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THE DIVINE VOICE IN SCRIPTURE: *RUAH HA-KODESH* IN RABBINIC LITERATURE

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The Divine Voice in Scripture:
Ruah ha-Kodesh in Rabbinic Literature

by

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Dedication

To my husband, Avraham Raphael Danan

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Abstract

The "Holy Spirit" is a familiar concept in Christianity, but in its original Hebrew construction as *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, it also plays an active role in classical Rabbinic literature. This dissertation surveys uses of the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in major texts from the Tannaitic period through the Aggadic Midrash and the two Talmuds. Drawing on Scriptural roots, the Rabbis identify *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as the divinely given power that enables individuals to prophesy. While the term never loses this biblical meaning, the Rabbis take *Ruah ha-Kodesh* further by personifying it as a metonym for God, and more specifically, as "the divine voice in Scripture."

This dissertation first surveys the historical background of the term in pre-Rabbinic ancient Judaism, and then turns to a detailed textual analysis of its uses as both

prophecy and personification in Rabbinic literature. The study notes and examines conventional and formulaic terms associated with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Four major *Ruah ha-Kodesh* traditions are analyzed in depth over the course of their diachronic development.

There are numerous Rabbinic sources that claim that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has ended, yet others offer advice on how to achieve it or indicate its existence in the Rabbinic present. The solution to this paradox is that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has not gone, but changed. Even as *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is said to have departed from Israel in her role of inspiring the prophets, she continues to speak actively as part of the ongoing Midrashic dialogue with the Sages.

The final chapter examines *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as a metonym for God, particularly as it contrasts and interacts with other divine metonyms of feminine grammatical gender: the *Shekhinah* and the *Bat Kol.* The *Shekhinah* and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* are frequently identified, but not identical. The changing role of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* exemplifies a shift in the locus of divine communication, from prophecy to the Midrashic study of Torah.

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INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of This Study

This dissertation surveys and analyzes the development and usage of the term, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* or "Holy Spirit," in classical Rabbinic texts through the redaction of the Babylonian Talmud (sixth century C.E.), against the background of its uses in other Mediterranean literatures preceding and concurrent with Rabbinic Judaism (including the well known role of the "Holy Spirit" in the New Testament). Drawing on Scriptural roots of the term *ruah* as spirit, the Rabbis identify *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, "holy spirit" or "spirit of holiness"[1] as the divinely given power that enables individuals to prophesy and to lead. But they also introduce a new application of the term by personifying it as a metonym for God, in ways which draw on Biblical and Hellenistic concepts of the hypostatization of Wisdom as Torah. The salient action of this personified *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is speech, a function which has not been explored in depth in previous studies. She (like the Shekhinah, the Rabbinic term for the Divine Presence, her gender is feminine) speaks in Scripture and speaks for God, as an active participant in the Midrashic dialogue. Yet the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* never loses its original meaning of prophecy, so that human beings speak with her voice as well.

[1] The construct form (*smikhut*) in Hebrew often functions like an adjective; thus "spirit of holiness," can also be "holy spirit." Aaron Bar-Adon, personal communication, March 30, 2009.

Ruah ha-Kodesh is presented as a remnant of the biblical past as well as the Rabbinic present. Paradoxically, Rabbinic sources claim that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has ended, yet they offer advice on how to achieve it. Even as *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is said to have departed from Israel in her role of inspiring the prophets, in her personified form she continues to speak as part of the ongoing Midrashic dialogue with the Sages.

Previous studies have identified the two main Rabbinic uses of the term, as the power of prophecy or as a metonym for God. But they do not address the problem of how these two meanings relate to one another either developmentally or theologically. This dissertation goes further by providing an in-depth overview of the development and nuances of the term, while highlighting the theological significance of the connection between its two major meanings.

TECHNICAL NOTES

Translations

Translations of the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) are from the Jewish Publication Society,[2] with my own adjustments as noted. (If embedded in other texts, they generally follow the style used by that translation.) The Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael follows Lauterbach,[3] and the Babylonian Talmud and Midrash Rabbah follow the Soncino edition, with transliterations, capitalizations and style adjusted for uniformity. I made changes where needed for the sake of a more precise correlation to the Hebrew text, and these are explained in the notes or placed in brackets. Notations of some key Hebrew

[2] *JPS Tanakh*, Hebrew-English Edition (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1999).
[3] Lauterbach, Jacob Z., *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael-a critical edition*, 3 vols., (Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society, 1961).

words in transliteration are placed in parentheses. I have inserted paragraph spacing for ease of reading. For the sake of consistency, the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is generally used untranslated within the biblical and Rabbinic texts, instead of English translations such as "Holy Spirit" or "divine inspiration," except where referring to other literatures which use different languages, or to secondary literature which uses the English term. The Yerushalmi texts from Megillah 1:1 and Sanhedrin 10:2 (28b) verbally follow Neusner's *Talmud of the Land of Israel.*[4] Translations of other Rabbinic sources are mine. New Testament citations follow the Revised Standard Version. Translations for non-Rabbinic texts are those noted in the bibliography.

Transliterations

There are two main approaches to the romanization of Hebrew words: transcription, which strives for a precise letter-for-letter and vowel-for-vowel correspondence; and transliteration, which approximates the sounds of the words. Rabbinic Studies tend to follow the latter method, but there is no one single accepted standard for Hebrew transliteration. This dissertation adopts a completely phonetic approach, with no attempt to differentiate between letters that are no longer distinguished by contemporary native speakers, except for the khaf (kh) and the het (h) which are still differentiated in Israeli Sephardic pronunciation. An apostrophe signals a silent letter in the middle of a word (whether aleph or ayin). Some commonly known words and names (Ishmael, Akiba, Moses) have been left in English form. Names of primary Rabbinic texts, as well as common terms accepted into English scholarship (e.g. "Aggadah" or "Qumran") have been left in their usual Anglicized spelling and not been italicized.

