

## THE MYSTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF TORAH STUDY IN GERMAN PIETISM\*

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper explores the mystical significance that the ritual of Torah-study assumes within the overall theosophic orientation of the Kalonymide circle of German Pietists active in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. This particular ritual is presented as one example of a much larger phenomenon alluded to in this corpus, namely, the esoteric nature and mystical efficacy of the performance of traditional commandments. My analysis focuses on three critical aspects of the Pietists' view of Torah based on earlier aggadic or mystical texts: (1) Torah as the divine names; (2) Torah as the singular divine name (the Tetragrammaton); and (3) Torah as the divine glory. It is shown in this paper that for the Pietists the notion that the Torah comprises the divine names is related to the identification of the Torah and the glory. Indeed, this identification provides the ideational basis for the mystical experience that underlies this most central ritual of normative rabbinic Judaism: the study of Torah provides the occasion for the visualization of the luminous glory or the divine name. This nexus of motifs is epitomized in Eleazar of Worms' statement that the one who studies Torah has the effect of mentioning the name which is understood in the Pietistic writings as a technical mystical praxis that results in a contemplative vision of the luminous glory.*

### A. Introduction

While much has been written about the pietism (*ḥasidut*),<sup>1</sup> the esoteric theosophy (*torat ha-sod*), especially the doctrine of the

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<sup>1</sup> Some representative studies include: M. Güdemann, *Geschichte des Erziehungswesen und der Cultur der Abendländischen Juden* (Wien, 1880), vol. I, chaps. 5–8; Y. N. Shimoni, "German Pietism in the Middle Ages" [Hebrew], *Ha-Ṣefrah* (1917), nos. 12, 13, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, republished in I. Marcus, ed., *The Religious and Social Ideas of the Jewish Pietists in Medieval Germany* (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 47–81; Y. Baer, "The Socio-Religious Orientation of *Sefer Ḥasidim*" [Hebrew], *Zion* 3 (1938): 1–50 (English translation in *Binah: Studies in Jewish*

*kavod*,<sup>2</sup> as well as the magical and folkloristic traditions<sup>3</sup> cultivated by the Ḥaside Ashkenaz active in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, relatively little attention has been paid to their treatment of ritual from a decidedly mystical vantage point.<sup>4</sup> This is all the more surprising insofar as Eleazar ben Judah of Worms (ca. 1165–ca. 1230), one of the central figures in the main circle of Pietists

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*History, Thought, and Culture*, ed. J. Dan [New York, 1989], 2:57–96); I. G. Marcus, *Piety and Society: The Jewish Pietists of Medieval Germany* (Leiden, 1981); idem, "The Devotional Ideals of Ashkenazic Pietism," in *Jewish Spirituality from the Bible through the Middle Ages*, ed. A. Green (New York, 1986), pp. 356–366; P. Schäfer, "The Ideal of Piety of the Ashkenazi Ḥasidim and Its Roots in Jewish Tradition," *Jewish History* 4 (1990): 9–23.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Epstein, *Mi-Qadmoniyot ha-Yehudim*, ed. A. M. Haberman (Jerusalem, 1957), pp. 226–248; G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1954), pp. 80–118; idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah* (Princeton, 1987), pp. 41–42, 97–123, 180–198, 215–216; J. Dan, *The Esoteric Theology of the Ashkenazi Ḥasidim* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1968); A. Farber, *The Concept of the Merkabah in Thirteenth-Century Jewish Esotericism: Sod ha-ʿEgoz and its Development* [Hebrew], Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 1986; M. Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven, 1988), pp. 130–132; E. R. Wolfson, "The Image of Jacob Engraved upon the Throne: Further Speculation on the Esoteric Doctrine of the German Pietists" [Hebrew], in *Ephraim Gottlieb Memorial Volume* (Jerusalem, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition* (New York, 1939); G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* (New York, 1969), pp. 158–204; J. Dan, *Studies in Ashkenazi-Ḥasidic Literature* [Hebrew] (Ramat-Gan, 1975), pp. 9–25, 34–43; idem, "Samael, Lilith, and the Concept of Evil in Early Kabbalah," *AJS Review* 5 (1980): 25–40; M. Idel, *Golem: Jewish Magical and Mystical Traditions on the Artificial Anthropoid* (Albany, 1990), pp. 54–80.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Scholem (*Major Trends*, p. 90) who notes that one of the subjects cultivated by the German Pietists and neglected by the old *merkavah* mystics was "an extensive speculation concerning the 'reasons of the Torah,' i.e., above all the true motives of the commandments." See also idem, *Kabbalah* (Jerusalem, 1974), pp. 41–42. In spite of his calling our attention to this important aspect of the pietistic worldview, Scholem in fact spends little time discussing it in any detail. An exception worth noting is his discussion of the German Pietists' treatment of prayer; cf. *Major Trends*, pp. 100–103; J. Dan, "The Emergence of Mystical Prayer," in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism*, ed. J. Dan and F. Talmage (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 85–120. See also the discussion of fear and love of God in the thought of the German Pietists in Scholem, *Major Trends*, pp. 95–96; G. Vajda, *L'Amour de Dieu dans la théologie juive du moyen âge* (Paris, 1957), pp. 149–162. Vajda briefly discusses (pp. 154–155) the mystical intention (*kawwanah*) of prayer according to the Pietists. On pietism as a preparation for mystical experience in prayer in the case of Eleazar, see the perceptive comments of Marcus, *Piety and Society*, pp. 117–118. On the fear and love of God in Ḥaside Ashkenaz, see Marcus, *Piety and Society*, pp. 28–36; M. Harris, "The Concept of Love in *Sepher Hasidim*," *JQR* 50 (1959): 13–44.

led by Judah ben Samuel he-Ḥasid of Regensburg (ca. 1150–1217), in one place includes *sod ha-mišvot* (the secret of the commandments) in his enumeration of the three esoteric disciplines within Judaism, the others being *sod ma'aseh bereshit* (the secret of the account of creation) and *sod ma'aseh merkavah* (the secret of the account of the chariot).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, in one passage from *Sefer Ḥasidim* the requirements specified for one “who wishes to enter into the depths of piety, the depths of the laws of the Creator, and the depths of his glory” include the conditions mentioned in the Mishnah (Ḥag 2.1) in connection with one who wishes to study matters pertaining to the chariot.<sup>6</sup> In a second passage from *Sefer Ḥasidim*, the disclosure of the reasons for the commandments (*ta'ame torah*)<sup>7</sup> is treated as an esoteric matter (*sod*) to be revealed only to one who is worthy.<sup>8</sup> The centrality of the fulfillment of the commandments as well as an understanding of their reasons for the proper gnosis of God is underscored by Eleazar in a passage from his commentary on the prayers:

A person is obligated to perfect himself by establishing the commandments of his Creator and arranging his actions; then he will know his Creator. . . . We have received all the commandments from the holy sages, and there is no difference with respect to

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Sefer Razi'el* (Amsterdam, 1701), 7c. The text has been printed as well in *Sode Razaya*<sup>2</sup>, ed. S. Weiss (Jerusalem, 1988), p. 1. Cf. the enumeration of supernal secrets (סְתֵרֵי עֲלִיּוֹנִים) in the version of Eleazar's *ʿEser Hawwayot* (derived from his *Sefer ha-Shem*) in MS Munich 43, fol. 225a: *ma'aseh merkavah*, *ma'aseh bereshit*, and *sode ta'ame ha-torah* (on this locution see below nn. 7–8). See, however, MS British Museum 737, fol. 178a, where the last item is given as *sode torah*. Cf. Eleazar's enumeration of esoteric disciplines in *Ḥokhmat ha-Nefesh*, chap. 2 (Bene-Beraq, 1987), p. 14: the secret of the chariot (*sod ha-merkavah*), the secret of creation (*sod ma'aseh bereshit*), and the secret of unity (*sod ha-yihud*). See also *Sefer ha-Roqeah* (Jerusalem, 1967), p. 23: “The Book of the Chariot (*Sefer ha-Merkavah*), the Book of the Account of Creation (*Sefer Ma'aseh Bereshit*), the Book of Formation (*Sefer Yeširah*), the Book of [Divine] Names (*Sefer Shemot*), and the Book of the Glory (*Sefer ha-Kavod*) should not be written in this book, as well as the secrets of the fifty gates of wisdom and the Alef-Bet . . . ‘The secret of the Lord is with those who fear him’ (Ps 25:14).”

<sup>6</sup> *Sefer Ḥasidim*, ed. J. Wistinetzki and J. Freimann (Frankfurt am Main, 1924), §984. This passage is mentioned by Scholem, *Kabbalah*, p. 42.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. bPes 119a; bSan 21b.

<sup>8</sup> *Sefer Ḥasidim*, §1477; cf. Scholem, *Major Trends*, p. 371, n. 30; idem, *Kabbalah*, p. 41.

the commandments between their words and the words of the Torah, for these too were given to us, and they received them from their fathers and their fathers from the prophets, and everything is [received] from God through Moses, the reason and how to perform it.<sup>9</sup>

In this study I shall focus on the treatment of one *mišwah* in particular in the writings of the Pietists belonging to the Kalonymide circle, namely, Torah study. It is not my intention to present a comprehensive treatment of *talmud torah* in all of its relevant aspects in the thought of Ḥaside Ashkenaz; rather I am interested specifically in the mystical significance which this ritual assumes within their overall theosophic orientation.

Let me begin by noting that in the two major discussions of *talmud torah* in the Pietists' corpus, the *Sefer Ḥasidim*,<sup>10</sup> the bulk of which is generally attributed to Judah,<sup>11</sup> and *Sefer ha-Roqeah* of Eleazar,<sup>12</sup> there are hardly any esoteric or mystical implications ascribed to this most basic of Jewish rites. Whatever innovative ideas are expressed by the Pietists with respect to the significance accorded to *talmud torah* within their system of religious and social values, especially in reaction to the emerging Tosafist movement of northern France and Germany,<sup>13</sup> the approach is, on the surface,

<sup>9</sup> MS Paris 772, fol. 21a.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Sefer Ḥasidim*, §§747–856.

<sup>11</sup> It is assumed that sections 1–16 of *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ed. Wistinetzki and Freimann, pp. 1–22) are part of the *Sefer ha-Yir'ah* of R. Samuel the Pietist, R. Judah's father. Cf. Friemann's introduction to *Sefer Ḥasidim*, pp. 12–14; Dan, *The Esoteric Theology*, pp. 56–57, n. 24; and the convenient review of the *status quaestionis* in S. Kogut, "The Language of 'Sefer Ḥasidim,' Its Linguistic Background, and Methods of Research," in *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, vol. 2, ed. I. Twersky (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 95–96; and Ivan Marcus' introduction to the facsimile edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* MS. Parma H 3280, *Quntresim: Meqorot u-Mehqarim*, 66–67 (Jerusalem, 1985), pp. 13–21.

