



Hai Gaon's Letter and Commentary on "'Aleynu": Further Evidence of Moses de León's Pseudepigraphic Activity

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HAI GAON'S LETTER AND  
COMMENTARY ON *ʿALEYNU*: FURTHER  
EVIDENCE OF MOSES DE LEÓN'S  
PSEUDEPIGRAPHIC ACTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

*In this study I present evidence of yet another literary forgery of the Spanish kabbalist, Moses ben Shem Ṭov de León (ca. 1240-1305). The text that I am presenting as a work of de León consists of two parts: a letter attributed to Hai Gaon concerning the custom of reciting the ʿAleynu prayer on a daily basis, and a kabbalistic commentary on the ʿAleynu itself. Both parts, but especially the second, have striking parallels to the Zohar as well as to the other writings of de León. The pseudo-Hai letter and commentary on ʿAleynu clearly predate the Zohar as there is no reference to it in the usual guised language that de León employs in his other Hebrew theosophic writings. Nevertheless, the zoharic style and technical kabbalistic terminology are apparent in the text. The obvious zoharic parallels in this document provide further evidence that de León—whether as author or editor—later wove into the texture of Zohar passages, themes and exegetical comments from his own earlier writings, sometimes used in entirely different contexts.*

*It is of importance as well that in this text de León, in all probability following the lead of the Castilian kabbalist, Isaac ben Jacob ha-Kohen and his disciples, Moses ben Simeon of Burgos and Todros ben Joseph Abulafia, attributes kabbalistic lore to certain ascetic figures, R. Josiah and R. Abraham, who are patterned after the life of historical personalities probably living in Provence. In most of his writings de León does not refer to such historical/fictitious characters. This technique, however, was employed in the treatise Sod Darkhe ha-ʿOtiyyot, written either by de León or by another member of a circle of nontheosophic linguistic mystics to which he belonged, and traces of it can be detected in the Zohar as well. In sum, the letter and commentary on ʿAleynu provides us with an early sample of de León's pseudepigraphical activity in which he tried to place kabbalistic ideas in the context of halakhic issues. This tendency continued to mark his literary activity, including his role as author or editor of the classic work of medieval kabbalah, the Zohar.*

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\* After working on this text for some time I was informed by Moshe Idel that M. Kushnir-Oron of Tel-Aviv University had worked on this same text several years ago. I thank Dr. Kushnir-Oron for allowing me to consult her unpublished

## 1. Introduction

Moses de León's (ca. 1240–1305) involvement with pseudepigraphy is best known to scholars from the complex literary problem surrounding the *Zohar*. Whether as sole author (as argued explicitly by Heinrich Graetz,<sup>1</sup> Gershom Scholem<sup>2</sup> and Isaiah Tishby,<sup>3</sup>—though, as Scholem himself remarked, “a whispered tradition of centuries”<sup>4</sup>), or as one member of a circle of kabbalists responsible for the composition of the *Zohar* (as intimated by Adolf Jellinek<sup>5</sup> and argued in detail recently by Yehuda Liebes<sup>6</sup>), it is clear that de León had some responsibility for writing a text that was attributed to an ancient authority.

De León's pseudepigraphic activity, however, is not limited to the *Zohar*. Several other writings have emerged as evidence for this literary posture. First, Scholem was of the opinion that the medieval collection of moral precepts, *Orhot Hayyim*, also called *Šawwa'at R. Eli'ezer*, attributed to Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, was the work of de León.<sup>7</sup> The connection between this work and de León is particularly strong in the case of the second part of the text, *Seder Gan Eden*, published by Jellinek in *Bet ha-Midrash*, 3:131–140. (Jellinek does not mention de León as the probable author.)<sup>8</sup>

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material. The thesis that I present, however, is my own and I therefore bear full responsibility for the contents of this paper. I would also like to express my gratitude to Neil Danzig for his useful comments pertaining to geonic literature.

<sup>1</sup> H. Graetz, *History of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1891–98), 4:10–24.

<sup>2</sup> G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1956), pp. 156–204; idem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem, 1974), pp. 233–235, 432–434. I refer in the body of this paper only to Scholem's mature view on the matter, which stands in striking contrast to the earlier position adopted in his lecture published in 1926 (see below, n. 13). Initially Scholem flatly rejected the opinion that de León was the sole author of the *Zohar*, but maintained the possibility that he may have acted like an editor or redactor, putting the text together from earlier sources (while perhaps adding in the process some things of his own) in the form that it presently exists.

<sup>3</sup> I. Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar* (Jerusalem, 1971), 1:103–108.

<sup>4</sup> *Major Trends*, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. A. Jellinek, *Moses ben Schem-Tob de Leon und sein Verhältnis zum Sohar* (Leipzig, 1851), p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Y. Liebes, “How the *Zohar* Was Written,” [Hebrew] *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 8 (1989): 1–71.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Major Trends*, pp. 183, 200; *Kabbalah*, p. 432. Cf. *She'elot u-Teshuvot le-R. Mosheh di Li'on be-Šnyene Qabbalah*, in I. Tishby, *Studies in Kabbalah and Its Branches*, [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1982), 1:53.

<sup>8</sup> See *Major Trends*, p. 393, n. 103.

It should be noted that other scholars, including Joseph Dan, have expressed reservation about Scholem's attribution of this text to de León and have suggested that the real author is the eleventh-century talmudist Eliezer ben Isaac, known as Eliezer ha-Gadol.<sup>9</sup> This view was, as far as I am aware, first advanced by Menahem ben Judah de Lonzano in the sixteenth century.

Scholem was also the first to recognize de León's pseudepigraphic involvement with another text, the collection of geonic responsa entitled, *Sha'are Teshuvah*, which contains fictitious responsa attributed to Hai Gaon. Indeed, some of these "nonauthentic pieces," as Scholem calls them,<sup>10</sup> have striking parallels to the *Zohar* given under the heading "Yerushalmi."<sup>11</sup> In some cases these "Yerushalmi" passages are stylistically similar to *Midrash ha-Ne'elam*, the earliest stratum of zoharic literature. On the basis of these parallel passages, David Luria argued, in the introduction to the Leipzig edition of *Sha'are Teshuvah*, published in 1858, for the antiquity of the *Zohar*,<sup>12</sup> but it is clear that his historical perspective was skewed. Scholem's own view on de León's relationship to this source has gone through a curious development, reflecting, of course, his attitude towards the authorship of the *Zohar* itself. In his lecture published in 1926 on the role of de León in the composition of the *Zohar*, Scholem noted that de León probably had knowledge of the zoharic passages cited as "Yerushalmi" in *Sha'are Teshuvah*, but "there is no reason to suspect that de León himself composed these forgeries," inasmuch as this way of citing the *Midrash ha-Ne'elam* stratum of the *Zohar* is known from other late thirteenth-century kabbalists who were somewhat older colleagues of de León, e.g., Isaac ibn Sahula and Ṭodros Abulafia.<sup>13</sup> The view expressed at that time was somewhat

<sup>9</sup> Cf. J. Dan, *Hebrew Ethical and Homiletical Literature* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 93–94. See also I. Abrahams, *Hebrew Ethical Wills* (Philadelphia, 1926), 1:31–49.

<sup>10</sup> *Major Trends*, p. 200.

<sup>11</sup> On this convention for citing the *Zohar*, see E. Wolfson, *The Book of the Pomegranate: Moses de León's Sefer ha-Rimmon* (Atlanta, GA, 1988), pp. 6, n. 17, 49, n. 199 [English section]. Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent references to this volume correspond to the pagination of the Hebrew section.

<sup>12</sup> Reprinted in *Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim Sha'are Teshuvah*, ed. W. Leiter (New York, 1946), pp. iv–xvi. See also D. Luria, *Ma'amar Qadmut Sefer ha-Zohar* (New York, 1951), pp. 42–71.

<sup>13</sup> G. Scholem, "Did R. Mosheh de León Write the *Zohar*?" [Hebrew] *Madda'eh ha-Yahadut* 1 (1926): 25.

modified in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (first published in 1941), where Scholem suggested that de León “had a share in the writing of these pseudepigraphic responsa, even if he did not write them all.”<sup>14</sup> Scholem further noted that de León was the first to quote one of these “bogus responsa.” As an example of this, Scholem mentions one of the *sodot* appended to de León’s *Sefer ha-Nefesh ha-Hakhamah* (the reference is to the *sod* of Shabbat).<sup>15</sup> To this one might add two passages from *Sefer ha-Rimmon* which contain matters found in *Sha<sup>c</sup>are Teshuvah* but nowhere else as far as I am aware (the first one has to do with *qedushah de-sitra*<sup>16</sup> and the second, with the three paragraphs that begin with the word וּבְכֵן in the *Amidah* for Rosh ha-Shanah<sup>17</sup>).

Scholem’s position, as stated in his article on the *Zohar* in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1972, published separately in the volume *Kabbalah*), goes even further than the view expressed in *Major Trends*. De León, writes Scholem, “edited a version of a collection of geonic responsa, particularly those of Hai Gaon, and he added kabbalistic material in the style of the *Zohar*, using particular idioms of zoharic Aramaic, and also in the style of the *Midrash ha-Ne<sup>c</sup>elam*, all of which he entitled *Yerushalmi*, or “the ‘*Yerushalmi* version’.”<sup>18</sup> According to this conclusion then, de León not only added passages to the geonic collection but also edited it. This view has recently been substantiated and elaborated upon by Neil Danzig. After examining the various manuscript recensions of this collection of geonic responsa as well as the printed version, Danzig concluded that de León not only added a few pseudepigraphic responsa here and there but in many places added to and changed the original text to serve his own purposes. Danzig also concluded that one version of these responsa, preserved in MS JTS Mic. 1768,<sup>19</sup> represents de León’s second attempt to copy and reorganize

<sup>14</sup> *Major Trends*, p. 200.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 396, n. 146.

<sup>16</sup> *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 85, which parallels *Sha<sup>c</sup>are Teshuvah*, § 55.

<sup>17</sup> *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 149, which parallels *Sha<sup>c</sup>are Teshuvah*, § 297.

<sup>18</sup> *Kabbalah*, p. 231.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *The Book of the Pomegranate*, pp. 56–57 [English section]. For a fuller description of the manuscript see N. Danzig, “The Collection of Geonic Responsa *Sha<sup>c</sup>are Teshuvah* and the Responsa from Heaven,” [Hebrew] *Tarbiz* 58 (1989): 23–26. In addition to the halakhic material discussed in detail by Danzig, i.e., the *Teshuvot ha-Ge’onim* and the *She’elot u-Teshuvot min ha-Shamayim* (fols. 10a–31b, 163b–174b), this codex contains a lot of kabbalistic material deriving from

the material included in his first collection, with an effort to mix up the pseudepigraphic passages and place them in a different order. Danzig conjectures that de León himself added the title to this collection—as preserved in the JTS manuscript—“These are the responsa of R. Hai Gaon,” in order to give geonic authority to all

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Castilian authors, e.g., *Sefer ha-Mishqal* of de León (fols. 32a–81a), a fragment of Isaac ha-Kohen's *Ma'amar 'al ha-<sup>2</sup>Ašilut ha-Semo'lit* (fols. 81b–84a), passages from Joseph Gikatilla's *Sha'are Sedeq* (fols. 97a–99a), and *Sha'are 'Orah*, referred to as *Sefer ha-<sup>2</sup>Orah* (fols. 99a–b; see below n. 121), two citations from de León's *Sefer ha-Rimmon* (fols. 81b, 109a–b), and a third passage which is a paraphrase from the aforementioned work (fol. 92a), responsa attributed to the anonymous elder (זקן) (fols. 113b–116a), and Gikatilla's commentary on the Passover Haggadah (fols. 128a–138b, 175a–190b). The *Zohar* itself is mentioned in the following contexts: (1) fols. 93a–94a contains a passage in Aramaic that corresponds to *Zohar* 3:199a–b; (2) fols. 94a–94b likewise contains an actual quote which corresponds to *Zohar* 3:197b–198a; (3) on fol. 96a a passage is introduced as זוהר סודי, but this does not correspond to any extant zoharic passage; (4) on fol. 106a–b there is a Hebrew paraphrase of *Zohar* 1:197a; (5) on fol. 108b there is an interpretation of Gen 30:27 which corresponds (more or less) to the interpretation of that verse in *Zohar* 1:139a, 161a, 167a. In that context an alternative explanation of the verse is offered also in the name of the *Zohar*, but to date I have not located any parallel to it in the printed versions of *Zohar*. In the same manuscript I have detected several passages, either anonymous or attributed to Shim'on ben Yoḥai, and in one case to Eleazar the son of Shim'on ben Yoḥai, which have parallels in the *Zohar*. The relevant texts are as follows: (1) on fols. 100a–b an interpretation of Gen 37:22 in the name of Rashbi which has a parallel in *Zohar* 1:185a–b; (2) on fol. 100b a passage on Jacob and Joseph in the name of Rashbi which has a parallel in *Zohar* 1:144b and 185b; (3) on fol. 100b an anonymous interpretation of Num 25:14 which has a parallel in *Zohar* 3:221b; (4) on fol. 100b an interpretation of Ps 89:16 attributed to Rashbi which contains material found in *Zohar* 2:123a and 3.231b; (5) on fols. 100b–101a an anonymous interpretation of Lev 19:4 which has a parallel in *Zohar* 3:83b; (6) on fol. 101a an anonymous explanation concerning Reuben and Joseph which has a parallel in *Zohar* 1:155a–b (*Sitre Torah*), 176b, 222b (see also 236a); (7) on fol. 101a an anonymous commentary on 2 Kings 2:9 which has a parallel in *Zohar* 1:191b; (8) on fols. 101a–b an anonymous commentary on Lam 3:22 which has a parallel in *Zohar* 3:305a; (9) on fol. 101b an anonymous interpretation of Gen 42:9 which has a parallel in *Zohar* 1:199b; (10) on fol. 101b an anonymous interpretation of Isa 4:3 which has a parallel in *Zohar* 2:57b; (11) on fol. 102b an interpretation of Lev 16:1 in the name of Eleazar ben Shim'on ben Yoḥai which corresponds to *Zohar* 3:60a also in the name of Eleazar (cf. *Zohar* 3:57a); and see fol. 106a, where the zoharic interpretation is upheld against the view of Ramban; (12) on fol. 102b an anonymous allusion to the secret contained in Lev 16:21 which has a parallel in *Zohar* 2:237a and 3:63a–b (the secret involves the demonic realm); (13) on fol. 105b an interpretation of Moses' sin at the Waters of Meribah (Num 20:11ff.) in the name of Rashbi, which has a parallel in *Zohar* 1:30b and 2:271b–272a; here too the view of Rashbi is upheld against that of Ramban

the responsa, especially those passages which he himself composed.<sup>20</sup> It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that de León indeed edited these geonic responsa and on occasion added his own innovations. Finally, in an article published in 1988, Israel Ta-Shema called attention to the fact that several passages found in the printed collection of the *She'elot u-Teshuvot min ha-Shamayim* of Jacob of Marvège were in fact composed by de León.<sup>21</sup>

In this study I wish to present evidence for another small treatise which was, in my opinion, also composed by de León but was ascribed to another figure. I refer to a letter and commentary on the prayer *Aleynu* attributed to R. Hai Gaon. Virtually every critical scholar who has examined this text has reached the conclusion that it is a forgery.<sup>22</sup> This possibility has also been entertained

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(for discussion of the latter cf. E. Wolfson, "By Way of Truth: Aspects of Nahmanides' Kabbalistic Hermeneutic," *AJS Review* 14 [1989]: 148–149); (14) on fol. 106a an aggadic tradition concerning Balaam which is found as well in *Zohar* 3:208a. It must be emphasized that these texts are not literal Hebrew translations of the Aramaic passages in the *Zohar*. In fact, it is difficult to determine whether these passages are based on existing zoharic texts, or represent sources which antedate the *Zohar* and which were incorporated into the texture of that work by de León or by some other kabbalist who belonged to the group that produced the *Zohar*. If the latter, these sources could be explained as evidence for something akin to that which Liebes has referred to as "מדרשו של רשב"י, which may have served as the source for exegetical pieces in the *Zohar*; cf. Liebes, "How the *Zohar* Was Written," pp. 10–12. On the other hand, one cannot rule out the possibility that de León himself may have authored these passages, in some cases attributing them to Rashbi or to R. Eleazar, his son, and then later incorporated them in the *Zohar* in new narrative settings. This would confirm Tishby's thesis that in the 1280's de León worked on pseudepigraphic passages inserted first into his Hebrew theosophic works and later translated into Aramaic in the *Zohar*; cf. Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 1:106–107. The matter requires further investigation based on a careful study of all the passages noted above.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Danzig, "The Collection of Geonic Responsa," pp. 26–32, 41–48.