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4 Jacob Neusner, *Talmud of the Land of Israel-A Preliminary Translation and Explanation* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982-1993).

Capitalization follows English conventions. The transliteration of *ruah* and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* provided some challenges. I have used the lower case when speaking of *ruah* as wind, and the upper case when it is translated as "Spirit," in connection with divinity, as in *Ruah YHWH* or *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (and capitalized Holy Spirit as well). I have also capitalized the names of other figures used as personifications: *Shekhinah, Bat Kol*. The reader should keep in mind that there is no upper case in Hebrew.

The Textual Evidence: What is Rabbinic Literature?

Before proceeding to analyze the uses of the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic Literature, I will first give an overview of the corpus of work that provides the textual evidence of Rabbinic thought. "Rabbinic Literature" is sometimes understood to indicate all Rabbinic works from the Second Century C.E. to the present day, including codes, scriptural commentaries, and Responsa. A narrower definition, which I follow here, focuses on the classic or formative age of Rabbinic literature and includes both Midrashic and Talmudic genres.[5]

In the present study, I confine my survey of the uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to the outstanding texts of that period: the major Halakhic (legal) and early Aggadic (non-legal) Midrashim, as well as the Mishnah, Tosefta, Beraitot (as quoted in the Talmuds) and the

[5] An overview of the development of several important texts and current issues in the academic study of Rabbinic Literature is provided in my Master's Thesis: Julie Hilton Danan, *Between Earth and Heaven: Elijah the Prophet in Rabbinic Literature*, University of Texas, 2000, 4-26. Some comments here are excerpted from that work. Three introductions to the subject are Gunter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash (Strack and Stemberger)*, trans. Markus Bockmuehl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), Jacob Neusner's, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), and Shmuel Safrai, ed., *The Literature of the Sages, Part 1* (Assen/Maastricht, Netherlands: Van Gorcum/Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987). Dates and general descriptions in this section are generally based on Stemberger (who is now the actual author of "Strack and Stemberger," translator's note, x).

two Talmuds. These documents originate in Palestine under Roman rule, except for the Babylonian Talmud. Dating of redacted texts is a serious problem in the study of Rabbinic Literature, and in many cases only approximate dates can be given,[6] but all are thought to be composed up to the seventh century C.E.. This was a time in which Judaism had to reconstitute itself and respond creatively in the wake of the Roman destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., the loss of Jewish sovereignty over the land of Israel, disastrous defeat in the second century rebellion against Rome, and the eventual rise of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire.

These classic Rabbinic texts are known as *Torah she-be'al peh*, or Oral Law, although they were subsequently transmitted in written form. Rabbinic tradition holds that the Oral Torah was given to Moses by God at Sinai, together with the Written Torah. Martin Jaffee examines the nature of Oral Torah in three manifestations of the term. "Oral Torah" may refer to the composition of Rabbinic texts, their oral-performative settings, or their doctrinal significance.[7] Early texts acknowledge a composition method that was both oral and written, but in later documents, there was a conscious effort to depict Rabbinic Literature as purely oral in composition. The "written-oral" debate about the composition of Rabbinic literature goes back to the Geonic period. Jaffee takes a middle position that there was an "interpenetration of the written and oral," which he demonstrates from close examination of formulaic characteristics. He concludes that the "oral" nature of Rabbinic Torah was focused on its oral-performance in the master-

[6] Neusner, *Introduction*, 1994, 651-656; Stemberger, *Introduction*, 46-48.
[7] Martin S. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth-Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BCE-400 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

disciple relationship.[8] The oral origins and performance settings of Rabbinic works are relevant to a fuller understanding of their nature.[9]

The language of the early Rabbinic works (most of the Mishnah, Tosefta, Halakhic Midrashim and many Beraitot) is Mishnaic Hebrew. Aramaic, in Galilean form for the Yerushalmi and Aggadic Midrashim, or Babylonian form in the Bavli (Babylonian Talmud), takes precedence in Amoraic works, with a number of loan words from Greek.[10]

HALAKHIC MIDRASHIM

Halakhic Midrashim, commonly known also as Tannaitic Midrashim, are exegetical commentaries with a legal orientation, on the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy.[11] In contrast to the apodictic nature of the Mishnah and Tosefta (which will be described below), these works use Scriptural citations as justifications for halakhah. The Mishnaic and Midrashic forms competed for dominance in the Tannaitic period. In a sense, each form "triumphed" in its own way. The Mishnah dominated by becoming the foundational text for both the Palestinian and Bablyonian Talmuds. Yet the

[8] Martin S. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, 124.
[9] See Chapter 1, on methodology, for more on the application of Oral-Formulaic methods to the study of Rabbinic Literature.
[10] Stemberger, *Introduction,* 101-107.
[11] The Tannaim are generally considered the sages of the first two centuries C.E., while the Amoraim are those that followed them through the early sixth century. It should be noted that there is another meaning for the word, *tanna*, in the narrower sense of one who repeats legal traditions orally, by heart. Some prefer to confine use of the term to this narrow definition alone.

Midrashic style of justified law reemerged in the Gemara's lengthy arguments.[12] The "Halakhic" Midrashim also contain significant Aggadic material. Traditionally, they are said to derive from the schools of Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiba, third generation Tannaim (c. 80-110 C.E.) who each founded a different school of Biblical interpretation, with Rabbi Ishmael considered more the literalist.[13]

The Mekhiltot

The Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael[14] is a halakhic Midrash on Exodus, which nonetheless contains extensive Aggadic sections.[15] In form and program, it "comprises the first scriptural encyclopedia of Judaism" collecting numerous topics and themes and then arranging them based on exegesis of Scriptural verses. As such, it was frequently imitated in later Midrashic collections.[16] Although its date has been widely argued, it is thought that the text is Tannaitic and received its final redaction in the latter part of the third century.[17]

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[12] For an exposition of this interplay between the two major Rabbinic genres, see David Weiss Halivni, *Midrash, Mishnah and Gemara-the Jewish Prediliction for Justified Law* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

[13] Although this classification has been called into question, Azzan Yadin find it instructive: Yadin, *Scripture as Logos--Rabbi Ishmael and the Origins of Midrash* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), Preface, x-xii.

