied the existence of any entity prior to creation.⁴⁴⁸ Anything that exists was created by God. But some kabbalists hold to the dual-creation theory.⁴⁴⁹

Rabbinic literature holds that “Seven things were created before the world was created, and these are they: The *Torah*, repentance, the Garden of Eden, Gehenna, the Throne of Glory, the Temple, and the name of the

therefore it “returns” to heaven while Christian thinkers generally hold that the human soul does not pre-exist but it came from God thereby it “returns” to God. (Joseph Anthony Mazzeo, “Dante’s Conception of Love,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 18 (1957): 148-150, 152.

⁴⁴⁸ “Bereshit Rabba demonstrates a dialogue between a philosopher and Rabban Gamaliel, the philosopher said your God used good materials such as tohu, bohu, darkness, air, water, abyss to create the world and Rabban Gamaliel denied it immediately that those “materials” were created by God.” [Hannu Toyryla, “Theories of Creation in Judaism,” (1998), <<http://users.abo.fi/htoyryla/creart6.pdf>> (13 August 2011).]

⁴⁴⁹ The standpoint of Provençal and Geronese kabbalists differ. Daniel Abrams states that the Provençal kabbalists treat creation as the result of process of emanation while Geronese Kabbalists distinguishes between the two types of creations; the creation of the sefirotic world was emanation and the creation of the material world was creation ex nihilo. See Daniel Abrams, “Some Phenomenological Considerations on the Account of Creation in Jewish Mystical Literature” *Kabbalah* 10 (2004): 10.

Messiah"⁴⁵⁰ and the divine name.⁴⁵¹ Rabbinic literature and Jewish mysticism posit that man can possess theurgical-magical power by means of the divine name. Jewish traditional thought underlies the anabatic movement of prayer cooperating with a worshipper. If the source of the divine name in written form is God, then the divine name "returns" to heaven. R. Ezra and Azriel state the Neoplatonic significance of the ascent of thought.

He should consider that all the words He teaches man are infinite, but that [human] thought spreads and rises to the place of its origin, and when it arrives there, it breaks off and cannot rise further."⁴⁵²

Not only the soul but also thought ascends to its source. Therefore, the divine name "returns" prayer heavenwards.

⁴⁵⁰ *B.T. Pesah*, 54b mentioned in Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 113-114; Toyryla, "Theories of Creation," 4.

⁴⁵¹ Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 113.

⁴⁵² R. Azriel, *Perush Aggadoth*, 39-40 and Ezra, *Liqqute Shikhhah u-Fe'a* (Ferrara, 1556) fols. 7b-8a quoted in Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, 303.

Chapter Five

The Relationship with *Kavvanah*

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A prayer without *Kavvanah* is ineffectual. On this, all theosophical kabbalists and halakhists agree.⁴⁵³ Rabbinic sages argue that *Kavvanah* is the essential and major requirement of prayer.⁴⁵⁴ R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid as well as Maimonides assert that “prayer without *Kavvanah* is no prayer at all.”⁴⁵⁵ As for kabbalists, the theurgical-magical significance of *Kavvanah* is emphasized. Zayyah maintains the traditional meaning of *Kavvanah* but is more radical in claiming in his mystical-magical works that *Kavvanah* is a technique to obtain an answer to a specific requirement in a shape of influx from the source. *Kavvanah* in prayer is directed to achieve this magical result.⁴⁵⁶ As we have seen, Zayyah rarely expresses theosophical speculations in *Perush* (unlike R. David). Is the goal to perform *Kavvanah* to bring influx as other kabbalists do, or just to

⁴⁵³ This is the result of a controversy in which some claim that *Kavvanah* is required for prayer and others reject this requirement. However, the *Shema* was accepted by all as requiring *Kavvanah*. See Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 188; Urbach, *The Sages-Their Concepts and Beliefs*, 395-397; Menahem Kallus introduces the case that does not necessitate *Kavvanah*. (“The Theurgy of Prayer in the Lurianic Kabbalah” Ph.D dissertation; Hebrew University, 2002, 123.)

⁴⁵⁴ The sages held to the view that intent was not required with precepts except for prayer. In the Babylonian Talmud, there is a discussion whether the observance of precept requires intention. Urbach, *The Sages-Their Concepts and Beliefs*, 395-397.

⁴⁵⁵ For R. David see Ms. London 771.1 fol. 5a, “כי כל תפלה שאין בה כוונה אין תפלה.” *Yad, Tefillah*, 4:15, 16.

⁴⁵⁶ Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 189.

fulfill halakhah? In this section, we will examine the objects of *Kavvanah*; either revealed or concealed God; the involvement of theosophical or theurgical *Kavvanah* in the imaginative faculty; the purpose of *Kavvanah*; and the result of *Kavvanah*.

Each object of *Kavvanah* brings a different result. The classic model of the object has a magical result whereas the theosophical understanding of *Kavvanah* entails the theurgical effect. Worshippers direct their intention to the divine name achieve the ascent of prayer - counteracting interferer of prayer- as well as the theurgical impact.

The Definition of *Kavvanah* in Prayer: Transition of the Meaning

“The performance of a commandment requires *Kavvanah*.”⁴⁵⁷ Despite the above-mentioned controversy, the Talmud explicated that *Kavvanah* is essential to the performance of *Mitzvot* and prayer.⁴⁵⁸ In rabbinic literature, *Kavvanah* denotes some form of intention and mental concentration during prayer and performance of other *Mitzvot*. Kabbalah added the new meaning to the

⁴⁵⁷ *B. T. Eruv*. 95b; *B. T. Ber*. 13a. See also H. G. Enelow, “Kawwana: the Struggle for Inwardness in Judaism,” in *Studies in Jewish Literature* (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1913), 86, 88.

⁴⁵⁸ In particular the *Shema* see *B.T. Ber*. 16a. Afterman argues that rabbinic sources do not explicate the exact form of *Kavvanah*. For a more detailed definition of rabbinic *Kavvanah* see Adam Afterman, “Letter Permutation Techniques, Kavvanah and Prayer in Jewish Mysticism,” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 6 (2007): 53.

Kavvanah.⁴⁵⁹ Kabbalistic *Kavvanah* is not merely fulfillment of a religious obligation but also an instrument for achieving “access to the transcendent.”⁴⁶⁰ Gershom Scholem defined *Kavvanah* as either a preparation for prayer or the mystical activity in prayer itself.⁴⁶¹ Scholem considers that this process enables the human and the divine to unite in the form of words.⁴⁶² Unlike the rabbinic understanding of *Kavvanah*, the kabbalistic treatment of the *Kavvanah* is theurgical or magical.⁴⁶³ The kabbalists believe that the performance of *Kavvanah* can influence the supernal realm; as a result, all the sefirotic realm or divine name is united.

The early Kabbalah in Provence and Catalonia connects the *Kavvanah* to the sefirotic realm.⁴⁶⁴ The kabbalist directs his thought to the name of the appropriate *Sefirah* or the words connected to a certain *Sefirah* throughout prayer and intends to draw blessings down to a *Sefirah*.⁴⁶⁵ Another technique is

⁴⁵⁹ Pinchas Giller, *Shalom Shar'abi and the Kabbalists of Beit El* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 21.

⁴⁶⁰ Dan, “The Emergence of Mystical Prayer,” 230 quoted in Giller, *Shalom Shar'abi*, 22, 23.

⁴⁶¹ Scholem, “The Concept of Kavvanah,” 169.

⁴⁶² Scholem, “The Concept of Kavvanah,” 164.

⁴⁶³ There is an opinion, which I cannot discuss here, that the theurgical idea of *Kavvanah* is also found in Talmud.

⁴⁶⁴ Scholem, *Major Trends*, 34; Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, 243; Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 103.

⁴⁶⁵ Scholem, *Reshit ha-Kabbalah* (New York: Schocken, 1948), 245-247.

related to the divine name. Visualization of the letters of the divine name accompanies pronouncing the divine name such as *Adonay* and uniting all the *Sefirot*.⁴⁶⁶ The word of prayer is treated as a symbol of the divine attribute.⁴⁶⁷ Correct intention can bring the flow of divine influence and reward with insight or knowledge. The object of *Kavvanah* is *Sefirot*, revealed God, or in special cases the color (*malbush*) of the *Sefirah*,⁴⁶⁸ and causing influx is the goal of *Kavvanah*.

Zayyah emphasized the magical impact of the *Kavvanah*. In his mystical-magical works, *Kavvanah* is treated as a technique to obtain an answer to a specific question. As the result of *Kavvanah*, the influx is drawn down from the source on high, and the magical effect is obtained.⁴⁶⁹

The Objects of Kavvanah

The Talmud states that “when standing in prayer one should direct one’s mind to God.”⁴⁷⁰ The rabbinic sages simply apply “God” as the object of *Kavvanah*.⁴⁷¹ Medieval mystics chose the Glory of God as the object, denying

⁴⁶⁶ Scholem, *Reshit ha-Kabbalah*, 245-247.

⁴⁶⁷ Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 103.

⁴⁶⁸ This method is the invention of R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid. See Idel, “Kabbalistic Prayer and Colors,” 21; *ibid.*, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 103.

⁴⁶⁹ Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 189.

⁴⁷⁰ *B. T. Ber.* 31a. English translation is rendered from *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* (ed., R. J. Werblowsky and G. Wingoder; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 353.

⁴⁷¹ “The problem of directing oneself during prayer toward a certain aspect in the divine world did not arise in earlier Jewish sources, the Bible, Talmud, Midrash.” (Dan,

the direction upon God himself. R. Eleazar of Worms directed it to “the ‘holiness’ of God, which is the ‘glory’ of God, devoid of all shape or form.”⁴⁷² Maimonides asserted that one should “regard himself as though standing in the divine presence.”⁴⁷³ The object of *Kavvanah* in kabbalistic literature is avoidance of the transcendental God. This transition was derived from the speculation of the Aristotelian philosophy penetrating Jewish scholars in the 12th century.⁴⁷⁴ Scholemian scholars assert the affinity between the emergence of the mystical *Kavvanah* and the encounter with an Aristotelian worldview.⁴⁷⁵ Not all kabbalists, however, accept the change of the object of intention from the hidden and the transcendent entity to the revealed attributes of God. The early Provençal Kabbalist directed his thought to the *Illat ha-Illoṭ* (Cause of causes), the concealed aspect of God.⁴⁷⁶

“The Emergence of Mystical Prayer,” 102.) There is another opinion in *B. T. Ber.* 31a that explicitly asserts; “when a man prays, he should direct his heart to heaven.”

⁴⁷² Scholem, “Kavvanah in Early Kabbalah,” 164; Abrams, “Secret of Secrets,” 61-81. R. Eleazar states in *Sefer ha-Rokeaḥ*, however, not to direct on the *Kavod*, appearance on the chariot, 68.

⁴⁷³ Moses ben Maimon, *Mishneh Torah* (Venice: 1574), 4:63b *Hilkhot Tefillah*, 4:16.

⁴⁷⁴ Dan, “The Emergence of Mystical Prayer,” 103; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 87; Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 251; Wolfson, “Iconicity of the Text,” 220.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁶ Scholem states that the method of *Kavvanah*, which directs to the *Illat ha-Illoṭ* also existed but disappeared by the time of R. Isaac the Blind. (Scholem, *Origins of Kabbalah*, 246-247.) The kabbalists who direct to *Illat ha-Illoṭ* probably unaccepted the Aristotelian

In medieval mysticism and Kabbalah, particularly the Geronese Kabbalah such as that of R. Abraham ha-Hazan, the objects are principally twofold: the sefirotic realm and the divine name. Most of the kabbalistic *Kavvanah* is related to these two domains. Accordingly, Zayyah adopted both systems along with the classic one.⁴⁷⁷ The interpretation of the Psalms that comprise the *Pesukei d'Zimra* demonstrates the classic model's object.

Another interpretation [is as follows]: "He fashions their hearts alike." (Ps.33:15) When Israel direct their heart to their Father in heaven, " He (God) considers all their deeds."⁴⁷⁸ (Ps.33:15) For example, God fixes all their deeds and their needs.⁴⁷⁹

"Father in heaven" as the object of *Kavvanah* is derived from the

world-view or two perspectives of God.

⁴⁷⁷ For the divine name as an object of *Kavvanah* see Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 53b quoted in this dissertation, 272.

⁴⁷⁸ In the original text "Father (in heaven)" is in plural. Ex. 3:15 used the masculine plural form, *abeicha* (your fathers), to indicate a single father. In Exodus father of Abraham, father of Isaac, father of Jacob are understood as all signifying the same father, thereby a single father. *B.T. Menahot* 110a uses the exactly the same phrase that Zayyah uses "abeihem she ba-Shamayim" and translated as a single father.

⁴⁷⁹ Ms. Jerusalem fol. 69b. "ד"א היוצר יחד לבם כשישראל מכוונין את לבם לאביהם שבשמים
המבין אל כל מעשיהם. כלומ' מתקן להם את כל מעשיהם וצרכיהם"

tannaic-rabbinic traditions.⁴⁸⁰ B.T. advises the concentration upon “Father in heaven” if he is “a blind man or one who cannot tell the cardinal points.”⁴⁸¹ This is the alternative method of praying toward Jerusalem. This concept is probably related to the architectonic significance discussed later in this chapter.

“Another interpretation” that Zayyah introduces here refers to the tradition of R. Judah he-Hasid. “Father in heaven” is the object of *Kavvanah* for R. Judah he-Hasid.⁴⁸² In addition to the classical model of *Kavvanah*, Zayyah adopts the linguistic tool as the object of *Kavvanah*. On the interpretation of *Pesukei D’Zimra*, we read,

“For he has yearned for me.” (Ps. 91:14) This means, “The soul of my son [*Shechem*] longs for your daughter.” (Gen. 34:8) [These verses] imply the secret of prayer that man must direct on the vocalization marks of the divine name. [The verb] “He has yearned (קָשַׁח)” is [composed of] the

⁴⁸⁰ The first interpretation on the verse in the preceding paragraph has no subjectual connection with the “another interpretation.” It demonstrates the cosmogonical interpretation according to the numerology, the Lord formed the worlds with the letters *Yod Heh*. (Ms. Jerusalem fol. 69b.) “Father” frequently appears in liturgy. (Werblowsky, *Jewish Religion*, 252): James Barr, “Abba isn’t ‘Daddy’” *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1988): 28-47.

⁴⁸¹ *B.T. Ber.* 30b, 31a. See also *Mishnah* quoted in *B.T. Ber.* 30b; “the pious men of old...concentrate their thoughts upon their father in heaven even if a king greets him [while praying] he should not answer him.”

⁴⁸² *Sefer ha-Hasidim* (ed., Margaliyot), siman 220.

initial letters of *Holam Sheva Kamatz*, which are the vocalization marks of the divine name.⁴⁸³

Zayyah discovers the secret of prayer embedded in the verse. The verse implies the entities that man must yearn for during the recitation of *Holam Sheva Kamatz*. The method of yearning is performed either by visualization of vocalization marks in front of one's eyes or by imagination within his thought. A few possible methods form the vocalization mark, such as visualization of the vocalization marks during the utterance of prayer. During the utterance of the word, recitors must identify that the letter is identical to the name of the vocalization marks of Tetragrammaton. Recent studies hold that the *Kavvanah* is performed within the imaginative faculty.⁴⁸⁴ Zayyah might have been concentrating on the vowels contained in the liturgical word "חשק" while uttering it. According to Maimonides in his interpretation of Ps. 91:14, "חשק" is used to express "when a man's love is so intense that his thought is exclusively engaged with the object of his love."⁴⁸⁵ Zayyah advises pronouncing or

⁴⁸³ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 72b. "כי בי חשק לשון חשקה נפשו בבתכם. ורמו כאן סוד התפלה שצריך שהם נקודות השם יתברך
האדם לכוין מאד בנקודות השם חשק ר"ת חולם שבא קמץ. שהם נקודות השם יתברך"

⁴⁸⁴ Abrams, "Imitatio Dei," 42; Elliot R. Wolfson, "Sacred Space and Mental Iconography: Imago Templi and Contemplation in Rhineland Jewish Pietism," *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern Biblical & Judaic Studies* (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 593-634.

⁴⁸⁵ Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed* (Tr., M. Friedlander; New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 390.

imagining the vowels of *H.S.K* for *ki bi heshek*. While pronouncing “קשח,” imagine the other vowels in thought. There is no continuous text that explains the speculation of Zayyah on this idea.⁴⁸⁶ Again, *Kavvanah* on the vocalization marks is not exclusive to Zayyah. This type of cleaving to God was already performed by Geronese Kabbalists such as R. Jacob ben Sheshet Gerondi (mid-13th century)⁴⁸⁷ and by Abraham Abulafia. Besides the concentration on letters of the divine name, the combination of the letters and their vowel signs and bodily movement are involved in his *Kavvanah*.⁴⁸⁸ Jacob ben Sheshet in his *Sefer Meshiv Devarim Nachohim* as well as R. Isaac the Blind and R. Abraham

⁴⁸⁶ It may be mentioned in other folio or in other works of Zayyah. The scattering the secrets in several different pages or in other work is his method of writing, which R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid used. This method causes difficulty in demonstrating the whole picture of the secret traditions thereby rendering us unable to decipher them.

⁴⁸⁷ The object of *Kavvanah* is both the Tetragrammaton and the vocalization marks. Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 33; *Sefer ha-Emunah ve-ha-Bittahon* in *Kitvei ha-Ramban* (ed. Hayyim Dov Chavell; Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rab Kook, 1988), 370. Scholem mentioned the possibility of Hai ben Sherira as the first user of the method. Since Hai Gaon “knew the relationship between the divine name and the *kavvanah* that must be accompanied to its reading. It seems to be the *kavvanah* is related to the Niqqud.” Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 32.

⁴⁸⁷ *Kitvei ha-Ramban* (ed. Hayyim Dov Chavell; Jerusalem: Mossad ha-Rab Kook, 1988), 37.

⁴⁸⁸ Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia*, 34; Giller, *Shalom Shar’abi*, 41. For a summary of the controversy between Idel and Wolfson on whether Abulafia’s *Kavvanah* is anomian or nomian see Afterman, “Letter Permutation Techniques,” 52.

ha-Hazan also demonstrate such multiple objects: the divine name, its letters and the vowel signs.⁴⁸⁹

This type of *Kavvanah* involves two acts at the same time: recitation of divine name and visualization of the letters.⁴⁹⁰ Concentrating upon the abstract object, without the concrete object, is difficult to achieve. In our text, Zayyah does not intend to vocalize the proper divine name but directs his thought to the vocalization marks.⁴⁹¹ Zayyah repeats the power of *Niqqdot*, vocalization marks, in his other works.⁴⁹² In the 16th century prayer text, the vocalization marks for Tetragrammaton are not written. The vocalization system was never applied to the epithet; thus, this *Kavvanah* does not involve the concentration of the physical written form of the mark but rather the imagination within one's thought or visualization in front of one's eyes. Although this does not fall within our time frame, the visualization of the letters of the divine name and meditation upon it are inherited by the later generation, the 18th century Hasidism, R. Jacob Joseph of Polonoy. *Kavvanah* is one of the most important components of the ascent of prayer. The object of *Kavvanah* is no longer the ontological entity but the image.

⁴⁸⁹ Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 33. For more visualization techniques see Wolfson, "Iconic Visualization and the Imaginal Body of God," 137-162.

⁴⁹⁰ Scholem, *Reshit ha-Kabbalah*, 245-247. This the case of R. Abraham ha-Hazan.