<sup>21</sup> I. Ta-Shema, "Responsa from Heaven: the Collection and its Additions," [Hebrew] *Tarbiz* 57 (1988): 51–66.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. J. Goldenthal, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Palatinae Vindobonensis* (Vienna, 1851), p. 23; M. Steinchneider, *Catalogus librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana* (Berlin, 1852–60), col. 1030, n. 16; J. Müller, *Einleitung in die Responsen der Babylonischen Geonen* [Hebrew] (Berlin, 1891), p. 58, n. 4; G. Scholem, "R. Moses of Burgos, the disciple of R. Isaac," [Hebrew] *Tarbiz* 3 (1932): 278; S. Assaf, *Gaonica: Gaonic Responsa and Fragments of Halachic Literature from the Geniza and other Sources* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1933), p. 4, n. 7. On kabbalistic material falsely attributed to Hai Gaon, see also the

in the traditional literature. Thus, for example, Israel Moses ben Eliezer Ḥazzan, in his commentary *ʿIyye ha-Yam*, published in the 1869 Livorno edition of *Shaʿare Teshuvah*, already sensed some historical and textual problems with the letter and commentary on *ʿAleynu* and claimed that he almost concluded that the work was a forgery.<sup>23</sup> To take a second example, in his commentary *ʿIyyun Tefillah*, published in *ʿOṣar ha-Tefillot*, Aryeh Leib ben Shlomo Gordon wrote that one who examines the entire responsum (i.e., the first part) will see from its language that “it is not [a work] of R. Hai Gaon but rather of one of the great [rabbis] in the generation of Rashi, and the explanation [i.e., the part that contains the commentary] on *ʿAleynu* [was composed] by one of the kabbalists, and was erroneously attributed to R. Hai Gaon.”<sup>24</sup> It is of special interest that in the above passage the writer sensed a distinction between the two parts of the document, the letter and the commentary, attributing the first to someone in the generation of Rashi—I presume an Ashkenazi authority—and the second to one of the kabbalists. In any event, it is clear that both traditional and critical scholars have expressed doubt about the authenticity of this text. It is thus no surprise that Tsvi Groner, in his “List of R. Hai Gaon’s Responsa” published in 1986, includes this text among those sources which were intended forgeries.<sup>25</sup> Despite the scholarly consensus about this forgery, no one to date has adequately explained its authorship. This paper attempts to fill the gap.

## 2. Description of text

The text is extant in six<sup>26</sup> manuscripts: (1) ms Paris 181, fols. 245b–247a; (2) ms Paris 835, fols. 113b–115b; (3) ms Vatican 195,

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references mentioned in E. E. Hildesheimer, “Mystik und Agada im Urteile der Gaonen R. Scherira und R. Hai,” *Festschrift für Jacob Rosenheim* (Frankfurt am Main, 1931), pp. 275–276, n. 8, and the pertinent remarks of Danzig, “The Collection of Geonic Responsa,” p. 30, n. 30.

<sup>23</sup> *Teshuvot ha-Geʿonim ʿim Haggahot ʿIyye ha-Yam* (Livorno, 1869), fol. 20a.

<sup>24</sup> *ʿOṣar ha-Tefillot* (New York, 1966), p. 433.

<sup>25</sup> T. Groner, “A List of Hai Gaon’s Responsa,” [Hebrew] *ʿAle Sefer* 13 (1986): 119.

<sup>26</sup> Apparently a seventh manuscript exists, as may be gathered from the description of ms 631 in the Günzburg collection in Moscow in the catalogue *Bet Yosef* by Senior Sachs. Unfortunately, I have not been able to examine this manuscript. In the card catalogue at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts in the



fols. 7a–9a; (4) ms JTS Mic. 3216, fols. 1a–3b; (5) ms Oxford-Bodleian 1565, fols. 3b–6a; and (6) ms Vienna 113, fols. 4a–5a. The text was published in a relatively corrupt form by Judah Coriat in his anthology of kabbalistic texts *Ma<sup>o</sup>r wa-Shemesh* (Livorno, 1839), on the basis of ms Paris 181.<sup>27</sup> The text is also quoted by Ḥayyim Avraham ben Shmu<sup>o</sup>el of Miranda in his book, *Yad Ne<sup>o</sup>eman*, published in Salonika in 1804,<sup>28</sup> and from there it was copied in the commentary *Yyye ha-Yam* by Israel Moses ben Eliezer Ḥazzan, mentioned above. The commentary is cited without name in the kabbalistic notes of Moses Keleş to the *Sefer ha-Musar* of his father, Judah Keleş.<sup>29</sup> It is also mentioned in *Sha<sup>o</sup>ar ha-Kawwanot* of Ḥayyim Vital<sup>30</sup> and in *Maḥaziq Berakhah* of Ḥayyim Yosef David Azulai.<sup>31</sup>

### 3. The Authorship

Turning to the question of authorship, the only serious attempt of which I am aware to trace the provenance of the text was made by Scholem. In a study published in 1927 Scholem refers to the pseudo-Hai commentary in the context of discussing the possible sources for Isaac ben Jacob ha-Kohen's "Treatise on the Left Emanations." In addition to the apparently pseudepigraphic sources that Isaac himself explicitly mentions (see below, 4.2.3[c]), Scholem assumes that this Castilian kabbalist utilized other sources including "small books belonging to the circle of the *Sefer ha-Iyyun* and pseudepigraphic works similar to it. The sources from which the material (Scholem lists the relevant sections in R. Isaac's treatise) was drawn were not far in terms of their literary character from the expansive literature attributed to R. Hai Gaon, which was composed before the disclosure of kabba-

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Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, ms Vat. 285 is listed as containing this text; an examination of the manuscript, however, indicates that this is an error. A kabbalistic commentary on *Aleynu* does indeed appear on fols. 177b–178a of this codex, but it is not related to the one attributed to Hai Gaon.

<sup>27</sup> A copy of this version can also be found in I. Weinstock, *Siddur ha-Ge<sup>o</sup>onim weha-Mequbbalim* (Jerusalem, 1971), 3:777–781.

<sup>28</sup> *Yad Ne<sup>o</sup>eman* (Salonika, 1804), fols. 40a–b.

<sup>29</sup> *Sefer ha-Musar* (Jerusalem, 1973), pp. 100–101.

<sup>30</sup> *Sha<sup>o</sup>ar ha-Kawwanot* (Jerusalem, 1902), fol. 50a.

<sup>31</sup> *Maḥaziq Berakhah* (Livorno, 1785), § 132, fol. 27b.

lah in Provence and Spain.”<sup>32</sup> Scholem goes on to specify three examples of pseudo-Hai material, viz., the responsa on questions regarding the emanation (of the *sefirot*), the commentary on *‘Aleynu* printed in the beginning of *Ma’or wa-Shemesh*, and the extensive quotes on cosmogony in the treatise of Moses of Burgos on the forty-two-letter name.<sup>33</sup> In an article published several years later (1932) Scholem concludes that the text under discussion was indeed composed by members of the *‘Iyyun* circle.<sup>34</sup> In passing it should be borne in mind that, according to Scholem, this group of mystics was operative in Provence in the twelfth and in the early part of the thirteenth century,<sup>35</sup> a view which has been challenged by Mark Verman, who argued that the *‘Iyyun* circle is to be located in Castile in the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>36</sup> Scholem was no doubt led to believe that the letter and commentary on *‘Aleynu* were written by members of this circle, on the basis of the fact that other pseudo-Hai kabbalistic responsa derive from them.<sup>37</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that in his list of works belonging to the *‘Iyyun* circle, published in *Reshit ha-Qabbalah* in 1948, Scholem did not mention the text under discussion.<sup>38</sup> While this may be attributed to an oversight, the fact of the matter is that Scholem does include in his list the other pseudo-Hai responsa from the circle described above.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, in the *Ursprung und Anfänge der Kabbala*, published in 1962, Scholem refers to the

<sup>32</sup> G. Scholem, “The Kabbalah of R. Jacob and R. Isaac the Sons of R. Jacob ha-Kohen,” [Hebrew] *Madda’e ha-Yahadut* 2 (1927): 191–192.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192. See below, n. 37.

<sup>34</sup> Scholem, “R. Moses of Burgos,” p. 278; see also p. 283.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *idem*, *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Princeton, 1987), pp. 309–364.

<sup>36</sup> M. Verman, *Sifre Iyyun* (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1984).

<sup>37</sup> Here I mention two such examples: the responsum on the mystical spelling of the divine name with twenty-four points, and the one on the thirteen *middot* and ten *sefirot*. Cf. *Origins*, pp. 328–329, 349–354. See below, n. 39. Both of these are found in two of the manuscripts which contain the letter and commentary on *‘Aleynu*, MSS Oxford 1565 and Vienna 113.

<sup>38</sup> Scholem, *Reshit ha-Qabbalah* (Tel Aviv, 1948), pp. 255–262.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 258–259, n. 16. In that context Scholem mentions three such responsa: the one concerning the thirteen *middot* and ten *sefirot*, a different version of the text concerning the three lights above the *sefirot* which make up the thirteen *middot*, and the treatise on the mystical writing of the name in twenty-four points. Insofar as the second is an extension or alternative version of the first, it still is accurate to speak of two pseudo-Hai documents in this circle.

text as a “kabbalistic commentary on the *‘Aleynu* prayer that was attributed to Hai Gaon but that actually must have been composed at the beginning of the thirteenth century in the south of France.”<sup>40</sup>

It is curious that Scholem does not mention the *‘Iyyun* circle by name in that context. Does this signify that he changed his mind about the earlier attribution? To be sure, the time and place that he specified could fit well his view of the *‘Iyyun* circle as outlined in the same volume; still he does not name them explicitly in the relevant context, and this raises the question of some change of mind on Scholem’s part. What is clear, however, is the fact that he did not entertain the possibility which I will suggest in this study.

A close examination of the text proves beyond a shadow of doubt that it was not written by the *‘Iyyun* circle. There is simply nothing in the text that reflects the unique theosophic posture or style of the writings that make up the corpus of this group of mystics. On the basis of my own study of the text I have concluded that de León, living in Castile in the latter part of the thirteenth century, is its genuine author. The Provençal elements—mostly the names of the personalities mentioned in the second part—were adopted by de León as part of his literary-cum-historical framework. As will be suggested below (4.2.3[c]), de León was in all probability influenced by his Castilian predecessors, mainly Isaac ha-Kohen and his circle,<sup>41</sup> in attributing kabbalistic secrets to fictional characters who are patterned after the lifestyle of actual figures. What is distinctive of de León, however, is his meshing of halakhic and kabbalistic motifs placed within the pseudepigraphical framework. I will now try in the remainder of the paper to prove my hypothesis by a closer textual analysis.

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<sup>40</sup> *Origins*, p. 230, n. 65.

<sup>41</sup> It is well known that de León had close personal relations with at least one prominent member of Isaac ha-Kohen’s circle, Ṭodros ben Joseph ha-Levi Abulafia. Cf. G. Scholem, “Two Treatises of R. Moses de León,” *Kobez ‘al Yad* 8 (1976): 327; Y. Liebes, “The Messiah of the *Zohar*,” in *The Messianic Idea in Jewish Thought: A Study Conference in Honour of the Eightieth Birthday of Gershom Scholem* (Jerusalem, 1982), p. 124, n. 151. See also M. Kushnir-Oron, *Sha‘ar ha-Razim le-R. Ṭodros ben Yosef ha-Levi ‘Abul‘afiyah* (Jerusalem, 1989), p. 35. On Ṭodros’ use of zoharic material cf. Scholem, “Did R. Mosheh de León Write the *Zohar*?” pp. 26–27. On the relationship between the mythical Shim‘on of the *Zohar* and the historical Ṭodros see also the observations of Liebes, “How the *Zohar* Was Written,” pp. 68–71.

This will be divided into two parts: (1) a literary analysis of the structure of the text, which will in turn be divided into two sections, the letter and the commentary; and (2) an examination of the obvious parallels in the text to de León's other Hebrew writings and/or the *Zohar*. I will conclude with a brief statement on the relevance of this text to the larger question of de León and his pseudepigraphic tendencies.

Before proceeding with my analysis a brief statement explaining my methodology is in order. The use of zoharic texts to prove the literary hand of de León requires some justification in light of what appears to be a growing scholarly consensus to the effect that the *Zohar* was not the sole product of de León—the theory that has dominated academic research on the *Zohar* for the better part of this century.<sup>42</sup> While it is entirely possible that de León is not responsible for composing the main sections of the *Zohar* by himself, it still seems valid, from a methodological point of view, to utilize zoharic parallels in order to identify de León's own writings insofar as they clearly reflect an intimate knowledge and intensive use of this material. Furthermore, to date no critical scholar has shown conclusively that de León was not one of the authors of the *Zohar*.<sup>43</sup> I have, therefore, followed this method in identifying the source at hand. Indeed, my approach represents a reversal of that adopted by Jellinek and utilized by Scholem and others who have followed him. That is, instead of identifying the author of the *Zohar* by noting parallels in de León's Hebrew writings, I am using zoharic terminology and concepts to identify a text of de León. Underlying my method, therefore, is the minimalist claim that de León was a member of the circle which produced the *Zohar* in the form in which we have it. In sum, the identification of de León as the author of the letter and commentary on *Aleynu* is based on parallels in his own theosophic writings and in the *Zohar*, and on his obvious tendency to forge halakhic responsa (often with kabbalistic allusions) in the name of geonic authorities.

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<sup>42</sup> See the article of Liebes cited above, n. 6; and cf. *The Book of the Pomegranate*, pp. 51–55 [English section]; M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven, 1988), p. 380, n. 66.

<sup>43</sup> On the contrary, see Liebes ("How the *Zohar* Was Written," p. 6) who still maintains that most of what is included in the *Zohar* was written by de León.

## 4. Literary Analysis

The text consists of two distinct literary units. The first part is a letter which Hai Gaon reportedly sent to various rabbis concerning the obligation to recite *Aleynu* on a daily basis; the second part is a kabbalistic commentary on *Aleynu*. It is obvious, therefore, that the thread which combines these two units is the emphasis on a particular prayer, *Aleynu*. Apart from this, however, the two parts are really distinct: the first is dedicated entirely to halakhic matters, and the second, to kabbalistic symbolism. Nevertheless, from the opening of the letter and the conclusion of the commentary, as well as from the consistency of style throughout, it is clear that the two parts were written by the same hand.

It would be in order to outline briefly the structure of the text. The two sections can be divided into small subsections, two in the first and three in the second:

(1) the opening, which provides the title of the work: "Perush 'Aleynu le-shabbeaḥ we-nusaḥ ha-<sup>3</sup>iggeret she-shalah Rabbenu Hai Ga'on" (MS Oxford 1565, fol. 3b; MS Vienna 113, fol. 4b). The letter is supposedly sent to a place called אנדלק (according to MSS Oxford 1565, fol. 3b; Vienna 113, fol. 4a) or ארנלק (according to MSS Paris 181, fol. 245b [= the printed version in *Ma'or wa-Shemesh*, fol. 8b]; Paris 835, fol. 113b; JTS 3216, fol. 1a; Vat. 195, fol. 7a).<sup>44</sup> It should be noted that the name of the place according to the reading in Ḥayyim Avraham ben Shmu'el's *Yad Ne'emān*, and following him in the commentary *Yyye ha-Yam* by Israel Moses ben Eliezer Hazzan, is אנדלוס. The description of this place differs in the various manuscripts and it is worthwhile to present these readings.

