

# Introduction

Those secret signatures (*Rischimim*), which God placed in things, are to be sure to the same degree concealments of his revelation as revelation of his concealment. . . . As such, the revelation is one of the name or names of God, which are perhaps the various modi of his active being. The language of God has namely no grammar. It consists only of names.

—Gershom Scholem,  
 “Tradition und Kommentar als  
 religiöse Kategorien im Judentum”

Of the various phases of Jewish mysticism, which up until now only Gershom Scholem has attempted to represent in their entirety,<sup>1</sup> the earliest has enjoyed increased attention by scholars of Jewish studies over the past several years.<sup>2</sup> It is the first “mystical”

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<sup>1</sup>*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 3d ed., New York, 1954; London, 1955 [1941]; a new overall view is being prepared by Joseph Dan.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. G. Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*, 2d ed., New York, 1965 [1960]; J. Maier, *Vom Kultus zur Gnosis*, Salzburg, 1964;

movement tangible within a complete literary system in whose center stands the divine chariot as described by Ezekiel (chapters 1 and 10) and that thus has been termed *Merkavah mysticism*.<sup>3</sup> The type of literature in which we find this mysticism is called *Hekhalot literature*; that is, the literature that deals with the *hekhalot*, the heavenly “palaces” or “halls” through which the mystic passes to reach the divine throne. It is no coincidence that the term *hekhal* is taken from the architecture of the temple, where it is used precisely for the entrance hall to the holiest of holies. Whoever undertakes the dangerous ascent to the divine throne is called the *yored merkavah*, literally one who “descends” to the chariot.<sup>4</sup>

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I. Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, Leiden and Cologne, 1980 [AGAJU 14]; D. J. Halperin, *The Merkavah in Rabbinic Literature*, New Haven, Conn., 1980 [AOS 62]; P. Schäfer (ed.), *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, Tübingen, 1981 [TSAJ 2]; I. Chernus, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism*, Berlin and New York, 1982 [SJ 11]; M. S. Cohen, *The Shi'ur Qomah. Liturgy and Theurgy in Pre-Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism*, Lanham, New York, and London, 1983; P. Schäfer (ed.), *Geniza-Fragmente zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, Tübingen, 1984 [TSAJ 6]; M. S. Cohen, *The Shi'ur Qomah: Texts and Recensions*, Tübingen 1985 [TSAJ 9]; P. S. Alexander, “Appendix: 3 Enoch,” in E. Schürer, G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Goodman, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, vol. 3.1, Edinburgh, 1986, pp. 269ff.; idem, “Incantations and Books of Magic,” in *ibid.*, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, vol. 3.1, pp. 342ff.; P. Schäfer (ed.), *Konkordanz zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, vol. 1, Tübingen, 1986 [TSAJ 12], vol. 2, 1988 [TSAJ 13]; M. Bar-Ilan, *Sitre tefilla we-hekhalot*, Ramat-Gan, 1987; J. Dan (ed.), *Proceedings of the First International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism: Early Jewish Mysticism*, Jerusalem, 1987 [JSJT 6, 1–2]; P. Schäfer (ed.), *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur*, vol. 2: sections 81–334, Tübingen, 1987 [TSAJ 17]; I. Gruenwald, *From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism. Studies in Apocalypticism, Merkavah Mysticism and Gnosticism*, Frankfurt am Main, Bern, New York, and Paris 1988 [BEATAJ 14]; D. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot. Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision*, Tübingen, 1988 [TSAJ 16]; P. Schäfer, *Hekhalot-Studien*, Tübingen 1988 [TSAJ 19]; P. Schäfer (ed.), *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur*, vol. 3: sections 335–597, Tübingen 1989 [TSAJ 22]; N. Janowitz, *The Poetics of Ascent. Theories of Language in a Rabbinic Ascent Text*, Albany, N.Y., 1989; P. Schäfer (ed.), *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur*, vol. 4: sections 598–985, Tübingen 1991 [TSAJ 29]; M. D. Swartz, “Liturgical Elements in Early Jewish Mysticism: A Literal Analysis of ‘Ma'aseh Merkavah,’” diss. New York University 1986.