<sup>12</sup> *Sefer ha-Roqeah*, pp. 11–13. A possible exception is Eleazar's description of the wisdom of Talmud (חכמת התלמוד) in the introduction to *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, according to which Talmud encompasses "great penetration" (עומק גדול), i.e., esoteric traditions derived from that which is encoded in Scripture. For discussion of this text, see Marcus, *Piety and Society*, pp. 69–70.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. H. Soloveitchik, "Three Themes in the *Sefer Ḥasidim*," *AJS Review* 1 (1976): 311–357; I. Ta-Shema, "The Practice of *Talmud-Torah* as a Social and Religious Problem in *Sefer Ḥasidim*" [Hebrew], *Bar-Ilan* 14–15 (1977): 98–113; Marcus, *Piety and Society*, pp. 102–105. On the educational theory and practice in the teachings of the German Pietists, see now E. Kanarfogel, *Jewish Education and Society in the High Middle Ages* (Detroit, 1992), pp. 86–99.

entirely normative, drawing extensively from talmudic, midrashic, and earlier halakhic literature. Despite surface appearances, however, a careful study of the writings of the Ḥaside Ashkenaz, many of which are still available only in manuscript, indicates that a mystical conception of Torah study does indeed underlie many of their theosophical and pietistic remarks. This conception, needless to say, is rooted in the Pietists' view of Torah. Hence, to appreciate the treatment of the study of Torah as a mystical praxis in the thought of the German Pietists it is necessary to have a clear understanding of their conception of Torah. My analysis will focus on three critical aspects of the Pietists' view of Torah, which are to an extent based on earlier aggadic or mystical texts: (1) Torah as the divine names; (2) Torah as the singular divine name (the Tetragrammaton); and (3) Torah as the divine glory. Only by analyzing these issues in a thorough manner will we be in a position to uncover the mystical significance accorded to Torah study in the esoteric teachings of the German Pietists.

Before proceeding with an analysis of these three motifs, a brief methodological observation will be in order. Like many other ideas that are essential to the Pietists' religious and spiritual outlook, their idea of Torah is never stated in a systematic manner. On the contrary, this idea is alluded to in many places, expressed through such hermeneutical techniques as numerology, letter associations, permutation of letters, and so on. It is the task of the reader to employ these devices as a means to decode the esoteric meaning embedded in the literary works of Ḥaside Ashkenaz, just as they felt that the application of these methods to traditional texts, scriptural, rabbinic, and liturgical, was necessary to ascertain their inner sense. A systematic presentation of the theosophy of Ḥaside Ashkenaz is helpful, although not decisive, as a tool to uncover the doctrines which informed their esotericism and which they considered to be the ancient truths of Judaism. Consistency is rarely the measure of human creativity, and it is surely not so in the case of Judah the Pious, Eleazar of Worms, and other colleagues or disciples who belonged to their circle.

### *B. Torah as the Divine Names*

I begin with an idea whose precise origin is still somewhat uncertain, but which was expressed centuries before the rise of the Pietists in medieval Europe, the notion that, in addition to the

normative reading of Scripture as narrative and code of law, the Torah yields an alternative reading, one that is essentially magical in nature, i.e., different names of God may be extracted from select verses through various hermeneutical devices.<sup>14</sup> While this idea may have originated in late antiquity, influencing specific magical and incantational practices, it is articulated as a distinct principle in the introduction to the work *Shimmushe Torah*, published separately under the title *Ma<sup>c</sup>ayan Hōkhmah*, which is to be placed in the gaonic period. The text relates that when Moses ascended to heaven to receive the Torah, each of the angels befriended him and “transmitted to him a cure and the secret of the names (*sod ha-shemot*) which may be derived from each and every section [of the Torah], and all [the ways] that they are used [theurgically].”<sup>15</sup> Moshe Idel has argued that this conception of Torah is the underlying intent of several aggadic or midrashic sources and is found as well in the literary compositions belonging to the *Hekhalot* corpus, the Jewish mystical speculation dated to the talmudic and post-talmudic eras. More specifically, Idel suggested that the esoteric sense of Torah, referred to frequently as *raz* (mystery or secret),<sup>16</sup> consisted of reading Torah as an amalgam of names, and in some cases these names were connected to the measurements or dimensions of God’s limbs, fully articulated in the *Shi<sup>c</sup>ur Qomah* material.<sup>17</sup> Thus, verses of Torah are transformed into the anthropomorphic shape of the deity, an idea formulated explicitly by thirteenth-century theosophic kabbalists who interpreted the words of Torah as symbols for the divine pleroma which is characterized, *inter alia*, as the macroanthropos. Idel suggests, moreover, that precisely some such conception is operative in the Ḥaside Ashkenaz,

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, pp. 37–39; idem, “The Name of God and the Linguistic Theory of the Kabbala,” *Diogenes* 79 (1972): 76–77; M. Idel, “The Concept of Torah in the Hekhalot and Its Evolution in the Kabbalah” [Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 1 (1981): 23–49.

<sup>15</sup> MS Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Plut. 44. 13, fol. 71b; and the printed version in Adolf Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash* (Jerusalem, 1967), 1:61. The text was already cited by Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, p. 38, and by Idel, “The Concept of Torah,” p. 28.

<sup>16</sup> For discussion of this critical term in the *Hekhalot* corpus, see R. Elijor, “The Concept of God in Hekhalot Mysticism” [Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6 (1987): 20, 35–36 (English translation in *Binah: Studies in Jewish History, Thought, and Culture*, ed. J. Dan [New York, 1989], 2:101, 111–112).

<sup>17</sup> See reference in n. 14.

for whom the older mystical traditions developed within a new context informed in part by the philosophical or scientific writings of Saadiah Gaon, Shabbetai Donnolo, and Abraham ibn Ezra.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, as Idel noted, a somewhat different idea to the effect that the Torah in its entirety (and not simply select verses) can be transmuted through a new division of letters into names of God was expressed in Eleazar's time by authors living in different geographical areas, for example, in Italy by Şedeqiah ben Abraham Anav, author of the halakhic compendium *Shibbole ha-Leqet*, and in Spain by Naḥmanides in the introduction to his commentary on the Torah and in his sermon *Torat ha-Shem Temimah*.<sup>19</sup> Internal evidence may be adduced as well to support the contention that the Pietists cultivated such a tradition regarding the Torah. Thus, in the introduction to the pseudo-Hai commentary on the forty-two letter name of God, included in Eleazar's *Sefer ha-Ḥokhmah*,<sup>20</sup> there appears to be a reference to this idea: "The holy Torah is one Torah without separation, and all the names of the Holy One, blessed be he, for this name too derives from Genesis, and this one from Exodus."<sup>21</sup> The critical passage in the extant manuscripts is **הוא תורה אחת בלי פירוד וכל שמותיו של הקב"ה**. Joseph Dan already suggested that perhaps the latter part of the text should be emended to **וכלה שמותיו של הקב"ה**, i.e., the Torah in its entirety consists of the names of God,<sup>22</sup> a formulation which is very close to that used by Naḥmanides, **כל התורה כולה שמותיו**

<sup>18</sup> Idel, "The Concept of Torah," pp. 47–48. Cf. P. Schäfer, *Hekhalot-Studien* (Tübingen, 1988), pp. 291–292, who seems to suggest that in the relevant textual units of the *Hekhalot* literature, the word *raz* (mystery or secret) is used to designate the esoteric knowledge of the names of God or of the angels; knowledge of Torah results from the proper use of these names but is not itself necessarily these names. Hence, the divine (or angelic) names provide the esoteric keys which help one gain knowledge of Torah, but are not themselves depicted as the content of that knowledge.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Idel, "The Concept of Torah," p. 54, n. 102.

<sup>20</sup> For discussion of this text, see Scholem, *Origins*, pp. 98, 184–185; Dan, *The Esoteric Theology*, pp. 118–129; Idel, *New Perspectives*, p. 195; Farber, "The Concept of the Merkabah," pp. 231–244, especially 236–237.

<sup>21</sup> MSS Oxford 1568, fol. 1b and 1812, fol. 54a; the text is cited as well in Dan, *The Esoteric Theology*, p. 124.

<sup>22</sup> *The Esoteric Theology*, p. 124, n. 45. See also M. Idel, "We Have No Kabbalistic Tradition on This," in *Rabbi Moses Naḥmanides (Ramban): Explorations in His Literary and Religious Virtuosity*, ed. I. Twersky (Cambridge, 1983), p. 54, n. 10.

של הקב"ה.<sup>23</sup> It is clear that the meaning of the passage is in accord with this suggested textual emendation, even if at present no manuscript evidence has surfaced to support it. That is, the intent of this passage is that the divine names can be extracted from Scripture, for the latter is made up of these names. Confirmation of such a tradition is found in various passages of Eleazar's writings, although I have not been able to locate this exact formulation.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, as I will suggest below, the claim that the Torah comprises the divine names in the case of Ḥaside Ashkenaz is related to the theosophic identification of the Torah and the glory.

### C. Torah as the Singular Divine Name

In addition to the tradition that the Torah is made up of divine names or that these names may be extracted from the Torah, there is evidence in the pietistic writings of another tradition, also found in kabbalistic works from the period under discussion, that the Torah is the one name of God, the Tetragrammaton.<sup>25</sup> This tradition is expressed, for example, in the following passage which

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<sup>23</sup> *Perush ha-Ramban 'al ha-Torah*, ed. C. Chavel (Jerusalem, 1984), 1:6. A similar formulation occurs in the introduction to the gaonic magical work *Shimmush Tehillim*; cf. Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, p. 109. It is likely, however, that this statement is a later addition to the text; cf. Idel, "The Concept of the Torah," p. 54, n. 102. See also the formulation in *Sefer Razi'el*, 25c, alluded to by Trachtenberg, p. 314, n. 4.

<sup>24</sup> In this context it is of interest to note that Joseph ben Meir Teomim (ca. 1727–1792), in his supercommentary, *ʿEshel Avraham* (part of the *Peri Megadim*) on the commentary of Abraham Abele ben Ḥayyim ha-Levi Gombiner (ca. 1637–1683), *Magen Avraham*, to *Shulḥan Arukh*, *ʿOrah Ḥayyim* 139:6, after referring to a citation from Eleazar of Worms' *Sefer ha-Roqeah* by Elijah ben Benjamin Wolf Shapira (1660–1712) in his *ʿEliyahu Rabbah* (Sulzbach, 1757) 44b, concerning the necessity to bow down before the Torah scroll, remarks: "One bows down to the Torah, for it is [made up of] the names of God, blessed be he." This text is cited by Idel, "The Concept of the Torah," p. 54, n. 102, but he inadvertently gave the source as Abraham David Oppenheim's commentary on *ʿOrah Ḥayyim* also entitled *ʿEshel Avraham*. The comment is not part of the citation from Shapira but is rather an interpretative gloss of Teomim. What is most striking is that the passage from *Sefer ha-Roqeah*, in fact a tradition which Eleazar brings in the name of Ḥizqiyyah, the brother of Raban (see below, n. 115), is actually a tacit polemic against the view that the Torah can in any way be identified with God.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, pp. 39–44; I. Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1975), 2:372; Idel, "The Concept of the Torah," pp. 49–84.



preserves a teaching stemming from the Kalonymide circle of the Ḥaside Ashkenaz:

תורה is numerically equivalent to שמו [his name].<sup>26</sup> There are those who say that [the first two commandments of the Decalogue] “I [the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage]” and “You shall have [no other gods besides Me]” (Exod 20:2–3) were heard from the mouth of God.<sup>27</sup> “The Lord’s name is proclaimed over you” (שם יהוה) נקרא עליך, Deut 28:10).<sup>28</sup> The initials [of the words: שם יהוה נקרא] are ש״י.<sup>29</sup> This refers to what is said regarding the ש״י of the phylacteries, that it is a tradition given to Moses at Sinai.<sup>30</sup> The four-letter name [יהוה] according to א״ת ב״ש<sup>31</sup> is מצפ״ן, which equals ש״י [i.e., 40 + 90 + 80 + 90 = 300].<sup>32</sup>

According to this text the Torah is identified with the divine name which is further associated with the letter *shin* of the phylacteries,

<sup>26</sup> The numerical equivalence here eludes me, as the word תורה = 611 whereas שמו = 346. Ivan Marcus suggested to me that perhaps in this context the word שמו actually stands for one of the names which through some numerical device may come close to the value of the word Torah. Indeed, as will be seen below, the hidden letters (נעלם) of the name ארני equal 606. If we then add the four letters of the name ארני to 606, we get the sum of 610 which is one short of the desired 611, the numerical value of the word Torah.

<sup>27</sup> bMak 24a; bHor 8a.