(a) MS Oxford, 1565, fol. 3b: אנדלק אשר בסוף ים הודו בסוף ים מערב

(b) MS Vienna 113, fol. 4a: אנדלק אשר בסוף ים מערב בארץ הודו אל יושבי אי אנדלק בסוף ים מערב

(c) MS Paris 181, fol. 245b (= *Ma'or wa-Shemesh*, fol. 8b): ארנלק אשר בסוף ים מערב בארץ הודו אליכם יושבי אי ארנלק בסוף ים הודו ובסוף ים מערב

<sup>44</sup> On the possible emendation of ארנלק to אוטרנטו, i.e., Otranto, a town in Apulia, Southern Italy, see Steinschneider, *Catalogus librorum hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana*, col. 1030, n. 16.

(d) MS Paris 835, fol. 113b: ארנלק אשר בסוף ים מערב מארץ הודו אל יושבי אל אי ארנלק בסוף ים מערב

(e) MS Vat. 191, fol. 7a: ארנלק אשר בסוף ים מערב בארץ הודו אל יושבי אי ארנלק בסוף ים הודו בסוף ים מערב

(f) MS JTS 3216, fol. 1a: ארנלק אשר בסוף ים מערב מארץ הודו אליכם יושבי אי ארנלק בסוף ים הודו ובסוף ים מערב

(2) the body of the letter (to be described in some detail in section 4.1)

(3) the opening of the commentary, which begins somewhat enigmatically: "Because we have seen at the close of the letter from R. Kalonymus and R. Natan an allusion to a certain matter, and I saw in the special letter which they sent to us that the wisdom of God is in their hearts. For your honor it should be known that the matter of *Aleynu* was a tradition from our rabbis, hidden and concealed. When R. Yosiyah ha-Parush ha-Levi came from the Land of Israel and passed among us, he said that Abraham ha-Parush, his relative, found this matter in many books and other matters which we do not have, and we will allude to some of it for you" (MS Oxford 1565, fol. 4b).

(4) the body of the commentary (to be discussed below in section 4.2)

(5) the end of the text: "Now we cannot elaborate but only give allusions. And since you said that you would send to us your emissary with the rest of your questions regarding the laws of *niddah*, we will send to you [clarification of] all these matters about which you have doubt, but which are not doubtful at all. God, blessed be he, should assist you and illuminate your eyes with the light of his Torah according to your desire. Yours sincerely, R. Hai ben Sherira Gaon, son of R. Menasheh [MS Vienna 113, fol. 6b and MS Paris 181, fol. 247a (*Ma'or wa-Shemesh*, fol. 10b); the reading in MSS Oxford 1565, fol. 6a and Vienna 113, fol. 6b, appears to be corrupt: מנפה; MS Vat. 191, fol. 9a: חנניא; MS JTS 3126, fol. 3b: חנניה; *Yad Ne'eman*, fol. 40b: סעדיא] ben R. Sherira Gaon, may his memory be for a blessing, from the staff [MSS Oxford 1565, fol. 6a, Vienna 113, fol. 6b, and Vat. 195, fol. 9a: מדגלי; MS Paris 181, fol. 247a and MS JTS 3126, fol. 3b: מרגליו; *Ma'or wa-Shemesh*, fol. 10b: מרגליא; MS Paris 835, fol. 115b: מרגלי] of Judah the son of Jacob, the Lion." In MS Paris 835, fol. 115b, the signature is: "R. Hai son of R. Sherira Gaon, the son of R. Judah Gaon, from the staff of R. Judah son of Jacob." This

ending is indeed problematic, as the name of Sherira's father was neither Menasheh nor Judah but rather Ḥananyah. Along the way one scribe or another apparently picked up on this, for in two of the manuscripts, Vat. 195, fol. 9a and JTS 3216, fol. 3b, the name Ḥananyah in place of Menasheh or Judah does in fact appear.

#### 4.1 The Letter

I will turn now to a brief discussion of the two main sections of the text: the letter and the commentary.

In the first part of the text, the letter, six names are mentioned: R. Hai, R. Natan, R. Shealtiel, R. Kalonymus, R. Gershom (referring presumably to Gershom ben Judah Me<sup>o</sup> or ha-Golah [ca. 960–1028]), and R. Alfasi. The narrative background of this treatise is that the aforementioned rabbis, i.e., Natan, Shealtiel, and Kalonymus (all, we assume, reportedly of Ashkenazi extraction), sent a letter to Hai Gaon requesting information about the source of the custom to recite the *Aleynu* daily, especially in the Diaspora. Before these rabbis there were letters pertaining to this matter from Alfasi and Gershom. According to the view attributed to Alfasi, even though Joshua composed the prayer when he entered the land of Canaan (I will presently discuss the origin of such a tradition), the custom to recite *Aleynu* in the daily liturgy was instituted by the Geonim (תקנת הגאונים). The view attributed to Gershom is that Yoḥanan ben Zakkai instituted the custom of reciting the *Aleynu* daily. The response of Hai Gaon reportedly is that the view of Gershom should be upheld: “In truth Joshua composed [*Aleynu*] . . . it was the reform of R. Yoḥanan ben Zakkai to make it obligatory [to recite *Aleynu*] every day in order to establish the pillar of faith (לקיים קיום האמונה).” I will return to this critical phrase at a later point in my analysis.

Clearly, there is no reason to assume that this letter was authentically written by Hai, notwithstanding the fact that the “narrative frame” given to this letter suggests some historical truth insofar as there is evidence for direct textual links between Ashkenazi sages and Babylonian Geonim as well as for the transmission of geonic traditions to Ashkenazi sages through intermediary links.<sup>45</sup> First,

<sup>45</sup> Cf. A. Grossman, *The Early Sages of Ashkenaz* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 168, n. 242, 303, 427, 433.

from a chronological perspective the whole matter of a letter of Hai Gaon, who died in 1038, addressing a view of Isaac Alfasi, who was born in 1013, is problematic. While such a problem does not affect R. Gershom, who was indeed a contemporary of Hai,<sup>46</sup> no independent evidence exists to support the claim that Hai responded to an opinion of, or corresponded directly with, R. Gershom.<sup>47</sup> Neither is there evidence indicating that either Alfasi or Gershom dealt with the problem of *Aleynu* as discussed in the text before us. Moreover, as far as I was able to detect, Hai's name is mentioned in connection with the *Aleynu* in only two other places. There is a genuine responsum of Hai concerning the *Aleynu*, but only as part of the Rosh ha-Shanah liturgy known originally as part of the Babylonian practice.<sup>48</sup> In another responsum the part of this letter concerning Joshua's composing of the *Aleynu* after capturing the land is repeated. I am referring to a responsum that appears in the collection, *Sha'are Teshuvah*, discussed above. In §44 it is written: "You ask about the matter of *erubin* and *yadayim* which King Solomon instituted. It is well and good that Joshua had instituted *Aleynu le-shabbah*; it is not a reform of the rabbis but rather Joshua instituted it when Israel entered the land. . . . *Aleynu le-shabbah* is the reform of Joshua, for previously they were outside the land [of Canaan], and now that they entered the land—the place which corresponds to the throne of Glory<sup>49</sup>—he had to institute it."<sup>50</sup> עליון עלינו לשבחה ולא הוא מתקנת רבנן יהושע תקן יהושע תקנו כשנכנסו ישראל לארץ . . . עליון לשבחה תקנת יהושע שהיו קודם בח"ל [בחורף לארץ] ועכשיו נכנסו לארץ מקום מכוון לנגד כסא הכבוד והוצרך לתקנו. Here we see an echo of the theme contained in the letter on *Aleynu* attributed to Hai in the context of

<sup>46</sup> See the pertinent remarks of A. Grossman, op. cit., p. 166, n. 233.

<sup>47</sup> There is a tradition, evidently spurious, from a source composed in the thirteenth century and included in the responsa (no. 29) of Solomon ben Jehiel Luria (ca. 1510–1574) to the effect that R. Gershom received instruction (קבל) from R. Hai. Cf. Sh. Eidelberg, *The Responsa of Rabbeinu Gershom Meor ha-Golah* (New York, 1955), p. 15; Grossman, *The Early Sages*, p. 110.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. L. Ginzberg, *Geonica* (New York, 1909), 2:46–47.

<sup>49</sup> Based on the midrashic view that the throne below in the Temple corresponded to the supernal throne. Cf. *Mekhilta<sup>2</sup> de-Rabbi Ishmael*, ed. H. S. Horowitz and I. A. Rabin (Jerusalem, 1970), *Masekhta<sup>2</sup> de-shirah*, 10, p. 150, and other references given there in n. 1. See also A. Aptowitz, "The Heavenly Temple according to the Aggadah," [Hebrew] *Tarbiz* 2 (1931): 145–148.

<sup>50</sup> *Sha'are Teshuvah* §44.



another question concerning an innovation on the part of Solomon. Indeed, the end of the passage is strikingly parallel to a statement in the letter: "Joshua the son of Nun instituted [*Aleynu*] . . . when [the people of] Israel entered the land, and they reached the place of the fixed peg (cf. Isa 22:25) which corresponds to the throne of Glory above," ותקן יהושע בר נון . . . בהכניסו ישראל, "כסא הכבוד למעלה לארץ הגיעו אל מקום יתד התקועה המכוון כנגד כסא הכבוד למעלה" (MS Oxford 1565, fol. 3b). It is important to note, as Ephraim Urbach has done in his edition of Abraham ben Azriel's *Arugat ha-Bosem*, that in all the parallel sources to this resumption on *eruvim* and *yadayim* there is no mention of *Aleynu*.<sup>51</sup> One may conclude, therefore, that the editor of *Sha'are Teshuvah*—i.e., Moses de León—added this part to the original question. This corroborates Neil Danzig's observation, mentioned above, that de León not only added new passages to this geonic collection, but reworked older passages by adding his own views.

The tradition that Joshua composed *Aleynu* upon entering the Land of Israel appears to be Ashkenazic in origin,<sup>52</sup> finding its first expression in such thirteenth-century sources as Abraham ben Azriel's *Arugat ha-Bosem*,<sup>53</sup> the *Siddur Ḥaside Ḳashkenaz*, pub-

<sup>51</sup> *Arugat ha-Bosem*, ed. E. E. Urbach (Jerusalem, 1962) 3:470, n. 31.

<sup>52</sup> The origin of this explanation may be based in part on the talmudic tradition (attributed to R. Nahman) that Joshua composed the blessing of the land in the grace after meals when the Israelites entered the land. Cf. bBer 48b. According to other traditions, the *Aleynu* is ascribed to the third-century amora Rab (based on the designation *teqī'ata' de-ve Rav* for the *malkhiyot* section of the *musaf* service for Rosh ha-Shanah which contains the *Aleynu*; cf. yRH 1.3, mAZ 1.2; L. Zunz, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden historisch entwickelt* [Frankfurt Am Main, 1892], pp. 386–387), or to the Men of the Great Assembly (cf. Manasseh ben Israel in his *Vindiciae Judaeorum* [1656], part 4, p. 2). See J. D. Eisenstein, *Ṣofar Dinim u-Minhagim* (New York, 1938), p. 322; E. N. Adler, *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, 1:337, s.v. *Aleynu*; L. J. Liebrich, "Aspects of the New Year Liturgy," *HUCA* 34 (1963): 159, n. 99; M. D. Swartz, "*Alay le-shabbeah*: A Liturgical Prayer in *Ma'aseh Merkavah*," *JQR* 77 (1987): 186, n. 20.

<sup>53</sup> *Arugat ha-Bosem*, 3:469. Cf. MS Paris 1408, fol. 59a. See also the collection of Ashkenazic hasidic material, combined with kabbalistic symbolism, extant in MS JTS Mic. 2430, fol. 77a. Concerning this codex, see Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 376, n. 122; J. Dan, *The Esoteric Theology of the German Pietists* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1968), p. 255; idem, "The Vicissitudes of the Esotericism of the German Hasidim," in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to Gershom G. Scholem on His Seventieth Birthday* [Hebrew section] (Jerusalem, 1967), p. 91.

lished by Moshe Hershler in his *Siddur of R. Solomon ben Samson of Garmaise*,<sup>54</sup> and Nathan ben Judah's *Sefer Maḥkim*.<sup>55</sup> The tradition is mentioned as well in the kabbalistic commentary on prayers by David ben Judah he-Ḥasid, *Or Zarua*,<sup>56</sup> written in all probability in the last decade of the thirteenth century<sup>57</sup> and clearly reflecting Ashkenazic customs and rites.<sup>58</sup> The Ashkenazic tradition had a subsequent influence on Provençal halakhic materials, e.g., Aaron ben Jacob ha-Kohen of Lunel's *Orhot Ḥayyim* (citing the tosafist Judah of Corbeil)<sup>59</sup> and the anonymous *Kol Bo*.<sup>60</sup> In addition, it appears that the custom to incorporate *Ḥaleynu* in the daily liturgy, originally as part of the *ma'amadot* prayer, began in select circles in France in the second half of the twelfth century.<sup>61</sup> By the end of that century the custom spread throughout France and Germany, though the *Ḥaleynu* was now placed in the concluding section of the morning prayers.<sup>62</sup> Evidence for such a custom is found, for example, in Eleazar of Worms' *Sefer ha-Roqeah*,<sup>63</sup> in his voluminous commentary on the prayers extant in manuscript,<sup>64</sup> and in the *Siddur Ḥaside Ḥashkenaz* which presumably reflects the order of prayers promulgated by Judah he-Ḥasid's circle.<sup>65</sup> Mention of this custom is found also in other thirteenth-century sources, such as the commentary on Berakhot of Menaḥem ben

<sup>54</sup> *Siddur of R. Solomon ben Samson of Garmaise* (Jerusalem, 1971), pp. 124, 126 (in the name of Judah the Pious).

<sup>55</sup> *Sefer Maḥkim*, ed. J. Freimann (Cracow, 1909), p. 13.

<sup>56</sup> See ms JTS Mic. 2203, fol. 34a.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. David ben Yehudah he-Ḥasid, *The Book of Mirros: Sefer Mar'ot ha-Šove'ot*, ed. D. C. Matt (Chico, CA, 1982), p. 3 (Introduction). See also Isaac of Acre, *Orhot Ḥayyim*, ms Moscow-Günzburg 775, fol. 44b.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. A. Marmorstein, "David ben Jehuda Ḥasid," *MGWJ* 71 (1927): 39–48; G. Scholem, "Chapters of the History of Kabbalistic Literature," [Hebrew] *Qiryat Sefer* 4 (1927–28): 305.

<sup>59</sup> *Orhot Ḥayyim* (Jerusalem, 1986), 1:fol. 21c. Cf. Abraham Kalfon, *Hayye Avraham* (Livorno, 1861), § 119, fol. 22a.

<sup>60</sup> *Kol Bo* (Tel Aviv, n.d.), fol. 9b, § 16.

<sup>61</sup> I am indebted to Prof. Israel Ta-Shema for this information as communicated to me in a private letter dated July 25, 1990.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. I. Elbogen, *Ha-Tefillah be-Yiśra'el be-Hitpaḥutah ha-Historit* (Tel Aviv, 1972), p. 63; B. Jacobson, *Netiv Binah* (Tel Aviv, 1968), p. 373.

<sup>63</sup> *Sefer ha-Roqeah* (Jerusalem, 1967), § 324, p. 221.

<sup>64</sup> MS Oxford 1204, fol. 120a.

<sup>65</sup> See reference in n. 54.

Solomon Meiri,<sup>66</sup> in Jacob ben Asher's *Tur*, *ʿOrah Ḥayyim* (§133), the *Sefer Maḥkim*,<sup>67</sup> the *ʿOrhot Ḥayyim*<sup>68</sup> and the *Kol Bo*.<sup>69</sup> It is of interest to note in passing that in the *Maḥzor Viṭry* of Simḥah ben Shmuʿel, this custom is recorded as well,<sup>70</sup> but the relevant passage is a later addition reflecting late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century practice.<sup>71</sup> By contrast, the custom of reciting the *ʿAleynu* in the daily liturgy is not found in contemporary Sephardic halakhic authorities, e.g., Maimonides and Abudarham.<sup>72</sup> It may be concluded, therefore, that this custom began in the Franco-German orbit and the notion that it was composed by Joshua served to legitimize the change in the ritualistic status of this prayer from the Rosh ha-Shanah liturgy to the daily one. It is clear from the letter attributed to Hai Gaon that at the time of its composition the custom was not yet established as a binding obligation. The author desired to establish it as a received tradition; he thus rests on the great authority of Hai Gaon, who is said to follow the view of R. Gershom that Yoḥanan ben Zakkai instituted the reciting of the *ʿAleynu* in the daily liturgy, and not the view of Alfasi that the *taqqanah* was made by the Geonim. Obviously the conclusion that the custom to recite the *ʿAleynu* daily began in the tannaitic period and not in the time of the Geonim strengthened the effort to establish the custom in a community where it was not yet established. That the author of this letter is indebted to either Ashkenazic or Provençal halakhic sources, or both, can be shown as well from another significant point. In the letter it is specified that

<sup>66</sup> *Bet ha-Behirah ʿal Masekhet Berakhot* (Jerusalem, 1960), p. 118.