[14] Third generation Tanna who came from a priestly family. He is traditionally known as the author of Thirteen Principles by which the Torah is interpreted.

[15] The Aggadic sections rarely mention Rabbi Ishmael and are not strictly to be included in his "school" of writings. Azzan Yadin, *Scripture as Logos*., xii.

[16] Neusner, *Introduction.*, 251.

[17] Stemberger, *Introduction,* 255.

The Mekhilta of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai[18] was another version of the Mekhilta from the Tannatic and early Amoraic period, which was quoted through the Middle Ages but considered a lost work until it was reconstructed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from citations in other texts and from manuscript fragments. The first fairly complete edition was produced in 1905 by David Z. Hoffmann, and a critical edition was produced in the mid-20th century by J.N. Epstein and E.Z. Melamed, from fragments in the Cairo Geniza and attestations in other sources such as Midrash ha-Gadol, a medieval midrashic anthology.[19] For many years, the latter was the standard scholarly edition, but W. David Nelson criticized the work for its lack of attention to critical manuscripts of the Midrash Hagadol, its choice of other textual sources, and the technical difficulties inherent in the utilization of its critical apparatus.[20] Nelson subsequently published a new critical edition which included selections of the Midrash that were preserved in the fifteenth-century Yalkut Temani.[21] The Mehkilta of Rabbi Simeon (Shimon) ben Yohai is considered a slightly later work than the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, probably edited during the Amoraic period (200-500 CE), and may be a "secondary redaction" from the same midrashic traditions.[22]

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[18] Fourth generation Tanna, a student of Rabbi Akiba. He is described as a mystic and was traditionally held to be the author of the Zohar, a primary Kabbalistic text now given a medieval provenance.
[19] D.Z. Hoffman, *Mechilta de-Rabbi Simon b. Jochai: Ein halachischer and haggadischer Midrash zu Exodus* (Frankfort am Main: J. Kauffman, 1905), and J.N. Epstein and E.Z. Melamed, *Mekhilta D'Rabbi Simon b. Jocha* (Jerusalem: Sumptibus Hillel Press, 1979).
[20] W. David Nelson, "Critiquing a a Critical Edition: Challenges Utilizing the Mekhilta of Rabbi Shimon Ben Yohai," *Recent Developments in Midrash Research: Proceedings of the 2002 and 2003 SBL Consultation on Midrash,* Lieve M. Teugels and Rivka Ulmer (eds.). Pisactaway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2005: 97-155.
[21] W. David Nelson, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006).
[22] W. David Nelson, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai,* xi-xxv.

Sifra, Sifre Numbers, Sifre Deuteronomy

Sifra, associated with the school of Rabbi Akiba, offers a verse-by-verse commentary on the book of Leviticus. Mainly due to the lack of narrative in Leviticus, its focus is on halakhah and legal material.[23] It frequently appears to quote the Mishnah and Tosefta, but may instead have been drawing on common circulating material also used in their redaction. The core of the work is dated to about the same time as the Mehkilta of Rabbi Ishmael, although there were apparently many later additions to the text.

Sifre ("books") contains early exegetical halakhic commentaries on the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy (Exodus was originally included, but lost after the Geonic period). Sifre Numbers can probably be dated to after mid-third century, with later additions, and Sifre Deuternonomy, apparently a composite work, was probably redacted in the late third century.[24]

TALMUDIC LITERATURE

Mishnah, Tosefta and Beraitot

Legal oral traditions were circulating from the Second Temple period. In addition to the Pharisees' known embrace of oral law, even groups such as the Sadducees and the Qumran sect had their own oral laws.[25] "Mishnah," from the Hebrew verb meaning "to repeat," can be described as the individual or collected oral teachings (*mishnayot*) of the

[23] Stemberger, *Introduction,* 260-263.
[24] Stemberger, *Introduction*., 273.

Tannaim, the early Rabbinic authorities. *The* Mishnah is the foundational document of the Talmudic genre. It consists of *mishnayot* collected and edited by Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi (also known simply as Rabbi) around the year 200 C.E. in the land of Israel. It is organized into six "Orders" or *Sedarim*, each of which contains seven to twelve tractates, or *masekhtot*. The Mishnah focuses on case law and covers all facets of daily life, ritual and prayer, torts, and marital relationships as well as rulings on sacrifices, purity and the temple cult which were no longer operable after the destruction of the temple. Although giving the appearance of a legal code, it might be better described as a legal textbook or training manual in the methods of the sages. Neusner calls it a "philosophical law code."[26]

The Tosefta, meaning "the addition," is a commentary on the Mishnah and collection of additional Beraitot (see below) which follows the organization of the Mishnah but is four times longer. Although its purpose and editorial development remain obscure, it was probably edited some time between 300 and the fifth century C.E.[27] It is often considered the earliest Talmud, although it lacks the dialectic nature of the later Talmuds. Many Beraitot in the two Talmuds are selections or paraphrases from the

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[25] Hanoch Albeck, *Introduction to the Mishnah* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1959), chapter 1, on the antiquity of Oral Law; Lawrence Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 245-255.