<sup>28</sup> The association of the name of God mentioned in this verse and the phylacteries is found in earlier sources. Cf. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Deut 28:10; bBer 6a.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Jacob ben Asher, *Perush Ba'al ha-Turim 'al ha-Torah*, on Deut 28:10 (Bene-Beraq, 1985), p. 431; *Perush ha-Roqeah 'al ha-Torah*, ed. Ch. Konyevsky (Bene-Beraq, 1986), 3:251. Regarding the attribution of this text to Eleazar, cf. J. Dan, “The Ashkenazi ‘Gates of Wisdom’,” in *Hommage à Georges Vajda*, ed. G. Nahon and C. Touati (Louvain, 1980), pp. 183–189.

<sup>30</sup> yMeg 1.9; bShab 28b, 62a; bMen 35a. For other relevant references, cf. E. R. Wolfson, “Circumcision and the Divine Name: A Study in the Transmission of Esoteric Doctrine,” *JQR* 78 (1987): 81, n. 8.

<sup>31</sup> That is, the method of interchanging the first letter (א) of the alphabet with the last (ת) and the second (ב) with the next to last (ש), and so on. Using this method the letters יהוה = מצפ״ן. This tradition occurs frequently in German pietistic literature; cf. Abraham ben Azriel, *Sefer Arugat ha-Bošem*, ed. E. E. Urbach (Jerusalem, 1947), 2:154, n. 1. See also *Perush Haftarah*, MS Berlin Or. 942, fol. 154a. Regarding the use of this name in earlier Jewish mysticism cf. K. Herrmann, “Die Gottesnamen כו״ץ und מצפ״ן in der Hekhalot-Literatur,” *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 16 (1988): 75–87.

<sup>32</sup> MS Oxford 1408, fol. 48d.

inasmuch as the *atbash* of the Tetragrammaton is **מצפ"ץ** which equals 300, the numerical value of *shin* as well.<sup>33</sup> The latter tradition appears in a variety of contexts in the German pietistic writings which indicate clearly that the *shin* of the phylacteries assumes hypostatic dimensions.<sup>34</sup> What is distinctive about the text cited above is the specific correlation of the name and the Torah.

Reference to the identification of the name and the Torah is also found in the anonymous theosophic work extant in MSS Oxford 1566 and 1567, entitled *Sefer ha-Kavod*, which Dan attributed to Judah the Pious, although he insisted that this text is not to be identified with the *Sefer ha-Kavod* of Judah cited in other sources.<sup>35</sup> The specific context in which this idea appears is a rather complicated numerological exegesis (*gematriyah*) which sets out to prove that the 613 commandments are comprised within the divine name (יהוה) and within the appellation (אדני): when the hidden letters (נעלם) of the word אדני (i.e., the inarticulate letters which spell each of the pronounced letters in full; e.g., the ל and פ of אל"ף) are added, the sum equals 606 (i.e., ל, פ, ל, ת, ו, ג, ו, ד = 30 + 80 + 30 + 400 + 6 + 50 + 6 + 4 = 606). To this sum one must add the נעלם of the two letters of the Tetragrammaton which have not yet been counted, the ה and the ו, which equal 7 (i.e., א and ו, 1 + 6 = 7). The total of the two computations is 613 corresponding to the 613 commandments. It should be evident that the Pietists have come up with a *gematriyah* in order to substantiate an already existing tradition regarding the inclusion of the Torah, or its 613 commandments, within the divine name. Thus, in the aforementioned text, it is stated explicitly:

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<sup>33</sup> Another tradition which may be of relevance here is the association of the letter *shin* with Jacob. Cf. *Sefer Razi"el*, 8a–b; *Sode Razaya*<sup>2</sup>, ed. Weiss, pp. 4–5; *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, MS Oxford 1812, fol. 62a; *Perush ha-Merkavah*, MS Paris 850, fol. 69a. I have discussed at length these and other relevant sources in my study referred to above, n. 2. According to several pietistic sources, the name Jacob symbolizes the Torah which is said to be comprised within the Decalogue, for the latter itself is represented by the name Jacob: the first letter of this name, י, represents the ten commandments, and the remaining three letters, עקב, correspond to the 172 words contained in the Decalogue. Cf. MS Oxford 1566, fol. 168a; *Perush ha-Tefillot*, MS Paris 772, fols. 28a–b, 84a; MS Cambridge Add. 644, fol. 19a.

<sup>34</sup> See references in the previous note.

<sup>35</sup> Dan, *Studies in Ashkenazi-Hasidic Literature*, p. 136.

And why are the 613 [alluded to] in the name? On account of the fact that it is written, “If you fail to observe faithfully all the terms of this teaching that are written in this book, to reverence this honored and awesome name, the Lord your God” (Deut 28:58). Thus the entire Torah is made dependent on the glorious name . . . and He considered [literally, weighed] the whole Torah equal to the name. . . . And this [is the meaning of the verse] “[From there the ark of God to which the name was attached], the name of the Lord of Hosts enthroned on the cherubim” (2 Sam 6:2). The explicit name is written on the forehead of the cherubim, and this is “the name of the Lord enthroned upon the cherubim.”<sup>36</sup>

The full implication of this text may be gathered from a second passage in the same composition which also draws upon the numerical equation of the two names and the 613 commandments:

All the *mišvot* are alluded to in the explicit name [יהוה] and in the appellation [אדני] to indicate that his name and the appellation are resting in the ark, and the cherubim are above [it], one corresponding to the name and the other to the appellation, and the commandments are in the ark, and the Torah scroll is there. . . . Therefore one who studies all the *mišvot* and fulfills them, his soul is bound under the throne of glory,<sup>37</sup> as it is written, “The life of my lord will be bound up in the bundle of life” (1 Sam 25:29).<sup>38</sup>

The point is made in yet a third passage from the same work:

The hidden letters [of יהוה and אדני] equal 613, corresponding to the positive and negative commandments, for the one who keeps the commandments has a God, and the names [are united] through his assistance. . . . These two names were on the foreheads of the cherubim, one on the forehead of one cherub and the other on the second.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> MS Oxford 1566, fol. 42a.

<sup>37</sup> A view frequently expressed in pietistic writings based on bShab 152b and its parallels. For references to primary and secondary literature relevant to this theme, cf. Wolfson, “Circumcision and the Divine Name,” pp. 91–92, n. 41.

<sup>38</sup> MS Oxford 1566, fol. 38a.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., fol. 87b.

The idea expressed in these texts is found also in Eleazar's *Sefer ha-Shem* in language that almost exactly parallels the second text cited above:

אל"ף דל"ת ו"ו נו"ן יו"ד [are the letters of] אדני. Do not consider the first [of the letters: אדוני] but that which results from them [i.e., the hidden letters that make up each letter]: ל"ף ל"ת ו ר"ן [ = 110 + 430 + 6 + 56 + 10 = 612] . . . And if you add to them א [= 1] from the [letter] ה [i.e., א"ה of יהוה] then the sum will be 613, corresponding to the 613 commandments, 365 prohibitions and 248 proscriptions. That is to say, the reason why the name is written יהוה and pronounced אדני is because together they bear the 613 commandments. . . . Why are all the commandments alluded to in the explicit name [יהוה] and the appellation [אדני]? To inform one that his name and its appellation were resting in the ark, and the cherubim were above, one corresponding to the name and the other to the appellation. And the commandments were in the ark, and the Torah scroll is there, as it is written, “[From there the ark of God to which the name was attached], the name of the Lord of Hosts enthroned on the cherubim” (2 Sam 6:2). Therefore, the one who studies all the commandments and fulfills them, his soul is bound to the bundle of life under the throne of glory.<sup>40</sup>

The pietistic teaching is based on an earlier rabbinic idea found in several sources, e.g., tSoṭ 7.17 and ySoṭ 8.3, to the effect that the name of God was placed in the ark, a view which complements the notion that the Torah, or the tablets, were placed in the ark between the two cherubim.<sup>41</sup> According to one source, bBB 14b, this view is linked exegetically to 2 Sam 6:2, the verse which figures prominently in the pietistic exegesis. More importantly, we find the following interpretation of the verse attributed to R. Shim<sup>c</sup>on bar Yoḥai: “This teaches that the name and all of its appellations were placed in the ark.”<sup>42</sup> According to the pietistic transformation of

<sup>40</sup> MS British Museum 737, fol. 212b.

<sup>41</sup> The correlation of the Torah scroll and the tablets in the ark is evident as well in *Sefer Ḥasidim* §§695–696, 698.

<sup>42</sup> See also bSoṭ 42b–43a; *NumR* 4.20. Cf. the statement from Ludwig Blau's *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen* (Strassburg, 1898), cited by Scholem, “The Name of God,” p. 66.

this earlier tradition,<sup>43</sup> the Torah contained in the ark is linked specifically to the name יהוה and to its appellation אדני, which in turn correspond to the two cherubim above the ark. From other contexts in the pietistic writings it is evident that the cherubim represent the visible manifestation of the glory, a point often made through the numerical equivalence of the word כרוכים and מראה כבוד.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, in other passages we find that R. Judah and/or his disciples note that the title “Lord, God of Israel” (יהוה אלהי ישראל), one of the names of the glory, equals 613, for the glory assumes or receives this name as a result of Israel’s fulfillment of the commandments. For example, in one text we read: “Therefore [the expression] יהוה אלהי ישראל is numerically equal to 613 [10 + 5 + 6 + 5 + 1 + 30 + 5 + 10 + 10 + 300 + 200 + 1 + 30], for he is the God of those who receive the Torah in its entirety.”<sup>45</sup> The point is made more explicitly in a second passage: “Thus says the Lord, God of Israel. This name יהוה אלהי ישראל numerically equals 613. [The name] includes Israel, for [the glory] is not called by this name except when they fulfill the 613 commandments.”<sup>46</sup> Given the correlation of the number 613 with the name and the appellation, which correspond to the cherubim, on the one hand, and the title of the glory, “Lord, God of Israel,” on the other, it is possible that implied in these passages is some form of identification of the Torah and the glory, a point to which I will return in the final section of this study. In any event, it is evident that the Pietists identified the Torah and the name (in its orthographic and phonetic forms), and further correlated the latter with the cherubim. It is possible that such a tradition underlies the following statement in *Sefer Hasidim*:

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Sefer ha-Shem*, MS British Museum 737, fol. 190a: “Thus the tablets were 216 handsbreadths, each tablet was [in length] six handsbreadths by six, equalling 36, and its width was 3 handsbreadths.  $3 \times 36$  equals 108. Thus was the [measure] of the second one as well. The sum, then, is 216, for the name was placed in the ark together with its appellations.” See *ibid.*, fol. 189b. On the measurements of the tablets in older rabbinic sources, cf. L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1968), 6:60, n. 308.

<sup>44</sup> See, e.g., *Sefer ha-Roqeah*, p. 22.

<sup>45</sup> MS Oxford 1566, fol. 38a. Cf. Isaac ben Judah ha-Levi, *Sefer Pa'aneah Raza*<sup>7</sup> (Amsterdam, 1867), 63a: “Turn from your blazing anger’ (Exod 32:12): When this is said in the synagogue it should be prefaced with [the expression] יהוה אלהי ישראל, for this numerically equals 613. When the 613 are mentioned, God, blessed be he, causes his Presence to dwell and turns away from his anger.”

<sup>46</sup> MS Oxford 1566, fol. 100b.