<sup>67</sup> See n. 55.

<sup>68</sup> See n. 59.

<sup>69</sup> See n. 60.

<sup>70</sup> *Maḥzor Viṭry*, ed. S. Hurwitz (Nuremberg, 1923), pt. 1, p. 75.

<sup>71</sup> See *ibid.*, introduction, p. 177. Ta-Shema suggested to me in a private letter (see n. 61) that given the fact that the custom to recite the *ʿAleynu* was in practice in France in the second half of the twelfth century there is no reason to qualify the reference to this custom in *Maḥzor Viṭry* as a later addition. It must be pointed out, however, that the precise custom attested in *Maḥzor Viṭry* involves the reciting of the *ʿAleynu* at the end of the morning prayers, a custom which did not begin, as Ta-Shema himself informed me, until the end of the twelfth century in France and Germany. I therefore have not corrected my remarks in the body of the paper.

<sup>72</sup> Even as late as the sixteenth century Joseph Caro does not list the custom of reciting *ʿAleynu* at the end of the daily liturgy in the *Shulḥan ʿArukh*. Cf. *ʿOrah Ḥayyim*, § 132, sec. 2, and see the note of Moses Isserles *ad loc.*, reflecting the Ashkenazi rite.

one should recite the *ʿAleynu* “with intent, while standing and with the head covered,” בכוונה בעמידה בעטיפת ראש (MS Oxford 1565, fol. 4b). The precise source of the custom of covering one’s head is not known, but in both the *ʿOrhot Ḥayyim* (and from there in the *Kol Bo*) and the *Sefer Maḥkim*, the necessity to recite the *ʿAleynu* in a standing position (מעומד) is traced to a passage from *Pirque Rabbi ʿEliʿezer* which, however, is not found in our editions: שבה גדול יש בעלינו לשבח לכך צריך לאומרו מעומד.<sup>73</sup> That the author of the letter attributed to Hai made use of some such source is strengthened by the fact that *ʿAleynu* is similarly described in the first part of the letter as a “great praise,” שבה גדול (MS Oxford 1565, fol. 3b). The use of the same terminology to describe the *ʿAleynu*, coupled with the emphasis on standing when uttering it, seems to me to be more than a mere coincidence.

Although the evidence from the letter is not sufficient in and of itself to prove de León’s authorship beyond any shadow of doubt, in my opinion there are several good reasons to suppose that he is in fact the one who composed it.<sup>74</sup> In the first instance the distinctive literary style of de León is evident in the document. I have already mentioned the most conspicuous example, but let me repeat it for the sake of our present discussion. In the letter we find the following statement: “In any event it was the reform of

<sup>73</sup> For references see nn. 55 and 59.

<sup>74</sup> One possible objection to my hypothesis is the fact that in the section dedicated to the daily liturgy in de León’s *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, as well as in his kabbalistic commentary on the prayers, *Maskiyyot Kesef* (MS JTS Adler 1577, fols. 103a–116a; the text was edited and translated by J. Wijnhoven as his master’s thesis at Brandeis University, 1961) no mention is made of the custom to recite the *ʿAleynu* in the daily liturgy. On the contrary, the only mention of *ʿAleynu* in *Sefer ha-Rimmon* is in the context of a discussion of the *musaf* prayer for Rosh ha-Shanah; see *The Book of the Pomegranate*, pp. 156–157. There is no mention of the Ashkenazi custom in the *Zohar* either. On the other hand, there are several striking examples which indicate that the authorship of the *Zohar* did follow Ashkenazi customs. Cf. I. Ta-Shema, “*El Melekh Neʿeman*: the Development of a Custom” [Hebrew] *Tarbiz* 39 (1969): 184–194; idem, “The Well of Miriam: The Development of an Ashkenazi Custom concerning the Third Meal of Sabbath” [Hebrew] *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 4 (1985): 266–270; idem, “*Ha-Pores Sukkat Shalom*: The Blessing and Its Evolution,” [Hebrew] *Asufot* 2 (1988): 187–189. See also J. Katz, *Halakhah and Kabbalah* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 39–45. Interesting in this regard as well is the following comment of de León introducing one of his *sodot* extant in MS Vat. 428, fols. 38b–39a: ביחא למפרע והמנהג הזה הוא מנהג חכמים קדמונים ותקון יפה בחכמה גדולה

R. Yoḥanan ben Zakkai to make obligatory [the recital of *Aleynu*] daily in order to establish the pillar of faith," לקיים קיום האמונה (MS Oxford 1565, fol. 4a).<sup>75</sup> This precise expression, לקיים קיום האמונה, is used by de León in some of his writings, including *Sefer ha-Rimmon*<sup>76</sup> and *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*,<sup>77</sup> while the related expression, קיום האמונה, is also characteristic of de León, as we find, for example, in *Sefer ha-Rimmon*<sup>78</sup> and *Sefer ha-Mishqal*.<sup>79</sup> Both expressions have parallels in the *Zohar*. The latter term corresponds to the zoharic expression, קיומא דכל מהימנותא,<sup>80</sup> whereas the usage קיומא קיימא, corresponding to לקיים קיום, is also found in the *Zohar*.<sup>81</sup> One should not, of course, make too much out of one parallel term, but this usage is unusual and it thus seems to be more than coincidental that it should appear in this letter, in de León's *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, in *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, and in the *Zohar*.

Another feature in this part of the document which is reminiscent of de León is the citation of pseudo-talmudic sources. The author cites two passages ostensibly from the Babylonian Talmud, one from the first chapter of <sup>c</sup>Arakhin (according to some manuscripts <sup>c</sup>Eruvin) and the other from Zevahim, which are not found in the specified tractates nor anywhere else in BT. In the first instance, it is reported that one of the decrees of Yoḥanan ben Zakkai was to institute the praise of the Land [of Israel], i.e., *Aleynu*, after the prayer: רבן יוחנן בן זכאי לבתר צלותא

<sup>75</sup> One may be reminded here of the use of *Aleynu* by martyrs, as in the well-known case of the persecution of the Jews of Blois in 1171. Cf. E. N. Adler, *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, 1:337, s.v. *Aleynu*. In the context of the pseudo-Hai letter and commentary, however, the establishing of the pillar of faith has a purely theosophical significance, i.e., through the utterance of this prayer the divine emanations, which collectively are the "principle of faith" (כלל האמונה; see MS Oxford 1565, fol. 6a, to be discussed below), are unified and blessed. The identification of the divine grades with faith, כלל האמונה, is found as well in an earlier part of the text; see *ibid.*, fol. 5a.

<sup>76</sup> *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 264.

<sup>77</sup> *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, ed. A. W. Greenup (London, 1911), p. 51.

<sup>78</sup> *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 339.

<sup>79</sup> *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, ed. J. Wijnhoven (Ph.D., diss., Brandeis University, 1964), pp. 52, 98, 106, 109. See also *She'elot u-Teshuvot le-R. Mosheh di Li<sup>2</sup>on be-<sup>c</sup>Inyene Qabbalah*, in I. Tishby, *Studies in Kabbalah and Its Branches*, 1:67.

<sup>80</sup> *Zohar* 3:35a; cf. Liebes, *Peraqim be-Millon Sefer ha-Zohar* (Jerusalem, 1976), pp. 379–380, n. 94.

<sup>81</sup> See, e.g., *Zohar* 1:194b and 3:16b; Liebes, *ibid.*, pp. 364–365, nn. 36–39.

אתקין שבחא דהדורא דארעא (MS Oxford, 1565, fol. 4a). From a comment that immediately precedes the passage just cited it is clear that the author considered the institution of *ʿAleynu* to be one of the ordinances established by Yoḥanan ben Zakkai after the destruction of the Second Temple. While this motif is known from talmudic sources,<sup>82</sup> it does not appear in the tractate mentioned in the pseudo-Hai text or in this specific context. The second example, an interpretation of Deut 4:39, addresses the question why Moses did not recite the *ʿAleynu* outside the Land of Israel, by offering the following response: דאין אדם יהיב שבחא על מה דלא אתי לידיה (ibid., fol. 4b). It is known that in his Hebrew theosophic writings de León was prone to either cite a zoharic passage in the name of classical rabbinic sources or invent things in the name of the rabbis which resemble the *Zohar* stylistically and thematically, even though exact parallels cannot be found in the printed versions of that work.<sup>83</sup> The fact that in this document one finds as well pseudo-talmudic texts lends support to the hypothesis that de León is the author. (To be sure, de León is not the only medieval figure to forge rabbinic sources, but the fact that such a feature is characteristic of his work, coupled with the other literary aspects that have parallels in his writings, allows me to use this factor as one of the indicators that de León is the author of the text under investigation.) Interestingly, in the second part of the document—the kabbalistic commentary—one also finds a statement attributed to R. Shim'on for which there is no precise source in the classical rabbinic documents. The statement occurs in the context of divulging a true esoteric tradition (קבלה אמיתית) that equates Israel with the holy side and the nations with the demonic, evil side: אמ' ר' סימון בכל מקום צריך להפריש בין ישראל לשאר האומות באמירה בדיבור בלשון בשבב בתפלה (MS Oxford 1565, fol. 6b). The substance of this remark fits well with a basic theme repeated throughout the zoharic corpus and in the writings of de León to be discussed in greater detail below (4.2.1 [c]).

<sup>82</sup> On the various traditions concerning ordinances instituted by Yoḥanan ben Zakkai since the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, cf. tRH 2.9; bRH 29b, 30b, 31b; bBeṣ 5a; bSan 41a.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 34, n. 104, pp. 45–46 [English section]. See also ibid., pp. 89, 115, 312 [Hebrew section]. On de León's tendency to forge rabbinic sources, cf. I. Ta-Shema, "Ha-Pores Sukkat Shalom," pp. 188–189.

## 4.2 The Commentary

The strongest proofs of de León's authorship emerge from the second part of the text, the commentary on *ʿAleynu*, in accordance with standard sefirotic symbolism. A careful examination of this part proves beyond any doubt that it is the work of de León. This can be shown from several vantage points. Here I will mention three and supply a few examples of each: (1) similarity in technical terms or expressions, (2) identical use of biblical verses to derive a certain theosophical significance, and (3) parallel ideas and motifs.

4.2.1 There are precise terms and symbolic correspondences used in the commentary which are found elsewhere in de León's theosophic works.

(a) To begin with, in this commentary we read: "*ʿAleynu le-shabbēah*: In every place that you find *ʿaleynu* it signifies a vow . . . And you will find that the vow is the thing which hangs upon the head from above and it is the place from which the life-force derives," עלינו לשבח בכל מקום את מוצא עלינו והוא קבלת נדר . . . ואת מוצא נדר הוא הדבר התלוי על ראש למעלה והוא מקום שהחיים באים ממנו. The precise expression at the end of the passage appears in *Zohar* 3:40a as a description of *Binah*, "the place which is called life and from which life emerges," אתר דאקרי, חיים ונפקי מתמן חייך. Moreover, in his writings de León frequently refers to *Binah* as the vow (נדר) and the place out of which the life-force (החיים)<sup>84</sup> emanates. To cite two examples: in *Shushan ʿEduṭ* we read: "And the vow is above, attached to the eighth sphere [i.e., *Binah*] which establishes and sustains all . . . and the life-force emerges from it," והנדר הוא למעלה ונתלה בגלגל ה' . . . המעמיד הכל ומקיים הכל . . . והחיים יוצאים מתוכה.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, in *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, "The vow is above every place and from there is the source of life," נדר הוא למעלה על כל מקום שם תוצאות החיים.<sup>86</sup>

(b) To take a second example, we read in the commentary: "Thus [is the meaning] of *ʿAleynu le-shabbēah*, we participate in

<sup>84</sup> Cf. *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, p. 71.

<sup>85</sup> "Two Treatises," p. 361.

<sup>86</sup> *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 222 [Hebrew section]. See also *ibid.*, pp. 6, 148; "Two Treatises," pp. 360, 375; ms Munich 47, fols. 359b, 382b, 384a; *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, p. 72.

the light of life which stands above us . . . *le-shabbeah*, this praise is offered by the sensible light which is upon us, and it is the light of our lives in the pattern of the life-force which is revealed. . . . This is the sensible light, the gathering of the resplendent light above,<sup>87</sup> for it is joined to it with a firm bond, " לשבח עלינו לשבח אנו משתפיך . . . לשבח אור החיים העומד עלינו למעלה . . . לשבח שבח זה והוא שבח המשבח אור מורגש שעלינו והוא אור חיינו כדוגמת החיים הגלויים . . . הוא אור המורגש אסיפת אור הבהיר למעלה שמתקשר בו בקשר אמיץ In de León's writings the "sensible light" (אור המורגש)<sup>88</sup> whereas the resplendent light, אור הבהיר, is used as a symbol for the masculine potency vis-à-vis the *Shekhinah*, usually identified as *Hesed*<sup>89</sup> but sometimes also as *Binah*<sup>90</sup> or *Tif'eret*.<sup>91</sup> It is possible that in this context אור הבהיר is equivalent to another expression used by de León in contrast to the "sensible light," אור המורגש, viz., the "intelligible light" אור המושכל, which corresponds either to *Binah* or to *Tif'eret*.<sup>92</sup> In at least one passage in his *Shushan 'Edut*, de León equates the term אור הבהיר with the light of the sun, in that context a symbol for *Tif'eret*, which illuminates the moon, i.e., *Shekhinah*.<sup>93</sup> The important point is that de León utilizes the image of the two lights to characterize the unification of *Shekhinah*—also called אור החיים—with the upper masculine emanations. This process is implied as well in the image of the union of the sensible and resplendent lights. Furthermore, de León often uses expressions that resemble the end of the passage, שמתקשר בו בקשר אמיץ (this expression is used as well near the end of the text, fol. 6a: השם המפורש אשר בכאן

<sup>87</sup> It is of interest to compare the expression used here to designate the *Shekhinah*, אסיפת אור הבהיר, and the expression used by de León to refer to *Shekhinah* in another one of his texts, *Mishkan ha-'Edut*, MS Berlin Quat. Or. 833, fol. 4a, אסיפת המחשבה.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. *The Book of the Pomegranate*, pp. 27, 129, 169, 179; *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, pp. 94, 123; MS Munich 47, fols. 342a, 374b, 375b, 376b, 383b; *Maskiyyot Kesef*, MS JTS Adler 1577, fol. 14b (ed. Wijnhoven, p. 31).

<sup>89</sup> Cf. *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 196; *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, p. 123.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 153.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. MS Munich 47, fol. 376b; *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 109.

<sup>92</sup> See references in n. 87. Cf. G. Scholem, "Eine unbekannte mystische Schrift des Mose de Leon," *MGWJ* 71 (1927): 116. The source for this terminology is apparently Judah ha-Levi's *Cuzari* 1:69, as noted already by I. Tishby in his edition of *Perush ha-'Aggadol le-R. 'Azri'el* (Jerusalem, 1983), p. 34, n. 15.

<sup>93</sup> "Two Treatises," p. 348. See also MS Munich 47, fols. 348a, 376b.



