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Zoharic Narratives and Their Adaptations

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About a decade ago Yehudah Liebes advanced a closely argued thesis that the Zohar was not written by a single author, that is Rabbi Moses de Leon, but by a number of authors. This thesis, which underlies the present article, could be applied to number of different historical situations which might have existed simultaneously or consecutively.

1 The present article is part of a comprehensive study of the Zohar and its manuscripts which is supported by the Israel Science Foundation and the Jewish Memorial Foundation, New York. While surveying Zohar manuscripts for the purpose of this study, the various textual variants presented here were discovered. Neta Sobol, Gad Sagiv, Yael Rinot, and Keren Arbel assisted in this survey, and they have my thanks for their help. I hereby thank my friends Prof. Yehudah Liebes and Prof. Eli Yassif. The former’s stamp is considerable on the present study. It was produced both as a response to his studies of the Zohar and out of a constant dialogue with him. Several of his comments have been integrated in my remarks about the tale “The Rose and its Scent”; also in places where this is not explicitly indicated. The second friend helped me to refine the literary aspects of the article – I hope that, as a result of my discussions with him, I have succeeded in polishing more extensively my formulations in this area. I would like also to thank another friend – Dr. Boaz Huss, for his comments and his additional bibliographical suggestions. Thanks are due to Prof. Menahem Kaddari for his linguistic comments. Finally, I thank the State Library in Munich, the University of Toronto Library, the Friedberg Collection, and the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, for the permission given me to publish the excerpts discussed here from manuscripts in their possession.

The foreword to the present article was taken and summarized from R. Meroz, The Pearl, the Fish and the Mosca: the Spiritual Biography of Rashbash or: The Original Structure of the Zohar (Hebrew, in print).

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* The authors of the Zohar were part of a literary movement – or school of thought – which began in a group that Gershom Scholem called “the circle of Gnostic kabbalists” and led to kabbalists who until now have been considered imitators or followers, such as Rabbi David ben Yehudah he-Hadari, or Rabbi Yosef of Hamadan. From this viewpoint we are dealing with literary activity that flourished for about a century, starting before the middle of the 13th century.

* The link between the various authors was created through a teaching institution, a beit midrash, with a structural format of one sort or another in which there was an hierarchy among teachers and students, as well as a measure of latitude – some of the students regularly attended it, whereas others came only occasionally. It may well be that several similar institutions existed at that time.

* The authors of the Zohar were joined together in a fellowship with a leader at its head. This meant a deep personal and spiritual commitment for a long period of time as well as extremely intensive ties among the members. Possibly the academic fellowship involved a degree of seclusion from the rest of the world, even from other scholars, and perhaps several similar fellowships existed simultaneously.

Perhaps, as we have said, there was also a certain overlapping of all these possibilities. For example, a literary movement or one concerned with ideas may have taken shape, sometimes in the setting of a beit midrash or study fellowship, and sometimes with members going their separate ways. Or it may have been a scholarly institution functioning as a fellowship, but open to additional students who used it as a study house. If indeed we are talking about activity that spread over almost a century, it was only natural that changes occurred in personnel as well as in the format of relationships among them. In any event, the central distinction between the three possibilities is tied to the degree of intensity of relations between the members, with the borders between these possibilities not being sharply defined and unambiguous.

It seems to me that already at this stage of research, sufficient proof has accumulated in favor of this thesis. Due to the vast quantity of detailed evidence, I shall try to present here only the aspects and considerations focusing on the composition of the Book of Zohar itself and not on the literary activity which preceded or followed it. The nature of most of the evidence is such that an isolated detail may not possess the force of independent proof of the thesis. Rather, it is only the accumulation of evidence that would be compelling. For example, consider the argument that will be presented below as to the multiplicity of opinions expressed in the Zohar: In principle it is impossible to determine the boundary between the reasonable number of changes that one might expect from one author and the number that would attest to a multiplicity of authors. Since we are dealing with thousands (!) of differences it seems to me that the balance leans towards the thesis under consideration here. However, there still remains room for the discretion of the researcher.3

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In any event, I would argue that the proofs to be presented here will suffice to create a solid block and endow them with historical validity.

Furthermore, most of the considerations that will be presented here support the general argument of the multiplicity of authors, but only a few of them relate to the nature of the relationships among the authors. The proofs in this area will therefore bear slightly less validity than the general argument. The term “fellowship” has become customary among researchers (myself as well) chiefly due to the forcefulness of the Zohar’s narrative, not specifically because more proofs exist in its favor than in favor of other formats of relationship between the authors. We may classify the considerations supporting a multiplicity of authors according to different categories. I will present here one such division, and in order not to overly dilute on the matter, I will content myself with just a few examples or references to other studies.

A. Internal and External Textual and Bibliographic Proofs

1) The multiplicity, variety and even contradiction between the opinions presented in the various parts of the Book of Zohar. In fact, one may use for this purpose almost the whole research literature written to this day! There is almost no study that surveys the opinions of the Zohar on any particular subject that does not point to this trait of wondrous multiplicity and internal contradictions. Isaiah Tishby has done this more than anyone else. His monumental book, The Wisdom of the Zohar, systematically surveyed (sometimes numerically!) the varying opinions expressed in the book on each and every matter, whether a mountain or a molehill, and this despite the fact that Tishby still firmly held that there was only a single author of all this.

2) The awareness of internal contradictions or disputes. We find in the Zohar not only a multiplicity of opinions but also innumerable disputes. The approach of the book’s authors is to disagree with their colleagues in a fashion so refined and indirect to the point that often we do not sense a controversy or their awareness of a controversy.4 However, sometimes, as in the following example, they present their disputes explicitly.

The following example, which revolves around the status of the Sabbath as a

3 In light of such problems as mentioned here we might choose a more cautious claim, namely that the Zohar is a collection of texts, and that we cannot conclude whether they were written by a single author or by several ones. In such a case we might still discuss some relations between the texts, for example – which is earlier and which is later. But since we cannot ignore the following considerations in favor of real ‘personal’ relationships I think we should nevertheless try to consider the option of many texts as well as many authors.

4 For instance, the five divisions of the soul that appear in the Midrash ha-Ne’elam; see I. Tishby, The Wisdom of the Zohar, 2, Jerusalem 1961, pp. 32–35 (Hebrew).

5 My two other articles deal at length with such concealed critiques. See R. Meroz, ‘The
symbol for the Sefirot (the 10 Sefirot are the 10 aspects of the divinity) may be seen in two ways. Firstly, as part of the pseudepigraphical covering of the Zohar — that is, attribution of the dispute to one man who amuses himself with a fictional dispute in which he takes both sides (this supports the single-author thesis); and secondly, as an expression of a controversy that took place in fact, in writing or speech, between real personalities who were presented under fictional names. As usual with him, Isaiah Tishby spread before us the various contradictory opinions on the topic of the Sabbath as a symbol. Most of these opinions appear in the Zohar without relation to other possibilities. In our example, in contrast, Rabbi Shimon bar Yohay discussed the Sabbath as a symbol of the Sefirot while fully aware of the existence of contradictory opinions.7

"And He rested on the seventh day" (Gen 2:2): This is the foundation of the universe [that is, the Sabbath symbolizes the Sefirot of Creation]. In the book of the Rav Yehi Shaba it is said — this is the Jubilee [that is, the Sefer usually called Bina... but we say — this is the Foundation.

3) Internal commentary. Yehudah Liebes was the first to point out the widespread phenomenon of internal commentary. The central example which served him in his abovementioned article was the commentaries on Sifra di-Tsieniath. The Idrot, for example, present quotations from this literary section (it should be pointed out that these sentences are not always found in the Sifra di-Tsieniath as is known to us today) and interpret them, often not in conformity with the spirit of Sifra di-Tsieniath.

Another example of internal commentary is the connection between the section called Sitrei Torah and the sections called Matanit and Tosefot (namely, two different sorts of Zoharic Mishnah). Ephraim Gottlieb indicated that while "in the articles mentioned [from the Matanit and the Tosefot] what stands out is concentration, conciseness and allusion, whereas in the articles of Sitrei Torah elaboration is noticeable and sometimes it seems that the Sitrei Torah's words are but a continuation of Matanit and Tosefot, and a clarification of the hermetic 'Mishnah'."

4) Repeated Reworking of the Text and Ideas. The present article deals with three stories that appear in two different variants each; one variant is apparently a reworking of the other. Nevertheless, this is not the first and only example. In one of his articles Gershon Scholem,9 for instance, published what appeared to him to be an early variant of a known and published text from Midrash ha-Ne'el am. The abovementioned article by Yehudah Liebes expands the evidence for the existence of proto-Zoharic texts of the Sifra di-Tsieniath and the Idra Rabbah. Furthermore, quite a number of Zohar texts are known to us today in two variants — one in Hebrew and one in Aramaic,10 whereas in another group of texts we find stories that contain certain homilies, while in other manuscripts we find the same homilies abstracted from any narrative context.11

5) The Biblio-Historical Testimonies as to the Process of Crystallization of the Book of Zohar. It is known to us that from the beginning the Book of Zohar was disseminated in separate quires,12 although we do not know the nature of the division between the quires. The first quotations from the Zohar appear under various names — Midrash Rabbi Shimon bar Yohay, Midrash Yerushalmi, Sitrei Torah, etc.13 Perhaps the very existence of different quires and different names attests to there being several sources or authors. Sometimes these first quotations seem to have actually been taken from the Book of Zohar; sometimes it is more fitting to call these quotations "paraphrases"; in some other cases they seem to be the words of the author, a parallel variant and not a quotation.14 In Yehudah Liebes' opinion, cases like these may bear out that the author used the material as if it were his own, precisely because he was one of the fellows who had produced it.15

Perhaps we need to add that headings are found in the printed copies and manuscripts of the Zohar. Certain parts are called Sitrei Torah, Sifra di-Tsieniath, and so on. Again — the very existence of different headings may attest to there having been distinct compositions from the beginning.16

6) The condition of the manuscripts of the Zohar. As we know, the outer

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10 For a scientific edition and an analysis of these texts, see Liebes and Meroz, article in preparation.
11 See Meroz, 'Zoharic Homilies and Their Adaptations to Narratives' (in preparation).
12 I. Tishby and F. Lachower, The Wisdom of the Zohar, 1, p. 31 in the introduction (Hebrew).
13 Tishby and Lachower, ibid., pp. 37–38 in the introduction.
14 For example, in Rabbenu Bahya. On this matter see E. Gottlieb, The Kabalah of Bahya ben Asher, Jerusalem 1970, p. 169 (Hebrew).
15 As to Rabbenu Bahya, see Liebes, 'How the Zohar was Written', p. 9; and as to Rabbi David ben Yehudah heHasid, ibid., p. 58.
16 And in my book (Meroz, The Pearl, the Fish and the Matza) I continue this line of
format and the size of the Book of Zohar that we now have were determined by the first printers in the middle of the sixteenth century. They themselves announced that they had created this format by combining several manuscripts. Indeed, except for manuscripts dependent on the printed version, there is no manuscript that includes all that the printed versions contain. All the manuscripts contain various combinations of the Zohar material. I am now devoting most of my time to researching the Zohar manuscripts and to the history of their editing. I also hope soon to begin to publish my conclusions. However, we may even now point out a salient fact—certain literary units within the Zohar “wandered” from one part to another in the various manuscripts. One such example that is found in the printed editions as well (which obviously are based on different manuscripts), is printed versions of which followed it, this section is found as part of the portion Terumah, whereas in the Cremona printed edition it is in the portion of Genesis. This phenomenon can be explained in various ways; however, from our vantage point, we should mention the possible deduction that Sifra di-Tsniyuth (as well as other literary units) stood apart from the rest of the Zohar material, since its source was different. Since it stood apart, the various editors of the Zohar over the generations made different decisions as to how to integrate it into the Zohar as a whole. In general, we may say that the very fact that various manuscripts are essentially different in their interior order, and in their way of organizing the literary units, attests to their separate origin. Perhaps this was because they were written by different people.

B. Literary Considerations

1) The Multiplicity of Styles. One of the most important, most closely reasoned arguments of Gershom Scholem as to the manner of composing the Zohar was his discernment of the relative stylistic homogeneity of the book and its proximity to the Hebrew writings of Rabbi Moses de Leon. However, Yehudah Liebes commented on this point.

Further on in the article, Yehudah Liebes stresses the stylistic differences between Midrash ha-Ne’elam and the literature of the Idros. In fact, he was not the first to indicate stylistic differences between the various parts of the Zohar. Isaiah Tishby believed that the book had one single author. Nevertheless he more than once indicated stylistic differences. This is especially prominent in his survey of the literary units that make up the book. Ephraim Gottlieb, who also accepted Scholem’s thesis of single authorship nevertheless assigned space to the considerable stylistic differences in the Zohar. He especially elaborated on detailed analysis of the style of the tractates Maimon and Tosefta in the Zohar, and indicated that “These tractates are [therefore] a separate section in the Book of Zohar”. The present article too makes a certain contribution to discerning the multiplicity of styles in the Zohar texts.