Why were there two cherubim and the word [of God] between the two cherubim? To teach that two should be occupied with [the study of] Torah together, as it says, "In this vein have those who revere the Lord been talking to one another . . . and a scroll of remembrance has been written at his behest concerning those who revere the Lord and esteem his name" (Mal 3:15). [The expressions "those who revere" and "those who esteem" לִירְאֵי וְלִחוֹשְׁבֵי] are numerically equal to the 613 commandments.<sup>47</sup>

More explicit references to the identification of Torah and the name are to be found in Eleazar's writings. Thus, for example, in his *Sefer ha-Shem*, the text that deals with different interpretations of the divine names and which is, consequently, the most esoteric writing in the pietistic library, Eleazar writes: "יְהוָה is numerically equal to twenty-six, for the Torah, which was given after twenty-six generations,<sup>48</sup> is dependent upon the great name."<sup>49</sup> In a second passage from this work the Tetragrammaton, which when spelled out in full numerically equals forty-five (יִרְדִּי הִיא וְאִי הִיא), is connected with both the forty-five righteous ones upon whom the *Shekhinah* dwells and with the Torah which is said to be divided into forty-five.<sup>50</sup> The latter idea involves both a complicated numerical sequence which I will not discuss here, and a simpler computation, namely, the Torah comprises five books and was given to Moses in the course of forty days.<sup>51</sup> The same tradition figures in yet another passage from *Sefer ha-Shem* wherein the correspondence of the Torah and the name is given a decidedly mystical valence:

The four letters יהוּא:<sup>52</sup> [the letters יְהוּ] numerically equal 21, and when one considers the pronunciation with an א the sum is

<sup>47</sup> *Sefer Hasidim*, §780.

<sup>48</sup> For references to this idea in rabbinic literature, see Ginzberg, *Legends* 6:30, n. 177.

<sup>49</sup> MS British Museum 737, fol. 173a; MS Munich 43, fol. 223b.

<sup>50</sup> MS British Museum 737, fol. 181b.

<sup>51</sup> For references, cf. Ginzberg, *Legends* 6:49, n. 255, and 6:51, n. 264.

<sup>52</sup> This form may have been suggested by Qoh 11:3; cf. M. Reisel, *The Mysterious Name of Y.H.W.H.* (Assen, 1957), pp. 39–41, 60–61, and other references given on p. 104, n. 206. It should be noted that these four letters were considered by various medieval writers to constitute one of the forms of the Tetragrammaton, indeed the

22, corresponding to the 22 letters of Torah. This indicates that [with respect to] the one who studies Torah it is as if he mentioned the name (הלומד תורה כאלו מזכיר השם).<sup>53</sup>

To appreciate what is contained in the epigrammatic formulation which concludes the above citation, הלומד תורה כאלו מזכיר השם, it is necessary to point out that the expressions *le-hazkir ha-shem*, or *hazkarat ha-shem*, are employed in the writings of Eleazar in a technical sense, following the usage in rabbinic sources and several *Hekhalot* compositions, especially the unit published by Scholem, *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, and the *Merkavah Rabbah*, both of which exerted an important influence on Ḥaside Ashkenaz. To mention the name is to utter the Tetragrammaton (or perhaps another one of God's names) in some mystical or theurgical context. More importantly, Eleazar considered *hazkarat ha-shem* to be part of the esoteric transmission of the name which required a specific ceremony involving various rituals and techniques. Thus, in one place in *Sefer ha-Shem* he says, "The one who studies the name (הלומד מן השם) must wear nice clothing, for the name is not mentioned (אין מזכירין את השם) except by one who wears nice clothing."<sup>54</sup> It can be shown, moreover, from a comparison of the description of the ceremony required for transmission of the name

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hidden name of God. In thirteenth-century mystical literature this tradition especially informed the *Hug ha-'Iyyun* as well as Abraham Abulafia. Cf. G. Scholem, "Šeridim Ḥadashim mi-Kitve R. 'Azri'el mi-Geronah," *Sefer Zikaron le-Šasher Gulak weli-Shemu'el Klein* (Jerusalem, 1942), p. 219, n. 2; idem, *Origins*, p. 315, nn. 238–239, and p. 337; M. Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia* (Albany, 1988), pp. 18, 22, 31 (and see especially Abulafia's *Sefer Ḥayye ha-'Olam ha-Ba'*, MS Oxford 1582, fol. 47a). A possible polemic against this view in the writings of the Provençal kabbalist R. Isaac the Blind has been noted by H. Pedaya, "'Flaw' and 'Correction' in the Concept of the Godhead in the Teachings of Rabbi Isaac the Blind" [Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6 (1987): 182. On the tradition regarding the four vowel letters, אהר"י functioning as a divine name, cf. Abraham ibn Ezra, *Sefer Šaḥot* (Fürth, 1827), 4b, 47b; idem, *Sefer ha-Shem*, ed. G. H. Lippmann (Fürth, 1834), 6b–7a; idem, *Perush ha-Torah* on Exod 3:15, ed. A. Weiser (Jerusalem, 1977), 2:27; Judah Halevi, *Sefer ha-Kuzari*, IV, 3 (ed. Even-Shemuel [Tel-Aviv, 1972], p. 157). For a mystical treatment of this tradition, which may reflect some ashkenazi influence as well, cf. R. Asher ben David, *Perush Shem ha-Meforash*, ed. M. Hasidah, *Ha-Segullah*, 2 (1934): 3.

<sup>53</sup> MS British Museum 737, fol. 190b.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 172a. Cf. *Ešer Hawwayot*, MS Paris 825, fols. 193a, 199b.

which begins *Sefer ha-Shem*<sup>55</sup> and the parallel description of the ceremony required for transmission of knowledge concerning the chariot found in Eleazar's *Perush ha-Merkavah*,<sup>56</sup> that for Eleazar study of the *merkavah* is identical with knowledge of the name.<sup>57</sup> In the relevant passage from the latter work Eleazar links together the one who is occupied with the chariot or the glorious name, הַעוֹסֵק בְּמִרְכָּבָה אוֹ בְּשֵׁם הַנִּכְבֵּד.<sup>58</sup> It is thus evident that mentioning the name provides the occasion for a contemplative vision of the name which is comparable to, indeed identical with, a vision of the luminous glory.

Any number of texts could be cited to prove the point, but it will suffice here to recall one idea repeated on various occasions in the writings of the Pietists: mentioning the divine name had the theurgical impact of creating a luminous garment for the glory, made up of the four letters of the divine name. I will cite one representative text from Eleazar's commentary on the liturgy:

When Israel blesses the name of his glory, the glory is increased.<sup>59</sup> . . . It is written, "Your glorious name" (1 Chron 29:13), for [the name] is clothed and glorified in splendor. [The expression] "Your glorious name" [לְשֵׁם תְּפָאֲרֶתךָ] is numerically

<sup>55</sup> MS British Museum 737, fols. 165b–166a.

<sup>56</sup> MS Paris 850, fols. 165b–166a. Cf. Dan, *The Esoteric Theology*, pp. 74–76; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, p. 136.

<sup>57</sup> The association of the chariot vision and knowledge of the name is found in ancient Jewish mystical sources as well as in gaonic literature. Cf. Idel, *The Mystical Experience*, pp. 14–17; idem, *Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia* (Albany, 1989), pp. 49–53. This association is also well attested in northern French authors who may have influenced the German Pietists; see Pedaya, "Correction' and 'Flaw,'" pp. 157–158.

<sup>58</sup> MS Paris 850, fol. 59a.

<sup>59</sup> This formulation (כְּבוֹד מִתְרַבֵּה) occurs several times in Eleazar's writings. Cf. *Sode Razayya*<sup>2</sup>, ed. I. Kamelhar (Bilgoraj, 1936), p. 41; *Perush ha-Tefillot*, MS Paris 772, fol. 38b (הַדָּר הַכְּבוֹד מִתְרַבֵּה), 39a (הַכְּבוֹד וְהַמְלִיכּוֹת מִתְרַבֵּה); MS Oxford 1204, fols. 11b, 112b; *Perush ha-Merkavah*, MS Paris 850, fol. 122a (הַכְּבוֹד וְהוֹדָה מִתְרַבֵּה). Cf. Judah ben Barzillai, *Perush Sefer Yeşirah*, ed. S. J. Halberstam (Berlin, 1885), p. 37, where the expression הַמְרוֹבָה הַכְּבוֹד occurs. See also *NumR* 14.22. See also the *yoşer* for Rosh ha-Shanah in the *Liturgical Poems of R. Shim'on bar Yişhâq* [Hebrew], ed. A. M. Haberman (Berlin-Jerusalem, 1938), p. 48, where those who observe the commandments are said to increase God's glory, לְהַרְבִּיב כְּבוֹדךָ (cf. E. D. Goldschmidt, *Maḥzor la-Yamim ha-Nora'im*, vol. 1: Rosh ha-Shanah [Jerusalem, 1970], p. 47).



equivalent to the four letters [ארבעה אותיות]<sup>60</sup> which is the Tetragrammaton [יהוה]. When Israel mentioned the name in the Temple “his glory filled the whole world, amen and amen” (Ps 72:19).<sup>61</sup>

A careful examination of the two passages referred to above, which describe respectively the rituals connected to the transmission of the name and the study of the chariot, indicates that Eleazar's conception of the divine name is based heavily on some of the *Hekhalot* compositions, specifically *Hekhalot Zutarti* and *Ma'aseh Merkavah*. An outstanding feature in the case of both of these textual units is the emphasis placed on the divine name as the concentration of power as well as the focus of mystical vision.<sup>62</sup> The liturgical formula proposed by Eleazar concerning the different aspects of the name is reminiscent of passages found in the aforementioned *Hekhalot* texts. Indeed, one of the expressions used by Eleazar in both contexts, “You are one and your name is one” (אתה אחד ושמןך אחד) is found verbatim in *Ma'aseh Merkavah*.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, it is evident from other passages in his own writings that Eleazar assigns a theurgical significance to the knowledge of the name, a motif that is prevalent in *Hekhalot Zutarti* and to an extent in *Ma'aseh Merkavah*. It follows that, insofar as the name represents the power of God, indeed in a sense is interchangeable with the glory, the one who acquires knowledge of the name is imbued

<sup>60</sup> In fact, the numerical equivalence is between תפארתך and ארבעה אותיות, both equal 1101.

<sup>61</sup> MS Paris 772, fol. 110a. Cf. *ibid.*, fol. 50b; *Ešer Hawwayot*, MS Paris 825, fol. 197a. See also MS Oxford 1638, fol. 51b and parallel in *Sefer ha-Shem*, MS British Museum 737, fol. 169a; MS JTS 2430, fol. 67a; *Arugat ha-Bosem*, ed. Urbach, 2:154. I have discussed these texts at length in a chapter on the German Pietists included in a forthcoming monograph on visionary experience in medieval Jewish mysticism.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. P. Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen, 1981), §§337, 347, 351, 362–363, 548, 588. On the names of God in *Hekhalot* literature, see K. E. Grözinger, “The Names of God and the Celestial Powers: Their Function and Meaning in the Hekhalot Literature,” *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 6 (1987): 53–69 (English section); Elior, “The Concept of God,” pp. 20–24 (English translation, pp. 103–105); *idem*, “Hekhalot Zutarti,” *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought*, Supplement 1 (1982): 5.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Schäfer, *Synopse*, §589. The formulation is based on Zech 14:9. The influence of another passage in *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, *Synopse* §586 is discernible in Eleazar's *Sefer ha-Shem*, MS British Museum 737, fol. 199b: והקב"ה הוא שמן ושמן הוא.

with the power to perform magical acts and adjurations. The emphasis on the need to conceal the name resonates with a distinctive element of *Hekhalot Zutarti*, namely, knowledge of the name is treated as esoteric lore that cannot be readily disseminated.<sup>64</sup>

Finally, as will be discussed more fully below, in Eleazar's writings it is evident that the name is depicted as a fiery or luminous substance, a conception which is particularly striking in *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, where the name assumes hypostatic dimensions.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, in at least one passage from that textual unit the divine name is characterized as being "kindled in burning fire," **חצור באש** **להבה**,<sup>66</sup> terms that echo the verse, "the voice of the Lord kindles flames of fire," **קול יהוה חצב להבות אש** (Ps 29:7). One may detect from the two relevant texts of Eleazar mentioned above that he too identified the voice of God described in Ps 29 as the name of God, an identification which allowed for the liturgical use of that very psalm in the techniques required for transmission of the name and/or the secret of the chariot.