שלחתי לכם חתום בקשר אמיץ), to convey the notion of dynamic unity within the sefirotic realm. Thus, for example, in *Sefer ha-Rimmon* it is stated in one passage that “all [the emanations] are alluded to in the mystery of Wisdom and are joined [to it] with a firm bond,” כולם נרמזים בסוד חכמה ונקשרים בקשר אמיץ.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, the use of the word קשר to refer to the unity of the sensible and intelligible lights, the feminine and masculine aspects of divinity, is also attested in de León’s writings.<sup>95</sup>

(c) Commenting on the words in *Aleynu*, שלא עשנו כגויי הארצות, the author notes that each nation has a corresponding gradation above whence that nation derives its power. The nations of the world collectively correspond to the demonic realm, whose ways are depicted as the impurity of the *niddah*—a standard zoharic theme<sup>96</sup>—whereas “the souls of Israel derive from the Tree of Life from within the sensible light like a crystal which receives the light of the sun,” שכל אומה אומה יש לה מדרגה וממשלה . . . היתה דרכם כטומאת הנדה ונשמתן של ישראל נשאבת מאילן החיים בתוך אור המורגש כעשיית השמש (ms Oxford 1565, fol. 5a). While the twin themes of Israel’s ontological holiness and the nations’ impurity are quite prevalent in the *Zohar* and in de León’s Hebrew theosophic writings,<sup>97</sup> one zoharic passage in particular is noteworthy for almost the exact language of the above text is used to describe Israel: ישראל כלהון מתתקפין באילנא דחיי כלהו אחירין באילנא ממש.<sup>98</sup> In the commentary the nations are also compared to the branches of the tree whereas Israel is the trunk of the tree or its fruit, images that are utilized in the *Zohar* and by de León in his other writings.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>94</sup> *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 227; see *ibid.*, p. 41; “Two Treatises,” p. 339, and parallel in *Zohar* 1:89a; ms Munich 47, fols. 336a, 344b; ms Vat. 428, fol. 33b; *Mishkan ha-Edut*, ms Berlin Or. Quat. 833, fol. 23a.

<sup>95</sup> See, e.g., *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 129. See *ibid.*, p. 139. On the wide-ranging use of the root קשר in zoharic literature, see Liebes, *Peraqim*, pp. 394–402.

<sup>96</sup> *Zohar* 1:126b; *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 345.

<sup>97</sup> On the inherent impurity of the nations, cf. *Zohar*, 1:131a–b, 220a; 3:40a; *The Book of the Pomegranate*, pp. 211–212. On the corresponding theme of Israel’s holiness, cf. *Zohar* 1:33a, 184b; 2:121b, 225b; 3:94a, 112b, 296b–297a; *The Book of the Pomegranate*, pp. 89, 312; *Mishkan ha-Edut*, ms Berlin Or. Quat. 833, fol. 26a.

<sup>98</sup> *Zohar* 1:193a. Cf. Liebes, *Peraqim*, pp. 111, n. 21; 119, n. 73.

<sup>99</sup> See, e.g., *Zohar* 2:59a, 64b; 3:103b (*Piqqudin*); *The Book of the Pomegranate*, pp. 177–178, 186; Liebes, *Peraqim*, p. 129, n. 120. On the use of the image of the fruit of the tree for the souls of Israel, cf. *Zohar* 1:226b; Liebes, *ibid.*, p. 126, n. 108.

Alternatively, in the commentary the souls of the nations are said to derive from the realm of impure forces, whereas the souls of Israel are said to derive from the Tree of Life which in the *Zohar* and in de León's Hebrew writings corresponds either to the sixth gradation, *Tif'eret*, or to the ninth, *Yesod*.<sup>100</sup> These souls emerge, however, from the sensible light, i.e., *Shekhinah*, which receives the flow of emanation from the masculine potency, *Tif'eret* or *Yesod*, as a crystal receives light from the sun. The notion of the emergence of souls from *Yesod* via the *Shekhinah* is widely attested in the works of de León and in the *Zohar*.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, the latter image used to describe the *Shekhinah*, a crystal receiving light from the sun, is to be found in other writings of de León.<sup>102</sup> Finally, it will be noted as well that the interpretation of this passage from *Aleynu* has a close parallel in de León's *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, even though in that case the prayer is found as part of the Rosh ha-Shanah liturgy rather than of the daily service as advocated in the pseudo-Hai letter: שלא עשנו כגויי הארצות שיש עליהם שרים ממונים שלא שולטים ונשפעים מהם כל אומה ואומה מכח אותה הסבה השולטת עליה והוא ית' נתן לישראל מעלה עליהם והוציאם מתחת ממשלת זרים.<sup>103</sup>

(d) Other terms used characteristically in the *Zohar* or by de León in his Hebrew theosophic works appear in this pseudo-Hai text as well. To name just a few of the more salient examples: the divine emanations, *sefirot*, are referred to collectively as gradations (מדרגות), which parallels the zoharic term דרגין;<sup>104</sup> *Hokhmah* is called המחשבה הסתומה;<sup>105</sup> *Binah* is זוהר החיים,<sup>106</sup> חביון עזו,<sup>107</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Cf. *Zohar* 1:18a, 78b, 35a, 156b, 199a, 209a, 236b; 2:17b; 3:34a, 40a, 41a, 42b, 58b; 3:111a, 170a; *Zohar Hadash*, 87d; ms Munich 47, fol. 335b; "Two Treatises," pp. 330–331, 361, 381; *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, pp. 14, 36, 60, 69; *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, p. 41. See Liebes, *Peraqim*, pp. 119–120, nn. 75–76.

<sup>101</sup> See, e.g., *Zohar* 1:13a, 17a, 115a, 186b, 205b; *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 166; *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, p. 69; *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, p. 41. Cf. Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 2:5–6.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. *Zohar* 2:82a.

<sup>103</sup> *The Book of the Pomegranate*, pp. 156–157.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. ms Munich 47, fols. 379a, 381b; *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 20; "Two Treatises," p. 333; Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 400, n. 29.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. "Two Treatises," p. 375; ms Munich 47, fols. 379b–380a; *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, pp. 8, 29. Cf. *Tiqqune Zohar*, ed. Margaliot, 5, fol. 19a.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, p. 67.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. "Two Treatises," p. 375; *The Book of the Pomegranate*, pp. 6, 124, 153, 179; *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, pp. 28, 31, 61.

and שכנינת עוזו רוכצת על האפרוחים;<sup>108</sup> *Yesod* is הכל, עץ חיים and ים הגדול;<sup>109</sup> and *Shekhinah* is designated as the הגדול שלם that gathers within itself the seven rivers corresponding to the seven lower *sefirot*.<sup>110</sup> Another feature found in this text which is known from other works of de León is the use of a symbol for *Binah*—in this case the term סתר הסתרים—which functions in the *Zohar* as a symbol for *Keter*.<sup>111</sup> One final example: towards the end of the document the author refers to the process of unifying all the elements in the secret of the inscribed explicit name (i.e., *YHWH*) whose pronunciation is hidden, and from whose secret all things above and below are created. The unity of these elements (the *sefirot*) within the divine name is referred to as the “principle of faith,” כלל האמונה. This very term is found in other works of de León<sup>112</sup> and an exact parallel, כלל דמהימנותא, occurs in the *Zohar*.<sup>113</sup>

4.2.2 The second area of comparison between this text and de León’s Hebrew theosophic writings and/or the *Zohar* is the use of similar verses in the same symbolic context.<sup>114</sup>

(a) Thus, for example, we read in the commentary: “Therefore one must complete [the prayer] against his will, for it is not to his

<sup>108</sup> Cf. *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, p. 72. Cf. *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 339.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, pp. 60, 69; ms Munich 47, fol. 367b.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. *Zohar* 2:56b.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *Zohar* 1:15b; 3:128a. For another example of this phenomenon, see *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 52 [English section]. See also E. Wolfson, “Mystical-Theurgical Dimensions of Prayer in *Sefer ha-Rimmon*,” in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times*, ed. D. Blumenthal (Atlanta, 1988), 3:69, n. 69.

<sup>112</sup> See, e.g., *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 118; *Sheqel ha-Qodesh*, p. 67.

<sup>113</sup> *Zohar* 3:288b (‘*Idra Zuta*’).

<sup>114</sup> In one place in the commentary the expression in Ps 84:6, מסלול בלבבם, “whose mind is on the highways,” is understood in the light of Ps 68:5, סלו לרכב, “extol him who rides the clouds, the Lord is his name.” The same exegetical combining of these two verses is found in *Zohar* 1:142a. To take another example of this type of exegetical similarity: commenting on the expression in *Aleynu*, שהוא נוטה שמים, the author interprets the word הוא as a reference to the hidden and concealed gradation, i.e., *Binah*, and states that the symbolic meaning of the term is found in the verses “Only Levites shall perform the services,” הוא עשנו ולא אנחנו (Num 18:23), and “he made us and we are his,” הוא עשנו ולא אנחנו (Ps 100:3). The same two verses are cited together in de León’s *Sheqel ha-Qodesh* (p. 24), whereas the former verse is cited in a similar context, as an explanation of the words הוא אלהינו in the *Aleynu*, in *Sefer ha-Rimmon* (p. 15). The verse from Numbers is interpreted in a similar kabbalistic way in *Zohar* 3:171a.

benefit [not to do so], and if he transgresses it is as if he transgressed against the very nature of God, blessed be he. Concerning such [people] it is said, 'They shall go out and gaze on the corpses of the men who rebelled against me' (Isa 66:24), "על כן יש להשלים" בעל כרחו שלא בטובתו ואם פשע כאלו פשע בעצמו של מקום ב"ה ועל כל פקודי אורייתא מתאחדן בגופא דמלכא . . . Therefore the one who transgresses with respect to any of the commandments, is as one who transgresses with respect to the body of the king, as it is written, 'They shall go out and gaze on the corpses of the men who rebelled against me', . . . ובגיני כך כל מאן דפשע בחד פקודי אורייתא כמאן דפשע בגופא דמלכא כמה דכתיב ויצאו וראו בפגרי האנשים הפושעים בו ואם פשע כאלו פשע בעצמו של מקום ב"ה, exactly parallels the zoharic passage מאן דפשע בחד פקודי אורייתא כמאן דפשע בגופא דמלכא, the only difference being that in the case of the latter the principle is applied universally to any transgression whereas in the former it is applied specifically to the case of uttering the prayer *Aleynu*.

(b) In the context of comparing the relationship of Israel to the nations with that of the tree to its branches (see 4.2.1[c]) the author notes that the branches, i.e., the nations, "destroy those who are attached (הנאחזים)<sup>116</sup> above who are the fruit and the tree [i.e., Israel], as it says, 'Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards' (Song 2:15), and it says, 'For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the House of Israel' (Isa 5:7), until the time of pruning (עת הזמיר) comes (cf. Song 2:12), [the time] to cut down (לזמור) those who surround the tree, then the fruit will be produced as it truly should be and its leaves will be for healing"<sup>117</sup> (cf. Ezek 47:12)" (MS Oxford 1565, fol 5a). The expression עת הזמיר therefore refers not to a time of singing but to a time of cutting, an interpretation which is reflected already in the Targum to the verse, ועדן קטוף, בוכריא מטא, "the time to destroy the first-born [of the Egyptians]

<sup>115</sup> *Zohar* 2:85b.

<sup>116</sup> For parallel expressions in the *Zohar*, see Liebes, *Peraqim*, p. 119, n. 73.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. a similar description of the Tree of Life in *The Book of the Pomegranate*, pp. 1, 108.

has come.”<sup>118</sup> According to the pseudo-Hai commentary, עת הזמיר refers to the time of cutting down the branches which surround the tree (the nations) so that the fruit (Israel) will flourish.<sup>119</sup> This interpretation is suggested in *Zohar* 1:97b: “The time of pruning has come, these are the branches of the forbidden tree” (ענפוי דערלה); literally, ‘branches of the uncircumcised’; cf. Lev 19:23). Although not stated overtly, it is obvious that the implied meaning of עת הזמיר is the time to destroy the nations of the world,<sup>120</sup> the demonic forces who are compared to the branches of the uncircumcised tree. What is implied here is stated more explicitly in *Zohar* 3:4b: “The time of pruning has come: the time to uproot the dominion of the princes of the nations, so that they will not rule over Israel when the Tabernacle is established.” It is interesting to note, moreover, that in another one of de León’s writings, *Mishkan ha-Edut*, he utilizes some of the same images removed from any exegetical context to characterize the ontological difference between Israel and the nations: “According to their secret and classification all the families of the earth are divided below. Israel is the unique nation among them, existing in [a state of] holiness and in the secret of the substance of the Holy One, blessed be he [i.e., the *sefirot*], which is extended to them in the secret of their holy form given to them from the river that goes forth incessantly [i.e., *Yesod*]. As there is a separation of the branches and leaves to which are attached the foxes (הענפים והעלים באחוז בהם השועלים), so that the

<sup>118</sup> Most of the traditional commentators explain עת הזמיר as a time of singing. Cf. Abraham ibn Ezra’s commentary ad loc. where both possibilities are given.

<sup>119</sup> A similar explanation of the word זמר is employed by Joseph Gikatilla to explain the mystical function of the psalms uttered before prayer, the פטורי דומרא. Cf. *Sha’are ʿOrah*, ed. J. Ben-Shlomo (Jerusalem, 1981), 1:54; see also Isaac of Acre, *ʿOṣar Ḥayyim*, ms Moscow-Günzburg 775, fol. 44a. It is of interest to mention in this context one of the technical terms used by the *Zohar* to refer to kabbalists, “reapers of the field,” מחצרי חקלא. According to the interpretation of some kabbalists, e.g., Ḥayyim Vital, the import of this expression is that the kabbalists cut away the thorns, i.e., the demonic powers, from the field which is a symbol for the *Shekhinah*. For a wide-ranging discussion of this term, see Y. Liebes, “The Messiah of the *Zohar*,” pp. 146–148, n. 224.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Eleazar of Worms’ commentary to Song of Songs ad loc. (*Perush ha-Roqeah ʿal Ḥamesh Megillot*, ed. Ch. Konyevsky [Benai Beraq, 1985], p. 119), where he similarly offers an explanation of עת הזמיר as a time “to cut down and destroy the nations.”



these powers should be restricted is well known from de León as well as from his Castilian predecessors, such as Isaac ben Jacob ha-Kohen,<sup>123</sup> Moses ben Simon of Burgos,<sup>124</sup> and Ṭodros ben Joseph ha-Levi Abulafia:<sup>125</sup> the tradition regarding the demonic powers was considered to be one of the most secret aspects of Kabbalah revealed only to the elite.<sup>126</sup> It can be shown that de León similarly considered the doctrine of the demonic side to comprise the most recondite kabbalistic secrets. Therefore, in his Hebrew theosophic writings, in marked contrast to the main body of the *Zohar*, he is extremely cautious about elaborating on this topic in print and often refers to it in language appropriate for the most esoteric part of the tradition.<sup>127</sup>

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*Zohar?*," p. 28 (in that context Scholem discussed also the treatment of this motif in Baḥya ben Asher's commentary on Gen 36:39); see also Liebes, "How the *Zohar* Was Written," pp. 56, 66–67. For the source of the zoharic notion of the Edomite kings in what appears to be a pseudepigraphic midrash used by Ṭodros Abulafia, cf. Liebes, "The Messiah of the *Zohar*," pp. 219–221. (This source too was already noted by Scholem, "Did R. Mosheh de León Write the *Zohar?*," p. 27.)

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Scholem, "The Kabbalah of R. Jacob and R. Isaac ha-Kohen," p. 244. See also "The Commentary of R. Isaac on Ezekiel's Chariot," [Hebrew] ed. G. Scholem, *Tarbiẓ* 2 (1931): 203, and 217, n. 107.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Scholem, "R. Moses of Burgos, the disciple of R. Isaac," [Hebrew] *Tarbiẓ* 4 (1933): 208, 211.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Ṭodros ben Joseph ha-Levi Abulafia, *ʿOṣar ha-Kavod ha-Shalem* (Warsaw, 1879), fols. 3a, 10c, 11b–c, 12c, 13d, 14c, 17d, 23d; idem, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, ed. M. Kushnir-Oron, p. 81 (and cf. the editor's remarks, pp. 24–29).