<sup>3</sup>Although the term *merkavah* is not to be found in Ezekiel, but rather only *kisse*, “throne”; cf. Ezekiel 1:26, 10:1, 43:7. It is found in the technical sense, i.e. for the divine chariot in the temple (!), for the first time in 1 Chronicles 28:18. In Sirach 49:8 the *merkavah* (in Hebrew: *zene merkavah*, “types of the *merkavah*”); in Greek, *epi harmatos cheroubin*, “on the Cherub chariot”) stands for the content of the Ezekiel vision; cf. also LXX Ezekiel 43:3.

<sup>4</sup>This paradoxical terminology, which uses the term *yarad* (literally, “descent”) for the “ascent” to the Merkavah and the term *alah* (literally, “ascent”) for the “descent,”

## I

It is a controversial point to what extent the movement or direction of Judaism, as expressed in the Hekhalot literature, can be defined as mysticism. In his magnum opus *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (in the first chapter) Scholem discusses in detail the problems surrounding the definition of mysticism and Jewish mysticism. Among others, he refers to Rufus Jones's *Studies in Mystical Religion*<sup>5</sup> and Thomas Aquinas. Jones defines mysticism in the following way: "I shall use the word to express the type of religion which puts the emphasis on immediate awareness of relation with God, on direct and intimate consciousness of the Divine Presence. It is religion in its most acute, intense and living stage."<sup>6</sup> Scholem then consentingly quotes Thomas Aquinas's definition that mysticism is *cognitio dei experimentalis*, thus experimental knowledge of God obtained through living experience, whereby Thomas, like many mystics, refers to the words of the Psalm: "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalms 34:9).<sup>7</sup> "It is this tasting and seeing," says Scholem, "however spiritualized it may become, that the genuine mystic desires" and he then submits his own definition: "His attitude is determined by the fundamental experience of the inner self which enters into immediate contact with God or the metaphysical Reality.

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has not yet been conclusively explained; cf. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 46f.; *Jewish Gnosticism*, p. 20, n. 1. The Hekhalot literature is, however, not consistent: the "reversed" use of *yarad* and *'alah* appears to be characteristic above all of *Hekhalot Rabbati*; against this, the other macroforms associate in the semantically "correct" way *'alah* with "ascent" and *yarad* with "descent." Whereby Scholem attempted to explain the paradoxical use of *yarad* through the analogy of the descent to the Torah shrine (*yored lifne ha-tevah*) in the synagogue service (*Jewish Gnosticism*, p. 20, n. 1) and later took refuge in a psychological explanation ("perhaps it means those who reach down into themselves in order to perceive the chariot?": Art. Kabbalah, *EJ* 10, Jerusalem 1971, col. 494), Halperin has recently referred to the parallels that speak of the descent of the Israelites to the Red Sea (*The Faces of the Chariot*, pp. 226ff.): "These writers had learned from midrashic traditions like the one preserved in *Ex.R.* 23:14 that the *merkabab* had been perceptible in the waters of the Red Sea when the Israelites crossed it. They deduced that access to what is above lies through what is below. To get up to the *merkabab*, one must descend" (p. 237). The one explanation remains as unsatisfactory as the other. See now E. Wolfson, "Descent to the Throne: Enthronement and Ecstasy in Ancient Jewish Mysticism," to appear in B. Herrera (ed.), *Typologies of Mysticism*.

<sup>5</sup>London, 1909.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted by Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>*Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 97, a. 2.