As we have argued above, isolated stylistic differences cannot constitute proof of the multiplicity of authors. After all, even a single author might utilize several styles in one and the same work. All the more so when the writing stretches out over years. Here too there is room for the researcher’s reasoning and for his judgement as to where the border lies beyond which a multiplicity of styles necessarily attests to the presence of many authors. If it had to do with numerous differences in ideas, but found in similar stylistic settings, our argument would

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17 See note 1.
18 For the sake of clarity, we indicate that the argument here differs from the argument in the preceding section on two matters. First, in the previous paragraph we considered testimonies about manuscripts that are no longer extant, whereas here we are considering testimony about manuscripts that have survived; secondly, in that it not only stresses the “crumbling of the Zohar material, but its separation precisely in conformity with the division into known literary units, such as the Sifra di-Tsniyutha.
20 Liebes, ‘How the Zohar was Written’, pp. 2–3.
man who is capable of creating different literary variations of the same collection of motifs? It seems to me that in view of this, it would be correct to see the phenomenon of “multiple existence” as proof of the multiplicity of authors only in combination with the additional characteristics of multiplicity of styles and multiplicity of opinions.

Together with the phenomenon of “multiple existence” of narrative motifs, even more commonplace in the Zohar is such a phenomenon concerning homiletical motifs. Several examples of this will be presented below. I propose seeing this second phenomenon too, like the first one, as evidence for a multiplicity of authors.

3) The literary fiction. The Book of Zohar was written in Spain towards the end of the thirteenth century, but its protagonist, Rabbi Shimon bar Yohay, lived in the Land of Israel in the second century CE. In addition to Bar Yohay, dozens of sages, tannaim and amoraim, are mentioned in the book. Thus it seems that the narrative aspect is fictional and not based on the lives of the book’s authors. In any event, we do not have any direct evidence at all of such a nexus. Nevertheless, the researchers have been inclined time and again to connect the narrative to historical reality. For example, Yehudah Liebes claimed the existence of a fellowship that had produced the Zohar27 and even tried to locate a historical figure living in the thirteenth century, to whom the fellowship members had alluded in their remarks about their spiritual leader.28 In fact, Yitzhak Baer had already gone in that direction, for instance, when he drew several historical matters out of the Zohar, such as the way of life of the Jewish preacher. His initial assumption was formulated in the following manner:29

Through the mystic haze shrouding it [the Zohar], a real-life setting is clearly discernible. The tales told in the Zohar are not fragments of the imagination, invented to provide a frame for the discussions and teachings of the ancient sages. They are, without doubt, as much a part of the contemporary scene and events as are the stories concerning St. Francis of Assisi and his companions. While the author of the Zohar put his teachings into the mouths of sages of the Mishna and the Talmud, he made no effort to conceal the true social setting of his work.

According to our method we shall say that if such a transition as this one, from fiction to historical reality, is done with particular care,30 then it is legitimate;

27 Liebes, ‘How the Zohar was Written’, p. 7.
30 On the problems in such a transition, see Meroz, The Pearl, the Fish and the Matza.
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and when it deals with the issue of the authors of the Book, it is legitimate only because there is much to support it (as described in this article).

Examination of the fictions hints at several possibilities of relations between sages who had a hand in producing the Book of Zohar:

a) Creative Work in the Setting of Several Fellowship. The fiction about the fellowship of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohay is the one that has attracted the most fame. According to the opening of the Idrā Rabba (Zohar III, 127b) this fellowship numbered ten members. Their names are listed there. Since most of the Zohar is presented in the form of discussions among the fellows, it seems that those men held up as a weight that despite the hierarchy among them, they all participated in one way or another in bringing up ideas. At the same time, the fiction claims, not all the fellows wrote down their words. Hence, Rabbi Abba was assigned by Rabbi Shimon bar Yohay in writing the thinking of the fellowship (Zohar I, 217a). Nevertheless, this is not the only fellowship mentioned in the Zohar: Nahorai Saba meets Shimon bar Yohay and tells him that he is part of the fellowship of hermits which dwells in the desert (Zohar II, 183b–187b). Likewise, it turns out that another fellowship dwells in Kapotka and it sends an emissary to Shimon bar Yohay and his fellowship in order to consult in regard with the secrets of prayer (Zohar I, 132a). In the Midrash ha-Ne'elam we find sometimes other figures who appear in the role of spiritual leader – for instance, Rabbi Eliezer ben Hycanus (Zohar I, 98a–99a) and in the text that we are publishing in another article, “the King is the leader of the fellowship, and explicitly (not by allusion) this does not refer here to Shimon bar Yohay.”

Among the characteristics of the fellowship are permanent contact, hierarchy, and emotional commitment. The fellows accept the dominance of their leader up to the point of issues of life and death and are committed by ties of love to all the other members.

From this fiction it emerges therefore that there were many partners in producing this work. And even if there was only one man assigned to write things down in Rabbi Shimon bar Yohay’s group, the situation was not necessarily the same in the other fellowships.

31 This probably refers to the Cappadocians who lived in Sepharos and view them as inhabiting a separate village. For more details see Tishby and Lachower, The Wisdom of the Zohar, 1, p. 76 of the introduction.

32 Meroz, “And I Was Not There?”.

33 For example, Rabbi Yeeisa who dared to put his teacher to the test paid for it with his life, Zohar, III, 79a.


b) Creative Work in the Setting of Several Study Houses: Sometimes we find in the Zohar more open formats. Every one who has a question, a difficult problem to solve, or a thirst for study can come and go just as he likes. Sometimes we even find a combination of the two formats – the one open and one requiring greater commitment. In the tale that appears in the Midrash ha-Ne’elam in the Zohar Hadash (15b–d), the spiritual leader is Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohay, Rabbi Abbahu, Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Nathan hear words of Torah from him. Rabbi Abbahu remains afterwards for thirty days to study with him “every moint point”. Rabbi Hiyya leaves. However when he hears later on about the wisdom of Rabbi Elazar he returns to him and stays with him for twelve years. Now, all this implies that Rabbi Nathan does not remain there at all. According to another story that appears in the main part of the Zohar (II, 36b–39b) Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Yosef take up the mystical doctrine, and introduce innovations in it. When they come up against a difficult matter that they have not succeeded in solving, they decide to turn to Rabbi Shimon bar Yohay, whom they have heard positive things about. They go to visit him in his study house in Tiberias; thus their assumption is that the study house of Shimon bar Yohay is also open for those who are not regular students there. In the end, they are deeply impressed by his answer and they stay there.

4) A Similar Literary Fiction from a Source External to the Zohar. The book Mashal ha-Qodmoni was written in 1281, that is, while the Zohar was in the process of being written, by the contemporary and fellow townsmen of Moses de Leon, Rabbi Isaac ibn Abu Sahula. Here too we find a description of a fellowship which very much resembles the fellowships mentioned in the Zohar.

In this book, a fellowship is mentioned which became famous among “the people of the city”. It is described as “the glory of the assembly of the refined”, that meets regularly for study. The fellowship is hierarchical. At the head is “the old prophet”, the Nazirite”, (chap 33). Around them are the students – “They sat before him, the senior one as his favorite”. The penitents wear black (chap 33). The relationship between the teacher and his students is warm. When the teacher arrives –

They bowed down before him and came joyfully towards him... and the Nazirite asked how they were faring and how their Bible studies were faring/ And how their Talmud studies and their Mishnah studies were faring/ And they said: Peace [= faring well]. Glory to the dweller of my dwelling./


36 Based on Isaiah 47:8.

37 Based on I Kings 13:25.

38 The Nazirite is married, by the way, and we learn this from the fact that he has a daughter, whom he marries off to his chosen student (chap 32).
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Blessed art thou for My Lord. Indeed one halakhah is still unclear to us and remains to be explained... (chap. 30)

Love and devotion were extremely important. The senior disciple declares before his teacher:

Since the sweet sap of your words you sated me39/ and of the virtues of good qualities you informed me/ Here I am fulfilling your purified words/gladsly and most pleasantly/ and all the days of my life I shall pass before you/ Thus may the Lord do to me if anything but death parts me from you (chap. 32).40

As in the Zohar, the fellowship has a role in the spiritual leadership of the people of the city.41 For that reason, when, according to Mashi'ah ha-Qadmoni, the people of the city propose to the senior disciple that he leave his teacher and set up a new study house, his response is, “As the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you” (chap. 33).42 At the commandment of the teacher, the disciple agrees, despite everything, to the request. A relationship of mutual contribution develops between him and his new city:

And they prepared for him a house and excellent slaves/ and spacious rooms/ and he became the city’s shield and breastplate/ Resting quietly the earth burst out in song43/ And he led them according to Torah and ethics/ And he was their minister/ And he instructed them in the law of penitence../ And they were his sons and students (chap. 33)

His teacher too had contributed to the welfare of the community in aspects that are not mentioned in the Zohar. At the beginning of his path he was a merchant, but after he did penitence, he described his new path as follows:

And I took a vow for my crimes and my sins/ The vow of a Nazirite to be devoted to God.. And I turned all my possessions into an endowment... And I rose up and built a temple house/ to God, a small sanctuary44 [a synagogue] And I erected it east of the place/ to call to all passersby and to awaken them/ And I attracted to myself fellows and students... and I taught

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Torah in public/ And I gave each man in accordance with the fruit of his deeds/ In the house that is called in my name45/ And I increased within it wealth and glory/ and very much silver and gold/46 And everything was prepared for the poor/ And for the redemption of captives (chap. 29).

Thus it seems that the fellowship described in Mashi'ah ha-Qadmoni has several roles. Its primary role is study of the Torah for adults who devote all their time to that. The study of Torah is linked to a clearly spiritual and moral aspect. It is not said explicitly that they are involved in the hidden wisdom of mysticism, but we may find an allusion to this in the fact that their leader is called “Prophet”. The sources of income of the fellowship are the private endowment of the teacher,47 and contributions by members of the community.48 The second group of roles is social – a spiritual contribution to the people of the city, charity for the poor, and the redemption of captives.49

This fellowship therefore possesses a broader spectrum of roles than what is exhibited in the Zohar fiction; however, we have found several points of proximity so that we can see them as parallel fellowships.

C. Historical Considerations

Information about the Existence of Fellowships in Spain. Activity in the format of a fellowship is well known in Castile and Aragon starting from the thirteenth century up until the expulsion.50 The fellowships had varied goals – charitable

Based on Jer 7:10 and additional sources.

The wealth of the House also emerges from its description as “a house, its beloved covering there that is of gold” (chap. 32), based on the association with the words of Songs of Songs (3:9–10); “King Solomon made him a palaquin of wood from Lebanon. He made it posts of silver, its covering of gold, its seat of purple wool”.


Concerning the Teacher’s fellowship, this is perhaps known through the formulation, “And I increased its wealth and its glory.” It was explicitly said of the disciple that the people of the city were the ones who financed his home and his study house, after he became the teacher (see above).

Shimon Shubot claims that in Spain the redemption of captives was carried out by the leaders of the community rather than by private initiative. See Sh. Shubot, ‘Charity Fellowships in Christian Spain’, A. Morgenstern ed., Collected Papers in Memory of A. Shilgeelman, Jerusalem 1979, p. 167 (Hebrew).

and benevolent activities, study of Torah, and instruction of adults and children, prayer, etc. In regard to the kabbalists too we possess certain information that they came together in the fellowship format.

For example, we may have testimony that such a format existed in Gerona. In any event, the terms havurah (fellowship) and haverim (fellows, members) appear in respect of the kabbalists in Gerona. Rabbi Solomon Montpellier writes in this vein to the kabbalists of Gerona (who chronologically preceded the Zohar, as we know): "And therefore my lord and his holy fellowship, take care to investigate this for the glory of our God". Likewise, Nahmanides treats Rabbi Ezra ben Solomon as one of "the fellows". In regard to Rabbi David ben Yehudah ha-Hasid too, who followed in the path of the Zohar fellowship, we possess several pieces of evidence as to his activity in this setting; in his writings "haverim" (fellows) are mentioned and even "rosh havurah" (head of a fellowship). However, it may be that even Moses de Leon hints at the existence of a fellowship when he writes in the Sefer ha-Rimmon:

And those who grasped the Torah hid themselves in their words... And for this reason, the exalted Torah was forgotten in Israel, until God, blessed be He, awakened another spirit and men took good counsel to return to the true knowledge of the Creator, may He be blessed, and understood things in the words of our Rabbis, may their memory be for a blessing, in the slight awakening that they experienced.

* This article is dedicated to one layer in this massive structure, to the examination of three pieces of evidence for the repeated reworking of the Zohar texts. What is common to the following three texts, is that they are all structured as stories. Each one of these three tales has been discovered in two textual variants. Various signs attest that these were not the only textual variants. It seems that many Zohar texts underwent several reworkings. The present article scrutinizes the differences between the two variants that were discovered with the purpose of recovering the motives for producing them, and of indicating internal developments in the Zohar that led to the need to rework an existing story. As we shall become aware, it is likely that these motives were divided into three kinds – various linguistic preferences, literary creativity, and most important of all, conceptual developments.

The First Tale – “The Tale of Rabbi Yosei ben Pazi”

When we first examine the two variants of the first text, it seems that the differences between them are no more than the fruit of accidents or of the unfocussed freedom of the copyist. However, a closer examination of these differences strengthens the possibility that Variant Text B is a deliberate reworking of Text A, a reworking that was done in one of the stages of editing the Book of Zohar. We will point out several of these differences as part of an attempt to explain how they were formed, but we will begin first of all by describing the plot common to both textual variants.