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Liebes, "The Messiah of the *Zohar*," pp. 123–125. See, however, Scholem, "R. Moses of Burgos," p. 280, who contrasts the circle of the Castilian kabbalists (Isaac ha-Kohen, Moses of Burgos, and Ṭodros Abulafia) with that of the *Zohar* on precisely the grounds that the former emphasized the truly esoteric nature of the doctrine, whereas the latter greatly expanded upon it and thereby reduced its esoteric quality. The doctrine of evil in the Castilian kabbalah has been widely discussed in scholarly literature. See G. Scholem, "The Kabbalah of R. Jacob and R. Isaac ha-Kohen," pp. 193–197; idem, "R. Moses of Burgos," p. 282–286; idem, *Pirque Yesod be-Havanat ha-Qabbalah u-Semaleha*, pp. 191–193; Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 1:287–307; J. Dan, "Samael, Lilith, and the Concept of Evil in Early Kabbalah," *AJS Review* 5 (1980): 17–41; E. Wolfson, "Left Contained in the Right: A Study in Zoharic Hermeneutics," *AJS Review* 11 (1986): 28–32; idem, "Light Through Darkness: The Ideal of Human Perfection in the *Zohar*," *HTR* 81 (1988): 78–84; M. Oron, "Was the Kabbalah in Castile a Continuation or a Revolution? A Study of the Concept of Evil in Castilian Kabbalah," [Hebrew] *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6 (1987): 383–392.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. *The Book of the Pomegranate*, pp. 42, 74, 77–78, 240–241, 277, 345, *Mishkan ha-ʿEdut*, ms Berlin Quat. Or. 833, fols. 2a, 13a, 19a, 23b, 57b, 58b. I do

(b) The characterization of the relationship between the nations of the world and the Jews in the *Aleynu* commentary has a striking parallel in the *Zohar*. The author compares the nations being sustained by the overflow of the Land of Israel to dogs waiting under the table for a bone to fall which they could lick: לאחר כן מתמצית ארץ ישראל כמה כלבים צועקים זה לזה ואומ' אם גורלך תפיל בתוכנו כיס אחד יהיה לכולנו כדוגמת הכלבים הממתינים תחת השולחנות לגרמא דנפיל ונשיך דא לדא עליה. The precise image is found in *Zohar* 3:197a, where the issue discussed is likewise the sustenance of the nations of the world by the overflow of Israel. In that context the sins of Israel are said to be cast upon the sea for the other nations, who are described as waiting and expecting “the gift from above like dogs before the table,” וכי חטאין ישראל חובין, דלהון זרקין ומתפלגין לעמא דלהן אלא אינון מחכאן ומצפאן למתנן דלעילא ככלבי לקמי פתורא. In both instances it is obvious that the image of the dog functions as a symbol for the demonic other side, a standard theme in the kabbalistic symbolism of the *Zohar* and its Castilian sources.<sup>128</sup> The point of the two passages, then, is to say that the nations of the world are sustained by the residual overflow of Israel just like the demonic realm draws its sustenance from the holy realm of *sefirot*.

(c) The third example of this type is another statement in the commentary that has a remarkable resemblance to passages in de León's writings and in the *Zohar*. In the pseudo-Hai commentary we read that “R. Menahem the son of Ishmael said: Great is the praise of Joshua, for he instituted within it [the *Aleynu* prayer] five chariots, in each and every word there is a chariot,” אתקין ביה

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not mean to suggest that the doctrine of the demonic plays an insignificant role in de León's kabbalah as it emerges from the Hebrew texts. On the specific role played by the demonic force in de León's *ṭa'ame ha-mišwot* see E. Wolfson, “Mystical Rationalization of the Commandments in *Sefer ha-Rimmon*,” *HUCA* 59 (1988): 240–247.

<sup>128</sup> See, e.g., Scholem, “The Kabbalah of R. Jacob and R. Isaac,” p. 256; Ṭodros Abulafia, *Ṣoṣar ha-Kavod ha-Shalem*, fol. 3a (explicating a passage in bBQ 60b where a connection is made between the whine of dogs and the approach of the Angel of Death); idem, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, pp. 88–90; *Zohar* 2:65a, 121b (cf. parallel in *The Book of the Pomegranate*, p. 313); 3:238a (*Ra'aya Mehemna*), 259b, 282a (*Ra'aya Mehemna*). As my colleague, Richard White, reminds me, the passage from the *Zohar* 3:197a (and the parallel in the pseudo-Hai commentary) comparing the nations of the world to dogs waiting under the table who feed on the crumbs of Israel is reminiscent of a passage in Mark 7:28 (cf. Matt 15:27).



חמש רתיכין בכל מלה ומלה רתיכא (ms Oxford 1565, fol. 5b). The linguistic notion that there is a chariot for each word resembles a position articulated in several of de León's other treatises, including the nontheosophic *Or Zarua*<sup>129</sup> and the untitled fragment extant in ms Munich 47, fol. 370b. In both of these sources the issue concerns the first four letters of the Hebrew alphabet serving as a chariot for the letter *yod* which, in the case of the theosophic work, is identified as the second divine emanation, *Hokhmah*. In another text on linguistic mysticism, the *Sod Darke ha-<sup>3</sup>Otiyyot*, which may have been composed by de León or at the very least is derived from a circle with which he was involved,<sup>130</sup> one finds a similar expression: "each and every one [of the first four letters] produces a chariot of its own according to the secret of the vowel-point."<sup>131</sup> A similar view is expressed in the *Zohar*. Thus, for example, one passage says that "each and every letter is in a chariot that is appropriate to it," כל אות ואות ברתיכא דחזי ליה.<sup>132</sup> In the continuation of the same passage it is said of various letters that they "rise in their chariots," דקא סלקין ברתיכיהו. This linguistic concept is apparent as well in the *Sitre <sup>3</sup>Otiyyot* stratum of the *Zohar*, first printed in the Cremona *Zohar* (1558–60) in the section on Genesis (fols. 12a–14b) and later in the collection *Zohar Hadash* (first edition, Salonika, 1597).<sup>133</sup> That text begins with the following passage: "Within inscribed letters that are incised upon the concealment of the impression [or: side] of existence the chariots ascend as holy chariots, סלקן רתיכין ברתיכין קדישין. Each and every chariot ascends in an inscribed letter, כל רתיכא ורתיכא . . . Each and every letter stands in the place of the chariot that is appropriate to it, כל את ואח קאים על קיומיה. דההוא רתיכא דאתחזי ליה.<sup>134</sup> I will not enter here into a lengthy

<sup>129</sup> Ed. A. Altmann, *Kobez <sup>3</sup>al Yad* n.s. 9 (1980): 282ff.

<sup>130</sup> Cf. A. Farber, "On the Sources of Rabbi Moses de León's Early Kabbalistic System," [Hebrew] in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism, Philosophy, and Ethical Literature Presented to Isaiah Tishby on his Seventy-fifth Birthday* (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 67–96.

<sup>131</sup> ms Vat. 441, fol. 204b.

<sup>132</sup> *Zohar* 2:132a. Cf. the treatise of R. Isaac in "The Kabbalah of R. Jacob and R. Isaac ha-Kohen," p. 256.

<sup>133</sup> A critical edition of this work has been published by S. Wald as part of his study *The Doctrine of the Divine Name: An Introduction to Classical Kabbalistic Theology* (Atlanta, GA, 1988).

<sup>134</sup> *Zohar Hadash*, ed. R. Margaliot (Jerusalem, 1978), p. 1a. Cf. the critical text established by Wald, *Doctrine*, p. 153.

discussion of this linguistic notion to which I have dedicated a separate study.<sup>135</sup> What is essential for my purpose is to argue that the passing remark in the pseudo-Hai text must be seen as an analogue to what we find in de León's Hebrew writings and in the *Zohar*. This similarity is yet another indication that de León is in fact the author of the pseudo-Hai commentary.

Other examples could be adduced to support my claim, but I think that what I have already cited is sufficient to prove the point or at least to present a reasonable argument. The assumption that de León composed the text helps account for one final characteristic of the commentary. In this part of the text several personalities are mentioned who do not figure in the first part. The most important of these names to which I have already alluded are two ascetics said to have come from the Land of Israel, Abraham ha-Parush and Yosiyah ha-Parush. The kabbalistic commentary on *ʿAleynu* is said to have derived from the former and to have been transmitted through the latter. The use of the term *parush* (as well as its equivalent *nazir*, and to some extent *ḥasid*) as an epithet to characterize scholars who set themselves off from society is known especially from twelfth-century Provence.<sup>136</sup> To be sure, these terms have a longer history, but what is particularly relevant about the twelfth century is that at that time the ascetics (*perushim*) were also *baʿale sod* (masters of esoteric lore) or *mequbbalim*. This factor has been documented by Scholem who relied on the work of previous historians.<sup>137</sup> What is critical from my vantage point is that in the twelfth-century material, especially of Provençal extraction, *parush* designates a member of a well-defined social group which had a vocation for the ascetic and contemplative life, somewhat detached from mundane affairs. On occasion the members of these ascetic groups were also expounders of the mystical tradition. In some cases, like Jacob ha-Nazir of Provence, the names refer to actual historical personalities, whereas in other cases, like Yosiyah ha-Parush in our document, they seem to be fictitious personalities appearing only in pseudepigraphic documents, although they may have been based on real characters, as

<sup>135</sup> Cf. E. Wolfson, "Letter Symbolism and *Merkavah* Imagery in the *Zohar*," in M. Halamish, ed., *Alei Shefer: Studies in the Literature of Jewish Thought Presented to Rabbi Dr. Alexandre Safran* (Bar-Ilan, 1990), pp. 195–236 (English Section).

<sup>136</sup> Cf. I. Twersky, *Rabad of Posquières: A Twelfth-Century Talmudist* (Cambridge, MA, 1962), pp. 26–28.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. *Origins*, pp. 229–231.

Scholem indeed has argued with respect to the aforementioned Yosiyah ha-Parush.<sup>138</sup>

As I noted above, in his *Origins of the Kabbalah*, Scholem mentions the commentary on *Aleynu* in his more general discussion of *perushim* in Northern France and Provence, although in that context he does not attribute the text to any particular mystical group or individual kabbalist.<sup>139</sup> In trying to determine the provenance of this text it is essential to bear in mind that one finds a very similar phenomenon in the case of the Castilian kabbalist, Isaac ha-Kohen, who had a decisive influence, conceptually and terminologically, upon the members of the zoharic circle, including de León. Perhaps the most important passage for our consideration is the well-known text in Isaac's *Treatise on Left Emanations*, wherein he describes his receiving from the kabbalistic sages (חכמי קבלה) in Arles, a pamphlet (קונדרט) transmitting secrets in the name of "the rabbi and gaon who was called R. Maṣliaḥ, the son of the elderly gaon, R. Pelatyah, who was from Jerusalem, the holy city." The pamphlet reportedly was brought to Arles by the "great sage and pious one (חסיד), R. Gershom of Damascus."<sup>140</sup> In still other places Isaac traces a particular esoteric tradition to a certain *ḥasid* who is further characterized as an ascetic (*parush*),<sup>141</sup> but the above passage is the one that most resembles what one finds in the pseudo-Hai commentary on *Aleynu*. Mention must also be made of the pseudepigraphic materials cited by two of R. Isaac's disciples, Moses of Burgos and Ṭodros Abulafia. The former reports in one context that Naḥmanides received a tradition concerning the fifth emanation from a certain Yosiyah ha-

<sup>138</sup> Cf. "R. Moses of Burgos," p. 279.

<sup>139</sup> See above, n. 40.

<sup>140</sup> Scholem, "The Kabbalah of R. Jacob and R. Isaac ha-Kohen," pp. 248–249. See also Dan, "Samael, Lilith, and the Concept of Evil," pp. 32–33. In this context it is also in order to recall that according to a tradition reported by Ezra ben Solomon of Gerona, Jacob ha-Nazir, whom he calls Jacob he-Ḥasid, received a certain mystical and angelological tradition from R. Nehorai in Jerusalem. Cf. Scholem, *Origins*, pp. 232–233. In this regard, then, one can detect an interesting shift from what are presumably Provençal traditions to the later Castilian sources: according to the former the pietist travels from Provence to Jerusalem where he receives the mystical traditions, whereas in the case of the latter the mystical traditions are transmitted to Provence from Jerusalem (or, more generally, Israel).

<sup>141</sup> See, for instance, Scholem, "The Kabbalah of R. Jacob and R. Isaac ha-Kohen," p. 263.

Bavli,<sup>142</sup> whereas the latter had before him a tradition attributed to Yehoshiel ha-<sup>3</sup>Ashkenazi.<sup>143</sup> Scholem was of the view that these three names, Yosiyah ha-Parush, Yosiyah ha-Bavli, and Yehoshiel ha-<sup>3</sup>Ashkenazi refer to one and the same literary persona.<sup>144</sup> Further evidence for the circulation of such pseudepigraphic materials in this circle may be adduced from the relevant writings, one of the more important examples being the Aramaic text attributed to two geonic figures, Natronai and Nahshon.<sup>145</sup> In spite of the obvious similarity between our text and the Castilian sources enumerated above, there is no reason to assume that the document under discussion was composed by Isaac or by someone in his immediate circle. The terminology from a literary and conceptual standpoint is simply not what we find in their writings. Moreover, we have no evidence to the effect that Isaac or his disciples attributed texts of an halakhic import to geonic figures in general and to Hai Gaon in particular.<sup>146</sup> By contrast, both of these conditions are fulfilled in

<sup>142</sup> Cf. G. Scholem, "R. Moses of Burgos, disciple of R. Isaac," [Hebrew] *Tarbiẓ* 4 (1933): 215.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. G. Scholem, "Notes and Addenda to the Catalogue of Hebrew Mss. in Munich (Kabbalistic Mss.)," [Hebrew] *Qiryat Sefer* 1 (1924–25): 291. Initially, Scholem identified the text referred to by Ṭodros Abulafia with a fuller responsum cited in the name of Yehushiel ha-<sup>3</sup>Ashkenazi in an anonymous text containing twenty-four kabbalistic secrets. Subsequently, Scholem included these responsa in the list of writings which he attributed to the *ʿIyyun* circle. Cf. Scholem, "R. Moses of Burgos, disciple of R. Isaac," [Hebrew] *Tarbiẓ* 4 (1933): 68–70; idem, *Reshit ha-Qabbalah*, p. 261. On another pseudepigraphic source utilized by Ṭodros Abulafia, see above n. 121. See also Scholem, *Origins*, p. 328, n. 265.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Scholem, "R. Moses of Burgos, disciple of R. Isaac," [Hebrew] *Tarbiẓ* 3 (1932): 278, n. 3.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Scholem, *Origins*, pp. 283–284. The text is cited as well in Moses of Burgos, *Sefer ha-<sup>3</sup>Orah*, MS Mussayef 145, fol. 60b; MS JTS 1806, fol. 14a. For another kabbalistic responsum (dealing with matters pertaining to the demonic realm) attributed to Natronai and Nahshon, see Shem Tov ibn Shem Tov, *Sefer ha-ʿEmunot* (Jerusalem, 1969), fol. 56a; and cf. G. Scholem, "Kabbalistic Miscellaneous Notes," [Hebrew] *Qiryat Sefer* 1 (1924–25): 165.