[26] Neusner, *Introduction,* 97, and Stemberger, *Introduction,* 55, suggest that it might have been a teaching manual. Abraham Goldberg terms it a "study book of Halakha." Goldberg, "The Mishna—A Study Book of Halakha," in Shmuel Safrai, ed., *The Literature of the Sages,* Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987): 211-262.

[27] Stemberger, *Introduction,* 158-159.

Tosefta, often (especially in the Bavli) rephrased for the purposes of the current argument.[28]

Beraitot, or "external" teachings, in the Talmud were traditionally considered authentic Tannaitic sources from the same period as the Mishnah. Today, some hold that not all Beraitot are authentically Tannaitic. Those quoted by sages "from the middle or late Amoraic period," which cannot be found elsewhere in the Tannaitic literature or the Yerushalmi (Palestinian or Jersualem Talmud), are considered to be particularly doubtful.[29] To be cautious, I will examine Beraitot in the context of their Amoraic texts, but note their traditional classification as an earlier layer of text.

The Talmuds of the Land of Israel and Babylonia

The two Talmuds are the Yerushalmi, also known as the Palestinian Talmud or the Talmud of the Land of Israel and the Babylonian Talmud or Bavli. The former was probably redacted in Tiberias in the early fifth century, and the latter was edited in Babylonia in the sixth and early seventh century C.E., but remained fluid, reaching a "fixed quality" in the eighth century.[30] The Bavli was largely edited by the "Stammaim,"

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[28] Abraham Goldberg , "The Babylonian Talmud," in *The Literature of the Sages,* Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987): 323-345.

[29] Abraham Goldberg, "The Babylonian Talmud," 334-335. Likewise Jack N. Lightstone contends that "beraitot as a class share the literary traits of postmishnaic texts." He claims that many developed from passages in the Tosefta, Halakhic Midrashim and Yerushalmi, and therefore most should be dated no earlier than the second half of the third century. Lightstone, "The Rabbis' Bible: The Canon of the Hebrew Bible and the Early Rabbinic Guild," *The Canon Debate*, Lee Martin McDonald and James A Sanders (eds.) (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.), 178fn.

[30] Michael Krupp, "Manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud," *The Literature of the Sages*, Shmuel Safrai, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 346.

anonymous fifth to seventh century redactors, whose penchant for "justified law" and desire to include and reconcile divergent Rabbinic opinions created the discursive style and complex dialectical argumentation which give the Bavli its unique character.[31]

Each Talmud starts with the Mishnah at its core, commenting on and clarifying the Mishnah but even more importantly (especially in the Bavli's case) launching into extensive dialectic and argumentation in the search for truth, the divine will, and principles of righteous living. The expansion on the Mishnah is known as the *Gemara* (learning), which is sometimes used as another word for the whole of the Talmud. Both Talmuds follow the Mishnah's outline but neither covers every tractate. The Talmuds, particularly the Bavli, became the foundational documents of traditional Judaism.[32]

AGGADIC MIDRASHIM (MIDRASH AGGADAH)

The collections of Aggadic Midrashim examined in this study are those which are associated with the Amoraic period in Palestine, and related to the Palestinian Talmud. Stemberger dates the final redaction of Genesis Rabbah as "approximately contemporary with the Palestinian Talmud, i.e. in the fifth century, and probably in its first half." He dates Leviticus Rabbah to the fifth century as well.[33] These two are generally considered the earliest Aggadic Midrashim (although I have noted that the Mekhiltot also contained extensive aggadic components), and are closely associated in origin with the Yerushalmi.

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[31] See David Weiss Halivni, *Midrash, Mishnah, and Gemara*, pp. 76-92; and Jeffrey Rubenstein, *The Culture of the Bablyonian Talmud* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 1-13. The term, "Stammaim," is Halivni's, following the classic term for anonymous or unattributed Talmudic material, "*Stam ha-Talmud*."

[32] For a description of the Bavli's ascent to authority in the Geonic period, see Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction*, 214-215.

[33] Stemberger, *Introduction*, pp. 279, 291. Note that some other Midrashim termed, "Rabbah" come from a later period. Also, the Midrashim themselves contain some later additions; see Stemberger 280, 289-290.

Genesis Rabbah is exegetical, expounding in minute detail on the book of Genesis. It consists of one hundred chapters and focuses rhetorically on the "direction of the history of Israel, specifically its ultimate salvation at the end of time."[34] Leviticus Rabbah has a different format; it is not a verse-by-verse commentary. It has usually been defined as a homiletic Midrash whose thirty-seven chapters follow the weekly Torah readings of the triennial Palestinian cycle. Some have found a tight literary structure to the work, while others see it as a looser collection of sermonic material.[35] Burton Visotsky finds no clear unifying theme and calls Leviticus Rabbah a "miscellany, an encyclopedic collection of traditions which are gathered around thirty-seven nodes or clusters of verses in Leviticus."[36] Each section opens with at least one *petiḥta* (opening segment), before turning to the *gufa*, or "main section."

Other Aggadic works of Amoraic period are referenced in my study, including: Pesikta de-Rab Kahana (Sabbath and festival homilies from fifth century Palestine), Pesikta Rabbati (homilies for the festivals and special Sabbaths, date uncertain, perhaps sixth to seventh century), Song of Songs Rabbah (a commentary on the Song of Songs, mid-sixth century), Lamentations Rabbah (commentary on Lamentations, first half of the fifth century), and Avot de-Rabbi Natan, a narrative expansion of the Pirke Avot, which is a collection of wise sayings attributed to the Tannaitic sages and included in the Mishnah. The dating of Avot de-Rabbi Natan is uncertain, possibly as early as the fifth century.[37]

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[34] Neusner, *Introduction*, 360.