The tale deals with a sage who migrated from one country to another, and with his ultimate neighbor, Rabbi Yosei. The plot of the tale is built out of oscillation between short events (such as the words of the Teacher or the decisions of the neighbor) and the relatively long-term implications that these events had on the neighbor’s life. The moral of the tale may be presented in the statement: Whosoever studies Torah even not for its own sake will eventually study it for its own sake. In another wording, which is close to the emphases of the story itself, we may compare the possibilities of reward for studying the Torah – rewards in this world (that is, wealth and honor) for Torah studying not for its own sake; and the rewards in the next world for Torah studying for its own sake. This moral lesson is set into the structure and contents of the tale in both variants, but it is presented explicitly only in Variant B (lines 84–86). From the formal standpoint, the tale is presented (in both variants) as an etiological story as well, concerning the source of the name of a family of sages which is in fact mentioned tens of times in the early rabbinic literature, the Ben Pazi.

56 See notes 58, 72, and 138 and surrounding text.
family. 

The beginning of the story (The First Episode) presents a great teacher. On account of his greatness in Torah, his countenance shone like the sun (only in Variant A) and every crowded at his door (lines 1–4, 9). His neighbor, Rabbi Yosei, in contrast (as is implied in the continuation of the story) is poor and ignorant at that time. The neighbor’s interest in Torah is awakened; however, the Teacher puts him to a test, as he was accustomed to doing to everyone — whether he is interested in studying Torah for its own sake (that is, if he ready to wait for a reward in the life of the world to come) or for its own sake (expecting wealth and honor in this world) (lines 5–8). It seems that the neighbor does not view this as a test but as an offer of two legitimate possibilities.

The Second Episode opens after the neighbor’s autonomous, inner choice, when he has chosen the Torah out of the expectation of wealth and honor (lines 10–13). Before these expectations have been fulfilled, Rabbi Yosei is already called “the possessor of wealth and honor” (line 21). Several events take place over the course of the second episode. Some are natural, some miraculous.

In the first event, the neighbor again demonstrates his autonomy. He loses his patience when his expectations of riches are not fulfilled (or, alternatively, when the Teacher’s promise of wealth is not kept) (line 24–25). We should point out that according to Variant A his expectations of honor are apparently realized, since he succeeds not only in learning a great deal but also in attracting many students (line 22–23). The Teacher is disappointed with his student since he has not withstood the test, neither at the decisive moment nor later on. He considers punishing him, but a divine voice that promises a positive future for the student leads the Teacher to continue, despite everything, to encourage his student in his studies (lines 26–32). The next event too, which serves as a transition to the third episode, is miraculous in nature and reflects the divine intervention throughout the plot: unexpectedly, a stranger appears, childless but rich, who is ready to contribute his wealth in order to have someone who will study on his behalf. The Teacher brings together these two contrasting personalities — the neighbor and the stranger. Neither has sufficiently learnt Torah but while the neighbor is interested in learning Torah in order to enrich himself in this world, the stranger is ready to give away his great wealth in order to earn merit in the world to come.

The Third Episode then opens with the wondrous appearance of the stranger who had given away his vast riches to the neighbor, who is called from now on, Rabbi Yosei ben Pazi [son of fine gold]. The neighbor’s wish is entirely fulfilled and it seems that he is happy to continue his studies (lines 34–60). Nevertheless, the deeper and deeper that he gets into his studies of Torah, his reasoning changes as does his choice (another inner, autonomous event). The love of Torah enters his heart instead of the greed for money, and now he prefers the life of the world to come over the life of this world.

The Fourth Episode opens with the return of the wealth to its owner in order for him to share it among the poor of the world; from now on the neighbor will learn Torah for himself and for the stranger despite his poverty in this world. But he and his family will always be called ben Pazi (lines 61–85).

Thus the story spreads over four episodes:

The neighbor is ignorant and poor and is called Yosei.

The neighbor is a poor wise scholar and is called Rabbi Yosei, the possessor of wealth and honor.

The neighbor is a rich wise scholar and is called Rabbi Yosei ben Pazi.

The neighbor is a wise scholar, poor in material things but rich in spirit and is called Rabbi Yosei ben Pazi.

The tale opens with a continuing situation of imperfection — ignorance, but it ends with a utopian situation, apparently permanent — wisdom and study for the sake of Heaven. Indeed, the principal motor force in the plot is the inner, autonomous strength of the neighbor and the nature of his choices, but without the delay necessary for this force to find its way, the story would not arrive at its positive ending, and this delay is wondrously produced by Heaven, both through the heavenly voice and through the appearance of the rich stranger.

One of the most prominent traits of the Zohar story is the repetition of combinations of several motifs — the phenomenon of “multiple existence”: sometimes the same motifs are developed to a much greater extent, and sometimes in a more limited manner; sometimes new motifs are interwoven with them. A pair of textual variants of each story presented in this article exemplifies one aspect of the phenomenon — it seems that in this case the link between the pairs is clearly textual. But sometimes the story has more distant “relatives” who share only a small part of their motifs while their styles or their

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59 The family included sages such as Rabbi Yehudah bar Simon, his son, Rabbi Shimon or Simon, and his son’s son, Rabbi Yehudah. Likewise known is Rabbi Hanina ben Pazi (or Hanan or Hanan) who may have been the brother of Rabbi Shimon.

60 Rabbi Yossi ben Pazi is mentioned in the JT Shabbat 4:1. Rabbi Yosei is mentioned again several times in the Midrash ha-Ne’elam in the Zohar Hadash, e.g., in 11b; 13b; 14b.

61 Thus, the moral of the story does not fit in with the words of Pirkei Abot (2:4) that, “Whoever fulfills the Torah out of [a state of] poverty his end [will be] to fulfill it out of a [state of] wealth” (the. J. Israelstam). And perhaps it is more appropriate to say that our story takes matters out of their simple meaning and sees the wealth promised in Pirkei Abot as spiritual wealth, which justifies in a deeper sense the name “ben Pazi”.

62 For a short discussion of the phenomenon of “multiple existence”, see the foreword to the present article. For additional discussion of the meaning of the phenomenon in respect of the Zohar stories (together with examples), see Meroz, The Pearl, the Fish and the Matza.
moods are different. It is quite possible that the link between them might be oral, not necessarily textual. Our story too (in both variants) has such a "relative"; its links to our tale might be oral. From the literary point of view, the following story, called "The Illumination of the Face of Rabbi Hyya", is more meager than the pair of tales about R. Yosei ben Pazzi.63

... Whoever exerts himself in the Torah day and night, inherits two worlds – the upper world and the lower world. He inherits this world – although he did not study it [the Torah] for its own sake, and he inherits the upper world – if he studies it for its own sake. Come and see what is written: "In her right hand is length of days, in her left, riches and honor" (Proverbs 3:16) ... After all, Rabbi Hyya, when he came from there to the Land of Israel, he read the Torah until his face was shining like the sun. And when they used to stand before him, all those toilers in the Torah, he used to say: This one exerts himself in the Torah for its own sake and this one does not exert himself for its own sake. And he used to pray for whom he occupied himself [with it] for its own sake that he would be so always and would merit the world to come, and for the one who did not occupy himself with it for its own sake, that he would come to occupy himself with it for its own sake, and would merit eternal life.64

One day he saw a disciple who was toiling in the Torah and his face was turning green. He said – surely he is pondering about sin.65 He kept in him in front of him and drew on him words of Torah [form above] until his [the disciple's] mind was settled within him.66 From that day on [the disciple] set his mind so that he would not chase after those evil thoughts and would exert himself in the Torah for its own sake.67

Similarly to the tale about R. Yosei ben Pazzi (as will be emphasized below), so the tale about R. Hyya is set into the homily about the verse from Proverbs and is meant to illustrate it. Likewise are some of the repeated narrative motifs – the migration to the Land of Israel of a sage from Babylonia,68 the shining face (parallel only to Variant A) and the interest of the sage in the question of studying Torah for its own sake or not for its own sake. In both tales the Teacher and the student are placed in contrast – in the first, one is a sage and the other (by implication) an ignoramus, in the second – one has a shining face and the other – a face turning green. In both tales, the Teacher displays extraordinary talents – here he succeeds in intuitively identifying who studies for its own sake and who – not for its own sake, and there "he bent over" or "entered his room" (in Aramaic – his lida) in order to hear the opinion of the higher powers in regard to the student. In both tales, the Teacher succeeds in raising his student to the (permanent) situation in which he learns for its own sake.

On the whole, the atmosphere is more natural and of this world in the tale about R. Hyya; in order to attain the religious achievement of studying for its own sake, the Teacher urges the student to act in a psychological manner of channeling his thoughts – while in both variants of the tale about R. Yosei ben Pazzi there is a clearly miraculous, legendary element. From this we learn that despite the borrowing by the various authors of the Zohar of narrative and homiletical motifs from each other, there is no midrash and no tale without something new, or without a personal stamp. The authors do not simply repeat the words of their colleagues, rather they use them in order to exhibit a different picture of the world. Here we may highlight the central difference between the tales as a difference between the natural world and a world which is in need of supernatural intervention. Alternatively, one might highlight this as a difference between optimism and pessimism, as a difference in assessing one’s ability to achieve religious attainments: the tale about R. Hyya is fundamentally optimistic and expresses the sense that man has, through the natural means in his possession, the capability of reaching religious attainments and of arriving on the level of learning for its own sake; the tales about R. Yosei ben Pazzi are much more

63 Zohar, III, 189b–190a: עלא עלאה – עלא עלאה. ר"ב אתי תחתון אש - עלא עלאה. ר"ב אתי תחתון אש - עלא עלאה. ר"ב אתי תחתון אש - עלא עלאה. ר"ב אתי תחתון אש - עלא עלאה.

64 Like the prayer of Rabbi Safra in the Gemara, BT Berakhot 17a: “And all those who deal [with it] not for its own sake, may it be [His] will that they deal with it for its own sake”.

65 The link between the countenance and the moral condition of a person was already presented by the Talmudic sages. For example, "There are four signs: Dropsy is a sign of sin; jaundice is a sign of causeless hatred..." (BT Shabbat 33a, tr. H. Freedman). Also: “Dropsy is a manifestation of lewdness” (BT Yeemanot 60b, tr. I. W. Slotki). This link is developed in course of the magical literature dealing with chiramony and physiognomy. "Jaundice" as a sign of sinful thoughts or as a sign of moral wavering appears in the Zohar in other places. For example, in Zohar, III, 193b, it is sign of transgression in general, and in the tale of the Ten Martyrs (Midrash ha-Ne'elam Ruth, Zohar Hadash, 89c), it is a sign of moral wavering which produces pollution.

66 And does this suggest that while pondering sin, his face turned green because he lost his soul as if he was dead?

67 The formulation here has been softened. The Talmudic sages present the link more resolutely – the study of Torah prevents evil thoughts of various kinds. See, for example, BT Qiddushah 30b; BT Berakhot 5a; Avo d'Rabbi Naḥman, Version A, Chap. 16 and Chap. 20; Sifre Numbers, Paragraph 45, pp. 103–104.

68 And see around notes 78–80 below.
pessimistic — indeed they ascribe importance to man’s autonomous decisions and to his desires, but in the last analysis, they express the sense that without heavenly intervention, man cannot advance on his path, and certainly cannot reach the degree of learning for its own sake.

We now return to the tale of R. Yosei ben Pazi and we shall point out a number of the differences between the two textual variants:

1. Both variants are set in a different homiletical framework. The homiletical framework of Variant A in the manuscript was printed (despite the fact that the variant itself was not printed) and belongs to the Midrash ha-Ne’elam. The homiletical framework of Variant B, in contrast, was printed in the Margoliouth edition under the heading Sirei Torah (and in another formulation, as will become clear below: next to the text of Sirei Torah).

Considerable parts of the Midrash ha-Ne’elam are structured as a series of homilies and stories; sometimes the tale is meant to exemplify one of the claims of the homily, and at other times the homily is meant to clarify one of the aspects of the tale. Thus our story fits in with this general structure. In contrast, Sirei Torah is structured as a detailed commentary on the Bible, and stories are not included in it. Therefore, this tale stands out as deviant in the Sirei Torah section. We are therefore bound to conclude that the natural place and source of the story is in the Midrash ha-Ne’elam, and that someone liked the story and chose it to be added to Sirei Torah as well. If this was not the decision of the author of Sirei Torah, then it was probably that of an editor who came after both Midrash ha-Ne’elam and Sirei Torah. The logic behind such a decision is clear: both homiletic settings are focussed on a verse from Proverbs (3:16) which deals with the value of wisdom: “In her right hand is length of days, in her left, riches and honor”. Both understand this verse in the light of the remark in the Babylonian Talmud (Shabbat 63a), which identifies wisdom with the Torah. The tale that exemplified this message in the Midrash ha-Ne’elam was thus also capable of serving as an illustration for the Sirei Torah.

