"MERKAVAH TRADITIONS IN PHILOSOPHICAL GARB: JUDAH HALEVI RECONSIDERED"

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I

It is generally agreed that the twelfth century was a critical time when both philosophy and mysticism began to have a greater impact on the intellectual development of Jews living in central Europe. On the one hand, ancient Jewish mystical speculation on the divine chariot *(merkavah)* cultivated in the Talmudic and Geonic periods was joined together with a "new" theosophic conception of divinity, and kabbalah took its place on the stage of literary history. It is assumed, for instance, that sometime in this century the *Sefer ha-Bahir,* held by Scholem and others to be the first text fully dedicated to theosophical kabbalah, appeared in Provence.[1] It was also in this very geographical region during this century that other, apparently autonomous, circles of kabbalists appeared on the scene, the most well-known being the circle of R. Abraham ben David of Posquiéres and his son, R. Isaac the Blind.[2] In this same period

[1] Cf. G. Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Princeton, 1987), pp. 49–198. See also M. Idel, "The Problem of the Sources of the *Bahir*" [Hebrew] *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6 (1987): 55–72; idem, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven, 1988), pp. 122–127.

[2] Cf. Scholem, *Origins,* pp. 199–309. Thus Scholem concludes his survey of the kabbalah of RABaD and R. Isaac the Blind: "For our analysis it suffices to have demonstrated that in the fragments from Isaac a specific and completely independent form of the Kabbalah, very different from the world of the *Bahir* as we have learned to know it, can be localized and identified in Provence. The seed of the *Bahir,* landing in Provence, germinated in a singular manner." See also M. Idel, "The Sefirot above the Sefirot" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 51 (1982): 239; idem, *New Perspectives,* p. 136.

the *merkavah* corpus began to have a profound influence on the emerging theosophical speculations of Pietistic circles in Northern France and the Rhineland who not only faithfully copied the older materials but creatively developed ideas contained therein which in some cases have strong phenomenological similarity to mainstream kabbalistic conceptions.[3] On the other hand, it was in this century that in the European continent Jewish philosophy — an amalgam of Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism[4] — had gained an increasing audience, largely due to the composition of original texts in Hebrew and the translation of older texts from Arabic into Hebrew.

[3] The relationship of German Pietistic speculation to the theosophic kabbalah which flourished in Provence and Northern Spain has been the subject of much scholarly discussion. Cf. A. Epstein, *Mi-Qadmoniyot ha-Yehudim: Kitve R. Avraham Epstein,* ed. A.M. Habermann, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1957), p. 226; M. Güdemann, *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Kultur der Juden in Frankreich und Deutschland,* vol. 1 (Vienna, 1880), pp. 121–124; S.W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews,* vol. 8 (New York, 1958), p. 42; G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1956), p. 117; idem, *Origins,* pp. 41–42, 97–123, 180–198, 215–216, 325, n. 261; J. Dan, *The Esoteric Theology of the German Pietists* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1968), pp. 116–129; idem, "A Re-evaluation of the 'Ashkenazi Kabbalah'" [Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6 (1987): 125–140; Idel, "The Sefirot above the Sefirot," pp. 274–277; *New Perspectives,* pp. 130–132; A. Farber, "The Concept of the Merkabah in Thirteenth-Century Jewish Esotericism: Sod ha-'Egoz and its Development" [Hebrew], (Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 1986); and E.R. Wolfson, "The Image of Jacob Engraved on the Throne: Further Speculation on the Esoteric Doctrine of the German Pietists" [Hebrew] to be published in the *Ephraim Gottlieb Memorial Volume.* See also E. Ginsburg, *The Sabbath in the Classical Kabbalah* (Albany, 1989), p. 169, n. 189 and p. 176, n. 231. On the possible connections between ancient mystical techniques preserved by the German Pietists and the ecstatic kabbalah expounded by Abraham Abulafia, cf. Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia* (Albany, 1988), pp. 22–24; idem, *New Perspectives,* pp. 98–102.

[4] In the twelfth century we can also speak of a flourishing of Jewish Neoplatonism in the Oriental Islamic world. See G. Vajda, "Le néoplatonisme dans la pensée juive du Moyen Age," *Rendiconti Lincei, Serie Ottava,* XXVI (1971): 320 and references given there in n. 11 (reprinted in *Melanges Georges Vajda,* ed. G.E. Weil [Hildesheim, 1982], p. 418, n. 11).

No one would argue, then, with the claim that the twelfth century was one in which philosophy and mysticism flourished as two distinct disciplines. Through the work of several scholars, however, we have come to appreciate the extent to which philosophical texts in and of themselves should be considered as important sources for the preservation of earlier mystical ideas that may have, in turn, helped to generate the literary renaissance of kabbalah.[5] Indeed, it would be wrong to assume that the philosophical personalities of medieval Jewry, before the thirteenth century, were devoid of mystical tendencies or influences. It seems to me that any such bifurcation is largely colored by the writings of Maimonides (1135–1204) which, in spite of any formal similarity to medieval kabbalistic hermeneutics, have little to do with the positive content of earlier Jewish mystical documents.[6] That Maimonides was familiar with at least some of these we know with certainty from the fact that he had occasion to refer to the *Shi'ur Qomah* both in an earlier work, the *Commentary on the Mishnah,* and in a later responsum. Whereas in the former he showed a positive disposition towards this text, calling for the need of an extended commentary, in the latter he not only concluded that the treatise was a Byzantine forgery but equated the study of it with idolatry.[7] It can also be safely assumed that Maimonides had access to *Sefer Yeṣirah*, though he does not mention it by name.[8] Finally, it has been demonstrated that Maimonides had

[5] Cf. Y. Liebes, "Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol's Use of the Sefer Yeṣira and a Commentary on the Poem 'I Love Thee'," in *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6 (1987): 73–124 (in Hebrew). See also article by Moshe Idel cited below, n. 29.

[6] This point was made by A. Altmann, "Das verhältnis Maimunis zur jüdischen Mystik," *Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 80 (1936): 305–330.

[7] A. Altmann, *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism* (Ithaca, 1969), pp. 186–187. See also Baron, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–30, 287, n. 32.

[8] Cf. S. Pines, "Points of Similarity between the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Sefirot in the Sefer Yeẓira and a Text of the Pseudo-Clementine

knowledge of at least some ancient Jewish esoteric terms, though it is readily admitted that he radically altered the meaning of these terms.[9] Perhaps more significantly, however, is the almost total absence of any of the *merkavah* imagery or motifs in Maimonides' literary corpus. He even has little, if any, use to make of standard aggadic texts which strike of a *merkavah* character. Those who would like to appropriate Maimonides as a Jewish mystic by seeing him as a figure who combined philosophy and mysticism — espousing therefore a type of intellectualist mysticism[10] — miss the essential point, in my opinion. The mystical dimension of Neoplatonism is indisputable, as is the historical claim that this school of philosophy influenced Maimonides, primarily through Arabic writers who had assimilated Neoplatonic texts.[10a] The critical question from my vantage point is Maimonides' relation to *Jewish* mystical doctrine as expressed in a given literary corpus determined not by scholars but by the community of mystics themselves. When the question is phrased in this way, I find the evidence wanting. Indeed, it seems to me that one could make a very good case

Homilies," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 7 (1989): 127–132.

[9] Cf. M. Fishbane, "Some Forms of Divine Appearance in Ancient Jewish Thought," in *From Ancient Judaism to Modern Israel: Intellect in Quest of Understanding: Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox,* ed. J. Neusner, E.S. Frerichs, N.M. Sarna, 4 vols. (Atlanta, 1989), 2:261–270.

[10] See D.R. Blumenthal, "Maimonides' Intellectualist Mysticism and the Superiority of the Prophecy of Moses," in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times,* ed. D.R. Blumenthal, vol. 1 (Chico, Ca., 1984), pp. 27–52; idem, "Maimonides: Prayer, Worship, and Mysticism," in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times,* ed. D.R. Blumenthal, vol. 3 (Atlanta, 1988), pp. 1–16. The same critique, in my opinion, may be levelled against those who would impute to Maimonides the mystical elements that emerge more overtly in the Jewish Sufism of his son, Abraham, and grandson, 'Obadyah. I do not mean to deny the mystical element in the Sufi piety cultivated by Jews, but only question the validity of identifying this as a factor in determining the relationship of Maimonides himself to the esoteric traditions of Jewish mysticism.

[10a] See now A. Ivry, "Neoplatonic Currents in Maimonides' Thought," in *Perspectives on Maimonides,* ed. J. Kramer (Oxford, 1991), pp. 115–140.

that Maimonides is aware of the earlier esoteric traditions and exerted much effort to subvert them by utilizing the key terms such as *ma'aseh bereshit* and *ma'aseh merkavah* but investing them with radical new meaning, viz., Aristotelian physics and metaphysics.[11] The same may be applied to Maimonides' treatment of *ṭa'ame ha-miṣwot*, "reasons for the commandments," which are related in his view to the category of *sitre Torah*, "mysteries of the Law."[12] A careful scrutiny of Maimonides' account of each of these subjects reveals that there is very little that is esoteric in the true sense of that term for him; what is esoteric is the style of presentation and the claim that certain matters have been concealed from the public, matters that Maimonides, on account of an intellectual need and religious obligation (notwithstanding the explicit rabbinic injunction to the contrary), must disclose in the appropriate manner. The content of the mysteries of *ma'aseh bereshit* (physics) and *ma'aseh merkavah* (metaphysics), however, is very much determined by philosophic notions that are exoteric in nature, ascertained by the use of natural reason. Moreover, the utilitarian-instrumental approach to the commandments that underlies Maimonides' discussion of *ṭa'ame ha-miṣwot* is completely exoteric in its orientation.[13] Kabbalists in the thirteenth century were well aware of this subversion and attempted to counter it by composing what they considered to be authentic — i.e., indigeneously Jewish — commentaries on Genesis and Ezekiel's chariot as well as propagating the mystical reasons for the commandments.[14]

[11] Cf. M. Idel, "*Sitre 'Arayot* in Maimonides' Thought," in *Maimonides and Philosophy*, ed. S. Pines and Y. Yovel (Boston, 1986), pp. 79–91; idem, *New Perspectives*, p. 252.

[12] Cf. I. Twersky, *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides* (New Haven, 1980), pp. 397–398.

[13] As noted already by Twersky, *op. cit.*, p. 401.

[14] It is of interest to note in this connection that in one place Eleazar of Worms enumerates three types of *sodot* or esoteric subjects as follows: the secret of the chariot (סוד המרכבה), the secret of the account of creation (סוד מעשה

The aim of this paper is to show, however, that in the pre-Maimonidean philosophical thought[15] of Judah Halevi (ca. 1075–1141) ancient Jewish chariot-mysticism, especially as it was interpreted in the Geonic literature, had a decisive influence.[16] To this end I will focus on some of the themes connected with Halevi's understanding of prophecy and revelatory experience, for it is with respect to these key issues that one can most readily discern the centrality of earlier *merkavah* traditions. That Halevi knew some of these texts is beyond question as is attested by the fact that in the *Kuzari* he mentioned several of the relevant documents by name. Thus in

בראשית), and the secret of the commandments (סוד המצות; cf. the reading in MS Paris 850, fol. 118a: the secret of the performance of the commandments, סוד מעשה המצות). Cf. *Sefer Razi'el* (Amsterdam, 1701), fol. 7c. The text has been printed as well in *Sode Razaya'*, ed. S. Weiss (Jerusalem, 1988), p. 1. See, by contrast, Eleazar's enumeration of esoteric disciplines in *Ḥokhmat ha-Nefesh*, ch. 2 (Bene Beraq, 1987), p. 14: the secret of the chariot (סוד המרכבה), the secret of creation (סוד מעשה בראשית), and the secret of unity (סוד היחוד). The latter is known by one who knows the secret of the wisdom of the soul (סוד חכמת הנפש).

[15] In using the expression "philosophical thought" in relation to Halevi I do not wish to take issue with the claim of those who would not regard the *Kuzari* as a philosophic book. Cf. L. Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (New York, 1952), p. 98. Strauss is right to characterize Halevi's dialogue "primarily as a defence of Judaism against philosophy" (p. 103), and in that sense it is a work of kalâm (pp. 99–100). It is nevertheless appropriate, in my view, to refer to the philosophical thought of Halevi, by which I mean his overall religious philosophy. The latter, while in some fundamental ways at odds with the leading philosophic positions of Halevi's day, is expressed at times in terms and modes of discourse derived from philosophy proper, a point well-made in the scholarly literature.

[16] The complicated relationship between philosophy and mysticism in Jewish sources — mostly in a period later than that of Halevi — has been studied most thoroughly by Alexander Altmann and Georges Vajda. For the former, see the essays collected in Altmann, *Studies in Religious Philosophy and Mysticism* (Ithaca, 1969). For the latter, see the studies referred to in G. Vajda, "Recherches sur la synthèse philosophico-kabbalistique de Samuel Ibn Moṭoṭ," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* (1960): 29, n. 1 (= *Melanges Georges Vajda*, p. 661, n. 1).

III:65 Halevi identifies the tanna, R. Ishmael ben Elisha the High Priest, as the one who is mentioned in the "*Hekhalot, Hakkarat Panim,* and *Ma'aseh Merkavah.* He knew all these secrets to the point that he merited a grade proximate to prophecy" (דרגה קריבה מן אלנבוה).[17] It is noteworthy that Halevi compares knowing secrets of the *merkavah* to prophecy, a point to which I will return at a later stage in this analysis. What needs to be emphasized here is that the three items listed above are references to specific literary works. In the case of the first two, *Hekhalot* and *Hakkarat Panim,* this is fairly obvious, the former referring in all probability to one of the main and most widely disseminated texts of the *merkavah* corpus, *Sefer Hekhalot* also known as *3 Enoch,*[18] in which R. Ishmael figures prominently, while the latter refers to a chapter on chiromancy entitled *Hakkarat Panim le-Rabbi Yishma'el,* also part of the same corpus.[19] The same can be said with respect to the third reference given by Halevi, *Ma'aseh Merkavah.* As Scholem has already pointed out, this title was used by medieval authors in basically three ways: (a) to cover a general collection of *Hekhalot* books, (b) to refer specifically to either *Hekhalot Rabbati* or *Shi'ur Qomah,* or (c) to name another *Hekhalot* text which Scholem himself published from manuscript and called by this

[17] Cf. *Kuzari,* I:103, where one is said to come close to the degree of prophecy through the doing of good deeds, sanctification, purification, and being close to the prophets. See also V:12 where the *ḥasid* is depicted as being one level below the prophet. Halevi's association of pious behavior and the attainment of a degree which approximates that of the prophets had an impact on the Jewish-Sufi Pietism of Abraham Maimonides and his circle. Cf. P. Fenton, *The Treatise of the Pool, al-Maqâla al-Hawdiyya* by 'Obadyah b. Abraham b. Moses Maimonides (London, 1981), pp. 8–9, 58, n. 42; idem, *Deux traités de mystique juive* (Paris, 1987), pp. 75, n. 158, 77, n. 163.

[18] Cf. Judah Moscato, *Qol Yehudah,* ad *Kuzari,* III:65.

[19] The text was published by Scholem, "Physiognomy and Chiromancy" [Hebrew], *Sefer Assaf,* ed. M. Cassuto, J. Klausner, and J. Guttmann (Jerusalem, 1953), pp. 480–487. Scholem mentions the passage from the *Kuzari* on p. 465.

title.[20] In IV:3 Halevi again mentions *Ma'aseh Merkavah* but this time together with *Shi'ur Qomah,*[21] thereby eliminating the possibility that for him *Ma'aseh Merkavah* refers to *Shi'ur Qomah.* It must be concluded, therefore, that Halevi had in mind either the general collection of *Hekhalot* books or another particular *Hekhalot* treatise. Given the fact that Halevi enumerates *Ma'aseh Merkavah* together with *Hekhalot* and *Hakkarat Panim* in one instance and with *Shi'ur Qomah* in the other, I am inclined to accept the latter possibility. Halevi's intimate knowledge of early Jewish mysticism is attested as well by his elaborate commentary on *Sefer Yeṣirah* in IV:25–27. References to that work are also to be found in III:17 and V:14. Furthermore, Halevi's religious poetry abounds with images taken from the *merkavah* literature as will be shown in the relevant places in the present analysis.[22]

That Halevi's writings — both the speculative dialogue and the religious poems — reflect a mystical strain should come as

[20] Cf. G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York, 1965), pp. 101–102. Curiously, in this context Scholem did not mention Halevi in his discussion of the medieval authors who refer to *Ma'aseh Merkavah.* Concerning the use of this title see also the remarks of P. Schäfer, "Tradition and Redaction in Hekhalot Literature," reprinted in idem, *Hekhalot-Studien* (Tübingen, 1988), p. 13.

[21] Cf. Altmann, *Studies,* p. 188.