With this background information we can now return to Eleazar's comment in *Sefer ha-Shem* that the one who studies Torah is as one who mentions the name, **הלומד תורה כאלו מזכיר השם**. This is not the appropriate place for a lengthy discussion on the expression, **כאלו**, but inasmuch as it is a critical part of this statement I shall briefly comment on its usage. It is clear from a perusal of many tannaitic and amoraic sources in both halakhic and aggadic contexts that the meaning of this term is "it has the effect of," i.e., the expressions on either side of the qualifier are semantically equivalent. Thus, to do X has the effect of Y. In the case of Eleazar's comment: to study Torah has the effect of mentioning the name.<sup>67</sup> And what effect does the mentioning of God's name have according to Eleazar? As I have noted above, mentioning the name

<sup>64</sup> Cf. *Synopse*, §§335, 337.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, §§548, 568, 589–590, 592, 596.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, §549 (according to MSS JTS 8128 and Oxford 1531).

<sup>67</sup> In a response to my oral presentation of this paper at the Sorbonne in Paris, Prof. Roland Goetschel observed that there may be an implicit critique in Eleazar's formulation, "The one who studies Torah is as one who mentions the name," of the view suggested by the Sar-Torah section of the *Hekhalot Rabbati*, to the effect that by mentioning the proper names one gains knowledge of the Torah (see above, n. 18). This is a useful comment that merits a more careful investigation.

results in the vision of the luminous form of the glory. Study of Torah, therefore, is viewed by Eleazar as an occasion for mystical illumination. The point is made as well in another passage in *Sefer ha-Shem*: “The glorious name is with those occupied [in the study of] Torah, and it illumines their eyes.”<sup>68</sup> To be sure, Eleazar’s idea draws upon much earlier sources, both biblical and rabbinic, which describe the luminous nature of Torah. Even more to the point are the many passages in talmudic and midrashic texts which connect Torah study and the visible manifestation of the *Shekhinah*.<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, it seems to me that there is a more technical mystical connotation in Eleazar’s words: the Torah is identical with the name, and the name with the glory.<sup>70</sup> Thus, study of Torah has the effect of mentioning the name which eventuates in the visible presence of the glory.

That Torah study provides the occasion for the visible manifestation of the glory or Presence is a point made in several passages in the pietistic writings. Thus, for example, in *Sefer Ḥasidim* reference is made to a fellowship (חברים) of Pietists who “study together before the glory, as it is written, ‘Let the pious exult in glory’ (Ps 149:5).”<sup>71</sup> According to a second passage in this work, “Whoever is occupied [with Torah study] out of love sits in the shade of the Presence and derives pleasure from the splendor of the glory.”<sup>72</sup> In my view, these statements are not simply a rhetorical reworking of the standard rabbinic conception that those occupied

<sup>68</sup> MS British Museum 737, fol. 178a.

<sup>69</sup> See, e.g., mAvot 3.2, 3.6; bBer 6a; bSanh 39b; Targum to Ps 82:1; *Midrash Tehillim* on Ps 105:1, ed. S. Buber, 224b; *DeutR* 7.2.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Eleazar’s *Perush ha-Tefillot*, MS Paris 772, fol. 84a: “The light of His countenance’ corresponds to the Torah, Prophets, and Writings, and it is written, ‘and the teaching (תורה) is a light’ (Prov 6:23).” Although Eleazar does not here equate the Torah (in the extended sense of Scripture) with either the glory or the name, it seems to me that implied in this passage is a hypostatic characterization of Torah which is identified with the light of the divine countenance. See *ibid.*, fol. 64a: “[The hymn] אל ברוך is based on the alphabet, for in it are [found the words] מאורות נתן, and the lights (מאורות) are compared to the Torah, as it is written, ‘He placed in them a tent for the sun . . . nothing escapes his heat. The teaching of the Lord (תורה יהיה) is perfect’ (Ps 19:5–8). The Pentateuch [corresponds to] the five [occurrences of the word] ‘light’ in [the first chapter of] Genesis.” See also the tradition cited by Urbach in his edition of *Arugat ha-Bošem*, 2:155, n. 2, and 3:34–35. See also *Sefer Pa’aneah Raza*<sup>2</sup>, 6b.

<sup>71</sup> *Sefer Ḥasidim*, §1052.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, §753.

in the study of Torah are before the divine Presence, but refers rather to a technical appearance of the glory induced by the study of Torah. Such an interpretation is suggested by more explicit claims found in Eleazar's works. For example, in one passage in his *Sha'are ha-Sod ha-Yihud we-ha-<sup>2</sup>Emunah*, Eleazar discusses the necessity to select a fixed place for prayer where the Creator will make his glory visible. In the context of that discussion he notes: "In the place that [Torah] is studied, it is good for prayer, as it is written, 'in every place where I cause my name to be mentioned, I will come to you and bless you' (Exod 20:21)."<sup>73</sup> The proof-text is unintelligible unless one assumes an identification of the name and the Torah, on the one hand, and the Torah and the visible glory, on the other.

That study of Torah results in some sort of ecstatic visionary experience, expressed as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, is explicitly affirmed in a passage from Eleazar's *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*, where he sets out to explain how Abraham and David gained knowledge of events that occurred in the celestial court:

All day they would study the Torah of the Lord, and they would praise and glorify the Holy One, blessed be He, with songs and hymns, to raise the voice in joy. As a result He emanated from the voice of His word and His good sense,<sup>74</sup> and sent the Holy Spirit within him, and his heart is joyous and filled with the love of the Holy One, blessed be He. His soul is bound to the joy, and he reveals to him the secrets and innovations from above.<sup>75</sup>

Here Torah study is joined together with prayer, or more specifically, the act of uttering praises and hymns, as a means to cause the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, a process which is connected as well with the disclosure of secrets and hidden knowledge.

#### D. Torah as the Divine Glory

It is appropriate at this point to examine in greater depth the identification of Torah and the glory. This identification will provide us

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<sup>73</sup> J. Dan, "The Book *Sha'are ha-Sod ha-Yihud we-ha-<sup>2</sup>Emunah* of R. Eleazar of Worms" [Hebrew], in *Temirin*, ed. I. Weinstock (Jerusalem, 1972), 1:155.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Ps 119:66.

<sup>75</sup> *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*, chap. 7, p. 21. This source was drawn to my attention by my student, Joel Hecker.

with yet another conceptual component that serves as the background for the mystical valorization of Torah study in the religious outlook of the German Pietists.

As I mentioned above, in various classical rabbinic sources (including the Mishnah) a connection is made between Torah study and the visible appearance of the *Shekhinah*.<sup>76</sup> In most of these cases there is no suggestion that the Torah should be identified ontologically with the *Shekhinah*, yet in some sources the language is vague enough so that one could readily see how subsequent authors interpreted the texts in precisely this way. Thus, for example, in *SongR* 8.11 one finds the following view of R. Joshua ben Levi, cited by R. Shim<sup>c</sup>on: "In every place that the Holy One, blessed be he, placed his Torah, he placed his *Shekhinah*." In an oft-cited passage from *Midrash Tanhuma* the Torah is compared to a king's daughter (one of several very common images used in rabbinic literature to describe the Torah in female characteristics)<sup>77</sup> set within seven palaces. The king reportedly says, "Whoever enters against my daughter, it is as if he enters against me." The meaning of the parable is explained immediately in the continuation of the text: "The Holy One, blessed be he, says: If a man desecrates my daughter, it is as if he desecrates me; if a person enters the synagogue and desecrates my Torah, it is as if he rose and desecrated my glory."<sup>78</sup> As I have noted elsewhere,<sup>79</sup> the possible dependence of this statement on ancient Jewish mystical speculation is suggested by the fact that the Torah is compared parabolically to a princess hidden behind seven *hekhlot* (palaces). More importantly, a link is made between the Torah and the divine glory, so that the former hidden within the ark in the Synagogue is compared to the latter which is said to be located in the ark of the covenant which was kept in the Holy of Holies in the Temple. The parallel between the throne of glory, the dwelling of the Presence in between the cherubim on the ark of the covenant, and the scrolls

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<sup>76</sup> See above, n. 69.

<sup>77</sup> I have studied the development of this motif in midrashic and kabbalistic sources in detail in "Female Imaging of the Torah: From Literary Metaphor to Religious Symbol," in *From Ancient Israel to Modern Judaism, Intellect in Quest of Understanding: Essays in Honor of Marvin Fox*, ed. J. Neusner, E. S. Frerichs, and N. M. Sarna (Atlanta, 1989), 4:271–307.

<sup>78</sup> *Tanhuma*, Pequde 4.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Wolfson, "Female Imaging," pp. 279–280.

kept in the Torah shrine is an ancient one in Jewish sources, expressing itself in a particular way in early Jewish mysticism.<sup>80</sup>

It is evident that such sources influenced the formulation of subsequent mediæval authorities who explicitly identify Torah and the glory or Presence, a motif that was particularly important in both pietistic and kabbalistic speculation. One interesting example that may reflect an early attestation in mediæval Jewish sources to the identification of the Presence and the Torah, or Wisdom, is found in the following comment of Sherira ben Ḥanina Gaon (ca. 906–1006), elaborating on the statement attributed to R. Isaac in bSoṭ 11a which applied Exod 2:4, “And his sister stationed herself at a distance, to learn what would befall him,” to the divine Presence:

Know that the Presence (שכינה) is [found] with the students [of Torah], and a light dwells among them; that light is called Presence . . . and Wisdom itself is one of the Presences (שכינות), and thus it is written, “The Lord created me at the beginning of his course . . . ” (Prov 8:22). “I was with him as a confidant” (Prov 8:30). Regarding each verse it says the [name of the] Lord, which is one of the Presences, and she is called a sister to the sages, and consequently she is a sister of Moses standing from a distance.<sup>81</sup>

Wisdom is thus identified by Sherira as the Presence, or to be more precise, one of the Presences (שכינות), a usage that is found as well in one of the responsa of Sherira’s son, Hai Gaon. The expression occurs in the context of Hai’s discussion of various esoteric works of a magical or mystical nature: “We have heard strong rumors [to the effect] that some people who have been occupied with these [books] immediately perished, and all of this is on account of the holiness of the [divine] name, and the holiness of the Presences (שכינות) and the angels which surround them, and the holiness of the chariot.”<sup>82</sup> It thus follows from Hai’s comment

<sup>80</sup> Cf. G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York, 1965), pp. 20, n. 1, 24–25; E. R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York, 1954), 4:115–116, 130–136; P. Prigent, *Le Judaïsme et l’image* (Tübingen, 1990), pp. 55–59.

<sup>81</sup> *Ṣṣar ha-Ge’onim*, ed. B. M. Lewin, vol. 11: Tractates Nedarim, Nazir, and Soṭah (Jerusalem, 1942), p. 235.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 4: Tractates Yom-Ṭov, Ḥagigah, and Mashqin (Jerusalem, 1931), p. 21 (Ḥagigah).

that the term שכינות in these gaonic texts denotes a multiplicity of powers in the divine realm, the exact nature of which is not fully articulated. Returning to the case of Sherira: while the further identification of the Presence and the Torah is not stated explicitly, it is implied by the fact that Wisdom in standard rabbinic thinking is identical with the Torah. The verses cited in the above passage are often applied by the sages to the primordial Torah. It is likely, therefore, that this is the underlying mystical intent of the opening statement which clearly draws upon older sources to the effect that the light, which is the *Shekhinah*, dwells with those who study the Torah, i.e., the light itself is the divine Wisdom which is the Torah in some hypostatic sense.

