SEVEN MYSTERIES OF KNOWLEDGE: QUMRAN E/SOTERICISM RECOVERED

Elliot R. Wolfson

Kakuseba iyo-iyo arawaru.
The more you hide it, the more it is exposed.
Rinzai Zen Kôan

In this study, I offer a modest contribution to Qumran studies in particular and to the history of esotericism in late Second Temple Palestinian Judaism more generally.[1] As is well known to experts in this field, notwithstanding the fact that the extant corpus of primary documents, the so-called "Qumran library,"[2] is relatively small, in great measure restored on the basis of highly technical, and at times boldly imaginative, modes of textual reconstruction, the bibliography of scholarly studies on that corpus is quite sizeable. One might posit an inverse correlation at work here: the more fragmentary the textual evidence, the greater the propagation of interpretative stratagems.[3]

The specific focus of this essay is a reconsideration of the notion of mystery, *raz*, a Persian loanword, as it is employed in select sectarian texts.[4] Needless to say, there have been important observa-

---

[1] The core of this study took shape in the seminar I led on heavenly ascents in late antique Judaism and Christianity at the University of Notre Dame, Fall 2002. I am grateful to the students who attended for their thoughtful engagement, and a special note of thanks to Hindy Najman for immeasurably enriching the seminar by her faithful attendance and participation. This study, in no small measure, was inspired by our conversations. It is an honor to publish this study in a volume honoring the scholarly achievement of Professor James Kugel, a man of considerable literary sensibility and exegetical acumen.

[2] Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective* (with the collaboration of Pamela Vermes; rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 45–86.

[3] For a thoughtful discussion of this issue, see Hartmut Stegemann, "Methods for the Reconstruction of Scrolls from Scattered Fragments," in *Archaeology and History in the Dead Sea Scrolls: The New York University Conference in Memory of Yigael Yadin* (ed. L. H. Schiffman; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1990), 189–220.

[4] On the philological and conceptual implications of the term *raz*, especially in the Sassanian period, see Shaul Shaked, "Esoteric Trends in Zoroastrianism," PIASH 3 (1969): 193: "The word *râz* is used several times in the Pahlavi books in connection with a group of religious mysteries, which seem to be usually related to the

tions regarding this term elicited from the various genres of what is considered the canon of Qumran literature, a canon determined by scholarly consensus formed, with more than a little political intrigue and drama, over several decades.[5] A recent opportunity to teach *4Q*

---

fields of creation and eschatology as well as to the knowledge of the proper way of fighting the demons. It should, however, be remarked that this word does not necessarily designate in many of its occurrences a secret piece of knowledge or a doctrine which must be kept hidden; it seems often to denote a hidden cause, a latent factor, a connection which is not immediately evident." A selection of relevant texts are cited and translated by Shaked, "Esoteric Trends," 206–13, whence he draws the conclusion that there are "two main characteristics of the mystery designated by the word *râz*: the secret of the battle of the gods with the demons . . . and the secret of eschatology." My gratitude to Maria Subtelny for drawing my attention to Shaked's study. The meaning he ascribes to the word *raz* in the Zoroastrian context resonates well with the semantic range of this term in the Qumran literature, a matter worthy of a separate analysis. On the possible links between Qumran and Zoroastrianism, see David Winston, "The Iranian Component in the Bible, Apocrypha, and Qumran: A Review of the Evidence," *HR* 5 (1966): 183–216; Shaul Shaked, "Qumran and Iran: Further Considerations," *IOS* 2 (1972): 433–46.

[5] On "mystery" (*raz, sod*) in Qumran texts, see the list compiled by E. Vogt, " 'Mysteria' in textibus Qumran," *Bib* 37 (1956): 247–57; and the study by Raymond E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term "Mystery" in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 22–30. Brown utilizes the following categories: (1) mysteries of divine providence—the secret is thus related to the providence that God shows vis-à-vis angels, humankind, and Israel; (2) mysteries of the sect's interpretation of the law—the members of the community are entrusted with special understanding of Torah; (3) cosmic mysteries; and (4) evil mysteries. See also Matthew Black, *The Scrolls and Christian Origins: Studies in the Jewish Background of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner, 1961), 142–44. Black focuses on the expression "mysteries of redemption" and its link to *mysterion* in the NT as it is applied to the mystery of redemption in the suffering of Christ (Col 1:24–26). Black mentions 1 QH IX, 6–8 (1QH[a] XVII, 6–8) where the soul is described as being brought low in the marvels or wonders of God (*nifle'otekha*) and 23–27 where the soul is said to be chastised in the mystery of divine wisdom (*beraz ḥokhmatekha*). It does seem that here the mystery of wisdom involves the element of divine providence. Black also mentions 1 QH IV, 27–28 (1QH[a] XII, 27–28) where God is said to illumine the face of the many through the one who has become acquainted with the secrets of God's mysteries (*ki hoda'atani berazei pela'ekhah*)—in this case it seems a theosophic intent is implied. To know the divine nature results in an illumination. I do not discern support for Black's contention that these texts espouse the idea of the mystery of redemptive suffering. For other attempts to compare the use of "mystery" in the New Testament, particularly in the Christology of Paul, and Qumran, see Béda Rigàux, "Révélation des mystères et perfection a Qumrân et dans le Nouveau Testament," *NTS* 4 (1958): 237–62; Joseph Coppens, "Le 'Mystère' dans la théologie paulinienne et ses parallèles qumrâniens," *RechBib* 5 (1960): 142–65; trans. " 'Mystery' in the Theology of Saint Paul and Its Parallels at Qumran," in *Paul and Qumran: Studies in New Testament Exegesis* (ed. J. Murphy-O'Connor; Chicago: Priory, 1968), 132–58; and Heinz-Wolfgang Kuhn, "The Wisdom Passage in 1 Corinthians 2:6–16: Between Qumran and Proto-Gnosticism," in *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts from Qumran: Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Oslo, 1998—Published in Memory of Maurice Baillet* (ed. D. K. Falk, F. G. Martínez, and E. Schuller; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 240–53, esp. 251–53. For the use of the term *raz* in the sapiential

Širot ʿOlat Haššabbat, the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, occasioned a reconsideration on my part of the term and some of its philosophical ramifications yet to be disclosed in academic treatments.

I. *Imago Templi* and Reciprocal Reciprocity

To state my hypothesis at the outset: I begin with the seemingly trivial assumption that *raz* is multivalent in its range of semantic insinuation. This assertion, needless to say, is hardly unique to this term, but it is nonetheless relevant for me to make the point, as it underscores the fact that what I shall present is consciously acknowledged to be only one of many indexical possibilities. I shall focus on a trajectory of meaning that, for lack of a better term, I call onto-theosophic. This admittedly awkward (and to some readers, no doubt, anachronistic) locution suggests that the nature of mystery is not merely epistemological, understood either as a matter of marking the spot where intellect falters before its own limit and thus yields to a higher revelation as the ultimate source of knowledge, or as a social mechanism to create an inner circle, a group distinguishing itself from a larger cohort and claiming supremacy for its own agenda.[6]

---

works known as the *Mysteries*, see Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia/Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), 206. According to Schiffman, *raz* "refers to the mysteries of creation, that is, the natural order of things, and to the mysteries of the divine role in historical processes." The source of both the cosmological and providential mysteries, the secrets of nature and history, is divine wisdom. For another useful survey of the different terminological signposts to denote mystery or secret in Qumran texts, see Markus Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1990), 53–56. Commenting specifically on the connotation of *raz* in the depiction of the worship of the "seven exalted angelic princes" in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, Bockmuehl remarks that we cannot make a distinction between "cosmological and soteriological concerns. . . . Revelation of both kinds of mysteries illustrates and derives from God's wisdom and understanding" (55). While acknowledging the source of the two kinds of mystery in the divine, Bockmuehl does not go far enough in appreciating the onto-theosophic implication of *raz*, as I have argued in the body of this study.

[6] A useful discussion to reflect on the esotericism in Qumran is the account of the "mysteries of God" in John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 210–60. Admittedly, Collins focuses on a different geographical area with its cultural distinctiveness, but we well know that Palestine in the period that corresponds to the Qumran community and the evolution of its practices and teachings was influenced by Hellenic trends of thinking. For specific discussion of this issue, see Martin Hengel, "Qumrân und der Hellenismus," in *Qumrân: sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu* (ed. M. Delcor; BETL 46; Paris: Duculot, 1978), 333–72.

I readily admit that both of these features are attested in the use of *raz* in the Scrolls, but there is an additional connotation, which I take to be ontological, a technical philosophical expression that I employ to convey the sense of confronting that which is yet to be confronted, a meaning epitomized in the signature denotation of divine mystery that appears in the sapiential works 1Q/4QInstruction and 1Q/4QMysteries as well as in 1QS XI, 3–4, *raz nihyeh*,[7] rendered most often as "mystery of being"[8] or "mystery of existence,"[9] and applied generally to God's mysterious plan for human history from beginning to end, creation to the eschaton.[10] This technical

---

[7] For a brief but useful account of the different scholarly renderings, see Daniel J. Harrington, "The *Râz Nihyeh* in a Qumran Wisdom Text (1Q26, 4Q415–418, 423)," *RevQ* 17 (1996): 549–53, esp. 551; see also Daryl F. Jefferies, *Wisdom At Qumran: A Form-Critical Analysis of the Admonitions in 4QInstruction* (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias, 2002), 64–67.

[8] Ben Zion Wacholder and Martin G. Abegg, *A Preliminary Edition of the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls: The Hebrew and Aramaic Texts from Cave Four* (2 fasc.; Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1991–1992), 2:xii–xiv. The authors propose that *raz nihyeh* in the Qumran sapiential fragments is to be interpreted textually, that is, the term "refers to a work, or works, that had been available to the author(s) and readers of these compositions but has since perished," or it is "the sectarian title for many of the works found in this fascicle" (xiii). Wacholder and Abegg speculate, moreover, that alternative names for the compositions referred to as *raz nihyeh* are "book of memory," *sefer zikkaron*, and the "vision of meditation," *ḥazon haguy* (4Q417 2 I, 16). On the possibility that *raz nihyeh* is a body of teaching or a vehicle of transmission of divine wisdom, see Harrington, "*Râz Nihyeh*," 552; Jefferies, *Wisdom At Qumran*, 67, 299–305. I have appropriated the translation "vision of meditation" from *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (ed. and trans. F. G. Martínez and E. J. C. Tigchelaar; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1997–1998), 2:859. Support for this rendering may be elicited from an earlier passage in this fragment, based partially on Josh 1:8, [. . . *yom wa-laylah hagah beraz ni*]*hyeh wedoreš tamid we'az tedaʿ 'emet weʿawwal ḥokhmah*, "[. . . day and night meditate on the mystery of ex]istence, and seek continuously. And then you will know truth and injustice, wisdom" (4Q417 2 I, 6; *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2:858–59). The *ḥazon haguy* is linked by them to the *sefer hagu* mentioned in CD X, 6; XIII, 2. See the rich note offered by Rabin in the apparatus (*The Zadokite Documents* [2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1958] 50, 6.3). He suggests a possible emendation, *hehaghi*, and notes the etymological derivation from a verb that means "to study."

[9] *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1:66–67 (1Q26 1+2 2; 1Q27 1 I, 2), 1:96–97 (1QS XI, 3–4), 2:662–63 (4Q300 3 3, 4), 2:846–47 (4Q415 6 4), 2:850–53 (4Q416 2 III, 9, 14, 18), 2:854–55 (4Q416 7 1), 2:858–59 (4Q417 2 I, 6, 18), 2:870–71 (4Q418 77 2), 2:886–87 (4Q423 3+4 2), 2:888–89 (4Q423 5 2).

[10] Torlief Elgvin, "An Analysis of 4QInstruction" (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997), 80–81 (cited in Jefferies, *Wisdom At Qumran*, 66): "*raz nihyeh* is a comprehensive word for God's mysterious plan for creation and history. His plan for man and for redemption of the elect. . . . The translation 'mystery to come' better catches the historical and eschatological connotation of *raz nihyeh* than 'mystery of being.'" See also John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Ages* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 122, and references to other scholars cited below, n. 12.

term substantiates the hermeneutical point I was making above, to wit, attested in Qumran literature is an ontological connotation of the word *raz*, as it denotes the "being" of the divine image,[11] a mystery that consists in the fact that the "being" of this image is in the image of being (be)coming what it is to be.[12] Without denying the cosmological and eschatological implications, I would argue there is another dimension to consider as *raz* relates to the mystery of divine becoming; the cosmological and eschatological are grounded in this

[11] Another example to substantiate this philological claim is the expression *razei ʾel lešaḥet riš*ʿ*ah*, "God's mysteries will destroy wickedness" (1QM III, 9). This sentence is meaningful only if we interpret *razei ʾel* ontologically, that is, as referring to the powers of the divine nature, which will, in the end, exact justice and destroy the wicked. I would suggest a similar interpretation for the expression *razei* ʿ*ormato*, "the mysteries of his cunningness" (1QpHab VII, 14), used in conjunction with the eschatological promise that in the end the righteous will prosper and the wicked will suffer. In this connection, mention should also be made of the expression ʿ*ormat da*ʿ*at*, the "cunningness of knowledge," in 1QS X, 25. See also CD II, 3–4: *ʾel ʾohev da*ʿ*at ḥokhmah wetušiyyah hiṣṣiv lefanaw* ʿ*ormah weda*ʿ*at hem yešartuhu*.