⁴⁹¹ See also Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 101b for *Kavvanah* upon the vocalization mark of the divine name.

⁴⁹² See Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 192 n. 61 for the sources of this issue.

The quintessence of the [mystical] intention [of the prayer] is that the person who prays should direct his intention to cause the descent of the spiritual force from the supernal degrees to the letters that he pronounces, so that these letters will be able to ascend to the supernal degree, in order to perform his request.⁴⁹³

Either the imagination or the act should be performed. Esoteric Buddhism in the Far East provides an excellent comparative example. In their technique of mystical union with God during prayer, the supernal power or God – in their case, Maha Vairocanam but as a metaphoric symbol – descends into a performer's soul. The praxis is not performed merely in the imaginative faculty but is a real act.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹³ Ben Porat Yosef, fol. 21a quoted by Moshe Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic*, 74. This description is derived from Cordovero's thought via Azulai's *Hesed le-Avraham* and it recurs in a series of Hasidic texts.

⁴⁹⁴ The pantheistic and polytheistic religions tend to pray for supplications for their own merit. They recite scrolls but without any intention of offering to God. In these circumstances the Shingon is one of the unique Buddhist sects that adopted one transcendent entity as the object of prayer. For example, the Shingon Buddhism practiced the A-syllable meditation during the prayer. The objects of the worship in Buddhism in general are statues. During the course of time the statues or images were considered not simply the holy statue but the personification of doctrine itself. (This is the view of Kukai, the founder of Shingon Buddhism. See Chikai Seino, *The Theories and Practices of Esoteric Buddhism* (ed., Yusho Miyasaka; Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1984), 118.

The object of prayer, Zayyah indicates, is related to one of his characteristics, belief in the power of language.⁴⁹⁵ With these various tools, Zayyah proves that each prayer text possesses multiple meanings. Finding the divine name hidden in the texts is identical to an encounter with God.

Kavvanah as the condition for acceptance of the prayer

On the interpretation of the blessing after the *Shema*, Zayyah treats *Kavvanah* as the condition for causing the ascent of prayer.

“That you may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy (Num.15:40).” The initial letters [constitute the word] קום [which indicates] when man wakes he shall perform the Mitzvot promptly and not deliberately slow. He shall perform them for the sake of holiness and for the heaven, and he shall not perform without *Kavvanah*. If you perform *Mitzvot* with *Kavvanah*, the Holy one, blessed be He, hears your voice when you pray and shout before Him. This is the meaning of “and be holy to your God (Num. 15:40).”⁴⁹⁶

[Jpn])

⁴⁹⁵ Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 191; Jonathan Garb, “Powers of Language in Kabbalah: Comparative Reflections,” *The Poetics of Grammar and the Metaphysics of Sound and Sign* (ed.; S. La Porta and D. Shulman; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 234. Zayyah describes the power of letters in *Zeror ha-Hayyim* 20b, 31b, 32b and *Even ha-Shoham*, Ms. St. Petersburg, fol. 4a, 13b.

⁴⁹⁶ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 94b. “ועשיתם את כל מצותי והייתם קדושים ר”ת קום שאדם יקום”

Kavvanah is the condition for one's voice being accepted by God. This nomian understanding of *Kavvanah* is derived from rabbinic literature. For Zayyah, a rabbi and a posek, keeping the halakhic significance of prayer is the first priority. Zayyah takes the same stance as Talmudic authority and Maimonides – that prayer without *Kavvanah* is not considered prayer.

Zayyah asserts that any prayer with *Kavvanah* is entitled to be heard by God. In fol. 81b, Zayyah notes that God hears the prayer even of wicked men if it is recited with truth and *Kavvanah*.⁴⁹⁷ Prayer enters heaven and reaches God with the aid of *Kavvanah*. The Jerusalem Talmud depicts the opposite view, that the prayer of religious sinners is only allowed to reach the gate of heaven but not the inside; therefore, it is not heard by God even when prayed with *Kavvanah*.⁴⁹⁸ Hasidei Ashkenaz treats the wicked person as a defiler who exerts a harmful influence upon the spirit of Pietists.⁴⁹⁹ From this understanding, the prayer of wicked person never reaches God. In contrast to the first statement mentioned above, Zayyah demonstrated a quasi-conformist attitude to the

ויעשה המצות בזריזות ולא בעצלתים ויעשם לשם קדושה ולשם שמים ולא בלא כוונה . כי אם תקיימו המצות בכוונה ישמע הקב"ה קולכם כשאתם מתפללים וצועקים לפניו וזהו והייתם קדושים לאלהיכם."

⁴⁹⁷ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 81b. "קרוב יי לכל קוראיו. יכול לכל. ת"ל לכל אשר יקראוהו באמת: " ויא"ת אם כן היה לו לומי בקיצור קרוב יי לכל אשר יקראוהו באמת . וי"ל אפי' לרשעים כשהם קוראים לו בתפילתם באמת ובכוונה הם נשמעים וזהו קרוב יי לכל קוראיו."

⁴⁹⁸ See J. T. *Sanhedrin* 10:28 quoted in the chapter 1.

⁴⁹⁹ *Sefer Hasidim* quoted in Wolfson, "Sacred Space and Mental Iconography," 613.

Talmudic view that “one who is arrogant shall not recite *Shema* since he cannot direct his thought.”⁵⁰⁰ Zayyah considers that the arrogant (*gas ruah*) man lacks the ability to perform *Kavvanah*. If the arrogant man is unable to perform *Kavvanah*, then it would be more difficult for the wicked to do so. In Scripture, the term *rasha* (wicked) denotes the opposite of *zaddik* (righteous), designating good and evil in the Bible⁵⁰¹; the wicked man even deserves death (Eze. 3:1). The wicked are more religiously unclean than the arrogant. Zayyah does not make a clear distinction between the terms *gas ruah* and *reshayim* (wicked).

Another point Zayyah emphasizes here is the merit of *Kavvanah*. As the result of prayer with *Kavvanah*, God listens to the devotee’s prayer. The mystical-theurgical significance of *Kavvanah* is juxtaposed with the obligatory *Kavvanah*. In his other works, Zayyah integrated the interpretation of the rabbinic text with the mystical-magical idea of *Kavvanah*. The worshipper will receive the worldly needs, such as health, livelihood, and so on.⁵⁰² Similarly, Gikatilla has the same idea that “He should be expert in them and when he needs to request something from God he should concentrate on the Name designated to handle that question.”⁵⁰³ Gikatilla suggests that there are specific divine names for specific questions. One who deals with this type of *Kavvanah*

⁵⁰⁰ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 92b. “מי שהוא גס רוח לא יקרא קש כי אינו יכול לכויך.”

⁵⁰¹ Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1407.

⁵⁰² See *Zerur ha-Hayyim*, 49b quoted in Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 188. In this text, the object of *Kavvanah* is *Sefirot*. A *Sefirah* to be concentrated upon varies according to the answer to a question.

⁵⁰³ Gikatilla, *Gates of Light*, 14.

must have knowledge corresponding to the question. This is a highly esoteric matter. Therefore, Gikatilla as well as Zayyah do not mention the details.

Theosophical Kavvanah

An early kabbalistic view of the spiritual intention is connected with prayer pertaining to the unification of the ten *Sefirot*.⁵⁰⁴ Kabbalists direct his thought upon the name of *Sefirah*, the words related to *Sefirah*, or the color of *Sefirah*.⁵⁰⁵ Zayyah introduces the two interpretative methods: the instruction of the multi-tasking *Kavvanah*, of which the object is the vowel marks of the divine name, and the occurrence of the theurgical effect as the result of *Kavvanah*.

Another interpretation: “Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, He who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.”⁵⁰⁶ You shall concentrate on the divine name throughout the recitation of the name of the Lord and [concentrate] on the vocalization sign of “he was, he is, and he will be” and on the name “*Eloheinu*” you shall concentrate

⁵⁰⁴ Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 55. Especially the *Shema* see *Sefer Avodat ha-Kodesh* by R. Meir ibn Gabbai.

⁵⁰⁵ For *Kavvanah* on the color of *Sefirah* see Chapter 2. See also Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 293. The technique is related principally to imagination of colors.

⁵⁰⁶ Morning service. See Philip Birnbaum, *Daily Prayer Book, Sephardic* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1969), 14.

strongly.⁵⁰⁷ By way of secret “Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe” alludes to the Special Cherub, which is called the small lord. “King of the universe” receives an influx of blessings from *Illat ha-Illot* (cause of causes), which is concealed from all... All blessings from *Illat ha-Illot* begin from the Special Cherub,⁵⁰⁸ which is the gate of the beginning of all blessings. Afterwards, you shall direct your thoughts to the first cause.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁷ The term “*Lashon Adnut*” signifies the pronounced name of Tetragrammaton, *Adonay*. See for example, *B.T. Pesachim* 50a, *Tosafot Berachot* 7b, *Gates of Light*, 15. See also Wolfson, “Sacred Space and Mental Iconography,” 605.

⁵⁰⁸ *Illat ha-Illot* (Cause of causes), an Aristotelian term, entered into mediaeval Hebrew through Judah ibn Tibbon’s translation of the Arabic to Hebrew. R. Abraham ben David and other Provençal kabbalists first employed the phrase. The definition of the term varies according to kabbalist. R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid consider that it refers to *Ein Sof* while R. Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi, a Spanish kabbalist in early 14th century, *Illat ha-Illot* is located above the world of emanations and frequently identified as *Ein-Sof*. [Moshe Hallamish, “The Influence of *Sefer ha-Bahir* on R. Yosef b. Shalom Ashkenazi,” *Bar-Ilan* 7-8 (1970): 218.] For Zayyah *Illat ha-Illot* refers to the supreme wisdom, which is the source of blessings. (Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 146a.)

⁵⁰⁹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 53b. “ד”א ברוך אתה יי’ אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על נטילת ידים. יכוין בשם בקריאתו לשון אדנות ובניקודו לשון היה והיה ובשם אלהינו יכוין בלשון תקיף וחזק: ועל דרך הסוד ברוך אתה יי’ אלהינו מלך העולם רמו כרוב המיוחד ית” שנקרא ה הקטן ומלך העולם שהוא מקבל שפע הברכות מעילת העילות ית” שהוא נסתר מכל והכי פרושו כל הברכות מעי’ העי’ ית להתחיל בכרוב המיוחד ית” שהוא שער והתחלה לכל הברכות ואח”כ לכוין

On the interpretation of the blessing of “*Netilat Yadayim*” (washing of hands), Zayyah instructed that one concentrate on the various objects – divine names, the vocalization marks, and the hidden aspect of God – during the utterance of the blessing. The blessing contains several divine names: blessed one, You, YHVH, Lord, our God, or King of the universe. Zayyah is extremely reticent, especially when he describes the method of *Kavvanah*. This is not unique to Zayyah but represents most Kabbalists. No precise explanation or details of the method of *Kavvanah* is disclosed. This text is a great example that demonstrates the requirement of profound knowledge of esoteric wisdom to decipher what Zayyah intends to transmit. To decode such an abbreviated text, the two writings are the key: *Tur Orach Hayyim* by R. Jacob ben Asher (d.1340), who emigrated from Germany to Spain,⁵¹⁰ and *Sefer ha-Peliah*.⁵¹¹ The first

לעילה הראשונה ית.”

⁵¹⁰ On his migration from Germany to Spain see Fred Rosner, “Pharmacology and Dietetics in the Bible and Talmud” in *The Healing Past: Pharmaceuticals in the biblical and Rabbinic world* (ed., Irene and Walter Jacob; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), 8; Wolfson, “Sacred Space and Mental Iconography,” 605-606.

⁵¹¹ For English translation of *Tur Orach Hayyim* see Wolfson, “Sacred Space and Mental Iconography,” 603-604.

Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 53b	<i>Sefer ha-Peliah</i> , 30b	<i>Tur Orach Hayyim</i> § 5
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sentence of *Perush le-Tefilah* mentions the object of *Kavvanah* as the singular “[divine] name” without any specification. Only a selected or a learned man knows which divine name one should intend. *Tur* and *Sefer ha-Peliah* explicate the words that *Zayyah* shortens. During the recitation of *Netilat Yadaim*, a worshipper shall concentrate on the name “YHVH” while pronouncing it as *Adonay* and at the same time concentrate on the vocalization marks of YHVH.

ד"א ברוך אתה יי' אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על נטילת ידים.		
יכוין בשם בקריאתו לשון אדנות	ותכוין בברכה כי קריאת השם הוא לשון אדנות בא"ף דל"ת והכוונה שהוא אדון הכל.	ויכוין בברכותיו פירוש המלות המוציא מפיו ובהזכירו השם יכוין פי' קריאתו באל"ף דל"ת לשון אדנות שהוא אדון הכל
ובניקודו לשון היה הוה ויהיה	ובשעת קריאתו ביו"ד ה"א המורה יהו"ה שהוא היה הוה ויהיה ובמקומו אבארהו.	ויכוין עוד פירוש כתיבתו ביו"ד ה"א לשון הויה שהוא היה והוה ויהיה
ובשם אלהינו יכוין בלשון תקיף וחזק:	גם מלת אלהי"ם ומלת א"ל בע"ה.	ובהזכירו אלהים יכוין שהוא תקיף אמיץ אשר לו היכולת בעליונים ובתחתונים
		כי אל לשון כח וחוזק הוא כמו ואת אילי הארץ

Sefer ha-Peliah similarly adopts the multiple objects of *Kavvanah*, such as YHVH (Lord) pronounced as *Adonay, Eloheinu* (Our God).

The association of the Tetragrammaton with “he was, he is, and he will be” is also presented in *Tur* and *Sefer ha-Peliah*.⁵¹² Although Zayyah abbreviates the words in the two texts, he never loses accuracy. *Tur* and *Sefer ha-Peliah* mention “*Elohim*,” but the blessing of *Netilat Yadaim* has no such word and instead uses “*Eloheinu* (our God).”

The second half of the text belongs to the secret way of interpretation. We must be aware that the phrase “by way of secret” may imply *Sefer Or Zaru’a*, for one manuscript of R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid is mentioned in this appellation.⁵¹³ Moreover, Aaron Azuz implies in *Perush le-Tefilah* that the interpretations are according to the “way of secret” and the “way of *Peshat*.”⁵¹⁴ It is undisclosed which writing refers to the secret way of interpretation. According to the interpretation “by way of secret,” the first six words of the *Netilat Yadayim* allude to Special Cherub. According to the early adoption of the term, Special Cherub is not a simple cherub but a manifestation sitting on the throne of glory.⁵¹⁵ Zayyah may intend that according to the secret written in

⁵¹² “When reading *yod heh* that signifies YHVH, which is, he was he is and he will be.” (*Sefer ha-Peliah*, 30b.)

⁵¹³ Ms. Oxford Bodleian 1624 (Opp. Add fol.35): The title reads: פרוש תפלות על” פרוש הנקרא אור זרוע

⁵¹⁴ See Introduction, 66.

⁵¹⁵ Joseph Dan, “Midrash and the Dawn of Kabbalah,” *Midrash and Literature* (ed., Geoffrey H. Hartman and Sanford Budick; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986),

Sefer Or Zaru'a, the first phrases of *Netilat Yadayim* should direct to the Special Cherub. But this interpretation is not found in *Sefer Or Zaru'a*. Furthermore, “by way of secret” in *Perush le-Tefilah*, “king of the universe” receives the influx from *Illat ha-Illoṭ* while *Sefer Or Zaru'a* mentions a dissimilar attribute:

“King of the universe” alludes to *Binah* and “blessed” alludes to *Keter Elyon*,⁵¹⁶ which is blessed (*Barukh*) and blessed from *Illat ha Illoṭ*... Another interpretation is that “*Barukh*” alludes to *Tiferet*, which is blessed from *Keter Elyon*... “*Barukh*” alludes to *Malkhut*, which is blessed (*Barukh*) from the *Tiferet*. By way of truth, “*Barukh*” alludes to *Keter Elyon*, which is blessed from the mouth of *Illat ha Illoṭ*.”⁵¹⁷

In *Or Zaru'a*, “king of the universe” implies *Binah*, and the entity that receives blessings from *Illat ha-Illoṭ* is *Keter Elyon*. As far as this text is concerned, “the way of secret” does not refer to *Sefer Or Zaru'a*. Does it then refer to the interpretation of *Zayyah*? *Zayyah* mentions in other folios that the liturgical word “Bless,” the call recited by *Hazan* before the recitation of *Shema*, is

135.

⁵¹⁶ In *Sefer Or Zaru'a*, the term *Keter* does not appear. Instead, *Keter Elyon* (the supreme Crown) is designated as the first *Sefirah*. *Ayin* and *Keter Elyon* seem to be identical. Elsewhere we find the phrase “*Keter Elyon*, which is called *Ayin*” (Ms. London 771, fol. 48b), “*Ayin* means *Keter Elyon*, which is *Ayin*” (Ms. London 771, fol. 40a).

⁵¹⁷ Ms. London 771, fol. 9a.

associated with the Cherub by anagram.⁵¹⁸ “‘Bless’ is equivalent to the letters ברוך כרוב רוכב רכבו ברכו (blessed, Cherub, he rides, they rode, Bless).” This association testifies that Byzantine Kabbalah profoundly influenced the speculation of Zayyah. In *Sefer ha-Kanah*, we read, “He said to him what is Barukh? He replied to him *Rochab* (he rides)... He said to him what is Barukh? He replied to him Cherub.”⁵¹⁹ The Cherub is called small Lord.⁵²⁰ The identification of the Cherub as “the small Lord” is apparently taken from the circles of Hasidei Ashkenaz, the Special Cherub circle, among which this notion is widespread.⁵²¹ “‘King of the universe’ alludes to *Binah*” may indicate the intention of man during the pronunciation of the liturgical phrase. However, whether the interpretation in *Or Zaru’a* is the instruction of the *Kavvanah* is in fact unclear. In *Even ha-Shoham*, Zayyah demonstrates abundant usage of the name of *Sefirot*. Zayyah connects *Kavvanah* to the sefirotic realm, as early Kabbalah in Provence and Catalonia demonstrate.⁵²² “The blessed one” signifies either the Lord himself or its symbolic meaning. “The bless the Lord,

⁵¹⁸ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 89b. “ברכו אותיות ברוך כרוב רוכב רכבו ברכו וזהו גם ברכו את יי” ה. הכרוב נקרא השם הקטן.”

⁵¹⁹ *Sefer ha-Kanah*, 14b. “א”ל נחזור לעניננו לדברינו מהו ברוך א”ל רוכב רוכ”ב בערבות. א”ל מהו “ברוך א”ל רכו”ב... א”ל מהו ברוך א”ל כרוב.”

⁵²⁰ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 89b, 126b. “וזהו גם ברכו את יי” הכרוב נקרא השם הקטן.”

⁵²¹ Joseph Dan, “Kavvanah in Prayer of R. Judah he-Hasid,” *Da’at* 10 (1983): 49-50; Idel, “The Relationship of the Jerusalem Kabbalists,” 169-170.