<sup>146</sup> To be sure, Hai Gaon was viewed by the circle of Isaac as a master of kabbalistic lore and praxis. Cf. Scholem, "The Kabbalah of R. Jacob and R. Isaac ha-Kohen," pp. 192, 252. In addition, pseudo-Hai material circulated in this circle, as is attested by R. Moses of Burgos' commentary on the forty-two-letter name. Cf. G. Scholem, "R. Moses of Burgos, disciple of R. Isaac," [Hebrew] *Tarbiẓ* 5 (1933–34): 52. On the use of the pseudo-Hai responsum on the thirteen attributes deriving from the *ʿIyyun* circle in the case of Ṭodros Abulafia, cf. *ʿOṣar ha-Kavod ha-Shalem*, fol. 16c; *Shaʿar ha-Razim*, p. 116 (see editor's remarks on p. 19). Another

the case of de León, for not only are there numerous similarities between the text on *Aleynu* and the Hebrew writings of de León and the *Zohar*, but there is ample evidence indicating that de León did forge halakhic material in the name of geonic authorities. It is, however, plausible, indeed highly probable, that de León was influenced by the pseudepigraphic orientation of Isaac's circle as exemplified in the aforementioned sources.<sup>147</sup>

It must be emphasized that in most of de León's Hebrew writings he does not refer to such historical/fictitious characters. It is of interest to point out, however, that in the text on linguistic mysticism, *Sod Darkhe ha-<sup>3</sup>Otiyyot*, which, as I mentioned above, was in all probability written by de León or by a member of the circle of nontheosophic mystics to which de León at one point belonged, several of these figures are mentioned. Thus, at the beginning of the text, we read about Isaac ha-Parush who "at the time of his death had to reveal to us his [mystical] tradition and proper secrets."<sup>148</sup> The text goes on to describe how various people gathered together at that time to hear the disclosure of mystical secrets—principally concerned with the divine names—by the master, Isaac ha-Parush. The rabbis, who in their gathering are compared to the "great Sanhedrin," included Abraham ben David, Jacob the son of Meshullam of Damascus, Solomon ha-Kohen, and Jacob the Sephardi. One should be reminded immediately of the narrative setting for the concluding part of the *Zohar*, the so-called <sup>3</sup>*Idra<sup>3</sup> Zuṭa<sup>3</sup>*, the "Small Gathering," said to have taken place at the time of Shim<sup>c</sup>on ben Yoḥai's death.<sup>149</sup> It is an interest-

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pseudo-Hai text, perhaps composed by someone in this circle, is in MS JTS 1768, fol. 91a (see above, n. 19), transcribed in Danzig, "The Collection of Geonic Responsa," p. 24, n. 14. My contention is, however, that the pseudo-Hai material in the writings of Isaac and his disciples is never of an halakhic nature, as it is in the case of de León.

<sup>147</sup> See above, n. 41. On Isaac's pseudepigraphic style, see J. Dan, "The Kabbalistic Book *Baddei ha-<sup>3</sup>Aron* and Kabbalistic Pseudepigraphy in the Thirteenth Century," [Hebrew] in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism, Philosophy, and Ethical Literature Presented to Isaiah Tishby on his Seventy-fifth Birthday*, pp. 132–133.

<sup>148</sup> MS Vat. 441, fol. 183a.

<sup>149</sup> *Zohar* 3:287b. It is worthwhile to note in this context that an early account of R. Shim<sup>c</sup>on's death is included in *Midrash ha-Ne'elam (Zohar Ḥadash, 18d–19a)* and is alluded to at the beginning of <sup>3</sup>*Idra<sup>3</sup> Zuṭa<sup>3</sup>* (*Zohar* 3:287b); cf. Liebes, "How the *Zohar* Was Written," p. 6, n. 20. See *ibid.*, pp. 68–69, where Liebes suggests a link connecting the fictional death of R. Shim<sup>c</sup>on in the *Zohar* to the actual death

ing fact, never before discussed to my knowledge, that this early text has such a strong literary similarity to the *ʿIdraʿ Zuṭaʿ*. The pretext for disclosure of esoteric doctrine is the imminent death of the master, who gathers together various figures in order to transmit his knowledge before he passes away.<sup>150</sup> What is most significant is the fact that in this early text the mystical knowledge is likewise placed in the mouths of the ascetics, many of whom can be identified as Provençal figures.

## 5. Conclusion

From the evidence that I have marshaled above it is clear to me that the text which I have discussed in this paper represents yet another example of Moses de León's pseudepigraphic activity. The text analyzed above is an important chapter in de León's intellectual career. It represents the period when he began to come under the influence of the theosophic kabbalists in Castile, sometime in the latter part of the 1270's. In all likelihood it was in this period that de León composed similar pseudepigraphic writings like the pseudo-Hai responsa included in *Sha'are Teshuvah*. At this juncture it appears that one of his main interests was placing kabbalistic ideas within halakhic contexts. It is of special interest that in this treatise de León, perhaps following Isaac ha-Kohen and other

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of R. Ṭodros Abulafia in 1283. (For the different views regarding the date of R. Ṭodros' death see Oron, *Sha'ar ha-Razim*, p. 13, n. 1.) In this context mention should also be made of the fact that within the *Zohar* itself one can discern several versions of the *ʿIdrot*. Cf. Liebes, "The Messiah of the *Zohar*," pp. 94–101.

<sup>150</sup> In the *Midrash ha-Ne'elam* narrative of the colleagues visiting R. Shim'on on his deathbed (see preceeding note) the occasion is not pointed out as the most auspicious time to reveal secrets, though R. Shim'on himself does ascend heavenward, where he gains knowledge of the place of the souls of the righteous (including Adam) in the world-to-come. On the other hand, towards the conclusion of this account R. Shim'on offers the following interpretation of the verse "[Go down, warn the people] not to break through to the Lord to gaze, lest many of them perish" (Exod 19:21): "What is the meaning of 'lest many of them perish' (ונפל רב ממנו רב)? I have interpreted it thus: the comrade (חברא) who instructs everyone about the holy name will fall and be caught in that sin more than they, as it is written, ונפל ממנו רב, i.e., the master (הרב) will fall and be caught in that sin." While no disclosure of the secrets connected with the divine names is made in this account, it is noteworthy that the last thing that R. Shim'on instructs his colleagues and disciples about is the need to exercise discretion and caution in revealing the name of God (presumably the Tetragrammaton).

members of his circle, attributes the esoteric lore (reported by Hai) to fictitious ascetics who are patterned after the historical figures in Provence. The same technique was employed in the nontheosophic text *Sod Darke ha-<sup>3</sup>Otiyyot*, and traces of it can be detected in the *Zohar* as well.<sup>151</sup> The letter and commentary on *Aleynu* thus provide us with important textual evidence for the beginning of de León's shift from early linguistic mysticism to mature theosophic kabbalah. I further assume that this work postdates *Midrash ha-Ne<sup>c</sup>elam*, considered to be the earliest stratum of the *Zohar* proper, insofar as the theosophic symbolism in this text is much more distinctive than it is in *Midrash ha-Ne<sup>c</sup>elam*, including the latter parts of this work, such as the commentary on the Book of Ruth.<sup>152</sup> On the other hand, the commentary on *Aleynu* is, as I have shown, filled with interesting parallels to the main body of the *Zohar*, thematic, stylistic, and exegetical in nature. What is lacking here is any direct citation from the *Zohar* in the fictitious guise of an ancient midrash, a common trait of de León, as may be gathered from his Hebrew writings which may be dated from 1286 to 1293. Nevertheless, the similarities to the *Zohar* are unmistakable. The obvious zoharic parallels in this document provide further evidence that de León—whether as author or as editor—later wove into the texture of the *Zohar* passages, themes, and exegetical comments from his own earlier writings, sometimes in entirely different contexts. The continual study of texts such as the one discussed in this paper, some of which may still be buried in manuscripts, remains a desideratum, for only such study will help clarify with more accuracy the unresolved problem of the process of literary composition of one of the most intriguing books in the history of Jewish spirituality.

<sup>151</sup> See, e.g., *Zohar* 3:186a, where mention is made of R. Shema<sup>c</sup>yah the Pious (שמעיה חסידא). On other fictitious figures who appear as revealers of esoteric truths in the *Zohar*, cf. Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 1:26–27.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. Tishby, *Mishnat ha-Zohar*, 2:39; Ch. Mopsik, *Le Zohar: Le Livre de Ruth* (Paris, 1987), pp. 6–7. It is, of course, necessary to distinguish different literary strata even within *Midrash ha-Ne<sup>c</sup>elam* itself, for some parts of the latter contain material that is found in some of the presumably later strata, e.g., *Matnitin*, *Tosefia<sup>2</sup>*, *Sitre Torah*, and the *Idrot*. See E. Gottlieb, *Mehqarim be-Sifrut ha-Qabbalah* (Tel-Aviv, 1976), pp. 203–204; Liebes, “How the *Zohar* Was Written,” p. 6, n. 20.

## APPENDIX

Presented in this appendix is a transcription of the letter and commentary on *Aleynu* attributed to R. Hai Gaon as it appears in MS Oxford-Bodleian 1565, fols. 3b–6a. While this text has been printed several times (see above, nn. 27–29), the version extant in the manuscript which I have selected constitutes a text far superior in most cases to what has been published. In the notes in the critical apparatus I have identified basic biblical and rabbinic sources and have enumerated variant readings only in cases where the other manuscripts may preserve a preferred reading or at least where the reading in the Oxford manuscript is questionable. I have not noted the many kabbalistic parallels in the writings of Moses de León or the *Zohar*, as these are fully annotated in the paper itself.

*Sigla of MSS and Printed Texts*

א = MS Oxford-Bodleian 1565

ב = MS JTS Mic. 3216

ו = MS Vienna 113

ט = MS Vatican 191

י = *Yad Ne'eman* (Salonika, 1804)

מ = *Ma'or wa-Shemesh* (Livorno, 1839) = MS Paris 181

פ = MS Paris 835

## כ"י אוקספורד 1565 דף 3ב-א6

[ב3] פירוש עלינו לשבח ונוסח האגרת ששלח רבינו האי גאון ז"ל אנדלק אשר בסוף ים הודו בסוף ים מערב<sup>1</sup> וראשיהם החכמים הנבונים בעלי השכל וחכמה הרב ר' נתן והרב ר' שאלתיאל והרב ר' קלונימוס נר"ו ושאר החכמים הנבונים המשכילים בכל ספר וחכמה. שלום הגיעה אלינו האגרת אשר שלחתם ונועם מליצותיכם ודקדוק שאלתכם ועמדנו על

<sup>1</sup> אנדלק אשר בסוף ים מערב בארץ הודו אל יושבי אי אנדלק בסוף ים הודו בסוף ים מערב ו אנדלק אשר בסוף ים מערב בארץ (מארץ ב) הודו אליכם יושבי אי אנדלק בסוף ים הודו ובסוף ים מערב מב אנדלק אשר בסוף ים מערב מארץ הודו אל יושבי אי אנדלק בסוף ים מערב פ אנדלק אשר בסוף ים מערב בארץ הודו אל יושבי אי אנדלק בסוף ים הודו ובסוף ים מערב ט אנדלוס אשר בסוף ים מערב בארץ הודו י



דבר ודבר אבל מפני עוצם ותוקף השאלות אשר סבבונו מכל פאות ומזרח וצפון ומקצת ארצות אחרות עכבנו את שלוחכם ולא יכולנו להאריך בשלומכם שיגדל השם לעד. אבל מה ששאלתם והודעתם בכתבכם כי יש בידכם אגרות מהרב רבי גרשום ז"ל והאגרת מרב אלפאסי ז"ל משאלותיכם וענין עלינו לשבח אשר שאלתם. והודע הרב אלפאסי ז"ל כי עלינו לשבח תקנת גאונים היתה לומר אחר התפלה בכל יום מפני שהוא שבח גדול ומעלת יוצרינו ית' כפי מה שאמ' ותקן יהושע בר נון<sup>2</sup> נר ישראל נר<sup>3</sup> הבהיר בהכניסו ישראל לארץ והגיעו אל מקום יתד התקועה<sup>4</sup> המכוון כנגד כסא הכבוד למעלה. ואשר שאלתם מפני מה אומרים אותו חוצה לארץ הואיל והגיעו ימים ללא אלהי אמת ולא כהן מורה<sup>5</sup> והיושע לא אמ' ותקן זה אלא בארץ. והשיב הרב ז"ל שאלו היתה מעשה עבודה מעבודת בית המקדש אסור לעשות בחוצה לארץ. אבל עבודה שהיא כדיבור ולא במעשה יש לנו לומר כגון במקדש שהיו אומרים בשעת הקרבן רצה ואשי ישראל. וכבר ראינו שבטלה העבודה ואנחנו בחוצה לארץ ובכל יום חובה עלינו לומר זה. וכן עלינו לשבח תקנו מתקנות הגאונים לומר בכל יום אחר התפלה אע"פ שאנו בחוצה לארץ. שבח התלויה בפה הוא ועבודת אמירה הוא עד כאן. ומה שהודעתם תשובת רבי גרשום ז"ל

[4א] שאמ' בענין אחר כי עלינו לשבח אמרן לאחר שהנחיל לישראל הארץ וכבר היה להם אלוה בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת אין עוד<sup>6</sup> מה שלא היה כן קודם לכן אע"פ שכל אותם מעלות היה להם בימי משה לא נתקיים דבר זה בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת אלא בארץ הקדושה ואז יתקן עלינו לשבח. ומפני מה אומרים אותו בחוצה לארץ. והודיע תקנה זו תקן רבן יוחנן בן זכאי עם כל התקנות<sup>7</sup> שתקן לומר אותו בכל יום אחר עבודת התפלה לאחר שנחרב הבית מפני שבימיו נחרב והוא היה שם ויצא לאספרויינסו ברוב חכמה ואע"פ שאבא סיקרא בן אחותו היה ראש הפריצים ונחרב הבית והוא תקן תקנות הרבה. ועלינו לשבח לומר בכל יום

<sup>2</sup> ראה סידור רבנו שלמה מיוחס לרבנו שלמה ב"ר שמשון מגרמיזא וסידור חסידי אשכנז, מאת משה הרשלר (ירושלים, תשל"ב), עמ' 124, 126 (בשם ר' יהודה החסיד); ר' אברהם ב"ר עזריאל, ספר ערוגת הבשם, מאת אפרים א. אורבך (ירושלים, תשכ"ג), כרך ג, עמ' 469; ר' נתן ב"ר יהודה, ספר מחכים, מאת יעקב פרימאנן (קראקא, תרס"ט), עמ' יג; ר' אהרון הכהן מלונזל, ספר אורחות חיים (ירושלים, תשמ"ו), כרך א, כא ע"ג, הלכות אחר י"ח, סי' ח' (בשם ר' יהודה מקורביל) ומא"ח הועתק בכל בו סי' טז ועיין שם סי' קכב; תשובות הגאונים שערי תשובה, מאת זאב וואלף לייטער (פיטסבורג, תש"ו), סי' מד (בשם ר' האי גאון); קובץ של סודות חסידיים-אשכנזיים בכ"י ניו-יורק בהמ"ל 2430, דף 77 ע"ב; ר' דוד בן יהודה החסיד, אור זרוע, כ"י ניו-יורק בהמ"ל 2203, דף 34 ע"א.

<sup>3</sup> אור ב פ מ י ט

<sup>4</sup> ישע' כב: כה.

<sup>5</sup> דה"ב טו: ג.

<sup>6</sup> דב' ד: לט.

<sup>7</sup> ראה תוס' ר"ה ב: ט; בבלי ר"ה כט ע"ב; סנהדרין מא ע"א; ביצה ה ע"א.

אותו מתקנותיו היה. וגרסי<sup>8</sup> בערכי<sup>9</sup> פ"ק<sup>10</sup> ומני מגזרי רבן יוחנן בן זכאי שבחא דהדורא דארעא לבתר צלותא אתקיין. והטעם לומ' אותו בחוצה לארץ לאחר התפלה הוא מפני שכל ישראל צריכין תפלתם וכוונתם לצד הארץ כדאמ' וכוין פתיחן ליה בעילייתיה נגד ירושלם<sup>11</sup> ואלו נצאים בכוונתם לצד המקדש והואיל וכל התפלות עולות כוונת המקדש עלינו לשבח בכוונת המקדש הוא ובארץ הוא ועולה על כל הכוונות שכבר נתקנו במקדש. ע"כ יש להשיב לכם על זה ולברור הדרך הישר ודיין האמת למען לא תהיו נבוכים ומשובשים ברוב הדעות ואע"פ שדעתנו קצרה מלהשיב אומרים ממחשבת דעתינו. אבל יש לאל ידינו במה שקבלנו וראינו ובמה שלמדנו מרבותינו עמודי עולם. ובתחלה יש להשיב כי תשובת רבי' גרושם למעלה מתשובת רב אלפסי ז"ל ובאמת כי תקן יהושע לאחר קדושת הארץ כדברי חז"ל<sup>12</sup> ונתקיים מה שאמ' הרב ז"ל בשמים ממעל ועל הארץ מתחת שנמצא או שם<sup>13</sup> אלהות. ועל כל פנים תקנת רבן יוחנן בן זכאי ע"ה הוא שחובה על האדם הוא בכל יום לקיים קיום האמונה. ומאי דרוש וידעת היום והשבות אל לבבך כי יי' הוא

[ב4] האלהים וכו'.<sup>14</sup> וגרסי' בזבחים<sup>15</sup> וידעת היום בארץ והשבות אל לבבך בחוצה לארץ. אי הכי משה אמאי לא אמ' בחוצה לארץ אלא משה לא אמ' דאין אדם יהיב שבחא על מה דלא אתי לידיה ואכן אע"ג דהוינא בחוצה לארץ כבר אתי לידן. ויש לומר אותו בכוונה בעמידה<sup>16</sup> בעטיפת ראש מפני שאין שבח כמותו ליוצרנו ועולה על כל השבחות שבעולם. ומפני שראינו בשפולי האגרת פייס מהרב ר' קלנימוס והרב ר' נתן יצ"ו לרמזו להם רמז וראיתי בכת' המיוחד אשר שלחו אלינו ראינו כי חכמת אלהים בלבם. יודע לכבודכם כי הענין עלינו לשבח היה קבלה מרבותי ז"ל בידינו גנוז וחתום וכאשר בא רבינו יאשיה הפי' הלוי בא מארץ ישראל ועבר עלינו אמ' לנו שמצא בספרים רבים אברהם הפרוש קרובו ענין זה והכל אחד ועניינים אחרים שלא היה בידינו קבלנו ממנו ונרמזו לכם מעט. עלינו לשבח בכל מקום את מוצא עלינו והוא קבלת נדר סתם כדגרסי<sup>17</sup>

<sup>8</sup> ליחא.