[12] Harrington, "*Râz Nihyeh*," 551, remarks that he and Strugnell followed Milik's lead, *le mystère futur*, and thus translated *raz nihyeh* as "the mystery that is to be/come." The future tense is reflective of the mystery in a "body of teaching," whether written or oral, that "concerns behavior and eschatology" (552). See also Daniel J. Harrington, *Wisdom Texts from Qumran* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996), 60, 64. For a similar approach, which emphasizes that *raz nihyeh* is an apocalyptic reinterpretation of the earlier concept of divine wisdom, see Torlief Elgvin, "The Mystery To Come: Early Essene Theology of Revelation," in *Qumran Between the Old and New Testaments* (ed. F. H. Cryer and T. L. Thompson; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 113–50; idem, "Wisdom With and Without Apocalyptic," in *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts*, 24–25, 37. See also the translation of *raz nihyeh* as "the mystery that is to be" in Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 121–25. Schiffman, *Reclaiming*, 207, renders *raz nihyeh* as "the mystery that was coming into being," which he also relates to divine wisdom, the source of the "mysteries of creation, that is the natural order of things," and "the mysteries of the divine role in historical processes" (206). In a similar vein, A. Klostergaard Petersen, "Wisdom As Cognition: Creating the Others in the Book of Mysteries and 1 Cor 1–2," in *The Wisdom Texts from Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought* (ed. C. Hempel, A. Lange, and H. Lichtenberger; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 415, translates *raz nihyeh* as the "mystery of that which was coming into being" and suggests that it "is apparently connected to the eschaton. It includes a body of teaching involving creation, ethical activity, and eschatology." Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 116, submits that *raz nihyeh* refers to the "original order of creation." See also John I. Kampen, "The Diverse Aspects of Wisdom in the Qumran Texts," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (ed. P. W. Flint and J. C. Vanderkam, with the assistance of A. E. Alvarez; 2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1998–1999), 1:228–30. Finally, Bilhah Nitzan, "The Idea of Creation and Its Implications in Qumran Literature," in *Creation in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (ed. H. G. Reventlow and Y. Hoffman; London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 250–52, renders *raz nihyeh* as "the mystery of what is to come into being," which she relates to the cosmological and eschatological secrets of God's hidden wisdom beyond human knowledge.

other dimension that I shall call the ontological. The key to open this door, and perhaps, for some, to go through, is to think of the juxtaposition of *raz* and *daʿat*, "mystery" and "knowledge."[13] By uncovering this conjunction we hope to begin to recover the soteric nature of esotericism promulgated by some of the priests in what is prudently referred to as the Qumran community (*yaḥad*).

The text that has inspired my reflections inscripted herein appears in what is believed to be the eighth in the sequence of thirteen *Sabbath Songs*,[14] presumed to have been recited during the thirteen Sabbaths of the first quarter of the annual calendar[15] or repeated once in each of the four quarters.[16] In my judgment, a symbolic significance can be ascribed to each of these possibilities, as the numbers thirteen and four are both sacred markers of an underlying unity. Be that as it may, these angelic hymns, as scholars of the Scrolls have duly noted,[17] provide critical information about the liturgical piety cultivated by the priestly defectors from the Jerusalem Temple responsible for the formation of the *yaḥad* in the desert, even if one casts doubt about the composition of the hymns by members alleged to represent the communal viewpoint.[18] Central to that piety is a liturgical synchro-

---

[13] For a still useful survey of the various applications of the term *daʿat* in Qumran literature, see William D. Davies, "'Knowledge' in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Matthew 11:25–30," *HTR* 46 (1953): 113–39, and esp. 121–22 for analysis of passages dealing with secret knowledge.

[14] The fullest account of these angelic hymns remains Carol Newsom's *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985), which served as the basis for her critical edition in J. VanderKam and M. Brady, consulting eds., *Qumran Cave 4.VI: Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 1* (DJD 11; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 173–401. See also Adiel M. Schwemer, "Gott aus König und seine Königsherrschaft in den Sabbathliedern aus Qumran," in *Königsherrschaft Gottes und himmlischer Kult in Judentum, Urchristentum und in der hellenistischen Welt* (ed. M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer; Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 45–118; Bilhah Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* (trans. J. Chipman; Leiden: Brill, 1994), 273–318; Fletcher-Louis, *Glory of Adam*, 252–394. For a concise summary, see Schiffman, *Reclaiming*, 355–60, and particularly his suggestion (359) on the basis of 11Q5 XXVII, 5–7 that the sect believed David composed the *Sabbath Songs*.

[15] Johann Maier, "*Shîrê ʿÔlat hash-Shabbat*. Some Observations on their Calendric Implications and on their Style," in *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid, 18–21 March, 1991* (ed. J. Trebolle Barrera and L. Vegas Montaner; 2 vols.; STDJ 11; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 2:546–52.

[16] Newsom, *Songs*, 19–20.

[17] For a somewhat more reserved approach, see the careful weighing of the philological and textual evidence in Daniel K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 126–39.

[18] Carol Newsom, "'Sectually Explicit' Literature from Qumran," in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters* (ed. W. H. Propp, B. Halpern, and D. N. Freedman; Winona

nism[19] or what may be called reciprocal reciprocity, double mirroring of heaven and earth, Jerusalem Temple and celestial throne.[20] To speak of double mirroring—as below above, as above below[21]—

Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 179–85; and see the cautionary remarks of Ra'anan Abusch, "Sevenfold Hymns in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* and the Hekhalot Literature: Formalism, Hierarchy and the Limits of Human Participation," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity: Papers from an International Conference at St. Andrews in 2001* (ed. J. R. Davila; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 225. It should be noted that in earlier studies, Newsom argued that the Qumran community was the probable *Sitz im Leben* for the composition of the angelic hymns; see *Songs*, 1–4, 59–74; idem, "'He Has Established for Himself Priests': Human and Angelic Priesthood in the Qumran Sabbath *Shirot*," in *Archaeology and History*, 103–4. Much controversy still surrounds the precise sociological identification of the community. For what appears to me to be a balanced and sensible account, see Shemaryahu Talmon, *The World of Qumran from Within: Collected Studies* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1989), 11–52. According to Talmon, it is best to avoid the approach of seeking a single identity from without and imposing it on the community as opposed to examining the contours from within. Talmon assumes that the small band of priests who left Jerusalem is a *sui generis* phenomenon of the Second Temple period. See idem, "Between the Bible and the Mishna—the World of Qumran from Within," in *The Scrolls of the Judaean Desert: Forty Years of Research* (ed. M. Broshi et al.; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute and Israel Exploration Society, 1992), 10–48 [Hebrew]; and for an alternative review of the issue, see James C. Vanderkam, "Identity and History of the Community," in *Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years*, 2:487–533.

[19] Henry Corbin, *Le paradoxe du monothéisme* (Paris: Éditions de l'Herne, 1981), 110, 126–27, utilizes the expression *synchronisme liturgique* to describe the relationship between heaven and earth in the Qumran angelology.

[20] Many worthy studies have been written on the mythopoeic theme of the correspondence between the earthly and heavenly Temples. As a selective list, I note Victor Aptowitzer, "The Celestial Temple as Viewed in the Aggadah," *Tarbiz* 2 (1931): 137–53, 257–77 [Hebrew], abridged English translation in *Studies in Jewish Thought* (vol. 2 of *Binah: Studies in Jewish History, Thought, and Culture*; ed. J. Dan; New York: Praeger, 1989), 1–29; M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (London: SPCK, 1991). For studies related more specifically to this theme in the Qumran Scrolls, see Bertil Gärtner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965); James R. Davila, "The Macrocosmic Temple, Scriptural Exegesis, and the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice," *DSD* 9 (2002): 1–19.

[21] This sensibility is an integral aspect of ancient mythologies based on a presumed parallelism between heaven and earth, the pantheon and royal court. This archaic principle evolved into an elemental hermetic principle articulated in the beginning of *Tabula Smaragdina*, the "Emerald Tablet," a series of gnomic utterances attributed to the legendary Hermes Trimegistus, cited in John Read, *Prelude to Chemistry: An Outline of Alchemy, Its Literature and Relationships* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), 54: "I speak not fictitious things, but that which is certain and true. What is below is like that which is above, and what is above is like that which is below, to accomplish the miracles of one thing." For a learned discussion of the development of this theme in later hermetic literature, see Gilles Quispel, "Gnosis and Alchemy: the Tabula Smaragdina," in *From Poimandres to Jacob Böhme: Gnosis, Hermetism and the Christian Tradition* (ed. R. van den Broek and C. van Heertum; Amsterdam: Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, 2000), 304–33. See further below, n. 59.

suggests something of a challenge to the hierarchical alignment of heavenly and mundane; mirrored and mirror are indistinguishable when the mirror is mirrored as the mirrored of the mirror. The play of (dis)semblance is not dependent on linear causality, whether charted vertically or horizontally, and hence even in the absence of an earthly temple the correlation of upper and lower is not severed in the imagination; quite to the contrary, the correlation seems to be strengthened and its horizons expanded to the extent that there is no concrete instantiation of the symbolic paradigm. Scholars of Jewish literature in the Second Temple period, what is sometimes referred to (in what strikes me as an overly determined historiographical taxon) as "early Judaism," have not generally appreciated the full mythopoeic import of the imaginal symbol of the celestial temple,[22] a transcendent reality supposedly envisioned contemplatively in the heart of the worshiper, the organ of apperception that corresponds to the throne upon which the glory sits.[23] The symbolic correlation of heart and throne implies that the imaginal faculty, the vehicle that provides the showground wherein the theophanic image appears, is engendered as feminine, the veil through which the hidden becomes manifest and the manifest, hidden, speculum of the other, lucidly dense, densely lucid, sapphire stone whence the throne is hewn.

When the matter is examined from a perspective beholden to an empiricist epistemology, it is obviously the case that images depicting the heavenly temple are contrived on the basis of the concrete reality of an earthly temple. It would be foolish to think otherwise; however, there is no compelling intellectual reason to privilege this angle of vision, which, I suspect, has attained prominence in the academy in large measure due to the dominance of social scientific method in the study of history and other disciplines included in the rubric of the humanities.[24] It is entirely possible from a conceptual

[22] Henry Corbin, *Temple and Contemplation* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 263–390. Although I have utilized Corbin's thinking in a number of studies, the one most relevant for this analysis is Elliot R. Wolfson, "Sacred Space and Mental Iconography: *Imago Templi* and Contemplation in Rhineland Jewish Pietism," in *Ki Baruch Hu: Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Judaic Studies in Honor of Baruch A. Levine* (ed. R. Chazan, W. Hallo, and L. H. Schiffman; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 593–634.

[23] A notable exception is Christopher Morray-Jones, "The Temple Within: The Embodied Divine Image and its Worship in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish and Christian Sources," *SBLSP* 37 (1998): 399–431.

[24] A poignant example of this methodological flaw is found in the arguments made about temple imagery in *Sefer Yeṣirah* by Yehuda Liebes, *Ars Poetica in Sefer*

standpoint to reverse the causal relation, impelling one to consider the architectural construction of the earthly temple in light of the mythical *imago templi*.[25] This point, which has ramifications for a wider understanding of the symbolic fabric of ritual, mediated always by and through the prism of a socio-political community, the conduit to past tradition that calls forth incessantly for reappropriation, is especially pertinent in the case of the priests who absconded from their temple duties[26] and deserted the city to establish a priestly order[27] in the wilderness based not on the offering of sacrifices but on upholding purity laws,[28] fostering poetic forms of liturgical devotion,[29] and sponsoring oracular study of Torah, a form of visionary

---

Yetsira (Tel-Aviv: Schocken, 2000), 205–8 [Hebrew]. The relevancy of this reference is enhanced by the fact that Liebes dates the textual core of *Sefer Yeṣirah* to the Second Temple period. The somewhat unconventional and, to my mind, misguided approach to this textual aggregate deserves to be treated in more detail, but suffice it to say here that the methodological confusion displayed by Liebes on this point has to do with approaching the dual temples, celestial and earthly, in a binary and hierarchical fashion, according priority to the latter as the ground upon which the former is to be constructed.

[25] A clear-cut illustration of the failure to apprehend this point is found in Abusch, "Sevenfold Hymns," 236. The author criticizes the angelomorphic reading of the *Sabbath Songs* offered by Fletcher-Louis (see reference below, n. 61), which presumes an ontological identification of human and angelic based on a common semantic field: "This assumption, however, is especially problematic in the *Songs*, in which language functions primarily as a mode of representation and the imagined realms are perforce described as mirroring the earthly reality of the author(s)." In the first instance, it is not obvious to me why mirroring would preclude ontological identity, and, secondly, I am not convinced that the imagined, heavenly realms mirror the earthly reality. It is equally plausible—indeed, from my vantage point, preferable—to suggest that the reverse is the case, the earthly mirroring the heavenly, the veridical reflecting the imaginal.

[26] On the segregation of the priests to form the desert community, see 4Q397 14–21 7 (in E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, *Qumran Cave 4.V: Miqṣat Maʿaśe ha-Torah* [DJD 10; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994], 27, 58, 111); CD VIII, 16; Craig A. Evans, "Opposition to the Temple: Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 235–53; Schiffman, *Reclaiming*, 84–85. In 1QS VIII, 13–14; IX, 19–20, the physical withdrawal is expressed in the image of clearing a path, linked exegetically to Isa 40:3.

[27] On the priestly nature of the sectarian community, see the survey by Robert A. Kugler, "Priesthood at Qumran," in *Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years*, 2:93–116.

[28] See Florentino García Martínez and Julio Trebolle Barrera, *The People of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Writings, Beliefs, and Practices* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 139–57; Schiffman, *Reclaiming*, 97–112; Hannah K. Harrington, *The Impurity Systems of Qumran and the Rabbis: Biblical Foundations* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993).

[29] There has been a profusion of studies written on the liturgical dimensions of Qumran piety, so here I offer but a modest sampling: Talmon, *World of Qumran*, 200–243; Moshe Weinfeld, "Prayer and Liturgical Practice in the Qumran Sect," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research* (ed. D. Dimant and U. Rappaport; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 241–58; Eileen Schuller, "Prayer, Hymnic and Liturgical Texts

midrash,[30] or, as some scholars have put it, inspired biblical exegesis,[31] an effort goaded by the determination to determine the will of YHWH in accord with the demands of each and every moment.[32]

---

from Qumran," in *The Community of the Renewed Covenant* (ed. E. Ulrich and J. C. Vanderkam; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 153–71; Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer*; idem, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Jewish Liturgy," in *Dead Sea Scrolls as Background*, 195–219; Esther G. Chazon, "Prayers from Qumran and Their Historical Implications," *DSD* 1 (1994): 265–84; idem, "Hymns and Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years*, 1:244–70.