⁵²² See Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 192 for the relationship between theosophic power and the name of *Sefirah*.

blessed one” is interpreted as the blessed one receiving influx from the name, *ha-Shem* translated as “the Lord.” The 16th century Safedian kabbalist, Moshe Cordovero, in the last chapter of the *Pardes Rimmonim, Gate of Kavvanah*, views prayer as a substantial entity:

His prayer does not ascend because it does not possess wings to fly in the pure and holy air and to split the air and firmament... Indeed, while directing one’s heart on prayer, he makes wings for the prayer to fly in the firmament. Then his prayer splits on high to the *Keter*. From there through Madrigot levels influx influences from the face of king ...⁵²³

Cordovero treats prayer as a substantial entity lacking wings. Therefore, prayer does not ascend. The prayer needs wings to “fly” to *Keter*. Prayer accompanied by *Kavvanah* allows it to reach its destination. The phrase “prayer splits” firmaments is reminiscent of the *Zohar*, where it recurs. It is obvious that Cordovero is familiar with the texts of the *Zohar*, but he adds a new interpretation. The prayer ascends to *Keter* in *Pardes Rimmonim* whereas the *Zohar* states that the prayer ascends only to the lowest *Sefirah*, *Shekhinah*.

⁵²³ Moshe Cordovero, *Pardes Rimmonim Rimmonim* (Korzec, 1780), 185b. “ונתן סבה לזה כי אין תפלתו עולה למעלה, מנפי שאין לה כנפים לעוף באויר הטהור והקדוי ולבקע אוירין ורקיעין וחיילי אמר מעל המתכוון בתפלתו עשה יעשה לו כנפי לעוף השמים ותפלתו בוקע עד מעלה למעלי מעל עד הכתי ומשם דרך המדרגוי ישפיע שפע רב מאת פני המלך וישא משאת רב כיד המלך הטובה עליו.

Kavvanah as the Semantic Linguistic Magic of Power

The nomian technique of *Kavvanah* is interwoven with monadic-semiotic interpretation and magical effect.

[The text of prayer], “Bless the Lord, the blessed one,”⁵²⁴ begins with [letter] *beit* and ends with [a letter] *kaf*, which correspond to the twenty-two letter name and the *Torah* that was given by twenty-two letters [of the alphabet]. One who utters the word “bless” with *Kavvanah* is considered as if he fulfills all the Law.⁵²⁵

The utterance of payer – recited in the presence of a *minyan* (quorum of ten adult men), before blessings of the *Shema* – involves a halakhical magical significance. The achievement of *Kavvanah* during prayer is a religious duty and the kabbalist “has no intention of changing the halakhic regulations of prayer.”⁵²⁶ The phrase “as if he fulfills all the Law” demonstrates the magical effect of the recitation of the blessing belonging to *Shema*. It seems uttering the word “Bless” with *Kavvanah* fulfills not only a Law but all the Law.⁵²⁷ However, “Bless” is generally preceded by the *Hazan*, a cantor, and the congregation then

⁵²⁴ *M Ber.* 7:3.

⁵²⁵ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 89b. “ברכו את יי המבורך מתחלת בביית ומסיימת בכיף נגד שם של כ״ב ונגד התורה שניתנה בכ״ב אותיות וכל האומי ברכו בכוונה כאלו קיים כל התורה כולה.”

⁵²⁶ Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 103.

⁵²⁷ See other examples for keeping one *Mitzvah* fulfills all. *Mishneh Berurah Hakdamah*, pt.3 “All who keep Sabbath is considered as if fulfill the law.”

recites the hymn.⁵²⁸ It is a great question whether “Bless” was recited by all recitors or only by the *Hazan* or *Shaliah Zibur* (cantor) in the congregation of Zayyah. If only the *Hazan* can utter the word, then any reader cannot attain nor fulfill the law in this way. R. Hayyim Vital, who certainly knew the works of Zayyah, demonstrates in his *Sefer Sha’arei Kedushah* the magical effect of the recitation of the *Shema*:

“The *Shema*... is unification of the place, which is the root of all the *Mitzvot*. Moreover there are 248 words in the *Shema*... One who reads the *Shema* twice a day is [considered] as if he performed all the *Torah*.”⁵²⁹

Kavvanah is understood here as a power interwoven with a monadic hermeneutic.⁵³⁰ Recitation of prayer text, which is none other than halakhic

⁵²⁸ This custom was established by the second century. Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 16; *Mishneh Torah Hilkhhot Tefillah*, 9:1; R. Ya’akov ben Asher, *Tur Orah Hayyim*, 57 (Warsaw: 1861), 59a.

⁵²⁹ *Sefer Sha’arei Kedushah* (Constantinople: 1734), part 2 gate 7, 21a. “ק”ש כבר ידעת כי הוא ייחודו של מקום שהוא שרש לכל המצות גם יש בה רמ”ח תיבות כי על ידי קריאתה ניתקנין רמ”ח איברי הנשמה גם אז”ל הקורא ק”ש פעמי’ בכל יום כאלו קיים כל התורה שנאמר וחגית בו יומם ולילה.”

⁵³⁰ For the monadic concept of Hebrew alphabet in the Commentary on the prayer by an thirteenth-century anonymous kabbalist and further historical background for this concept see Afterman, *The Intention of Prayers in Early Ecstatic Kabbalah*, 64 onward. See also Afterman, “Letter Permutation Techniques,” 62 for monadic interpretation of Hebrew alphabets.

practice, is treated as a kind of instrument. Zayyah continues,

“Bless the Lord, the blessed one.” The beginnings of the words are “באיייה.” As it is written, “none that go unto her return again.” (Prov. 2:19) One who recites “Bless” with *Kavvanah* does not return to *Gehnom*.⁵³¹ There are four words in the verse that correspond to the Tetragrammaton. BAYH in *Gematria* is eighteen.⁵³² The Holy One, blessed be He, controlled eighteen thousand worlds as it is written “Life-giver of the world.” “Bless (*barchu eth*)” [implies] the inclusion of all the appellations of Holy one, blessed be He. The letters of “bless” [can be transposed into] ‘blessed,’ ‘Cherub,’ ‘Rochab (rides),’ *rchbu* (they rode), and ‘bless.’ Therefore, “bless the Lord” also refers to the small lord. “The blessed one” receives an influx from the Lord. This is [the meaning of] “the Lord (*eth ha-shem*).” [The particle] ‘*eth*’ [implies] that the *Cherub* is also the small Lord...⁵³³

Zayyah devotes most of fol. 89b to the interpretation of the word “Bless,” in

⁵³¹ “Gehnom” is not literal but figurative.

⁵³² $2+1-10+5=18$

⁵³³ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 89b. “ברכו את יי המבורך ריית באיייה שני כל באיה לא ישובון (משלי ב, וזוהו את יי : : המבורך שהוא מקבל שפע מאת השם ייית : : את לרבות שהכרוב גייכ השם ייית) האומר ברכו בכוונה לא ישוב לגיהנם ויש בה ד' תיבות נגד שם של ד' אותיות באיה בגימ' ייית הקבייה שליט בייח אלף עולמות שני חי העולמים : ברכו את לרבות כל הכינויים שיש להקבייה ייית : : המבורך שהוא מקבל שפע מאת השם ייית : : את לרבות שהכרוב גייכ השם ייית.”
הקטן.”

which he quoted the text of *Pirkei Heikhalot Rabbati*.⁵³⁴

R. Akiba said that every day, an angel stands in (the middle of) the heaven and opens [his mouth] and says, "The Lord reigns, the Lord controls and the Lord has reigned! (I Ch. 16:31) The (?) Lord reigns (Ps. 10:16), Lord has reigned (Ps. 93:1), Lord shall reign for all eternity (Ex. 15:18) until he reaches "Bless!" and when he reaches "Bless!" an animal in the midst of the firmament called Israel is engraved on her forehead Israel (stands) in the middle of heaven and says in a loud voice, "Bless the lord, blessed one."

On the interpretation of the blessing *Yozer*, we read,

"He who makes peace and creates all things." (Is. 45:7) ...the Holy one, blessed be He, gives him peace who recites One Hundred blessings with *Kavvanah*. Therefore the end of the words of the verse "He who makes

⁵³⁴ *Pirkei Heikhalot Rabbati* 31:4 "א"ר עקיבא בכל יום ויום מלאך אחד עומד ברקיע ופותח (תה' י, טז) י"י ימלוך לעולם (שמי' טו, ואומר י"י מלך (דברי הימים א טז, לא או תה' צג, א) י"י מלך (תה' י, טז) י"י ימלוך לעולם (שמי' טו, יח) ועד עד שמגיע לברכו וכשמגיע לברכו יש חיה אחת באמצע הרקיע ושמה ישראל וחקוק על מצחה ישראל." Similarly the 14th century Ashkenazi compilation *Sefer ha-Ziyyoni* on Torah *Parshat beShlah* and *Sefer Avodat ha-Kodesh* have identical texts. These three texts describe how sanctification by angels takes place in heaven. Zayyah either quoted different version of *Pirkei Heikhalot* or *Sefer ha-Ziyyoni*. Some of the sentences Zayyah quoted are identical to the latter than the former.

peace and creates" are "מאה" (Me'ah – one hundred).⁵³⁵

The association of the verse with *One hundred blessings* is an influence of R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid's *Sefer Or Zaru'a*, but his aim differs from its Zayyah. R. David elaborates his version of *One hundred blessings* in addition to its original version by R. Meir. According to R. David, the number 100 corresponds to the number of Sefirot. At the completion of the recitation, the blessing "draws down influx from one hundred upper springs and causes the influx to come to all the worlds."⁵³⁶ R. David attempted to find the basis of 100 blessings in Scripture by means of the *Atbash* method of derivation. "The worlds" indicates both sefirotic and celestial worlds and the lower world. "If God forbid, (if) one recites less than one hundred blessings, it is as if there were less emanation from those sources that hence did not come into the world."⁵³⁷

R. David holds that the theurgical-magical effects are the aim of one hundred blessing whereas for Zayyah, the halakhical-magical specific blessing with *Kavvanah* brings individual merit.

There are six hundred thirteen letters [in *Ashrei*], which correspond to the [number of] *Mitzvot*. Therefore man must be careful to utter with *Kavvanah* with virtue and without omission of letters and words.

⁵³⁵ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 89b. " עושה שלום ובורא את הכל. (ישעיה מה, ז) השלום שקול כנגד הכל. " ומי שמברך מאה ברכות בכוונה הקב"ה נותן לו שלום וזהו עושה שלום ובורא ס"ת אותיות מא"ה

⁵³⁶ Ms. London 771, fol. 8b-9a.

⁵³⁷ Ms. London 771, fol. 9a.

Moreover, the food of one who utters with *Kavvanah* is blessed ...⁵³⁸

According to Zayyah, each letter of “*Ashrei*,” the first prayer recited in *Minhah* in the Sephardic version, corresponds to all *Mitzvah*. The *Kavvanah* accompanied by the visualization technique is a prominent concentration in early theosophical Kabbalah. Zayyah barely mentioned the theosophical terms in *Perush le-Tefilah* regarding the visualization of *Kavvanah* but does so in other works.⁵³⁹ This text taken from *Even ha-Shoham* describes precisely on what one has to concentrate and imagine.

And without using the method, we wrote by the external way. We have not used [the external method] except to study⁵⁴⁰ to reveal the secret usage of the internal way of *Kavvanah* upon attributes and not upon the evil force.⁵⁴¹ The apposition of ‘כתר’ (crown) is ‘כרת’ (root of cut or destroy). To enter into the secret of chambers and to direct your thought upon your question in order to open the gate of the inner yard, which faces east...therefore keep this book and the sayings, the secrets in its order and bless.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁸ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 80a. “ ויש בו תריג אותיות כנגד המצות ולכן יזהר בו כל אדם לאומרו
בכוונה וביושר ולא בדלוגה אותיות והתיבות וגם מי שאומרו בכוונה מזונותיו מתברכין מתוספין לו
כי חק אל נרמז בו והם רומזים על מזונות

⁵³⁹ Garb, “Trance Techniques in the Kabbalistic Tradition of Jerusalem,” 64.

⁵⁴⁰ According to Garb it refers to the rabbinic understanding, which Associates the rabbinic concept and study to practice according to the shape of constellations.

⁵⁴¹ See Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 293.

⁵⁴² *Even ha-Shoham*, Ms. St. Petersburg, 170b. The identical text is found in Ms.

According to Garb, *Sedra'v* (its order) refers to *Kavvanah* here as the hidden secret is in proper order of the operations, which Zayyah conceals. Zayyah deliberately occludes here the connection between the external technique, which is related to the *Temurot*, and the technique of entering into chambers to receive a reply to a question from the specific *Sefirah*. Zayyah sees great need in keeping secrets referring to *Sefirot*.⁵⁴³ The apposition, “destroy” with “crown” is also found in the works of Abulafia⁵⁴⁴ and the 16th century Byzantine Kabbalah, *Sefer ha-Kanah*.⁵⁴⁵

Kavvanah as a Counterforce to Obstacles to prayer

Rabbinic and Jewish mystical literature note that worthy prayer prevents the appearance of an obstacle to prayer. Zayyah expands the halakhic idea of counterforce, holding that certain prayers with *Kavvanah* possess power to disperse Satan and protect the prayer's journey to heaven, similar to the function of the forty-two-letter divine name.

Jerusalem 416 quoted in Garb, “Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah,” 293.

⁵⁴³ Garb, “Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah,” 293.

⁵⁴⁴ Abraham Abulafia, *Sefer Imre Shefer* Ms. Muenchen Cod. Hebr. 285, fol. 102b, “... all their letters TRK, which are KTR to purify or KRT for requirement.”

⁵⁴⁵ *Sefer ha-Kanah*, 25a. “The *Binah* is called *Keter* and it is *Krat* (destroy) since when cutting the blessings, which are cut into pieces.” “שגם הבינה נקרא כתר והוא כרת כי” “בשכורתים הברכות נכרתו בגזירות האם כרתי בכרת”

“One (Lord).” (Deut. 6:4)⁵⁴⁶ Holy One, blessed be He, is the only [one]. This is the meaning of “א (one).” He is above seven firmaments and the earth. This is the meaning of “ח (eight).” “And in four corners of the world.”⁵⁴⁷ This is the meaning of “ד (four.)” Man shall direct his heart to the word “אחד” and prolong the “dalet” of “אחד” until he enthrones the heaven and the earth... One who says *Shema* with *Kavvanah* disperses and separates Satan.⁵⁴⁸

The monadic numerology is the medium here to interpret the liturgical word “one” in *Shema* to explain the proper intention. It may further indicate the instruction of the visualization technique.⁵⁴⁹ The “one” consists of the numerals 1, 8, and 4. Each letter explains the structure of the worlds and the instruction for the recitation of *Shema*. The Holy one, blessed be He, is above all the worlds, which have eight layers – seven firmaments and the earth. Recitation of *Shema*

⁵⁴⁶ The last word of the *Shema*.

⁵⁴⁷ The reason for the prolongation of the word “*Ehad*” in the *Shema* is described in *Sefer ha-Kanah on the Torah* (Cracow: 1894), 16b in which the author related to the four corners of the world. “ויאריך בדי של אחד כל כך עד שיעלה במלת שמע עם הדי כי הדי כניי ושמע” הוא חסד שהחסד הוא יורד וזהו שארז”ל כדי להמליכו בשמים ובארץ ובארבע רוחות העולם שמים ווארץ הם הדי”ו פרצופים

⁵⁴⁸ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 92b. “אחד הקב”ה יחיד זהו א’ בז’ רקיאים ובארץ זהו ח’ : ובארבע רוחות העולם זהו ד’ : ולזה יכוין אדם במלת אחד ויאריך בדלת דאחד עד שימליכהו בשמים ובארץ. . כל האומר ק”ש בכוונה מגרש ואפריד השטן

⁵⁴⁹ For this subject see Wolfson, “Sacred Space and Mental Iconography,”

along with *Kavvanah* upon the divine related word counteract evil power. The issue is whether the effect relies upon the reader's power. R. Azriel of Gerona holds that it is intentional while the *Zohar* and *Gikatilla* say the opposite. Azriel of Gerona states that the power of mystical *Kavvanah* relies upon the person: "He who meditates mystically in his prayer drives away all obstacles and impediments and reduces every word to its nothingness."⁵⁵⁰ Zayyah holds that counterforce is operated by a reader but is unintentional; the counterforce is caused by *Kavvanah* on the divine name. It is like photosynthesis in a plant, where the result is the production of oxygen by the plant. For a reader, the dispersing of Satan is the byproduct of the combination of *Kavvanah* and the divine name. This assumption may explain the later dissemination of Kabbalah among non-adepts. The other magical effect of Bed-time *Shema* is expounded: "'Gas (סג)' in *Notarikon* denotes 'disperse Satan.' Therefore reciting Bed-Time *Shema* damages Demons..."⁵⁵¹ The letters *gimmel* and *samech* do not appear in daytime *Shema* but do at Bedtime *Shema*. The two letters contained in the prayer constitute the phrase "disperse satan"; therefore, reciting Bedtime *Shema* disperses the evil spirit. The association of the letter *samech* with Satan is found in the 13th century work *Yalkut Shimonai* on Gen. 2: 23. "Up to this point a letter *samech* is unfound since Satan was created when Eve was created."

⁵⁵⁰ Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 178.

⁵⁵¹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 92b. "גס נוטרי גרש סטן ולכך הורא קש לפני מטתו להשל ממזיקים ושדים: ויש ז הפסקותי על לבבך. ואבדתם. מהרה: וכה"ג נגד שבע מדרגות לגיהנם והקורא בכוונה ומפסיק בין הדבקים מצעין לו גיהנם שני בפרש שדי מלכים בה תשלוג בצלמון (תה' סה, טו: ספרדי השבועות מזמור לשבועות."

In the blessing (the 17th *Amidah*, *Avodah* (Temple Service),⁵⁵²) there are forty-two words, which correspond to the forty-two [letters]-name. In the blessing “Magen Abraham” there are also forty-two words, by their merit Holy One, blessed be He choose us. It is virtuousness to direct to the forty-two-letter name in the blessing since it raises the prayer and reject Satan from standing in front of the prayer.⁵⁵³

The number of words of the 17th blessing of the *Amidah*, which has undergone many changes, is understood to be forty-two, which associates with the forty-two-letter name.⁵⁵⁴ Therefore, the recitation of the *Amidah* is tantamount to calling the divine name. As discussed in the previous chapter, the forty-two-letter name itself has the power to raise prayer and disperse Satan. Zayyah’s phrase “to direct the blessing to the forty-two-letters name” is difficult

⁵⁵² The blessing, *Avodah*, Zayyah quoted in Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 101b contains only 40 words although it includes additions. “ואתה ברחמיך הרבים תחפוץ בנו ותרצנו” is the addition found in Vitry, Sepharad, and Provence. (Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 50.) “רצה יהוה אלהינו בעמך ישראל ולתפלתם שעה והשב העבודה לדביר ביתך : ואשי ישראל ותפלתם מהרה תקבל ברצון ותהי לרצון תמיד עבודת ישראל עמך ואתה ברחמיך הרבים תחפוץ בנו ותרצנו ותחזינה : עיינינו בשובך לציון ברחמים. ברוך אתה יהוה המחזיר שכינתו לציון :

⁵⁵³ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 101b. “ ויש בברכה זו מב תיבות כנגד שם בן מייב וגייכ בברכת מגן אברהם “ יש מייב תיבות כי בזכותם הקב"ה בוחר בנו : וטוב להתכוין ברכה זו בשם של ב"ם כי הוא המעלה את התפלה ודוחה השטן מלעמוד בפניה

⁵⁵⁴ For the transition of the contents of *Amidah* see Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 50-51.

to discern. He probably meant that concentration upon the prayer is similar to directing one's heart to the divine name. What is the relationship between *Kavvanah* and the function of the forty-two-letter name? The divine name accomplishes its function as a raiser and the counterforce with *Kavvanah* because *Kavvanah* is a religious duty without which prayer does not reach God. Thus, *Kavvanah* must be added for the divine name in prayer to function properly. Zayyah holds that man has no power or intention of dispersing Satan; however, without a reader, the divine name could not achieve the aim. It is like man emitting carbon dioxide and unintentionally benefitting photosynthesis. Zayyah's predecessors, the authors of the *Zohar* and Gikatilla, assert that a lack of *Kavvanah* causes hindrances to prayer:

If one comes to unify the holy name and did not intend it in his heart, the desires and fear that within him are blessed, the lower and the higher. Then his prayer is cast out and evil is decreed on it."⁵⁵⁵

It seems one can unite the holy name through recitation. The theurgical effect occurred as the result. R. Joseph Gikatilla, on the other hand, holds that their magical effect accompanied by *Kavvanah* also prevents any hindrance to prayer being answered by God.⁵⁵⁶ R. Azriel of Gerona mentions the power of mystical *Kavvanah*: “

⁵⁵⁵ *Zohar* 2:57a. English translation is taken from Giller, *Shalom Shar'abi*, 25-26.