What forms the essence of this experience, and how it is to be adequately described—that is the great riddle which the mystics themselves, no less than the historians, have tried to solve.”<sup>8</sup>

Thus for Scholem, the essence of both mysticism and Jewish mysticism is made up of “the immediate contact with God” gained from the “fundamental experience of the inner self.” The general history of religion has employed the expression *unio mystica* for this fundamental experience, the mystical unification with God. Scholem is very careful in assessing whether and to what extent this term is also applicable to Jewish mysticism. If it implies the coalescence of human existence with that of the divine being, the extinguishing of the mystics’ individuality (in later Hasidic terminology *biṭṭul ha-yesh*, the “annihilation of the self”), then according to Scholem this applies only to a few manifestations of Jewish mysticism. For Scholem, the *unio mystica* is apparently the highest stage of mystical experience; other stages, which are more often to be found in Jewish mysticism, are ecstasy and, obviously under the influence of Gnosticism, that which Scholem calls the *soaring of the soul*. This experience, he argues, is particularly characteristic of early Jewish mysticism: “The earliest Jewish mystics who formed an organized fraternity in Talmudic times and later, describe their experience in terms derived from the diction characteristic of their age. They speak of the ascent of the soul to the Celestial Throne where it obtains an ecstatic view of the majesty of God and the secrets of His Realm.”<sup>9</sup>

Scholem introduced two further terms to explain and illustrate the notion of “Jewish mysticism”: *theosophy* and *esoteric*. *Theosophy* (“the wisdom of God”) describes an aspect with regard to the contents of Jewish mysticism; namely, that it is concerned with exploring the mysteries of the hidden divine life and the relationship between the divine life and the world of human kind and creation. Insofar as this relationship is a reciprocal one, not only the world of God influencing the human world but human kind also influencing the divine inner life, one speaks of theurgy (*theourgia*: in the furthest sense from “divine action,” which flows from both God and human beings, to “the coercion of God,” the direct influence of human kind upon God with a strong magical component).

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<sup>8</sup>*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 5.

Finally, the term *esoteric* pertains to the social side of the mystic: the “initiate,” who is in possession of mystical knowledge, is forbidden to transmit it further; the circle of initiates is thus intentionally and artificially circumscribed. The secret knowledge is not for everyone, it requires particular ethical qualities, a specific age or also a limited number of adepts. It is already stipulated in the Mishnah that the central content of the secret teaching, in rabbinic terminology *ma'aseh merkavah* (“working of the chariot”) and *ma'aseh bereshit* (“working of creation”), is subject to certain restrictions: “One does not expound cases of incest before three persons, the work of creation before two, and the Merkavah before one, unless he is wise and understands on his own.”<sup>10</sup>

Due to simplicity, I have followed the convention set by Scholem and retained the term *mysticism*, even though its strong individualistic leaning limits the concerns of the Hekhalot literature to one aspect only.<sup>11</sup> The circles that formed this literature were engaged in nothing less than a radical transformation of the conception of the world of the so-called classical or normative Judaism,<sup>12</sup> which for centuries was determined by the rabbis; and this transformation, which in reality equals a revolution, is inadequately understood by the term *mysticism*.

## II

The textual basis for a portrayal of early Jewish mysticism is the so-called Hekhalot literature. The editions of the *Synopse* and the *Geniza-Fragmente*, as well as the *Übersetzung*, have indeed made the most important text material of the Hekhalot literature accessible;

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<sup>10</sup>M Hag 2:1.

<sup>11</sup>Gruenwald (*From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism*, p. 185) wishes to let the term *mysticism* in the Hekhalot literature stand only for the heavenly journey, but not for the theurgic-magical *sar ha-torah* traditions. This thesis not only presumes a much more rigid separation between the two central themes of the Hekhalot literature than is suggested by the literature itself (see below pp. 137ff.), but it also stems from a notion of religious-mystical experience that is not as self-evident as Gruenwald believes: “Mystical experiences, or for that matter visions of heavenly ascents . . . , are by all means the climax of one’s religious life. All other religious experiences fall short of that, including for that matter the technique and experiences which come under the cover of the Sar-Torah complex of traditions” (*ibid.*, p. 188).