[30] As has often been noted in scholarly literature, the root *drš* appears prominently in the Scrolls; the community's "righteous teacher" (*moreh ṣedeq*) bears the honorific title *doreš hattorah*, "interpreter of the teaching" (CD VI, 7; VII, 18). See Philip R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant: An Interpretation of the "Damascus Document"* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), 123–24. The exegetical proficiency of the priestly leader is affirmed in a number of places; see 1QS V, 2–3; VIII, 1–2; CD XIII, 1–2. It is worthy to recall as well the expression *midraš hattorah* in CD XX, 6, which parallels *midraš yaḥad* in 1QS VI, 24, as noted by Joseph M. Baumgarten, "Corrigenda to the 4Q MSS of the Damascus Document," *RevQ* 19 (1999–2000): 221. The word *midraš* occurs as well in 1QS VIII, 15 (see below, n. 32), 26; 4Q174 1–2 I, 14. On the revelatory nature of the exegetical enterprise in sectarian literature, see Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 42–49; Aharon Shemesh and Cana Werman, "Hidden Things and Their Revelation," *RevQ* 18 (1998): 409–27. On revelation as the source of authoritative interpretation of the written text, see also A. R. C. Leaney, *The Rule of Qumran and Its Meaning: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), 63–75; Michael Mach, "The Social Implication of Scripture-Interpretation in Second Temple Judaism," in *The Sociology of Sacred Texts* (ed. J. Davies and I. Wollaston; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 166–79. For discussion of this theme linked especially to angelic mediation, see Hindy Najman, "Angels At Sinai: Exegesis, Theology, and Interpretive Authority," *DSD* 7 (2000): 313–33. The philological and conceptual implications of the terms *pesher* and *midrash* are discussed by George J. Brooke, *Exegesis At Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in its Jewish Context* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 149–56. On affinities between the midrashic character of sectarian *pesher* and later rabbinic hermeneutical principles, see Eliezer Slomovic, "Toward an Understanding of the Exegesis in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *RevQ* 7 (1969): 3–15; Paul Mandel, "Midrashic Exegesis and Its Precedents in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *DSD* 8 (2001): 149–68.

[31] Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1980), 19–23; Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Sectarian Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Courts, Testimony, and the Penal Code* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983), 15–16; Michael Fishbane, "Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. M. J. Mulder; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988), 345–46, 364–66. For an attempt to view the emphasis on study of Torah advocated in the Scrolls as part of a larger "return to the text" in Second Temple Judaism, a move that had a great impact on subsequent rabbinic Judaism, see Adiel Schremer, "'[T]he[y] Did Not Read in the Sealed Book': Qumran Halakhic Revolution and the Emergence of Torah Study in Second Temple Judaism," in *Historical Perspectives: From the Hasmoneans to Bar Kokhba in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 27–31 January, 1999* (ed. D. Goodblatt, A. Pinnick, and D. R. Schwartz; Leiden: Brill, 2001), 105–26.

[32] 1QS VIII, 15: *hi'h midraš hattorah 'a[š]er ṣiwwah beyad mošeh la'aśot kekhol hannigleh 'et be'et*, "This is the study of the Torah that he commanded through Moses in order

Indeed, the poetic compositions betray a complicated hermeneutical pattern that suggests it may not be wise to distinguish too sharply between liturgical and exegetical activities on the part of the priestly scribes.[33] From the same ranks came forth visionary poet and inspired exegete, *maśkil* and *moreh ṣedeq*, entrusted with knowledge of the mysteries of the prophets that pertained especially to the "appointed time," the eschatological end, *ḥazon lammoʿed weyafeaḥ laqqeṣ* (Hab 2:3), the final terminus, *haqqeṣ haʾaḥaron* (1QpHab VII, 7).[34]

Members of the "sacred community," *yaḥad qodeš*,[35] "community of the sons of Zadok," *yaḥad benei ṣadoq*,[36] community of "those who enter the renewed covenant," *boʾei berit haḥadašah*,[37] defined themselves as the "elect ones of Israel" (*beḥirei yiśraʾel*),[38] the "righteous remnant,"[39] "his chosen assembly" (*ʿadat beḥiro*), which is compared

---

to act in compliance with all that is revealed at each and every moment." For analysis of this passage, see Gershon Brin, *The Concept of Time in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 308. In 1QS V, 9, the priests, sons of Zadok, are described as "guardians of the covenant and interpreters of his will," *šomrei habberit wedoršei reṣono*. See 1QS VIII, 6 where the community council is said to be *beḥirei raṣon*, that is, the elect "chosen by the will" of God. The members of the community are designated *benei raṣon*, "sons of favor," in 1QH[a] XII, 32–33; XIX, 9. The idiom *ʾanšei raṣon*, "men of will," occurs in 4Q298 I, 3–4; 4Q418 81 10.

[33] On the exegetical-meditative aspects of the liturgical compositions, see Carol Newsom, "Merkabah Exegesis in the Qumran Sabbath Shirot," *JJS* 38 (1987): 11–30.

[34] Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 167–68; Bilhah Nitzan, *Pesher Habakkuk: A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judaea (1QpHab)* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1986), 27–28, 172–73.

[35] Many scholars have noted the centrality of cultic purity in the sectarian's understanding of self-identity. For a relatively recent study that takes into account previous discussions, see Hannah K. Harrington, "Holiness and Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *DSD* 8 (2001): 124–35.

[36] This title is derived from Ezekiel's depiction of the priests who will serve in the future Temple (44:15). See 1QS V, 2, 9; CD III, 20–IV, 3; Kugler, "Priesthood," 97–100. On the figure of Zadok, see Ben Zion Wacholder, *The Dawn of Qumran: The Sectarian Torah and the Teacher of Righteousness* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1983), 99–140.

[37] Howard C. Kee, "Membership in the Covenant People at Qumran and in the Teaching of Jesus," in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 104–22.

[38] 4Q174 1 I, 21, 2 19; CD IV, 3–4. In 1QpHab X, 13, the sectarians are referred to as *beḥirei ʾel*, the "elect ones of God." See also the expression *beḥirei raṣon*, "chosen by the will," in 1QS VIII, 6, and *beḥirei haʿet*, "chosen ones of the moment," in 1QS IX, 14 (= 4Q259 III, 11), discussed by Brin, *Concept of Time*, 303–4; and *beḥirei ṣedeq*, the "just chosen ones," in 1QH[a] X, 13.

[39] Members of the *yaḥad* viewed themselves as the holy remnant of Israel (Jer 6:9; 31:7; Ezek 9:8; 11:13; Mic 2:12; Zeph 3:13; 2 Chr 34:9) with whom God would renew the covenant and effect the restoration to the days of glory past (CD I, 4–5); the community thus understood its destiny in terms of receiving the "new covenant," *berit ḥadašah*, inscribed on the heart (Deut 10:16; 30:6; Jer 31:31–33; Ezek 36:26). *Berit* connotes the covenant with God that must be renewed through reenactment of biblical ceremony (Deut 27–28; Josh 8:30–35). See Davies, *Damascus*

to "sapphire amidst the stones" (*ke'even hassappir betokh ha'avanim*),[40] whose primary task was to establish a priestly regimen without temple or sacrificial cult.[41] Hence, one should not be surprised that by their own account the liturgical rite, "offering of the lips" (*terumat śefatayim*),[42] is trumpeted as a substitute for the "flesh of burnt offerings" and the "fat of sacrifices" (1QS IX, 4–5); prayer as an instrument of theurgic power, which in this context denotes bestowal of praise upon, that is, glorifying, the "glorious king," *melekh hakkavod*,[43] tem-

---

Covenant, 173–97; Bilhah Nitzan, "The Concept of the Covenant in Qumran Literature," in *Historical Perspectives*, 85–104. The Scrolls have also yielded evidence that circumcision of the flesh and circumcision of the heart both play a role in the formation of the community's pietistic ideal. Regarding the latter, see, for example, 1QS V, 5 where those in the *yaḥad* are described as circumcising the "foreskin of the inclination and the stiff neck" (echoing Deut 10:16) and 4Q434 1 I, 2–4 where circumcising the foreskin of the heart is attributed to God (cf. *Jub.* 1:22); and the depiction of the wicked priest "whose disgrace exceeded his glory because he did not circumcise the foreskin of his heart" in 1QpHab XI, 12–13. See R. Le Déaut, "La thème de la circoncision du cœur (Dt. 30:6; Jer. 4:4) dans les versions anciennes (LXX et Targum) et à Qumrân," *VT* 32 (1982): 178–205; David R. Seely, "The 'Circumcised Heart' in *4Q434 Barki Nafshi*," *RevQ* 17 (1999): 527–35.

[40] 4Q164 1 3 (interpreting Isa 54:11).

[41] Many scholars have emphasized this character of the sectarian worldview. For several relatively recent discussions and substantial bibliographies of other relevant studies, see Israel Knohl, "Between Voice and Silence: The Relationship between Prayer and Temple Cult," *JBL* 115 (1996): 17–30; Philip R. Davies, *Sects and Scrolls: Essays on Qumran and Related Topics* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 45–60; Lawrence H. Schiffman, "Community Without Temple: The Qumran Community's Withdrawal from the Jerusalem Temple," in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel: Zur Substituierung und Transformation der Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum* (ed. B. Ego, A. Lange, and P. Pilhofer, in collaboration with K. Ehlers; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 267–84, and Florentino García Martínez, "Priestly Functions in a Community without Temple," op. cit., 303–19.

[42] Compare 1QS X, 6, 14. A parallel locution for the prayers of the priestly community, *terumat lašon*, "offering of the tongue," appears in 4Q400 2 7, whereas the angelic hymns are referred to as *terumat lešoneihem* in 4Q403 1 II, 26—a philological support to the theoretical claim that the liturgical gesture blurs the ontic line separating human and angelic. For discussion of this theme, see Devorah Dimant, "Men as Angels: The Self-Image of the Qumran Community," in *Religion and Politics in the Ancient Near East* (ed. A. Berlin; Bethesda, Md.: University Press of Maryland, 1996), 93–103; and the somewhat different perspective offered by Esther G. Chazon, "Liturgical Communion with Angels at Qumran," in *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts*, 95–105. A related expression, *bero'šei terumot lešonei da'at*, occurs in 4Q405 23 II, 12, and see Newsom's note (DJD 11:365) where she suggests, relying in part on Elisha Qimron ("A Review Article of Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition by Carol Newsom," *HTR* 79 [1986]: 349–71, esp. 356–57), that the word *terumot* in the angelic songs may be translated as "praise-offerings" rather than simply "offerings," since it is developed independently from the verb *rwm*, which means "exaltation," and thus is not linked exclusively to the scriptural *terumah*, "heave offering." See as well Newsom's note, DJD 11:190, but see Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer*, 291 n. 59.

[43] A commonplace epithet for God in the sectarian nomenclature derived from

porarily supplants sacrifice,[44] even as the physical temple still stood and daily sacrifices continued to be offered.[45] From this we may conclude that the temple imagined by the *maśkil*, poet-sage,[46] "spiritual

Ps 24:7–10. See 1QH[a] XXVI, 9; 4Q403 1 I, 3, 31; 4Q403 1 II, 25; 4Q511 52 4; 11Q17 V, 5–6.

[44] The qualification "temporarily" is intended to underscore the fact that while there is no evidence for a sacrificial rite in the desert community, the belief on the part of the Qumranites was that they would return to the "New Jerusalem" and reconstitute the offering of sacrifices in the future Temple. Hence, prayer, including the angelic liturgy, cannot be seen as a permanent substitution for sacrifice on the part of the sectarian religious philosophy. See Vermes, *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 129–30, 180–81; Lawrence H. Schiffman, *The Eschatological Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Study of the Rule of Congregation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 64–67. On sacrifice and worship among the Qumran sectarians, see as well Joseph M. Baumgarten, *Studies in Qumran Law* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 39–56.

[45] Talmon, *World of Qumran*, 209; Lawrence H. Schiffman, "The Qumran Scrolls and Rabbinic Judaism," in *Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years*, 563–64; Maier, "*Shîrê ʿÔlat hash-Shabbat*," 543–60; Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers*, 137–38; idem, "Qumran Prayer Texts and the Temple," in *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts*, 106–26. On the image of the New Jerusalem and the future Temple, see Florentino García Martínez, *Qumran and Apocalyptic: Studies on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 180–213; idem, "The *Temple Scroll* and the *New Jerusalem*," in *Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years*, 2:431–60.