⁵⁵⁶ *Gates of Light*, 12; *Shaare Orach* 54.

Architectonic Significance of Kavvanah

For prayer, there exists the fixed path to heaven. Thus, architectonic knowledge is essential to accomplish *Kavvanah* using the visualization technique and for the ascent of prayer. According to *Even ha-Shoham*, Zayyah's commentary on the combination of letters, the architectonic information is an indispensable requisite for *Kavvanah* as *Kavvanah* is accompanied by the visualization of entering into *Sefirot*.⁵⁵⁷ This phenomenon, entering into *Sefirot*, occurs within the imaginative faculty. The angel, on the other hand, needs the structure of the lower world to raise prayer. The *Mishnah* teaches the concentration method from the architectonic point of view. "A blind man or one who cannot tell the cardinal points should direct his heart towards his Father in Heaven."⁵⁵⁸

Gikatilla pointed out the physical direction for prayer. No force interrupts the communal prayer if it is recited within the Eretz Israel.⁵⁵⁹ "Even communal prayers recited in the Diaspora many forces disparage and vilify."⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁷ Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 188.

⁵⁵⁸ *B.T. Ber. 30a. B.T. Ber. 57a* also mentions to devote to Father in Heaven describing a kind of oneiromancy or dream fortune-telling. "If one sees a palm branch in a dream, he is single-hearted in devotion to his Father in Heaven." ("Talmud - Berachoth," *The Soncino Talmud on CD-ROM*. Version 3.0.6. 1990.) On question of dreams in Zayyah's work see Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 192.

⁵⁵⁹ "Communal prayers, however, cannot be halted by any sentry or appointee. For when the community prays, the prayers are always accepted." (*Gates of Light*, 110.)

⁵⁶⁰ *Gates of Light*, 111, *Shaare Orah*, 142.

“There is no way for their prayers to ascend” when one is in exile “for the gates of heaven reside in Israel alone.”⁵⁶¹ Based on Kings 1, 8, 48, Gikatilla considers that the geographical path of prayer is only linked between Eretz Israel and heaven. “The prayers in the Diaspora can ascend only if they are directed from there to Jerusalem, for it is from Jerusalem they are dispatched to the heavens.”⁵⁶² Therefore, one in Diaspora makes prayer ascend by praying toward Jerusalem. Zayyah adopted the classical significance of the geographical importance of prayer:

Therefore man prepares to pray in a public congregation and in the same area. Those who pray alone intend to pray while the congregation prays. When the community prays, the “Holy One, blessed be He, links his name with them”⁵⁶³ completely.⁵⁶⁴

Prayer in congregation is the condition for calling the divine name.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

⁵⁶² *Gates of Light*, 112, *Shaare Orah*, 143. This account is obviously derived from *Mishnah* recorded in *B.T. Ber.* 28a. See also *B.T. Ber.* 30a for mental concentration towards Jerusalem; *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhote Tefillah*, 5:3. See also Menachem Kellner, *Maimonides' Confrontation with Mysticism* (Oxford; The Littman Library, 2007), 212.

⁵⁶³ *Midrash Numbers Rabbah* 9:7.

⁵⁶⁴ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 53a. “לכן יכין אדם להתפלל בצבור ואותן ישובים שמתפללים ביחיד”ה מיחד שמו עליהם שלם יכוונו להתפלל בשעה שהקהלות מתפללין וכשציבור מתפללין הקב”ה מיחד שמו עליהם שלם.”

Zayyah as a halakhist recommended praying in congregation,⁵⁶⁵ which has a direct effect upon the godhead. The phrase “to pray in the same area” should be investigated; it implies the account of Abraham praying at the same place every morning. Zayyah understood the verse to mean the existence of geographical path for prayer; otherwise, the angel cannot take them to heaven.⁵⁶⁶

Theurgical-magical effects occur as the result of *Kavvanah*. The unification of the divine name is the state Israelites have been longing for.

AYH (איי"ה) corresponds to “I am that I am” (Ex. 3:14) that he prays it with *Kavvanah* especially to the Holy one, blessed be he and it (the verse) testifies God that he is “He was, He is, and He will be.”⁵⁶⁷

Recitation of liturgical phrases that contain the letters A, Y, H or “I am that I am” in the Sephardic version of liturgy unites the God. In the same folio, Zayyah continues:

Up to this point [the liturgical phrase, “Blessed are You, Lord, hears prayer”], he shall direct his heart on the phrase and on vocalization

⁵⁶⁵ Zayyah attempts to prove the importance of recitation in congregation since *Kaddish* and *Kedushah* necessitate the *Minyan*. (Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 66a.)

⁵⁶⁶ See Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 53b quoted in chapter 3.

⁵⁶⁷ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 53b. “איי"ה ונגד אהיה אשר אהיה שהמתפלל בכוונה מיחד להקב"ה” “AYH” seems to refer to a word of holiday prayers; “כבודו מלא עולם. משכתינו שואלים זה לזה איה מקום כבודו” This prayer is uttered by *Hazan*. According to *Sefer ha-Peliah*, 8a ‘AYH’ refers to the three attributes.

mark[s] of the divine name with complete *Kavvanah*. But you shall not utter them as they are the names that needs *Kavvanah* of the heart. They transmitted me that he shall examine this several times.⁵⁶⁸ Indeed, he has to know when he attracts its power. Another Kabbalah I received was those divine names, which are from a verse in Levictus... Another [name] that was transmitted me, the youth, was also from the verse "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup." (Ps. 16:5) It is also their benefit, and those [names] are יהי יהל יהור יהוהו מגנכת יחמלו קתיה ותכאויס. More [names] were transmitted: 'ביה' when you reach (the liturgical phrase) of "he hears our prayers," say "תפות ניהל" "לחשג לעקב וקיא נבה" which open[s] the gates of prayer for me. . It will be power and permission to create the evil to accuse and keep my prayer from ascending to the highest heaven. ⁵⁶⁹⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁸ What one shall examine is unclear.

⁵⁶⁹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 101b. "כשיגיע לפה יכוין לבו בהם בכונה שלימה ובניקוד כל שם ואל".
 "יוציאם מפיו כי הם שמות שצריכין כוונת הלב"

⁵⁷⁰ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 101b. "אבל צריך לדעת כחו מהיכן".
 נמשך. ועוד קבלה אחרת קבלתי שאלו השמות שיוצאין מפסוק ויקרא אל משה מועילים לזה והם אלו. רמאל דעום להאם וילא הוהי רבדיו השם לא ארקנו : ועוד נמסר לי אני הצעיר שגם אלו השמות שיוצאים מפסוק יי' מנת חלקי וכוסי וגוי' (תה' טז ה) תועלתם גם לזה ואלו הם יהי יהל יהור יהוהו מגנכת יחמלו קתיה ותכאויס ועוד נמסר ביה שכשתגיע לו שמע תפלתינו תאמר תפות ניהל לחשג לעקב וקיא נבה שתפתח לי שערי התפלה ואל יהי כח ורשות ליצר הרע לקטרג ולמנוע תפלתי מלעלות למרומי מרומים ותהיה תפלתי ובקשתי זאת נענית בעת ובעונה הזאת ואם נגזרה עלי גזרה שתתבסל ואם נחתם עלי גזר דין

Zayyah treats the “*Kavvanah* of the heart” as a recitation by the heart. The phrase was already used in the Babylonian Talmud, connoting the concentration of the mind during prayer, or simply concentration.⁵⁷¹ The Amidah has been known as a silent prayer since the rabbinic period, and in the 16th century, individuals in Jerusalem certainly recited the Amidah silently.⁵⁷²

The first paragraph has two possible readings: Either Zayyah adopted the Ashkenazic custom of prayer, or he treats the “Kavvanat ha-Lev” as a recitation by heart. He suggested a silent *Kavvanah*. The silent *Kavvanah* should apply to part of the blessing. *Kavvanat ha-lev*, according to Zayyah, designates the silent *Kavvanah*. This text demonstrates the important testimonies: Zayyah receiving several traditions and the date of composition. Kabbalists, whose names are concealed, transmitted orally the secret of the names to Zayyah. The phrase “other Kabbalah” indicates that they belong to a kabbalistic tradition different from that of Zayyah. Although he was young, Zayyah was entitled to receive several kabbalistic traditions. Each circle had a different tradition on the divine name, and they maintained their traditions without intermingling. The phrase “I, the young” has two readings. Both are the key to determining the date of the composition of *Perush le-Tefillah*. The paleographer thought the date of the composition was corrupt as it is not likely that Zayyah wrote his first

⁵⁷¹ B.T. Ber. 13b; B.T. Megillah 20a.

⁵⁷² Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 25; Welblowsky, *Jewish Religion*, 644;

Joseph Heinemann, *Prayer In the Talmud: forms and Patterns* (New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1977), 156-192.

work at 13.⁵⁷³ If “the young” means an early teenager, Zayyah indeed wrote the *Perush* at the age of 13. The phrase “*ani ha-zayir*” has been used by his predecessors, R. Isaac of Acre and more.⁵⁷⁴ Another possible reading is “I am the youngest” among those who received the tradition. If this reading is correct, we can determine that Zayyah already reached the level; “the other Kabbalah” transmitted their secret to Zayyah.

⁵⁷³ See Ms. Jerusalem, 227b.

⁵⁷⁴ Judges 6:15 “I am the youngest in my house” *Ber.* 48:14 “who was the younger”; R. Isaac of Acre, Commentary to *Sefer Yezirah*; Moshe ben Ya’akov of Kiev, *Sefer Shoshan Sodot* (Karachi, 1784), 69b; Ibn Gabbai, *Sefer Avodat ha-Kodesh* (CD-ROM Taklitor ver. 14), 1:22, the phrase does not appear on Warsaw: 1883, *idem*, *Sefer Tolaat Yaakov, hakdamah*, 10; Abraham ben Azulai, *Sefer Hesed le-Abraham* (Amsterdam: 1685), *hakdamah*.

Chapter Six

Interpretation of Prayer by *Gematria*

Chapter Six: Interpretation of Prayer by *Gematria*

Gematria, the traditional Jewish hermeneutic technique,⁵⁷⁵ is one of the main exegetical methods Zayyah employs in his *Perush le-Tefilah*. It was in the Geonic period when *Gematria* was first used as an interpretation of prayer.⁵⁷⁶ Further developed by the Hasidei Ashkenaz,⁵⁷⁷ numerological hermeneutics were widely accepted by Jewish mystics and kabbalists.⁵⁷⁸ To date, there is no physical evidence how the numerological hermeneutics of Hasidei Ashkenaz was transmitted to the Spanish kabbalists. R. Judah he-Hasid has left no esoteric writing, and neither had Judah and R. Eleazar of Worms visited Spain nor received a disciple from Spain. On the other hand, there is an opinion that R.

⁵⁷⁵ Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 337; Joseph Dan, *Jewish Mysticism – The Middle Ages* (Jerusalem: Jason Aronson, 1998), 74. The earliest use of *Gematria* is shown in an inscription of Sargon II (727-707 B.C.E.). There is an opinion that Scripture already uses *Gematria*, transposing ‘*Sadeh*’ for ‘*Shaddai*.’ In rabbinic literature *Gematria* first appears in the second century. In midrashic literature *Gematria* plays important role. *m. Abot* 3:18; *b. Naz.* 16; *b. Shabbat* 10b; *b. Sukkah* 45b; *b. Sanh.*

⁵⁷⁶ Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 32.

⁵⁷⁷ Joseph Dan, *The Esoteric Theology of Ashkenazi Hasidism* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1968), 20 (Hebrew); Abrams, “From Germany to Spain,” 91.

⁵⁷⁸ Although numerological hermeneutics were widely accepted in Jewish mystics and kabbalists there are those who were not occupied with. Among the forerunners of Zayyah, neither *Heikhalot* mysticism nor the *Sefer Yezirah* ever used the method of numerology and the main body of the *Zohar* almost ignores the method. (Dan, “The Ashkenazi Hasidic Concept of Language,” 20; Abrams, “From Germany to Spain,” 91.)

Eleazar reveals the secret doctrine in written form to disseminate the instruction of the *Kavvanah* during prayer.⁵⁷⁹ Scholem suggested that the influence or indirect transmission of Hasidei Ashkenaz seems to have reached Spanish Kabbalah, especially in Castile.⁵⁸⁰ Moshe Idel proved Scholem's assumption that certain mystical and theurgical techniques in Spanish Kabbalah are the Ashkenazic origin by presenting the textual evidences.⁵⁸¹ Spanish and Provençal kabbalists such as a leading disciple of Nahmanides, R. Bahya ibn Adret, prominent Provençal kabbalist, R. Isaac the Blind, demonstrates the encounter with Ashkenazic masters.⁵⁸² Their testimony proved that they

⁵⁷⁹ Daniel Abrams, "The Writing of Secret in Ashkenaz and its Transition to Spain," *Mahanaim* 6 (1994): 101 (Hebrew).

⁵⁸⁰ Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 85. According to Scholem, it is through Hasidei Ashkenaz the *Gematria* as hermeneutic method of prayer probably entered into Spanish Kabbalah. (Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 337.) Then to other places including Jerusalem and Safed. There is no clear picture how the hermeneutical method spread.

⁵⁸¹ Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 97-98; Moshe Idel, "Ashkenazi Esotericism and Kabbalah in Barcelona," *Ispania Judaica*, 5 (2007): 74-80.

⁵⁸² Idel, "Ashkenazi Esotericism and Kabbalah in Barcelona," 74-80. The appellation "Ashkenazic master" here refers to, according to Idel, "esoteric traditions in southern Germany, mainly those related to the family of R. Qalonimous from Luca." (Idel, *ibid.*, 70-71.) Idel supported Scholem's view that there were two currents of Provençal Kabbalah in Catalonia at the beginning of the 13th century. [Moshe Idel, "The Vicissitudes of Kabbalah in Catalonia," *The Jews of Spain and the Expulsion of 1492* (ed., Moshe Lazar and Stephen Haliczer; California: Labyrinthos, 1997), 26-27.]

received certain teachings concerning the secret of divine name from Ashkenazi figures. Moreover there is a record that an Ashkenazi scholar, R. Abraham Axelrod of Cologne visited Barcelona sometime in 1260s, more precisely, at the house of R. Shelomo ben Adret's father and R. Abraham provided sermon to the Rabbis in the area.⁵⁸³

Here we must remember, as Moshe Idel warns us, that Kabbalah has been maintaining strictly oral transmission. The Kabbalistic traditions in the written documents are only a small part of whole secrets and most of the teachings are remained concealed, transmitted from a master to a disciple or selected elite, by orally. Therefore we do not possess the profundity of the kabbalistic lore.⁵⁸⁴ Therefore we must take into account that there are mystical teachings transmitted orally. In this chapter, we shall trace the transmission trait of the numerological interpretation of prayer and the influence upon Zayyah and the doctrines of Zayyah to the later generation. I shall attempt to prove the textual connection between the esoteric thought of leading figures in three regions: Germany, Spain, and Jerusalem. Through comparison, we will detect the origins of the influence or major sources of Zayyah's Kabbalah (derived from the source in ancient Jewish mysticism and mystical thought of several generations before him).⁵⁸⁵ Again, Zayyah had a profound influence on the treatises of Safedian kabbalists, most particularly the prominent kabbalist and principal disciple of R. Isaac Luria, R. Hayyim Vital.

⁵⁸³ Idel, "Ashkenazi Esotericism and Kabbalah in Barcelona," 93.

⁵⁸⁴ Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 22.

⁵⁸⁵ See Garb, "Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah," 262.

To a large extent, *Gematria* is used to transform a word into a numerical value and associate it with a term related to the number. For example, *mah* (the letters *mem* and *heh*) is in *atbash yod Zadik* and equals one hundred, with which is associated one hundred blessings.⁵⁸⁶ I call this type a single calculation numerology as it requires only one calculation. A double calculation type transforms a word into a numerical value and then replaces it with a numerically equivalent word. For example, “*be-Hokhmah*” ($2+8+20+40+5=75$) is in *Gematria Lailah* ($30+10+30+5=75$).⁵⁸⁷ This type of *Gematria* requires two calculations. Both the original word and the word to be associated require calculation.

The major aims of numerology in *Perush le-Tefilah* are to demonstrate the inner meaning of prayers and to reveal the divine names hidden in the text of prayer. This is achieved by counting the number of words or by numerical calculation of a word or words of prayer and correlation of the result to certain verses of Scriptures, passages from rabbinic texts, or to a divine name.

Single Calculation Numerology

The exegesis on the blessing “*Asher Yazar,*” recited after micturition (relieving oneself), is an example of the first type, the single calculation numerology. Writings of German pietist R. Eleazar of Worms, Spanish kabbalist, R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid, and Zayyah demonstrate the similarities.

⁵⁸⁶ Besides *Perush le-Tefilah* and *Sefer Or Zaru'a*, this association is found in *Tosafot, Menahot, 44a*.

⁵⁸⁷ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 54b.

<p>Zayyah, <i>Perush le-Tefillah</i>, <u>חלולים חלולים בגי"מ רמ"ח</u> כנגד רמח איברים כי אדם חלול רמ"ח, כנגד רמ"ח אברים בפנים הכרס והבטן ואפילו בין עצם ובשר ועוד הדם מפסיק שבאדם. והולך מזה לזה:</p>	<p>R. Eleazar, <i>Rokeah</i> ⁵⁸⁸ ומצאתי במעשה הגאונים <u>חלולים חלולים בגימטריא</u> כנגד רמ"ח אברים בפנים הכרס והבטן ואפילו בין עצם ובשר ועוד הדם מפסיק שבאדם.</p>	<p>R. David, <i>Or Zaru'a</i>⁵⁸⁹ ד"א אשר יצר את האדם בחכמה. פ"י בחכמה עליונה שהוא מסודר ומתוקן איבריו ופרקיו על דרך חכמה עליונה וברא אותו ברמ"ח איברי' כנגד רמ"ח איברים צינורות היורדים מעולם החכמה אל החסד.</p>
<p>"Many cavities"⁵⁹⁰ in Gematria is [equivalent to] 248 as correspond to 248 limbs since man hollows in face and in abdomen even between bone and flesh, moreover the blood ceases and goes</p>	<p>I found in the practice of Geonim. "Many cavities" in Gematria is [equivalent to] 248 as correspond to 248 limbs of man.</p>	<p>Another interpretation for "He who has formed man in wisdom (and created in him many orifices and many cavities.)"⁵⁹¹ It means [He who has formed man] with supreme wisdom according to which limbs and joints are aligned and fixed. He has created him (man) 248 limbs as</p>

⁵⁸⁸ *Perush Siddur ha-Tefilah le-Rokeah*, 1: 5.