<sup>9</sup> בתוספתא דערכין י' בערכין ת בתוספות בערכין ב בתוספות דערכין ם בעירובין ו

<sup>10</sup> פוק י' מ ב ט פוק פ

<sup>11</sup> דני' ו: יא.

<sup>12</sup> השווה בבלי ברכות מח ע"ב.

<sup>13</sup> ליחא י' ב מ פ ט אז שם ו

<sup>14</sup> דב' ד: לט.

<sup>15</sup> ליחא.

<sup>16</sup> כך מתפרש במאמר המובא בשם פרקי רבי אליעזר בס' אורחות חיים ומשם בכל בו וכן בס' מחכים. ראה לעיל הערה 2. השווה חיד"א, מחזיק ברכה (ליוורנו, תקמ"ה), סי' קלב; סדר היום לר' משה אבן מכיר (לובלין, תרל"ו), יב ע"ד; ספר שלמי צבור לר' ישראל יעקב אלגאזי (ירושלים, תשמ"ז), עמ' שעז; ספר טהרת הקודש הקדמון (ירושלים, תשמ"ט), עמ' פט.

<sup>17</sup> בבלי מגילה ח ע"א.

מה בין נדר לנדבה עלי להביא קרבן וכו'. ואת מוצא נדר הוא הדבר התלוי על ראש למעלה והוא מקום שהחיים באים ממנו. וגרסי<sup>18</sup> בנדרים נדר כנשבע בחיי המלך. וזהו לשון עלינו שמקום שעומד עליו משותף. והכא עלינו לשבח אנו משתפין בזה אור החיים העומד עלינו למעלה שיש בשיתוף עמנו. לשבח שבח זה והוא שבח שמשבח אור מורגש שעלינו והוא אור חיינו כדוגמת החיים הגלויים. עלינו למלך למעלה וכן בכל מקום עלי עלינו עלי אלהים נדריך<sup>19</sup> הוא אור המורגש אסיפת אור הבהיר למעלה שמתקשר בו בקשר אמיץ<sup>20</sup> באותו דבר. על כן יש להשלים בעל כרחו שלא בטובתו ואם פשע כאלו פשע בעצמו של מקום ב"ה ועל אלו נאמר ויצאו וראו בפגרי האנשים.<sup>21</sup> לאדון הכל זוהר החיים הנקרא חביון עוזו.<sup>22</sup> הכל עץ החיים מלך שהשלוש שלו<sup>23</sup> הוא הכל. לתת גדולה כלל כל שש קצוות. והכי נקטינן רז"ל המדרגות כדי לחבר עמנו בהוא שעלינו כלל כל המדרגות ממדרגה למדרגה כי אין לבוא

[א5] למעלה סתר הסתרים ריקם אלא במדותיו הראויים לו. ליוצר בראשית הרי סתר הסתרים עליו וחובת כל המדרגות שהוא יוצר מחשבותיו הזכה והטהורה והמציא אותה. ועל זה מאחר שהמציא מחשבתו היוצר הכל מיד עלינו במחשבה כדגרסי<sup>24</sup> בתוספת ישראל עלו במחשבה.<sup>25</sup> על כן שבח זה אינו כשאר כל השבחות והתפלות מפני שבכאן נכללין כל עיקרים ויסודות ומדרגות כל האמונה מה שאין הפה יכולה לדבר והלב יכולה להרהר. ר' מנחם בר' ישמעאל אומ' גדולה שבחא דיהושע דהוא אתקין ביה חמש רתיכין בכל מלה ומלה רתיכא ואית ביה עשרה מאמרות דבראשית<sup>26</sup> וחמשה חומשי תורה בכללן. שלא עשנו כגויי הארצות מפני תוקף ועוצם המעלה העליונה הכל בדרך נסתר. שלא עשנו כשאר האומות שכל אומה ואומה יש לה מדרגה וממשלה למעלה ומשם שואבים האומות נפשותם נפרדים אלו מאלו ומשם יפרד בחלוקי יסודות הנפרדים מלמטה למטה היתה דרכם כטומאת הנדה. ונשמתן של ישראל נשאבת מאילן החיים בתוך אור המורגש כעשישית המקבל אור השמש. שלא שם חלקינו בהם דכתיב כי חלק יי' עמו<sup>27</sup> והנחילו לשאר עמים וחלק אותם לשרים ומשרתים בתוך

<sup>18</sup> ספרי במדבר קנ"ג.

<sup>19</sup> תהי' נו: יג.

<sup>20</sup> שמ"ב טו: יב.

<sup>21</sup> ישע' סו: כד.

<sup>22</sup> חבק' ג: ד.

<sup>23</sup> ע"פ שה"ש רבה א: א; במדבר רבה יב: ד.

<sup>24</sup> בתוס' מ בתוספתא פ ב ו ט

<sup>25</sup> בראשית רבה א: ד.

<sup>26</sup> ע"פ המאמר "עשרה מאמרות שבהן נברא עולם [עיין אבות מ"ה פ"א; אבות דרבי

נתן נו"א פל"א] . . . בראשית נמי מאמר הוא. "ראה בכלי ראש השנה לב ע"א; מגילה כא ע"ב.

<sup>27</sup> דב' לב: ט.

ענפי האילן הנאחזים בתוכו למטה המחבלים אותם הנאחזים למעלה שהם הפרי והאילן כענין אומר אחזו לנו שועלים שועלים קטנים מחבלים כרמים<sup>28</sup> וכתיב כי כרם יי צבאות בית ישראל<sup>29</sup> עד שיגיע עת הזמיר<sup>30</sup> לזמור אותם סביבות האילן ואז יעשה הפרי לאמתו ועלהו לתרופה.<sup>31</sup> וגורלנו ככל המונס שהם משתחווים להבל וריק בהנחיל עליון שבעה נהרותיו הגנוזים הנעלמים לתוך הים הגדול וכל אותן הנהרות כוונתם אל מקום אחד. ועל ירושלם ידו גורל<sup>32</sup> באהבה ובכוונה שלימה מתנה רחבה ומלאה כי הגורל גורל ליי.<sup>33</sup> לאחר כן מתמצית ארץ ישראל

[ב5] כמה כלבים צועקים זה לזה ואומ' אם גורלך תפיל בתוכנו כיס אחד יהיה לכולנו<sup>34</sup> כדוגמת הכלבים הממתינים תחת השולחנות לגרמא דנפיל ונשיך דא לדא עליה ובימי הגלות בעונותינו שגרמו הסעודה אוכלים הכלבים וישראל מתמצית הראשונה ממה שאכלו ניזונו וזהו דכתי' ומשביע לכל חי רצון<sup>35</sup> כתי' ולא כל כי האם הקדושה גונת בין שדיה לבנה ישראל מעט רצון מחפץ עליון שמקבלת לעצמה. ואע"פ שאוכלין הכלבים אינם אוכלי' אלא הלעסט הנמלים ולא מחפץ רצון עליון אלא כשם שמאכיל לחולה שימות ודאי בשר שור בשר כל דבר רע כי כן מות הוא וזהו דכתיב כירק עשב נתתי לכם את כל<sup>36</sup> כי בודאי בן מות אותם. אבל ישראל בני אל חי והוא משביע אותנו רצון השקוי הטוב רפואות לנפש ומרפא לעצם<sup>37</sup> וזהו ומשביע לכל חי רצון. שהם משתחווים להבל וריק ומתפללין אל אל לא יושיע כמה קבלנו קבלה אמיתית מר' יאשיה הפרוש ואין ראוי לכתוב בכתיבה כי הנסתרות ליי' אלהינו.<sup>38</sup> אנו משתחווים בלא וא"ו שאין ראוי לומר וא"ו שהוא תוספת על הדבר הראשון.<sup>39</sup> משתחווים להבל וריק כמו מלכים יראו וקמו שרים וישתחוו וא"ו בתוספת על הראשונות בתעלות ובין באהלות.<sup>40</sup> אמ' ר' סימון בכל מקום צריך להפריש בין ישראל לשאר האומות באמירה בדיבור בלשון בשבח בתפלה. ועל כן צריך להתעכב בהם כ"ש במרום הזה והשטן מזומן לקטרג וצריך לשמור כ"ש וכ"ש בשבח

<sup>28</sup> שה"ש ב: טו.

<sup>29</sup> ישע' ה: ז.

<sup>30</sup> ע"פ שה"ש ב: יב.

<sup>31</sup> יחז' מז: יב.

<sup>32</sup> עוב' א: יא.

<sup>33</sup> ויק' טז: ו.

<sup>34</sup> משלי א: יד.

<sup>35</sup> תהל' קמה: טז.

<sup>36</sup> ברא' ט: ג.

<sup>37</sup> משלי טז: כד.

<sup>38</sup> דב' כט: כח.

<sup>39</sup> ראה בבלי פסחים ה ע"א ומקבילות.

<sup>40</sup> בתעלות ובין באהלות ו כדאמרי' בתעניות וכן באהלות י בתעניות ב מ בתעניות וכן

גדול זה שלא יקטרג בו. וקבלנו<sup>41</sup> כי בשעה שישראל אומרי' שבח זה ומשתחוים באימה ביראה ברתת חפויי ראש כל צבא מרום שומעי' והקב"ה עומד עם פמליא שלו וכלם עונים ואומרים אשרי העם שככה לו וגו'.<sup>42</sup> אשרי אדם עוז לו בך מסלות בלבבם.<sup>43</sup> מאי מסלות בלבבם כדאמרי' סלו לרוכב בערכות ביה שמו.<sup>44</sup> לפני מלך מלכי

[6א] המלכים הקב"ה. בכל מקום את מוצא ענין השתחויה לפני יי' ועכשי לפני סתר הסתרים אשר אין ראוי לדבר בפה כי כבר נתעלינו בשאר תושבחות ושירות ותפלות ואנו במדרגה עליונה לפני גנוז הנסתר העליון אשר אין חוש בו מלך עליון בסתר אשר אין נמצא ונחקר בשום צד מלכי מחשבה וחביון עוזו. המלכים כל שאר שש קצוות. הב"ה אור המורגש הב"ה אשר לאהרן.<sup>45</sup> שהוא נוטה שמים מפני שהוא בסוד מדרגה עליונה חוזר הענין על אותו הנסתר הנעלם הנקרא הוא וסודו ועבד הלוי הוא<sup>46</sup> [הוא]<sup>47</sup> עשנו ולא אנחנו.<sup>48</sup> נוטה שמים קרא נטייה והוא<sup>49</sup> ובאמצע שאין כן ביוד שהיא כפופה וזה נטוי באמצע השם. ויוסד ארץ ה"א בסוף אותיות השם מיוסדות על תוכן האמונה מתוך יסוד העולם ולפי' יסוד בארץ הוא. ומושב יקרו יקרו הוא כסא העליון הנעלם היושב על השמים הנזכרים והנטוי ביו"ד וא"ו. וזהו הענין המחשבה הסתומה ולפי' נקרא יקרו כדאמ' ודבר יי' היה יקר בימים ההם.<sup>50</sup> דבר יי' שאינו נמצא כלל הוא יקר ביקרו. ושכינת עוזו הוא חביון עוזו שאמרנו שכינה של מעלה בגובהי מרומים. גובהי מרומים הם נהרי האפרסמון העליונים שאמרנו. ושכינת עוזו רוכצת על האפרוחים<sup>51</sup> הבנים על גובה אברתם פורשת כנפיה עליהם. וזהו וגובה להם ויראה להם כי החיות יש להם גובה על הכל בסוד וא"ו למעלה. ומאחר שהזכרון כל עיקרי היסודות כלל האמונה מיחדים הכל בסוד שם החקוק המפורש הנסתר בהגיותיו אשר מסודו נבראו שמים וארץ מעלה ומטה וארבע רוחות העולם. ואמ' הוא אלהינו מקיימי אחדות הכל

<sup>41</sup> ראה ההגהה של ר' אברהם ב"ר ישעיה הורוויץ מספר עמק ברכה לר' אברהם ב"ר שבתי שעפטל הורוויץ בסידור שער השמים לר' ישעיה הורוויץ, עמ' 246, שהביא הלשון של ר' משה כלץ בספר המוסר לאביו ר' יהודה כלץ (ירושלים, תשל"ג), עמ' קא, המבוססת על התשובה המיוחסת לר' האי: "וקבלנו שיש לומר שבח זה ומשתחוה באימה וביראה וברתת ובזיע בשיפוי ראש כי כל צבא השמים שומעים והקב"ה עומד עם פמליא של מעלה וכולם עונים ואומרים אשרי העם שככה לו אשרי העם שה' אלהיו וכו'".

<sup>42</sup> תהלי' קמד: טו.

<sup>43</sup> שם פד: ו.

<sup>44</sup> שם סח: ה.

<sup>45</sup> אשר לאהרן עם הזרועות והלחיים ו כסא הקדש א[שר] לאהרן ב מ כסא הכבוד אשר

לאהרן ט שלאהרן פ

<sup>46</sup> במ' יח: כג.

<sup>47</sup> ליתא בכ"י א והשלמתי ע" פ פ ו ט וכן הוא עשנו ב מ

<sup>48</sup> תהלי' ק: ג.

<sup>49</sup> וא"ו פ ב מ ט

<sup>50</sup> שמ"א ג: יא.

<sup>51</sup> דב' כב: ו.

והשם המפורש אשר בכאן שלחתי לכם חתום בקשר אמיץ לבלתי ירוץ בו אחר כאשר תמצאו בו בשבועה גדולה וחרם ונדוי לא למעני אני עושה כי אם לשם קדשו ית'. ועכשיו לא יכולנו להאריך אלא ברמז והואיל ואמרתם שתשלחו אלינו שלוחכם בשאר ספקותיכם בהלכות נדה<sup>52</sup> שלחו המסופק לכם ואין בכל זה ספק ודאי. והשם ית' יהיה בעזרכם ובמאור תורתו יאיר עיניכם כחפציכם. וחפץ רב האי בר רב שרירא גאון בר רב מנפה בר רב שרירא גאון ז"ל<sup>53</sup> מדגלו<sup>54</sup> של יהודה בן יעקב אריה.

<sup>52</sup> ראה תשובות הגאונים שערי תשובה סי' ה.

<sup>53</sup> רב האי בר רב שרירא גאון בר חנינא גאון בר רב יהודה גאון ז"ל ט רב האי בר רב שרירא גאון בר רב חנינה ב רב האי בר רב שרירא גאון בר רב יהודה גאון ז"ל פ האי בר רב שרירא גאון בר רב מנשה בר רב שרירא גאון ז"ל ו האי בר שרירא גאון בר סעדיא גאון י

<sup>54</sup> מרגליו ב מרגלו פ י