In this context I would like to mention a twelfth-century author whose influence on Ḥaside Ashkenaz has been noted in the scholarly literature,<sup>83</sup> Judah ben Barzillai of Barcelona. A close study of his major speculative work, the commentary on *Sefer Yeṣirah*, has led me to the conclusion that in some passages he moves in the direction of a decidedly mystical conception regarding the Torah as the embodiment of the *Shekhinah*. This is particularly evident in Judah's exegesis of the talmudic passage interpreting the verse, "In that day there shall be neither sunlight nor cold moonlight" (Zech 14:6): "What is [the meaning of] 'sunlight and cold moonlight' (אור יקר וקפאון)? R. Eleazar said: The light that is heavy (יקר) in this world shall be light (קפוי) in the world to come."<sup>84</sup> Judah cites two contemporary interpretations of R. Eleazar's explanation. The first one, found in Ḥananel ben Ḥushiel's talmudic commentary, identifies the light of which R. Eleazar spoke as a reference to the Torah, while the second opinion maintains that the light is the *Shekhinah* disclosed to the prophets. From his own vantage point Judah combines the two interpretations, "For the reward of the light of Torah is a vision of the splendor of the Presence (ראיית הוד השכינה) . . . the one occupied with [the study of] Torah and who meditates upon it merits to see the light of the *Shekhinah*."<sup>85</sup> Judah thus combines the two interpretations, for the light of Torah, also equated with Wisdom or the Holy Spirit (רוח הקודש),<sup>86</sup> is

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Dan, *The Esoteric Theology*, pp. 18, 29.

<sup>84</sup> bPes 50a.

<sup>85</sup> *Perush Sefer Yeṣirah*, ed. Halberstam, p. 25; cf. p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 67, 72, 75, 83, 92, 96.

the light of the *Shekhinah* that is manifest in prophetic visions; consequently, those who study Torah are accorded a vision of the splendor of the *Shekhinah*, the same terminology which he employs to characterize prophetic vision. Interestingly, in another context, one of the reasons Judah gives to explain the fact that God manifested his glory to Israel at Sinai in the specific form of fire is that those who study the Torah merit the light of the *Shekhinah* which is characterized as “fire consuming fire.”<sup>87</sup>

The most interesting evidence for a mystical conception of Torah is found in Judah’s interpretation of the talmudic explanation<sup>88</sup> of Zechariah’s vision of the flying scroll (מגלה עפרה) as a vision of the folded Torah scroll:

This vision which Zechariah saw was a visual image and not an actual thing, but it was rather as if the Holy One, blessed be he, gave him power in his eyes and heart to see the measurement of Wisdom, which is the Torah. . . . The Holy One, blessed be he, gave him power to see with his eyes as if he saw with a vision of his eyes and imagined in his heart a scroll 3,200 times greater than the whole world. Thus no human possesses knowledge to conjecture if the Holy One, blessed be he, created the place of the Torah above the seven heavens in this measurement. [The Torah scroll] is an entity that is not [materially] real as is the world, but is rather a form with measurements and dimensions in the manner that [the glory] was shown to Isaiah.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, according to Judah’s interpretation, Zechariah had a contemplative or mental vision of the Torah scroll which assumed enormous proportions. While no explicit mention is made here of the *Shi’ur Qomah*, one is reminded of precisely that tradition, although it is the Torah and not the Demiurge who is being measured.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. bGīt 60a; see also b’Eruv 21a. See Idel, “The Concept of Torah,” p. 43.

<sup>89</sup> *Perush Sefer Yeşirah*, p. 67. It is of interest to note that in *Sefer ha-Roqeah* (p. 109) Eleazar refers to the Torah under the throne of glory as the flying scroll (מגלה עפרה). This would seem to reflect the influence of Judah ben Barzillai. See also the material discussed by Idel, *ibid.*, p. 42, n. 53.

<sup>90</sup> As various scholars have noted, in Eleazar Qallir’s *silluq* for *Sheqalim* the Torah (referred to as the Princess, *bat melekh*) is characterized in terms reminiscent of the *Shi’ur Qomah* measurements. Cf. Idel, *ibid.*, p. 40, n. 49; Wolfson, “Female Imaging,” p. 279.



Moreover, the identification of the Torah and the luminous glory is suggested by the fact that Judah compares Zechariah's vision of the Torah with Isaiah's vision of the glory. This comparison is not meant merely to convey the fact that the means of vision in both cases are identical, but rather to suggest that the object of vision as well is similar in the visions of the two prophets.

The German Pietists appropriated and elaborated upon these traditions as well. Thus, for example, in an anonymous commentary on the seventy names of God, deriving from the Pietists, the identification of Torah and the glory is made explicitly: "the Torah [is] the glory of the Holy One, blessed be he" (הַתּוֹרָה—כְּבוֹדוֹ שֶׁל הַקָּב"ה).<sup>91</sup> In a somewhat more elliptical way, Eleazar refers to a similar tradition in his commentary on the prayers. The relevant context is an explanation of the prayer uttered on Rosh ha-Shanah after each blowing of the shofar, הַיּוֹם הַרַת עוֹלָם הַיּוֹם יַעֲמִיד מִשְׁפָּט:

[This prayer] has thirty-two words corresponding to the thirty-two paths [of wisdom] by means of which the world was created. . . . Therefore the name [i.e., יהוה] is written י"י with three יו"י, which equal thirty, and the crown is like a כ [which equals two];<sup>92</sup> thus there are thirty-two, corresponding to the numerical value of כְּבוֹד (glory). . . . May God have mercy on us through the merit of Torah which begins with the כ of בְּרֵאשִׁית (Gen 1:1) and ends with the ל of לְעֵינֵי כָל יִשְׂרָאֵל (Deut 34:12).<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup> MS Sasson 290, p. 585, cited by Idel, *ibid.*, p. 42, n. 53.

<sup>92</sup> Concerning this scribal tradition and discussion of some of the sources which may have influenced Eleazar's formulation, cf. the note of M. Steinschneider, *MGWJ* 40 (1896): 130–132, and J. Z. Lauterbach, "Substitutes for the Tetragrammaton," *PAAJR* 2 (1930–31): 46, n. 22; 54–55, no. 59–61. For additional sources see the Introduction of B. Lewin to his edition of the *Ḥiggetet R. Sherira Ga'on* (Haifa, 1929), pp. xxxi–xxxii. On Eleazar's designation of the *bet* as a crown, see Steinschneider, pp. 130–132 and Lauterbach, p. 61, n. 44. The tradition of writing the Tetragrammaton with three *yods* was appropriated and reinterpreted by Provençal and Spanish kabbalists as well. See, e.g., R. Isaac ben Jacob ha-Kohen's *Perush Mirkevet Yehezqel*, published by G. Scholem, "An Inquiry in the Kabbala of R. Isaac ben Jacob Hakohen" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 2 (1931): 194, and further references provided on p. 204, n. 8. See also M. Idel, "The Sefirot above the Sefirot" [Hebrew] *Tarbiz* 51 (1982): 245–246; *idem*, "Kabbalistic Material from the School of David ben Judah he-Ḥasid" [Hebrew], *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 2 (1983): 176, n. 26.

<sup>93</sup> MS Paris 772, fol. 163b.

The chain of images is reiterated by Eleazar in a second passage related to the opening words of the three verses of the Priestly Blessing in Num 6:24–26:<sup>94</sup>

יִשָּׂא [comprise] יוֹדִין יִבְרַךְ יָאֵר יִשָּׂא [comprise] three יוֹדִין which correspond to the ten *sefirot*, the ten *ma<sup>2</sup>amarot* [i.e., the ten sayings through which the world was created],<sup>95</sup> and the ten *dibberot* [the ten commandments]. Therefore there are three יוֹדִין in the name יִי [i.e., the name can be represented as such] and the כ surrounding [them]. Thus there is [a sum of] thirty-two [לכ] which corresponds to the thirty-two paths by which the world was created.<sup>96</sup> Thus [the Torah] begins with the כ of בְּרֵאשִׁית (Gen 1:1) and ends with the ל of לְעֵינֵי כָל יִשְׂרָאֵל (Deut 34:12).<sup>97</sup>

Eleazar thus draws upon the correspondence between the thirty-two paths of wisdom through which the world was created, an idea first articulated in *Sefer Yeşirah*, the glory (*kavod* whose numerical value is 32), and the Torah which begins with the letter *bet* and ends with the letter *lamed*, whose sum is 32). This is represented orthographically as well through the scribal tradition of marking the Tetragrammaton by three *yods*, which equal 30, and a half-circle extending from the last *yod* over all three, which is designated as the crown and is compared to a *bet* whose numerical value is 2.

In a parallel to this text in *Sefer ha-Shem* the ontic identification of the Torah and the glory is rendered even more explicitly:

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Tobiah ben Eliezer, *Midrash Leqah Tov*, ed. S. Buber (Wilna, 1884), p. 185. A similar linkage of the three *yods* of the name and Num 6:24–26 is found in a passage of Menahem ben Solomon's *Midrash Šekhel Tov*, cited in the *Sefer Ḥassufot* of R. Eliezer ben Joel Halevi (Rabiah); cf. *Midrash Šekhel Tov*, ed. S. Buber (New York, 1959), Introduction, p. xxxix, and Lauterbach, "Substitutes for the Tetragrammaton," pp. 60–61.

<sup>95</sup> mAvot 5.1.

<sup>96</sup> Eleazar briefly alludes to this tradition in *Sefer ha-Roqeah*, *Hilkhot Berakhot*, p. 207: לִכְךָ אֲנִי כוֹתְבִין הַשֵּׁם בְּג' יוֹדִין יִי יִבְרַךְ יָאֵר יִשָּׂא. Cf. the passage in the *Sefer Ḥassufot* of Rabiah, published by M. Gaster in the *Report of the Judith Montefiore College* (London, 1893), pp. 61–62, cited by Steinschneider (n. 92 above), p. 131, and Lauterbach, "Substitutes for the Tetragrammaton," p. 60.

<sup>97</sup> MS Paris 772, fol. 84b. Cf. *Sefer ha-Shem*, MS British Museum 737, fol. 203b. Concerning the tradition of writing the name with three *yods* together with a *bet*, thereby attaining the sum of thirty-two, cf. *Perush ha-Qaddish* in MS Paris 850, fols. 14b–15a. On the tradition regarding thirty levels of kingship (מַלְכוּת) related to the Torah, see *Arugat ha-Bošem*, ed. Urbach, 2:155.

In [the first word of the verses Exod 14:19–21] **ויסע ויבא ויט** there are three *yods* in one name [i.e., the seventy-two letter name<sup>98</sup>]. Therefore the name [יהוה] must be written with three *yods*, **ייי**, and the crown is like a *bet*. Thus there are thirty-two [three *yods* = 30 + *bet* = 2], to inform us that [God] created the world by means of thirty-two paths. Thus the Torah begins with **בראשית** and ends with **ישראל**. Thus there is thirty-two (לב) which is the numerical value of **כבוד** (glory). There is no glory but the Torah (**אינן כבוד אלא תורה**).<sup>99</sup>

The final statement is derived from earlier sources, e.g., the comment in mAvot 6.3, where it signifies that honor must be paid to the scholar. It is evident that Eleazar has theosophically recast the rabbinic saying such that the Torah itself is identified as the very glory of God. The Torah in its entirety comprises the *kavod*, and this is symbolized by the fact that the first and last letters of the Pentateuch are respectively *bet* and *lamed*, which equal thirty-two, the same numerical value of the word *kavod* (glory).