<sup>12</sup>With this, however, the question is by no means decided whether this process took place *during* the heyday of rabbinic Judaism (i.e., simultaneously) or thereafter; see below pp. 159f.

however, the next essential step, the critical analysis of the literary, redactional, and traditional aspects is still in its infancy. The most significant result of investigations undertaken so far<sup>13</sup> has been to show that we are dealing with an extremely fluctuating literature that has been crystallized in various macroforms,<sup>14</sup> which are nonetheless interwoven with one another on many different levels. As has been illustrated by the Genizah fragments in particular, the redactional arrangement of the microforms into clearly defined “works” is to be placed rather at the end of the process than at the beginning (although the individual texts must be judged differently and opposite tendencies will likely also appear).<sup>15</sup> Even more differentiated and complicated is the picture when one compares individual sets of traditions and smaller literary units on the level of “microforms” with one another, which can appear in various relationships within the various macroforms.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Cf. above all *Hekhalot-Studien* and the cited literature.

<sup>14</sup>I employ the term *macroform* for a superimposed literary unit, instead of the terms *writing* or *work*, to accommodate the fluctuating character of the texts of the Hekhalot literature. The term *macroform* concretely denotes both the fictional or imaginary single text, which we initially and by way of delimitation always refer to in scholarly literature (e.g., *Hekhalot Rabbati* in contrast to *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, etc.), as well as the often different manifestations of this text in the various manuscripts. The border between micro- and macroforms is thereby fluent: certain definable textual units can be both part of a superimposed entirety (and thus a “microform”) as well as an independently transmitted redactional unit (thus a “macroform”). An example of this would be the *sar ha-torah* unit, which is transmitted both as a part of *Hekhalot Rabbati* and as an independent “writing.” Cf. in detail *Hekhalot-Studien*, pp. 199ff.

<sup>15</sup>The considerable differences between the Genizah fragments and the comprehensive medieval manuscripts, which lie not so much in the text variations but above all in the structure of the particular texts, have given rise to the assumption that we are dealing with two very different recensions of the Hekhalot literature; namely, an early “eastern” or “oriental” recension, which is represented by the Genizah fragments (which themselves are anything but uniform, but rather extremely varied and manifold), and a later “Ashkenazi” recension, which attempted to unify the transmitted material of the traditions. Cf. J. Dan, “Hekhalot genuzim”, *Tarbiz* 56 (1987): 433–437; Schäfer, *Hekhalot-Studien*, pp. 3ff.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. (for *Hekhalot Rabbati*) *Hekhalot-Studien*, pp. 214f. It is a gross and distorted misunderstanding when Gruenwald argues against my “literary approach”: “If the major concern of the scholar who studies that literature is restricted to structural problems as dictated by the rather fragmentary and flexible condition of the material as it appears in the manuscripts, then the intellectual interest one takes in the activities of the Merkavah mystics recedes to the background and is likely even to be buried in textual problems” (*From Apocalypticism to Gnosticism*, p. 180). Such a simplified contrast of “mere textual criticism” and “intellectual interest” really no longer should

The macroforms that undisputedly belong to the Hekhalot literature are *Hekhalot Rabbati* ("the Greater Palaces"), *Hekhalot Zutarti* ("the Lesser Palaces"), *Ma'aseh Merkavah* ("the Working of the Chariot"), *Merkavah Rabbah* ("the Great Chariot"), and the so-called third book of Enoch (i.e., the Hebrew as opposed to the Ethiopian and Slavic books of Enoch); the macroforms whose affiliation is problematic above all are *Re'uyyot Yehezqel* ("the Visions of Ezekiel") and *Masekhet Hekhalot* ("the Tractate of the Hekhalot").<sup>17</sup> With the exception of *Re'uyyot Yehezqel*<sup>18</sup> and *Masekhet Hekhalot*,<sup>19</sup> the macroforms are edited in the *Synopse*; this edition, together with the edition of the Genizah fragments<sup>20</sup> and the respective volumes of translation,<sup>21</sup> is the basis for the following study.