[35] Joseph Heinemann, "Profile of a Midrash: The Art of Composition in Leviticus Rabba," Journal of the American Academy of Religion 39 (1971): 141-150. Neusner, *Introduction*, 391-393, cites its "recurrent message," that focuses on the sanctity of Israel and its future salvation from subjugation to the nations. But cf. David Stern, "Vayikra Rabbah and My Life in Midrash," *Prooftexts*, Vol, 21, 1, (Winter, 2001): 23-38.

[36] Burton Visotsky, *Golden Bells and Pomegranates*: Studies in Midrash Leviticus Rabbah. (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 23.

[37] Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction*, is my source of dates for these Midrashim. A. Guttman holds that Pirke Avot was a late addition to the Mishnah, c. 300 (Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction*, 122).

A NOTE ON THE TERMS "MIDRASH" AND "AGGADAH"

Discussions of Rabbinic lore and hermenautics sometimes interchange the two concepts of "Aggadah" and "Midrash". The two terms are not identical, but they overlap to some degree. In broad terms, Aggadah is a genre of Rabbinic literature that includes all the non-legal material found in Talmud and Midrash. The vast majority of this literature was composed in Palestine, although many selections were edited and adopted into the Babylonian Talmud.[38] Aggadah ranges from wise sayings and epigrams to anecdotes, folk-tales and lengthy stories, some of which are about events in the Bible and some of which do not reference Scripture.[39] *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, as a theological concept, is invariably referenced in aggadic passages of Rabbinic works, whether those works are classified as halakhic or aggadic.

"Midrash" has a dual meaning, as the Rabbinic method of biblical hermeneutics and collections or exempla of such interpretation. As such, it signifies both the genre and the compilations themselves.[40] Midrash has a unique hermeneutical method of weaving and comparing Biblical verses (or words, or even letters) together in an "intertextual"

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[38] Avigdor Shinan, *The World of the Aggadah*, 16-17. Shinan extends the boundaries of Aggadah far beyond Rabbinic literature, encompassing other early Jewish literatures such as the Apocrypha, Jewish-Hellenistic literature, mystical works, the Dead Sea writings, and more.

[39] J. Heinemann, *Aggadah and its Development* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974).

[40] G. Hartman and S. Budick, eds., *Midrash and Literature*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), Introduction.

fashion to show that "Scripture is one interconnected whole."[41] In Neusner's phrase, the Rabbis "write with Scripture" in creating Midrash. Fishbane decribes the Midrashic uses of Scripture in the terminology of Saussure's structural linguistics: Scripture becomes the "langue" (complete linguistic system) of each Midrashic "parole" (act or expression of speech), so "thus is the Midrashic word inscribed within the language of Scripture."[42] Midrashic collections or texts can contain both halakhic (legal) and aggadic or legendary material, but they are always referencing Scripture. If the primary focus of a Midrashic text is aggadic (such as Genesis Rabbah or Leviticus Rabbah), it is commonly known as a "Midrash Aggadah," although the former example is exegetical (interpreting Scripture verse by verse) and the latter is homiletic (sermonic in nature). Yet as previously noted, the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, conventionally termed a "Halakhic Midrash," also contains large sections of aggadic material. Likewise, the Bavli contains both Halakhah and generous selections of Aggadah. At the same time, the Bavli often employs "midrash" or "midrashic techniques" in its hermeneutic.

I will try to clarify matters by using upper-case "Midrash" to signify a text in the Midrashic genre, while using lower-case "midrash," to signal the use of midrashic hermeneutics in a given Rabbinic text.[43] Similarly, I will use Aggadah for the genre and aggadah for an individual example.

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[41] Michael Fishbane, *The Exegetical Imagination*, 13. Cf. Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, 11-19.

[42] Michael Fishbane, *The Exegetical Imagination*, 11-12.

[43] Like "Halakhah" for the legal genre and "halakhot" for individual laws. Judah Goldin states that three terms are commonly used in Rabbinic texts themselves to describe the principal components of the Oral Torah: *midrash, halakhot, aggadot*. (Avot deRabbi Natan, 39, cited in Judah Goldin, "Freedom and Restraint of Aggadah," *Midrash and Literature*, Hartman and Budick, eds., 57-66.) Goldin describes halakhot as the apodictic traditions, not dependent on Midrash.

THE HISTORIC STUDY OF MIDRASH AND AGGADAH

Having reviewed the major works of Rabbinic Literature, I turn to a brief review of how Aggadic material has historically been treated as a subject of study. Beginning in the Geonic period, Aggadah has often taken a secondary role to Halakhah in Jewish thought.[44] Judah Goldin explores the general Rabbinic principals that "one doesn't rely (*ein somkhin*) on Aggadah" and furthermore, "one doesn't bring a difficulty (*ein makshin*) from the Aggadah," and one may not derive halakhot (laws) from it, because aggadot (legends) are a personal creation and not based on received tradition.[45] According to Goldin, these are Geonic formulations, and the reluctance to rely on the Aggadah does not stem from the Talmuds (except for an oblique reference in the Yerushalmi). In the two Talmuds, Halakhah and Aggadah were closely intertwined. In Tannaitic and Amoraic literature, the study of Aggadah is frequently praised, and considered a way to learn *imitatio dei*.[46] However, by the Geonic period, "Rationalism [was] the dominant intellectual persuasion"[47]and the post-Talmudic authorities had already become uncomfortable with the antinomian potential inherent in the free-flowing aggadic imagination. There ensued a development away from Aggadah, and growing restraints put upon its use. The discomfort, indeed embarrassment of the Geonim and subsequent commentators with the Aggadah, appears to have resulted partly from

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[44] See Joshua Levinson, "Literary Approaches to Midrash," *Current Trends in the Study of Midrash*, Carol Bakhos (ed.), Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006: 189-226.