Furthermore, it seems that another story in the Midrash ha-Ne’elam (Zohar Hadash, 11b-c) recognizes the biography of R. Yosei ben Pazi, and precisely in a version that has him as a bachelor (Variant B, line 10). It should be stressed (as we said at the start of our discussion) that this does not mean that the tale from the Zohar Hadash recognizes specifically Variant B; however, it is aware of some variant, whether A or B, or perhaps an additional variant according to which R. Yosei was a bachelor. In any event, according to this tale R. Yosei ben Pazi meets, when he is already “a great man and a sage of the generation”, a child named Ahava (“Love”). The child hesitates whether it is proper to speak with him because he sees a sign on him that he has received his neshamah, the refined aspect of his soul, only a short while before and not at birth. R. Yosei indeed confesses that “I was a bachelor when I toiled in the Torah and a neshamah was bestowed on me”. Further on, the text differentiates between two kinds of men: the possessor of vitality (nefesh hayyah) (“Who does not know nor recognize the work of his Creator”) and in contrast, the possessor of a neshamah (“He who knows and recognizes the work of his Creator”). The child thus feels (and R. Yosei indeed confirms this) that R. Yosei has merited recognizing his Creator through his neshamah only at a later stage in his life, when he was a “bachelor”, that is, a mature man but not married. Together both stories — “The tale of R. Yosei ben Pazi” and the story now mentioned from the Midrash ha-Ne’elam in Zohar Hadash — produce a fragment of a biographical legend. This fact reinforces our inclination to see the source of “The tale of R. Yosei ben Pazi” precisely in the Midrash ha-Ne’elam, and not in the Sirei Torah.

The advantage of the considerations presented here (as well as that of some of the following considerations) lies in their reinforcing the methodological argument that stylistic and literary distinctions within the Zohar have value not only in themselves but also by virtue of their help in sharpening our diagnoses in matters of text and ideas.

In any event, since in our estimation both the Midrash ha-Ne’elam and the Sirei Torah are the work of the second generation of members of the Zohar fellowship, then the process of editing was likely carried out as early as the third generation or in one of the later generations up to the time of printing the Zohar.

2. In Variant A, the migrating sage is Rav Kahana, while in Variant B, he is

69 This framework was printed in the Zohar Hadash, the portion of Lekh Lekha, 24a. The story itself was not printed there but there is a reference to it.

70 The homiletical framework of Variant B was also printed in the Cremona edition but it was not indicated there that it pertained to Sirei Torah.

71 For a detailed description of the style of the Sirei Torah section, see Meroz, The Pearl, the Fish and the Matza.

72 See next note 54.

73 As to the writing of the Zohar being spread over a lengthier period than Scholern and Tubby conjectured, and as to the need to see its writing as a part of a broader literary movement, see Liebes, “How the Zohar was Written” and this article’s introduction. According to my research (Meroz, The Pearl, the Fish and the Matza) the Zohar was written over the course of four generations. In the first generation, we find texts such as the Maimonot, Tosefot, and Sifra di-Tsimna; in the second generation (the seventies and eighties of the thirteenth century), we find the Hebrew writings of R. Moses de Leon, Sirei Torah, considerable parts of Midrash ha-Ne’elam, and others; and in the third generation (the nineties of the thirteenth century), the epic section (a narrative section containing some twenty tales, which include well known stories such as the two Isra) as well as a substantial part of other tales of the Zohar (despite my lack of success in defining the unit they belong to); and in the fourth generation (the first quarter of the fourteenth century), a few of the tales of the Zohar as well as Tikuney Zohar, and the Ramon Maimon.

74 In the sources, we have another story about the migration of Rav Kahana (an amora of
immigration to the Land of Israel or from it is also a recurrent motif among the tales of the Zohar, another example of the phenomenon of “multiple existence” in the Zohar.

3. According to both textual variants, at the beginning the sage is angry with his student when it turns out that the latter did not study for the sake of Heaven, but further on he overcomes his anger, and this occurs after the prophecy of the heavenly voice as to the student’s positive future (lines 28–33). According to Variant A, the sage hears the heavenly voice when “he bent over” whereas according to Variant B, it was when he “entered his room”. It seems that the differences between the two variants reflect different tendencies in the conception of prophecy.

Voices from heaven that intervene in the course of the lives of the sages appear in all the strata of the Zohar. In the Mishnayot of the first generation no circumstantial setting is specified for the appearance of the voices, although it is rather clear that they represent God’s words in one form or another. In the third generation, the dominant setting for creation of the link with the upper worlds is the ceremonial setting with numerous participants that is called “Idra”; the literal meaning of the word being earthly room as well as Heavenly Chamber. In another text, which apparently belongs to the second generation, we find (just as in Variant B of “The tale of R. Yosei ben Pazi”) Rabbi Elazar entering on his own, without any special ceremony, into his “Idra”. There hearing a heavenly voice, which discusses, among other things, the Heavenly Chambers, he is considered as someone who has actually entered them. In the Midrash ha-Ne’elam, in contrast, we find a case more similar to Variant A of our tale – R. Zmira repeatedly bends toward the ground, lowers his ears and hears voices. It turns out from the continuation of the story that he is listening to the voices of those being punished in Gehenna. Thus it seems that also in the tale of R. Yosei ben Pazi while bending over Rav Kahana hopes to hear the words of dead souls. This conjecture is strengthened by another Zohar text in which R. Metivta considers the ability of the sorcerers to bend over towards the ground in order to hear the voices of the dead, and promises R. Shimon ben Yohay to have him comprehend the full truth about this area.85

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77 See for instance, Tishby and Lachower, The Wisdom of the Zohar, 1, pp. 75–76 in the introduction.
78 Zohar, III, 72b.
79 Zohar, II, 174b; Sholem, ‘A Lost Chapter’, p. 442. On the other hand, in Zohar, I, 190a, the second generation) from Babylonia to the Land of Israel: BT Baha Qama 117a–b. Additional sages by this name are known; not one of them belonged to the generation of the historical Rabbi Shimon bar Yohay.
75 If the reference is to R. Abba bar Ibo, that is, Rav, after all there is no special story in our sources devoted to describing his migration and if the reference is to R. Abba, who is also called R. Ba, an Amora of the third generation, then certain details about his immigration are given in BT Berakhot 24b, and in BT Ketubbot 112a, but they do not reach the point of forming a real story. In both cases, this R. Abba is not a contemporary of the historical Rabbi Shimon bar Yohay.
76 Scholom, Major Trends, p. 182; idem, ‘A Lost Chapter’, p. 427; Tishby and Lachower, The Wisdom of the Zohar, 1, pp. 27–28 in the introduction; as well as Meroz, The Pearl, the Fish and the Matta, in the foreword. These comments have been additionally reinforced a great deal by my research. An example, one of many, may be examined in the Oxford Bodleian manuscript, 1564, film number 16932, in which this phenomenon is very commonplace. Another example is found in the tale “The Rose and its Scent”, to be discussed below (see next to note 144).
78 See for instance, Tishby and Lachower, The Wisdom of the Zohar, 1, pp. 75–76 in the introduction.
79 Zohar, III, 72b.
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4. On line 72–73 in Variant A, we find a verbal description exception in the Zohar literature, which describes the neighbor’s weeping – “the voices flow out of me like water!” This description is omitted from the second variant.

An additional unconventional verbal combination is found in Variant A and is missing in Variant B. Towards the end of the tale, the neighbor goes up onto the straight path and chooses the Torah for the sake of Heaven, rather than for the sake of wealth. The Teacher’s joy is presented in Variant A (line 69–70) in a text that must have probably been corrupted: בפעמים מעברותadar נפש מתאירה הקורא. In the corrupt text, it seems that we may discern it the remnants of an epigram, something like: The scorpion too needs to grow up in order to improve its sting. In the background of this saying was probably the remark in the Pirqey Abot 2:10 (or similar sayings) that the Torah of the wise scholars is like the sting of a scorpion.97

Our text is not the only case in the Midrash ha-Ne’elam where it seems that the text makes use of verbal combinations that are not found in other parts of the book, or of combinations that resemble proverbs. For instance, לימים י✎ב י✎ב י✎ב י✎ב; that is, “Why ... does your mouth not drip the sweetness of the wisdom of honey?”98 And in another place, when R. Hiyya besechees R. Abbahu: הבשיל מצות מתאירה הקורא, is the idea, according to R. Hiyya, that the sweetness of honey was the sweetness of honey that you wrung out of the instruction of the upper holy beings.99


98 Indeed, the copyist of the Moscow manuscript, Ginsburg 262, commented here too, “I didn’t understand.” The text of the Moscow manuscript has instead of י✎ב י✎ב י✎ב י✎ב instead of י✎ב י✎ב י✎ב י✎ב; אד

97 Like the comparison of the bee’s sting to the words of the Torah – Deuteronomy Rabbbah, ed. Lieberman, Jerusalem 1992, 1:6 – Just as the bee is sweet to her master and stinging to others, so are the words of Torah the sap of life for Israel and the sap of death for star worshippers.

98 Zohar Hadash, 12b, Midrash ha-Ne’elam on Bereshit. The link between the sweetness of honey and wisdom, the Torah, the word of God, or the secrets of the Torah is very widespread in our sources. See, for example, Ezk 3:13; Ps 19:9–11; Prov 16:24; BT Haggah 13a; Exodus Rabba, 47:7. And compare with similar language appearing in the remarks of the first one to quote the Midrash ha-Ne’elam, R. Isaac ibn Sahula, above near note 39.

99 The Midrash ha-Ne’elam uses here, as is customary in it, the root gtr in the sense of

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R. Abbahu answers him: רוזחgetEmail, "The answer appears to be a puzzling epigram that maybe should be translated." The palm branches and the filth of the honey (date honey) do not go together;100 or perhaps, “The cake (of honey) and the filth of honey do not fit together”;101 even: “Bits of excrements and the goodness of honey do not go together.102

instruction and not in its usual sense, namely, decree. This usage is apparently connected to the teacher’s title – ‘Melekh’ (king). For more detail, see Meroz, ‘And I Was Not There’.

90 Zohar Hadash, 15d, Midrash ha-Ne’elam on the portion of Bereshit. רוזחgetEmail is perhaps a corruption of אנה ‘in the year before the date... has come out of it... and have become hard and... become wood. One turns this way and one turns that way”. אנה – perhaps a corruption of בנה. Rashi there: "the trunk of palm tree which is smooth and no branch comes out of it in any direction..." And also see, B. Husic, A Dictionary of Foreign Words in the Zohar”, Kabbalah – Journal for the Study of Jewish Mystical Texts, 1 (1996), p. 173 (Hebrew): אנה עדא – the roots of grasses or branches of the palm tree”. And these are also the words of the Derekh Emun on the expression אנה עדא (or in another version, אנה עדא) which appears in the Zohar, II, 61a. מברケ – apparently from the word אנה עדא, that is, pollution. Rabbi Ashlag, in contrast, translates this saying: "Fruits of the top of the palm tree and the beverage (ועזרא תכשך) of honey cannot be together", deriving from אנה עדא (intoxicating drink). The meaning of the saying according to Rabbi Ashlag is: “Rabbi Hiyya was not yet a wise scholar, but he resembled the branches of the palm tree which are to bear fruit in the future. And Rabbi Abbahu said to him that there is still a great distance between the branches of the palm tree and the honey that issues forth from the dates that will grow along it. And for that reason, he is not yet worthy of drinking the honey.” According to the translation by Rabbi Ashlag, Rabbi Hiyya seeks to taste the honey and Rabbi Abbahu answers him that he cannot drink it. According to my translation, on the other hand, sharp criticism of Rabbi Hiyya is noticeable in the remark of Rabbi Abbahu. After all, earlier in this story when Rabbi Hiyya was allowed to hear these words of holiness, he chose not to remain; thus he befuddled, as it were, the sweetness of the honey. Furthermore, according to Rabbi Ashlag, the metaphor of a palm tree relates to Rabbi Hiyya, whereas according to my approach, the metaphor of a palm tree relates to the teaching of the holy teachers, who are probably seen as righteous like the palm tree. Incidentally, it should be mentioned that Toshuma on the portion Ki Tavo, chap. 3, rejects in principle the possibility of pollution of honey: “Just as honey does not become polluted, so the Torah does not become polluted...” Here and in the next two notes the following dictionaries should be consulted – J. Levy, Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim, Berlin and Wien 1924; M. Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature, NY 1971; M. Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period, Ramat-Gan 1990.

91 Here I saw in אנה עדא a corruption of אנה, one of the meanings of which is ‘cake’. אנה עדא is according to this trend of thought אנה, that is, bread. And perhaps together they are a loaf of cake, or some baked cake dish, an allusion to a kind of honey cake.

92 This option was raised by Prof. Liebes. Here אנה means either a cake or excrements (see Nathan of Rome, The Complete Arukh, ed. H. Kohut, Wien 1878–1892 [Hebrew]).
Another example of unconventional verbal combinations is found in the next sentence: דוד ושעתי דוד נתבוג אינו מברית וברית נתבוג דוד נתבוג ומברית; This is, "When the sun inclines its wings to go with the force of its wheels, its legs tread on the leaves of the trees in the Garden of Eden!" From the stylistic viewpoint, we should distinguish between the trait mentioned here, that is, rare combinations of known words, and the inclination of the Matntin and the Tosefat to use unknown words (an inclination that influenced almost all the other layers of the Zohar), "Zoharic words", such as קוסיימץ ואביה אלבליו, and the like.

In Variant B the remnants of the epigram dealing with the scorpion have disappeared (perhaps because its formulator did not know it? or perhaps his style did not favor epigrams? or perhaps he did not favor unusual combinations of words?). Instead of this, the author of Variant B put into the mouth of the Teacher words that create a contrast with a previous event, in which he was disappointed with his student when the latter still held on to the expectation of riches:

line 26–27: He said, That means that he does it not for the sake of Heaven!
line 68–69: He said, Now it means that he does it for the sake of Heaven!