[22] To be sure, the influence of *merkavah* imagery on liturgical poetry (especially the classical *'ofan* form) is not unique to Halevi or even to Andalusian Hebrew poets. On the contrary, this is a common feature found in medieval poets in Spain, Northern France, Germany and Italy, Cf. E. Fleischer, *Hebrew Liturgical Poetry in the Middle Ages* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1975), p. 454; idem, *The Yoẓer Its Emergence and Development* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 252–267, 522, 620, 671. The relationship between *Hekhalot* hymns and formalized Synagogue prayers, especially the *qedushah,* has been the subject of much scholarly debate. Cf. I. Gruenwald, "Angelic Songs, the Qedushah and the Problem of the Origin of the Hekhalot Literature," in idem, *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism* (Frankfurt am Main, 1988), pp. 145–173, and references to other scholarly literature on pp. 145–146, nn. 3–7. See also Meir Bar-Ilan, *The Mysteries of Jewish Prayer and Hekhalot* [Hebrew] (Bar-Ilan, 1987).

no surprise to the historian of medieval Jewish thought. The possible influence of Islamic mysticism, especially in the form of Isma'ilism, on Judah Halevi has been suggested by several scholars, most notably, David Kaufmann,[23] Ignaz Goldziher,[24] Israel Efros[25] and Shlomo Pines,[26] while others have readily acknowledged the more general influence of Arabic Neoplatonism upon his thought.[27] Scholars have also noted the mystical tendencies in Halevi's poetry.[28] Halevi's indebtedness to Jewish mysticism, however, and, in particular, *merkavah* traditions, has been less frequently noted in the scholarly literature, the one major exception being Moshe Idel.[29] In the following sections I

[23] D. Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre in der jüdischen Religionsphilosophie von Saadia bis Maimuni* (Gotha, 1877), pp. 166, 177, n. 135, 202, n. 180, 220–221, n. 205, 232, n. 221.

[24] I. Goldziher, "Le *Amr ilahi(ha-'inyan ha-'elohi)* chez Juda Halévi," *REJ* 50 (1905): 32–41.

[25] I. Efros, "Some Aspects of Yehudah Halevi's Mysticism," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research* 11 (1941): 27–41, reprinted in idem, *Studies in Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (New York, 1974), pp. 141–154.

[26] S. Pines, "Shi'ite Terms in Judah Ha-Levi's *Kuzari*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 2 (1980): 165–251. On the relation of Halevi's *amr ilahi* to Isma'ili doctrine, see also idem, "La longue recension de la théologie d'Aristotle dans ses rapports avec la doctrine ismaélienne," *REI* (1955): 7–20. For another possible influence of this literature on Halevi, see idem, "On the Term *Ruḥaniyyut* and its Origin and on Judah Halevi's Doctrine" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 57 (1988): 511–540.

[27] See J. Schlanger, "La doctrine de la hièarchie dans le Livre du Kuzari de Jehuda Halevi," in *Le Néoplatonisme, Colloque de Royaumont, 9–13, juin 1969* (Paris, 1971), pp. 339–353; Vajda, "Le néoplatonisme dans la pensée juive," pp. 319–320, n. 10 (= *Melanges Georges Vajda*, pp. 417–418, n. 10); H. Greive, "Jehuda Halevi und die Philosophische Position des Abraham Ibn Ezra," *Judaica* 29 (1973): 141–148.

[28] Cf. A. Komem, "Between Poetry and Prophecy: Studies in the Poetry of Judah Halevi" [Hebrew], *Molad* 2 (1969): 676–698.

[29] Cf. M. Idel, "The World of Angels in Human Form" [Hebrew], in *Studies in Philosophy, Mysticism, and Ethical Literature presented to Isaiah Tishby on his Seventy-fifth Birthday* (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 15–19. See also H. Sérouya, *La Kabbale* (Paris, 1947), pp. 148–151, and the passing remark of Altmann,

wish to concentrate on some aspects of Halevi's thought which derive from *merkavah* speculation in both its classical and Geonic formulations. To be sure, as will be shown in the course of my analysis, these older mystical themes were combined with more contemporary Neoplatonic ideas and structures of thought, in some cases perhaps filtered through Sufi channels. It is nevertheless the case that Halevi was utilizing ancient Jewish mystical doctrine. The blending of *merkavah* imagery with Neoplatonism represents an important stage in the evolution of medieval Jewish thought. A fresh analysis of this dimension in Halevi's writings will undoubtedly enhance our appreciation of the soil that nurtured the intellectual roots of kabbalah.[30]

II

The influence of the *merkavah* traditions upon Halevi is brought out most clearly in the *Kuzari,* IV:3.[31] In a lengthy passage on the various divine names and the nature of prophetic revelation, Halevi notes, *inter alia,* that the verse, 'And under His feet there was the likeness of a pavement of sapphire' (Exod. 24:10), alludes to the fact that the nobles of Israel "perceived a spiritual form" (אלצורה אלרוחאניה) which is called

Studies, p. 188, while discussing Halevi's positive evaluation of *Shi'ur Qomah* in *Kuzari,* IV:3: "Jehuda Ha-Levi need not, of course, have expressed here his entire view of the work. Close as he was to Jewish mysticism, he might have regarded it as a repository of profound mysteries."

[30] A separate question, not the subject of this inquiry, is that of the affinity of later kabbalists for Halevi and their borrowing from or dependence upon his writings. Cf. Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre,* pp. 166–167, n. 120, and references to other scholarly literature given there. For Halevi's particular influence on the Gerona kabbalists, see Scholem, *Origins,* pp. 410–411, and references given in n. 107.

[31] In preparation of this paper the following editions have been consulted: *Kitâb al-Radd wa-'l Dalil fi 'l-Din al-Dhalil,* ed. D. Baneth and H. Ben-Shammai (Jerusalem, 1977); *Sefer ha-Kuzari,* trans. Yehudah ibn Tibbon; *Sefer ha-Kuzari,* trans. Yehudah Even-Shmu'el (Jerusalem, 1972).

the "God of Israel." In the continuation of the same passage we are told that this "divine form" (אלא צורה)[32] appears to human imagination in the most noble image, viz., that of a human being. In yet another comment in the same context there is a remark to the effect that in the time of Moses the vision of the spiritual form or light was available to persons other than prophets. Indeed, in a subsequent section of the *Kuzari* (IV:11) Halevi contrasts Moses' spiritual leadership with that of others on the grounds that Moses did not seek to limit prophetic revelation to the isolated few. On the contrary, Moses made the people stand near Mount Sinai "to see the light that he had seen ... and afterward he called the seventy elders and they saw it, as it says, 'They saw the God of Israel.'" The visible pole of revelation is therefore identified by Halevi as the God of Israel.[33]

[32] Ibn Tibbon translates Halevi's expression *'alâ ṣurah* in a somewhat ambiguous manner as דמותו, i.e., "his image." For a more literal rendering see Even-Shmu'el, *Sefer ha-Kuzari*, p. 162: צורת האלוה.

[33] It should be noted that the expression 'God of Israel' occurs in several biblical passages where some visionary experience of the divine is posited, most notably Exod. 24:10. Presumably, based on this usage Ezekiel adopted the terminology "glory of the God of Israel" (כבוד אלהי ישראל) to refer to the object of his vision. Cf. Ezek. 8:4, 10:19, 10:20, 11:22, 43:2, 44:2. The technical signification of the term אלהי ישראל in a theophanic context was not lost to subsequent generations of Jewish writers. Thus, for example, the term is used frequently in the textual units comprised within the corpus of *Hekhalot* literature. Cf. P. Schäfer, *Konkordanz zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen, 1986), s.v. ישראל, pp. 322–324, where numerous occurrences of the epithet "God of Israel" are recorded in the various manuscript codices in which these texts have been preserved. The *merkavah* mystics consciously chose this expression to refer to the aspects of God which were apprehended through the ecstatic-mystical experience. I would suggest that the verse in Exodus regarding the seeing of the God of Israel at Sinai, as well as its reflex in Ezekiel's vision of the glory of the God of Israel, probably informed the *merkavah* mystics' choice of this epithet to serve as a *terminus technicus* for the visible aspect of the divine glory. Analogously, as I will set out to demonstrate, in the case of Halevi the God of Israel is not merely a descriptive term qualifying the proper name of

The spiritual form *(al-ṣurah al-rûḥâniyyah)* which, as we have seen, Halevi equated with the biblical "God of Israel," is further identified by him as the world of the *merkavah* and all that is comprised in this world: the various classes of angels, the throne, and the visible aspect of the glory itself. That Halevi interpreted the throne-world of ancient Jewish mysticism in these terms is evident from his description of R. Aqiva as one "who approached the level of prophecy until [the point that] he had contact with the world of the spiritual entities (עאלם אלרוחאניין), as it says, Four entered the Pardes ... one entered in peace and exited in peace. Who was it? R. Aqiva" (III:65).[34] Pines suggested that this passage must be understood against the background of the term *pneumata* derived from Greek magical-theurgical texts of Late Antiquity which was rendered in Arabic philosophic sources as *al-ruḥaniyyat*.[35] While this etymology may be correct, as seems to be supported by other passages in Halevi, in this specific context it is important to emphasize that which Pines failed to note, viz., here the world of spiritual entities, *'alâm al-rûḥâniyyan ('olam ha-ruḥaniyyim),* is identified with the aggadic Pardes which is understood by Halevi as the celestial throne-world. That is to say, therefore, that in this case at least the spiritual entities comprise

God, but is rather a technical expression used to characterize the visible forms of divinity. In my opinion this is no mere coincidence, but represents a discernible philological link that connects Halevi with the Jewish mystical texts of which he was certainly aware. See also Judah Hadassi, *'Eshkol ha-Kofer* (Eupatoria, 1836), 27b.

[34] In the continuation of this passage Halevi describes Aqiva as one "who had contact with [or made use of] the two worlds without any danger. It has already been said concerning him, 'he was worthy to have the *Shekhinah* rest upon him like Moses but the time was not appropriate'." Cf. Israel of Zamosc in his commentary *'Oṣar Neḥmad ad loc.* who notes that a saying similar to this is found in B. Sanhedrin 11a but with reference to Hillel and Shmu'el ha-Qadan, and not R. Aqiva. He also suggests *Numbers Rabbah* 19:6 as a possible source: דברים שלא נגלו למשה נגלו לר"ע וחבירו.

[35] Pines, "On the Term *Ruḥaniyyut,*" p. 525.

the array of objects known from the pleroma of the *merkavah* mystics: the glory, the attendant angels, the chariot, and the throne. To be sure, the philosophical interpretation of this older motif is evident in the continuation of this very passage when Halevi describes the fate of another rabbi who entered the Pardes, Elisha ben Abuyah, as degrading the commandments "after contemplating the Intellects (אלעקליאת)." From this context, then, it may be concluded that Halevi identified the mystical Pardes with the realm of spiritual beings which are the immaterial Intellects. In yet another passage in the *Kuzari* (II:4), where the merging of ancient Jewish theosophy and contemporary philosophical terminology is evident as well, Halevi notes that the "spiritual forms" (אלצור אלרוחאניה) are called the "glory of the Lord" (כבוד יהוה) and, metaphorically, simply the Lord (יהוה).[36] In that same passage we are told that the *kavod* refers to "spiritual forms" that "are formed from the subtle spiritual substance (אלגסם אללטיף אלרוחאני) called the Holy Spirit (רוח הקדש)." In another context (IV:25) the Holy Spirit, identified as the Spirit of God (רוח אלהים) mentioned in *Sefer Yeṣirah* 1:9 as the first of the ten *sefirot,* is described as the

[36] This is also reflected in the view of Abraham ibn Ezra that the entire upper world is the glory, וכל זה העולם כבוד. See Standard Commentary *ad* Exod. 3:15 (ed. A. Weiser, 3 vols. [Jerusalem, 1977], 2:34), and cf. to Halevi's formulation in *Dîwân des Abu-l-Hasân Jehuda ha-Levi,* ed. H. Brody, with introduction, bibliography, additions and indices by A.M. Habermann, 4 vols. (Westmead, England, 1971), 3:69 (poem no. 36): מרומים מלא כבודו. Cf. ibn Ezra s statement in the Short Commentary *ad* Exod. 33:18 that "every glory is conjoined to God," כל כבוד דבק בשם (ed. Weiser, 2:343), i.e., every angel in virtue of its incorporeality cleaves to the divine essence. The use of the term כבוד (or the related terms נכבד and כבודים) as a generic name for the immaterial angelic realm or the soul that derives therefrom is found frequently in ibn Ezra's writings. See, e.g., Commentary *ad* Gen. 3:24; Exod. 19:20; Deut. 30:15; Ps. 14:2, 24:4, 36:9, 66:2, 76:5, 91:16, 103:1. Cf. Naḥman Krochmal, *Moreh Nevukhe ha-Zeman,* in *The Writings of Nachman Krochmal,* ed. S. Rawidowicz (Waltham, 1961), ch. 17, p. 288; M. Friedländer, *Essays on the Writings of Abraham ibn Ezra* (London, 1877), p. 15.

source "whence the angels, which are spiritual beings (אלמלאיכה אלרוחאניון),[37] are created, and to which the spiritual souls (אלאנפס אלרוחאניה), are conjoined."[38]

It has been suggested by Harry Wolfson that Halevi's conception of a "subtle spiritual substance" which is acted upon by a ray of divine light reflects a Neoplatonic view, traceable to Plotinus himself, regarding the light (φῶς) that proceeds from the One and acts upon the intelligible (νοητή) or divine (θεία) matter (ὕλη) or substance (οὐσία).[39] It was Wolfson's opinion,

[37] Cf. IV:3 where Halevi concludes that the word *mal'akh* can refer either to an entity created temporally from the subtle elements or to one of the incorruptible angels which may be further identified as the spiritual realities (אלרוחאניון) of which the philosophers speak. Halevi informs the reader that one is not obligated to reject or accept this philosophical position. Indeed, with respect to the angels seen by Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, Halevi flatly states that "it cannot be decided if they were from that which is created or from the enduring spiritual forms." The identification of the angels as incorruptible spiritual beings or forms finds expression as well in the writings of Halevi's contemporary, Abraham ibn Ezra, who likewise uses the term *ṣurot* to refer to the angelic beings whom he further identifies as the separate intelligences. Cf. ibn Ezra's Commentary on Dan. 2:11, 10:21. See below n. 90.

[38] Cf. *Dîwân,* 3:257 (poem no. 138): ברכי [נפשי] אצולה מרוח הקדש; ibid., 4:188 (poem no. 86): דרשה נשמה דבק בכסאך / כי דמתה אל כרוב ומלאך. (On the association of the intellect and the cherub, on one hand, and the imagination and an angel, on the other, cf. Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed,* II:6, interpreting *Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 10:20.) The theme of the soul deriving from the throne of glory is found in other poets influenced by Neoplatonic trends of thought. See, e.g., *The Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Solomon ibn Gabirol,* ed. D. Jarden, 2 vols. [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1977), 1:52; *The Religious Poems of Abraham ibn Ezra,* ed. I. Levin, 2 vols. [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1976–80) 1:114 (poem no. 63). Elsewhere (*Kuzari,* V:23) Halevi speaks of an aspect of the *Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh*, which is continuously with every member of Israel in any geographic area, as the "spiritual hidden Presence" in contrast to the aspect of the Presence "revealed to the eye" exclusively in the land of Israel. Cf. H. Davidson, "The Active Intellect in the Cuzari and Hallevi's Theory of Causality," *REJ* 131 (1972): 388. See also Halevi's discussion of the biblical appellation for God, קדוש ישראל, in IV:3.

[39] H.A. Wolfson, *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion,* 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1973), 2:89.

moreover, following the view of David Kaufmann,[40] that Halevi's conception shared much in common with Saadya's doctrine of the "second" and "first" air developed in his *Tafsir Kitâb al-Mabâdi.*[41] According to Saadya, the first air is a visible air which permeates all beings, whereas the second air is a more subtle and reified air, though it too is described as a created light. The second air, God's intermediary in creation, is identified as the Throne, the biblical *kavod* and the rabbinic *Shekhinah* or Holy Spirit. Out of this second air are produced the various forms that appear to the prophets, in a way analogous to Halevi's conception of the spiritual forms apprehended by the prophets being produced by the light of the Holy Spirit. The significant factor that Wolfson did not dwell upon is Halevi's indebtedness to older forms of Jewish mysticism. This indebtedness is highlighted if one compares his notion of *ṣurot ruḥaniyyot* with the cognate notion in standard Neoplatonic works. To take one example from a key medieval Neoplatonic text that may have been an important source for Halevi, the Pseudo-Empedoclean *Book of Five Substances.* In that text one reads about an "intellectual vision" (הראות השכלי) through which one can know the spiritual or intelligible forms (צורות שכליות רוחניות) which are the "impressions (or traces) of God" (רשומי השי"ת)[42] within the world of the Intellect (עולם השכל).[43] These forms are akin to the Plotinian conception of intelligibles (τα νοητα) within the second hypostasis, *Noûs,* that make up the intelligible world (κοσμός νοητός). Yet, for Halevi, the spiritual forms are not simply the intelligible ideas within the mind of God; they assume the character of the entities known from the

[40] Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre,* p. 183, n. 146.

[41] Wolfson, *Studies,* p. 93.

[42] Cf. *Kuzari,* I:77, but there the divine traces of which Halevi speaks are in the physical world.

[43] Cf. D. Kaufmann, *Studien über Salomon ibn Gabirol* (Budapest, 1899), pp. 18–19.

world of ancient Jewish throne-mysticism.[44] These forms collectively make up the visible glory.

The understanding of the *kavod* as comprising the entities of the chariot is affirmed as well by Halevi when he discusses the term *kevod YHWH* in IV:3. According to one opinion, the divine glory (כבוד יהוה) is a "subtle body (אלגסם אללטיף) which accomplishes the will of God, and assumes every form that God wills to make visible to the prophet," whereas, according to a second view, the glory refers to the "totality of angels and spiritual intermediaries: throne, chariot, firmament, ophanim, wheels, and other imperishable beings."[45] In still another sense the terms "glory of the Lord," "Angelhood (מלאכות) of the Lord,"[46] and "Presence of the Lord," can be applied metaphorically to natural phenomena, as in the verse, 'the whole earth is full of His glory' (Isa. 6:3), to indicate the immanence of God.[47] However, insofar as the third usage does not represent a distinct theory or doctrine of the *kavod* but merely accounts for one of its semantic applications, it may be concluded that reflected in Halevi's words are two differing conceptions of the *kavod.* It is

[44] To an extent this is true of other Jewish Neoplatonists, most notably, Solomon ibn Gabirol, Abraham bar Ḥiyya, and Abraham ibn Ezra.