[45] Goldin, "Freedom and Restraint," 57-61. Israel Ta-Shma, however, points out that in the Middle Ages, Ashkenazic commentators derived some life-and-death halakhot related to martyrdom from aggadic passages. Ta-Shma, Israel, 2004. *Studies in Medieval Rabbinic Literature in Europe and North Africa (Hebrew).* Part II, Jerusalem: Magnes Press/Hebrew University, 193 fn.

[46] Goldin, "Freedom and Restraint," 67-68.

polemics with other sects and groups, such as the Karaites, Muslims, and Christians, who made mockery of the Aggadah's fantasy and anthropomorphism (the latter less of a problem for medieval Christians, as Ta Shma points out).[48] Goldin notes that a medieval commentator such as Rabbi Abuhav, 14th century author of *Menorat ha-Ma'or*, felt a need to apologize in the introduction for his foray into the aggadic realm.[49] In the Middle Ages and later, aggadot and Aggadic Midrashim were lavishly preserved in collections such as *Yalkut Shim'oni* (attributed to Rabbi Shim'on Hadarshan, 13th century, Frankfort), and anthologies such as the aforementioned *Menorat ha-Ma'or*, *Ein Ya'akov* (a collection of all the aggadic sections in the Bavli and some of the Yerushalmi, Ya'akov ben Shlomo ibn Haviv and son Levi, Salonika, 1516), or retellings in the *Tsena Ur'ena* (a popular Yiddish collection including biblical and midrashic material, Ya'akov ben Yitshak Ashkenazi, Poland, 1590's), but these were directed at popular audiences and considered secondary to Halakhah, the study of the elite.

The first traditional scholar to take a systematic approach to the study of Aggadah was Maimonides (outstanding rabbi, philosopher, lawyer and physician also known as the Rambam, 1135-1204). He was challenged by the seemingly fanciful nature of the Aggadic Midrash, in contrast to rationality and to neo-Platonic philosophy and metaphysics. In the *Moreh ha-Nevukhim* (The Guide of the Perplexed), *Mavo la-Mishnah* (Introduction to the Mishnah), and particularly his introduction to *Perek Helek* (Chapter 10 of Tractate Sanhedrin), Maimonides tends to approach the Aggadah and sometimes

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[47] Goldin, "Freedom and Restraint," 60.
[48] Ta-Shma, *Studies*, 194-195.

the biblical text itself in a symbolic fashion. He developed a new allegorically based hermeneutic for the study of Aggadah.[50] For example, in his interpretation of the stories of Adam and Eve, reminiscent of Philo, Maimonides says that Adam symbolizes form or reason, while Eve represents physicality. Isaac Heinemann's understanding of the Rambam's view of Aggadah comes from a famous presentation on the matter in *The Guide of the Perplexed*. The Rambam contends that there are three categories of people who approach the Aggadah in different ways. Some accept it as literally true, some reject it as nonsense, and some realize that is it poetic or literary expression, "*melitsa ve-shir*." The former are fools, the latter just show their own ignorance, and the third group is correct. Rambam's view, then, combines a notion of the creative literary quality of the Aggadah, along with a neo-Platonic tendency to interpret it in symbolic ways.

In fact, the recovery of Aggadah was seen as a key task of the *Wissenschaft*, the "scientific" and scholarly study of Judaism that began in Germany early in the 19th Century (the first group formed in 1819), spread to Italy, Galicia and Russia, and ultimately created a legacy that continued into the Jewish Studies movement in the United States, Israel and Europe. One of the most important books produced by that movement was Leopold Zunz's (1794-1886) treatise on the history of the Jewish sermon, *Gottesdienstlichen Vortrage der Juden* (1834), which provided a history of the Jewish sermon and midrashic literature. After Zunz, other scholars who pioneered the literary

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[49] Goldin, ibid. I found it interesting to note that the 16th century commentaries of the Maharsha are customarily printed with the halakhic sections in large print and the aggadic sections in small print!

[50] Joshua Levinson, "Literary Approaches," 196-197.

study of Midrash included Isaac Heinemann, Max Kadushin, and Joseph Heinemann, the first appointed professor in Midrash at The Hebrew University.[51]

The modern renaissance of Aggadah was furthered by poets and scholars. In Odessa and later in Palestine, Hayim Nahman Bialik and Yehoshua Ravnitsky published *Sefer ha-Aggadah* (in installments from 1908-1911). They compiled aggadot from many traditional sources, but smoothed out the rough edges for a modern audience, and even composed some sections on their own.[52] In the United States in the early 20th century, Louis Ginsberg (1873-1953) authored the six volume *Legends of the Jews* as a retelling of the Aggadah in English, reworking the material even more than had Bialik and Ravnitsky, in order to weave it into a smooth and continuous narrative. In both cases, the literary qualities of aggadah were featured. For Bialik and Ravnitsky, the Aggadah became an ancient Jewish "epic" for the modern world.[53]

The first serious and systematic treatment of the Aggadah (although in reality confined to the Midrashei Aggadah) is that of Isaac Heinemann in his classic *Darkhei ha-Aggadah*.[54] He analysed the structure and purpose of the Aggadah, and built his own system on the Maimonidean categories described above. He noted that in the modern period, there are still those who accept Aggadah as historic (in some ways), those who reject it out of hand, and those who see it as creative expression. The first group could be

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[51] David Stern, *Midrash and Theory-Ancient Jewish Exegesis and Contemporary Literary Studies* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 7.
[52] David Stern, Introduction, *The Book of Legends—Sefer ha-Aggadah*, Bialik and Ravnitsky, trans. William G. Braude, (New York, Schocken Books, 1992), xxi.
[53] David Stern, Introduction, *The Book of Legends*, xxi.
[54] Heinemann, Isaac, *Darkhei ha-Aggadah* (Jerusalem: Massada Press, Hebrew University, third edition, 1974), as cited in D. *Boyarin's Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 1-11.