[46] The heading of the individual angelic hymns is *lemaśkil šir ʿolat haššabbat*; 4Q400 1 I, 1; 4Q401 1–2 1; 4Q403 1 I, 30; 4Q403 1 II, 18; 4Q405 8–9 1; 4Q405 20 II-21–22 6; Mas1k I, 8. For a similar use of *maśkil* as the one to whom the song is ascribed, see 4Q511 2 I, 1; 8 4; 1Q28b I, 1; III, 22; V, 20. Newsom, DJD 11:179, conjectures that the formulaic introduction is modeled on the psalm heading *lemaśkil*. See also Newsom, "'Sectually Explicit,'" 180; Bilhah Nitzan, "Hymns from Qumran—4Q510–4Q511," in *Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years*, 53–63. I would add that *maśkil* echoes as well the apocalyptic connotation of the term as we find in Dan 12:3. Regarding the latter, see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 492–93. The liturgical-poetical qualities of the *maśkil* are appreciated, albeit with different nuances than my own, by Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer*, 265–72; and idem, "Dead Sea Scrolls and the Jewish Liturgy," 206 n. 40 (mention is made there of Amos 5:13 where *maśkil* denotes one who recites songs). The term *maśkil* appears elsewhere in the sectarian material, for example, as the official title of the instructor of the sons of light according to *Manual of Discipline*; see 1QS1 I, 1; III, 13; IX, 12, 21; 1QM I, 1; 4Q421 1 II, 10, 12; 4Q298 I, 1. In CD XIII, 7–8, the leader of the camp is depicted as one who will "enlighten the multitude in the ways of God," *yaśkil ʾet harabbim bemaʿaśei ʾel*. Mention should also be made of the description of the Israelite people in 1QM X, 10 as *maśkilei binah*, "enlightened in understanding." Wacholder, *Dawn of Qumran*, 81, notes that *maśkilei binah* is based on the expressions *lehaśkilekha vinah* (Dan 9:22) and *maśkilei ʿam yavinu* (Dan 11:33). On the critical term *maśkil* in Qumran literature, see Rigàux, "Révélation des mystères," 242–44; Hans Kosmala, "Maskil," *JANESCU* 5 (1973): 235–41; Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, 3–4; idem, "The Sage in the Literature of Qumran: The Functions of the Maskil," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 373–82; Schiffman, *Reclaiming*, 123–25, 456; Kampen, "Diverse Aspects," 238–39; James E. Harding, "The Wordplay Between the Roots כשל and שכל in the Literature of the Yahad," *RevQ* 19 (1999): 71–74; Jefferies, *Wisdom at Qumran*, 38–41. Finally,

guide,"[47] luminous and illuminating, obfuscated any unequivocal demarcation between celestial and mundane, angelic and human; indeed, one can even say the blueprint for construction of the community below was what the priests imagined with respect to the realm above.[48]

One of "pure heart," *lev ṭahor*,[49] is capable of envisioning the imaginary topography of the "king of purity," *melekh haṭṭaḥor* (4Q403 1 II, 26),[50] the heavenly temple, whilst residing in the desert, a place where one is less encumbered by sensory stimuli. We may conjecture that the desolate and barren terrain was deemed especially worthy of the visionary journey, provided the sojourner's heart was purged of carnal desire,[51] and he attained, perhaps "appropriated" would be the better word, the image of God within, the priestly conception of *ṣelem ʾelohim*, luminous presence shared by angel and human, radiance of the divine glory beheld in the prophetic vision uniquely linked to Israel, and of the latter, the priests, and of the priests, the

---

mention should be made of the textual evidence that an alternative version to the formulation *wezeh hasserekh leʾanšei hayyaḥad* in the *Manual of Discipline* (1QS V, 1) was *midraš lemaśkil ʿal ʾanšei hattorah* (4Q256 IX, 1; 4Q258 I, 1). See Geza Vermes, "Preliminary Remarks on Unpublished Fragments of the Community Rule from Qumran Cave 4," *JJS* 42 (1991): 251; Hartmut Stegemann, "Some Remarks to 1QSa, to 1QSb, and to Qumran Messianism," *RevQ* 17 (1996): 481–82, 486.

[47] Harrington, *Wisdom Texts*, 65.

[48] This point has been noted in previous scholarship. See Michael Knibb, *The Qumran Community* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 90; Ben-Zion Wacholder, "Ezekiel and Ezekielianism as Progenitors of Essenianism," in *Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years*, 188; and Elliot R. Wolfson, "Mysticism and the Poetic-Liturgical Compositions from Qumran," *JQR* 85 (1994): 195–96. See also John Strugnell, "The Angelic Liturgy at Qumrân—4QSerek Širôt ʿÔlat Haššabat," VTSup 8 (1959): 320: "This is no angelic liturgy, no visionary work where a seer hears the praise of the angels, but a Maskîl's composition for an earthly liturgy in which the presence of the angels is in a sense invoked and in which the Heavenly Temple is portrayed on the model of the earthly one and in some way its service is considered the pattern of what is being done below."

[49] The expression occurs at 4Q436 1 I, 10.

[50] Cf. what seems to be a description of the angelic priests as *ṭehorei ʿolamim*, "eternally pure ones," in 4Q403 1 I, 13, and the apparent description of the firmament (*raqiʿa*) associated with the inner sanctum as *ṭohar ṭehorim*, the "purest of the pure" (4Q403 1 I, 42) and the reconstructed *raqiʿa ṭohar* at 4Q405 6 3. It stands to reason, as Newsom notes (DJD 11:276), that this description of the heavenly sphere was inspired by the words *ukhʿeṣem haššamayim laṭṭohar* (Exod 24:10).

[51] My suggestion accords with a well-attested phenomenon in the history of religions, the emptying of oneself through ascetic practices, including fasting and sexual restraint, as preparation for divine possession, visitation, and the visionary encounter. See David Martinez, "'May She Neither Eat Nor Drink': Love Magic and Vows of Abstinence," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (ed. M. Meyer and P. Mirecki; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 343–44 and references to other scholars cited in nn. 31–36.

elite group assembled in the desert. In the angelic/divine state, the *maśkil* is illumined by *ruaḥ haqqodeš*, the holy spirit, and thereby conjures theophanic images of the heavenly chariot (*merkavah*),[52] the "holy dwelling" (*maʿon qadoš*) described in graphic detail in several of the Sabbath hymns, reaching an ocular crescendo in the last three.[53]

---

[52] There have been many commendable studies on *merkavah* imagery and the theological-angelological speculations of the sectarian community related especially to the Sabbath hymns. See Lawrence H. Schiffman, "*Merkavah* Speculation at Qumran: the 4Q *Serekh Shirot 'Olat ha-Shabbat*," in *Mystics, Philosophers, and Politicians: Essays in Jewish Intellectual History in Honor of Alexander Altmann* (ed. J. Reinharz, D. Swetschinski, and K. Bland; Durham: Duke University Press, 1982), 15–47; idem, "Hekhalot Mysticism and the Qumran Literature," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6:1–2 (1987): 121–38 [Hebrew]; Newsom, "Merkabah Exegesis"; Joseph M. Baumgarten, "The Qumran Sabbath Shirot and Rabbinic Merkabah Traditions," *RevQ* 13 (1988): 199–213; Devorah Dimant and John Strugnell, "The Merkabah Vision in Second Ezekiel (4Q385 4)," *RevQ* 14 (1990): 331–48; Devorah Dimant, "The Apocalyptic Interpretation of Ezekiel at Qumran," in *Messiah and Christos: Studies in the Jewish Origins of Christianity Presented to David Flusser* (ed. I. Gruenwald, S. Shaked, and G. G. Stroumsa; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 31–51, esp. 42–43; Elisabeth Hamacher, "Die Sabbatopferlieder im Streit um Ursprung und Anfänge der Jüdischen Mystik," *JSJ* 27 (1996): 119–54; James R. Davila, "The *Hodayot* Hymnist and the Four Who Entered Paradise," *RevQ* 17 (1996): 457–78; idem, "4QMESS AR (4Q534) and Merkavah Mysticism," *DSD* 5 (1998): 367–81; idem, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Merkavah Mysticism," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context* (ed. T. H. Lim; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 249–64; James M. Scott, "Throne-Chariot Mysticism in Qumran and in Paul," in *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. C. A. Evans and P. W. Flint; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 101–19; Rachel Elior, "The Merkavah Tradition and the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism: From Temple to Merkavah, from Hekhal to Hekhalot, from Priestly Opposition to Gazing upon the Merkavah," in *Sino-Judaica: Jews and Chinese in Historical Dialogue* (ed. A. Oppenheimer; Tel-Aviv: Tel-Aviv University Press, 1999), 101–58; idem, *Temple and Chariot, Priests and Angels, Sanctuary and Heavenly Sanctuaries in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2002), 174–211 [Hebrew]; Michael D. Swartz, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Later Jewish Magic and Mysticism," *DSD* 8 (2001): 182–93; Abusch, "Sevenfold Hymns," 220–47.

[53] Bilhah Nitzan, "The Idea of Holiness in Qumran Poetry and Liturgy," in *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts*, 143–45. Nitzan describes the experience encoded in the thirteen Sabbath hymns as an "ascent" leading to a "mystical experience," a continuation of the thesis she has promulgated elsewhere. See idem, "Harmonic and Mystical Characteristics in Poetic and Liturgical Writings from Qumran," *JQR* 85 (1994): 163–83. For a critical assessment of Nitzan's argument, see Wolfson, "Mysticism." What is worth pointing out here is that there is no definitive philological marker in the text to validate the conjecture that there is an ascent experience preserved in the Sabbath hymns, though I acknowledge that continued study of the texts has convinced me that some such experience may indeed be alluded to in some critical passages. Nevertheless, from a conceptual standpoint it is unnecessary to press this point inasmuch as the distinction between upper and lower is significantly blurred for the one who envisions the imaginal in the mirror of the heart; in this visual field, below is above and above, below; angelic, human (that is, according to the ideal thought to be embodied in the priestly ascetics; see n. 56) and human, angelic.

We would do well at this juncture to pause and consider a bit more carefully the nexus of revelatory experience and angelification.[54] To envision the glory, a term that signifies in Qumran fragments the world of the chariot in its totality, which encompasses angelic forms, cherubim-thrones,[55] and the enthroned king, one must become glorious, aglow with the glimmer of the divine image, the angelic splendor in whose likeness Adam was created.[56] Though not stated explicitly, at work here are two independent but related epistemological principles, one traceable in the Greek philosophical tradition to Anaxagoras, "like sees like,"[57] and the other to the occult wisdom of hermetic alchemy,[58] "like mirrors like," expressed succinctly in the second precept of the *Emerald Tablet* (*Tabula Smaragdina*) attributed to Hermes Trismegistus,[59] "I speak not fictitious things, but that which is certain and true. What is below is like that which is above, and what is above is like that which is below, to accomplish the miracles

---

[54] Peter W. van der Horst, *Japheth in the Tents of Shem: Studies on Jewish Hellenism in Antiquity* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 195–96.

[55] See reference to *merkavot kevodekhah*, "chariots of your glory," in 4Q286 1 II, 2; Schiffman, "*Merkavah* Speculation," 42–43.

[56] Stephen N. Lambden, "From Fig Leaves to Fingernails: Some Notes on the Garments of Adam and Eve in the Hebrew Bible and Select Early Postbiblical Jewish Writings," in *A Walk in the Garden: Biblical, Iconographical and Literary Images of Eden* (ed. P. Morris and D. Sawyer; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 74–90, esp. 80–82; John J. Collins, "In the Likeness of the Holy Ones: The Creation of Humankind in a Wisdom Text from Qumran," in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues* (ed. D. W. Parry and E. Ulrich; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 609–18; Fletcher-Louis, *Glory of Adam*, 113–22.

[57] Particularly important for the point I am making is the exegesis of Anaxagoras offered by Plotinus in *Enneades* I, 6.9.

[58] A lucid account of alchemy in the manner that I am employing it is offered by Richard Goldard, *Remembering Heraclitus* (Hudson, N.Y.: Lindisfarne Books, 2000), 11, who notes that in a "strict sense" alchemy consists of delving "into secrets of nature for the purpose of understanding the relationship between human and divine nature." See ibid., 73–74.

[59] There are various legends intended to procure the antiquity of *Tabula Smaragdina*, the alchemical fragment purportedly engraved on an emerald slab. Critical historians are skeptical of the antiquity and prefer to pick the story up from the thirteenth century when the text, though modest in size, exerted an impressive influence on the development of western alchemy. See Titus Burckhardt, *Alchemy: Science of the Cosmos, Science of the Soul* (trans. W. Stoddart; London: Stuart & Watkins, 1967), 196–97; Allison Coudert, *Alchemy: The Philosopher's Stone* (London: Wildwood House, 1980), 27–28; Gareth Roberts, *The Mirror of Alchemy: Alchemical Idea and Images in Manuscripts and Books from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century* (Toronto/Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 68–70. The issue of dating the composition of this fragment is not central to my argument as it seems beyond question that the homology between heaven and earth is a belief that stretches far back in time.

of one thing."[60] In the particular case of the sectarian priests, the *maśkil* can behold the glorious light without only when he has become that light within, a transformation facilitated by faithful adherence to ascetic practices, especially sexual renunciation, intended to realize the ideal of ritual purity incumbent on members of the community.[61]

The transformation, however, would not be imaginable if one did not presume that the design of the community was patterned in the likeness of the paradigmatic image, the symbolic constellation configured in the visionary's heart. From the textual remains of the *yaḥad*, we can infer that this image—at once virtually real and really virtual—set the purview of the historical phenomenon, and not vice-versa, the temple above laying the groundwork for the sacred space of the community below. Tellingly, in one passage the community is designated *beit qodeš le'aharon lehayyaḥad qodeš qodašim*, "the holy house for Aaron, the holy of holies for the community" (1QS IX, 6); according to the elocution of another passage, the *yaḥad* is simply called *miqdaš 'adam*, "sanctuary of man" (4Q174 1–2 I, 6). As George Brooke suggested, this expression lends philological support to the idea that the community described in the fragments recovered from the caves at Qumran anticipated in its own existence the eschatological sanctuary without denying belief in a future rebuilding of the temple.[62] I would add that the prolepsis renders future present, albeit present as the future that is to come, an imaginal bridging of time that parallels the bridging of space implied in the homology between the encampment of the community below and the elaborate workings of the temple above.

---

[60] See reference cited above, n. 21.

[61] On angelomorphism and celibate abstention, see Fletcher-Louis, *Glory of Adam*, 131–34. Also pertinent is the comparative analysis of Alexander Golitzin, "Recovering the 'Glory of Adam': 'Divine Light' Traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Ascetical Literature of Fourth-Century Syro-Mesopotamia," in *Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism*, 275–308. In this connection, it is relevant to recall the prohibition of sexual intercourse in Jerusalem, the "city of the sanctuary," *'ir hammiqdaš*, according to CD XII, 1–2, lest it be rendered unclean. The unequivocal implication of this injunction, whether or not it was ever instantiated in an actual community, is that sexual intercourse defiles the ritual purity appropriate for the holy city. See Baumgarten, *Studies in Qumran Law*, 41, 43–44.

[62] Brooke, *Exegesis At Qumran*, 212, and see his comments (ibid., 276 n. 357) about the link between the attitude of CD toward the temple and the implication of the phrase *miqdaš 'adam* in 4Q174 1–2 I, 6. See also Dimant, "Apocalyptic Interpretation," 38, 40, 45; Fletcher-Louis, *Glory of Adam*, 167 n. 52.