[45] *Kuzari,* IV:3.

[46] See below, n. 53.

[47] Cf. *Dîwân,* 3:150–151, 232; 4:194; Silman, *Thinker and Seer: The Development of the Thought of R. Yehuda Halevi in the Kuzari* [Hebrew] (Bar-Ilan, 1985), pp. 167–171. The connection of the glory with divine immanence is expressed especially in Halevi's interpretation of a passage in *Sefer Yeṣirah* where the seven double letters are said to correspond to the six directions and the holy Palace (היכל קדש) in the middle. Concerning this seventh entity, the holy Palace, Halevi writes: "'Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place (Ezek. 3:12),' He is the place of the world but the world is not His place [cf. *Genesis Rabbah,* 68:10]; this alludes to the divine matter *(al-amr al-ilahi)* which joins the opposites" (IV:25). Halevi's interpretation is apparently based on Saadya's commentary to *Sefer Yeṣirah* 2:3, ed. J. Kafih (Jerusalem, 1972), p. 80; cf. Judah ben Barzillai, *Perush Sefer Yeṣirah*, ed. S.J. Halberstam (Berlin, 1895), pp. 231ff.

generally assumed that the first view corresponds to the notion of the created glory, first formulated by Saadya Gaon (882–942),[48] and the second to the Karaite view as expressed, for instance, by Judah Hadassi (12th century) who identifies the *kavod* with the sum of angels and divine beings (sometimes referred to in the plural form *kevodot*) including the throne itself.[49] In the opinion of several scholars Halevi accepted the validity of both views,[50] though according to at least one traditional commentator, Israel ben Moses Halevi of Zamosc

[48] Cf. Efros, *Studies,* p. 152, n. 50; Altmann, *Studies,* pp. 140–160. It should be noted that Altmann considered the Jewish mystical tradition of *ma'aseh merkavah* as a possible source for Saadya's doctrine of *kavod nivra'*. See *loc. cit.,* pp. 153–154. Altmann reached this conclusion on the basis of the fact that for Saadya the *kavod* is mentioned together with the throne and the attendant angels. It must be emphasized, however, that the very notion of a created glory, the central pillar of Saadya's theory of revelation, is not found in the ancient Jewish mystical tradition. Moreover, in other respects a tendency to transpose the earlier mystical ideas in a philosophical or scientific vein is discernible in Saadya's writings, as has been shown, for example, by H. Ben-Shammai, "Saadya's Goal in his *Commentary on Sefer Yeṣirah*," in *A Straight Path Studies in Medieval Philosophy and Culture: Essays in Honor of Arthur Hyman,* ed. R. Link-Salinger (Washington, D.C., 1988), pp. 1–9. On the philosophical orientation of Saadya's commentary, see also G. Vajda, "Sa'adya commentateur du 'Livre de la Création'," *Annuaire de l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Sciences Religieuses* (1959–60): 5 (*Mélanges,* p. 39). For a possible Aristotelian interpretation of the opening passage of *Sefer Yesirah* in the *Kuzari,* see R. Jospe, "The Superiority of Oral Over Written Communication: Judah Ha-Levi's *Kuzari* and Modern Jewish Thought," in *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism,* 3: 131–133.

[49] Cf. Altmann, *Studies,* p. 155, n. 66; D. Lasker, "The Philosophy of Judah Hadassi the Karaite" [Hebrew], in the *Shlomo Pines Jubilee Volume on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday, Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought 7* (1988): 487–488; idem, "Judah Halevi and Karaism," in *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism,* 3: 115. On the interchange between the angel and the glory in Karaite theology, cf. Jephet ibn Ali, *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel,* ed. and trans. D.S. Margoliouth (Oxford, 1889), pp. 56–57.

[50] Cf. Wolfson, *Studies,* 2:90–95; Lasker, "Judah Halevi and Karaism," p. 115. See also Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre,* pp. 185–186.

(ca. 1700–1772), Halevi preferred the first view.[51] I would like to suggest that from other discussions in the *Kuzari* it can be shown that Halevi's own orientation was closer to the second view which for him resonated with ancient Jewish mystical speculation on the chariot and the enthroned glory.

The Saadianic influence in the first view has been noted already by several scholars:[52] the *kavod* or *Shekhinah* is a created light made visible to the prophets in multiple forms in order to substantiate the divine veracity of the revealed word. Prophetic visions, according to this position, are not visions of God at all, but rather of a created luminous substance called by a host of names culled from the Bible and rabbinic writings. Confirmation of this view is to be found in a previous part of IV:3, where Halevi writes that the intermediary through which the divine is revealed is called by various names, to wit, glory (כבוד), Presence (שכינה), Kingship (מלכות),[53] fire and cloud, image and form, and appearance of the rainbow.[54] All of these phe-

[51] Cf. *'Oṣar Neḥmad* ad *Kuzari*, IV:3, already noted by Lasker, *op. cit.*, p. 115, n. 17.

[52] Cf. Wolfson, *Studies*, 2:93; the studies of Efros and Altmann referred to in n. 48; Silman, *Thinker and Seer*, p. 178, n. 40.

[53] At the end of IV:3, Halevi speaks of "the glory of God, the angelhood (מלאכות) of God, and the *Shekhinah*." Cf. II:7. Similar terminology can be detected in his poetry as well; see, e.g., *Dîwân*, 3:123 (poem no. 64): "And they will see your kingdom (מלכותו) and by means of your messengership (ובמלאכותו) they will go." See ibid., p. 262 (poem no. 138) where *shem*, *malkhut*, and *kavod* are used interchangeably and are further identified as the light of God's countenance. And see ibid., p. 292 (poem no. 145), and 4:145 (poem no. 62). Cf. Wolfson, *Studies*, 2:86, n. 89; Efros, *Studies*, pp. 151–153. According to Efros, the confusion between the usage of these two words is explained by the fact that both terms derive from the Arabic conception of *'âlam al-malakût*, i.e., the changeless world of angels. There is an obvious similarity between Halevi's terminology and subsequent kabbalistic doctrine concerning the last *sefirah* which is called by the names *kavod*, *Shekhinah*, and *malkhut*. Cf. Joseph Albo, *Sefer ha-'Iqqarim* (Warsaw, 1877), II:11.

[54] Cf. *Kuzari*, II:26 where Halevi distinguishes between three kinds of light: the known revealed fire (אלנאר אלטאהרה אלמשהורה), the subtle hidden fire (פלנאר הי

nomena "were proof that the [prophetic] word [or speech] came from God to those individuals [i.e., the prophets], and they called it the 'glory of the Lord' (כבוד יהוה), and sometimes simply 'Lord' (יהוה)." This formulation indeed bears a strong resemblance to the doctrine of the created glory of Saadya Gaon who likewise maintained that the purpose of the visual appearance of the glory was to establish the ultimate authenticity of the divine word.

Yet, some of the other comments made by Halevi suggest that he may have been reflecting an understanding of the *kavod* that is essentially at variance with Saadya's doctrine of the created glory. That is, the *kavod* is not a created entity that is manifest at given intervals of time, but is rather an incorruptible spiritual form — a "spark of divine light"[55] — that can assume the diverse shapes of the entities that occupy the throne-world. These spiritual forms, in turn, express the tangible or visible manifestation of the divine reality which is *per se* incorporeal and invisible. The possible relation of Halevi's usage of the term "spiritual forms" to refer to the whole range of entities in the throne-world, to wit, the glory of God, the angels, the chariot, the firmament, the ophanim, and the wheels, and the occurrence of the term "holy forms" (צורות קדושות) in the *Sefer ha-Bahir* to refer to spiritual entities connected to the throne has been noted by Idel.[56] Moreover, from a terminological standpoint it can be shown that Halevi's usage of *kavod* reflects

אכפי ואלטף), and the light of wisdom and knowledge (נור אלחכמה ואלאלהאם). These three correspond to the burnt-offering altar, the altar of gold, and the candelabrum. In Halevi's own terms, the purpose of the three objects is to enable the person to cleave to each of the respective luminous entities. In the continuation of that passage Halevi adds yet another light which is manifest through the Urim and Tummim, viz., the light of prophecy (נור אלנבוה).

[55] *Kuzari*, II:8. Cf. ibid., II:50.

[56] See Idel, *New Perspectives*, pp. 124–125. Another parallelism between an image in the *Kuzari* and *Sefer ha-Bahir* was noted by Scholem, *Origins*, pp. 78–79.

well the way that this term was used in the ancient Jewish mystical speculation. That is, in the texts that make up the *Hekhalot* corpus the word *kavod* functions as a generic name that embraces all the constituent elements in the heavenly realm that are visually apprehended by the mystic in his ecstatic ascent: the chariot, the celestial chambers, the different angelic hosts,[57] the throne and the glory itself. From that perspective the word *kavod* is interchangeable with *merkavah,* so that it may be said that the one who has seen the chariot has seen the glory.[58] Given this usage in Jewish mystical texts, as well as other Jewish literature influenced by the former, it seems to me necessary to qualify the generally accepted assumption that the second view of the *kavod* espoused by Halevi in IV:3 simply reflects the Karaite position. I do not mean to suggest that there is no similarity between Hadassi's understanding of the *kavod* and Halevi's description. The point that I wish to emphasize is that Halevi's own characterization of this second view, an alternative to the Saadianic one, is colored by the descriptions of the chariot known from the Jewish mystical literature which are, at least in part, exegetical elaborations of the relevant biblical material.[59] Indeed, assuming that the second view refers to the Karaite notion, then I would suggest that what allowed Halevi to cite this position, and in fact to espouse a view quite similar to it in other contexts, is the proximity of it to what he

[57] This semantic usage is attested, for example, in an early *piyyuṭ* attributed to Yose ben Yose, published by E. Fleischer, *Qoveṣ 'al Yad* 7 (1968): 70: "The beasts, the cherubim, and the holy seraphs [are] His glory, they shine and rejoice in glorifying His glorious name, וחיות וכרובים ושרפי הקודש כבודו / זוהרים ושמיחים לפאר שם כבוד.

[58] Cf. G. Scholem, *Major Trends,* pp. 46, 358, n. 16; idem, *Jewish Gnosticism,* pp. 67–68; R. Elior, "The Concept of God in Hekhalot Mysticism" [Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6 (1987): 34–35.

[59] See Efros, *Studies,* p. 152, n. 48, who commented on the link between Halevi's second use of *kavod* and the theophanic sense of this term in Hebraic sources, beginning already with the Bible. He did not, however, focus especially on the Jewish mystical tradition.

considered to be the authentic *merkavah* tradition. That Halevi's understanding of the visual *kavod* is influenced by the *Hekhalot* texts is supported by the concluding remark of *Kuzari,* IV:3, wherein he notes that biblical anthropomorphisms and theophanies, e.g., Exod. 24:10 and Num. 12:8, as well as *Ma'aseh Merkavah* and even *Shi'ur Qomah* must be understood in light of the doctrine of *kavod* or *Shekhinah.* That is, that which Scripture refers to as the "God of Israel" or the "image of God" is identical with the visible glory of the *Hekhalot* text as well as the measurable Demiurge of the *Shi'ur Qomah* tradition. Halevi adds that the ethical-religious value of these visionary claims is to instill fear in the hearts of believers. It is clear, however, that the true significance of his position is the interpretation of both the prophetic and mystical traditions in light of his doctrine of *kavod* as comprising the spiritual forms of the chariot realm.

The influence of *merkavah* imagery in Halevi's conception of the *kavod* can be seen from another vantage point as well. For Halevi the spiritual forms in the throne-world are not discrete entities but constitute one organic or anatomical unity visualized or imagined in the prophetic eye as an anthropos. In this regard it is of interest to consider the fact that in the throne speculation of the German Pietists the various beings that make up the chariot world are not discrete entities but rather constitute an organic unity. Thus, for example, in his commentary on Ezekiel's vision of the chariot Eleazar of Worms writes: "All the beasts, the ophanim and wheels are one body like branches of a tree."[60] In another work, his voluminous commentary on the mystical aspects of the liturgy, Eleazar makes a similar point: "Zion and Jerusalem are close, all is one [just as] the beasts and wheels are one body, for the spirit of the beasts is in the wheels, and the beasts have four heads and one body."[61] The position is

[60] MS Paris 850, fol. 50a.

[61] MS Paris 772, fol. 109b.

stated even more precisely by the Castilian kabbalist of the second half of the thirteenth century, Moses of Burgos, a student of Jacob and Isaac ha-Kohen who were greatly influenced by the writings of Eleazar. In his *Sefer ha-'Orah* he notes: "The eight beasts, the eight chariots above the highest firmament, and the eight wheels of the chariot and the four ophanim of the chariot, are all set in one body."[62] In other passages Eleazar maintains that the four beasts who bear the throne comprise one body which is likened to a cherub or an anthropos.[63] Evidence for a similar tradition is to be found in the texts that derived from the independent group of Pietists, the *Ḥug ha-Keruv ha-Meyuḥad* ("Circle of the Special Cherub").[64] Without entering here into the complex intricacies of these different theosophies, suffice it to say that in the Ashkenazi *merkavah* speculation the chariot realm was viewed as one organic whole whose different parts were thought to be attached one to another like limbs of a human body. Indeed, the throne-world was imagined as an anthropomorphic body.[65] I assume that this tradition, shared by the two Pietistic circles, was not innovated by either of them, but rather derives from a common source that has its roots in much older speculation on the chariot in Jewish esotericism. It is plausible that some such tradition influenced Halevi as well.

That Halevi knew of and utilized such a tradition is evident in another passage in IV:3, which has been discussed most

[62] MS JTS Mic. 1806, fol. 18a.

[63] Cf. *Sode Razaya'*, ed. I. Kamelhar (Bilgoraj, 1936), p. 33; *Sode Razaya'*, ed. S. Weiss, p. 141; Farber, "The Concept of the Merkabah," pp. 424, 553.

[64] Cf. *Baraita' de-Yosef ben 'Uzi'el,* MS Paris 770, fol. 33a; Elḥanan ben Yaqar, *Sod ha-Sodot,* in *Tekstim be-Torat ha-'Elohut shel Ḥasidut 'Ashkenaz,* ed. J. Dan (Jerusalem, 1977), p. 19. Concerning this circle, cf. J. Dan, *The Esoteric Theology,* pp. 52–55, 156–164, 255–258; idem, *Studies in Ashkenazi Hasidic Literature* [Hebrew] (Ramat-Gan, 1976), pp. 89–111.

[65] Cf. Farber, "The Concept of the Merkabah," p. 421.

recently by Idel. Halevi distinguishes two senses in which we can understand the anthropomorphic tendency to compare the Creator to a human being. On the one hand, there is the philosophic or rationalistic conception according to which the anthropomorphism is rooted in the comparison of God to the rational soul. That is, just as man, who is the microcosm, comprises a soul and body, so too the soul of the macrocosm (the world) is the divine being. In this very limited sense God is figuratively likened to a human. There is, however, an alternative explanation, one that is based on a prophetic-visionary experience as contrasted to rational comprehension. Here it would be in order to cite Halevi's own language:

> Do not question that the image of man has been [attributed to the Creator]... For God is the spirit of the world, its soul and intellect, its life... Thus the image has been clarified according to the intellect. How much more so, according to prophecy, whose vision is greater than logic. The vision comprehends the upper multitude [i.e., the world of angels] directly and sees the host of heavens, the spiritual entities close [to God] and the other ones apart from them, in the image of man. These are alluded to in the verse, 'Let us make man in our image and likeness' (Gen. 1:26).[66]

Prophetic vision, in contrast to philosophic ratiocination, apprehends the multiplicity of spiritual entities which together comprise the form of an anthropos. Idel has argued that Halevi's account must be understood in light of an earlier *merkavah* tradition concerning the configuration of the world of angels as an anthropomorphic structure. Idel further suggested that the spiritual form which Halevi identified as the biblical God of Israel likewise must be understood in the context of this *merkavah* tradition. Hence, for Halevi, the "visible" glory of God is the totality of spiritual forms which together constitute the form of a human being. This anthropos, in turn, is the measurable being of the *Shi'ur Qomah* tradition, now under-

[66] *Kuzari*, IV:3.

stood not as the Godhead but as the totality of angelic beings that comprise the divine back. Indeed, according to Halevi, it is this vision of the chariot and angelic world which Moses wanted to attain in his request of God, 'Show me Thy glory' (Exod. 33:18). Moses was granted to see God's back, i.e., the "glory which prophetic vision alone can bear," but not the face which "no mortal creature has the power to endure." The back of the glory included those theophanic elements related in the chariot visions of the prophets and mystics. Again we see that the doctrine of *kavod* implied here must be distinguished from the Saadianic conception. For Saadya, the object of *Shi'ur Qomah* speculation was a created light apprehended only by the angels, distinct from the light apprehended by the prophets;[67] for Halevi, the object of both prophetic and mystical visions, including therefore the measurable form in the *Shi'ur Qomah* tradition, is a spiritual form which is, in truth, multiple in its manifestations, comprising nothing less than the totality of the angelic realm that is visible to human beings through a special means of vision.