Given the correlation of the Torah and the name, on the one hand, and the name and the glory, on the other, it follows that Torah is to be correlated with the glory. In a passage from the pietistic work *Sefer Tagi*, the different viewpoints are brought together: “Three things require water: the explicit name, i.e., the Tetragrammaton, is not transmitted except over water.<sup>100</sup> . . . A

<sup>98</sup> According to one widespread tradition in medieval Jewish literature, the 72-letter name of God is derived from Exod 14:19–21, for each verse consists of 72 letters. Hence the 72-letter name actually comprises 216 letters divided into 72 groups of three. The connection of the tradition of writing the name with three *yods* and the 72-letter name of God seems to be implied in the reference to a kabbalist in Menahem Šiyoni’s commentary on Num 6:24; cf. *Sefer Šiyoni* (Lemberg, 1822), 60d, cited by Steinschneider (n. 92 above), p. 131.

<sup>99</sup> MS British Museum 737, fol. 203a. Cf. *ibid.*, fols. 205b–206a: “ייי, three *yods* and the *bet* on their back, which is its crown. Thus there are thirty-two. Therefore the *Sefer Yeširah* begins [with a reference to the] thirty-two paths [of wisdom] . . . Why thirty-two? For the Torah begins with **ב** and ends with **ל**. To teach you that everything is alluded to in the Torah, but it is hidden from people, and the secrets of Torah were not transmitted except to those who fear Him.” See also *Pa‘aneah Raza*<sup>2</sup>, 4b, and the statement of Baḥya cited below, n. 121.

<sup>100</sup> This formulation is reported in the name of the mystics (literally, sages of the truth, **חכמי האמת**) by Baḥya ben Asher, *Commentary on the Torah*, Lev 16:30, ed. Chavel (Jerusalem, 1981), 2:505: “It is a tradition of the mystics that the name is not transmitted except over water, as it says, ‘The voice of the Lord over the waters’

king is not anointed except over water. One studies Torah over water. Therefore [the glory] is made visible to the prophets over water.”<sup>101</sup> The textual bases for this comment are a passage in *QohR* 3.15 that explicitly states that the divine name is only transmitted in a pure place and over water<sup>102</sup> and a passage in bHor 12a, which mentions the law concerning the anointing of a king by water,<sup>103</sup> as well as a tradition relating that R. Mesharsheya would advise his sons to recite their learning by a stream so that they would be prolonged as the continual flow of running water.<sup>104</sup> The only way to understand this is by reference to the mystical idea that I have been discussing: Torah should be studied by water, for the esoteric dimension of Torah is the divine name which is, at the

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(Ps 29:3).” As we have seen, this verse is also interpreted by Eleazar as a reference to the divine name. Cf. Scholem (*On the Kabbalah*, p. 136, n. 1) who already suggested that Eleazar was the probable source for Bahya. The text that I have cited, however, contains the exact phrase cited by Bahya.

<sup>101</sup> MS Oxford 1566, fol. 233a. On water as the appropriate medium for visual experience in the writings of the German Pietists, cf. M. Idel, “On the Transmission of an Ancient Technique of Prophetic Vision in the Middle Ages” [Hebrew], *Sinai* 86 (1979): 1–7. Finally, it should be recalled that Eleazar reports in both his *Perush ha-Merkavah* (MS Paris 850, fols. 58a–58b) and *Sefer ha-Shem* (MS British Museum 737, fols. 165b–166a) an elaborate ceremony for transmission of the divine name and the esoteric gnosis of the chariot which involves a body of water. Cf. Dan, *The Esoteric Theology*, pp. 74–76; Scholem, *On the Kabbalah*, p. 136.

<sup>102</sup> This midrashic passage as a possible source for the German Pietistic practice of transmitting the name was already noted by Dan, *The Esoteric Theology*, p. 75, n. 10.

<sup>103</sup> The biblical precedent for this law is 1 Kings 1:32ff. See tSanh 4.10; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Kele ha-Miqdash 1.11; Melakhim 1.11; R. Pattai, *Water: Research into the Knowledge of the Palestinian Land and Folklore in the Biblical and Mishnaic Periods* (Tel-Aviv, 1936; Hebrew), p. 11.

<sup>104</sup> In light of this source Scholem’s remarks in *On the Kabbalah*, p. 137, that the magical significance of water as an appropriate medium for initiation (as described in *Sefer ha-Malbush* and *Sefer ha-Shem*) does not occur in talmudic literature or any other Jewish traditions, should be slightly modified. On the *topos* of the Torah as a body of water and the transformative power of Torah study to turn the sage into a fountain or spring, see M. Fishbane, “The Well of Living Water: A Biblical Motif and Its Ancient Transformations,” in *Sh<sup>c</sup>arei Talmon: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, ed. M. Fishbane and E. Tov with assistance of W. W. Fields (Indiana, 1992), pp. 3–16, esp. 14ff. See also the passage from *Sefer ha-Melammed* on the comparison of Torah to water extant in MS Vatican 300, fols. 23a–23b. It is recommended that the text should be studied on the seventh day of Passover which commemorates the splitting of the Red Sea.

same time, the luminous glory that appeared in prophetic vision by a body of water. It is thus no mere coincidence that in the text from *Sefer Tagi* mention is made of both the transmission of the name and the vision of the glory. It should be noted as well that the idea that the glory appears on or near a body of water is based on much older sources including apocalyptic, midrashic, and mystical texts.<sup>105</sup> The Pietists have combined the various traditions, for the name, the glory, and the Torah are identical.

The mystical correlation of the divine name and the glory or the Presence, on the one hand, and the Torah, on the other, is implicit as well in a passage in *Sefer Ḥasidim*. After noting the standard talmudic idea that one should have the *Shekhinah* before oneself when one prays,<sup>106</sup> Judah the Pious comments:

Similarly, the one who reads the Torah on the seventh, second, or fifth day, when he reaches a name [of God], if he can have the intention, he should [cast his] intention toward him. The one who sits in the east should consider in his heart as if the *Shekhinah* were facing west and his face is opposite him.<sup>107</sup>

In the continuation of that passage Judah goes on to say that when the cantor says *Qaddish*, and specifically the opening words, **יְתַגַּדְלֵה רַבְּהָהּ** *רִיתְקֹדֶשׁ שְׁמִיהָ רַבְּהָהּ*, “magnified and sanctified be his great name,” the congregants

should turn toward the Torah scroll, and if he [the cantor] is worthy, he should take hold of the Torah, and the people should direct their hearts toward the Torah. Therefore, [the congregation should] say, “Exalt [the Lord our God] and bow down to his footstool” (Ps 99:5), for the Torah is his footstool. [The expression] **הַדָּרוֹם רַגְלֵיוֹ** [his footstool] is written five times in Scripture corresponding to the Torah scroll which comprises

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Gruenwald, “The Visions of Ezekiel: Critical Edition and Commentary [Hebrew],” *Temirin*, vol. 1, ed. I. Weinstock (Jerusalem, 1973), pp. 112–113.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. bSanh 22a.

<sup>107</sup> *Sefer Ḥasidim*, §1585. The identification of Torah as the glory may also be implied in other sections of this work; see, e.g., §§1638–1639. Perhaps there is some such theosophic notion underlying the statement in §1591 that an elderly righteous person (**הַזֶּקֶן הַצַּדִּיק**) should tie up the Torah scroll before it is returned to the ark. Cf. Marcus, *Piety and Society*, p. 100.

the Pentateuch, and the two staves in the Torah scroll correspond to “his legs are like marble pillars” (Song 5:15).

Underlying the remark that when the cantor recites the *Qaddish*, in which the name of God is sanctified, the congregation should turn to the Torah scroll, is the identification of the Torah and the name. In addition, the Torah is identified as the footstool of God which provides the ideational basis for the ritual of bowing down to the Torah. One can find further evidence for these ideas in Eleazar’s commentary on the liturgy. Thus, in the context of discussing the prayer uttered when the Torah is taken out of the ark, which includes the recitation of Ps 99:5, he notes:

“His footstool” (הדרום רגליו) refers to the Torah and this is [the import] of what R. Shim<sup>c</sup>on [bar Isaac] wrote in the *yoṣer* for Shavu<sup>c</sup>ot [describing the primordial Torah]: “I approached his feet, I dwelt in his shadow.”<sup>108</sup> Thus [the expression] הדרום רגליו occurs five times in Scripture,<sup>109</sup> corresponding to the five [occurrences of] מלך הכבוד<sup>110</sup> (the glorious king).<sup>111</sup>

In a second passage from the same work, Eleazar offers a similar mystical explanation for the *Qaddish*, but in this case the principal focus is on the visualization of the *Shekhinah* in the ark, the place in which the Torah scroll is enshrined: “When [the cantor] says יתגדל he should cast his eyes to the holy ark, for the *Shekhinah* rests in it, as it says, ‘I constantly place the Lord before me’ (Ps 16:8).”<sup>112</sup> A parallel idea is expressed in yet another passage in a commentary on the prayer book deriving from the circle of German Pietists: “Our teacher Eleazar wrote in the name of our teacher R. Judah the Pious: When the cantor begins to say יתגדל

<sup>108</sup> I have discussed this poem by Shim<sup>c</sup>on bar Isaac in my study, “Images of God’s Feet: Some Observations on the Divine Body in Judaism,” in *People of the Book: Jews and Judaism in Embodied Perspective*, ed. H. Eilberg-Schwartz (Albany, 1992), p. 154.

<sup>109</sup> Isa 66:1; Ps 99:5; 132:7; Lam 2:1; 1 Chron 28:2. In a sixth occurrence, Ps 110:1, the reference is not to the Temple or the earth as the locus of the divine Presence.

<sup>110</sup> Ps 24:7, 8, 9, 10 (2x).

<sup>111</sup> MS Paris 772, fol. 135a; see also *Siddur Mal’ah ha-ʿAres De’ah* of R. Naftali Herz Treves (Thiengen, 1560), section on the *yoṣer* of Sabbath, s.v. גדלו ליהודה אתי ונרוממה שמר יחדיו.

<sup>112</sup> MS Paris 772, fol. 62a. Cf. MS Oxford 1097, fol. 17a.

וַיִּתְקַדֶּשׁ, he should intend with all his heart, and cast his eyes upon the holy ark.”<sup>113</sup>

In this connection it is of interest to consider the following tradition reported by Eleazar in *Sefer ha-Roqeah* in the name of Ḥizqiyah, the brother of R. Eliezer ben Nathan of Mainz (ca. 1090–ca. 1170):<sup>114</sup>

When the Torah scroll is returned to its place [in the ark], and when one bows down to it, the verse “Exalt the Lord, our God, [and bow down to his footstool]” (Ps 99:5) is said. In the blessings of the Torah as well we bow down to the glory of the Torah. When we return [the Torah], “Let them praise [the name of the Lord, for his name alone is sublime; his splendor covers heaven and earth]” (Ps 148:13) is said, to indicate that one does not bow down because of the divinity that is in the Torah (אלהות שבתורה), but rather he bows down to the Holy One, blessed be he, for his Presence rests upon it [the Torah], and not because it too is a god, for “his name alone is sublime.”<sup>115</sup>

This tradition rejects the explanation that one bows down to the Torah because it is divine in the normative sense of comprising the words of God or in the mystical sense of being identical with the glory. Rather the reason for bowing down is that the *Shekhinah* itself dwells upon the Torah and is thus located in the ark which contains the scrolls. We may detect in this explanation a polemical statement against the full identification of Torah and the divine glory, a position articulated in pietistic sources, including Eleazar himself. Indeed, the Torah shrine in the thought of Ḥaside Ashkenaz is comparable to either the ark in the Temple or the throne of glory (the correlation of the two is biblical in origin; cf. Jer 17:12). This nexus of symbols is evident in one passage in *Sefer Ḥasidim*

<sup>113</sup> *Siddur of R. Solomon ben Samson of Garmaise, including the Siddur of the Ḥaside Ashkenaz* [Hebrew], ed. M. Hershler (Jerusalem, 1971), p. 76. Cf. MS Oxford 1102, fol. 14b.