II. Re/Covering Knowledge of Mystery

The poetic utterance that opened the path of inquiry, the pathmark in the Heideggerian idiom, occurs in the eighth of the thirteen songs:

> *Ševaʿ razei daʿat*
> *beraz happeleʾ*
> *lešwʿat gevulei*
> *qode*[*š qodašim . . .*]
>
> Seven mysteries of knowledge
> in wondrous mystery,
> corresponding to seven boundaries
> of the ho[ly of holies . . .] (4Q 403 1 II, 27)[63]

To explicate this passage responsibly, and particularly the key expression *razei daʿat*, it is obviously necessary to consider the meaning of two terms, *raz*, "mystery," and *daʿat*, "knowledge." What kind of knowledge, what kind of mystery? How does knowledge impart mystery, how does mystery impart knowledge? Before approaching these philological and philosophical clarifications, it would be beneficial to situate the text better in its literary setting, a move that will shed light on the symbolic significance of the number seven, which will, in turn, facilitate a better understanding of the mysteries of knowledge.

At the outset of the eighth song there appears to be a correlation between seven celestial priests, "seven priesthoods of the inner sanctum," *ševaʿ kehunat qorvo* (4Q403 1 II, 20; 4Q405 8–9, 4–5),[64] "priests of the highest heaven," *kohanei merommei rom* (4Q400 1 I, 20), and another sevenfold angelic division:

---

[63] I have availed myself of the text critically prepared by Newsom in DJD 11:280, but all translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

[64] See DJD 11:279 and 325. The idea of seven chief angels, closely linked to the notion of seven archangels attested in pseudepigraphic and later gnostic texts, may have been derived from Ezek 9:1–2, as suggested by James R. Davila, *Liturgical Works* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 120. On the apocalyptic conception of the seven archangels, and especially in the context of the septenary symbolism in the book of Revelation, see Adela Yarbro Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology in Jewish and Christian Apocalypticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 105–6, 111, 113, 115, 119, 174; and Ralph J. Korner, "'And I Saw . . .': An Apocalyptic Literary Convention for Structural Identification in the Apocalypse," *NovT* 42 (2000): 179–80 and relevant notes. See also Abusch, "Sevenfold Hymns," 227 n. 21. I note, parenthetically, that the number of seven priests presents something of a different model than the composition of the council of the community (*ʿaṣat hayyaḥad*) according to 1QS VIII, 1, which consists of three unblemished priests (*kohanim temimim*) and twelve men (*ʾiš*).

koha[*not*] *ševaʿ bamiqdaš peleʾ*
lešivʿat sodei qodeš

seven priest[hoods] in the wondrous sanctuary
corresponding to seven holy councils (4Q403 1 II, 22)[65]

In the song restored as the first of the cycle, the angelic priesthood is described as the "god-like ones of all the holiest of the holy ones (*ʾelohei kol qedošei qedošim*); and in divinity (*uveʾelohut*)[66] . . . among the eternally holy (*qedošei ʿad*),[67] the holiest of the holy ones (*qedošei qedošim*), and they have become for him priests of (*kohanei*) . . . ministers of the presence in the shrine of his glory (*mešartei panim bidevir kevodo*)" (4Q400 1 I, 2–4).[68] Just as below the priestly elite had exclusive access to the inner chamber of the temple, so above, there is a distinguished class of angels, the "seven exalted holy ones," *šivʿat qodšei rom* (4Q 403 1 II, 11), that ministers before the presence enthroned in the innermost of the "seven boundaries[69] of the hol[y of holies]," *šivʿat gevulei qode*[*š qedošim*] (4Q 403 1 II, 27), also referred to as the "seven wondrous boundaries," *šivʿat gevulei peleʾ* (4Q403 1 II, 21),[70] or the "[se]ven priestly shrines," [*šiv*]*ʿat devirei kehuno*[*t*] (4Q405 7 7).[71] The seventh of these palaces is the "sanctuary of his holiness," *miqdaš*

---

[65] DJD 11:279.

[66] It is of interest to note that initially the scribe wrote *uveʾelohuto*, that is, "in his divinity," but in the scroll the suffixed *waw* is marked for deletion, yielding *weʾelohut*, "in divinity." See Newsom's brief, but informative, note on this matter (DJD 11:179).

[67] The unusual use of *ʿad* as an adjective follows the scriptural precedent in Isa 9:5 and Hab 3:6.

[68] Here I have availed myself of Newsom's translation in DJD 11:178, but I have made some emendations.

[69] As Newsom suggests (DJD 11:287), the word *gevul* may be indebted to Ezek 43:12 where "it refers to the territory of the temple mount." Given this meaning of *gevul*, it is obvious why the author(s) of the Sabbath hymns chose it to demarcate the seven palaces in the celestial temple.

[70] This reading is restored at 4Q405 8–9 5 and 11Q17 II, 6. See Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer*, 315 n. 132.

[71] Note the reference in 4Q405 14–15 I, 7 to the "[sanctuary of the ho]ly of holies, in the inner shrines of the king," [*miqdaš qo*]*deš qedošim bidevirei melekh.* Christopher Morray-Jones suggests the seven sanctuaries (*devirim*) of the celestial temple in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* "are evidently identical with the seven heavens" (*A Transparent Illusion: The Dangerous Vision of Water in Hekhalot Mysticism. A Source-Critical and Tradition-Historical Inquiry* [Leiden: Brill, 2002], 31). It seems to me more sensible to assume that the seven sanctuaries refer to chambers of the celestial temple rather than the heavenly spheres. For a comprehensive survey of the notion of seven heavens in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic sources, see Collins, *Cosmology and Eschatology*, 21–54.

qodšo (4Q403 1 I, 42), "tabernacle of the most high," *miškan roʾš rom*, "glory of his kingdom," *kevod malkhuto* (4Q403 1 II, 10).[72]

Before progressing deeper, or higher, as the case may be, into the labyrinth of symbols—in the *mundus imaginalis*, there is no significant difference between ascent/descent and entry/exit, as going up is going in, going down going out, and hence the two metaphorical templates coalesce—a cautionary note is in order. One must be careful not to lapse, even if inadvertently, into a binary logic that presumes a unilateral relation of upper mirroring lower, a stance that implies further that the symbolic is constructed on the basis of the historical. Is it not equally plausible to view the historical as reflective of the symbolic, the tangible construed on the basis of the imaginal? Is the Qumran material not exemplary of a society wherein the fantastic served as the vehicle of implementation of the real? Consider the assertion, "they are glorified amongst all the camps of angels and venerated in the council of men," *hemmah nikhbadim bekhol maḥanei ʾelohim wenoraʾim lemosdei ʾanašim* (4Q400 2 2). Newsom notes the terminological derivation of *maḥanei ʾelohim* from Gen 32:2 and also its recurrence in 4Q405 22 13, a context wherein it clearly refers to the camps of angels who utter hymns before the glory. She suggests further the angelic elite is "probably to be identified with the angelic princes."[73]

I would argue that the expression *maḥanei ʾelohim* in this context also refers, in part, to the camps of angels stationed in the throne chamber. To support this interpretation I must say more about an admittedly ambiguous passage, but it is precisely by marking the ambiguity that one can see the clarity of the ontic confusion. The beginning of the text in question reads *lehallel kevodekhah peleʾ beʾelei daʿat wetišboḥot malkhutekhah biqedošei qe*[*došim*], "to praise your wondrous glory with the gods of knowledge, and the praises of your kingship with the holy of h[olies]" (4Q400 2 1). The textual lacuna in the beginning of the fragment opens the interpretative space: I suggest that the subject of the statement is the *maśkilim*, the enlightened priests, who join together through poetic envisioning with the angelic elite, the "gods of knowledge," *ʾelei daʿat*,[74] the "holy of holies," *qedošei qedošim*, to praise the divine glory (*kavod*) and his kingship (*malkhut*). After this

[72] See Newsom's comments, DJD 11:287 and 332. See also Esther Eshel, "Prayer in Qumran and the Synagogue," in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel*, 323–34, esp. 327–28. Davila, "Macrocosmic Temple," 12–17, attempts to explain this locution on the basis of Exod 23:20–23 and Isa 63:7–14.

[73] DJD 11:189.

[74] 4Q403 1 I, 38.

line comes the aforecited remark, "they are glorified amongst all the camps of angels and venerated in the councils of wondrous men," *hemmah nikhbadim bekhol maḥanei ʾelohim wenoraʾim lemosdei ʾanašim pe*[*leʾ*] (4Q400 2 2). If my supposition is correct, then it is the *maśkilim* who are accorded this high honor; they are simultaneously rendered glorious above in the angelic realm and acclaimed below in their congregation. The key term *nikhbadim* denotes transformation, which here does not imply becoming something new but rather actualizing the latent glory, the *kavod*, the image of God (*ṣelem ʾelohim)* by which the true Adam was created, believed by the sectarians to be embodied in the perfect ones of Israel, that is, the priestly elite of the *yaḥad.*

Proof for this reading may be elicited from the continuation of the text, "from gods and men," *meʾelohim waʾanašim.* It seems plausible to suggest that this expression refers to the *maśkilim* of whom it can be said that they belong both to the angelic pantheon (*ʾelohim*)[75] and to the human elite (*ʾanašim*). It is they who "will narrate the splen-

[75] The reference to the angels collectively as *ʾelohim* underscores the lack of clear demarcation between angelic and divine to the point that monotheism, strictly speaking, cannot be applied to these texts unless one understands that term to mean that in the host of divine beings there is one who stands out from the rest and is considered the supreme deity, *ʾel ʾelim, melekh haṭṭahor*, "God of gods, the king of splendour" (4Q403 1 II, 26). The point is underscored as well by angelic epithets such as *ʾelei daʿat, ʾelei ʿor, ʾelei hod*, and *ʾelei rom*, as noted by Newsom, DJD 11:243. Regarding the question of monotheism as an appropriate classification in the period to which the Qumran scrolls refer, see James H. Charlesworth, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Historical Jesus," in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 47 n. 65. See also Peter Hayman, "Monotheism—A Misused Word in Jewish Studies?" *JJS* 42 (1991): 1–15, esp. 4–9. The word *ṭahor*, which means "purity," occasionally is indistinguishable from *zohar*, "splendor"—on this see the remark of Nitzan, DJD 11:52–53, in her note to 4Q287 2 5. However, if one assumes that monotheism ontically rules out all but one divine being, then the term is a misnomer if used to describe the theological picture that emerges from these fragments. We would do well to think here of a corporate sense of the deity, composed of the king and his servants, which consists of angels and the priestly elite who join the heavenly host to tell the story, to render its imaginaries visually acoustic and acoustically visual. For discussion of the older roots for this corporate notion of divine unity, see E. Theodore Mullen, Jr., *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980). A useful terminology is Corbin's distinction (*Le paradoxe du monothéisme*, 7–18) between "exoteric monotheism" and "esoteric and gnostic theomonism," the former insisting on a unity without multiplicity, a tendency that can lead to "metaphysical idolatry"—that is, reification of the one God as the being to whom anthropomorphic qualities are invariably ascribed—and the latter, which is predicated on a vision of multiplicity in the unity, a multiplicity that consists of names and attributes that emerge from and return to the undifferentiated oneness of the Infinite. I was reminded of this dimension of Corbin's thought by Maria Subtelny who makes mention of it in her "The Four Sages who Entered the Pardes: A Talmudic Enigma from a Persian Perspective" (forthcoming). I am grateful to the author for sharing an early draft of her study, from which I have benefited.

dor of his kingship according to their knowledge," *yesapperu hod malkhuto kedaʿatam* (4Q400 2 3). Let us heed these words carefully: the priest-poets have the task of recounting the splendor of his kingship (*hod malkhuto*) in accord with their knowledge (*kedaʿatam*). Three points are worthy of note to draw forth the full implications of this passage. First, *hod malkhuto* signifies the heavenly abode and all of its luminous components, to wit, glory, chariot-thrones, and various groups of angelic beings who minister before the enthroned king.[76] Thus, in another fragment, the hymns are extolled as the activity that empowers the divine, *ki behadar tišbaḥot kevod malkhuto bah tišbaḥot kol ʾelohim ʿim hadar kol malkh*[*uto*], "for in the grandeur of the praises is the glory of his kingship, in it are the praises of all the gods together with the magnificence of all [his] kingship" (4Q403 1 I, 32–33).[77] Second, the specific task is to recount the experience, *lesapper*, to render it narratologically and thereby "glorify the splendor of divine kingship."[78] The *sippur*, narration, refers, more specifically, to the poetic depiction of the imaginal realm preserved in the hymns. Third, the narration must be in accord with knowledge, *daʿat*, a word that calls to mind the title of the angelic elite, *ʾelei daʿat*, "gods of knowledge," as well as the "seven mysteries of knowledge," *ševaʿ razei daʿat*, which are said to correspond to the "seven boundaries of the holy of holies," *ševaʿ gevulei qodeš qodašim*, the decoding of which sent us on our way. At this juncture we must consider more carefully the word *daʿat*, a consideration that will enable us to go further along the path to ascertain the knowledge of mystery embedded in the mystery of knowledge.

---

[76] Compare 4Q286 1 II, 2.

[77] On the semantic equivalence of *hod* and *hadar*, and especially the scriptural expressions *hod malkhut* (1 Chr 29:25) and *hadar malkhut* (Dan 11:20), see Newsom, DJD 11:273.

[78] The locution is based on scriptural precedent; see Isa 43:21; Jer 51:10; Pss 9:2, 15; 79:13; 96:3; 107:22; 145:6; 1 Chr 16:24. See Ben Sira 1:24, *ʿad ʿet yastir devaraw weśiftei neʾemanim tesappernah ḥokhmato*; 1QH[a] VII, 4–5: *loʾ yaʿaṣru koaḥ ladaʿat bekhavod* [*ulesappe*]*r nifleʾ*[*otekha*] [. . .] . . . *lefi sikhlam ukhefi daʿatam*, "they will not gather the strength to know your glory [or to recou]nt [your] wonders [. . .] . . . according to their intelligence and in accordance with their knowledge." See also 1QH[a] VII, 8: *uwehafleʾ nesapperah yaḥad bedaʿa*[*t ʾel*], "and wondrously we shall recount together the knowledge of God."