The identification of the *kavod* as the back of the divine, which encompasses the angelic hosts of the chariot realm seen by the prophets, is implied as well in the following stanza from Halevi's poem, אלהים אל מי אמשילך:[68]

יי צבאות שם כבוד מלכותך	יי אחד שם אלהותך
המון מלכותך יספר ולא ידבר	ואל אלהותך שני לא יחבר
וכמה פנים לפנים הנוראים	וכמה אחורים לאחורים הנראים
דגלי מרכבה הקמת לעד ולאות	כי הדבר מאת יי צבאות
הכל עבדיך משרתי פניך	גבורי כח עושי רצונך
הם הנעלמים מעיני ברואיך	הם הנראים לעיני נביאיך

[67] Cf. Judah ben Barzillai, *Perush Sefer Yeṣirah*, pp. 20–21. Concerning the critical distinction between two aspects of the glory in Saadya, cf. Dan, *The Esoteric Theology*, pp. 109–111; idem, "Kavod Nistar," in *Dat we-Safah*, ed. M. Ḥallamish and A. Kasher (Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 73–76.

[68] *Dîwân*, 3:288–289 (poem no. 145).

In the first part of this poem Halevi states categorically that God has no image to which He may be compared, or which may be comprehended by the heart or seen by the eye. The "pure souls,"[69] however, are said to see the divine, although not by means of the eye,[70] ראוך הנשמות טהורות / ולא נצרכו למאורות, and to hear God through an inner ear, or literally, the ear of their thoughts, for their ears are deafened,[71] כי / שמעוך באזני רעיוניהם תחרשנה אוניהם.[72] The invisible face of God, described as awesome, is contrasted with the back which is visible, the poet skillfully playing on the words awesome, הנוראים, and visible, הנראים. This visible aspect is further characterized as comprising the camps of angels surrounding the chariot which are hidden from the eyes of all but the prophets.

III

Another aspect of Halevi's discussion of prophecy may also have its origin in Jewish speculation on the vision of the chariot. I refer to Halevi's claim that the spiritual forms can assume diverse shapes within the prophetic imagination — also identified by Halevi as the "inner" or "spiritual" eye and the heart (to be discussed more fully below) — which collectively express the tangible or visible manifestation of the divine

[69] From the context it would appear that these "pure souls" are angelic beings; Cf. J. Schirmann, *Hebrew Poetry in Spain and Provence,* 2 vols. [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1961), 1:533, n. 20 (poem no. 237). It is possible, however, that this expression also refers to human souls which are bound to the throne in the angelic realm, a usage attested in other Andalusian poetry such as that of Solomon ibn Gabirol; cf. *The Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Yehuda Halevi,* ed. D. Jarden [Hebrew], 4 vols. (Jerusalem, 1978–1986), 1:105, n. 20 (poem no. 36).

[70] On the rhetorical use of the word מאורות for eyes, see the example of Samuel ha-Nagid cited by A. Even-Shoshan, *Ha-Millon he-Ḥadash* (Jerusalem, 1980), s.v., מאור.

[71] Cf. Micah 7:16.

[72] *Dîwân,* 3: 288 (poem no. 145).

reality.[73] The spiritual forms are thus configured symbolically within the prophet's imagination. In IV:3 Halevi informs the reader that the most perfect of forms (אכמל אלצור) apprehended by the inner eye of prophetic vision is that of the king or judge sitting on the throne of judgment. In his lengthy disputation on *Sefer Yeṣirah* in IV:25 Halevi comments that the statement, גלגל בשנה כמלך במדינה לב בנפש כמלך במלחמה תלי בעולם כמלך על כסאו (*Sefer Yeṣirah* 6:2), refers to three symbolic depictions of the *'inyan ha-'elohi,* for the *teli* symbolizes the intelligible world (עאלם אלעקל), the *galgal* the extended sphere of the sun (פלך אלשמס), and the *lev* the realm of animate beings (אלחיואן). The figurative expressions thus represent the providential role of the *'inyan ha-'elohi* in each of the realms of being. What is most important for this discussion is the fact that for Halevi the cosmological role of the *'inyan ha-'elohi* in the highest realm, that of the Intellects (= תלי), is symbolized by the image of the king on the throne — the same image that serves as the highest form within the prophetic imagination. This point is reiterated in slightly different terms in one of Halevi's poems, יה שמך ארוממך:[74]

וברצותו בבן־ביתו באהלו שת שכינתו
ושם מראות לנבואות להביט אל תמונתו
ואין תבנית ואין תכנית ואין קץ לתבונתו
רק מראיו בעין נביאיו כמלך רם מתנשא

When He desired his servant,[75]
In His tent He set His Presence[76]
He placed the visions for the prophets,
To look upon His image;[77]

[73] In IV:3 Halevi compares the prophet's vision of the spiritual forms to the aggadic tradition concerning Moses' vision of the heavenly Tabernacle before the building of the earthly one. See also I:99 (discussed below).

[74] *Dîwân,* 3:231 (poem no. 128).

[75] The reference is to Moses (see the next note) though the scriptural basis for the terminology is clearly Gen. 15:3.

[76] Cf. Exod. 33:7–11.

[77] Cf. Num. 12:6–8; *Leviticus Rabbah* 1:14.

There is no form[78] or measure,[79]
Nor a limit to His understanding,
Only His appearance in the eyes of the prophets,
Like an exalted and elevated king.

The image of God visualized in the prophet's eye is thus that of an exalted and elevated king, viz., the enthroned anthropos known from biblical theophanies and developed further in the chariot mysticism. The "eye of the prophet" is not simply a figurative expression but must be construed as a technical reference to the imaginative faculty which Halevi likewise designates in a key passage in *Kuzari,* IV:3 as the "inner" or "spiritual" eye.[80]

Here we would do well to pause to consider more carefully Halevi's notion of prophetic vision and the specific role of imagination, for through such a consideration we can appreciate better Halevi's indebtedness to the *merkavah* traditions, especially as they were interpreted in Geonic literature. Halevi rejects the standard medieval philosophic interpretation of prophecy as a state produced by the Active Intellect operating upon the human intellect and imagination.[81] Thus in *Kuzari,* I:87 Halevi writes that according to Jewish belief "prophecy did not (as philosophers assume) burst forth in a pure soul, become united with the Active Intellect (also termed Holy Spirit[82] or Gabriel), and be then inspired."[83] Moreover,

[78] Cf. *Dîwân,* 3:5 (poem no. 4).

[79] Cf. Ezek. 43:10.

[80] Cf. *Dîwân,* 3:75 (poem no. 38): יחו לשון / חזות אישון / אשר יחזו / פלאיך.

[81] Cf. Davidson, "The Active Intellect in the Cuzari," pp. 366–367. For the intellectual background of this view of prophecy, see F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam: Philosophy and Orthodoxy* (Chicago, 1958), pp. 30–91.

[82] Halevi here is following a view expressed in both Alfarabi and Avicenna; see Efros, *Studies,* p. 142, n. 4.

[83] See, by contrast, *Kuzari,* V:12 where Halevi presents a more straightforward philosophic account of prophetic illumination arising from the conjunction of the human intellect with the Universal Intellect (אלאתצאל באלעקל אלכלי). In that passage the philosopher of Halevi's exposition represents the opinion of Avicenna; cf. Pines, "Shi'ite Terms and Conceptions," p. 211.

continues Halevi, Jews do not believe that "Moses had seen a vision in sleep, or that someone had spoken with him between sleeping and waking, so that he only heard the words in fancy [i.e., the imagination], but not with his ears, that he saw a phantom, and afterwards pretended that God had spoken with him." The implication of Halevi's rejection of the standard philosophic view is that from the Jewish perspective, as he presents it, the object of prophecy is a real entity, albeit spiritual in nature, that is apprehended by the individual.[84] The content of prophecy does not result from the prophet's intellectual conjunction with the Active Intellect as mediated through his imaginative faculty; it is rather an objectively verifiable datum,[85] although the means of verification may exceed the bounds of the normal processes of sense or intellection. For Halevi, that is, prophecy is more than a mere psychological state; it entails the same presumption of veridicality as normal sense experience, but in the case of prophecy the objective correlate of the vision is a spiritual form that, in the prophetic state, becomes tangible.[86] Indeed, for Halevi, the fundamental

[84] Cf. Davidson, "The Active Intellect in the Cuzari," pp. 389–390. See also C. Sirat, *Les Théories des visions surnaturelles dans la pensée juive du moyen-âge* (Leiden, 1969), pp. 86–87. With respect to this theme Halevi shares a basic orientation with theosophic kabbalists who similarly emphasize the "objective" pole of prophetic vision as opposed to the more psychologically-oriented explanation of the philosophers; see E. Wolfson, "The Hermeneutics of Visionary Experience: Revelation and Interpretation in the *Zohar*," *Religion* 18 (1988): 315; and idem, "The Secret of the Garment in Nahmanides," *Da'at* 24 (1989–90): XXV–XLIX.

[85] See Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam,* p. 38, who draws a distinction between the views on prophecy of Alfarabi and Avicenna on the basis that the former, unlike the latter, tried to maintain the objective correlate for the pyschological state of prophecy.

[86] Cf. Davidson, "The Active Intellect in the Cuzari," p. 389, who tries to uphold a distinction between the "tangibility" of the *Shekhinah* and its "corporeality." That is, according to Davidson, Halevi's view that the *Shekhinah* is the tangible aspect that provides the visible element in prophecy does not nec-

paradox of prophetic revelation, that which the believing Jew cannot explain but must accept, is predicated on the fact that in the moment of prophecy the spiritual, incorporeal intention of God becomes tangible in both a visible and audible form known scripturally as the God of Israel.[87]

The means to ascertain this form are decidedly mental or spiritual, i.e., the prophet hears and sees in a way quite distinct from the physical senses.[88] Halevi also contrasts prophetic vision with the process of rational insight or discursive reasoning.[89] Thus, in IV:3, as I have already noted above, Halevi asserts that the prophets have an "inner eye" (אלעין אלבאטנה) or "spiritual eye" (אלעין אלרוחאניה) through which they see the spiritual forms.[90] Halevi goes on to identify this "inner

essarily entail that for him the *Shekhinah* is a physical body. It is clear that one of Halevi's main preoccupations is affirming the joining or conjunction of the incorporeal with the corporeal; see, e.g., *Kuzari,* I:25, 68.

[87] Cf. *Kuzari,* I:89, IV:17; Sirat, *Les Théories des visions surnaturelles,* p. 87.

[88] Cf. *Dîwân,* 3:288–289 (poem no. 145).

[89] Cf. *Kuzari,* I:95 where Halevi speaks of the divine faculty which is above the intellect, the attainment of which enables one to be conjoined with God and the spiritual entities. In such a state, moreover, one comprehends the intelligible truths without inquiry or study. In that context the imagination is not mentioned.

[90] In a way strikingly close to Halevi, Abraham ibn Ezra in one place describes the angelic hosts that inhabit the third world as the "wonderful forms and awesome visions" (צורות מופלאות ומראות נוראות) which one beholds with the "inner eye" (בעיני קרביך) or "eye of the heart" (ובאישוני לבבך) as opposed to the physical eye. Cf. *Iggeret Ḥay ben Mekitz*, ed. I. Levin (Tel Aviv, 1983), pp. 82–83. See also Short Commentary to Exod. 23:20, and Commentary to Exod. 33:21; Ps. 139:18. On the use of the term *ṣurot* in ibn Ezra, see above, n. 37. The motif of the eye of the heart is repeated often in ibn Ezra's poetry. See, e.g., *The Religious Poems of Abraham ibn Ezra,* ed. I. Levin, 1: 26 (poem no. 2), 67 (poem no. 38), 69 (poem no. 39), 97 (poem no. 54), 112 (poem no. 62), 120 (poem no. 66), 126 (poem no. 69), 480 (poem no. 243), 515 (poem no. 258). Cf. A.M. Habermann, "Ten Poems of Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra" [Hebrew], *Sefer Ḥayyim Schirmann*, eds. S. Abramson and A. Mirsky (Jerusalem, 1970), p. 84, poem no. 4, n. 4. Despite the closeness in terminology between ibn Ezra and Halevi (for similar terminology in other Andalusian Jewish poets, see below, n. 134), the

eye" as the "internal sense" (אלחס אלבאטן) which in turn may be identified with the imagination (אלמתכילה)[91] through which the prophet apprehends the spiritual or incorporeal form.[92] With

role of the inner eye is quite different in the two thinkers, though scholars have tended to treat the two as espousing the same view; cf. Levin, 1:26 (poem no. 2, n. 3), 112 (poem no. 62, n. 4). That is, for ibn Ezra, in marked contrast to Halevi, the heart's eye is the rational faculty in a human being seemingly unrelated to the imagination. Thus, on occasion ibn Ezra uses the expression "eye of the intellect" (עין השכל) instead of "eye of the heart" (עין הלב) indicating that the two terms have the same meaning. Cf. Levin, 2:449 (poem no. 404): אחוך בעין שכלי. In numerous other poems of ibn Ezra it is evident that the heart (sometimes he uses the expression "splendor of the heart," יקר הלב) is identical with reason which is the highest aspect of the human soul; see, e.g., Levin, 1:51 (poem no. 27), 110 (poem no. 61), 113–114 (poem no. 63), 125 (poem no. 68), 127 (poem no. 70), 462 (poem no. 237), 483 (poem no. 244); 2:180 (poem no. 309), 215 (poem no. 325), 220 (poem no. 327). This usage is reflected as well in ibn Ezra's biblical commentaries. See, e.g., Commentary to Gen 1:1 (ed. Weiser [Jerusalem, 1977], 1:12): וכן נשמת האדם העליונה תקרא לב ... בעבור היות הלב מרכבת הראשונה לה; Deut 6:5 (ed. Weiser, 3:235): הלב הוא הדעת והוא כנוי לרוח המשכלת כי הוא המרכבה הראשונה.

[91] For an historical survey of the relevant terminology, see Wolfson, *Studies,* 1:250–314.

[92] It is of interest to compare the role accorded the imagination in Halevi's theory of prophecy with the description of the prophetic state found in Ḥayyim Vital, *Sha'are Qedushah* (Vilna, 1834), Part 3, Gate 5, fol. 26a: "The *Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh* rests on a person when he is awake, when the soul is in his body and does not leave it [as in sleep]. But [the prophetic state involves] the matter of separation [of the soul from the body] for he removes [from his mind] all [mundane] thoughts entirely. And the imaginative faculty in him, which is a faculty that derives from the elementary animal soul, prevents him from imagining or thinking about any matter pertaining to this world as if his soul left him. Then his imaginative faculty transforms his thoughts such that he imagines that he ascends to the upper worlds to the roots of his soul ... and the forms of all the lights will be strengthened in his thought as if he imagined and saw them as is the way of the imaginative faculty to imagine in his mind things of this world even though he does not [actually] see them.... Within his imaginative faculty these [spiritual] matters assume a corporeal form so that [the prophet] can comprehend them as if he actually saw them with the [physical] eye (ושם יצטיירו העניינים ההם ציור גשמי בכחו המדמה ואז יבינם כאלו רואה אותן

respect to the relationship of this imagination to reason, Halevi appears to espouse two opposite views. On the one hand, he seems to allot a secondary role to reason, for he states that reason brings proofs for that which the spiritual eye has already seen, presumably in a direct, intuitive way, a view found elsewhere in Halevi.[93] On the other hand, he follows philosophic convention when he states explicitly in this very passage that the inner eye, the imaginative faculty, sees the spiritual forms only when "it is subject to the rational faculty," thereby implying that the imagination is secondary. From an examination of other passages in the *Kuzari,* not to mention his poetry, it may be concluded that the former represents the opinion he accepts in the vast majority of instances. That is, the imagination is the spiritual faculty through which one can discern that which is unavailable to reason.

It is likely, as scholars have pointed out, that Halevi's conception of the inner eye is based on precedents in Islamic philosophy.[94] Moreover, his identification of the faculty which apprehends incorporeal spiritual forms as the imagination *(mutakhayyilah)* can be traced to earlier philosophical discussions within the Neoplatonic tradition. A clear example of this can be found, for instance, in the *Kitâb al-Ustuqussât* of Isaac Israeli (ca. 855–ca. 955). In Israeli's view the mechanics of

בעין ממש). For discussion on the role of imagination in Lurianic texts, cf. R. Meroz, "Aspects of the Lurianic Doctrine of Prophecy," M.A. thesis, Hebrew University, 1980 [Hebrew], pp. 10–20.

[93] Cf. *Kuzari,* I:15, 95; II:48; IV:15; V:15; Silman, *Thinker and Seer,* pp. 161–163.

[94] Cf. A. Ivry, "The Philosophical and Religious Arguments in Rabbi Yehuda Halevy's Thought" [Hebrew], in *Thought and Action: Essays in Memory of Simon Rawidowicz on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of his Death,* ed. A.A. Greenbaum and A. Ivry (Tel-Aviv, 1983), p. 28. On possible Sufi connections, see Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre,* pp. 177, n. 135, and 202, n. 180 where Halevi's conception of the inner eye is traced specifically to al-Ghazzâlî (see ibid., pp. 166, 220–221, n. 205, 232, n. 221); and Davidson, "The Active Intellect in the Cuzari," p. 367, n. 4.

prophetic vision are as follows: during sleep the spiritual forms (הצורות הרוחניות), which are intermediate between corporeality and spirituality, are impressed upon the *sensus communis* which is itself intermediate between the corporeal sense of sight and the imagination proper *(fantâsiya)* which is said to reside in the anterior ventricle of the brain. The *sensus communis* then transmits these forms, clarified by the intellect, to the imaginative faculty which receives them in a more subtle way. "We mentioned that the forms with which intellect clarifies the spiritual forms are intermediate between corporeality and spirituality because they result from the imaginative representations of the corporeal forms, and are more subtle, spiritual, and luminous than the latter, which are found in our waking state and are full of darkness and shells."[95] The imaginative faculty transfers the images to the memory where they are stored. In a state of wakefulness the person seeks to comprehend the spiritual meaning of these imaginative forms (דמיונות) through the cogitative faculty and will thus completely purify the forms of all vestiges of corporeality.[96] From Israeli's description it is evident that the intellect plays a critical role in the production of these imaginative forms; indeed, it seems that the imagination itself serves the rational soul, a point implied in Halevi's remarks as well. The intermediate role acorded to the imagination between sense perception and reason can be traced back to Neoplatonic sources and ultimately goes back to some Aristotelian ideas.[97]

The doctrine of "imaginative revelation" is found as well in the writings of Alfarabi (ca. 870–950) and taken over with some

[95] A. Altmann and S.M. Stern, *Isaac Israeli A Neoplatonic Philosopher of the Early Tenth Century* (Oxford, 1958), p. 136.