The author of Variant B also sharpens the comparison between the first appearance of the neighbor in the Teacher’s house and the appearance of the rich stranger, and again he does this by creating parallel formulations. The following are the two introductory conversations according to Variant A:

93 Zohar Hizkah, 174, Midrash ha-Ne‘elam on Bereshit.
94 Not only does this epigram resemble the epigram about the scorpion by the very existence of an unusual combination but here there is a repeat of words derived from the same root. In the epigram about the scorpion, קוסיימץ ואביה אלבליו (the common word to both expressions) - קוסיימץ - means - their hooves” (a comment by Neta Sohел). Further, it may be that this unconventional combination was created out of the corruption of the description of a cosmological structure. We ought to recall that according to the cosmology of the Talmudic Sages, the universe is made up of layer upon layer: under our earth there are abysses; and above the earth there are the firmaments (which include the celestial bodies) as well as the chariot with its wheels and its Beasts. A discussion joining the wheels of heaven to the hooves (טב選擇) of the Beasts sometimes appears. See, for example, Seder Rabbah deBereshit, Sh. A. Wertheimer, Batey Midrashim, Jerusalem 1950, part I, especially p. 43.

95 As said above, these sections belong to the first generation, in my view.
96 For a discussion of these words, see Tishby and Lachower, The Wisdom of the Zohar, 1, pp. 78–79 in the introduction, as well as Gottlieb, ‘Tradition’.

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line 12–13: He said to him, Rabbi, I seek the merit of Torah in order to have wealth.97
line 37–50: He said to him, Rabbi, I seek to have a portion in the wages of the Torah.
He said to him, What are your deeds?
He said to him, Father left me gold and silver... And I was not granted a son... And I came to find someone who wants silver and gold and he shall study Torah and it will be counted my merit as if I myself had studied it.

And these are the two introductory conversations according to Variant B:

line 12–13: He said to him, Rabbi I seek to study Torah in order to have wealth.
line 40–51: He said to him: Rabbi, I want to merit the Torah... since I have great wealth.

This last example also shows the ability of the author of Variant B to shorten, to choose his words, to be precise with them in good taste98 - out of high moral awareness he strove to avoid all unnecessary verbiage. We can find several additional examples of this distinction between the two variants but a few shall suffice here. According to Variant A, when the neighbor became wiser, he understood that he had given up the world to come for the sake of riches (line 61–66), and afterwards he repeated this insight before the Teacher (lines 71–76). Variant B makes do with one short presentation of this insight before the Teacher (line 65–71). By the same token we may note that Variant A goes far in describing the neighbor’s academic successes (lines 22–23, 57–60) while he is still not learning for the sake of heaven. However, does not a story of success such as this weaken the moral lesson?99 Do his students not sense his materialism? The author of Variant B senses this contradiction, apparently, and gives up entirely on giving these descriptions. As we have said, any account that does not lead to a moral lesson is superfluous for him.

Emerging from all this is that while the author of Variant A reflects a stylistic trait of Midrash ha-Ne‘elam (the use of epigrams and of combinations that are not common in the rest of the Zohar), the style of Variant B is characterized by an inclination to literary uniformity, to structural coherence,90 to economy and

97 The text presented here was created by combining the Munich and Vatican versions, and likewise below.
98 Also comparison with the other versions of the neighbor’s words shows to what extent the author of Variant B was precise in choosing his words; this is not the place to expand on all these matters.
99 Only in one case does Variant A draw a parallel between different situations, whereas Variant B waives doing so. According to Variant A, Rav Kahana’s face is shining and the golden cup that the stranger brought gleams in the house. Since R. Yosi is called from here on ben Pazi (= son of fine gold”), it is implied that from now on he too is linked to light. It may be that the author of Variant B is not interested in drawing a parallel between
to meticulous, carefully chosen formulation. It may be that the next example too points to such an inclination.

In both variants, a strange man appears, bringing with him a valuable golden vessel (line 35). Further on, it becomes clear that this cup is in fact one of thirteen cups (line 45; according to the versions in the Vatican and Moscow manuscripts it is one of twelve cups). The homiletic framework of Variant B describes the reward in the world to come through the metaphor — among other ways — of thirteen rivers of balsam. It may be that whoever joined the story to this new framework also tried to create a parallel by way of negation — the choice between thirteen golden cups (more exactly, of one that represents them all), as a symbol for the pleasures of this world, and the thirteen rivers of balsam, as a symbol of the pleasures of the world to come.

This explanation is reinforced if we note the irony concealed in the Teacher’s usage of a verse from the Book of Job (28:17) which describes Wisdom in the following way: “Gold or glass cannot match its value, [nor] vessels of fine gold be exchanged for it” (line 55–56). In a simple understanding of the Biblical text, this verse is built as a parallelism, in which the negative term also serves its second half: It is impossible to weigh the value of wisdom in gold, glass, or a vessel of fine gold. However, the Teacher, disappointed with his student, hints at his bitter evaluation of the student’s understanding of the worth of wisdom, that is, the Torah. It is impossible indeed to weigh wisdom like gold or glass, but some make do, like his student, with what seems to them to be its material equivalent — vessels of fine gold. It seems that in the Teacher’s opinion, the student understands too simplistically both the verse from Proverbs and the following words of the Talmudic Sages: “What does it mean — ‘Gold or glass cannot match its value, [nor] vessels of fine gold be exchanged for it’? It said to him, These are words of Torah that are difficult to obtain, like golden vessels and vessels of fine gold, and that are easy to lose, like glass vessels”.

In the student’s comprehension, a parallel and an equation are created between the verse cited from Job and the verse from Proverbs mentioned above (3:16): “In her right hand is length of days” — corresponds to wisdom in its exalted aspect; “In her left, riches and honor” — corresponds to another acceptable aspect of wisdom — its equivalent material value which can be measured in valuable vessels. It is superfluous to indicate that in the Teacher’s opinion, the combination of both verses attests precisely to the abyss-opened up between the two.

Possibilities. The author of Variant B aspires, apparently, to widen this abyss even more: he who chooses wisdom or Torah according to the one way chooses length of days, eternal life, and the thirteen rivers of balsam, whereas he who chooses it the other way chooses riches and honor in this world, or the thirteen golden cups.

The plot in both variants leaves us wondering. If that stranger is so rich, why does he not use his money to teach his son Torah? By such an act, he could not only fulfill an obligation imposed on him as a father, but even actually enter into paradise. On the other hand, neglect of this action is likely to bring him to Gehenna. In the words of the Midrash ha-Ne’elam: “Everyone who brings a son into this world, and teaches him Torah and good deeds, the angels of destruction and of Gehenna do not rule over him... so that a man shall not say, ‘The Torah I have studied and the good deeds I have done protect me, and therefore I shall not deal with being fruitful and multiplying.’ Yet, despite his having studied Torah and having done good deeds, he does not enter into the enclosure of the Holy One blessed be He, and he does not have a portion in the world to come.”

Variant A responds to this wonderment quite simply: “I do not have a son” (line 46), whereas Variant B does not relate to this problem. There are two possible conclusions in this situation. Variant B might be the earlier one and when it was reworked, the rewrier felt this lack and added it to the new variant, which was Variant A. Alternatively, this matter was omitted accidentally from Variant B, which is later than A. The latter possibility is the preferred one in my view according to the totality of considerations presented here.

Before concluding, we shall add another comment: a Hebrew paraphrase of our story is found in the book of R. Abba Saba’s, Tseor ha-Mor. We know by the style that we are talking about a paraphrase and not another variant worked

101 In another formulation, one can say that the student makes a hermeneutical mistake: he makes a faulty combination between the two verses, since the plain meaning of the figurative verse indeed gives an equal status to both things of matter and of spirit, whereas the verse from Job grades them differently. The student is not sufficiently aware of “his hermeneutical ambience” and hence he arrives at the wrong conclusion. Again, in another formulation, one may say that he is not sufficiently aware of prevailing values that condition the acceptable hermeneutical steps.

102 The value of this obligation is stressed often in the Zohar. See, for example, the following stories, “Rav Meitiya”, Zohar, III, 164a; “Saba d’Mishpatim”, Zohar, II, 95a; “The Expulsion of the Angel of Death”, Zohar, I, 217b.

103 Zohar Hadash, Midrash ha-Ne’elam Ruth, 89b. We have here a widening of the idea that appears in BT Sanhedrin 104a: “A son confers privileges on his father but a father confers no privilege on his son” (tr. — H. Freedman). And see the two tales printed in the Zohar Hadash which are meant to illustrate this principle: one, in Zohar Hadash, 49a-b, the portion of Aharey Mot and the second in the Midrash ha-Ne’elam Ruth, Zohar Hadash 84b-c.
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up by members of the Zohar fellowship. In any event, the stylistic and content elements which distinguish our two variants are not noticeable here, and it may be that this paraphrase rests on a third, slightly different variant. The sages here is Yohanan, the language of the student is cruder here than in our two variants, and many motifs are lacking. As in the Zohar, the presentation of the tale is meant to teach the reader a moral lesson. And this is the variant which is found in Saba: 105

... for beginners and for the fool if they are not told to worship the Lord for the good things of this world, etc., they will not worship the Lord on account of His greatness and exaltedness. And perhaps later on they will recognize the truth and will say: This is the straight path before a man and the other one leads to death. 106

And likewise, they said of Rabbi Yohanan that a student came before him and said that he wanted to learn Torah in order to be rich, and he accepted him. And he ordered his students to call him, 'R. Yosei, the possessor of wealth'.

And he [the student] was busy with Torah and he succeeded and he used to say that he had a good name and did not have wealth!

104 For example, unlike the Zohar – the predominance of indirect speech instead of direct speech; expressions like, "He recognized the truth", and many others. And indeed according to Gross' research most of the Zohar was not available to Saba' and he therefore relied on his memory. See A. Gross, Iberian Jewry from Twilight to Dawn: The World of Rabbi Abraham Saba', Leiden-New York-Köln 1995, p. 68.

105 R. Abraham Saba. Teenor haMor. Bnei-Bra'ah 1990, part I, p. 100, commentary on Genesis 18: 17: the archangel of the Lord is not called the angel of the Lord, even when the word אֵל el (that is, Elohim) is used. However, in the context of the story of Abraham and Sarah, the angel is referred to as אֵל el, which is a title of God.

106 The last words are based on Proverbs 14: 12. From the present text it emerges that the request for a reward in this world stands – for the author – in the same category as "fear of His punishment", and is contrasted with "awe of His exaltedness". This pair of terms is not used by the members of the Zohar fellowship in our story.

Zoharic Narratives and Their Adaptations

One day, a very rich man came before R. Yohanan. His father had left him great wealth and pearls, vessels of fine gold, and he didn't read and he did not study, and he came to his [R. Yohanan's] study house. And he said to him that since he had not been occupied with the Torah, he was bringing with him a vessel of fine gold to give to the students. And the Rabbi accepted it and gave it to Rabbi Yosei, 'the possessor of wealth', and he called him by the name 'R. Yosei ben Pazi' and he came to busy himself with the Torah joyously.

After he had learned and entered into the depths of the Torah he felt desire for the Torah, of which it is said, "more desirable than gold, than much fine gold" [Ps 19:11], and he said to himself, "Woe is me that I put aside eternal life for the sake of life for the moment!" 107

And he went and said to the Rabbi, "Why did you deceive me?! 108 And you hunt my soul in order to take my life! 109 Because I should not busy myself with Torah save for the greatness of God, and not for silver and gold".

And that same vessel of fine gold came back to the Rabbi to give it away for the poor. And he recognized the truth and therefore [his family] was named after him "Rabbi Yosei ben Pazi" throughout all the Talmud.

And this is what they said: "A man shall forever busy himself with Torah and the commandments even if not for its own sake, since out of not for its own sake he came [to do it] for its own sake...". And therefore, the first way [namely, awe of His exaltedness] is the true way... since He is great and terrible, and not the fear of punishment; but for beginners and fools the second way is the proper way.

In conclusion: What is common to both variants of "The tale of R. Yosei ben Pazi" (in contrast to the tale "The Illumination of the Face of Rabbi Hyya") is the importance of the supernatural in the routine of religious life. I assume that the source of the story about R. Yosei lies in the Midrash ha-Ne'elam; afterwards it was inserted into the text of Sirei Torah and during this process it was reworked. The differences between the two variants of this tale rest on verbal, literary and conceptual issues – during editing, verbal expressions that may have been less acceptable to the editor were omitted; its literary form was sharpened and it was made much more uniform and concise so that the opposition between the two different paths laid out before a man (studying for its own sake or not for its own sake) was emphasized; and finally, its terminology was adjusted to the conceptual changes which had taken place in the time that had passed between writing the two variants – now focusing on members of the fellowship.
of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohay and stressing the importance of the idra as a means to attaining mystical knowledge.

THE SECOND TALE—"THE FOWL AND THE CHILDREN"

On the face of it the two variants that represent this tale are different in length. Variant A is the shorter one, Variant B is the longer. The principal difference between them rests on one visual image—the arrows—which is developed in Variant B and is lacking in Variant A. The systematic absence of this image in Variant A, despite its being scattered among the various parts of Variant B, attests that the absence is neither accidental, nor a scribal error. Since I have not succeeded in imagining an argument to explain why any kabbalist might have wanted to remove precisely this image from his text, the reasonable explanation is that Variant A is also the earlier one, whereas Variant B is the product of creative elaboration.