exemplified by bible scholars like Umberto Cassutto (1883-1951) and Benno Jacob (1862-1945), the second by early Reform Jewish leader Abraham Geiger (1810-1874) and the third by the historian and philosopher Nahman Krochmal, known as Ranak (1785-1840). However, Heinemann himself prefers a fourth approach. He cites Rabbi Yehiel Michael Sachs, who describes the Aggadah as a combination of "free expression and the striving for truth" (*tseruf bein yetsirah hofshit u-sh'ifa le-emet*).[55] In short, the Aggadah is actually "creative historiography." Heinemann finds the scholarly underpinnings for his approach in the work of German romantic historiographers such as Stefan George.[56] The goal of such historiography is not to strive for historical accuracy in the "objective" sense, but to get inside the world and mind of the characters of history and to retell their stories, "not the way it was but the way it should have been." Furthermore, according to Heinemann, the Aggadah is a product of the Rabbis' "organic" thought, which is very concrete, emotional, and collective in nature, as opposed to "scientific," (we might say, "Western" or even "logocentric") thought, which valorizes rationality, abstraction, and individualism. Furthermore, the Rabbis jettison the Greek approach to "Logos" in its sense of the word in its context, and feel free to take each word, phrase, or section of the Bible and detach it from its setting to find meaning that enhances, but doesn't destroy the plain sense.[57]

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[55] Heinemann, Isaac, *Darkhei ha-Aggadah*, 1-7.
[56] Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 1-11.
[57] Heinemann, Isaac, *Darkhei ha-Aggadah*, 140. Up to the last phrase, this Rabbinic technique sounds amazingly like post-modern deconstructionism.

Heinemann's methodology, while serving as a landmark at the time of his writing, now requires updating. For example, while he described earlier and later developments in the Aggadic Midrash and compared them to Hellenistic Jewish, apocryphal and Classical works, he did not analyze individual works. Rather, he wrote about the tendencies of Aggadah as a genre. Since Neusner, scholars have been much more cautious about a "synoptic" approach to Rabbinic thought which fails to note the distinct program, dating and context of each document.[58] Also, the concept that the Rabbis thought "organically" and emotionally is challenged by the highly logical analysis dominating their halakhic works.[59] Readers have acknowledged the strong German Romantic outlook that colors I. Heinemanns' work, particularly his view that the Rabbis envisioned and recreated an ideal Jewish mythic past.[60] Nonetheless, the foundational quality of Heinemann's work, as the first systematic analysis of the Aggadah, must be acknowledged.[61]

[58] See Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), Introduction. Critiques of Neusner's approach are mentioned under "Tradition History," below.
[59] Of course, their "organic" thought might be limited to Aggadic literature.
[60] D. Stern, *Midrash and Theory*, 101 fn.
[61] D. Boyarin, *Intertextuality*, 1-11.

Literature Review: Previous Studies on *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic Literature

The subject of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has not been widely addressed in depth in the secondary literature on Rabbinic sources. Several scholars have noted the dual usage of the term, but have failed to highlight the distinguishing features of the term or to address the connection between its two major meanings. One classic monograph has been cited for nearly a century, while scattered articles and references seek to update scholarship on the subject. This Literature Review will survey the pertinent works and assess the current state of research. As might be expected from a topic as theologically loaded as the "Holy Spirit," polemical agendas and apologetics have often clouded researchers' conclusions. In addition, the interchange of *Shekhinah* and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in some texts has led some writers to consider the two virtually identical.

After nearly a century, Joshua Abelson's classic, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature*, contains the most thorough study of the subject of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic literature.[62] I am referring to him at length, because although he was one of the earliest modern scholars to have written on the subject, his work remains the most thorough treatment of the topic. Chapters 14-21 of this monograph deal with "The Holy Spirit" (so I will use his choice of English term in reviewing his book). Although

[62] Joshua Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1912).

written in 1912, the book is still referenced and quoted extensively, indicating that it remains the authoritative volume on the subject. [63]

Abelson's book gives an overview of Rabbinic descriptions of God's immanence, including several chapters on the Shekhinah, several on the Holy Spirit, and some concluding chapters on Rabbinic theology and mysticism. His book shows a broad familiarity with many Rabbinic sources as well as Hellenistic, apocryphal and Christian works, and is surprisingly contemporary in many of its insights and observations.

Nevertheless, the book is unabashedly apologetic in tone. Abelson seeks to defend the mystical and empirical nature of Rabbinic spirituality. Ephraim Urbach has already noted Abelson's "apologetic purpose" which he said may well "overstep the mark."[64] To be more specific, Abelson contends that Classical Rabbinic literature (Talmud and Midrash) contains a substantial mystical element, which he defines as a religious experience based on empirical experience and feeling. "The mystic's ideal is communion with God. His soul reaches out in loving yearning to embrace God. And he knows that he has found God, because he has felt the thrill of His answering love."[65] According to Abelson, Rabbinic depictions of the *Shekhinah*, the Holy Spirit and other personifications of the divine show a Rabbinic belief in God's immanence in the world and His availability for direct relationships with humanity in the Rabbinic present as well as in the

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[63] Examples of citations of this book by later scholars included in our literature survey are: Ephraim Urbach, *The Sages-Their Concepts and Beliefs*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 41; David Flusser (who calls it "the most important work about the hypostatic aspects of Rabbinic Judaism until now"), *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity.* Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988, 307 fn., and B. Gertel, "The 'holy ghost' and Judaism" (Conservative Judaism, 49, 2, New York, 1997), 38.

[64] Ephraim Urbach, *The Sages*, 41.