[96] Ibid., pp. 135–137.

[97] As has been pointed out with respect to Alfarabi by R. Walzer, "Al-Fârâbî's Theory of Prophecy and Divination," in idem, *Greek into Arabic Essays on Islamic Philosophy* (Oxford, 1962), p. 211. See also Wolfson, *Studies,* 1:315–330; Altmann and Stern, *op. cit.,* pp. 142–143; C. Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 64–65.

modification by Avicenna (980–1037). According to Alfarabi, the imaginative faculty has, in addition to the standard functions of retaining impressions of things apprehended by the physical senses and constructing new images on the basis of the sensory impressions, a third function consisting of the figuration of the intelligible forms received from the Active Intellect in terms of perceptual symbols. The symbolic images produced in the imagination in turn impress themselves upon the perceptual faculty and the images are apprehended as sensible realities.[98] In similar fashion Avicenna distinguishes between two forms of prophetic experience, intellectual and imaginative: in the case of the former the universal intelligibles are received directly from the Active Intellect, whereas in the latter the prophet receives images from the celestial souls by means of his imagination.[99] The key difference between the view of Alfarabi and Halevi is that the latter eliminates the role of the Active Intellect bestowing these intelligibles on the imagination. For Halevi the prophet looks directly into the spiritual forms which are experienced in corporeal terms within the imagination.

In the context of IV:3, in marked contrast to some other sections of the *Kuzari,*[100] the function which Halevi attributes to

[98] See Walzer, "Al-Fârâbî's Theory of Prophecy and Divination," pp. 211–216; Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam,* pp. 36–45; M.W. Ur-Rahman, "Al-Farabi and his Theory of Dreams," *Islamic Culture* 41 (1967): 149.

[99] Cf. M.E. Marmura, "Avicenna's Psychological Proof of Prophecy," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 29 (1963): 51.

[100] In V:12 Halevi, consciously portraying the philosophical view, depicts the common sense as the faculty that stores images of sensible objects after they have disappeared, whereas the imagination is described as "the faculty which combines all the images united in the common sense, and which separates them, and adds changes to them without removing at all the images of the common sense." Further on in the same section of the *Kuzari* Halevi notes that the highest function of the rational soul is such that the spiritual forms or intelligibles replace the images which the vital soul had formed by means of the imaginative faculty. Cf. III:5. For the philosophical background of these passages, see Wolfson, *Studies,* 1:285–286.

the imaginative faculty is apprehension of that which is incorporeal. A similar function is given in III:5 where Halevi describes one of the stages of the pietistic life[101] as the exercise of the imaginative faculty to conjure images of certain major events and/or items stored in the memory, such as the attempted sacrifice of Isaac, the Sinaitic theophany, the tabernacle of Moses, the sacrificial cult, the indwelling of the Presence in the Temple, in order "to represent figuratively the divine matter." According to that passage, the symbolization of the *'inyan ha-'elohi* in concrete images occurs within the imaginative faculty, but those images are supplied to the imaginative faculty by the memory which retains select received traditions. In the case of IV:3 Halevi expresses the matter in somewhat different terms, asserting that the relation of the inner sense to the incorporeal entity is parallel to the relationship between the outer sense and the sensible (physical) object. To be sure, Halevi emphasizes that in gazing upon these spiritual forms with the inner eye the prophet sees forms appropriate to his nature and in accord with what he is accustomed. Consequently, when the prophet describes the visionary experience he uses corporeal attributes, such as the image of God as the king or judge sitting on the throne. The image is appropriate from the perspective of the seer but inappropriate from the perspective of that which is seen: the spiritual form is not in its essence an enthroned king but only appears as such in the mind of the prophet. Nevertheless, the experience is not purely subjective, for there is a correlation between the spiritual form and the mental image constituted within the imaginative consciousness of the people of Israel collectively (at Sinai) or the individual prophet. To take another example from a different domain that sheds light on Halevi's conception of prophetic vision. In I:99 Halevi employs the midrashic motif that God showed Moses on Mount Sinai the prototype of the Tabernacle

[101] See above, n. 17.

and all its parts. According to Halevi this means that God showed these forms to Moses "in a spiritual manner and he made them physically." Similarly, continues Halevi, David had a spiritual vision of the First Temple and Ezekiel of the last. This spiritual vision is contrasted sharply with the natural capacities of estimation, syllogism and ratiocination. The critical point is that spiritual vision — the act of imagination — has an object that is outside the mind, an object that is incorporeal but which assumes tangible shape within the particular imagined form.

While the Islamic influence on Halevi's notion of prophetic imagination is clear enough, I would like to suggest another possible source that has been less readily acknowledged, viz., the theory of prophecy and mystical vision of R. Hai ben Sherira (939–1038), the gaon of Pumbedita, as transmitted especially by R. Ḥananel ben Ḥushiel of Kairouan (d. 1055/56) and R. Nathan ben Yeḥiel of Rome (1035–ca. 1110).[102] In this context it is of importance to note that David Kaufmann suggested that Halevi's views regarding the distinctiveness of the Jewish people vis-à-vis the other nations in terms of their immediate knowledge of God based on revelatory experience and the historical truth of prophecy should be compared to similar ideas expressed by R. Nissim ben Jacob of Kairouan (ca. 960–1062).[103] R. Nissim singles out the prophets of Israel and the Jewish people collectively (specifically at the Sinaitic theophany) as possessing certain knowledge of God through direct experience, whereas the other nations acquire this knowledge only indirectly through rational proofs and syllogistic reason-

[102] The possibility that Halevi's notion of prophecy as mental vision was influenced by R. Ḥananel's commentary on B. Berakhot 6a was already noted by Even-Shmu'el in his translation of *Sefer ha-Kuzari*, p. 364.

[103] See Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre*, pp. 167–168, n. 121; S. Abramson, "Sefer Megillat Setarim," in *R. Nissim Gaon Libelli Quinque* (Jerusalem, 1965), p. 334.

ing.[104] The knowledge of God, which is unique to the Jews, is referred to periodically in the extant Hebrew translation of *Megillat Setarim* as ידיעת ההרגשות, i.e., sentient knowledge.[105] Interestingly enough, the translator himself informs the reader in one place that this term is a rendering of the Arabic *al-'ilm al-ḍarûrî* (necessary knowledge).[106] For R. Nissim, then, prophecy entails the immediacy of sentient experience and this alone constitutes necessary knowledge which is absolute and irrefutable.[107] It is evident that Halevi shares much in common with

[104] Cf. S. Poznanski, "Extracts from the Book Megillat Setarim of Rabbi Nissim ben Jacob of Kairouan" [Hebrew], *Ha-Ṣofeh le-Ḥokhmat Yisra'el* 5 (1921): 177–180. See also the fragment published by Abramson, *op. cit.*, pp. 344–345.

[105] See Abramson, *op. cit.*, p. 344, who renders הרגשית as אפריורית *(a priori)*. This rendering is totally unsatisfactory as it misses the very point of R. Nissim's claim, i.e., apriori knowledge is prior to or independent of experience, and for R. Nissim, the superiority of prophecy consists precisely in the fact that it is firsthand knowledge of an empirical, indeed sensuous, nature. The latter is the force of the expression ידיעת ההרגשות which is consistent with its usage in other medieval Hebrew philosophical texts. Cf. Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre*, p. 167, n. 121, who accurately refers to R. Nissim's notion as "sinnlichen Wahrnehmung."

[106] The reading in the text published by Poznanski, *op. cit.*, p. 180, אלעלם אלצורי, is corrupt. I have corrected it to אלעלם אלצוררי according to the emendation suggested by D. Kaufmann, *Die Sinne* (Leipzig, 1884), p. 56, n. 53. See also S. Abramson, *op. cit.*, p. 193. The expression *al-'ilm al-darûrî* is used by Saadya to refer to the third of the four sources of knowledge which he enumerates in the introduction to *Kitâb al-Amânât wa-al-I'tiqâdât* (ed. J. Kafiḥ [Jerusalem, 1970], p. 16), viz., inferential knowledge based on data supplied by the senses or reason.

[107] To be sure, R. Nissim certainly denied that God possesses a body. What, then, is the object of this prophetic experience that is described as knowledge through the senses? In line with his Geonic predecessors, R. Nissim offered two possible explanations for passages that relate a visionary experience of the divine: either they are to be taken metaphorically or the object of the prophetic experience is in fact an angel which is a form created by God. Cf. Poznanski, *op. cit.*, pp. 184–187.

the views espoused by R. Nissim. Yet, in at least one fundamental respect Halevi's description of the prophetic-mystical vision is closer to the position adopted by R. Hai, R. Ḥananel and R. Nathan. That is, for Halevi, as for these figures, the locus of the vision is the imagination, a point not developed by R. Nissim. It thus seems to me that Halevi's position represents a kind of synthesis, or merging, of the respective views of R. Hai (and those who elaborated on his doctrine, especially R. Ḥananel) and that of R. Nissim: on the one hand emphasis is placed on the heart as the spiritual organ of vision, while on the other the sensuous character of prophecy is underscored as the distinctive feature of the Jewish people. Insofar as Kaufmann has already duly noted the importance of R. Nissim for understanding Halevi's doctrine of prophecy, I will concentrate on the impact that R. Hai's interpretation of the chariot vision may have had on Halevi.

The starting-point of our analysis is the claim that prophetic and mystical vision — they are treated as one by R. Hai and his followers[108] — is a vision of the heart, ראיית הלב.[109] It is clear from the relevant sources that the latter conception is based on the talmudic expression, "understanding of the heart," אובנתא דלבא, utilized by the anonymous redactor in B. Megillah 24b to explain R. Judah's view on the nature of the vision of the

[108] Cf. R. Hai's responsum concerning *merkavah* mystical praxis in *'Oṣar ha-Ge'onim* to *Ḥagigah*, ed. B. Lewin (Jerusalem, 1984), "Responsa," p. 15, where he argues against the view of R. Shmu'el ben Ḥofni that the vision and miracles are restricted to the prophets. According to Hai, the miracles performed by the righteous and the visions perceived by them are identical to those of the prophets. A polemic against the position of Hai can be found in Judah ben Barzillai, *Perush Sefer Yeṣirah*, p. 22, where the author makes a clear distinction between prophets and *merkavah* mystics on the grounds that the vision of the former (ראיית הנביאים) approximates an "actual seeing" (קרובים לראייה ממש) whereas that of the latter (הראיית צופי מרכבה) is purely mental (אובנתא דליבא).

[109] Cf. Eccles, 1:16 where the phrase, "my heart has seen," ולבי ראה, connotes mental comprehension.

merkavah.[110] Following R. Hai's interpretation, the ecstatic ascent described in the *Hekhalot* texts consisted of a mental vision — contemplation of the heart — rather than a physical journey. This is implied, as Idel has argued,[111] in R. Hai's famous responsum on mystical praxis from which I will cite only the most relevant part: "When one desires to see the chariot and to gaze upon the palaces of the angels above, he has various ways to accomplish this: he should fast for several days, place his head between his knees, and whisper to the ground songs and many explicit praises. Thus he will gaze inward and into the chambers [of his heart] (מציץ בפנימיו ובחדריו) as one who sees with his eyes the seven palaces, and he sees as one who enters from palace to palace."[112] R. Hai's view is transmitted as well by R. Nathan of Rome in his lexicon of the Talmud and Midrashim, the *'Arukh,* who describes the descenders to the chariot as follows: "They did not ascend on high, but rather in the chambers of their heart they saw and contemplated (בחדרי לבן רואין וצופין)[113] as a person who sees and contemplates something clearly with his eyes, and they heard and spoke with a seeing eye by means of the Holy Spirit" (בעין הסוכה ברוח הקודש).[114]

[110] Cf. D. Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature* (New Haven, 1980), p. 174; idem, *The Faces of the Chariot* (Tübingen, 1988), pp. 318–319, 335. Cf. the Hebrew parallel to the Aramaic phrase, אובנתא דלבא, in the *Haggadat Shema' Yisra'el,* in A. Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash* (Jerusalem, 1967), 5:166, בינת לבבכם, already noted by Halperin.

[111] Cf. Idel, *New Perspectives,* p. 90; see also M. Cohen, *The Shi'ur Qomah: Liturgy and Theurgy in Pre-Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism* (Lanham, MD, 1983), pp. 5–6. For a different understanding of R. Hai's statement, cf. Scholem, *Major Trends,* p. 49; Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature,* pp. 3, 88–89, 177; idem, "A New Edition of the Heikhalot Literature," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104 (1984): 544, 547, 550–551; idem, *Faces of the Chariot,* pp. 5–6, 32, 359–360.

[112] *'Oṣar ha-Ge'onim* to *Ḥagigah*, ed. B. Lewin, "Responsa," p. 14.

[113] R. Nissim Gaon uses a similar expression חדרי לבו; cf. Poznanski, *op. cit.,* p. 180.

[114] Cf. *Aruch Completum,* ed. A. Kohut (Vienna, 1926), 1:14, s.v. אבני שיש טהור.

It is noteworthy that in this passage R. Hai interprets the mystical vision of the chariot with terms used in *Leviticus Rabbah* 1:3 to refer to prophecy: נביאים שסוכים ברוח הקודש.[115] The same attempt to understand the vision of *merkavah* mysticism in light of prophetic vision is to be found in R. Ḥananel's commentary on B. Ḥagigah 14b concerning the four who entered Pardes: "They did not ascend to heaven but they contemplated and saw by means of the understanding of the heart (באובנתא דלבא) as one who sees and looks through a speculum that does not shine."[116] In this case R. Ḥananel has combined two rabbinic idioms, אובנתא דלבא, which describes the chariot vision, and אספקלריא שאינה מאירה, which is used to describe prophetic experience.[117] The clearest application of this category to prophetic vision occurs in R. Ḥananel's commentary to B. Berakhot 6a and Yevamot 49b. In the case of the former, commenting on the aggadic statement that God wears phylacteries, R. Ḥananel writes:

> The Holy One, blessed be He, makes His glory visible to those who fear Him[118] and His pious ones through a comprehension of the heart (באובנתא דליבא) in the image of an anthropos sitting, as it is written, 'I saw the Lord seated upon His throne, with all the host of heaven standing to His right and left' (I Kings 22:19), and it is written, 'I saw God sitting on the high and lofty throne and the skirts of His robe filled the Temple' (Isa. 6:1). [The glory appears] as one that has feet, as it is written, ['They saw the God of Israel] and under His feet there was the likeness of a pavement of sapphire' (Exod. 24:10)... It is clear to us that the vision spoken of here is a vision of the heart (ראיית הלב) and not a vision of the eye (ראיית העין). It is impossible to say with

[115] On the use of the verb סכי with the object רוח הקודש, see also B. Megillah 14a.

[116] Cf. *'Oṣar ha-Ge'onim* to *Ḥagigah*, p. 61.

[117] Cf. B. Yevamot 49b.

[118] Cf. the reading in *Perushe Rabbenu Ḥananel le-Masekhet Berakhot*, ed. D. Metzger (Jerusalem, 1990), p. 10: "to His prophets," לנביאיו.

> respect to a vision of the eye that an image of God (דמות להב"ה) was seen... It is possible to say that one sees through a vision of the heart the image of the glory (דמות כבוד) ... but not through an actual vision of the eye, for the verse states explicitly, 'When I spoke to the prophets ... and was imagined by the prophets[119] (וביד הנביאים אדמה) (Hosea 12:11). This teaches that [God] showed to every prophet an image (דמיון) that he could see.[120]

The same point is reiterated in R. Ḥananel's commentary to the statement in B. Yevamot 49b to the effect that all the prophets gazed within the speculum that does not shine while Moses gazed within a speculum that shines: "All the prophets saw the glory from within the speculum that does not shine... And this is what is written, 'and was imagined by the prophets' (וביד הנביאים אדמה) (Hosea 12:11), i.e., the vision that they saw was an image (דמיון) and not the essential sight. Moses, our master, gazed upon the glory and the splendor of the *Shekhinah* (הוד השכינה) through a speculum that shines from behind the splendor of the *Shekhinah*."[121]

While no definitive proof can be adduced to demonstrate conclusively that these sources influenced Halevi directly, the common elements at least make the suggestion plausible. For Halevi as well the mystical vision of the chariot approximates the prophetic experience, and both involve mental vision through images which is depicted further as a seeing by means of *Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh*. In suggesting that the Geonic interpretation of the *merkavah* texts is a possible source for Halevi's notion of internal vision or the imaginative seeing of the heart (the crucial term employed by Halevi in his poems as will be seen in detail below), I do not want to rule out the likelihood

[119] I have rendered this verse in accordance with the interpretation of R. Ḥananel.