Both variants are uniform in the lesson they impart. Their conceptual background assumes that each people has a guardian angel. The rule of the Holy One blessed be He over the peoples is carried out through His rule over those guardian angels. The removal of the guardian angel from his post or his demotion causes the destruction of his people or at the least its conquest by others; strengthening the guardian angel in Heaven makes it possible for his people to rule over other peoples. As is indicated at the end of both variants, and as we find in several parallels in the Zohar, the removal of a guardian angel from his post is carried out by burning him in the the Fiery Stream (Nehar Dinur) and proclaiming this fact throughout all the worlds.


111 This opinion is extremely widespread in the Zohar (or: formulated in the spirit of the thesis of multiple authorship—it must have been widespread among the members of the Zohar circle). One may see in it an example of the "multiple existence" of liturgical motifs, in parallel to the phenomenon of the "multiplication" of literary motifs, as described in the foreword to the present article and in note 135. This opinion, with slight changes, appears in the following places, for example: Zohar, I, 69a; Zohar, II, 18b, 19b, 46b, 49a, 52b, 54b, 175a, 239b, 252b. In fact we find here a combination of two ideas that were already expressed by the Talmudic sages: One is: "Every day the ministering angels are created from the fiery stream and utter a song and cease to be", BT Haggahah 14a (and see too Genesis Rabbah 78:1, ed. Theodor-Albeck, Jerusalem 1996, pp. 916–917 and the notes there); and the second was mentioned in the last note. The second idea also appears among Ashkenazi Pesikta (see Sefer Hasidim, ed. Margulies, Jerusalem 1957, sig. Hb 375) and in Bahya's commentary on Pentateuch, ed. C.B. Chavel, Jerusalem 1966-1968, Part II, p. 119 (commentary on Exodus 14:25). In contrast, the opinion of R. Joseph Gitakila on the topic of the rise and fall of princes of the nations is presented through a totally different array of terms. See Joseph Gitakila, Sha'arei Orah, ed. J. Ben-Shlomo, Jerusalem 1971, II, gate 5.

112 According to Variant B the rule of the guardian angels overseeing Rome causes damage to Israel too (line 30-31).

113 Based on "The future Redeemer will be like the former Redeemer" (Ruth Rabbah 5:6; tr. L. Rabinowitz) and parallels; and possibly also based on, "In Nisan [the month of Passover, of the Exodus, tr.] they were redeemed, in Nisan they will be redeemed" (BT Rosh haShanah 11a).

114 Another possible interpretation is that Egypt represents the first exile and Rome represents all the empires that come after it, whether the reference is in fact to a variety of empires like Babylonian, Persia, Greece, and Rome itself.

Zoharic Narratives and Their Adaptations

In both of our variants, four guardian angels are mentioned. It seems that the background to this is the messianic conception which anticipates the coming of redemption at the end of the four exiles of Israel, in the spirit of the Book of Daniel. The guardian angels are, one, overseeing Egypt while the three others are overseeing three Roman peoples. The three guardian angels which oversee the Roman peoples devastate the land of the single guardian angel as presented in relatively great detail (lines 24-31, 44-49). This entails messianic benefit at least according to Variant A (lines 30-31), since the enemies of Israel are striking at each other, and indirectly aiding in the resurgence of Israel. Egypt is not mentioned indeed in the visions of Daniel (chap. 11), but it is doubtful whether this point of origin is valid, since Rome is not mentioned there. It is more reasonable to assume that we have here a grafting together of two models of redemption—the model of the four exiles, or the four empires, according to the Book of Daniel, and the model of the Exodus from Egypt, according to which the first redemption, that is the Exodus from Egypt, is the model for the last redemption. The grafting together of the two models creates a pattern in which the last empire is the empire of Egypt.
was located. Then could it be that the war mentioned here alludes to the wars of the Reconquista?115

In any event, the humiliation of the one guardian angel and the strengthening of the three others is described in several ways:

R. Yosef rises at dawn (is it again a messianic allusion to the redemption that bursts out like the dawn?)116 and hears a heavenly proclamation which speaks from the mouth of a flying fowl. The words of the proclamation are enigmatic – it discusses the guardian angels without saying this explicitly. The dominion of one of them is unstable; he sits and does not sit on the throne of power (line 12), and in the end he is indeed removed from rule, whereas three of them stay stable. In Variant B, the fowl adds a visual illustration to the puzzle: the fowl soars three times and one time flies lower down (line 7).

In Variant A, the fowl illustrates its tidings by throwing down three wings from his right wing and one from his left wing (line 21–22). This visual picture is not clear and even less so is the image of the sniffing of the wings (line 25). It may be that in the background of matters stands Daniel’s vision of the four beasts (chap 7). The first beast in Daniel’s vision, a winged lion, is indeed raised up from the earth (like the fowl in our vision) but its wings have been plucked, as a sign of its defeat (verse 4). In any event, it seems that since the image is not clear from the visual viewpoint, it was reworked into Variant B and became the four arrows. This change produced an opening for further changes: The arrows, by their very nature, are heralds of violence. For that reason, this image suits the violent behavior (at least in the author’s view) of the Gentile nations and their rulers, both on earth and in heaven. This violence is expressed in “the uncontrolled behavior” of the arrows when they come down to earth. When R. Elazar picks them up they unexpectedly wound him (line 25)117 (and this apparently contains an allusion to the severe decrees imposed by these on the Jewish people – line 30–31) or they produce black fire (line 33). Even the end of the one arrow is by violence (just the one probably only for the moment since in the future the others will be destroyed too), while it is being burned (line 50; again, like Daniel’s vision, in which the horned beast is given over to be burned in fire – 11:11).

115 This option might be reinforced by the suggestion made by Hananel Mack that Nahmanides’ attitude towards Pharaoh is a reflection of his attitude towards his king, Jaime I. See H. Mack, ‘From the Eyes of Nahmanides: His Attitude to Pharaoh of Egypt and Jewish Status in the Kingdom of Aragon-Catalunya’, Sefunot: Studies and Sources on the History of the Jewish Communities in the East, New Series 7 (22) (1999), pp. 33–48 (Hebrew). I thank Dr. B. Huss for bringing this article to my attention.

116 JT Berakhot 1:1, as well as JT Yoma 3:2. Also see the Midrash on Psalms, ed. S. Baber, New York 1943, at the end of Psalm 18.

117 And perhaps we find here an image opposite to the often vented curse against Satan – “An arrow in your eyes” (See, for example, BT Qiddushin 30a).

Zoharic Narratives and Their Adaptations

The last device that the texts utilize in order to indicate their message is the wondrous appearance of three mysterious children. Each one of them reads a verse or a seeming verse, which prophesies the ruin of Egypt, and then vanishes.

It seems that our story is based to some extent on the tale that appears in the Gemara (BT Gittin 56a), despite its general tendency being different from ours. In it, too, we find a similar combination of motifs – an arrow, the movement of which is based on the forces On High, rather than on any forces of nature, a child who is capable of reciting a suitable Biblical verse and the hope of vengeance against the Gentiles.

Thus in five ways that are based on the senses, the fellows obtain a prophecy (as is said on line 53 of Variant B; in Variant A we find “perfect wisdom”) – the embodiment of the heavenly herald, the fowl; the manner of its flight; the fowl’s casting off of wings and arrows; the burning of one arrow of the four arrows; the verses recited by the three mysterious children.

Several of the ways have a touch of magic – deciphering the calls of the fowls of heaven or the ways they fly (the science of flight, ‘the Wisdom of Taryar’ is as we know a widespread magical technique. The unnatural flight of the arrows too may have a magical background.118 However, the last three ways also have extraordinary traits: it seems that these marvelous events were produced ad hoc especially for the sages; the reality of the vision is stressed by the fact that the arrows revealed in it are capable of actually wounding R. Elazar. The details of the doctrine of prophecy which underlies the vision are not given, but it seems that the spirit of R. Saadia Gaon’s doctrine of prophecy looms over them. According to The Book of Beliefs and Opinions (second article, chap. 10) the object of the prophetic vision is a “form” which is created for the moment for the purpose of this particular prophecy. The uniqueness of the prophecy here also stands out from a comparison with the story that will be considered in the following section. There the sage will pick up a rose that he happened to find in his path in order to demonstrate what “great wisdom” is (line 15). That is, there he makes use of existing nature. Here – unnatural events occur especially for the sages, in order to have them comprehend the secret of redemption.

This special prophecy is not understood by the fellows in an immediate, direct manner. They need the mediation and explanation of R. Elazar in order for him to reveal “the secret of wisdom” which is concealed in it (lines 52–65). Riddles already existed in the Bible as one of the prominent aspects of prophecy; Moses’ prophesying is presented in the Scriptures through this trait as a contrast to the prophesying of most prophets:

118 On the arrows, see in the above-mentioned story from the tractate Gittin. On the fowls, see J. Trachtenberg, Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion, New York 1979, p. 211.
When a prophet of the Lord arises among you, I make Myself known to him in a vision, I speak with him in a dream. Not so with my servant Moses; he is trusted throughout My household. With him I speak mouth to mouth, plainly and not in riddles, and he holds the likeness of the Lord (Num 12:6–8).

Perhaps then the marvelous, extraordinary capacity of R. Elazar in deciphering the clues in his vision alludes to his status being equal to that of Moses. Whatever may be the precise details of this doctrine of prophecy, they impart a clearly surrealistic hue to the vision described in our text, and may bring the vision close to Ashkenazi Pietists, who sympathized with R. Saadia’s doctrine of prophecy.119

In conclusion, the conceptual side is common to both variants; however it seems that the difference existing between the two is not accidental but is based on literary motives, in other words – on richer visual images which are meant to illustrate the prophetic vision more forcefully.

THE THIRD TALE – “THE ROSE AND ITS SCENT”

The differences between the two variants of the third tale are greatest and most meaningful, in comparison with the preceding two pairs of stories. In my view, we have here a deliberate reworking of an earlier story on account of a change in the kabbalistic conception of the world. These changes have slight implications for the structure of the tale but more so – for the homilies presented in it. I shall open with a systematic account of the opinions presented in each variant, I shall continue with a comparison of their literary aspects, and only at the end of the discussion will I set forth my evidence as to the precedence of one and the secondary nature of the other.

The earlier variant presents one single idea in several different ways; in other words – it presents the repeated reflection of one principle on different levels of the world, the ‘principle of shoshanim’. The principle, taken from the words of the Sages,120 is that God’s providential action is a combination of two opposed qualities or attributes (Middot) – Din (Stern Judgment) and Rahamim (Compassion); these are symbolized by two colors – red and white, the colors of the roses, that is the shoshanim. The quality which is thus created is called here the quality of Hesed (Mercy), and it is represented by a scent. As long as these qualities represent the moral qualities of God, there is a correspondence between the opinion expressed in this story and that of the Talmudic Sages.

However, in a kabbalistic context, they also have the meaning of Sefirot and clearly the specific relations described here do not correspond to the opinion of the central trend in Kabbalah – that in general Rahamim is a result of the combination of Hesed and Din. As Prof. Moshe Idel has shown,121 there is indeed a different kabbalistic tradition, the version of which corresponds to our text. This tradition has been preserved chiefly in Ashkenaz,122 and some of the Catalan and Castilian kabbalists were aware of it.

The reflection of this principle is presented in several examples. First, in nature, that is, in the rose. Corresponding to both Din and Rahamim, the rose has both colors, red and white, and, corresponding to Hesed, a pleasant scent emanates from it (lines 28–32). In fact, from the literary standpoint, the moral of the story is anchored precisely in this example, that begins with Rabbi Ba taking advantage of a coincidental opportunity to pick up a rose in his hand and teach his friends a word of wisdom (lines 7–15), that is, to illustrate through the rose the recurrent reflection of a certain principle. From the homiletic standpoint, this principle appears to be the exegetical development of the verse from the Song of Songs (6:3) which considers the shoshanim (that is, roses) – Just as the Holy One blessed be He leads the world according to the principle of the shoshanim, mankind too is supposed to worship their Sovereign according to this principle and thereby theurgically reinforce this positive pattern within the divinity. It seems that the ways of worshipping God were determined in such a way that mankind could respond to their Lord in the same coin and could create the quality of Hesed by combining Din and Rahamim, namely, act according to the principle of shoshanim.

Indeed, incense offered to God is based on the same principle: from the ingredients, some of them red and some white, the smoke and the scent rise (lines 53–57). Thus also in regard to the sacrifice – from the red blood and the white fat the aroma rises (line 59–62). After the Destruction of the Temple, prayer and fasting took the place of Temple worship. Hence, the same principle is found in them too. The morning and afternoon prayers correspond to Rahamim and Din, whereas the evening service, which, so to speak, includes both of them, takes the place of the quality of Hesed (lines 75–81). The nature of the evening prayer as Hesed, a quality that corresponds to aroma in general, is noticeable, for example, in the way the aromatic myrtle is used at the end of the Sabbath (line 82). Even the prophets of Baal were aware of this principle – they

119 Additional links to Ashkenazi Pietists are offered above and below in the discussions that consider the early versions of the first and third texts (around notes 85 and 122).
120 Breshita Rabhah 40, ed. M. Friedman, Tel-Aviv 1963, p. 167; Genesis Rabbah 12:15, p. 113.

122 On another possible proximity to Ashkenazi thought, see above around notes 85 and 119.
waited for the hour of afternoon prayer, that is the hour when the Din quality is active in order to intensify it through self-laceration - probably up to creating an imbalance which will serve their goals (lines 69–73). Finally, in a fast, too, a process similar to the sacrifice is believed to take place: the fat and blood of the person fasting, are - as it were - burned and offered up as the smoke of a sacrifice to heaven (lines 96–105).