⁵⁸⁹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 54b.

⁵⁹⁰ Morning prayer. *B.T. Ber.* 24b.

⁵⁹¹ *B.T. Ber.* 60b.

correspond to 248 limbs of
channels (lit. pipes), which
descend from the world of
Hokhmah to *Hesed*.

The number 248 is one of the popular numerals among the discussions in Jewish literature throughout the ages. Most of the discussions in talmudic literature, midrashic literature, and medieval Jewish literature rely upon the three grounds for numbering. The first is numerological equivalency. The word “Abraham” or “Uriel” associates with the liturgical phrase “*Halulim Halulim*”

many cavities). The numerical values of the word or phrase are 248.⁵⁹² The second is the number of words. This uses the counting method. It is well known that the *Shema* contains 248 words.⁵⁹³ The last is tradition. This category has no numerical relation to “248,” but according to the anatomical or halakhical tradition, the number of the limbs of man and positive *Mitzvot* are considered to

⁵⁹² There are numerous discussions on the number of limbs already in the pre-Kabbalistic literature. The first known text, which associates the limbs with the number 248 is the *Mishnah Aharot* 1:8 elaborating the details of configuration of limbs in man. See also *Midrash Tanhumah* (Amsterdam, 1733), 6b; *Midrash Avot deRabbi Nathan* (Vilna: 1833), 36b also demonstrate this issue although there is no consensus how one reaches this number. *B.T. Nedarim*, 32b on the other hand mentions other association. The numerical value of ‘Abram’ is 243, which was increased to 248 when he was given a letter of divine name and was named Abraham. *B.T. Makkoth*, 23b associates the number of Mitzvot with the number of the limbs of man. “R. Simlai when preaching said: Six hundred and thirteen precepts were communicated to Moses, three hundred and sixty-five negative precepts, corresponding to the number of solar days [in the year], and two hundred and forty-eight positive precepts, corresponding to the number of the members of man's body.” For the association of 248 with Abraham see Rashi, Commentary on Genesis, 12:2 “and Abraham is [in *Gematria*] 248 as opposed to the limbs of man”; *Sefer ha-Bahir* (Amsterdam: 1651), 2b; “and Abraham in *Gematria* 248 as the number of man's limbs.” For “Uriel” see *Zohar* 1:97b; *Sefer ha-Peliah*, 23b, “Uriel in *Gematria* 248.”

⁵⁹³ Rashbam on Deut. 7:11, *Tur Orah Hayyim*, 61

be 248 pieces.⁵⁹⁴ Thus, the 13th century writing *Kad ha-Kemach* by R. Bahya ben Asher holds that the number 248 in a certain word is no coincidence.⁵⁹⁵

The interpretation of Zayyah falls into category one, extracting the numeral 248 from the liturgical words “many cavities.”⁵⁹⁶ It demonstrates the exact wording in R. Eleazar’s text. R. David ben Yehuda ha-Hassid, on the other hand, connects the part of same prayer to 248 limbs without mentioning the term “*Gematria*.” Successors of R. David such as the author of *Sefer ha-Peliah*

⁵⁹⁴ *Midrash Gen. Rabbah* 24:5; Moshe ben Nahman, Commentary on the Torah: Exodus (tr., Charles b. Chavel; New York: Shilo Publishing House, 1976,) 315.

⁵⁹⁵ Bahya ben Asher ben Hlava, *Kad ha-Kemach* (Constantinople, 1551), 90b. “248 positive *Mitzvot* correspond to 248 organs of man. Therefore the sages of blessed memory, demanded 248 words in the *Shema* and must study them. Said the Holy one, blessed be He ‘you keep mine (*Mitzvot*) I will keep yours.’ If you keep 248 words of *Shema* or 248 *Mitzvot* in the *Torah* I will guard your 248 organs.” The numbers of organs and tendons are 248 and 365 respectively, which refer to positive precepts and negative precepts, total of which equal the number of *Mitzvot*, 613. “Therefore they were in the number of the part of man. (ועל כן הם רמ"ח מצות עשה לעומת רמ"ח איברים) ושס"ה מצות לא תעשה כנגד שס"ה גידים ... רמ"ח מצות עשה ושס"ה מצות לא תעשה הוא כללות ושס"ה מצות לא תעשה כנגד שס"ה גידים.” Moshe Alsheikh, *Sefer Torat Moshe* (Warsaw: 1879), 49a. In *Sefer Or Zaru'a* (Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 142b) the number of *Mitzvot* corresponds to the 613 *Zinorot*, which descend from the world of *Keter Elyon* to *Ateret Israel*.

⁵⁹⁶ The numerical value of cavities (*Halulim*), *Het*=8, *Lamed*=30, *Vav*=6, *Lamed*=30, *Yod*=10, *Mem*=40, which make $124 \times 2 = 248$.

draw the same association but do not mention the word "*Gematria*."⁵⁹⁷

R. David wrote that God created man with 248 limbs, corresponding to "248 limbs of *zinatorot* (רמ"ח איברים צינורות)." "The limbs of pipes (or channels)" is the unknown expression.⁵⁹⁸ There are two understandings of this phrase: anatomical and sefirotical. It is understandable if it refers to the structure of the human body. The anatomical knowledge R. David demonstrates that man has 248 limbs in which there are many cavities. The cavities are not merely openings in the body but spaces that connect the other parts of limbs. This form of space can be called a pipe. Therefore, R. David used the expression "limbs of pipes."⁵⁹⁹ The last phrase seems to explain that there are 248 limbs in the channel between *Sefirah Hokhmah* and *Sefirah Hesed*. If my reading is correct, the expression "limbs of pipes" also alludes to the sefirotic structure. The term "*Zinor*" is frequently used to denote the path within *Sefirot* in which influx descends.⁶⁰⁰ Some writings suggest the relationship between

⁵⁹⁷ *Sefer ha-Peliah*, 30b; "248 limbs of Ruhaniim exists through holes and cavities.

Therefore "many cavities" is 248." *Tur Orah Hayyim*, 6 "many cavities' is 248 as the number of limbs of man."

⁵⁹⁸ For the concept of *Zinor* see Chapter 1, 77 n.197.

⁵⁹⁹ Abraham Abulafia mentioned the holes and pipes in the organ. [*Sefer Ozar Eden ha-Ganuz* (Jerusalem, 2000), 126.] "ויש לזכר איברי התולדה בולטין ובתוכם נקבים וצנורים שבם עובר הזרע הבולט... ויש לה איברים לברוא במ מזון הנולד עד שיתגדל והם השדים לינק במ החלק... שהיה דם." For Hasidic vision of *Zinor*, *Zaddiq* as the pipe or channel see Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic*, 198-203.

⁶⁰⁰ The concept "*Zinor*" later in the 18th century Hasidism developed as the *Zaddiq*

limbs and *Sefirot*; *Sefer ha-Peliah* for instance notes that “all the *Sefirot* are called limbs.”⁶⁰¹ R. Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi notes the correspondence of *Sefirot* to the power and limbs in the human body.⁶⁰² It differs from the anthropomorphic comprehension of *Sefirot*, but *Sefirot* correspond to the “powers and limbs” within the human body. *Sefirot* exist also in the human body and soul.⁶⁰³ The human body resembles the sefirotic world, in which energy both flows and irrigates. The general idea that the universe and man are parallel is found not only in Pythagoras or Plato but also in Babylonian literature, and talmudic midrashic literature pointed out the similarities between the universe and the human body.⁶⁰⁴ R. David considers that God created each part of human body correlating to the celestial entity.

The interpretation given by R. David here is chiefly concerned with

functioning as the *Zinor*, a channel of influx.

⁶⁰¹ *Sefer ha-Peliah*, 60a. See also other kabbalistic treatise giving a *Sefirah* this appellation.

Sefer Shoshan Sodot, 8b” וידעת ג”כ כי אברהם אע”ה נטל ממדת החסד לחלקו ואברהם עולה רמ”ח והנה הטומאה עולה ובוקעת עד החסד בכל אברי האדם העליון חוץ מג’ אברים רוחניים שהם ג’ ספירות העליונו’ כדי שלא נרמוז עליהם נחסרו ג’ תיבות וכדי שלא להחסירם לגמרי

⁶⁰² Idel, *Hasidism: Between Ecstasy and Magic*, 232.

⁶⁰³ See the anonymous author of *Sefer ha-Yihud*. Idel, *Hasidism*, 232.

⁶⁰⁴ Talmud and Midrash explicate the common points between the universe and human body (*Abot deRabb Nathan*), [Henry Malter, “Personifications of Soul and Body,” *JQR* 2 (1911-1912): 453-479.] “The oldest text regarding this topic is *B.T. Nedarim*, 32b. *B.T. Sanhedrin* 91a uses ingenious metaphor in order to explain the relationship between soul and body.”

theosophy and implies the movement of influx descending from the upper right side of *Sefirah Hokhmah*, to one level below, *Sefirah Hesed*. The creation of man and the movement of influx are the main themes of the interpretation of *Asher Yazar* in R. David's texts whereas Zayyah offered an anatomical interpretation of the human body. Zayyah continues to mention the liturgical understanding of "*Asher Yazar* (who created)," which expresses appreciation to God for maintaining the body. The interpretation of "many cavities" ceases and the description of the 248 limbs is not found elsewhere in *Perush le-Tefilah*. Based on with this reference alone, Zayyah did not intend a theosophical significance. Elsewhere, Zayyah condenses his interpretation of cosmogony: "Another interpretation, 'in wisdom,'⁶⁰⁵ is in *Gematria* [equivalent to] 73.⁶⁰⁶ God created his world with his 72-letters name with cooperation with the attribute of Judgment, which is *Elohim*."⁶⁰⁷ A similar expression is found in the writing of R. Hayyim Vital, *Sefer Sha'arei Kedushah*.⁶⁰⁸ It indicates that the human body (limbs and sinews) was created in the image of pipes. Zayyah does not disclose the further secret concerning the 248 limbs and the *Zinor* in *Perush le-Tefilah*. As he scattered the secret teaching in his other work, in *Even ha-Shoham* he mentioned that the *Zinor* constitutes part of the sefirotic structure⁶⁰⁹ and the human limbs

⁶⁰⁵ *B.T. Ber.* 60b. "He who has formed man in wisdom."

⁶⁰⁶ The numerical value of word "wisdom (*hokhmah*)," without preposition, is 73.

⁶⁰⁷ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 54b. "ד"א בחכמה בגי"מ ע"ג ברא עולמו בשמו של ע"ד. ושיתוף מדת הדין " שהוא אלהים וזהו אמרתי עולם חסד יבנה (תה' פט, ג) חסד בגי"מ ע"ב"

⁶⁰⁸ Part 1, Gate 1.

⁶⁰⁹ *Even ha-Shoham*, Ms. St. Petersburg, fol. 19a. " בין מדה למדה הוא בגבול המדה "

correspond to Ten *Sefirot*.⁶¹⁰

In each *Sefirah* of Ten *Sefirot*, there are 300,000 parasangs luminaries as correspond to them. You will see that there are 300 bones in a man: 248 limbs, 32 teeth, and 20 nails. Accordingly, [the total number] is 300, which is [equivalent to] M.Z.P.Z.,⁶¹¹ which is YHVH...⁶¹²

The 14th century Byzantine *Sefer ha-Peliah* relates the 248 limbs with *Sefirot* theosophically. The profound relationship between Zayyah and the Byzantine kabbalists repeatedly arises from such sources. As mentioned above, the notion of 248 associates with several other notions. *Shema* is associated with the number of limbs.

בעצמה ר"ל מבלי שיעור מדת הצנורות אשר הם עוברות מקו ימין לקו שמאל זולתי במקום אשר
מגיע זוהר אצילות המדה ההיא מצד אצילותה ולא על צד
Petersburg, fol. 3b.

⁶¹⁰ *Even ha-Shoham*, Ms. St. Petersburg, fol. 7a. "הרי כי בכל ספירה מהי"ס יש ש' רבוא."
מאורות ופרסאות וכנגדם תמצא ש' עצמות באדם שהם דוגמת יסוד רמ"ח איברים ול"ב שניים וכ'
צפרנים וכן ש' עולה מצפץ שהוא יהוה המתהפך מצפץ באותיות א"ת ב"ש"

⁶¹¹ According to a text stemming from Hasidei Ashkenaz preserved in Ms. Oxford 1408
(quoted in Wolfson, "The Mystical Significance of Torah Study," 51) M.Z.P.Z is
equivalent to the four-letter name YHVH lead by the linguistic system *Atbash* and also
equal to the numerical value of the letter *Shin*. See also Kallus, "The Theurgy of
Prayer," 179 for similar association in *Sefer ha-Hokhmah* Ms. Bodleian 1568; Ms.
Jerusalem, fol. 55b.

⁶¹² *Even ha-Shoham*, Ms. St. Petersburg, fol. 7a.

Therefore the *Torah* was given... “coupled together at its head.” (Ex. 36:29) This is prayer of Israel that makes up the *Shekhinah* crown. This is [the meaning of] “at its head, to one ring.” (Ex.36:29) Therefore, it is written, “the Lord, our God, the Lord is one.” (Ber. 6a) Consequently, there are 248 words in *Shema*, with which the Holy one, blessed be He, unites all 248 limbs. A passage says, “and I will sing praises to your name” (Sam. II 22:50), [which is equivalent to] 248. Another passage mentions “and I will sing praises to your name.” (Ps. 18:50) Man sings [the identical number of words] to 248 limbs, and if it is woman, she sings according to the number of her limbs.⁶¹³

Zayyah considers that *Torah* also has its pair. Elsewhere he describes the reason why pair passages exist in the scripture. “All God created are pairs; heaven and earth, Gehnom and Gan Eden, Reshaim and *Zaddikim*... and Holy one, blessed be He and Israel.”⁶¹⁴ The last passage suggests that there is a difference in the number of limbs according to gender. The male form of the word “I sing” is equivalent to 248 while the female form is equivalent to 253. *Shema* comprises 248 words. It suggests that each word of *Shema* corresponds to a certain limb of

⁶¹³ For other association, see Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 93a. “ [] תמים אלראשו ולכך ניתנה תורה [] זהו תפילת ישראל שנעשה כתר לשכינה וזהו אל הטבעת האחת. שאומי יי אלהינו יי אחד : ולכן יש בשמע רמי"ח תיבות ליחד הקב"ה בכל רמח איברים ובפסוק אחד אומי ולשמך אזמר רמח ובפסוק אחד אומי ולשמך אזמרה איש אזמר במנין רמח איברים : ואם אשה אזמרה כמנין איבריה

⁶¹⁴ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 93a.

man and not of woman.

The limb here may refer to the theosophical realm, but the notion 248 *Sefirot* is unknown in kabbalistic literature. If the limbs God unites are the limbs of man, what does this suggest? According to the *Zohar* the numeral refers to the number of divine names.⁶¹⁵ As Zayyah mentioned in the beginning of the manuscript, Holy one, blessed be He unites His name with the community of Israel completely.⁶¹⁶ Zayyah may imply that the unification of 248 limbs alludes to the state of perfection, the union of the divine name. Accordingly, in *Sefer ha-Peliah*, the numeral refers to perfection. "Holy one, blessed be He said to him I created you complete in number and it figures Abraham, equivalent to 248."⁶¹⁷ The numerical value of "Abraham" became 248 after God gave a part of his name, "heh," to Abram. Zayyah adds – as Hasidei Ashkenaz did – a phrase comprising the acrostic of "Amen" to total 248. According to Elbogen, the addition of the *El Melekh Ne'eman*, "God, faithful King," is the Ashkenazi tradition and corresponds to the verse of *Shema* and the number of organs by adding the three words, which is of kabbalistic origin.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁵ *Zohar* 1:24a.

⁶¹⁶ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 52a.

⁶¹⁷ Abraham is associated with the number of *Mitzvot*. "Therefore Abraham is [equivalent to] 248 positive precepts of *Hesed*." *Sefer ha-Peliah*, 76a.

⁶¹⁸ Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 20. R. Hayyim Vital also mentioned the association of the 248 organs and the *Shema* in *Sefer Sha'arei Kedushah*, 20b-21a, see the text in footnote 539.

Roshey Tevot/Notarikon

The liturgical text of *Pesukei D'Zimra* is one of the popular texts for the hermeneutics. Zayyah, R. David, and R. Eleazar interpret the text by means of the linguistic device, *Notarikon*, extracting part of the ineffable name by *Roshey Tevot*.

R. Eleazar, <i>Rokeach</i> ⁶¹⁹	R. David, <i>Or Zaru'a</i> ⁶²⁰	Zayyah, <i>Perush le-Tefilah</i> ⁶²¹
רעם הים ומלואו, וכן יעלץ	ירעם הים ומלאו. פי' יתרעם	ירעם הים ומלואו. (תה' צו, יא)
השדה וכל אשר בו (דברי	הים שהוא העני: ומלאו אלו	יעלוז השדה וכל: פי' ר"ת יהו
הימים א טו, לב), הרי התחלת	הן הנשמות. הה"ד ליי' הארץ	יהו שני פעמים: כי השם נחסר
התיבות יה"ו, זה השם יה"ו	ומלואה.	בשני גליות. בגלות בבל.
מתגלגל בספר יצירה שבו נברא		ובגלות אדום ואינו שלם עד
השמים והארץ, ולקח ה"א		לעתיד: ד"א ירעם הים ומלואו
משמו וברא העולם מהלך ה'		ר"ת יהו אם תהיה בים ותעמו
מאות שנה ²³⁰		ד עליך גייסא אמור שבעה
		פעמים ירעם הים ומלואו:
השדה בגימ' שדי"י.	ד"א ירעם הים ומלואו. יעלוז	יעלוז השדה וכל אשר בו. ר"ת
	השדה ר"ת יהוה: יעלוז השדה.	יהו. אם תהיה ביבשה ויעמוד
	פי' עט' הנקרא שדה של	עליך צבא אמור יעלוז השדה

⁶¹⁹ *Perushei Siddur Tefilah le-Rokeah*, 15:59.

⁶²⁰ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 66b.

⁶²¹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 66b.

וכל אשר בו. והוא בדוק : תפוחים הה"ד ראה ריח בני
 השדה בגימטריא שדי. ⁶²² זהו כריח שדה : וכל אשר בו אלו הן
 לעתיד שאנו מתפללין לתקן שאר המרכבות והצבאות :
 עולם במלכות שדי.