<sup>114</sup> See *Sefer ha-Raban*, §73, cited by Urbach in his edition of *Arugat ha-Bošem* (Jerusalem, 1963), 4:52, n. 76.

<sup>115</sup> *Sefer ha-Roqeah*, p. 108. See discussion above, n. 24. Cf. the formulation in *Sefer ha-Roqeah*, p. 109, where Eleazar notes that on Rosh ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur an infant is circumcised after the reading of the Torah “because the Presence is near the Torah, as it is written, ‘I wanted to build a resting place for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, for the footstool of our God’ (1 Chron 28:2).”

where we find the following sequence of ideas: the Sabbath corresponds to the seven heavens, or alternatively, the seven thrones.<sup>116</sup> Thus the throne is mentioned seven times in the Sabbath liturgy, “for in each of the heavens there is a throne, one corresponding to the other.” The numerological equivalence of the seven references to the throne (כסא [= 81], כסאר [= 87], כסא [= 81], כסאך [=101], וכסאר [= 93], כסאר [= 87], כסא [= 81] totals 611, which is the numerical value of the word “Torah.” Having established these correspondences the author of *Sefer Ḥasidim* concludes:

There is no throne without the Torah, and this is [the import of the poem] “At the time before creation he established the Torah and the throne.”<sup>117</sup> Therefore the Torah is read on the Sabbath. And there occurs seven times in Scripture [the expression] “enthroned on the cherubim” (יושב הכרובים).<sup>118</sup> Therefore seven [sections in the Torah] are read, [on the Sabbath], and it is as if the *Shekhinah* were placed on the throne of the cherubim.<sup>119</sup>

The correlation of the Torah and the throne is not to be taken in a merely figurative way. On the contrary, the force of these images is that they function as religious symbols: just as the Presence dwells (ontically and not metaphorically) upon the throne, so it rests upon the Torah scroll encased in the holy ark. The full significance of the symbolic understanding of Torah, and its implicit function as a theurgical means, is made evident in the concluding

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<sup>116</sup> The correlation of heaven and throne is linked exegetically to Isa 66:1, “The heaven is my throne.” On the tradition of the seven thrones corresponding to the seven heavens, cf. *Sode Razayya*<sup>2</sup>, ed. Kamelhar, p. 16; *Perush ha-Tefillot*, MS Paris 772, fol. 123a, where this tradition is cited in the name of a midrash. The idea of a throne located in each of the seven heavens is already found in the apocalyptic text *Ascension of Isaiah*, and has a reflex in the Jewish mystical tract, *Re’uyot Yehezqel*; cf. I Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden, 1980), pp. 59, 137. On the tradition regarding thrones in each of the heavens, see also A. Farber, “The Commentary on Ezekiel’s Chariot by R. Jacob ben Jacob ha-Kohen of Castille,” M.A. thesis, Hebrew University, 1978, pp. 92–93, n. 25; 156–157, n. 19.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. E. D. Goldschmidt, *Maḥzor la-Yamim ha-Nora'im* (Jerusalem, 1970), vol. 2: Yom Kippur, p. 408. As Goldschmidt notes, this poetic image is based on earlier aggadic sources wherein the Torah and throne are listed among the various things created before the world.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. 1 Sam 4:4, 2 Sam 6:2, 2 Kings 19:15, Isa 37:16, Ps 80:2, 99:1, 1 Chron 13:6.

<sup>119</sup> *Sefer Ḥasidim* §637.



statement that by reading the seven sections of Torah on Sabbath it is as if one places the *Shekhinah* upon the throne of cherubim. Again we confront the “as if” construction, a term that lexically empowers the religious imagination with the ability to traverse spatial and temporal boundaries; the reading of Torah has the (theurgical) effect of enthroning the *Shekhinah*. That this is so is based on the fact that the ontic status of the Torah is that of the throne. Above I noted that in both *Sefer Hasidim* and Eleazar’s *Perush ha-Tefillot* one finds the explicit identification of the Torah as the divine footstool. The more specific correlation of the Torah and the throne appears in a pietistic text to which I have also already referred, *Sefer Tagi*: “The Torah and the throne of glory are one pair (זוג אחד), for the tablets were taken from the throne of glory.<sup>120</sup> . . . Just as the *Shekhinah* is upon the throne so it is upon the Torah and upon the ark in which there is the Torah and the tablets. Thus the Torah is his throne.”<sup>121</sup> Eleazar alludes to such a notion as well when he writes that “the Torah is in his throne as it is in the ark.”<sup>122</sup> In one text Eleazar expresses the consubstantiality of the Torah and the throne in an eschatological context:

The fire of the throne serves the supernal ones, and the fire before the throne of glory serves the lower ones; for just as the Torah was given in fire, so the sacrifice is burnt in fire, and before the soul that ascends enters beneath the throne the angel purifies it by the fire that is before the throne . . . and they place it under the throne, and there one sees the secrets and mysteries of Torah. . . . The tablets are from the throne; [the word] לַחַת

<sup>120</sup> Cf. *Tanḥuma*, <sup>c</sup>Egev, 9. For other references to the aggadic motif of the tablets being hewn from the sapphire stone of the throne of glory, see Ginzberg, *Legends* 6:49–50, n. 258 and 59, nn. 305–306.

<sup>121</sup> MS Oxford 1566, fol. 224b. Cf. Eleazar’s *Perush ha-Tefillot*, MS Paris 772, fol. 90b. An influence of Eleazar may be detected in Baḥya ben Asher’s commentary on Exod 31:8, ed. Chavel, p. 327: “The word לַחַת according to the [technique of] שׁוֹב אֵימָת בִּשְׁמַיָּא is כִּסֵּא. Thus the *Shekhinah* dwells upon them as on the throne of glory, and insofar as the tablets were taken from the throne of glory the Torah is called glory, as it says, ‘The wise shall obtain honor’” (Prov 3:35). Baḥya goes on to say that the throne is also the source of the intellectual soul, an idea found in other medieval Jewish writers, e.g. Solomon ibn Gabirol, Abraham ibn Ezra, and Judah Halevi. Cf. *Zohar* 1:126b (*Midrash ha-Ne’elam*). For discussion of the Baḥya source, cf. Idel, *Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics*, pp. 168–169, n. 77.

<sup>122</sup> *Sode Razayya*<sup>2</sup>, ed. Kamelhar, p. 38.

[written in a defective form without a *waw*] through א"ת ב"ש is כסא [throne], for the tablets and the Torah were in the throne.<sup>123</sup>

The point is reiterated in another passage as follows:

The word לחת is written without a *waw*, for through א"ת ב"ש this equals numerically the word כסא, to indicate that they were given from underneath the throne, and the one who fulfills the Torah is placed under the throne, as it says, "The teaching of the Lord (תורת יהוה) is perfect, restoring life" (Ps 19:8) [of the soul] to dwell under the throne of glory, and this is [the meaning of] "the life of my lord will be bound up in the bundle of life" (1 Sam 25:29)."<sup>124</sup>

From these texts we may postulate that the mystical import of the verses from Psalms uttered by the congregants when the Torah is taken out of, and returned to, the ark is that the Torah is identical with the name or the glory that is upon the throne.

Perhaps one of the most important texts which incorporates the identification of Torah and the *Shekhinah* or *kavod* appears in Eleazar's *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*:

And so [בראשית] is ראש בת, for the Presence of the Creator (שכינת הבורא) is called בת (daughter) . . . and she is called the tenth *sefirah* and *malkhut*, for the crown of royalty (כתר מלכות) is upon his head. And [she is also called] יראת שב [i.e., the letters of בראשית] which is the Torah, as it says, "The fear of the Lord is pure" (Ps 19:10).<sup>125</sup>

In this context, then, the *Shekhinah* is identified as the בת, the tenth ספירה, מלכות or כתר מלכות, יראת שב, and תורה. Some of these images, which have a striking resemblance to kabbalistic terminology, appear in the pseudo-Hai commentary on the forty-two letter name

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 19. And cf. the text from *Sefer ha-Kavod* cited in Abraham ben Azriel, *Arugat ha-Bošem*, ed. Urbach (Jerusalem, 1939), 1:161. On the numerical equivalence of א"ת ב"ש and לחת, based on the technique of א"ת ב"ש, in the writings of Abraham Abulafia, cf. Idel, *Language, Torah, and Hermeneutics*, pp. 44–45.

<sup>124</sup> MS Vatican 460, fol. 18a. The correlation of the soul and the throne is drawn explicitly in *Hokhmat ha-Nefesh*, chap. 54. One of the points that Eleazar makes is that insofar as the Torah and the soul share one ontic source in the throne, the soul can be compared to the Torah.

<sup>125</sup> MS Oxford 1568, fol. 25a. See Scholem, *Origins*, pp. 98, 185–186.

of God contained in the first part of *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*.<sup>126</sup> Most notably, the *Shekhinah* is there identified as the tenth kingship (מלכות עשירית) and the daughter of the king (בת מלך). It is possible that the latter reference is to the Torah which is frequently called in midrashic and aggadic texts, as well as in *piyyuṭim* (e.g., the famous *silluq* of Qallir to *parashat Sheqalim*),<sup>127</sup> the *bat melekh*. It is evident that Eleazar himself interpreted the reference in this way, as he explicitly identifies the *Shekhinah*, or *bat*, as the Torah. We may thus conclude that for Eleazar the Torah is the *Shekhinah* which is characterized in decisively feminine terms.<sup>128</sup> That the Torah assumes a feminine character is an ancient motif in Jewish sources, going back ultimately to the feminization of Wisdom.<sup>129</sup> What is novel for the Pietists is the combination of the different streams, aggadic and mystical-magical, such that the Torah is the feminine Presence as well as the divine name. As Asi Farber pointed out, the feminine characterization of Torah in the pietistic literature is another indicator that places the theosophy of Ḥaside Ashkenaz in close proximity to the *Bahir* which likewise identifies the Torah in one of its aspects as a feminine hypostasis.<sup>130</sup>

In conclusion, while the Pietists do not discuss in any systematic way the mystical significance of Torah study, they offer enough allusions to allow us to reconstruct their attitude on this subject. In the final analysis, they combine the aggadic tradition of the Torah as a feminine persona with the esoteric idea expressed in some of the *Hekhalot* texts to the effect that the glory is the name. Insofar as the glory is depicted as the female *Shekhinah*, it follows that Torah is the glory. Moreover, the glory is identical with the

<sup>126</sup> See references above, n. 20.

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Wolfson, "Female Imaging," pp. 278–279.

<sup>128</sup> It is possible that the identification of *Shekhinah* and Torah is implicit in another passage contained in Eleazar's *Sefer ha-Hokhmah*, MS Oxford 1568, fol. 23b, where the *Shekhinah* is described as having seventy aspects corresponding to the numerical value of the word סוד, "mystery," as well as the word רוגה, "the splendor," which has the same characters as הגון, "the color." Cf. MS JTS 1786, fol. 43b; Farber, "The Concept of the Merkabah," p. 410. It is evident that this is an echo of the rabbinic notion that the Torah has seventy aspects alluded to in the word סוד; cf. *NumR* 13.15. See Eleazar's description of Torah in his *Perush ha-Tefillot*, MS 772, fol. 89b.

<sup>129</sup> See my study, "Female Imaging" (above, n. 77). The relevant *bahiric* texts are discussed on pp. 285–291.

<sup>130</sup> Farber, "The Concept of the Merkabah," pp. 236, 242, 609.

Name; hence the Torah is identical with the name. The study of Torah, therefore, may provide an occasion for the visualization of the Name or the luminous glory. This, I surmise, is epitomized in Eleazar's statement, הלומד תורה כאלו מזכיר השם, "The one who studies Torah has the effect of mentioning the name."