It seems that the author of the later variant changed and reworked the early tale because of two reasons. First, his kabbalistic position differs regarding the relations among the three qualities - Din, Rahamim and Hessed. He belongs to the central stream of Kabbalah that holds that Din and Hessed stand in opposition to each other, while Rahamim unites the two. In this version too we may see Rahamim as the opposite of Din (in as much as it includes Hessed too), but there is no doubt that Hessed is not what constitutes their unity.

Secondly, he made a different choice from the store of opinions of the Talmudic Sages concerning the relationship between Din and Rahamim. While the point of origin of the early variant is the conduct of the world on the basis of joint effort between two opposed qualities, that is, the qualities of Din and Rahamim, the point of origin of the later variant is the broad choice of sayings of the Talmudic Sages that stress the contrast between them and see them as alternatives. For example, “‘Turn my beloved and be thou like a gazelle’ (Songs 2:17)- eventually I will change Mary treatment of you from the attribute of Din to the attribute of Rahamim and hasten your deliverance like a gazelle or a hart”.

Or: “If you make your way of life acceptable [to me, then] ... from the throne of Din I shall rise and take My seat on the throne of Rahamim whence filled with Rahamim for you I shall spare you and for your sake turn harsh measure of Din into the gentle measure of Rahamim”. In this world, too, the two qualities stand as alternatives – the righteous are capable of transforming the quality of Din into the quality of Rahamim, while the evildoers affect an opposite action; they transform the quality of Rahamim into the quality of Din.

We also find among the Talmudic Sages several additional verbs which emphasize the contrast between Din and Rahamim. For instance, “May it be My will that My Rahamim may suppress My anger, and that my Rahamim may prevail over [My] other attributes ... so that I may deal with My children in the attribute of Rahamim and on their behalf stop short of the limit of Din”.

Thus, many sources of this kind moved the later author to favor the principle of opposition between the Hesed or Rahamim on the one hand and Din on the other over the principle of a combination of Hesed and Din. This preference is noticeable in the fact that it (and not the previous preference) is presented at the start of the new variant (lines 2–6). However, both for literary reasons - that is, since the author of the later variant did not go out to compose a new story but made use of the earlier variant - and since he did in fact accept, with only a slight change, the earlier principle, we find in his words a certain combination of the two principles.

Three times in the new story the principle of opposition between the qualities is demonstrated through the rose or the shoshan (lines 3, 28–29, 83–86). It seems that the idea behind this example is the preparation of rosewater. The inversion between the colors or the qualities which they represent, was carried out by brewing, or by the power of fire. The rose (or shoshan) is red this time and therefore represents the principle of Din, whereas water, which represents Rahamim, is white. I am inclined to conjecture that the process of producing rosewater by brewing roses in water, is described here by the peculiar word רְבֵּץ ("nitzqin", from the root nzq). It seems that since the printers of the Cremona edition of the Zohar too (or their sources) thought about rosewater, they chose to print "nitzqin"; this is derived from the root zbq, (to pour) which is connected by its very nature to water. In the subsequent appearances of this word in our story (lines 40, 85, 88), its meanings are broadened for any process of brewing or burning. In contrast, in line 88, it seems that the word "nitzqin" is derived from the root znq; and perhaps this should be corrected to "nitzaq" which is capable of being derived once again from the root qzq or perhaps the

123 Songs Rabbah, end of portion 2; tr. – M. Simon.
125 Genesis Rabbah, 73:3, p. 847; ibid., 33:3, p 308.
126 BT Berakhot 7a, tr. – M. Simon. This verb in the context of the principles of Din and Rahamim is found in additional sources, such as Sifrei, ed. Horowitz, Leipzig 1917, Psalms 3.
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above should be corrected to “zomqin”[133] In any event, the scent of roses, a motif originating in the previous variant, attests here, too, to what is positive in God’s attributes – here it is Rahamin (while in the earlier variant – the scent was equivalent to Hesed).

Thus the demonstration of the new principle is presented three times. This principle is that of opposition between the qualities, in respect of the rose. Nevertheless, the illustration of the previous principle, that is, the principle of combination was carried over, without change, from the earlier variant. This is noticeable in line 51 where the scent is mentioned as emerging precisely from the combination of colors, red and white, which are found in the shoshan (the rose).

The skipping between the two principles is also noticeable when the text shifts to discussion of the worship of God according to the principle of shoshan. Sometimes the sacrifice is described as red, while the smoke which rises from it after it has been burned in fire is white (lines 38–42, 85–86) and sometimes the new text preserves the words of the previous text and describes the sacrifice as a process of producing a scent from the combination between redness and whiteness (lines 49–52, 58–59). The new text describes the importance of the incense only through the words and line of thought of the previous text (lines 53–57), but on the other hand it adds a new motif which responds to its own line of thought only and not to the line of thought of its predecessor. This new motif is atonement for man’s sins; the sinner and his sins are red but as a consequence of the transformation from the quality of Din to the quality of Rahamin – they turn white (lines 5–6, 33–36). However, it seems that not every example can be accepted by him – the author of the new text does not adopt at all the example of prayer, apparently since he did not succeed in accommodating it with his own opinions. In the first variant the three prayers of the day represent, respectively, Rahamin, Din, and Hesed, while the last one includes the two first ones. It is nearly certain that the writer of the new variant adopted the more accepted opinion in the Zohar, that is, that they represent Hesed, Din, and Kingdom.[134] In this order, there is no reason to supply the example of prayer in order to demonstrate the principle of the “shoshanim!”

133 Indeed, in the view of Rabbi David Luria. “zomqin”, is a word which describes the process of burning the rose or the sacrifice in fire until white smoke comes out, whereas “migqin” is “a word for pouring water on it, and that is a mistake since pouring water on the roses so that the water becomes white, does not need fire at all; further, when they draw water from it [the rose] then the scent of roses itself is weakened and here he said, “And its scent does not change”” (R. David Luria, Nefesh David, Vilna 1882, at this place). Tishby, in contrast, chose the word “migqin” and explained “Migqin – melt, dissolve”. He included in this any process of burning, both of producing rose water and of burning the sacrifice.


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On the subject of fasting we find an interesting combination of the ideas of his forerunner with his own ideas. On one hand, he takes from his forerunner the idea that the advantage of fasting is in its combining the colors of red and white, which represent here the blood and fat of the faster (lines 60–61, 91). On the other hand, he is apparently hinting at the paleness which spreads over the face of the faster, who has succeeded in transforming himself from red to white – “Whoever sits in his fasting and sacrifices his fat and his blood, does not broil and turn all of him white save by fire” (line 87–88). Further, he directs our attention to the process that is responsible for refining – fire. Like the rosewater, the incense and the sacrifice, the faster thus “boils” his limbs “in the warmth of the weakness of his body”, until “the fire overcomes him” and transforms his body into a sacrifice (lines 88–92, 100–104).[135] And finally, the author of the reworked tale broadens the motif of scent more than his forerunner and takes up the case of R. Eliezer ben Hyrkanus and the blessing he received from Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai as a model. According to that blessing the bad odor that comes out of his mouth during his fasting becomes the aroma of the Torah that

135 As Scholem commented here in his Zohar (Gershon Scholem’s Annotated Zohar: Jacob fos 1873, Jerusalem 1992), there is also a parallel to this paragraph in Mishkan ha’Eduot of R. Moses de Leon, that was written in 1293: “Know and understand that the secret of fasting is the altar of atonement [which is] ready to stone for one’s sins as may be fitting. Because by eating and drinking little, his fat and his blood diminish and he sacrifices it in its small amount to the Lord his God. And it will be in the evening when the weakness of limbs will overcome him and the fire of natural heat will be kindled in him [and] it will not be extinguished and will not find in the body food or drink... it [the fire] will take from what it finds and will eat from the fat and the blood that are in the body instead of food... Just as the smoke of fire rises from the sacrifice... and it will rise upwards, and just as the scent of the sacrifice rises, so does the scent of a man on a day of fasting... goes forth and rises from his mouth upwards and it is a pleasant scent, a burnt offering to the Lord” (Berlin manuscript, Or. Ou. 833, previously acc. 15. 1896, film no. 1754, page 132a). The importance of “the fire of natural heat” and the stress on the scent bring this text close to the later variant of our story more than to the earlier variant. At the same time, we should point out that its context in Moses de Leon is totally different. It does not deal with the way in which God conducts the world but with the parallel between the structure of this world and of the upper world. This should be seen as part of the phenomenon of “multiple existence” of homiletic motifs (as described in the foreword to the present article and in note 111). These motifs occur time and again but their context might change. Further on – in de Leon, as in our story, the homiletic motif of red and white is connected with fasting, sacrifices, and scent, whereas in other places in the Zohar, we find that the combination of red and white is linked to other combinations. For example, in the famous Zoharic article “The Rose” which opens the Book of Zohar (Zohar, 1, 1a), as well as “The Rose and the Lily of the Sharon” which is found in Zohar, 1, 22a, and in Zohar, III, 107a. These are further examples for the ‘multiple existence’ of homiletic motifs, but this is not the place for elaboration.
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Both variants of the story are exemplary tales. Exemplary tales are meant to demonstrate a certain principle, though not through being based on a Biblical verse, but through a particular narrative event, sometimes in the life of an exemplary personage. Dozens of the Zohar’s tales, which have very varied formats, and especially many of the tales of the Midrash ha-Ne’elam (like the pair of tales about R. Yosei ben Pazi discussed above), belong to this genre. The exemplary tales are close in their character to the exemplum, an extremely widespread genre in the Middle Ages. However, while the exemplum uses the narrative aspect to present an exemplary pattern of behavior, only a minority of the Zohar’s exemplary stories are meant to demonstrate a principle of behavior; most of them are meant to demonstrate a theological principle as to the structure of the universe or how it functions.139

The two variants of our story are therefore exemplary tales meant to demonstrate a certain theological principle, the ‘principle of shoshanim’. Despite this, we may discern a slight difference in the structures of the two variants. Rabbi Ba in the earlier tale notices roses and takes advantage of the opportunity in order to point to the governance of the universe according to that very principle. That is to say, the format is a limited narrative opening which presents the example (lines 7–15), and afterwards an conceptual discussion that clarifies in various ways the principle behind this example (the rest of the story). The narrative opening is chiefly an illustration of the principle presented as a parable: “Just as a rose is red and white ... so the Holy One blessed be He leads his universe from the quality of Din to the quality of Rahamim...”. (lines 28–32). In conformity with this parable, R. Ba picks a rose and shows his friends its colors.

The later story’s structure is different in that it adds at the beginning of the text special lines for a general determination of the principle of the moral of the tale (lines 2–6). From then on its format is identical to that of the earlier tale— the narrative aspect presents the example (line 19) and the conceptual discussion details the principle and explains the example (the rest of the story). The structure of the narrative aspect is identical to the structure of the earlier tale, despite the change in its content. The basic parable here is: “Just as the shoshan is red while its water is white, thus does the Holy One blessed be He lead his universe from the quality of Din to the quality of Rahamim” (lines 2–5). That is to say, this parable points to the ability to transform the rose from red to white. R. Abba illustrates the parable when he picks a red rose and indicates that it can be changed to white through “m’ziqa”, that is, by boiling it in water (line 29).

136 Pirgey d’Rabbi Eliezer, chap. 2; Aboth d’Rabbi Nathan, ed. S. Schechter, Vienna 1887, version A, chap. 6; Genesis Rabhah, 41 (42):1, p. 398; Old Tanhuma, ed. S. Buber, Vilna 1885, Lekh Lehka, sign 10; Shimuni, Lekh Lehka, sign 72, p. 274.

137 In the earlier tale, Hesed and scent are treated as parallels whereas in the later tale Rahamim and scent are so treated; in both cases myrtle on the eve after the Sabbath is the particular example. The scent of the myrtle of the ceremony of havdalah (on the evening post- Sabbath to mark the boundary between the Sabbath and the work week) as representing a Sefera which belongs to the right side specifically (that is, Hesed in the more accepted nomenclature) rather than a Sefera which stand in the middle (that is, Rahamim or Kingdom in the accepted terminology) appears in Zohar, I. 17b, and this is so despite the fact that according to the time of havdalah, it was proper to see it as a symbol of Kingdom (see note 134). For that reason, I am inclined to think that this paragraph, too, is based on the remnants of the unconventional kabbalistic terminology, which Prof. Moshe Idel pointed out in his essays, idem, Comments; idem, More.

138 See near note 54 above. On the precedence of the texts in which the Hebrew component is dominant over the Aramaic, see Scholem, ‘A Lost Chapter’, p. 427, as well as R.

139 On the exemplum genre in Hebrew, see Yassif, The Hebrew Folktales, pp. 137–148; 310–324. For a more detailed exposition of exemplary stories in the Zohar, see Meroz, The Pearl, the Fish and the Matza.
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The change between the two variants here thus resembles one of the changes between the two variants of the tale about R. Yosef ben Pazi. In both pairs of stories the moral of the story is embedded in the structure of the early variants but is not presented explicitly, whereas the late variants set aside a special place for explicitly stating the moral; in the tale of the rose and its scent — at the beginning of the tale (lines 2–6); in the tale of R. Yosef ben Pazi — at the end (lines 84–87). It seems that in both cases the processor of the stories took pains to emphasize their character and importance as exemplary tales.