<p> “The sea and its fullness will roar. Let the sea roar, and all that fills it” therefore “let the fields rejoice, and all that is in them” (Ch.1, 16:32) Here the beginning of the words are YHV, which is the name YHV that is combined in <i>Sefer ha-Yezirah</i> with which the heavens and earth are created. And takes <i>heh</i> from His name and He created the world </p>	<p> “The sea and its fullness will roar” (Ps. 96:11) means that the sea will become angry because it is poor. “And its fullness” [means] the <i>neshamot</i>. As it is written “The earth is the Lord, and all that fills it.” (Ps. 24:1) Another interpretation: “The sea and its fullness will roar. The field will exult.” (Ps. 96:11) The initial letters are YHVH. “The field </p>	<p> “The sea and its fullness will roar. The field and everything in it will exult.” (Ps. 96:11) The initial letters are YHV YHV; twice, as the name is missing in the two exiles – in the exile of Babylon and the exile of Edom. The name will not be perfect until the world to come.⁶²³ Another interpretation is as follows: “The sea and its fullness will </p>
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⁶²² שדי 300 +4+10=314 השדה 5+300+4+5=314

⁶²³ Ms. Jerusalem, fol.66b.

during the 500 years.

will exult” means *Atarah*, which is called field of apples as it is written “See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field.” (Gen. 27: 27) “Everything in it.” These are the rest of chariots and hosts.

roar.”(Chronicles 1, 16:32) The initial letters of them are *YHV*. If you are in the sea and certain force stand in front of you, utter [the verses] seven times: “The sea and its fullness will roar.” “The field and everything in it will exult.”(Ch.1, 16:32) The initial letters of them are *YHV*. If you are in the desert and armed forces stand in front of you, utter “The field and everything in it will exult.” And he will be secured. “The field” in *Gematria* is [equivalent to] *Shaddai*. This means that for the future, we

⁶²⁴ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 66b. The original text is in the table.

pray to fix the world in
the kingdom of
Shaddai.⁶²⁴

Zayyah pointed out that the ineffable name was hinted at twice and gives a theological meaning to the prayer. Zayyah integrates the account of the exile of *Shekhinah* in *B.T. Megilah*, 29a with the missing letters of Tetragrammaton.⁶²⁵ Two of the last *heh* are related to the historical exiles of Jewish people: one in Babylon and other in Edom. In addition, the other concept of exile, the mystical exile of *Shekhinah* or of the *Malkhut*, is underlying. The Provencal and Geronese kabbalists already held that the letters of the Tetragrammaton were never to be united during exile. The final *vav* and *heh*, symbolized by the *Sefirot Tiferet* and

⁶²⁵ *B. T. Megilah*, 29a. "Whenever they went in exile, the Shekhina accompanied them. They were exiled into Egypt, the Shekhina was with them, as is written [I Sam. 2:17] "Did I not appear unto the house of Your father, when they were in Egypt?" When they were exiled into Babylon, the Shekhinah was with them, as is written "For your sake I was sent to Babylon (Is. 43:14)." And in future, when they will be redeemed, the Shekhinah will also come to them."

Malkhut respectively, were already parted at the time of Adam's first sin ⁶²⁶

The reason for linking Tetragrammaton and the text of prayer is unclear in R. Eleazar of Worms and R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid. The latter does not provide any explanation, and the complete divine name is presented; R. Eleazar relates the letter as a tool for the creation of the world mentioned in *Sefer Yezirah*. The last *heh* was used for creation therefore it is missing. This proves and associates with the meaning of prayer as God's revelation in nature and in history, how His glory can be seen in creation and in the unfolding of events. The continuous passage introduces the magical usage of prayer that functions as a protection from danger during a trip.

The numerical values of the words "the field (*ha-Sadeh*)" and "*Shaddai*" are 314. The verse can be transposed into "*Shaddai* and everything in it will exult." The association of "the field" to "*Shaddai*" is not merely the numerical equivalent but also has phonetic similarity. The similar reading is found in *Or Zaru'a* of R. David: "It is written in *Torah* 'And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you.' (Deut. 10:12) Do not read *Mah* but *Meah* (one hundreded). *Mah* (*mem heh*) in *Atbash* is one hundreded (*Yod Zaddik*)." R. David

⁶²⁶ R. Asher ben Saul of Lunel, one of the scholars of Lunel in the late 12th centuries to the early 13th century, mentioned in his *Sefer Minhagot* that he regards the Tetragrammaton as the name that fills the world but during the exile it does not fill. The blessing "halelluya" only mentioned the first part of the Tetragrammaton (YH) is recited and not the last part, *vav heh*. The separation of the name, between YH and VH is already discussed in the kabbalistic school of the first generation, R. Izhak Sagi-Nahor.

presents numerological and phonetical associations. The last part describes the aim of prayer. *Malkhut Shaddai* is the place to fix the world. Many kabbalists refer to this phrase.⁶²⁷ As phrase “the initial letters are YHV YHV; twice” indicates that one is historical, and other is for future that name *Shaddai* is the name of *tikkun*. Zayyah notes how to fix the world. *Tikkun* is achieved by prayer; in other words, a prayer is a tool to fix the world of the kingdom of *Shaddai*.⁶²⁸

Zayyah orders the recitation of the biblical verse seven times. This performance protects from armed forces or pirates. But it is unclear how the magical effect takes place, whether the utterance of prayer containing the divine names has the magical power or the name itself possesses the magical power. The influence of Zayyah upon the Safedian Kabbalist, R. Hayyim Vital, the first disciple of R. Isaac Luria, is well known. As Boss, Idel and Garb pointed out, the specification was transmitted to Vital. He quoted Zayyah in the context of magical praxis.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁷ *Sefer Rabbeinu Bahya asher Beur al ha-Torah* (1524), 224b; *Sefer ha-Temunah*, 53b; *Sefer Avodat ha-Kodesh*, 53b; *Sefer Tolaat Yaakov*, 115.

⁶²⁸ The *Shaddai* symbolizes *Sefirah Yesod* but Zayyah treated it as non-theosophical, the literal meaning.

⁶²⁹ Gerrit Bos, “Hayyim Vital’s “Practical Kabbalah and Alchemy”: a 17th Century Book of Secrets, *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 4 (1994): 64. See also Idel, “The Relationship of the Jerusalem Kabbalists” 170; “To protect seafarers from armed attacks Vital gives a magical praxis derived from a liturgical commentary by Joseph Zayyah, namely, to recite seven times: “Let the sea and all within it thunder” (Ps. 96:11;

In *Perush he-Tefilot* (!) by R. Joseph Zayyah, I found “if you will be in the sea recite [the verse] “The sea and its fullness” (Chronicles 1, 16:32) seven times as the initials are YHV. And if a certain force is against you, you shall be saved. If you are in the desert, utter “The field and everything in it will exult” seven times, and also direct your thought to the initials according to what is mentioned. If certain force[s] stand in front of you, you shall be saved and secured.⁶³⁰

Vital explicated that the initial letters of the verse, “YHV,” are the object of *Kavvanah*. This is not merely his interpretation but Zayyah’s esoteric thought. Spiritual intention upon the divine name protects recitors from dangers on their journey. The association of the verse with the incomplete divine name is taken from R. Eleazar, but the magical usage of the verse is not found in R. Eleazar or R. David. Through indirect influence of R. Eleazar upon Zayyah, Hasidei Ashkenazic thought reached the Safedian Kabbalah.

98:7), while meditating upon the three letters YHW.” Garb, “Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah,” 266.

⁶³⁰ Ms. Musayof, fol. 88a quoted in Idel, “The Relationship of the Jerusalem

Kabbalists,” 170. “אָמור ז״פ ז׳ : אָם תהיה בים, אָמור ז״פ ז׳” בפירוש התפילות להרי יוסף ציאח ז״ל מצאתי : אָם תהיה בים, אָמור ז״פ ז׳” בפעמים] ירעם הים ומלואו בכונת ר״ת [ראשי תיבות] שהוא יה״ו ואם שם יעבור עליך גייס תנצל. ואם תהיה ביבשה, אמור ז״פ יעלוז השדה וכל אשר בו ותכוין גם אל ר״ת ע״ד [על דרך] הנזי [הנוכר] ואם יעמוד שם עליך גייס תנצל בדוק ומנוסה.”

Great is our Lord

The next example is also the exegesis of a verse from Psalms recited in *Pesukei deZimrah* on weekday and *Shabbat* mornings. "Great is our Lord, and of great power" (Ps. 147:5). The meanings of this verse are infinite.

Zayyah ⁶³¹	R. Eleazar of Worms ⁶³²	R. David ⁶³³
גדול אדונינו ורב כח (תה' קמז	ומדות הקומה רל"ו אלפים	גדול אדונינו הוא חס"ד הוא
ה) גימ' רל"ו שצריך אדם לכוין	רבבות פרסאות, דכתיב גדול	אדון לאדונים
מאד בתיבה זו	אדונינו ורב כח, ור"ב כ"ח	
	בגימטריא רל"ו.	
ורב כח כי רומז רל"ו אלפים	(פרושי סדור התפילה לרוקח, עמ' קע)	ורב כח רומז לגבורה שנקרא
<u>רבבות פרסאות</u> מפרסאות של	גדול אדונינו ורב כח הוא גדול על	בעל כח. הה"ד ועתה יגדל
מעלה נרתעים המלאכים	כל, כי מראה את כבודו גדולה	נא כח אדני וגו' :
לאחוריהם מאימת הקב"ה :	מכל, להודיע כי הוא מהושל על	
	הכל, והכל תחתיו לעובדו,	
	והמלאכים גדולים מאד שהרי	
	מלאך אחד וכל ערבות רקיע פרוס	
	על ראשי אצבאותיו. על כן הכבוד	
	נראה לעין לב נביאיו	
	<u>ורב כח אלפים רבבות פרסאות</u>	

⁶³¹ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 83a.

⁶³² *Sefer Sodey Razaya*, 71; *Perush Siddur le-Rokeah*, 97.

⁶³³ Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 83a.

שלו, להודיע כי הוא גדול הכי,

ורב כח לפי גדולתו כוחו הגדול.

“Great is our Lord, and [His] height is 236,000 “Great is our Lord” is of great power” myriad parasangs as it is Hesed, which is Lord (Ps.147:5) is in *Gematria* written “great is our Lord of Lords. 236 that man must direct and of great power.” R”B to the word. K”H in *Gematria* is 236.⁶³⁴ “and of great power” (*Perushe Siddur ha-Tefilah le-Rokeah*, 97) “And of great power” implies 236,000 myriad alludes to Gevurah, parasangs since in the “Great is our Lord, and of which is called supreme realm angels great power;” (Ps. 147:5) possessor of power. step back with the owe He is great over all. He demonstrates his glory for Holy one, blessed be greater than all [entities]... He. “and of great power” thousand of ten thousand of Miryad of him to inform that He is the greatest...⁶³⁵

Zayyah and R. Eleazar link the biblical verse “and of great power” to the enormous numerical value of the divine power by deriving the numeral 236 from the verse. In the common source of Zayyah and R. Eleazar, *Shiur Komah*,

⁶³⁴ *Sefer Sodey Razaya Shalem*, 71.

⁶³⁵ *Perushe Siddur ha-Tefilah le-Rokeah*, 97.

the unit “myriad parasangs” frequently appeared to express the measurement of the divine body. On some occasions, the number 236,000 myriad parasangs indicates the height of the godhead or the total portion of divine throne.⁶³⁶ In plain reading, Ps. 147 expresses the uncountable greatness of God, but the author of *Shiur Komah* reads the verse as if it meant God is big in size.⁶³⁷

Zayyah holds the dual meaning that the number expresses either the vast dimension of the godhead as the view of *Shiur Komah* or His greatness or glory as in the interpretation of R. Eleazar. According to the *Rokeah*, the enormous measurement does not refer to the measurement of divine but a metaphor for divine power. Hasidei Ashkenaz held the view that God does not possess form or body.⁶³⁸ By transforming the verse into a numeral, Zayyah attempts to

⁶³⁶ Ms. Oxford 2257. “גדול אדונו ור״ב כ״ח בגימ רל״ו.” See Garb, *Manifestations of Power*, 200 for the relationship between *Shiur Komah* and Zayyah. For 236 gates see Garb, “Trance Techniques in the Kabbalistic Tradition of Jerusalem,” 62-63. *Sefer ha-Komah*, a recension of *Shiur Komah*, Ms. Oxford 1791 fol. 50b-58a quoted in Cohen (“The Name of God, 127); “From the place of the seat of His glory and up (is a distance of) 118,000 myriad parasangs. From the place of the seat of His glory and down (is a distance of) 118,000 myriad parasangs. His height is 230,000 myriad parasangs.”

⁶³⁷ The measurement of God varied according to the recension. (Elliot R. Wolfson, “Images of God’s Feet: Some Observations on the Divine Body in Judaism,” *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective* (ed., Howard Eilberg-Schwartz; State University of New York Press, 1992), 152.

⁶³⁸ On the general idea of incarnate form and imaginal form in Jewish religion see Elliot R. Wolfson, “Judaism and Incarnation: The Imaginal Body of God,” *Christianity*

express the power of God as a numerical value. The close relationship between this text of Zayyah and Hasidei Ashkenaz was noted by Garb in his book on power in Jewish mysticism as part of a linguistic model of power in Zayyah's writings. Garb also demonstrates elsewhere the 236 gates appeared in *Even ha-Shoham* in which 236 gates are one of the popular combination of letters.⁶³⁹ Combination of the letters is the practical-magical technique used for creation of Golem in Hasidei Ashkenaz and Abulafian doctrines.⁶⁴⁰ Zayyah does not clearly mention it yet it is possible that the combination of letters in *Even ha-Shoham* is designed for magical praxis. Therefore the other technique using divine name may also be an experiential technique.⁶⁴¹ The above quoted 236 may indicate the result of the combination of letters. The *Gematria* Zayyah and Eleazar use differs from the classical – or, as Scholem called it, the mnemonic type. The intention of this form of *Gematria* is to draw support from traditional texts rather than to develop new concepts. The *Gematria* Zayyah uses in this text

in Jewish Terms (ed., Tikva Frymer-Kensky et al.; Westview Press, 2000): 239-395.

⁶³⁹ *Even ha-Shoham*, Ms. St. Petersburg, fol. 4b; Garb, "Trance Techniques in the Kabbalistic Tradition of Jerusalem," 62-64. It is the influence of Hasidei Ashkenaz.

⁶⁴⁰ The Thirteenth-century anonymous kabbalist in Spain also wrote the technique of combination of letters "designed to produce ecstatic experiences" and Adam Afterman considers his Commentary to the Prayers demonstrates the earlier stages of Ecstatic Kabbalah. See Afterman, "Letter Permutation Techniques," 53; Afterman, *The Intention of Prayers in Early Ecstatic Kabbalah*, 18-22.

⁶⁴¹ Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 97; Garb, "Trance Techniques in the Kabbalistic Tradition of Jerusalem," 62-63.

is a simple mnemonic type. It is simple as it requires only one calculation of the numerical value of the words. He then links the result to words that possess the same numeral. This type of *Gematria* does not expect to draw any support from canonical texts.

Concluding Remarks

Preserving traditions, creating new ideas, and integrating these ideas all constantly recur in the history of Kabbalah. Four centuries after the emergence of Kabbalah, Jerusalem Kabbalah became one of the centers of Kabbalah. In this dissertation, we explored the development of the concept of ascent of prayer in Jewish literature, focusing upon *Perush le-Tefilah*, written by 16th century Jerusalem Kabbalist R. Joseph ibn Zayyah. An amalgamation of halakhic, theurgic, theosophic, and magical significances of prayer colored Zayyah's interpretation on liturgy. The period in which Zayyah was active was marked by magical and Neoplatonic thought, but above all, his works demonstrate what can be described as another renaissance with the revival of early Jewish mystical literature; namely, *Heikhalot* literature and Hasidei Ashkenaz literature. Ibn Zayyah was a central figure in this process and he profoundly influenced the flourishing of late contemporary Safedian Kabbalah.

Our discussion started from the assumption based on the tenet "God hears man's prayer"; therefore, prayer ascends to heaven. This belief is derived from the two treatments of the phenomenon of ascent of prayer: first, stated by Arthur Green, prayer is a substitute for sacrificial offering. Second, by Asi Farber, the ascension of prayer is metathesis for visionary ascension. I expanded

Farber's assertion, extending from Hasidei Ashkenaz to the entire history of premodern Jewish mysticism.

Zayyah's discussion of prayer not only demonstrates a numerological hermeneutic but also underlies a wide range of diverse motifs, such as messianism angelology, cosmogony based on *Sefer Yezirah*, significance of existence of man, and more.

Through the comparison of Zayyah's usage of *Gematria* to Hasidei Ashkenaz and R. David, the influence of the theosophical type of Kabbalah that characterizes the writings of R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid is less recognized. My attempt to find the influence of Hasidei Ashkenaz demonstrates the close relationship with earlier sources – in our case, the Jewish mystical writings written before the appearance of Kabbalah. Therefore, whether the textual similarities prove the influence of Hasidei Ashkenaz or only suggest Zayyah's and Hasidei Ashkenaz's usage of common sources is still unclear. Here the influence of R. David on the interpretation via numerology is not detected. Liebes proposes the influence of *Sefer ha-Zohar* upon R. Isaac Luria rather than common-source-theory. His assertion can be applied to the case between the thought of Zayyah and R. Isaac Luria. By the influence of *Sefer ha-Zohar*, the similar idea reached those two kabbalistic figures. It is more than the common source theory; zoharic speculation affected both kabbalists therefore there are similarities. Garb, who claimed scant influence of the Zohar on Zayyah, suggests another possible reason for the similarities between Zayyah and Luria. There is an affinity between Zayyah and R. Eleazar of Worms, R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid, and R. Hayyim Vital, especially in the context of magical

praxis. How the thought of R. David reached Safed is unclear. Whether Zayyah involved with the transmission of R. David's doctrine needs more analysis.

The ascent of prayer is categorized in three ways: the classic model, the early medieval model, and the Jerusalem model. The classic model is represented by rabbinic crown mysticism and is the origin of the other two models and the theurgical impact of the divine name upon the holy crown. This model illustrates the heikhalotic structure of heaven, in which angels play a central role in the ascension. It mostly concentrates on the movement of prayer in heaven. The distinct theurgical element does not appear. The encounters between celestial entities and earthly entities are profoundly expressed. Automatic ascension of prayer to heaven and filtering appropriate prayer by angels indicate that the holy and the mundane spaces are clearly distinct. Space in heaven is identified as the holy place while the space below the gate of heaven is mundane. The holy space accepts only religiously pure prayer. Both physical and spiritual impurity of one who prays affects his prayer's cleanness.

The early medieval model focuses upon the linguistic exegesis using a numerological device. The numerological exegesis reveals the divine name embedded in prayer texts. One of the striking phenomena in the early medieval model is the appearance of Satan as an obstacle to prayer. This model employed the new exegetical method, the theosophical one, by which the kabbalists offered a more precise explanation of the ascension of prayer within the godhead. Prayer ascends to certain attributes in the divine infrastructure.

The Jerusalem model centers on the thought of R. Joseph ibn Zayyah. It is the synthesis of the classic and the early medieval model and leads to the new

dimension of the phenomenological aspect of prayer. This model focuses upon the geographical path of prayer, the middle layer between earth and heaven. It is the integration of the numerological-linguistic interpretation, based on the thought that the divine name contained in prayer is the motivating force behind ascension. Belief in the power of the divine name is the central theme in this model. The idea promotes anti-automatic ascension of prayer, as some texts claim that prayer no longer ascends to heaven by itself.