With regard to dating the individual macroforms, scholarship is still far from reaching a consensus; this is valid for both an absolute and a relative chronology. As to the absolute chronology, Scholem's decisively held theory<sup>22</sup> that Merkavah mysticism stands in the center of rabbinic Judaism and reaches into the first and

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be discussed. It is not a matter of textual criticism as an end in itself, but rather one of "contextual conclusions" that accommodate the textual and above all redactional particularities of the macroforms. How complicated these really are and how much remains to be done in this area is illustrated by the excellent contribution by K. Herrmann and C. Rohrbacher-Sticker, "Magische Traditionen der New Yorker Hekhalot-Handschrift JTS 8128 im Kontext ihrer Gesamtedition," *FJB* 17 (1989) 101–149. My own attempt in the present study will fulfill this demand only to a certain degree; see below pp. 8f. and 156f. with n. 35.

<sup>17</sup>On the question of the delimitation of the Hekhalot literature in general, see *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literature*, vol. 2, pp. viiff.; *Hekhalot-Studien*, pp. 8ff. Concerning the size, delimitation, and structure of the macroforms, see *Hekhalot-Studien*, pp. 63ff., 201ff.; *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur*, vol. 2, pp. xivff. (*Hekhalot Rabbati*); *Hekhalot-Studien*, pp. 50ff.; *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur*, vol. 3, pp. viiff. (*Hekhalot Zutarti*); *Hekhalot-Studien*, pp. 218ff.; *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur*, vol. 3, pp. xxviii. (*Ma'aseh Merkavah*); *Hekhalot-Studien*, pp. 17ff. (*Merkavah Rabbah*); *Hekhalot-Studien*, pp. 84ff.; 221ff. (3 Enoch).

<sup>18</sup>See the edition by I. Gruenwald, in *Temirin*, vol. 1, Jerusalem, 1972, pp. 101–139; S. A. Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot*, 2d ed., vol. 2, Jerusalem, 1954, pp. 127–34.

<sup>19</sup>An edition with translation and commentary has been prepared by K. Herrmann.

<sup>20</sup>See above, p. 1, n. 2.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup>Against the older research by L. Zunz (*Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden historisch entwickelt*, Berlin 1832 [2d ed., Frankfurt am Main, 1892], pp. 165ff.) and above all by H. Graetz ("Die mystische Literatur in der gaonäischen Epoche," *MGWJ* 8 [1859] 67–78, 103–118, 140–153), who postulated an origin in the ninth century and under the influence of Islam.

second centuries C.E. has determined scholarship up until the present time.<sup>23</sup> Only recently have voices been heard that argue for a later dating<sup>24</sup> and view an absolute dating of the Hekhalot literature in general as being of little help. This is due mostly to the complicated redactional process and the widely differing literary levels within the macroforms, and further, to their fluctuating borders.<sup>25</sup> On the question of the relative chronology, Scholem inaugurated the sequence *Re'uyyot Yehezqel*, *Hekhalot Zuṭarti*, *Hekhalot Rabbati*, *Merkavah Rabbah*, *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, 3 Enoch, and *Masekhet Hekhalot*, more intuitively than based on solid evidence (although he often emphasized the particularly old age of *Hekhalot Zuṭarti*).<sup>26</sup> This sequence, for the most part, has been adopted by scholars.<sup>27</sup> The following study diverts from this convention and adopts the sequence *Hekhalot Rabbati*, *Hekhalot Zuṭarti*, *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, *Merkavah Rabbah*, and 3 Enoch, which is supported by several observations in the analyzed texts.<sup>28</sup>

### III

The deciphering of the literary, redactional, and traditional-historical relations of the Hekhalot literature is an important prerequisite for any intensive study of its contents. The following attempt to understand some of the main claims of the Hekhalot literature is undertaken in the full realization of the temporariness of this venture. Insofar as the analysis will limit itself to the macroforms *Hekhalot Rabbati*, *Hekhalot Zuṭarti*, *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, *Merkavah Rabbah*, and 3 Enoch in their more or less accepted range, not only will certain macroforms remain disregarded, but so will insertions

<sup>23</sup>*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, p. 45; *Jewish Gnosticism*, p. 24; idem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, Princeton, N.J., 1987, p. 19. Cf. *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur*, vol. 2, pp. xxff.