[120] *'Oṣar ha-Ge'onim* to *Berakhot,* ed. B. Lewin (Jerusalem, 1984), Appendix, p. 3.

[121] *'Oṣar ha-Ge'onim* to *Yevamot,* ed. B. Lewin (Jerusalem, 1984), "Responsa," pp. 123–124.

that he may also have been influenced directly by Islamic, especially Sufi, sources.[122] Similar theories of inner illumination of the heart to explain manifestations of the divine can be found in both Mu'tazilite literature and Islamic mysticism.[123] Moreover, one should not ignore the possibility that figures such as R. Hai and R. Ḥananel were themselves influenced by Islamic thought in their interpretations of the *merkavah* tracts.[124] Indeed, the role accorded the heart in the passages from R. Hai and R. Ḥananel is similar to the function of the heart *(qalb)* in Sufism as the seat of spiritual gnosis *(ma'rifa)* and internal vision *(baṣira).*[125] The Hebrew idiom used by R. Ḥananel in

[122] See references to Kaufmann and Davidson given above, n. 94, and see below, nn. 133, 154, 170. It would be of particular interest to compare Halevi's notion of the heart, or inner eye, as the locus of the imaginative form of the divine glory — the most perfect shape being that of an anthropos — with the role of theophanic imagination and the creativity of the heart in the thought of Muhyî al-Dîn ibn al-'Arabî (1165–1240). For a detailed analysis of the latter, see H. Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sûfism of Ibn 'Arabî,* trans. R. Manheim (Princeton, 1969), pp. 216–245.

[123] Cf. Altmann, *Studies,* p. 145, and references given there to other scholarly literature in nn. 26–27.

[124] The possibility that R. Hai's spiritualistic understanding of the vision of the chariot was influenced by Sufi mysticism (and particularly related to the function of the heart as the seat of mystical gnosis) was suggested by A. Jellinek, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala* (Leipzig, 1852), Zweites Heft, pp. 15–16, n. 22. See also P. Bloch, "Die יורדי מרכבה, die Mystiker der Gaonenzeit und ihr Einfluss auf die Liturgie," *Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 37 (1893): 69–72. For the more general view that *Hekhalot* mysticism, dated to the latter part of the Geonic period, was derived from Islamic sources, cf. H. Graetz, "Die mystische Literatur in der gaonischen Epoche," *Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 8 (1859): 115–118, 140–144. On the relationship between members of the Geonic academy in Iraq and Muslim pietists, see also the evidence adduced by D. Ariel, "'The Eastern Dawn of Wisdom': The Problem of the Relation Between Islamic and Jewish Mysticism," in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times,* vol. 2, ed. D.R. Blumenthal (Chico, Ca., 1985), pp. 155–156.

[125] Cf. L. Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* (Paris, 1922), pp. 172, 263; idem, "Le 'coeur' *(al-qalb)*

explicating the view of R. Hai Gaon, *re'iyat ha-lev,*[126] which renders in turn the talmudic *'ovanta' de-libba',* exactly parallels the commonplace Sufi term *ru'yat al-qalb* which likewise connotes understanding of the heart.[127] There is evidence as well that the motif of the heavenly journey *(mi'râj),* attributed in the first instance to Muhammad[128] (perhaps stemming from the influence of Jewish apocalyptic or mystical sources[129]) and secondarily to other adepts, was interpreted by Sufis not simply as a physical ascent from the sublunar world to the celestial throne but rather as a spiritual descent into the recesses of the inner self — the seven heavens corresponding to the *maqâmât,* the stages of the Suft path. [130] Thus, on a deeper level the vision

dans la prière et la méditation musulmane," *Études carmélitaines* 9 (1950): 96–102; P. Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique* (Beirut, 1970), s.v. *qall*; R.A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam* (New York, 1975), pp. 50–53, 68–70; I. Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law* (Princeton, 1981), p. 147.

[126] For the biblical precedent see reference above, n. 109.

[127] To be sure, there is evidence for the psychologistic or spiritualistic understanding of the vision of the chariot in earlier, pre-Islamic, sources. An interesting example of this approach, as noted already by Halperin, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature,* pp. 174–175, n. 136, is found in Origen's *First Homily on Ezekiel* (J.P. Migne, *Patrologiae Graeca,* XIII [Paris, 1857], col. 675) where the exiles are said "to have contemplated with the eyes of the heart" *(cordis oculis)* that which the prophet "observed with the eyes of the flesh" *(oculis carnis).* For the possible Jewish background of this passage, which may provide evidence for a psychological interpretation of the chariot vision in ancient Judaism, see Halperin, "Origen, Ezekiel's Merkabah, and the Ascension of Moses," *Church History* 50 (1981): 273–274; idem, *Faces of the Chariot,* p. 335. See also Idel, *New Perspectives,* pp. 90–91 and the relevant notes.

[128] On the basis of the traditional account of the nocturnal journey *(isrâ')* in Qur'ân 17:1; cf. also 53:4–18.

[129] Cf. J. Horovitz, "Muhammeds Himmelfahrt," *Der Islam* 9 (1919): 159–183. See also G.D. Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia From Ancient Times to Their Eclipse Under Islam* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1988), pp. 62–63. For possible later reflections of *merkavah* traditions in Islamic sources, cf. Halperin, *Faces of the Chariot,* pp. 467–490.

[130] Cf. N. El-Ama, "Some Notes on the Impact of the Story of the Mi'râj on Sufi Literature," *The Muslim World* 63 (1973): 93–104; M. Sells, "Bewildered

of the throne is an internal image in a manner that parallels the psychologistic or spiritualistic interpretation of R. Hai who spoke of the mystic gazing into the chambers of his heart. Even if we bracket for a moment the possible influence of Sufism on the Geonic interpretation of the *Hekhalot* praxis, the likelihood that Sufism had an impact on Halevi's notion of the heart as a spiritual organ for vision — the term used on occasion in the *Kuzari* (cf. II:24, 54)[131] and frequently in his poetry which parallels the inner or spiritual eye mentioned in the former[132] — should not be underestimated.[133] It is important here to recall as well that the expression "eye of the heart" (עין הלב) is a commonplace in Andalusian Hebrew poetry of the Golden Period (10th–12th centuries).[134] It is necessary to view Halevi, as any

Tongue: The Semantics of Mystical Union in Islam," in *Mystical Union and Monotheistic Faith,* ed. M. Idel and B. McGinn (New York, 1989), pp. 101–108. For other sources see Altmann, *Studies,* pp. 42–44 and references to scholarly literature in nn. 11–18.

[131] It may be suggested that this understanding of the heart as the organ of spiritual vision underlies Halevi's famous analogy comparing Israel to the heart of the nations; cf. *Kuzari,* II:36. As Halevi repeats over and over again, only Jews possess the divine matter which allows them to transcend the human species and become angelic or spiritual.

[132] Cf. Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre,* p. 202, n. 180; "Jeuda Halewi," in *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main, 1910), pp. 114–117 (Hebrew translation in idem, *Studies in Hebrew Literature of the Middle Ages* [Jerusalem, 1965], pp. 177–179); Schirmann, *Hebrew Poetry in Spain and Provence,* 1:516–517, poem no. 222, n. 3; E. Ḥazan, *The Poetics of the Sephardi Piyyuṭ according to the Liturgical Poetry of Yehuda Halevi* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 210–211.

[133] On the possible Sufi influence on Halevi's poetry, cf. Kaufmann, "Jehuda Halewi," p. 114, n. 4 (Hebrew translation, p. 177, n. 52). Regarding the Sufi influence concerning Halevi's notion of the inner eye, see above, n. 94.

[134] I mention here only a modest sampling of the many possible references. Cf. Samuel ha-Nagid, in Schirmann, *Hebrew Poetry in Spain and Provence,* 1:113 (poem no. 32); *The Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Solomon ibn Gabirol,* ed. D. Jarden, 2 vols. [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1979), 2:333 (poem no. 102), 462 (poem no. 135), 465 (poem no. 140), 516 (poem no. 176), 593 (poem no. 230); Isaac ibn Ghayyat, in Schirmann, 1:304 (poem no. 114) [partially cited below, n.

thinker or writer, in his proper historical, cultural, and literary context. Accordingly, we may say with confidence that Halevi adopted this terminology from his predecessors and peers. Yet, I would argue that Halevi's particular use of these expressions is to be distinguished from what is found in the other sources.[135] For these poets, who embraced the general philosophical orientation of the Hispano-Arabic culture of their time, the heart's eye is the means to attain an intellectual seeing of God or other immaterial entities (such as the angels and the rational soul). That is to say, in the Islamic-Jewish Neoplatonic tradition the vision of the heart is an intellectual intuition of that which is incorporeal and thus invisible in a physical sense. The eye of the heart (עין הלב) is synonymous with the eye of the intellect (עין השכל). A classical example of this is to be found in a passage from the *Rasâ'il* of the *Ikhwân as-Ṣafâ'*, a tenth-century Neoplatonic text (possibly deriving from Ismâ'îlî circles[136]) which had a wide influence upon Muslim and Jewish writers in Arabic-speaking lands. According to the relevant passage the

180]; Moses ibn Ezra, *Shire ha-Ḥol*, ed. H. Brody, 2 vols. [Hebrew] (Berlin, 1934), 1:23 (poem no. 17), 59 (poem no. 60), 66 (poem no. 74), 86 (poem no. 85), 207 (poem no. 207), 134 (poem no. 131). See also the poems of Moses ibn Ezra in Schirmann, 1:412 (poem no. 169) [recently discussed in R.P. Scheindlin, "Redemption of the Soul in Golden Age Religious Poetry," *Prooftexts* 10 (1990): 57–59] and 414 (poem no. 170). In the latter case ibn Ezra refers to the inner eye of the intellect as the "eye of knowledge" (עין הדעת) which sees the "splendor of the glory." On the expression "eye of your intellect" (עין שכלך) in which one is said to conceive of the spiritual powers, cf. L. Dukes, "Extracts from the Book *'Arugat ha-Bosem* of R. Moses ibn Ezra" [Hebrew], *Zion* II (1842): 121. For pertinent examples in the case of Abraham ibn Ezra, see above n. 90 and the reference to Habermann given there.

[135] See, by contrast, Y. Razhabi, "Borrowed Elements in the Poems of Yehudah Halevi from Arabic Poetry and Philosophy" [Hebrew], *Molad* 5 (1975): 173, who treats Halevi's notion of internal vision performed by the heart's eye in terms of Arabic philosophical precedents (and Sufi texts influenced thereby) without noting what I consider to be the key difference.

[136] For a review of the scholarly discussion, see S.H. Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (Boulder, 1978), pp. 25–40.

believers, the sages, and the prophets are said to separate from the physical world and contemplate the spiritual world with the "eye of their hearts (עיון קלובהם) and the light of their intellects (נור עקולהם)."[137] The standard viewpoint is reflected succinctly by Maimonides in the following statement in the *Mishneh Torah*: "The forms which are incorporeal are not seen by the eye but rather they are known through the eye of the heart (עין הלב), just as we know the Lord of everything without vision of the eye."[138] The eye of the heart is thus a figurative expression for the intellect by means of which one acquires knowledge (either discursively or intuitively) of that which is without body.[139] It is precisely such a conception which underlies the usage of this term in Andalusian Hebrew poetry. This does not, however, accurately reflect the usage of Halevi, for the vision of the heart of which he speaks is not intellectual but rather imaginative, and the object that is seen is not the Neoplatonic form (or Aristotelian universal) but rather a spiritual entity that is constituted within the imagination (i.e., seen by the inner eye) as a tangible, almost sensuous, shape. Halevi, in contrast even to his Muslim predecessor, Abû Hâmid al-Ghazzâlî (1058–

[137] *Rasâ'il,* 4 vols. (Cairo, 1928), 4:141 (cited by Razhabi, "Borrowed Elements in the Poems of Yehudah Halevi," p. 173).

[138] *Yesode ha-Torah,* 4:7 (also mentioned by Razhabi).

[139] Cf. Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed,* I:4: From still other medieval sources it is evident that heart refers to the rational soul or the intellect, a usage related to, but divergent from, both biblical and rabbinic sources which treat the heart as the seat of thought and emotions. (The same connotations are implied in the Arabic *lubb.*) Of the many examples that could be cited I will mention one of the more striking ones, viz., Baḥya ibn Paquda's *Kitâb al-Hidâya ilâ Farâ'id al-Qulûb.* The identification of the heart and the intellect is evident from the introduction (ed. J. Kafih [Jerusalem, 1973], p. 14) where Baḥya describes knowledge *('ilm)* as the "life of their hearts and light of their intellects (לעקולהם חיאה לקלובהם וסראג'א). Concerning this statement and parallels in other Arabic texts, cf. F. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden, 1970), p. 321. See also the poem written by Baḥya in Schirmann, *Hebrew Poetry in Spain and Provence,* 1:348 and 351 (poem no. 139).

1111), to whom his thought has often been compared,[140] sharply contrasts the function of the heart and that of the intellect.[141] The former, and not the latter, is the faculty which allows one to have direct gnosis of God and the world of spiritual realities. It seems likely to me that Halevi's identification of the heart or the inner eye as the imagination may indeed reflect the Geonic tradition recorded in the rabbinic materials discussed above. Specifically, the interpretation of prophetic experience and its application to *merkavah* mysticism that is found in Halevi has its precedent in the view espoused by Hai and those who elaborated his doctrine. These sources therefore must be seen as an important channel for Halevi, perhaps supplying him with the basis to appropriate and transpose the Sufi notions that parallel the ideas found in the Jewish texts. Scholars have tended to focus on the external influence without giving sufficient attention to the internal sources which may have

[140] Cf. Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre,* pp. 119–140; idem, "Jeuda Halewi," pp. 123–124 (Hebrew translation, pp. 184–185). Cf. the criticism of Kaufmann's position in D. Neumark, *Essays in Jewish Philosophy* (Cincinnati, 1929), p. 227; J. Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism* (New York, 1964), p. 493, n. 137. For a more balanced approach to Halevi's relationship to al-Ghazzâlî, see D.H. Baneth, "Rabbi Judah Halevi and al-Ghazzâlî" [Hebrew], *Kenesset* 2 (1942): 311–329; J. Guttmann, "Religion and Knowledge in Medieval Thought and the Modern Period" [Hebrew], in idem, *Religion and Knowledge* (Jerusalem, 1955), pp. 21–23.

[141] See Baneth, "Rabbi Judah Halevi and al-Ghazzâlî," p. 316, n. 4, who points out that for al-Ghazzâlî the heart is identified as the intellect or a power within the intellect; see ibid., pp. 323–324. Indeed, according to al-Ghazzâlî, soul *(nafs),* spirit *(rûḥ),* intellect *('aql),* and heart *(qalb)* denote different states *(ahwâl)* of one spiritual entity *(al-laṭîfâh al-rûḥâniyyah)*; cf. M.A. Sherif, *Ghazali's Theory of Virtue* (Albany, 1975), p. 25. By contrast, Guttmann, "Religion and Knowledge," p. 21, asserts that Halevi, like al-Ghazzâlî, distinguishes between the heart as the seat of religious knowledge and the intellect. Cf. *Kuzari,* II:26, where Halevi speaks of the heart as the locus of the external and internal senses. In IV:3 Halevi speaks of the intellect being in the heart of the brain, but only in a metaphorical sense insofar as the intellect cannot be found in physical place.

allowed for the assimilation, appropriation and transposition of foreign materials or concepts.[142]

Support for the claim that this Geonic interpretation of prophetic and mystical vision had a decisive influence on Halevi may be gathered especially from his religious poetry where he states on numerous occasions that the seeing of the glory is performed by the heart or the heart's eye which I take to be another way of describing the imagination. The first example is drawn from his poem, יעירוני בשמך רעיוני. Let me note, parenthetically, that the word רעיון in Halevi s poetry is often used synonymously with דמיון and therefore should be translated in such instances as mental image or vision rather than rational thought or concept.[143] Moreover, the use of the meta-

[142] The question of the transposition or transmutation of one cultural-literary form into another is especially acute with respect to Halevi's poetic composition as it is for the Andalusian Hebrew poets in general. A typical account of this process is found in Razhabi, "Borrowed Elements in the Poems of Yehudah Halevi," p. 165, who thus describes the Jewish poet in Spain during the Golden Age: "In his soul there was no barrier between the Jewish culture and the secular culture, and at times there escaped from his pen, whether intentionally or not, foreign ideas and words." However, in many of the examples that Razhabi gives, especially in the case of Halevi, he shows that the ideas borrowed from Arabic texts resonated with ideas found in the traditional Jewish literature. For recent treatments of this problematic, see R.P. Scheindlin, *Wine, Women, & Death: Medieval Hebrew Poems on the Good Life* (Philadelphia, 1986); R. Brann, "Judah Halevi: The Compunctious Poet," *Prooftexts* 7 (1987): 123–143, esp. 128–129; and idem, "Andalusian Hebrew Poetry and the Hebrew Bible: Cultural Nationalism or Cultural Ambiguity?," in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times,* vol. 3, ed. D.R. Blumenthal (Atlanta, 1988), pp. 101–131.