Finally, we should make another comment concerning our pair of variants: According to the late variant, two sages walk along a path and meet a third sage. It seems that originally this was also the situation in the earlier variant, but its text was corrupt. This matter is noticeable through two items. First, in lines 7–8 the two sages are only mentioned as walking together, but in line 12 a third sage is mentioned without explanation. Secondly, the appearance of the formulation: “Surely the Shekhinah is here”. This formulation is common in the Midrash ha-Ne’elam and is confessed (as part of the greetings in an encounter between sages) on the senior sage in the encounter. And incidentally, in response to the position represented by the title “Shekhinah”, R. Abbá responds to R. Yosef (according to the later story) with the contrasting reciprocal title — “my son” (line 18).

Let us conclude our remarks concerning the story “The Rose and its Scent”. Comparison of both variants shows that there are no accidental differences between them; it is not a matter of omissions or additions that were made by an absentminded proofreader. What we have found are planned changes that were deliberately made.

The format of the earlier exemplary tale which the later author had at his disposal held a certain charm in his view. Nevertheless, he joined to its beginning an additional layer which defined the central principle and the moral of the tale: the principle of opposition between the qualities of Din and Rahamim; probably also in order to stress his innovation. He did not find it essential to totally reject the central principle of his forerunner: the combination of the qualities of Din and Rahamim. Everywhere that he could he left the examples as they were, but he broadened them so that they would also fit the new principle of opposition (for instance, fasting is likened to sacrificing the fat and the blood, while the aroma rises from both, but additionally, the red flesh of the faster turns pale). He not only broadened what existed already, but he added new examples (for example, the whitening of sins) and even broadened the narrative platform in order to stress the importance of scent. However, he did not accept one of his forerunner’s opinions. That is, that the combination of Din and Rahamim produces Hesed, and for that reason, he also absolutely rejected the illustration of this opinion (the link between the three daily prayers).

In short, the differences between the variants are consistent and indicate a different conceptual interest.

Determining which of the variants is earlier and which later is based on the following arguments:

The expressions of the shorter variant, which demonstrates only one principle in the relationship between Din and Rahamim, are noticeable in the longer variant which demonstrates both principles (if the shorter tale were a reworking of the longer one, would not the shorter be noticeable in the short one too that originally dealt with both principles?).

The shorter variant is based on principles that are known to be more ancient or unconventional, that is, seeing Hesed as a combination of Din and Rahamim, and the Minnah (afternoon) service as corresponding to Hesed; the later variant, in contrast, is made up of opinions much more conventional in the various layers of the Zohar.

The shorter variant still does not “possess a developed pseudepigraphic consciousness, since the Talmudic rabbis are mentioned in it” (line 94). At most, the prayer which appears at its end is placed “In the mouth of R. Nehuniah ben Hakanan, the pre-Zoharic mystical hero” (in BT Berakhot 17a it is attributed to Rav Sheshet). In the longer variant, on the other hand, “It already belongs to R. Elazar, the son of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohay!”

As in “The tale of R. Yosef ben Pazi” we find a change in the name of story’s protagonist – R. Ba in the earlier text becomes R. Abbá. As said above, the process of changing names of the Sages who speak, as a consequence of reduction in their number and greater focussing on Rabbi Shimon bar Yohay’s fellowship, characterizes the transition from the earlier parts of the Zohar to the later parts. The label “Matnitin”, which is the Aramaic name for ‘Our Mishna’ is the heading for the shorter variant! The shorter variant, and not the longer one, has acquired this label. This label attests that a status of primacy and authority was ascribed to the shorter variant as compared with other stages of lateness and commentary, like the relationship between the historic Mishnah and the Gemara which interprets it. The author of Sîreti Torah too often quotes short passages under the headings “Matnitin” or “Tosefta” and then interprets them.

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140 See above, near note 57.
141 For instance, in the tales of the Midrash ha-Ne’elam which were printed in Zohar, II, 5a or in the Zohar Hadash, 28b.
142 And this too is often found in the Midrash ha-Ne’elam; for example: Zohar Hadash, 6a (and I am not including here cases which deal with relations between biological fathers and sons).
143 The present paragraph is a composite of remarks by Y. Liebes.
144 See above near note 76.
145 For example, in the passage which belongs to Sîreti Torah but beginning with the Tosefta in the Zohar, 1, 107b. And for more detail, see Meroz, The Pearl, the Fish and the Matza.

[46] [47]
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THE TEXTS

The texts themselves are reproduced below; each tale has two variants; each variant has two or more sources. While I was making comparisons between two sources of the same variant, I was generally inclined to skip over slight differences, such as initials used for phrases (i.e., רָאָשָׁה - רָאָשָׁה, the abbreviation of a word (for instance, עֲשָׂרַת - עֲשָׂרַת), doubling of letters (for instance, מִלְכָּה - מִלְכָּה), but not to other differences of spelling, or omission or addition of the definite article.

In each pair of tales, the source of one of the variants is in the Cremona edition (that was printed in the years 1558–1560) and one in the modern Margoliouth edition. The Margoliouth edition is based on the Mantua edition, which was contemporary with the Cremona printing, but had versions from many other editions added to it. Many of these alternate versions originate in the Cremona edition. Nevertheless, I have copied the text of the Margoliouth edition as it is, including the texts in brackets, namely, the additional versions.

The First Text: “The Tale of Rabbi Yosef ben Pazi”

Variant A of the present pair of texts was quoted according to the Munich manuscript Heb. 203, film number 1154 (here and in the following the film is kept at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, The Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem), pp. 114b–115a. The manuscript, which includes the Zohar on the Book of Genesis, was written in Rome in 1551 in Sephardic script by R. Hayyim Gatgegno, the proofreader of the Cremona edition. It should be pointed out that Variant B is found further on, on pp. 136a–b.

The alternate versions (marked *) were quoted from the Vatican manuscript 68, film number 185, pp. 14b–15a. This manuscript was written in Sephardic script. It is from the fourteenth or fifteenth century, and includes only material from the Midrash ha-Ne’elam on the Torah or Midrash ha-Ne’elam Ruth.

An additional source for the tale is the Moscow manuscript, Ginzburg 262, film number 27936, an Italian manuscript from the year 1564, pp. 227b–228a. The Ginzburg manuscript includes only material from the Midrash ha-Ne’elam.

Alternate versions from this source have been marked **.

Some fragments of Variant A are found in a few other manuscripts. Since all of these are far from being complete I did not incorporate their alternate versions.

The first part of the story (up to line 21 inclusive) is also found in the Florence Lorenziana manuscript, Plat. 48, film number 17809, p. 68b. This source, written in Italian script from the fourteenth or sixteenth century, includes various parts of the Zohar and is not complete.

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The second part of Variant A (from line 32 to its end) has partially survived in the Cairo Geniza. The manuscript, which is written in a semi-cursive Sephardic handwriting is from the 13th century at the earliest, and is kept at Cambridge (T-S AS 86 (198)). Those words which are readable do not present any new alternate version.

In British Museum manuscript Or. 10772 (Gaster 773), film number 8087 or 5746, p. 15a only lines 1–11 and 82–83 were copied. This is a manuscript that includes various parts of the Zohar on the Book of Genesis and is written in Sephardic script from the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The copy of the story ends with the words “as above”. Hence, it seems that the抄yist is referring us to the variant of this story that had already been copied by him earlier in the manuscript and for that reason, he did not copy it in full here. The problem is that the other part of the manuscript has not survived and has not come down to us. In any event, it seems that the copyist of the British Museum manuscript had in front of him the twin of the abovementioned Munich manuscript that included both texts; I conjecture that the copyist decided to forego copying the full text the second time on account of the similarity between the two texts.

Variant B was quoted here in accordance with the Margoliouth edition, I 88a–b. The alternate versions (which are marked * *) were quoted according to the Cremona edition I, cols. 242–243.

The Second Text: “The Fowl and the Children”

Variant A was quoted in accordance with a New York manuscript, the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary Ms. 1614 (previously Enelow 991), film number 10712, pp. 4a-b. The manuscript includes various parts of the Zohar on the Book of Exodus and the following. It was written in Sephardic script in the sixteenth century.

Alternate versions (marked ***) are according to the Cremona edition, II cols. 9–10.

Variant B was quoted in accordance with the Margoliouth edition of the Zohar, II 6b. This text too is found in the Cremona edition – in II col. 33, although it is fragmentary and only goes until line 79. Its alternate versions have been marked as above with the mark ***.

The Third Text: “The Rose and its Scent”

Variant A was quoted according to the Toronto manuscript, of the University, Friedberg collection 5–015, film number 70561, p. 245b. The alternate texts (marked ****) were quoted in accordance with the Vatican manuscript 206, film number 264, p. 331a–b. Both of these manuscripts are Byzantine from the fifteenth century.

Variant B was quoted according to the Margoliouth edition, II 20a–b. Alternate texts (marked *****) were quoted in accordance with the Cremona edition, II cols. 34–35.
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Variant B – Zohar II, 88a-b

1. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור.
2. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור.
3. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור.
4. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור.
5. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור.
6. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור.
7. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור.
8. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור.
9. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להשתע רבח אב, כיאה אשת אשת, מקס ביבואה גור. דך סילק בר בцеת להشت...
Ronit Merov

Zoharic Narratives and Their Adaptations

[Text content not displayed due to image limitations]
Ronit Meroz

The Fowl and the Children

Zoharic Narratives and Their Adaptations

Variant B – Zohar II, 88a-b

בכימרא אל מעטסמאל בגרני רגימא.
בעפשאלמ תבי עסער תונודר

75

אקות תירב הנותנה בברא

80

דנירבה האנה אתורא תירב ולקרא

Variants A – Munich Ms. Heb. 203

בכימרא אל מעטסמאל בגרני רגימא.
בעפשאלמ תבי עסער תונודר

85

פגפוג יבר ר ונוש

ןוין רכיה יבר ב ביז

וזה וניא דריהם

ונטקとなった אורייאן שנות

(בכינר דלוא ראות) 41

(בקים דלוא ראות) 42

בכתלמה כמות לילע ראותו

(בקים דלוא ראות) 43

(בקים דלוא ראות) 44

(בקים דלוא ראות) 45

(בקים דלוא ראות) 46

(בקים דלוא ראות) 47

(בקים דלוא ראות) 48

(בקים דלוא ראות) 49

(בקים דלוא ראות) 50

(בקים דלוא ראות) 51

(בקים דלוא ראות) 52

(בקים דלוא ראות) 53

(בקים דלוא ראות) 54

(בקים דלוא ראות) 55

(בקים דלוא ראות) 56

(בקים דלוא ראות) 57

(בקים דלוא ראות) 58

(בקים דלוא ראות) 59

(בקים דלוא ראות) 60

(בקים דלוא ראות) 61

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(בקים דלוא ראות) 66

[54]
Ronit Meroz

Variant B – Zohar, II, 6B

זוהיהלכהאומז"ההוהיאמצרימה
לאברבודהחכמהוזdmaמה
עבךלאברבודהחכמהוזdmaמה.

חכמהוהיהוהיאמצרימה.

לשםאמהז"הנדה.

לאברבודהחכמהוזdmaמה.

לאברבודהחכמהוזdmaמה.

עבךלאברבודהחכמהוזdmaמה.

לשםאמהז"הנדה.

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לשםאמהז"הנדה.
Zoharic Narratives and Their Adaptations

The Rose and its Scent

Variant B – Zohar, I 88a–b

לְהוָהַ רְוֵז הַסְּנָכָת נִלְון שִׁטָּתָא

וְחָטַאתֶא נַלְּקַת הָרְכָּזָת נְלָקָּטָא

דַּתְּרָא אָבָא – מַלְפִּיא נִלְון שִׁטָּתָא

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דַּתְּרָא אָבָא – מַלְפִּיא נִלְון שִׁטָּתָא

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דַּתְּרָא אָבָא – מַלְפִּיא נִלְוָתָא
Ronit Meroz

Zoharic Narratives and Their Adaptations

Variant B – Zohar, I 88a-b
א כראת הרוחות,...

Variant A – Friedberg 5-015
המאמרים,...

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ככ كبיה הנ desar עלה ממדת,...

והיה מעלה המשיחון הוא במדת התפירה.

שהמעシーズン ממדת במדת,...

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רמר רינו,...

והיה מעלה משיחון,...

ועלו בני כל חלקי של איל זהב.

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והחלום על וודה דולם,...

והיה מעלה משיחון,...

ורמר רינו...

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והיו בטלהה חנכתו שאף ולאו גונה...

ועיר עֵלֵה חנכתו ורב אריגה...

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ורמר_reply_array

והיו בטלהה חנכתו שאף ולאו גונה...

ועיר עֵלֵה חנכתו ורב אריגה...

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והחלום על וודו דולם,...

והיה מעלה משיחון,...

ורמר_reply_array

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והחלום על וודו דולם,...

והיה מעלה משיחון,...

ורמר_reply_array
Zoharic Narratives and Their Adaptations

Variants B - Zohar, I 88a-b

Ronit Meroz

Variant A - Friedberg 5-015

בברדורăm חמא הם חמודה, והם
ולעִי כַּהַ בָּאָסָא שֶׁבְּהַ אֵילָהּ

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Shemayach Cibor Hei Be-shamash Kefesh Hama

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גַּרְבּוּן שֶׁלֹּא קְנַנְתָּם בְּקָדָשָׁן קִים

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