III. Un/Covering Mystery of Knowledge

In the *Manual of Discipline*, God is described as follows: *meʾel haddeʿot kol hoyah weniheyyeh welifnei heyotam hekhin kol mahšavtam/uveheyotam liteʿudotam kemaḥševet kevodo yemallʾu peʿulotam weʾein lehiššanot*, "From the God of knowledge comes everything that is and that shall be, and before they were he prepared all their designs/And when they have come into being in their appointed times, they fulfill their actions in accord with his glorious design, and there is nothing to be changed" (1QS III, 15–16). The title *ʾel deʿot* is applied to God in 1 Sam 2:3,[79] and it would appear that it is used by the author of the Qumran text to express the theological belief in divine omniscience.[80] An almost identical formulation appears to have been utilized in one passage from the *Sabbath Songs* synoptically reconstructed as follows: *kiʾ meʾelohei daʿat nihyu kol* [*hawwei ʿad umiddaʿato umizzimotaw hayu kol teʿudot ʿolam*]*im*, "For from the God of knowledge came into being every [everlasting existent, and from his knowledge and from his plans all predestined things exist eterna]lly" (4Q402 4 12–13, restored on the basis of Mas1k 1 2–3). Assuming the validity of an admittedly questionable textual reconstruction, we can assert that the philosophical idea expressed herein runs parallel to the aforecited comment in the *Manual of Discipline*: the existence of all beings is predestined by and in the knowledge of God;[81] all things proceed from that knowledge, *daʿat*; in the mind of God are laid the schemes and plans of all that is to become in the spatio-temporal world.[82] Confirmation of this interpretation may be adduced from other passages in the *Manual of Discipline: wehuʾh yadaʿ peʿulat maʿaśeihen lekhol qiṣṣei* [*ʿolami*]*m*, "and he knows the consequences of their actions for all times

---

[79] On the designation *ʾel haddeʿot*, see 1QH[a] IX, 26.

[80] Jacob Licht, *The Rule Scroll: A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judaea—1QS, 1QSa, 1QSb: Text, Introduction and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1965), 90 n. 15 [Hebrew].

[81] In 1QH[a] IX, 23–25, the matter is expressed in the image of everything being engraved before God with the "engraving of memory," *hakkol ḥaquq lefaneikhah beḥeret zikkaron*.

[82] Attested in the Scrolls are seemingly contradictory positions, predestinarianism, on the one hand, and voluntarism, on the other; the belief that all things are predestined in divine knowledge did not mitigate against the conviction that human agents are free and responsible for their actions. For a brief but incisive discussion of this matter, see David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 43; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979), 50–51.

[everlast]ing" (1QS IV, 25–26); *uveda*ʿ*ato nihyeh kol wekhol hawwayah bemaḥšavto yakhinu umibbal*ʿ*adaw lo*ʾ *ya*ʿ*aśeh*, "everything shall come into being through his knowledge, and every being is established in his thought, and apart from him it is not realized" (1QS XI, 11). A slightly different formulation appears in the *Thanksgiving Scroll: uweḥokhmat da*ʿ*atekhah hakh*[*i*]*notah te*ʿ[*o*]*datam beṭerem heyotam we*ʿ*al pi reṣ*[*onekhah yih*]*yeh kol umibbal*ʿ*adekha lo*ʾ *ya*ʿ*aśeh*, "through the wisdom of your knowledge you have established their course prior to their existence and according to [your] wi[ll] everything will be and without you nothing comes to be" (1QH[a] IX, 19–20). In another passage from this scroll, we learn that members of the *yaḥad*, labeled "sons of your truth," *benei* ʾ*amittekhah*,[83] are accorded *śekhel*, usually translated as "intelligence," but, in my judgment, denoting in this context a form of visionary knowledge, the gnosis in virtue of which one assumes the comportment of *maśkil*, the enlightened sage-poet. In the continuation, we read that "in accord with their knowledge they are glorified," *ulefi da*ʿ*atam yekhabbdu* (1QH[a] XVIII, 27). I think it reasonable to assume that *śekhel* and *da*ʿ*at* are interchangeable,[84] and both refer to the cognitive faculty by means of which the enlightened priest apprehends divine truth (*ʾemet*).[85]

Support for this conjecture may be elicited from other passages, such as, *hiśkaltani beʾamittekhah uverazei peliʾakhah hoda*ʿ*atani*, "You have enlightened me in your truth and made me know your wondrous mysteries" (1QH[a] XV, 26–27). In virtue of that vision, the priest is glorified, that is, he is transfigured into an angelic body and becomes part of the celestial retinue while remaining a leader of the *yaḥad* below. According to another fragment belonging to one of the community songs of the *Hodayot*, a more explicit connection is made between knowledge (*da*ʿ*at*), inspiration of the holy spirit (*ruaḥ haqqodeš*), and discernment of divine mystery (*raz*), though in this instance the

---

[83] Compare the expression *ʾanšei haʾemet*, "men of the truth," in 1QpHab VII, 10. It should be noted that *benei ʾamittekha* also appears as a designation of the angels in 1QH[a] XIX, 11. In 1QS III, 24–25, reference is made to the "angel of his truth," *malʾakh ʾamitto*, who will assist the "sons of light," *benei ʾor*. In 1QS II, 24, the congregation at large is designated *yaḥad ʾemet*, the "community of truth."

[84] See, for instance, 1QH[a] XIX, 28: *śekhel de*ʿ*ah lehavin benifleʾotekhah*.

[85] See 1QH[a] XVIII, 29: *beda*ʿ*at ʾamittekhah ulefi da*ʿ*ato*, "in the knowledge of your truth and in accord with his knowledge." On the link between truth and secrecy, see, for instance, the instruction to the *maśkil* in 1QS IX, 18: *lehaśkilam berazei feleʾ weʾemet*, "to enlighten them in the wondrous secrets and in the truth."

auditory, as opposed to the visual, imagery[86] is summoned to depict the attainment of esoteric knowledge: *waʾani maśkil yedaʿtikhah ʾeli beruaḥ ʾašer natattah bi weneʾemanah šamaʿti lesod pelaʾekhah beruaḥ qodšekhah* [*pa*]*taḥtah letokhi daʿat beraz śikhlekhah umaʿayan gevurote*[*khah*], "I, the enlightened one, know you, my God, through the spirit that you placed in me, and I have listened faithfully to your wondrous secret through your holy spirit. You have [op]ened within me knowledge of the mystery of your intelligence and the spring of [your] power" (1QH[a] XX, 11–13).[87] In this extremely important and revealing text, the reader is afforded an opportunity to grasp something of the ecstatic experience of the priest acquiring knowledge (*daʿat*) of God. Significantly, that knowledge is connected to the mystery (*raz*) drawn from the spirit (*ruaḥ*) opened up within the enlightened one (*maśkil*), an internal awakening that facilitates listening (*šemiʿah*) to the "wondrous secret" by means of which the divine intelligence (*śekhel*) and spring of power (*maʿayan gevurah*) are accessed.

On the basis of careful attunement to these sources, collectively and individually, I would suggest that *daʿat* should be understood in a more technical theosophic manner than has been appreciated hitherto by Qumran scholars. In my judgment, it appears that this is the best way to account for all the occurrences of this term and grammatically related expressions in the extant fragments, as they apply to God, angels, and priestly elite. I begin with the credible assumption that the imaginal configurations of *daʿat* on the part of the Qumran priests were influenced by scriptural connotations of the term. To note the examples most relevant to this study: "divine knowledge," *daʿat ʾelohim* (Hos 4:1, 6:6; Prov 2:5); "supernal knowledge," *daʿat ʿelyon* (Num 24:16); "knowledge of the holy ones," *daʿat qedošim* (Prov 9:10, 30:3); "For the lips of the priest guard knowledge," *ki śiftei kohen yišmeru daʿat* (Mal 2:7); "and those enlightened in all wisdom, knowers of knowledge, intelligently insightful," *umaśkilim bekhol ḥokhmah weyodʿei daʿat umevinei maddaʿ* (Dan 1:4).

In addition to these, we must add the obvious reference to the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," *ʿeṣ haddaʿat ṭov waraʿ* (Gen 2:17), in

---

[86] For another example of the auditory, see 1QH[a] IX, 21: *ki galitah ʾoznai lerazei feleʾ*, "you opened my ears to the wondrous mysteries"; and 4Q416 2 III, 18: *galeh ʾoznekhah beraz nihyeh*, "he opened your ears to the mystery of what is becoming."

[87] Similar language of knowledge being attained through the spirit appears in 1QH[a] V, 24–25.

the mythical garden of Eden; the curious response of the serpent to the woman's reiteration of the punishment of death subsequent to transgressing the divine command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, "for God knows that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like the gods, knowers of good and evil," *ki yodeʿa ʾelohim ki beyom ʾakholkhem mimmennu wenifqeḥu ʿeineikhem wiheyiytem keʾlohim yodeʿei ṭov waraʿ* (Gen 3:5); and the account of man and woman after they transgressed, "And the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they were naked," *wattippaqaḥnah ʿeinei šeneihem wayyedʿu ki ʿerummim hem* (v. 7)—the knowledge of their nakedness seemingly accentuates their mortality, quite the obverse of the serpent's claim, though it is also likely that there is wordplay of the description of the serpent as "cunning," *ʿarum* (v. 1) and the expression "naked," *ʿerom*, applied to the human pair following their disobedience (vv. 7, 11).[88] Confirmation of the latter does come a bit later in the narrative, "The LORD God said, 'Behold Adam has become like one of us, knowing good and evil,'" *wayyoʾmer* YHWH *ʾelohim hen haʾadam hayah keʾaḥad mimmennu ladaʿat ṭov waraʿ* (v. 22), which is immediately followed by the concern that Adam would taste of the fruit of the tree of life and thereby attain immortality, and thus he is cast out of the garden (vv. 22–24). Finally, there is the figurative meaning of *daʿat* as carnal knowledge that ensues from engaging in intercourse, a connotation attested, interestingly enough, in the verse that immediately succeeds the tale of Adam's eviction from Eden, "And Adam knew Eve, his wife," *wehaʾadam yadaʿ et ḥawwah ʾišto* (Gen 4:1), as well as in several other scriptural contexts (Gen 4:17, 25; 24:16; 38:26; Judg 19:25; 1 Sam 1:19; 1 Kgs 1:4). Needless to say, the scriptural text cleverly weaves together these terminological threads to forge an intricate conceptual mesh of knowledge, sexuality, and immortality: Adam knows his wife; the engendering of progeny is conceived as a substitute for the immortality that would have been acquired had the first human pair eaten of the tree of life.[89]

The sense of intimacy conveyed by the use of *yadaʿ* to denote a man's cohabiting with his wife was utilized to depict man's relationship to the divine, as is attested, for instance, in the prophetic decree reaffirming God's covenantal promise to Israel: "I will espouse

[88] James Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 69–70.

[89] Barr, *Garden of Eden*, 57–73; Ronald A. Veenker, "Forbidden Fruit: Ancient Near Eastern Sexual Metaphors," *HUCA* 70–71 (1999–2000): 57–73, esp. 69–73.

you forever; I will espouse you with righteousness and justice, and with goodness and mercy. And I will espouse you with faithfulness; then you will know the LORD," *we'eraśtikh li le'olam we'eraśtikh li beṣedeq wemišpaṭ weḥesed weraḥamim we'eraśtikh li be'emunah weyada'at 'et* YWHW (Hos 2:21–22). Knowledge (*da'at*) is consequent to espousal (*'eruśim*); to know God one must be bound to God in a monogamous relationship, a theme that is central to the conception of piety cultivated in ancient Israel and embellished in sundry ways through the course of Jewish history. The linkage of this theme to the Genesis narrative implies, more specifically, that the knowledge of God consequent to erotic engagement is salvific inasmuch as it restores to man the primal state of enlightenment, an opening of the eyes that is not connected to the shamefulness of the indecent exposure of the naked body.

With the scriptural background in mind, one may conjecture that the priestly *literati* in the desert community placed at the center of their visionary landscape God's knowledge, *da'at 'elohim*, the ultimate object of imaginal representation and contemplative meditation. In the language of a crucial passage in the *Manual of Discipline*, *lehavin yešarim beda'at 'elyon weḥokhmat benei šamayim lehaśkil temimei derekh ki' bam baḥar 'el liverit 'olamim welahem kol kavod 'adam*, "to instruct the upright in the supernal knowledge and to enlighten those whose way is perfect in the wisdom of the sons of heaven, for God has chosen them for an everlasting covenant and to them belong all the glory of Adam" (1QS IV, 22).[90] Comprehension of the "supernal knowledge," which is parallel to the "wisdom of the sons of heaven," occasions

[90] Consider the following comment on 1QS IV, 22 by Ithamar Gruenwald, *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism: Studies in Apocalypticism, Merkavah Mysticism and Gnosticism* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988), 78: "the word דעת ('knowledge') may be taken to imply every aspect of divine wisdom: historical and ethical on the one hand, and cosmological and 'scientific' on the other." The passage is adduced by Gruenwald to support his argument that the "preoccupation of Gnosticism with cosmogonical, or cosmological, matters could well be the contribution of Jewish Apocalypticism" (79). The contrast between the use of *da'at* in apocalyptic literature and *gnosis* in Gnosticism is drawn explicitly by Gruenwald (84). Davies, "'Knowledge' in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 131, similarly distinguishes unequivocally between the *gnosis* of Gnosticism and the knowledge of the Qumran scrolls. See also Helmut Ringgren, "Qumran and Gnosticism," in *Le Origini dello Gnosticismo: Colloquio di Messina 13–18 Aprile 1966*, edited by Ugo Bianchi (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970), 379–388, and Menahem Mansoor, "The Nature of Gnosticism in Qumran," op. cit., 389–400, esp. 395–397. By contrast, according to my onto-theosophic interpretation of *da'at* in Qumran literature, the link to Gnosticism is more pronounced, for I am proposing a mythopoeic conception of the divine mind that encompasses a multiplicity of hypostatic potencies, the esoteric knowledge of which affords one salvation through a transformative experience of ascending upward by turning inward.

the incorporation of the knower into the known, not in the Plotinian sense of union that effaces all difference, but in the ancient Near Eastern mythopoeic conception of angelification whereby the superior human being can join the ranks of the angels chanting hymns before the glory in the heavenly realm.[91] Plainly stated, I propose that *ševaʿ razei daʿat* should be interpreted as seven potencies that constitute the substance of *daʿat ʿelyon*. Philological support for my contention may be drawn from the expression *ševaʿ gevurot peliʾah*, "seven wondrous powers" (4Q403 1 I, 2). In the continuation of that passage, God is designated *ʾelohei gevurot*, "God of the powers" (4Q403 1 I, 2–3), which I assume is an abbreviated allusion to the seven powers that constitute the fullness of God, and, in my estimation, are synonymous with the seven mysteries of knowledge.