The two trends of the ascent of prayer, crown mysticism and non-crown, derive from talmudic literature, which established the idea that every prayer ascends to heaven automatically. As Scripture states that God hears prayers of Israelites, rabbinic literature held that he uttered prayers ascend by themselves. No external force is mentioned to accompany the prayer's ascension. The ascent of the prayer is treated as common knowledge. This implies that the tradition of the ascent of prayer had already existed at the time the texts were written. Moreover, the angel has an important role in this tradition: the creation of crown out of prayer and protection of the celestial realm from unworthy prayer. However, the angel is not an intermediary of prayer or a deliverer of prayer between earth and heaven. Any clear active movement of them outside heaven is not illustrated. The angel merely waits for a prayer to ascend. Binding and raising the crown occur only within the celestial realm. The concept of prayer developed in Midrashim presents a prayer as a collectable but invisible entity.

Chapter one demonstrated the development of the concept of the ascent of prayer from its beginning until the 15th century Kabbalistic doctrines. Judaism holds ideas that certain materials or non-materials ascend to the most

solemn place or to heaven. The concept of the ascent of prayer in rabbinic literature kept halakhic regulations, the unknowability of God, reification of prayer, the expanded function of angels, power of divine name, and theurgical significance of prayer. Through this chapter, we discern that Zayyah belongs to the historical trail of *Heikhalot* literature, Hasidei Ashkenaz, and the Prophetic Kabbalah. It also demonstrates that Zayyah tends to return to the ancient mystical sources.

Chapter two demonstrated the textual similarity between R. David ben Yehudah he-Hasid and Zayyah. This chapter discussed why Zayyah juxtaposed the two manuscripts of R. David with his own. Most of the interpretations by Zayyah involve less theosophical characteristic and are dissimilar to R. David. The similarity between *Or Zaru'a* and *Perush le-Tefilah* is limited. Although both of them adopt the numerological hermeneutics, their aims differ. As the result of numerology, R. David leads to the theosophical association while Zayyah aims to extract the divine name. Most of the texts in *Perush le-Tefilah* negate the idea of R. David. Placing two writings on the same folio exhibits that Zayyah possessed his own idea and his disagreement with the theosophical idea in *Sefer Or Zaru'a*. *Perush le-Tefilah* is written as the antithesis of R. David's teaching.

Chapter three focuses on the writings of Zayyah and demonstrates the transition of the functions of angels and the important innovation. All prayer goes through two or three processes after it reaches heaven: filtering of appropriate prayers, transforming into the crown, or the final stage. All these processes are performed by angels. Only prayer that meets the requirement of heaven is allowed to enter into the celestial realm and reach the head of God.

This phenomenon is shared throughout the rabbinic and *Heikhalot* literature, which treat prayer, an abstract reality, as a substance. The reification of prayer has been acknowledged by rabbinic literature. Most of the texts depict angels as gatekeepers or protectors of heaven. This tendency continued until the emergence of Hasidei Ashkenazic literature, in which the angel becomes more active in collecting prayer and is depicted as a receiver of prayer.

Zayyah's most significant innovation is the place of activity of angels. The angel depicted as the raiser of prayer recurred in the previous literature, but all cases occurred in heaven. Zayyah claims the angel comes down to the path of uttered prayer. Heaven is not a vast space, but it possesses a precisely designed structure. It has paths on which angels appointed for prayer and demons pass. Through our examination of the concept of the ascent of prayer, we find that the world in which prayer ascends is vertically divided into three parts. Man no longer shares the upper part of the world with celestial beings; instead, prayer of man goes vertically through all the worlds, from the earth to the extraterrestrial realm. This vertical worldview is applied only to human prayer. Celestial liturgical prayer by heavenly beings has a horizontal perspective; the voice moves horizontally in the transcendent realm. But there is an exception in fol. 93b, in which the angelic response to the *Shema* goes down to earth while human *Shema* ascends to heaven, achieving an exchange of prayers. Both angelic and human prayers are indispensable to heaven. The angel changes from a receiver of prayer to a mediator. Behind this transition lies the change in the concept of the ascent of prayer: Prayer no longer ascends to heaven by itself. This new concept crystallizes the concept of the geographical

path of prayer.

Chapter four depicts the two main powers of the divine name pertaining to prayer: raising prayer and protection of prayer from evil inclination. The numerological equivalent of the divine name, especially the forty-two-letter name, functions mainly to raise prayer and protect prayer from hindrances. Zayyah's predecessors depict the automatic ascension of prayer or angelic forced ascension. Zayyah sought the evidence for such ascension and reached the conclusion that the divine name is the motivating force. Prayer ascends to heaven because the prayer contains the holy name. When prayer is associated with the linguistic power of the divine name, it becomes the motivating force that raises and protects against Satan. The emergence of the counterforce to the obstacle to prayer is the innovation Zayyah achieved. As we have seen, Zayyah links the divine name and verses of Scripture and Talmud that possess the same numerical value. This act is tantamount to an attempt to discover the new meaning of the prayer. Scripture, Talmud, and Jewish prayer contain the divine name; thus, they are a continuum of the divine name.

The absence of halakhic issues in this text does not indicate that Zayyah neglects religious duty. His interpretation is based upon a nomian practice, namely, prayer. From the role Zayyah played in the halakhic field, we can assume that he merely focuses here upon revealing the true meaning hidden in the words of liturgy.

Yordei Merkavah as well as a prayer of man must go through the gates of heaven where angels guard. Whether the ascent of prayer is the metathesis of *Yordei Merkavah*, many parallel processes and descriptions are found in texts of

Zayyah and in Heikhalot texts. There is a slight difference in the concept of celestial sentry in *Yordei Merkavah* and the ascent of prayer. The mystic pronounces the divine name, which functions as a laissez-passer or an entry permit, while man recites prayer that contains the name of God. Again, Zayyah adopts the Hasidei Ashkenaz tradition that the text of prayer is a continuum of the divine name. Divine name is necessary to enter heaven. If Farber's assumption can be applied, then the concept of the relationship between the prayer text and the divine name may be inspired, in turn, by the Merkavah mysticism. This is why liturgical texts must contain the divine name to match the Merkavah tradition. In order to observe the heavenly restriction (to utter the divine name at the gate), Hasidei Ashkenaz made the concept of prayer text fit in with Merkavah tradition. Did Hasidei Ashkenaz masters strictly maintain the Merkavah tradition? If the answer is yes, then it is possible that they considered that anything – corporeal, non-corporeal, a living thing, a material, even a prayer – needs the divine name to enter the gate. Thus, the name of God is behind the concept of prayer. Now man, without a dangerous journey, can utter the divine name on earth, and his prayer achieves visionary ascent. The divine name embedded in liturgical text supplants the entering process, pronouncing the name at the gate.

The text of R. Hayyim Vital proved the influence of Zayyah upon the Safedian Kabbalah. At least it testifies that Zayyah's Kabbalah is the integration of regional earlier mystical traditions and diverse kabbalistic speculations; this had a significant impact on later Kabbalah.

In chapter five, we saw that Zayyah focused upon the halakhic

importance and the correctness of the halakhic rule by demonstrating the unfavorable effect *Kavvanah*. *Kavvanah* is neither an additional nor subordinate condition. *Kavvanah* is an indispensable condition for all religious life, and mystical *Kavvanah* upon the divine names in prayer is a collateral condition for one's prayer being accepted by God.

In Rabbinic literature, prayer goes through the angel's inspection and only appropriate prayer that can "stand before God" enters into the sacred realm. Zayyah never considers the case of a prayer being recited without *Kavvanah* as it is halakhic obligation and brings merit: "If you perform *Mitzvot* with *Kavvanah*, God listens your voice when you pray."⁶⁴² On the topic of *Kavvanah*, Zayyah's descriptions are related to the theurgical effects, the merits, and the instruction. The transmission route of *Kavvanah* in prayer according to Zayyah was through Spanish Kabbalah or another transference route like that of R. Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi, who, on the other hand does not discuss the impact of Spanish Kabbalah.⁶⁴³ Scholem asserts that "the mystical conception of the *Kavvanah* of prayer is the Jewish form of the *unio mystica*."⁶⁴⁴ Zayyah's *Kavvanah* in *Perush le-Tefillah* does not aim the *unio mystica* but the union of divine worlds and rewards being granted as the result.

The textual similarities between Zayyah and R. Eleazar are due to R. Eleazar's efforts. He disseminated the secret doctrine in written form to transmit and maintain the proper *Kavvanah*. Thus, traditions reached Jerusalem

⁶⁴² Ms. Jerusalem, fol. 94b.

⁶⁴³ See Idel, "Prayer in Provençal Kabbalah," *Tarbiz* 62 (1993), 265-286.

⁶⁴⁴ Scholem, "The Concept of *Kavvanah* in the Early Kabbalah," 166.

Kabbalah. The pre-Zayyah method of *Kavvanah* adopted three objects, God as in the rabbinic idea of object, the concealed aspect of godhead, *Illah* and the revealed aspect of God, *Sefirot*. In addition to the classical objects, Zayyah adopted the linguistic item, vocalization marks of the divine name. Zayyah demonstrates the halakhic-magic, the theurgic-magic *Kavvanah*. Zayyah inherited the concept of the ascent of prayer mainly from Hasidei Ashkenaz, and the transmission of the traditional thoughts to or from Byzantine Kabbalah is prominent.

In chapter six, Zayyah applies a monadic understanding of prayer, subdividing prayer texts into the number equivalent to the number of the receiver. Zayyah does not think a number itself possesses magical or mystical power, but when it is associated with linguistic power embedded in the divine names, the number demonstrates certain power. Number is not only a mathematical symbol but the testimony of the harmony between the celestial world and the earth. Here again, Zayyah demonstrates the reflection of the Hasidei Ashkenazic idea of the numerical harmony between the liturgical texts and the celestial world.⁶⁴⁵ For the dissemination of general usage of *Gematria*, Hasidei Ashkenaz plays a central role. The impact upon Zayyah and his influence upon the Safedian kabbalists were presented in this chapter. Although we have no clear picture of how the *Gematria* as a hermeneutic method spread and how it reached Jerusalem Kabbalah, Hasidei Ashkenazic literature made a decisive impact upon the formation of Zayyah's

⁶⁴⁵ See chapter six.

speculation.⁶⁴⁶ By means of *Gematria*, Zayyah proves that the prayer book is the continuum of the divine name. Recitation of prayer is nothing less than calling His name. The utterance of prayer is tantamount to the pronunciation of the name, which is the only way that man can utter the name of God.

Through *Gematria*, Hasidei Ashkenaz discovered the audible subliminal effect. It is known that R. Judah he-Hasid practiced the mystical meditations using the numerological technique, “counting the numerical value of the letters in the prayers”⁶⁴⁷ as a tool to reach a certain mystical experience.⁶⁴⁸ In *Perush le-Tefilah*, Zayyah does not claim that counting numbers leads to a mystical experience. He extracts the divine name out of prayer texts. His purpose of numerology leads to the instruction of *Kavvanah*. One must concentrate upon the hidden divine name during prayer, thereby uniting the divine name. In order to achieve this result, a worshipper must know which word of prayer contains the divine name. Therefore, Zayyah requires one to pay attention to the names as acknowledgment of the divine name hidden in prayer is necessary. He does not state that the recitor must intend to raise prayer. For Zayyah prayer texts are tantamount to the divine name embedded in the text. Therefore, recitation of prayer means calling the divine name.

⁶⁴⁶ Garb, “Kabbalah of Rabbi Joseph Ibn Sayyah,” 262.

⁶⁴⁷ The technique of counting the numerical value of the letters in the prayers was already practiced by Judah he-Hasid and other members of his circle. (Abrams, “From Germany to Spain,” 90-91; Afterman, “Letter Permutation Techniques, 57.)

⁶⁴⁸ “Discovered through *Gematria* the mystical meditations on prayers, which can be evoked during the actual repetition of the words.” (Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 338.)

Several questions were raised over the course of study, and some of them are left unsolved. One of the key persons who may answer the questions is R. Moshe Alsheikh. Research into his mystical speculation system through his commentary on liturgy will answer some of the questions. To whom Zayyah wrote the *Perush le-Tefilah* is also a key to solving many problems raised here. It is obvious that he did not write it for laypersons but for experts in esoteric knowledge and practice.

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**תפיסת עליית התפילה בפרוש לתפילה ע"י המקובל
הירושלמי, ר' יוסף אבן צייאח**

חיבור לשם קבלת תואר דוקטור לפילוסופיה

מאת

סאצי' אוגימוטו

הוגש לסנט האוניברסיטה העברית, בירושלים

אייר תשע"א – אוגוסט 2011

עבודה זו נעשתה בהדרכתו של:

פרופסור יהונתן גארב

תקציר

ארבע מאות שנה לאחר הופעת הקבלה בפרובנסנטיסד מרכז הקבלה בירושלים כאחד ממרכזיה של תנועה ספרותית-רוחנית זו.. בחיבור זה אחקור את תפיסת עליית התפילה בספרות היהודית, תוך התמקדות באמצעות עיון קרוב בפירוש לתפילה אשר נכתב על ידי המקובל ר' יוסף בן אברהם אבן ציאה (1505-1573) בירושלים, תוך שהוא מפרש בתורו פרוש של המקובל ר' דוד בן יהודה החסיד, מן המאה הי"ד. הפרטים הטכניים-טקסטואליים וההיסטוריים הנוגעים לפרוש נפרשים במבוא לעבודה. ציאה ספג את תפיסות האל, המלאכים והתפילה המופיעות בספרות חז"ל, ספרות ההיכלות ובספרות חסידי אשכנז. המיזוג בין הבנות הלכתיות, תאורגיות, תאוסופיות ומאגיות של התפילה, צובעת את הפירוש של ציאה לכל אורכו, תוך שהוא ממקם את עצמו בתוך פנורמה של מקורות. ממילא, חיבוריו מדגימים את מה שניתן לתאר כרנסנס של המיסטיקה היהודית הקדומה; בעיקר, ספרות ההיכלות וספרות חסידי אשכנז. הדיון שלנו מתחיל מעיון באמונה ב"האל השומע תפילה", שנתרגמה במקומות מוקדמים לתפיסה של עליית התפילה לרקיע. אמונה זו נובעת משני דגמים של תופעת עליית התפילה: על פי הראשון, אותו תיאר למשל ארתור גרין, התפילה היא תחליף לקורבן; על פי השני, אותו תיארה למשל אסי פרבר, התפילה מהווה תחליף לעלייה המיסטית הקשורה בספרות ההיכלות והמרכבה. אני מרחיבה את טיעונה של פרבר, תוך מעקב אחר הטיפוס הדתי של חסידי אשכנז לכל אורך תולדות המיסטיקה היהודית הקדם-מודרנית, עד וכולל ירושלים. בהקשר זה, אני עומדת על מקומם היחסי של שני הדגמים בעולמו של ציאה..

ב"פני השטח, של דיונו של ציאיאח על אודות התפילה משתקפת ההרמנויטיקה הנומרולוגית-מספרית, אולם עיון קשוב חושף ב מגוון רחב של מוטיבים שונים, כמו אנגלולוגיה משיחית, קוסמוגוניה המבוססת על ספר יצירה, משמעות קיומו של האדם ועוד. ואולם, השוואה בין שימושו של ציאיאח בגימטריה של חסידי אשכנז לתפיסותיו של ר' דוד בן יהודה החסיד, חושפת פחות את השפעת הטיפוס התיאוסופי של הקבלה, המאפיינת את חיבוריו של ר' דוד בן יהודה החסיד יותר השפעות אשכנזיות, וזהו הממצא הבולט הראשון של עבודתי. כך למשל, השפעת ר' דוד על מתודת הפירוש באמצעות הגימטריה אינה מובהקת. הנסיון שלי להגדיר את ממדי השפעת חסידי אשכנז ממצביע בתורו על מקורות מוקדמים נוספים – במקרה שלנו, הספרות המיסטית היהודית שנכתבה לפני הופעת הקבלה. לכן, אין זה ברור האם הדמיון הטקסטואלי מוכיח את השפעת חסידי אשכנז או רק מצביע על השימוש של ציאיאח וחסידי אשכנז במקורות משותפים. במילים אחרות, יש לעיין במידת ההמשכיות בין תורת התפילה של אבן ציאיאח לתפיסה התיאוסופית-תאורגית הקבלית לעומת זיקה למקורות קדם-קבליים מן הצד השני של תקופת ירושלים, נדרשתי, בעקבות דיוני אידל וגארב, לשאלת יחסו של אבן ציאיאח למרכז הצפתי שהתבסס בדור שאחרי קבלת ירושלים. ליבס הדגיש ביותר את השפעתו של ספר הזהר על ר' יצחק לוריא. טענתו של ליבס עשויה להסביר לכאורה את היחס בין מחשבתו של ציאיאח ושל האר"י, אם נניח ששניהם חוזרים למקורות זוהריים.. לעומת זאת, גארב, הטוען למיעוט השפעת הזוהר על ציאיאח ועל קבלת ירושלים בכלל, הציע השפעה ישירה של ציאיאח על קבלת צפת, או לכל הפחות קוי דמיון שאינם מצטמצמים למקורות זוהריים משותפים. לאור הטענה הקודמת, ניתן להציב על דמיון כולל. ישנו דמיון בין ציאיאח ור' אלעזר מוורמס (בתור

נציג בולט של המיסטיקה האשכנזית הימי ביניימית), ר' דוד בן יהודה החסיד ור' חיים ויטאל, במיוחד בקונטקסט של פרקסיס מאגי. לכן, אפשר לומר שצייאח היה מתווך בין מקורות המוקדמים, ובכללם קבלתו של ר' דוד בן יהודה החסיד (שהיתה לו זיקה מסוימת וידועה לספרות הזוהר), לקבלה הצפתית ובכלל זה הקבלה הלוריאנית. זו תמונה אחרת לחלוטין מאשר זו של רצף תיאוסופי לינארי המוביל מן הזוהר ועד לאר"י. לא ברור כיצד נמסרה מחשבתו של ר' דוד והגיעה לצפת, אם באמצעות מסירה ישירה או שאינה ישירה. את מעורבותו של צייאח במסירה זו אחקור במקום אחר.

במבט פנורמי זה, עליית התפילה מסווגת בשלוש מודלים: המודל הקלאסי, המודל הימי-ביניימי, והמודל הירושלמי. המודל הקלאסי הוא המקור של השני המודלים האחרים ומיוצג על ידי השיח המיסטי הרבני על העטרה/כתר ובמיוחד השפעה תאורגית של השמות האל על העטרה. בעוד שהמקרא קובע שהאל שומע את תפילתם של ישראל, הספרות הרבנית מוסיפה שתפילה הנאמרת עולה בעצמה. שום כוח חיצוני לא מוזכר כהסבר לתופעת העלייה. למעשה, עליית התפילה נחשבת כדבר ידוע לכל. המודל הקלאסי מדגים את המבנה ההיכלותי של רקיעים, שבו למלאכים נודע תפקיד מרכזי בעליית התפילה אליהם. בעיקרו, תיאור זה מתמקד בתנועת התפילה בעולם העליון, בין על דרך דימוי העטרה בין על דרך דימוי הרקיע. האלמנט התאורגי פה נוכח אך אינו מובהק. המפגש בין הישות השמימית לבין המציאות הארצית עומד במרכזו של דגם זה. בחירת התפילות העולות הראויות מבוצעות על ידי מלאכים תוך ששמקום קדוש ומקום ארצי מובדלים בבירור. בדימויים מעין-מיתיים, מסורת העליית התפילה מזהה את המרחב השמימי כמקום קדוש ואילו המקום התחתון של שער השמים הוא ארצי. המקום הקדוש מקבל רק תפילה טהורה, כאשר הטומאה הגשמית והנפשית של אדם

שמתפלל משפיעה על טהרת תפילתו וסיכויי עלייתה. האנגאולוגיה תופסת מקום חשוב במודל הקלאסי: ובכלל זה בתהליכים כמו יצירת העטרה מתוך תפילה ו הגנת העולם השמימי מפני תפילה בלתי ראויה. אולם, המלאך אינו מתווך או מוסר התפילה בין שמים וארץ. המלאך ממתין לתפילה שעולה למעלה.