[143] Cf. Ḥazan, *The Poetics of the Sephardi Piyyut,* p. 210. Halevi may have been influenced by the conjunction of the words רעיון and לב in Eccles. 2:22 and Dan. 2:30. Cf. *Dîwân,* 4:235 (poem no. 124): את נתיבי רעיון אכונן. See also 3:164 (poem no. 89): בלבי ורעיוני; 182 (poem no. 99): יעירוני רעיוני וסוד לבי ומשאלו. Similar forms of expressions are used by other Andalusian Hebrew poets; see, e.g., Isaac ibn Ghayyat, in Schirmann, *Hebrew Poetry in Spain and Provence,* 1:320 (poem no. 124), where רעיוני לבבה parallels חזיוני כתבה; 324 (poem no. 127): חדלו רעיוני parallels נסתמו חזיוני. See also Moses ibn Ezra, in Schirmann, 1:412

phor of the heart's awakening to depict the prophetic vision is attested in the *Kuzari* as well. Thus, for example, in II:24 Halevi offers the following interpretation of the verse, "I was asleep, but my heart was wakeful" (Song of Songs 5:2): "He [Solomon] designates the exile by the term sleep [144] and the continuance of prophecy among them by the wakefulness of the heart."[145] Halevi's exegesis of the expression "my heart was wakeful" turns upon the identification of the heart as the locus of prophetic vision. Halevi expresses the matter in the poem יעירוני בשמך רעיוני in the following way:[146]

ולבי ראך ויאמן בך
כאלו מעמד היה בסיני
דרשתיך בחזיוני ועבר
כבודך בי וירד בעניני

My heart has seen You[147]
And believes in You
As if I had stood at Sinai;
I have sought You in my visions,[148]

(poem no. 169): יעירוני שעפי לחזותך / ויראוני בעין לב נוראותיך. It is important to note in this context that in medieval Hebrew philosophical terminology the word רעיון is generally used to translate the Arabic *khatir* which can denote either the compositive animal imagination (sometimes rendered as *takhayyul*) or the faculty of estimation or cogitation *(wahm).* Cf. Wolfson, *Studies,* 1:286–287. See, however, Samuel ibn Tibbon's translation of the *Moreh Nevukhim,* I:46, where רעיון is identified as דמיון, i.e., imagination. Cf. Wolfson, *op. cit.,* p. 255, n. 27; idem, *Philo Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam,* 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1947), 2:289, n. 39. See also the usage of the word רעיון in Eleazar of Worms, *Ḥokhmat ha-Nefesh*, chap. 3, p. 15.

[144] This part of Halevi's interpretation reflects standard rabbinic exegesis on the verse. Cf. Targum *ad loc.; Song of Songs Rabbah* 5:2.

[145] Cf. *Dîwân,* 3:67 (poem no. 34): ישן ולבו ער / בוער ומשתער / צא נא והנער ולכה באור פני.

[146] *Dîwân,* 3:65 (poem no. 32). Cf. ibid., 66 (poem no. 33) where Halevi speaks of the oppressed and the poor as receptacles for the divine and thus compares them to Mount Sinai and the burning bush.

[147] Cf. Eccles. 1:16.

[148] Cf. Ps. 119:10.

Your glory passed over me,[149]
Descending upon the clouds.

It is significant that here the poet's spiritual vision of God is likened to the prophetic theophany of the glory at Sinai; indeed, the poem is technically a *reshut* for the prayer of *barkhu* on the holiday of Pentecost which celebrates, according to rabbinic interpretation, the Sinaitic revelation.[150] The ultimate purpose of the visionary arousal, i.e., the stirring of the heart to conjure an image of the divine, is to enable one to bless the name of the glory,[151] as the poem itself ends:

הקימוני שעפי מיצועי
לברך שם כבודך אדני

Similarly, in another *reshut* written for *barkhu,* the poet boldly declares about God:[152]

כן לו דמות עין לא ראתה בלתי
נפש בלב תכיר אתו ותצפהו

He has an image which the eye does not see,[153]
Yet the soul in the heart discerns Him and gazes upon Him.

In this case too the seeing of God is placed in a liturgical context: one visualizes the divine image so that one may bless it, and thus the poem concludes, באי והודי את אדני וברכהו. Other examples could be adduced to show that for Halevi the poetic experience — much like his remark concerning R. Ishmael's knowledge of *merkavah* secrets and R. Aqiva's contemplation of the Pardes — approximates the prophetic state.[154] A

[149] Cf. Exod. 34:5–6.

[150] Cf. Y. Levin, "The Poetry of Judah Halevi in Relation to Earlier Hebrew Sources" [Hebrew] (Ph.D., Hebrew University, 1944), p. 53.

[151] On the intrinsic connection between the inner vision and the act of praising God, cf. *The Liturgical Poetry of Rabbi Solomon Ibn Gabirol,* 2:464 (poem no. 138): הגיג לבי בהביטי בקרבי / בכל עת ברכי נפשי אדוני.

[152] *Dîwân,* 4:194 (poem no. 91).

[153] Cf. Isa. 64:3.

[154] See now D. Pagis, "The Poet as Prophet in Medieval Hebrew Literature," in *Poetry and Prophecy,* ed. J. Kugel (Ithaca, 1990), pp. 140–150, esp. 142. Cf.

common denominator to the prophetic, mystical and poetic consciousness is the notion of the glory as a spiritual form which assumes tangible shape within the imagination, the *visio spiritualis,* the seeing of the heart (ראיית הלב).

ונלאו ראות אורו בעינם וחפשו
לבבם וראו אור כבודו ונבהלו

Unable to see His light with their eyes, their hearts Searched[155] and they saw the light of His glory,
They were frightened[156]

ומותר האדם מן בהמה אין
רק לראות צור כבודם ראות לב לא ראות עין

the comprehensive study of A. Komem referred to above, n. 28. While the author documents fully the mystical tendencies of Halevi's poetry, specifically in terms of visionary experience, he does not mention early *merkavah* sources. It should be noted that for Halevi the fulfillment of the traditional commandments is also a means, indeed the only legitimate means, for the people of Israel to attain an angelic state which is likened to prophecy. The key difference is that in the discussion of normative practice the visionary element is not central. Cf. *Kuzari,* I:79, 98; II:34, 48; V:20; Silman, *Thinker and Seer,* p. 182. On the relationship between the gradation of the angel and that of the prophet in Halevi, see the sources cited by Silman, *op. cit.,* p. 251, n. 27. Other forms of pietistic behavior, especially song and dance, are likewise upheld by Halevi as means for cleaving to the divine matter; see *Kuzari,* II:50. With respect to these forms Halevi may have been influenced by Sufi sources which likewise emphasized dance as a means to induce mystical ecstasy. Cf. F. Meier, "Der Derwischtanz," *Asiatische Studien* 8 (1954): 107–136; M. Molé, "La dance exstatique en Islam," *Sources orientales* 6 (1963): 145–280; A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, 1975), pp. 179–186. On the other hand, Halevi could have drawn from earlier Jewish sources as the use of dance in religious worship is attested in pre-Islamic Jewish texts including the Bible. Especially interesting is the statement in M. Sukkah 5:4 to the effect that the pious (החסידים) and the men of action (אנשי המעשה) danced before the priests at the celebration of the water-drawing festival. For a discussion of these and other relevant sources, cf. A. Caquot, "Les danses sacrées en Israel et à l'entour," *Sources orientales* 6 (1963): 121–143.

[155] Cf. Ps. 77:7.

[156] *Dîwân* 3:4 (poem no. 2).

Man has no superiority over the beast,[157]
But that he may see their glorious Rock,
A vision of the heart and not of the eye.[158]

Even more poignantly, in another poem Halevi comments:

לחזותו עין כלה
ומבשרי ללבי נגלה

To behold Him the eye fails,
But from my flesh[159] He is revealed to my heart.[160]

To cite two other illustrations of this motif:

הצור נסתר ובלב נראה

The Rock is hidden, but seen in the heart.[161]

יוצר המציא כל מאין
נגלה ללבב לא לעין

The Creator, who brought forth everything from nothing,
is revealed to the heart but not to the eye.[162]

From these examples (and others that could have been cited[163]) it may be concluded that in Halevi's poems the "eye of the heart"[164] assumes the role of the "inner eye" described in the *Kuzari,*[165] such that the vision of God located in the heart amounts to that which is conjured in the poet's imagination. Indeed, in the poem that begins אהבים העלו בלב להבים, Halevi mentions the "tablets of my heart," (לוחות לבבי) which are compared to the "tablets [of the Pact] which were inscribed on

[157] Eccles. 3:19.

[158] *Dîwân* 3:204 (poem no. 113).

[159] A play on Job 19:26: ומבשרי אחזה אלוה.

[160] *Dîwân* 3:6 (poem no. 5).

[161] Ibid., 4:201 (poem no. 97).

[162] Ibid., 189 (poem no. 87).

[163] Cf. ibid., 3:272 (poem no. 144): מי כמוך יחיד הנסתר מאישון / הנגלה בלב; 288 (poem no. 145), cited above at n. 72.

[164] Cf. ibid., 4:209 (poem no. 101): מה נפלא והוא נגלה / בעין הלב ומחשבותיו. See also 3:159 (poem no. 86): ובעין לב שרתיך.

[165] See above, n. 132.

the one side and on the other" (cf. Exod. 32:15).[166] The point of the poem, alluded to in the biblical phrase which serves as its prelude, מבשרי אחזה אלוה (Job 19:26), is to emphasize the extent to which the locus of one's knowledge and vision of God is centered in one's own physical and spiritual being. Thus Halevi maintains that one can "see" God from one's spirit which is created from the spirit of God's mouth, from one's limbs which are formed by God's hands, and from the tablets of the heart which are likened to the tablets of the Pact, *luḥot ha-'edut*, inscribed from both sides. In still another poem, יאתו לך תשבחות,[167] Halevi compares the heart of God's servants (לבב עבדיך) to the tablets upon which are carved the inerasable divine laws. In that context the heart which bears the imprint of the divine below is also compared to the throne that bears the glory above:[168] just as God dwells in the heart of the faithful, the faithful dwell alongside the throne of glory.[169] In Halevi's own words:

ועלי לבב עבדיך
לוחות ושם עדיך
כי באצבעות ידיך
חקות אשר לא נמחות חקקות על הלוחות

דרך נפשות קרבה
לדרך בכס מרכבה
כי ברוחך הטובה
על מי מנחות מונחות וסביביו מנחות

[166] *Dîwân*, 2:272 (poem no. 51).

[167] Ibid., 3:67–68 (poem no. 35).

[168] On the correlation of the heart and the throne, and the possible Sufi influence, see discussion below. The association of the tablets and the throne in Halevi may be derived as well from the aggadic tradition that the tablets were hewn from the sapphire stone of the throne or a quarry beneath the throne. For references see L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 8 vols. (Philadelphia, 1968), 6:49–50, n. 258, 59, nn. 305–306.

[169] Cf. E. Fleischer, "Reflections on the Religious Poetry of Rabbi Yehudah Halevi" [Hebrew], in *Mishnato he-Hagutit shel Rabbi Yehudah Halevi* (Jerusalem, 1978), pp. 179–180.

One may infer, then, that for Halevi the heart, compared to the tablets, is the divine essence, the *'inyan ha-'elohi,* that is embedded in the Jewish soul. This heart, moreover, is the inner eye or the imagination upon which are written the images — in the way that the commandments are inscribed on the tablets — from which one sees God or the divine form in a concrete, tangible manner.[170] This imaging of the formless God is the ultimate goal — and challenge — of the poetic dwelling.[171] To express the matter differently, the imaginative visualization of God for Halevi is a manner of expressing the sense of being filled with the immediacy of the divine presence — the *'inyan ha-'elohi* — in one's heart.[172] Thus in one of his poems, the *baqashah* which begins with the words אברך את אדני אשר יעצני, Halevi compares the "fear and trembling" of the process of poetic composition to various biblical accounts of visionary

[170] It is possible that with respect to this image, *luḥot levavi*, Halevi was influenced by a Sufi conception as found, for example, in the *Iḥyâ' 'ulûm ad-dîn* of al-Ghazzâlî, wherein the heart is said to reflect the truths contained in the Well-Guarded Tablet, *al-lawḥ al-maḥfûz*, mentioned in the Qu'rân 75:22 and identified in the mystical literature with the Active Intellect or the Universal Soul. Cf. Baneth, "Rabbi Judah Halevi and al-Ghazzâlî," p. 325, n. 2. For the influence of al-Ghazzâlî's passage on the Jewish Sufi, 'Obadyah Maimonides, see Fenton, *The Treatise of the Pool,* pp. 43, 71, n. 43, and text cited on p. 92: "When thou will have persevered in this effort, thine imaginative faculty will be purified and all that is graven on the 'well-guarded Tablet' will be manifest to thee." It is of interest that in this text the heart, which reflects what is written on the Well-Guarded Tablet, is also identified as the imaginative faculty, a point that concurs with what we have found in Halevi.

[171] Cf. *Dîwân,* 4:258 (poem no. 134): בלב רגז לראותך ונפשי לראותך חרדה; 263 (poem no. 135): עיני הדרך נכספה לראות / אך זאת כמוני בלי יאות. Cf. ibid., 2:306 (poem no. 89). See also the poem attributed to Halevi, though with a measure of reservation, in Jefim (Ḥayyim) Schirmann, *New Hebrew Poems from the Genizah* (Jerusalem, 1965), p. 251: יקר עצמך נעלה מראות... ואם על מרומים שכינתך בחדרי לבבות תמונתך —. Here too the divine image is said to be lodged in the chambers of the heart, i.e., the imagination. Cf. the language of R. Hai as cited in Nathan of Rome's *'Arukh* above n. 114.

[172] See article of Fleischer referred to above n. 169.

encounters with God, the glory, or an angel. Indeed, in the same poem Halevi implores the divine:[173]

ותן חלקי עם חסידיך התמימים ... ותערבני
בזיו שכינתך — ואשבעה בהקיץ תמונתך

Place my portion with Your unblemished saints...
Let me delight
in the splendor of Your Presence,
'Awake, I am filled with [the vision] of Your image'
(Ps. 17:15)

In this context we again see a clear connection between the *ḥasid* and visionary experience of the image (תמונה) of God also referred to as the splendor of the *Shekhinah.*

One of the essential images that informs this mental vision is that of the enthroned glory. The point is evident from the poem, מידך היתה ללבי:[174]

יום בו אחפש היש אדני
כי נעלה מראות בעיני
שבתי ללבי ורעיוני
ואמצאה כסאך לעד בי טמון בחובי

One day I sought if the Lord was present,[175]
For He transcends my physical sight;
Returning to my heart and my thoughts[176]
I found Your throne as a witness,
hidden within my recesses.

In the above stanza God's throne, which ultimately is the locus of the numinous presence of the deity, is interiorized as an image within the poet's heart or imagination.[177] It is possible

[173] *Dîwân,* 4:155 (poem no. 62).

[174] Ibid., 186 (poem no. 84).

[175] Cf. Exod. 17:7.

[176] Cf. Eccles. 2:22.

[177] Cf. *Dîwân,* 4:233 (poem no. 122): עיני אל כסאך תלויה. It seems to me that the reference to the "eye" here should be construed in a technical sense, i.e., the inner or spiritual eye which is the imaginative faculty.

that in this case Halevi may have been influenced by the correlation or identification of the heart *(qalb)* and throne *('arsh)* common in Sufi literature.[178] From the continuation of the poem, however, it is evident that Halevi draws upon another motif found as well in other medieval Jewish poets who were also influenced by Islamic Neoplatonism,[179] concerning the identification of the throne as the ontic source of all souls.[180] Thus Halevi writes: הוא כסאך מחצב נשמה. Insofar as the throne is the "quarry of the soul," in Halevi's language, it follows that the soul is the locus for the imaging of that throne. The form of the throne is the objectivized self-image of the heart projected outwardly.[181]

In one of his most elaborate and personal accounts of the poetic experience Halevi describes the state of ecstatic rapture

[178] Cf. G. Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Qur'ânic Hermeneutics of the Sûfi Sahl At-Tustarî (d. 283/896)* (Berlin, 1980), pp. 163–164, 191–193, 239, 253; Ibn 'Atâ' Allâh, *Traité sur le nom allâh,* introduction, translation, and notes by M. Gloton (Paris, 1981), pp. 196–197; R.A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 114, citing a passage from Al-Jili (1365–1406). On the correlation of the throne in the cosmic plane to the heart in the spiritual, see also the passage from Muhyî al-Dîn ibn al-'Arabî's *Al-futûḥât al-Makkiyya* (*Meccan Revelations*), discussed in F. Meier, "The Mystery of the Ka'Ba: Symbol and Reality in Islamic Mysticism," in *The Mysteries: Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks,* ed. J. Campbell (Princeton, 1955), p. 163. The correlation of the throne and the heart seems to be implied as well in the statement of Abû Yazîd al-Bistâmî (d. 874) cited by ibn al-'Arabî in his *Fuṣûṣ al-ḥikam* (English translation by R.W.J. Austin, *The Bezels of Wisdom* [New York, 1980], p. 101): "If the Throne and all that surrounds it, multiplied a hundred million times, were to be in one of the many chambers of the Heart of the gnostic, he would not be aware of it." For a slightly different rendering see ibid., p. 148, and cf. Massignon, *Essai sur les origines,* p. 249.

[179] See above n. 38.

[180] Cf. *Dîwân,* 4:188 cited above n. 38. See also the poem of Isaac ibn Ghayyat, in Schirmann, *Hebrew Poetry in Spain and Provence,* 1:304: חקרתיך והנה בין זממי / בעין לב אמצאה אותך ואראה: קשורת כסאך נפש נפחתה —.