To place the matter in a broader context, it should be noted that the number seven occupies a central place in the *Sabbath Songs*, and especially in the seventh of the cycle, plausibly thought by some to be the centerpiece of the poetic architectonic displayed in the hymns, wherein one encounters the supernal tabernacle, the chariot-throne, portrayed as the "pure light," *ʾortom*,[92] of the glory refracted through the "variegated[93] spirit of the holy of holies," *roqemet ruaḥ qodeš qodašim* (4Q403 1 II, 1). Without delineating all the permutations of this numerical symbolism, which, needless to say, is deeply

[91] Wolfson, "Mysticism," 192–94. On the motif of the song of heavenly beings in ancient Near Eastern literature, see Moshe Weinfeld, "Sumerian Literature and the Book of Psalms—An Introduction to a Comparative Analysis," *Beit Miqra* 57 (1974): 136–60 [Hebrew].

[92] On the form *ʾortom*, obviously a composite of the two words *ʾor*, "light," and *tom*, "unblemished," see 1QH[a] XXI, 14 and the restored *beʾor ʾortam daʿat*, "in light of the perfect light of knowledge," in 4Q403 1 I, 45 (= 4Q404 5 4). Newsom, DJD 11:283, suggests that in the *Sabbath Songs* this expression "refers to a peculiarly celestial light, associated with the inner shrine of the heavenly sanctuary and perhaps with the appearance of the throne of Glory itself." In my judgment, the "pure light" refers to the light of the glory (*kavod*), an identification substantiated by the reference to the polymorphic nature (see following note) of the holy spirit (*ruaḥ haqqodeš*), that is, the purity of the light of the glory is expressed in the kaleidoscope of colors through which the holy spirit appears.

[93] The translation of *roqemet* as "variegated" is based on the word *riqmah* (1 Chr 29:2), following the suggestion of Newsom, DJD 11:283, who draws the reader's attention to 1QM V, 6. See also Schiffman, "*Merkavah* Speculation," 41. One must bear in mind that *roqemet* also has the connotation of "embroidered." The spectral dimension is thus threaded to the image of something woven, a multicolored garment, as it were. Also noteworthy is the use of *roqmah* in 4Q270 7 II, 14, analyzed by George J. Brooke, "Between Qumran and Corinth: Embroidered Allusions to Women's Authority," in *Dead Sea Scrolls as Background*, 157–76.

entrenched in the Jewish literary imagination,[94] let me state that, in my judgment, the significance of this number in this particular literary context stems from the conception of the divine as a corporate body composed of seven potencies.[95] There appears to be an alternative enumeration of these potencies in the account of the songs of praise uttered by the seventh of the chief princes: *yevarekh bešem qodšo lekhol qedošim mimmeyasdei*[96] *da*[*ʿat*] *bešiv*[*ʿah*] *divrei qodeš pela*[*ʾo*], "he will bless in his holy name all the holy ones who establish know[ledge] with sev[en] words of [his] wondrous holiness" (4Q403 1 I, 24), a reference to the highest angelic beings, *haramim bekhol ʾelei daʿat*, "the exalted ones of all the gods of knowledge" (4Q403 1 I, 30–31), the ones "who illumine knowledge among all the divinities of light," *meʾirei daʿat bekhol ʾelei ʾor* (4Q403 1 II, 35). We may conclude, therefore, that "knowledge" functions as a technical designation of the divine

---

[94] For a still useful survey of some of the relevant images associated with the number seven cast in a comparative light, see Maurice H. Farbridge, *Studies in Biblical and Semitic Symbolism* (Prolegomenon by H. G. May; New York: Ktav, 1970), 119–39.

[95] If my interpretation stands the test of critical scrutiny, we would have in the *Sabbath Songs* the first reference in a Jewish text to a portrayal of God consisting of seven potencies, an idea that became more prominent in later sources, such as the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*, traces of which are discernible in *Sefer ha-Bahir*, an anthology of older traditions that served as the wellspring for many kabbalists in the late middle ages and beyond to the present. See Elliot R. Wolfson, *Along the Path: Studies in Kabbalistic Myth, Symbolism, and Hermeneutics* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 80–83, and references cited in 217 n. 135, 218 n. 142, 219 n. 146. A particularly important text, which I neglected to mention in the aforementioned reference, appears in the later rabbinic anthology of aggadic dicta, *Avot de Rabbi Natan* A 37 (Schechter ed., 110):

> Seven attributes (*middot*) serve before the throne of glory and they are wisdom, righteousness, justice, mercy, compassion, truth, and peace, as it says "I will espouse you forever; I will espouse you with righteousness and justice, and with goodness and mercy. And I will espouse you with faithfulness; then you will know the LORD" (Hos 2:21–22). R. Meir said, What can be deduced from "then you will know the LORD?" This is to teach that every man who has within him all these attributes knows the divine mind (*daʿato šel maqom*).

For discussion of the literary context in which this statement appears, see Menahem Kister, *Studies in Avot de-Rabbi Nathan: Text, Redaction and Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1998), 54–56 [Hebrew]. Also relevant to this discussion is the study of Gedaliahu G. Stroumsa, "A Zoroastrian Origin to the *Sefirot*?" *Irano-Judaica* 3 (1994): 17–33, which attempts to trace the origin of seven spirits, connected to the seven heavenly spheres, to Zoroastrianism. Stroumsa conjectures that the latter rabbinic notion regarding the seven hypostatic attributes in front of the throne may be an echo of this earlier tradition (20). On the ancient Zoroastrian notion of seven archangels, see the instructive observations of Corbin, *Le paradoxe du monothéisme*, 100–110.

[96] See Schiffman, "*Merkavah* Speculation," 32, and especially the suggestion that the root *ysd* can mean "to compose a liturgical hymn."

pleroma, the imaginal world of the chariot-throne, a conception conveyed by the expression *bamotei daʿat*, the "high places of knowledge," which are associated with the footstool of God (4Q403 1 II, 2).

IV. Poiesis and Re/Counting the Glory

On the basis of the textual-philological arguments mounted above, I would venture that the priests responsible for the imaginal conception of the chariot realm laid out in the Sabbath hymns believed they were capable of knowing, following the biblical expressions, "divine knowledge," *daʿat ʾelohim*, "supernal knowledge," *daʿat ʿelyon*, "knowledge of the holy ones," *daʿat qedošim*. By means of acquiring that knowledge, moreover, they fulfilled the verse, "For the lips of the priest guard knowledge," *ki śiftei kohen yišmeru daʿat* (Mal 2:7), and identified with the eschatological state of "those enlightened in all wisdom, knowers of knowledge, intelligently insightful," *umaśkilim bekhol ḥokhmah weyodʿei daʿat umevinei maddaʿ* (Dan 1:4). Scholars have previously suggested the possibility that the recitation of the songs may have served as a vehicle for ascent to the heavenly throne and communion with the angels. What has not been sufficiently noted is that the composition of these songs likely ensued from a similar imaginal transport by which spatial and temporal barriers were traversed by the initiates who viewed themselves as being shaped by God into "vessels of knowledge" (*kelei daʿat*) to contemplate the ancient mysteries of wisdom (4Q436 1 I, 2).[97] The tenor of the ecstasy underlying the experience of poiesis was well captured by the author of the *Manual of Discipline*, *ʾazammerah vedaʿat wekhol neginati likhwod ʾel*, "I will sing with knowledge and all my music shall be for the glory of God" (1QS X, 9), or again, *mimmeqor daʿato pataḥ ʾori uvenifleʾotaw habbiṭah ʿeinai weʾorat levavi beraz nihyeh*, "from the spring of his knowledge he opened my light, and my eyes gazed on his wonders, and the light of my heart the mystery of what is to be" (1QS XI, 3–4).

Now we can understand more fully the text discussed above, which assigned to priests the task of recounting what they experienced in the chariot realm in accord with their knowledge. One can surely

[97] See David R. Seely, "The Barkhi Nafshi Texts (4Q434–439)," in *Current Research and Technological Developments of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Conference on the Texts from the Judaean Desert, Jerusalem, 30 April 1995* (ed. D. W. Parry and S. D. Ricks; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 194–214, esp. 201–2.

interpret that remark in a general way, that is, knowledge is required so that the narration is informative and accurate. There is, however, another and more esoteric interpretation of the expression *yesapperu hod malkhuto kedaʿatam*, that is, their knowledge is the glorious element that accords them a divine-angelic status; they come to know the seven mysteries of divine knowledge through the exercise of their own knowledge though the actualization of their own knowledge is facilitated by apprehension of the seven mysteries of knowledge.[98] The duty to discourse poetically about the splendor of divine kingship is predicated on being incorporated into this kingship, to become god-like and glorious, to be illumined by the soteric esotericism that affords one the opportunity to be assimilated into the divine potencies. This possibility is affirmed explicitly in the following passage: *rannenu merannenei* [*daʿato be*]*ronen beʾelohei feleʾ wehagu khevodo belašon kol hogei daʿat rinnot pelaʾo*, "Sing with joy, those of you enjoying [his knowledge with] the exultation among the wondrous gods, and proclaim his glory in the language of those who proclaim knowledge of his wondrous songs" (4Q403 1 I, 36).

To apprehend the God of knowledge (*ʾel haddeʿot*), one must join company with the gods of knowledge (*ʾelei daʿat*) who declare his glory through the chanting of songs. Two predicates are used to demarcate the activity ascribed to the enlightened priest, *rannenu* and *hagu*, which I have rendered respectively as "sing" and "proclaim." It is important to note, however, that the root of the latter term, *hgh*, in scriptural usage can mean "to make a sound" or "to articulate" (Isa 8:19, 31:4, 38:14, 59:11; Pss 35:28, 71:24, 115:7; Prov 8:7; Job 27:4) as well as "to ruminate" (Josh 1:8; Isa 16:7; 33:18; 59:3, 13; Jer 48:31; Pss 1:2, 2:1, 37:30, 38:13, 63:7, 77:13, 143:5; Prov 15:28, 24:2). It is plausible to suppose that both connotations are implied in the aforecited text, and hence the mandate is for the priest to contemplate and proclaim the glory in the language of the angels who are called *hogei daʿat*. As the matter is expressed in another fragment from these hymns, *beroʾšei terumot lešonei daʿat* [*u*]*varekhu leʾlohei daʿat bekhol maʿaśei kevodo*, "In the chief of the offerings of the tongues of knowledge [and] they bless the God of knowledge in all of the works of his glory" (4Q405 23 II, 12). Lamentably, the beginning

[98] In this respect, I concur with Gruenwald's observation, *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism*, 83, regarding the reciprocal relationship between knowledge and salvation: "Knowledge brings salvation, and, *mutatis mutandis*, salvation leads to knowledge."

of this passage is not decipherable, but from what has survived we can confidently assume that the reference is to the angelic elite who bless the "God of knowledge" with "tongues of knowledge." In the state of liturgical ecstasy, the poet urges himself and others who shall read his poem to participate in this process of angelification.

The ideal is set forth in the *Thanksgiving Scroll* in language that is consonant with the intent of the *Širot ʿOlat Haššabbat*: *weruaḥ naʿaweh ṭihartah mippešaʿ rav lehityaṣṣev bemaʿamad ʿim ṣevaʾ qodašim welavoʾ beyaḥad ʿim ʿadat benei šamayim wetappel leʾiš goral ʿolam ʿim ruḥot daʿat lehallel šimkhah beyaḥad rinnah ulesapper nifleʾotekhah leneged kol maʿaśekhah*, "And you have purified the depraved spirit[99] from great transgression to take its place with the host of the holy ones and to enter in communion with the congregation of the sons of heaven, and you cast a lot for man with the spirits of knowledge, to praise your name in the community of song and to recount your wonders before all of your creation" (1QH[a] XI, 21–23). Jacob Licht noted in his edition of the *Hodayot* that this passage indicates that the participation of the sect with the angels was related specifically to the utterance of praise before God in the heavenly abode.[100] What is particularly noteworthy for our purposes is the designation of the angels as *ruḥot daʿat*, an obvious parallel to the expression *ʾelei daʿat* that appears in the *Sabbath Songs*. The angels are designated in this way not because they apprehend the inner knowledge of God but because they are manifestations of the divine mind (*maḥšavah*) wherein all knowledge inheres.[101] As a consequence of attaining the angelic status—troped in the image of casting one's lot—the sectarian priest praises the name of God and narrates the divine wonders. The matter is expressed elsewhere in these hymns in a manner that is especially pertinent to our discussion, *waʾani lefi daʿati beʾami*[*ttekhah . . .*] *uvehabbiṭi bikhevodekhah ʾasapperah nifleʾotekhah*, "And I, in accordance with my knowledge of [your] tru[th . . .] and in my contemplating your glory, I will recount your wonders" (1QH[a] XVIII, 20–21). Knowledge of divine truth is equated with visually gazing at the glory, which occasions the recitation of God's mysteries.[102]

---

[99] An uncommon expression probably inspired by *naʿaweh lev* in Prov 12:8.

[100] Jacob Licht, *The Thanksgiving Scroll—A Scroll from the Wilderness of Judaea: Text, Introduction, Commentary and Glossary* (Jerusalem: The Bialik Institute, 1957), 84 n. 22 [Hebrew]. For extensive philological analysis of this passage, see Bonnie Kittel, *The Hymns of Qumran: Translation and Commentary* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1981), 56–80.