<sup>24</sup>Halperin, *The Merkavah in Rabbinic Literature*, pp. 3ff., 183ff.; idem, *The Faces of the Chariot*, pp. 360ff.

<sup>25</sup>Schäfer, *Hekhalot-Studien*, pp. 8ff.; *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur*, vol. 2, pp. xxff.; vol. 3, pp. xvif., xxxiiff.; Swartz, *Liturgical Elements*, pp. 276ff.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. for example, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, p. 45; *Jewish Gnosticism*, p. 76; see also below, p. 151, n. 13.

<sup>27</sup>Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism*, pp. 134ff., follows this order exactly; cf. also Schäfer, *Hekhalot-Studien*, pp. 8ff.

<sup>28</sup>See below, p. 156, n. 35. *Re'uyyot Yehezqel* and *Masekhet Hekhalot* are not taken into account because they are not considered to belong to the Hekhalot literature proper.



and sets of traditions on the peripheries of the macroforms, whose affiliation is difficult to ascertain, be neglected. The basis of the text, therefore, is of necessity limited and—for want of adequate preliminary examinations—to a certain degree also artificial. Nonetheless, an attempt will be made, as far as possible, to explore the affiliations of the macroforms and especially the literary layers within the macroforms to present a more complex representation.

As stated, the theme that Scholem saw as central in the Hekhalot literature is the “heavenly journey of the soul,” the ascent of the Merkavah mystic through the seven heavenly palaces to the divine throne. This theme undoubtedly is an important motif whose significance, however, (under the influence of the gnostic literature) is presumed rather than proven by a comprehensive analysis. As shall be illustrated, this premise has led to a rather distorted overall evaluation of the Hekhalot literature. Therefore, the following study will be guided not so much by questions that indeed are legitimate though in the end externally imposed on the texts, but rather will concentrate much more on those themes that are voiced from within the texts themselves. Here as well, one could set one’s priorities at various points. I believe, however, that three topics predominate in all of the macroforms of the Hekhalot literature and, therefore, are appropriate as keys to an analysis of its contents: these are the conceptions of God, the angels, and man that the texts provide and the way in which these three “factors” stand in relation to one another.

Every examination of each possible form of Jewish mysticism is confronted with the grandiose synthesis that Gershom Scholem presented in his work. This applies to the Merkavah mysticism of the Hekhalot literature as well. I am concerned primarily with the development of my subject from the sources themselves and do not intend to take as a starting point a discussion with Scholem. Nevertheless, it is suitable to quote Scholem’s summarized statements concerning the two central aspects of our subject; namely, the conception of God and man in the Hekhalot literature:

We are dealing here with a Judaized form of cosmocratic mysticism. . . . Not without good reason has Graetz called the religious belief of the Merkavah mystic “Basileomorphism.”

This point needs to be stressed, for it makes clear the enormous gulf between the gnosticism of the Hekhaloth and that of the Hellenistic mystics. . . . In the

Hekhaloth, God is above all King, to be precise, Holy King. This conception reflects a change in the religious consciousness of the Jews—not only the mystics—for which documentary evidence exists in the liturgy of the period. The aspects of God which are really relevant to the religious feeling of the epoch are His majesty and the aura of sublimity and solemnity which surrounds him.

On the other hand, there is a complete absence of any sentiment of divine immanence. . . . The fact is that the true and spontaneous feeling of the Merkabah mystic knows nothing of divine immanence; the infinite gulf between the soul and God the King on His throne is not even bridged at the climax of mystical ecstasy.

Not only is there for the mystic no divine immanence, there is also no love of God. . . . Ecstasy there was, and this fundamental experience must have been a source of religious inspiration, but we find no trace of a mystical union between the soul and God. Throughout there remained an almost exaggerated consciousness of God's *otherness*. . . . The magnificence and majesty of God, on the other hand, this experience of the *Yored Merkabah* which overwhelms and overshadows all the others, is not only heralded but also described with an abundance of detail and almost to excess. . . . *Majesty, Fear and Trembling* are indeed the key-words to this Open Sesame of religion.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, pp. 54–56.