[181] My formulation here is based on Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sûfism of Ibn 'Arabî,* p. 224 (see above n. 122).

in terms that deliberately echo the experience of the *merkavah* mystic:[182]

> ברכי נפשי את אדני והתחברי עם מלאכיו ... ותני לך מהלכים — בין המלאכים — במושב עבדיו ובמעמד משרתיו משרתי מלכותו — ושלוחי מלאכותו ועושי מלאכתו ... הביטי אל צור אשר ממנו חצבת ... שאי עיניך — והסבי פניך — אל המנרה הטהרה אשר לפני אדני אשר ממאורה תאירי ... ויאר אדני פניו אליך — ויפרש כנפיו עליך ... אז תראי האור הבהיר אשר חשך לא ישופהו.
>
> Bless the Lord, O my soul,[183] and join with the angels... Give her passage[184] amongst the angels — in the dwelling of His servants and in the station of His angels, the servants of His kingdom, the messengers of His angelhood, and those who do His work... Gaze upon the Rock from which you have been hewn[185]... Lift your eyes and turn your face to the pure candelabrum[186] which is before the Lord, from whose light you will be illuminated... And the Lord will shine His countenance upon you[187] and spread His wings over you[188]... Then you will behold the resplendent light[189] which darkness cannot dim.

In this passage the basic themes of the mystical experience described in the *Hekhalot* are all appropriated by Halevi (sometimes expressed through biblical idioms) in order to describe his own experience in the moment of ecstasy induced by poetic composition. He joins, indeed becomes one with, the angels and utters hymns before God, and ultimately has a vision of the divine form characterized as the resplendent light of the divine countenance. While much of the language here is a paraphrase of scriptural texts, the frame which holds together the discrete parts seems to be the mystical experience known from the

[182] *Dîwân,* 4:145 (poem no. 62).

[183] Ps. 103:1, and elsewhere.

[184] Cf. Zech. 3:7.

[185] Cf. Isa. 51:1. Cf. *Dîwân,* 4:263 (poem no. 138): את צור לבבי את מקור חיי.

[186] Cf. Exod. 31:8, 39:37, Lev. 24:4.

[187] Cf. Num. 6:25.

[188] Cf. Ezek. 16:8.

[189] Cf. Job 37:21.

extant *merkavah* tracts. From all the textual evidence that I have adduced, therefore, it may be concluded that the language and motifs of ancient Jewish mysticism were utilized by Halevi and set in his own Andalusian cultural milieu. Most importantly, the description of the visionary experience of the mystic was considered to be, phenomenologically speaking, on par with prophecy and poetic inspiration. In all three cases the inner vision consisted of an imaging of an incorporeal light in corporeal forms within the imagination.

IV

At this juncture I will discuss another motif in Halevi that has great affinity with an idea expressed in Jewish esoteric sources, viz., the conception of prophecy as the apprehension of the divine name.[190] It is well-known that the names of God occupy a central place in the world of ancient Jewish speculation on the chariot.[191] Indeed, in the *Hekhalot* texts the *nomina barbara* assume both theosophical and magical-theurgical significance.[192] That is to say, on the one hand the names are said to reveal the nature of the divine essence, but, on the other, they serve as the principle means for the heavenly ascent to the throne as well as being an essential part of the hymns uttered by the angels and the mystic before the glory.[193] These two functions cannot be separated for the effectiveness of the names as

[190] On the relation of the name and prophecy, cf. *The Religious Poems of Abraham ibn Ezra,* 2:220 (poem no. 327).

[191] Cf. K.E. Grözinger, "The Names of God and the Celestial Powers: Their Function and Meaning in the Hekhalot Literature," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6 (1987): 53–70 (English section).

[192] On the magical-theurgical significance of the divine names in the *Hekhalot* literature, cf. Scholem, *Major Trends,* p. 56; idem, *Jewish Gnosticism,* pp. 54–55, 75–83; I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden, 1980), pp. 104–107.

[193] Cf. Elior, "The Concept of God," pp. 17–18, 20–24.

magical-theurgical means is linked to the operative belief that the names indicate something of the divine (or angelic) essence. Insofar as the name of God reflects the essence of God — epitomized, for example, in the famous statement, "He is His name and His name is He"[194] — it follows that the knowledge of God granted to the mystic in his ascent to the throne and vision of the glory will consist of knowledge of the names.[195] The "seeing of the king in his beauty" is, in effect, a mystical vision of the letters that make up the divine names. Although Halevi does not discuss the actual *merkavah* texts, it seems to me that his understanding of prophecy as the comprehension of the divine name is connected to this Jewish mystical tradition. Indeed, as will be seen further on in this section, Halevi on occasion employs precise terminology from the *Hekhalot* texts to characterize his conception of the name as a luminous substance. I will attempt to show that for Halevi the name is identical with the divine glory which is characterized as light. These associations are standard themes in ancient Jewish mystical literature that were expressed in both kabbalistic and Pietistic literature of the High Middle Ages.

Before proceeding to a discussion of the mystical conception of the name in Halevi, it most be noted that evidence for the cultivation of such an idea is found in the writings of other medieval Jewish Neoplatonists. In this context I will mention three examples. In the poetry of Solomon ibn Gabirol (ca.

[194] Schäfer, *Synopsis*, §588. Cf. G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (New York, 1969), p. 44.

[195] Cf. R. Elior, "Hekhalot Zuṭarti," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought*, Supplement I (1982): 5; idem, "The Concept of God," pp. 21–22. The mystical identification of the name and the glory is based on earlier traditions attested in the Bible itself. Thus the name is used as a substitute for the glory and assumes the characteristics applied to the latter as, for example, in the Deuteronomist's repeated claim that the name dwells in the Temple. Cf. Deut. 12:5, 11, 21; 14:23, 24; 16:2, 6; 26:2. Interestingly, the targumic authors render the reference to God's name in these contexts as God's Presence, שכינתיה.

1020–ca. 1057) the name is identified as the power of the Creator manifest in being through the divine Will. [196] In Pseudo-Baḥya's *Kitâb Ma 'ânî al-Nafs* it is stated that the first of the entities that emanates from the One is called by the Greeks Active Intellect and by the Torah glory, *Shekhinah,* and the name.[197] Even closer to Halevi's formulation is Abraham ibn Ezra who speaks of the souls being conjoined to the angelic realm, i.e., the separate Intellects, and thereby they cleave to the glorious name, *shem ha-nikhbad* (the Tetragrammaton).[198] From these examples, and others that could have been cited, it is evident that Halevi's utilization of the ancient speculation concerning the name within a Neoplatonic context is not an isolated phenomenon but rather represents a discernible pattern in medieval Jewish Neoplatonism.

In IV:15 Halevi writes that in the moment of prophecy, when the prophet achieves a state of being separated from his bodily existence by "cleaving to the angelic species," he is cloaked in the *Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh* (elsewhere described as *al jism al-laṭîf al-ruḥâni*, the subtle spiritual substance) and by means of a prophetic vision apprehends the Tetragrammaton.[199] The latter, Halevi notes, "is the specific and definite name which instructs about the relation between God and His most perfect creatures on the face of the earth, viz., the prophets, whose souls are pure, and they receive the light which penetrates them like the light of sun in a crystal... The explicit name instructs about

[196] Cf. A. Parnes, "The Mentioning of the Name in the Poetry of Solomon ibn Gabirol" [Hebrew], *Kenesset* 7 (1942): 280–293; I. Levin, *Mystical Trends in the Poetry of Solomon ibn Gabirol* [Hebrew] (Lod, 1986), pp. 80–91. On the influence of *merkavah* mysticism on ibn Gabirol, see also F.P. Borgebuhr, *Salomo Ibn Gabirol Ostwestliches Dichtertum* (Wiesbaden, 1976), pp. 74–76, 523–524, 565–567, 614.

[197] Cf. Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages,* p. 84.

[198] Cf. ibn Ezra's *Commentary* ad Exod. 3:15; *Yesod Mora',* chap. 7, p. 13. And see E. Wolfson, "God, the Demiurge, and the Intellect: On the Usage of the Word *Kol* in Abraham ibn Ezra," *REJ* 149 (1990): 77–111, esp. 101–106.

[199] Cf. Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Attributenlehre,* pp. 165–176.

the light that penetrates, and [it] attests that the light of God cleaves to men and penetrates them... The matter of the Tetragrammaton cannot be comprehended by logic, and of it there is no proof except through prophetic vision (אלבצר אלנבוי)."[200] The prophet, cloaked in the light of the *Ruaḥ ha-Qodesh*, apprehends the divine name which is a light that cleaves to the soul. This gnosis of the name, Halevi tells the reader in IV:3, can be attained only through "the evidence of prophecy (אלמשאהדה אלנובייה) and internal vision" (אלבצירה).[201] Underlying Halevi's remarks is a decidedly mystical notion of the divine name which has its roots in the *merkavah* texts. Accordingly, one can find in Halevi a correlation between the Tetragrammaton, on the one hand, and the luminous substance of the *kavod,* on the other. This correlation is especially apparent in several of Halevi's poems. Thus, for example, in the poem, איש אלהים גבר, a retelling of the Sinaitic revelation in alphabetic acrostic, Halevi discusses the second commandment, "You shall not take the name in vain," in the following way: "Do not take in vain that which is hidden from His holy ones [i.e., the angels] ... the splendor of the glory of His name called upon the multitude ... kindling flames of fire"[202] לא תשא לשוא גנוז לקדשיו ... הוד יקר השם הנקרא על המוני ... חצב להבות אש.[203] In this case Halevi has characterized the name as a luminous substance by substituting the name for the voice of God which is described as kindling flames of fire in Ps. 29:7. Specifically, there is a connection made between *hod* and *yaqar,* terms designating the luminosity of the glory, and the name. In another poem, ברכי נפשי את אדני, the mystical conception of the name as a luminous Presence is evident as well:[204]

ברכי
את שם זהר העולם איום ונורא

[200] Cf. Efros, *Studies,* pp. 147–148.
[201] Cf. *Kuzari,* II:54.
[202] Ps. 29:7.
[203] *Dîwân,* 3:100 (poem no. 49).
[204] Ibid., 258 (poem no. 138).

Bless the name — everlasting splendor,[205]
awesome and terrible.[206]

At the conclusion of that very poem Halevi equates the divine name (שמך), Kingdom (מלכותך) and glory (כבודך), all of which are identified as the light of God's countenance.[207] As we have seen above, in the *Kuzari* as well the terms כבוד and מלכות (or מלאכות) both designate the visible form seen by prophets. On occasion Halevi describes his own state of ecstatic inspiration in terms appropriate to the state of prophecy, as for example in the poem יודעי יגוני:[208]

ושמו בקרבי כאש בכליותי
קשור בלבי עצור בעצמותי

His name is in me[209]
Like fire in my kidneys,[210]
Bound to my heart,[211]
Shut up in my bones.[212]

In the above poem Halevi obviously draws upon the prophet's description of God's word "like a raging fire in my heart, shut up in my bones" (Jer. 20:9). For Halevi, however, the subject is not the prophetic word of God, the divine speech, but rather the very name of God, presumably the Tetragrammaton. The first words, "His name is in me," ושמו בקרבי, echo the biblical passage describing the angel of the Lord: "for My name is in him," כי שמי בקרבו (Exod. 23:21). This very verse played a crucial role in ancient Jewish esotericism where it was read exegetically as a reference to Meṭaṭron also known as *Yah ha-Qadan,* for he was

[205] Cf. Isa. 60:19.
[206] Cf. Hab. 1:7.
[207] *Dîwân,* 3:262 (poem no. 138).
[208] Ibid., 89 (poem no. 47).
[209] Based on Exod. 23:21.
[210] On the conjunction of kidney and heart, used to designate one's inwardness, cf. Ps. 26:2, 73:21.
[211] Cf. Ps. 73:21.
[212] Jer. 20:9.

thought to have borne the Tetragrammaton within himself.[213] Halevi combines this image from Exodus 23 with that of Jeremiah 20 to create the notion of the name being inscribed on his heart[214] and innerparts like flames of fire. The name of God is itself the luminous substance that is within the poet. Thus, in another poem, Halevi writes:[215]

שמך נגדי ואיך אלך לבדי
והוא דודי ואיך אשב יחידי
והוא נרי ואיך ידעך מאורי
ואיך אצען והוא משען בידי

Your name is before me, how can I walk alone?
It is my beloved, how can I sit lonely?
It is my lamp, how can my light go dim?
How can I wander with it as a staff in my hand?

Here the name of God is characterized in several ways which all tend to underscore the fact that it is a personalized dynamic entity, a point made as well by Halevi in the *Kuzari* (IV:1, 3) when he states that the Tetragrammaton is the *nomen proprium* which designates the divine reality in its particularity and specificity as is the function of proper names. The first verse brings to mind the passage in Psalm 16:8, "I have set the Lord before me always." In the case of Halevi, however, it is the name of God that is set before him. This name is the constant companion of the poet, indeed his beloved, as well as his lamp, the ontic source of the poet's soul characterized as a light, and, finally, the staff which supports the poet in his earthly peregrinations. In a recent discussion of this poem Raymond

[213] Cf. B. Sanhedrin 38b; I. Gruenwald, *Re'uyot Yeḥezqel*, in *Temirin*, vol. 1, ed. I. Weinstock (Jerusalem, 1972), p. 130, and see editor's n. 119; Schäfer, *Synopsis*, §387.

[214] A similar notion is expressed, for instance, by the thirteenth-fourteenth-century kabbalist, Isaac of Acre, *'Oṣar Ḥayyim*, MS Guenzberg 775, fol. 54b: "The name of the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, is inscribed on the heart of the enlightened ones from Israel, the pure souls upon whom He dwells."

[215] *Dîwân*, 2:221 (poem no. 10).

Scheindlin astutely observed: "This 'name of God' represents not merely the thought of God, but rather something divine that the poet feels to be an integral part of himself."[216] Indeed, the name of God for Halevi is an hypostatic entity, identical with the glory, that is the ontological source of the soul of every Jew. The name is inscribed within the soul, for the soul is of the same substance as the name. Because of this consubstantiality the poet can be unified with the name. Thus in the poem, ירשו למצער אהוביך, Halevi boldly claims: "Cleave to the name of God, Your strength, and hold fast to it," דבקי בשם אל אילותך ובו אחזי.[217] In the moment of poetic composition, therefore, the poet, like the prophet, is cloaked in the Holy Spirit and apprehends the Tetragrammaton.[218] The object of the vision described in some contexts as the anthropomorphic configuration of the spiritual form within the imagination is here characterized as the mystical apprehension of the name. In the final analysis, for Halevi the visible glory, the aspect of the *Shekhinah* "revealed to the eye," is identical with the divine name which is the light that emanates from the Holy Spirit, the "spiritual, hidden *Shekhinah,*"[219] and which comprises the totality of spiritual forms known from chariot speculation.[220]

Reflected in Halevi's writings is an older doctrine concerning

[216] Scheindlin, "Redemption of the Soul," p. 64.

[217] *Dîwân,* 3:88 (poem no. 46).

[218] Cf. ibid., 261 (poem no. 138): ברכי ...את שם קדוש ומקדש בפי כל חזה.

[219] Cf. *Kuzari* V:23, and discussion in Davidson, "The Active Intellect," p. 388.

[220] It is of interest to note as well that approximately a century later, the Castilian kabbalist, R. Jacob ben Jacob ha-Kohen of Soria, reports in his *Perush Mirkevet Yeḥezqel* what appears to be an older Jewish mystical tradition that has great affinity with the views of Halevi: R. Jacob makes a distinction between an upper and lower glory, the former corresponding to the *sefirot* whereas the lower comprises the throne of glory, the encompassing electrum, seven seraphim, the cloud of glory, and eight cherubim. Cf. R. Ya'aqov ha-Kohen, *Perush Mirkevet Yeḥezqel*, ed. A. Farber (M.A. thesis, Hebrew University, 1978), p. 8. See p. 96, n. 11, where Farber already notes the resemblance of this passage to Halevi's view. See also the article of Idel cited above, n. 29.

the *kavod* that has its roots in the Jewish mystical tradition. To be sure, Halevi's philosophical formulation advances considerably beyond the more mythical presentation in the *merkavah* texts, but there can be no doubt regarding the direct influence of the latter upon the former. The 'God of Israel' as it is used in the *merkavah* literature refers to the manifest forms in the world of the throne that constitute the revealed aspects of the divine in the mystical vision. Halevi similarly maintains that the 'God of Israel' is a spiritual form, expressed in the shape of the various inhabitants of the throne-world that are apprehended in a prophetic vision. In one place, as I have indicated, Halevi even describes this prophetic vision in terms of a person's cleaving to the angelic species (i.e., one strips away one's body and becomes a purely spiritual entity), being cloaked in the Holy Spirit, and comprehending the most sacred of divine names, the Tetragrammaton. While there is no exact parallel to Halevi's formulation in the *merkavah* texts, it can easily be shown that each of the critical elements has a basis in the early forms of Jewish mysticism. Central to the latter is a visionary ascent which leads to a temporary transformation of the human being into an angel; this transformation, moreover, is often described in terms of the mystic being surrounded or cloaked in the light of the *kavod.* Finally, the culminating stage in the ecstatic vision is a mystical apprehension of the divine names — many of which are various permutations of the Tetragrammaton — as they are correlated with limbs of the divine body. In the case of Halevi we have a striking example of a medieval Jewish intellectual who sought to incorporate early forms of Jewish mysticism in the texture of a more sophisticated philosophical approach largely indebted to Islamic influences, especially Sufi and Isma'ili thought. In great measure this tells the story of the literary profile of medieval Jewish mysticism which took shape in Provence and Northern Spain. At the very least this study points again to the complicated interweaving of two of the threads of medieval Jewish intellectual history, philosophy and mysticism, which by no means are easily disentangled.