[101] 1QH[a] XIX, 7–8: *uwemaḥšavtekhah kol deʿah*.

[102] This concurs with the expression *daʿat ʾamitto*, "his true knowledge," which

In what is perhaps the most evocative language depicting the transformative experience, the hymnist thanks God in the following terms:

> [*ho*]*daʿatani besod ʾamittekhah wetaśkileni bemaʿaśei peliʾekhah wattitten befi hodot welešoni tehilah. . . . tamid ʾavarkhah šimkhah waʾasapperah kevodekhah betokh benei ʾadam. . . . ulemaʿan kevodekhah ṭihartah ʾenoš mippešaʿ lehitqaddeš lekhah . . . lehiyyaḥed ʿi*[*m*] *benei ʾamittekha wegoral ʿim qedošeikhah . . . ulehityaṣṣev bemaʿamad lefaneikhah ʿim ṣevaʾ ʿad weruḥei* [*daʿat*][103] *lehitḥaddeš ʿim kol nihyeh weʿim yodʿim beyaḥad rinnah.*
>
> You have made me knowledgeable of the secret of your truth, and you have enlightened me in your wondrous works, and you have placed in my mouth thanksgiving and on my tongue praise. . . . I will bless your name constantly and recount your glory amongst the sons of man. . . . For the sake of your glory you purified man from sin to sanctify himself for you . . . to be united wi[th] the sons of your truth and in the lot of your holy ones . . . and to stand before you together with the everlasting host and spirits [of knowledge] to be renewed in all that will exist and with those who know in the communion of song. (1QH^{a} XIX, 4–6, 10–14)

Once again we see the clearly delineated nexus linking gnosis of the divine secret, transformation into the angelic elite who stand before the throne ("sons of truth," "everlasting host," and "spirits of knowledge"), blessing the divine name, and utterance of hymns through which the supernal glory is recounted. I would suggest that the narrative recounting refers, more specifically, to the composition of liturgical poetry, which is predicated on the imaginal excursion into the theophanic realm, an excursion that breaks down the barrier of angelic and human, celestial and mundane. Thus the poet, who serves the role of "mediator of knowledge in the wondrous mysteries," *meliṣ daʿat berazei feleʾ* (1QH^{a} X, 13), speaks of being renewed in "all that will exist," *kol nihyeh*, with "those who know in the communion of song." I propose that *kol nihyeh* is not simply a rhetorical flourish but is rather a technical term that is synonymous with *raz nihyeh*, the "mystery of what will be." If my surmise is correct, then the reference here is to the experience of ontic incorporation into the divine mystery.

The point I am raising is affirmed as well in a passage from the "Rule of Benedictions"[104] that is addressed, in all likelihood, to the

---

appears in conjunction with the recitation of angelic praise before the throne; that is, in virtue of the knowledge of divine truth, the heavenly mysteries can be recounted. See 4Q403 1 I, 16, 18; Schiffman, "*Merkavah* Speculation," 27.

[103] I have accepted the suggested reconstruction of Licht, *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 163.

[104] Here I am following a lead suggested by Newsom, DJD 11:180.

high priest:[105] "May [everlas]ting blessings be the crown of your head . . . he has chosen you . . . to raise above the heads of the holy ones. . . . May you be like the angel of presence in the holy residence for the glory of the God of the hos[ts. . . . You shall] be around, serving in the temple of the kingship, casting the lot with the angels of presence and the council of the community" (1Q28b IV, 3, 22–26).[106] The blessing bestowed on the high priest underscores the blurring of ontological boundaries, as he is impelled to become "like the angel of presence," *kemal'akh panim*,[107] so that he may take his place in the "holy abode," *ma'on qodeš*, "temple of the kingship," *heikhal malkhut*.[108] The obfuscation is reiterated in the end of the pas-

---

[105] Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 283; Lawrence H. Schiffman, *The Eschatological Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Study of the Rule of Congregation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 72–76; Fletcher-Louis, *Glory of Adam*, 151–58.

[106] *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1:106–7, translation slightly modified.

[107] A possible scriptural basis for the term *mal'akh panim*, an expression attested in *Jubilees* and several Qumran sources, is *umal'akh panaw*, "and the angel of his face," in Isa 63:9, which most likely served as the basis for *śar happanim*, the "archon of the face," a term applied to the highest angels, which includes predominantly Yahoel, Michael, and Metatron, according to a strand of Jewish angelology attested in later rabbinic and Hekhalot literature. On the exegetical linking of *mal'akh happanim* and *śar happanim* as technical theophanic expressions and the aforementioned verse from Isaiah, see Saul M. Olyan, *A Thousand Thousands Served Him: Exegesis and the Naming of Angels in Ancient Judaism* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1993), 105–9; and Moshe Idel, "Metatron—Notes on the Evolution of Myth in Judaism," in *Myth and Judaism* (ed. H. Pedayah; Negev: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 1996), 29–44, esp. 36–41 [Hebrew]. For a select list of other scholarly discussions of the relevant terms, see *3 Enoch or the Hebrew Book of Enoch* (ed. and trans. H. Odeberg; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), 83, 118–19; Gershom Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1965), 52, 63; Jarl E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the LORD: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985), 189, 220–38, 307–24; Peter Schäfer, *The Hidden and Manifest God: Some Major Themes in Early Jewish Mysticism* (trans. A. Pomerance; Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 36; Michael Mach, *Entwicklungsstadien des jüdischen Engelglaubens in vorrabbinischer Zeit* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992), 3–4, 14, 40, 55, 95–96, 204, 238; Nathaniel Deutsch, *The Gnostic Imagination: Gnosticism, Mandaeism, and Merkabah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 99–111; idem, *Guardians of the Gate: Angelic Vice Regency in Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 43, 152–57; James C. VanderKam, "The Angel of the Presence in the Book of Jubilees," *DSD* 7 (2000): 378–93.

[108] The angelic status of priests, a central tenet of the Qumran sectarian piety, is suggested by earlier sources, for example, Mal 2:7; *Jub.* 31:13–15. On the angelic configuration of the high priest in particular, see Sir 45:7; 50:6–7. For a detailed analysis of priestly angelomorphism in Qumran material, see Fletcher-Louis, *Glory of Adam*, 150–221. For a later echo of this theme in rabbinic literature, see especially *Sifre Num.* 119 (Horovitz ed., 143), cited and discussed in Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs* (trans. I. Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975), 156–57. According to that homily, as one would expect from a rabbinic source, the angelic standing of the priest is dependent on his dispersing words of Torah.

sage where the high priest is said "to cast his lot with the angels of presence," but this is followed immediately by the additional claim that he casts his lot as well with the "council of the community, *ʿaṣat yaḥad*. In light of the way that this expression is generally used in the Scrolls, it would stand to reason that the transfigured high priest is still part of the priestly sect below. While this is surely a plausible interpretation, and indeed on one level incontestable, the conventional reading is misleading inasmuch as it obscures the apperception that the angelic camp and the priestly congregation are indifferently the same, that is, the same precisely in virtue of being different—the experience of transformation, which is ongoing and repeated rather than intermittent and singular,[109] requires that the two parties are identical and disparate, for if human and angel were not the latter, how could they be the former?

Have we not met this model of the priest-sage, the *kohen doreš hattorah*, according to the community's portrayal of the ideal teacher and leader? On the probable identification of the priest (*kohen*) and expert in the law (*doreš hattorah*) as the same person, see Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers*, 120 n. 79; Géza G. Xeravits, *King, Priest, Prophet: Positive Eschatological Protagonists of the Qumran Community* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 169–71, 187. It is also pertinent to recall the depiction of Moses as an "angel" through whose mouth the divine speaks, *ukhemalʾakh yedabber mippihu*, in 4Q377 1 II, 11, transcribed and analyzed by Najman, "Angels At Sinai," 319. The portrayal of Moses in this fragment is an interpretative gloss on the scriptural expression associated with him *ʾiš haʾelohim*, "man of God" (Deut 33:1; Josh 14:6), which is rendered in the Qumran fragment *ʿim ʾelohim*, that is, "with God." To be sure, the exegesis is suggested by other verses that describe Moses as being with God in an intimate way, but it seems to be an innovation on the part of the author of this text to combine this theme with the designation *ʾiš ʾelohim*, one of the technical labels for a prophet (Judg 13:6, 8; 1 Sam 2:27; 9:6, 10; 1 Kgs 13:1; 17:24; 2 Kgs 1:10; 4:9). See Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 125–26. As the text continues, the reference is to Moses and God being together in the cloud. To the roles of priest and hermeneut, we might add that of the poet, the *maśkil*, responsible for the composition of the liturgical hymns. On the divine/angelic status of Moses in Qumran literature, see also Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "4Q374: A Discourse on the Sinai Tradition: The Deification of Moses and Early Christology," *DSD* 3 (1996): 236–52; idem, *Glory of Adam*, 136–49; Xeravits, *King, Priest, Prophet*, 174–83. On the divinization of Moses in Hellenistic sources, see Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 95–98. For discussion of this theme in Scripture, see Jack M. Sasson, "Bovine Symbolism in the Exodus Narrative," *VT* 18 (1968): 380–87; and the different view of the image of the shining face of Moses (Exod 34:29–35) proffered by John Van Seters, *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus-Numbers* (Louisville: John Knox, 1994), 356–60. On the avoidance of the apotheosis of Moses in Scripture, see James Nohrnberg, *Like Unto Moses: The Constituting of an Interruption* (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 36.

[109] It seems to me that this point has not been properly emphasized in the scholarly literature. If time permits, I shall return to this theme in a separate study.

In and by imagining the angel of presence adorned in priestly garb, the priest dons the cloak of the angel of presence, which is patterned on the model of the priestly garb, a double mirroring that renders the same different by the different remaining the same. This seems to be the intent of the following passage in the *Manual of Discipline*: "To those whom God has selected he has given them an everlasting possession; and he has given them an inheritance in the lot of the holy ones. He unites their assembly to the sons of heaven in order (to form) the council of the Community and a foundation of the building of holiness to be an everlasting plantation throughout all future ages" (1QS XI, 7–9). The council of the community, *'aṣat yaḥad*, is formed when the assembly of those whom God has chosen are united with the angels, the "holy ones," *qedošim*, "sons of heaven," *benei šamayim*, an alliance that is possible only because of the in/difference—that is, the sameness that is the ground for the ontic difference that binds members of the community and angelic beings in the mind/heart of the visionary.

As scholars of Qumran have long noted, the holiness of the desert enclave was expressed in terms of angels joining members of the community and members of the community conceiving of their own angelic identity.[110] The angelomorphic status seems to have implied as well the possibility of transport to the imaginal realm,[111] the incor-

[110] The angelomorphic status accorded members of the *yaḥad* is thematically related to the broader portrayal of the righteous as angels, a motif well attested in Second Temple sources. See James H. Charlesworth, "The Portrayal of the Righteous as an Angel," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism* (ed. G. W. E. Nickelsburg and J. J. Collins; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1980), 135–51; William F. Smelik, "On Mystical Transformation of the Righteous into Light in Judaism," *JSJ* 26 (1995):122–44; Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology, and Soteriology* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 184–205; idem, "Some Reflections on Angelomorphic Humanity Texts Among the Dead Sea Scrolls," *DSD* 7 (2001): 292–312; idem, *Glory of Adam*, 88–135. See also Christopher R. A. Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition," *JJS* 43 (1992): 1–31; Elliot R. Wolfson, "*Yeridah la-Merkavah*: Typology of Ecstasy and Enthronement in Early Jewish Mysticism," in *Mystics of the Book: Themes, Topics, and Typologies* (ed. R. Herrera; New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 13–44, esp. 23–26; Daniel L. Bock, *Blasphemy and Exaltation in Judaism and the Final Examination of Jesus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 113–83.

[111] For review of this topic, see James R. Davila, "Heavenly Ascents in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Dead Sea Scrolls After Fifty Years*, 2:461–85. Also pertinent here are the studies dedicated to fragments that have been reconstructed and interpreted as referring to an enthroned being, as we find, for example, in the self-glorification fragments. On this topic, see Morton Smith, "Ascent to the Heavens and Deification in 4QM^{a}," in *Archaeology and History*, 181–88; idem, "Two Ascended to Heaven—Jesus and the Author of 4Q491," in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 290–301; Martin

poration of priests below with priests above into one liturgical congregation, which, I propose, is the intent in this context of the juxtaposition of the expressions "angels of presence," *mal'akhei panim*, and "council of the community," *'aṣat yaḥad*.[112] The seeing of the divine face through the deflection of the angelic faces by the pure heart facilitates the twofold membership—the poetic envisioning inscripted in the hymnal compositions—that renders what is above within and what is within above, a fundamental tenet of the theophanic imagination. From this perspective heavenly ascent and incarnational presence may be viewed as two ways of considering the selfsame phenomenon.[113]

G. Abegg, Jr., "Who Ascended to Heaven? 4Q491, 4Q427, and the Teacher of Righteousness," in *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 61–73; Devorah Dimant, "A Synoptic Comparison of Parallel Sections in 4Q427 7, 4Q491 11 and 4Q471B," *JQR* 85 (1994): 157–62; Esther Eshel, "The Identification of the 'Speaker' of the Self-Glorification Hymn," in *Provo International Conference*, 619–35; Israel Knohl, *The Messiah Before Jesus: The Suffering Servant of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (trans. D. Maisel; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 15–21; J. C. O'Neill, "'Who Is Comparable to Me in My Glory?': 4Q491 Fragment 11 (4Q491C) and the New Testament," *NovT* 42 (2000): 24–38.

[112] Newsom, "Established," 101–20, esp. 108–9.

[113] I thus concur with the thesis of Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "Heavenly Ascent or Incarnational Presence? A Revisionist Reading of the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*," *SBLSP* 37 (1998): 367–99.

THE IDEA OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel

EDITED BY

HINDY NAJMAN

AND

JUDITH H. NEWMAN

BRILL
LEIDEN · BOSTON
2004