המודל הימי הביניימי מתמקד בהרמוניטיקה לשונית הנוקטת בשיטת הנומרולוגיה. ההרמוניטיקה הנומרולוגית חושפת את השמות האל החבויים בטקסט התפילה. אחת מן התופעות הבולטות במודל היא הופעת השטן כמכשול לתפילה. מודל זה גם נוקט בשיטה הפרשנית החדשה, השיטה התאוסופית (ותורת הרע הנלווית אליה), שמקובלים מספקים דרכה את הסבר מדויק ועשיר יותר של עליית התפילה בתוך עולם עליון המתואר עתה במושגי עולם האולמות. בתפיסה זו, תפילה עולה לספירה מסוימת בתשתית האלהית.

המודל הירושלמי מהווה סינתזה של המודל הקלאסי והמודל הימי הביניימי ומוביל להפנומנולוגיה שונה של התפילה. המודל מתמקד בנתיבות גאוגרפיות של תפילה, העוברות דרך הממד האמצעי בין ארץ לבין שמים. המודל הירושלמי מהווה מיזוג של תפיסות מוקמדות ומיתיות עם הפרשנות נומרולוגית-לשונית המבוססת על הרעיון כי שמות האל מורכב בטקסט התפילה היא כוח מניע עבור עליית התפילה. האמונה בכוח השמות האל היא נושא המרכזי של המודל זה, השולל את העלייה האוטומאטית של התפילה.

הפרק הראשון, "תפיסת עליית התפילה לפני ציאה", עוקב אחר התפתחות הקלאסית וזו הימי-ביניימית, מספרות חז"ל ועד תורות הקבלה במאה הט"ז. בפרק זה אני מראה את שייכותו של ציאה לנתיב המחשבה של ספרות

ההיכלות, חסידי אשכנז והקבלה הנבואית. בנוסף, הבחנתי בכך שצייאח נוטה ככלל לחזור למקורות המיסטיים הקדומים מן העת העתיקה. הפרק השני מציע את הדמיון הטקסטואלי בין מקובל הספרדי או גרמני במאה הי"ג, ר' דוד בן יהודה החסיד לבין צייאח. פרק זה מתחקה אחר הסיבה מדוע הציב צייאח את הטקסט שלו יחד עם הטקסט של ר' דוד בן יהודה החסיד באותו כתב יד. רוב הפירושים של צייאח, בדומה לכתביו האחרים, שאליהם אני מפנה לאורך הדיונים על צייאח, כוללים מאפיינים פחות תיאוסופיים ואינם דומים לאלה של ר' דוד. הדמיון בין ספר אור זרוע לר' דוד ופירוש התפילה לצייאח מוגבל. למרות ששניהם אימצו את ההרמנויטיקה הנומרוולוגית-מספרית, מטרותיהם שונות. ר' דוד קושר את תוצאת הפרשנות הגימטרית לפירוש תיאוסופי, ואילו פירושו של צייאח מכוון לחילוץ שמות האל מנוסח התפילה. הצבת שני חיבורים באותו עמוד עצמה מציעה איפוא את אי-הסכמתו של צייאח עם כתיבתו התיאוסופית של ספר אור זרוע, יחד עם הבלטת תפיסתו-שלו לצדה. פירוש התפילה נכתב במידה לא מבוטלת כאנטיתזה להוראת ר' דוד. זהו אם כן החידוש הטקסטואלי של הפרק.

הפרק השלישי מתמקד בחיבוריו השונים של ר' יוסף צייאח ומצביע על המעבר בתפקידי המלאכים וחידושו החשוב של צייאח. כל התפילה עוברת דרך שנים או שלושה תהליכים לאחר שהיא מגיעה לשמים: סינון התפילות הראויות, הפיכתן לכתר, או הגעתה של התפילה לשלב האחרון. כל התהליכים הללו מבוצעים בידי מלאכים. רק תפילה המספקת את הדרישות השמימיות מורשית להכנס לתחום השמימי העליון ולהגיע לראשו של האל. תופעה זו משותפת בספרות חז"ל ובספרות ההיכלות, המחזיקות את התפילה – מציאות מופשטת – כחומר. הנטיה להגשמת התפילה והפיכתה למושא

קונקרטי נודעה ומוכרת כבר מן הספרות הרבנית. רוב הטקסטים מתארים את המלאכים כשומרי השערים או כמגיני הרקיעים. נטיה זו המשיכה עד הופעת ספרות חסידי אשכנז, שבה המלאך הופך פעיל יותר באיסוף התפילה ואף מתואר כמקבל את התפילה.

מצד אחד, הנוכחות של השכבות המוקמדות הללו בתפיסתו של ציאה בולטת. אולם, חידושו המשמעותי ביותר של ציאה נוגע למקום פעילותם של המלאכים. תיאורו של המלאך כמגביה של התפילה מופיע שוב ושוב בספרות הקדומה, אך בכל המקרים מדובר בהתרחשות שמימית. ציאה טוען שהמלאך יורד לארץ בנתיבה של התפילה המבוטאת, מה שמהווה מעין וריאנט על תאורגיה של הורדה (כפי שתוארה בידי אידל). השמים אינם רק חלל ריק, אלא מחזיקים מבנה המעוצב במדויק. יש בהם נתיבים דרכם עוברים מלאכים הממונים על תפילות ושדים. באמצעות הניתוח של תפיסת עליית התפילה מצאנו שהעולם שבו עולה התפילה מחולק באופן אנכי לשלוש נתיבות. האדם אינו עוד שותף לחלק העליון ביותר של העולם שבו מצויות חיות הקודש; במקום זאת, תפילת האדם חוצה באופן אנכי את כל העולמות, מן הארץ עד לתחום השמימי העליון. השקפת העולם האנכית מיושמת רק על תפילת האדם. תפילה ליטורגית שמימית הנישאת בידי הישויות השמימיות היא בעלת פרספקטיבה אופקית; הקול נע באופן אופקי בתחום העולם הטרנסצנדנטי. חריגה אחת אכן קיימת בדף 93 ע"ב בפרוש, שם נאמר כי תגובת המלאכים לקריאת שמע יורדת לארץ בעוד תפילת שמע הנישאת בפי בני אדם עולה לשמים, ומשיגה בכך חילוף של תפילות. הן תפילות המלאכים הן תפילות האדם הכרחיות עבור השמים. המלאך משתנה ממקבל התפילה למתווכה. מאחורי מעבר זה טמון השינוי בתפיסת עליית התפילה: התפילה אינה עוד עולה לשמים בידי עצמה. רעיון חדש זה מתלווה אם כן לתפיסה

המפורטת של נתיבים גיאוגרפיים ושמימיים של התפילה.

הפרק הרביעי מתאר את שני הכוחות העיקריים של שמות האל הקשורים לתפילה: העלאת התפילה והגנתה מפני כוחות הרע.

כפי שאידל הזכיר, הקבלה היא מסורת שהתרכזה במידה לא מעטה בשמות האל. ציאה אכן שימר את הרעיון כי השם האלוהי ממלא תפקיד המרכזי בפירוש לתפילה שלו.

שוויון הערך הגימטרי של שמות האל, במיוחד שם בן מ"ב אותיות, מתפקד בעיקר כמעלה את התפילה וכמגן עליה מעיכובים. קודמיו של ציאה מתארים את עליית התפילה האוטומטית או עליית התפילה בכחם של מלאכים. ציאה ביקש את העדות לעליה כזו והגיע למסקנה ששמות האל הם בגדר הכח המניע לעלייתה. התפילה עולה לשמים מפני שהתפילה כוללת את שמות הקודש. כאשר התפילה מקושרת עם הכח הלשוני של שמות האל, האחרון הופך לכח המניע המעלה את התפילה ומגן עליה מפני השטן. הופעת הכוח הנגדי כמכשול בעבור התפילה היא חידושו של ציאה. כפי שראינו, ציאה מקשר את השמות האלוהיים, פסוקי המקרא והמקראות התלמודיים המחזיקים באותו ערך גימטרי. קישור זה כמוהו כנסיון לחשוף משמעות חדשה מתוך נוסח התפילה. המקרא, התלמוד והתפילה היהודית מכילים את השמות האלוהיים; על כן, הם למעשה המשך של שמות האל בבחינת חלקיו השונים של מעין מטה-טקסט.

היעדר נושאים הלכתיים בפירוש התפילה לציאה אינו מצביע על כך שציאה דוחה את החובה הדתית. פירושו מבוסס על פרקטיקות נומיות, ובלבן - התפילה. מן התפקיד שמילא ציאה בתחום ההלכה כרב וכפוסק, כפי שהדבר מתבטא בתשובותיו שבכתב יד, אני מסיקה שהוא התמקד כאן בחשיפת המשמעות הנסתרת של מלות התפילה השגורות, לצד העמדתן, כאמור, בתוך

הקשר מטה-טקסטואלי של ספרות קנונית

לאורך פרק החמישי ראינו שצייאח מתמקד בחשיבות ההלכתית ובדיוק של ביצוע החוק ההלכתי על ידי ההבחנה בתוצאה של הכוונה. הכוונה המיסטית אינה תנאי נוסף או נחות. הכוונה היא תנאי הכרחי עבור כל החיים הדתיים, והכוונה המיסטית בשמות האל במהלך התפילה היא תנאי מקביל לכך שתפילתו של אדם תתקבל בידי האל.

בספרות הרבנית, התפילה עוברת דרך בחינתו של מלאך ורק תפילה ראויה יכולה "לעמוד בפני האל" ולהכנס לתחום המקודש. צייאח לעולם אינו מחשיב את המקרה של תפילה הנישאת מבלי כוונה, משום שזו חובתו ההלכתית והיא מעלה על נושאה יתרון: "אם תבצא את המצוות בכוונה, האל יקשיב לקולך כאשר תתפלל".⁶⁴⁹

פרק זה גם חותר להעמקה בתפיסתו המיסטית של צייאח מתוך ראייה פנורמית של מקורותיה: המיסטיקן מבטא את שמות האל, המתפקדים כיוזמה חופשית או כאישור כניסה, בעוד שהאדם נושא תפילה המכילה את שמות האל. שוב, צייאח מאמץ כאן את מסורת חסידי אשכנז לפיה נוסח התפילה הוא המשך של שמות האל. שמות האל נחוצים על מנת להכנס לרקיעים. אם הנחתה של פרבר יכולה להתיישם, אזי תפיסת הקשר בין מבחן התפילה ושמות האל יכול לקבל השראתו, בתורו, ממיסטיקת יורדי. בכדי להתבונן בהגבלות השמימיות (שם האל בשער הרקיעים), חסידי אשכנז גיבשו את תפיסת נוסח התפילה כדי שיתאים למסורת יורדי המרכבה. האם החזיקו הדמויות החשובות בין חסידי אשכנז במסורות הירידה למרכבה? אם התשובה לכך חיובית, אזי אפשר שהם החשיבו שהכל – בין אם גשמי ושאינו גשמי, עצם חי, חומר ואפילו תפילה – צריכים לשמות האל בכדי לחדור מבעד

⁶⁴⁹ כ"י ירושלים, דף 94 ע"ב.

לשערי רקיע. כך, שם האל הוא מעבר לתפיסת התפילה. האדם, מבלי מסע מסוכן, יכול לשאת את שם האל בארץ, ותפילתו עשויה להשיג עלייה חזיונית. שמות האל המוטבעים בנוסח הליטורגי תופסים את מקומו של תהליך הכניסה, בתוך ביטויים בשער הרקיע.

בנושא הכוונה, תיאוריו של ציאה קשורים לתוצאות התיאורגיות, לסגולות המיסטיות ולהוראות הכוונה. מסירת נתיב הכוונה בתפילה, לפי ציאה, היה באמצעות הקבלה הספרדית או נתיב מסירה אחר, כמו זה של ר' יוסף בן שלום אשכנזי, אשר, מצד אחר, אינו דן בהשפעת הקבלה הספרדית.⁶⁵⁰ ג' שלום טוען ש"התפיסה המיסטית של כוונת התפילה היא הצורה היהודית של האוניו-מיסטיקה".⁶⁵¹ תפיסת הכוונה של ציאה בפירוש התפילה שלו אינה מכוונת לאוניו-מיסטיקה אלא לאיחוד העולמות העליונים ורק כתוצאה מכך מעניקה גמול למכוון בתפילתו.

הדמיון הטקסטואלי בין ציאה ור' אלעזר מוורמס מתקיים אודות למאמציו של ר' אלעזר. הוא דאג לפזר את התורה הסודית בצורה כתובה בכדי למסור ולשמור על הכוונה הדתית הראויה. כך הגיעו מסורות מיסטיות לקבלת ירושלים. שיטת הכוונה הקודמת לציאה אימצה שלושה אובייקטים, האל כברעיון הרבני של אובייקט, הבחינה הנסתרת של האלהות, העילה, והתחום הנגלה של האל, הספירות. בנוסף לאובייקטים הקלאסיים, ציאה אימץ את המרכיב הלשוני, סימני ההגיה של שמות האל. ציאה מבטא את הכוונה ההלכתית-מאגית, ואת הכוונה התיאורגית-מאגית. ציאה ירש את התפיסה בדבר עליית התפילה בעיקר מחסידי אשכנז, ולצדה בולטת מסירת הדעות המסורתיות מן הקבלה הביזנטית או אליה.

⁶⁵⁰ אידל, התפילה בקבלת פרובנס.

⁶⁵¹ שלום, The Concept of Kavvanah in the Early Kabbalah, עמ' 166.

לבסוף, עמדתי כאן על השפעת תפסיותיו של ציאח על דורות מאוחרים יותר: הטקסט של ר' חים ויטאל הוכיח את השפעת ציאח על הקבלה הצפתית. הוא לפחות מעיד שקבלתו של ציאח היא השילוב של מסורות מיסטיות מוקדמות מאיזורים גיאוגרפיים שונים ומתקופות שונות ושל ספקולציות שונות של מקובלים שונים; לזאת היתה חשיבות גדולה ומשמעותית בדורות הבאים של התפתחותה של תורת הקבלה.

בפרק השישי ראינו כי ציאח מיישם הבנה מונאדית של התפילה, ומחלק את נוסח התפילה למספר השווה למספר המקבלים את התפילה. ציאח אינו סובר שהמספר עצמו מחזיק בכח מאגי או מיסטי, אך כאשר הוא מקושר עם הכוח הלשוני הטבוע בשמות האל, המספר מייצג כוח מסוים. מספר אינו רק סמל מתמטי אלא מעין עדות להרמוניה בין העולם השמימי והארץ. שוב, ציאח מדגים בדבריו בנושא זה את ההשתקפות של תפיסת חסידי אשכנז בדבר ההרמוניה המספרית השוררת בין נוסחי התפילה והעולם השמימי. חסידי אשכנז מילאו תפקיד חשוב בהפצת השימוש הכללי בגימטריה. בפרק זה הוצגו השפעתם על ציאח והשפעתו, בתורו, על מקובלי צפת. למרות שאין בידי תמונה ברורה כיצד נתפשטה הגימטריה כשיטה הרמנויטית וכיצד הגיעה לקבלת ירושלים, ספרות חסידי אשכנז הטביעה חותם חשוב בהתגבשות עיוניו של ציאח. באמצעים של גימטריה, ציאח מוכיח שסידור התפילה הוא הרצף של השמות האלוהיים. אמירת התפילה אינה אלא קריאה בשמו. נשיאת התפילה בביטוי השפתיים כמוה כביטוי שם האל, והיא הדרך היחידה שבה אדם יכול לשאת את שם האל. באמצעות הגימטריה, חשפו חסידי אשכנז את הבחינה הנשמעת הנשגבת.

ידוע שר' יהודה החסיד תרגל מדיטציות מיסטיות בהשתמשו בטכניקות נומרולוגיות תוך שהוא "סופר את הערך המספרי של האותיות בתפילות",⁶⁵² ככלי להגיע לחוויה מיסטית מסויימת. בפירוש התפילה, ציאה אינו טוען שספירת מספרים מובילה לחוויה מיסטית. עבורו, הנומרולוגיה משרתת את הכוונה המיסטית. על המתפלל להתרכז בשמות האל הנסתרים במהלך התפילה, ובכך לאחד אותם. בכדי להשיג תוצאה זו, המתפלל חייב לדעת איזו מילה ממלות התפילה מכילה את שמות האל. לכן, ציאה דורש מן המתפלל לחשוף את שמות האל החבויים בתפילה. עם זאת, הוא אינו טוען שהמתפלל חייב לכוון באופן מפורש לעליית התפילה. עבור ציאה, נוסחי התפילה כמוהם כשמות האלוהיים המוטבעים בטקסט. לכן, נשיאת מילות התפילה משמעה קריאה בשם האל.

מספר שאלות הועלו במהלך הלימוד, חלקן נותרו בלתי פתורות. אחת מן המפתחות באמצעותם להשיב לשאלות מבוססת על התשתית ההיסטורית. מסירת נתיב המיסטיקה היהודית בימי הביניים בגרמניה לקבלה הספרדית, ולקבלה הירושלמית מתארת את התמונה הברורה כיצד ציאה הגיע לרעיונות אשר ביסוד הספקולציה המיסטית שלו. החוקרים בתחום זו מתקדמים מהירות לגשר על פני הרווח ההיסטורי החסר ומראים את העדויות הטקסטואלי למסירה והתפתחות של רעיונות הקבליות מופצים באירופה, אפריקה והמזרח התיכון. במחקר עתידי אראה, למשל, איך ציאה קיבל את המסורות, מה המסורות המדויקות בבסיס ההמשבה האזוטרתית ומיהו המורה שלו.

דמויות המפתח שיכולים להשיב לשאלות הם ר' יהודה אלבוטיני, ר' משה

⁶⁵² דניאל אברמס, טכניקת הספירה של הערך המספרי של האותיות בתפילות נשתמשה כבר בידי ר' יהודה החסיד וחברי חוגו. (אברמס).

אלשייך ומחברים של הכתיבות הקבלה הביזנטית, כמו ספר הפליאה וספר הקנה והמאגיה הערבית. המחקר החודר במערכת עיוניו דרך פירושיהם לתפילה עשויים להשיב על אחדות מהן. השאלה עבור מי כתב צייאח את פירוש לתפילה אף היא שאלת מפתח בנסיון לפתור קשיים מרובים אשר באו לידי ביטוי בעבודה זו. ברור שהוא לא כתב את פירושו עבור האדם הפשוט, אלא עבור בעלי הידע האיזוטרי ומתרגלי הפרקטיקות המיסטיות. מכל מקום דומה שהמודלים המתוארים כאן כוחם יפה גם לעיון בטקסטים נוספים בסוגה של פרושים קבליים לתפילה. בנוסף, ההתחקות אחר נתיבי מסירה במישור ההיסטורי עשויה לבאר סוגיות נוספות בקורותיה של המיסטיקה היהודית במעברים מן העת העתיקה דרך ימי הביניים לראשית העת החדשה.