[65] Abelson, *Immanence*, 5

biblical past. Abelson stresses the empirical "evidence" of God as a contemporary trend in religious life that is parallel to the empirical evidence of a new scientific age (a contention that would hardly be accepted today). He describes contemporaneous Christian trends toward an emphasis on "direct experience of God" and asks rhetorically, "Well…what has Rabbinical Judaism to say for itself? Must it confess its exclusion from such an inheritance? Is it shorn of the prerogative of having enjoyed the mystical experience of union with God…?"[66] The answer, for Abelson, is a resounding, "no," which he seeks to demonstrate in the rest of the book by citing extensive Aggadic material on the immanence of God.

Abelson explores the possible influence of Christianity on Rabbinic uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. He notes the frequent identification of the terms *Shekhinah* and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Amoraic writings, and suggests that the Rabbis may have switched to this term in order to avoid the Christian doctrinal connotations of "Holy Spirit." The term *Shekhinah* became the more popular one, and "whether this is owing to the adoption of the Holy Spirit into the theology of the N.T. and the Church Fathers, is a moot point."[67] He also observes increased reference to the Holy Spirit in later Aggadic Midrashim, which, he notes, originate in a time when Judaism and Christianity had become completely separate religions, and there was no longer a danger of confusion with Christian doctrines. However, his argument is not fully supported by the texts. *Ruah ha-*

[66] Abelson, *Immanence*, 11.
[67] Abelson, *Immanence*, 379.

Kodesh is used extensively in the Mekhilta, an early Midrash,[68] and also in Amoraic Aggadic Midrashim such as the Genesis Rabbah and Leviticus Rabbah, while there is a move to substitute *Shekhinah* in the Bavli.

The enduring popularity of this volume must stem from the fact that it remains, after nearly a century, the most exhaustive reference to Rabbinic sources describing God's immanence. The chapters on "The Holy Spirit" are extensive. In his first chapter on the subject, Abelson begins with a review of the term "Spirit" in the Tanakh and the Septuagint. He uses Biblical examples to illustrate many uses of the term *ruah* (in the Tanakh) or *pneuma* (in the Septuagint), including wind, breath, human nature, the Divine principal in human nature, and God's Spirit, all of which he views in a kind of hierarchy of meaning. The Divine or Holy Spirit interacts with humanity in a number of ways. It can relate to the entire nation by animating its leaders, or to individuals by offering "occasional, fitful inspiration" to certain prophets or "permanent, inborn endowment with a continuous ethical significance," as in Isaiah's vision of the Messianic ruler.[69] Abelson contends that the two Biblical passages which actually use the term "Holy Spirit" (Psalms 51:13 and Isaiah 63:10-11) have a special meaning related to the Rabbinic idea of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, because is a "deepening" of the term that connotes God's immanence in man.

Abelson also notes the Biblical personification of divine Wisdom/*Hokhmah* in the book of Proverbs in its role as a precursor to the Rabbinic understanding of the Holy

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[68] Although the dating is uncertain, Stemberger holds that the core of Mehkilta de-Rabbi Ishmael is third century. *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 255. W.D. Davies takes the opposite view from Abelson, that in fact the Mekhilta has many references to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, in response to its role in early Christianity. W.D.Davies, "Reflections on the Spirit in the Mekilta: A Suggestion," *The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*, Vol, 5 (1973): 95-105.

[69] Abelson, *Immanence*, 182-188.

Spirit. He notes the connection between the two, while contending that neither the Bible nor Rabbinic literature cross the line into a full hypostatization of these aspects of God. Biblical Wisdom and Rabbinic "Holy Spirit," have certain characteristics of personification, but Abelson insists that each remains, "a *quality* belonging to God, one of his attributes" and not, as in Christianity, representative of "any metaphysical divisions in the Godhead."[70]

In the following chapters, Abelson seeks to show the development of the term "Holy Spirit" or *Ruah ha-Kodesh* from the Bible into the Talmud and Midrashim. He notes that it is sometimes used as a name for God, perhaps because the Rabbis "held very stringent notions about the sanctity of the Divine name," and sometimes preferred "Holy Spirit" or "*Shekhinah*" as a substitute, therefore, "it is often a tax on one's ingenuity to discover whether an allusion to the Holy Spirit is a mere substitute for the Divine name, or whether it implies the deeper mystical meanings of the Divine Immanence."[71] Holy Spirit can also signify the "gift of prophecy in Israel" or the inspiration by which Biblical books were composed.

Abelson then turns to "materialistic conceptions of the Holy Spirit" (Chapter 16) such as "visual and auditory phenomena" that accompany mystical experiences. As one example, he interprets the expression, that the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "*nitsnetsa*" (was kindled or sparked) in someone to mean a manifestation of physical light. Likewise, if the *Ruah*

[70] Abelson, *Immanence*, 199-201.
[71] Abelson, *Immanence*, 207. In Chapter 6 of my dissertation, I examine the popular idea that the Rabbis substituted metonyms for God in order to protect God's sanctity or transcendence.

ha-Kodesh "appears," he assumes that it is in the form of a physical glow. This seems to be a hyper-literal reading of Rabbinic imagery and metaphor.

Abelson explores the ways in which the Rabbis used the Holy Spirit as a dramatic personification of the Scripture, speaking or crying out. He fails to note, however, that its scriptural speech is its chief distinguishing characteristic, the one that sets it apart from the *Shekhinah* and the *Bat Kol* ("daughter of the voice" or divine voice, another Rabbinic term).

His chapters on the Rabbinic view of the Holy Spirit and prophecy include references to Maimonides as well as classical Rabbinic texts. His concluding chapters on the Holy Spirit adumbrate the Rabbinic view that anyone could "possess" the Holy Spirit through living a holy life, and that the Rabbis acknowledged that non-Jewish prophets, such as Balaam, could also receive it under certain circumstances.[72] Although he includes an appendix on the interchange of the two terms *Shekhinah* and *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, it unfortunately contains some imprecisions, when Abelson contends that both the *Shekhinah* and Holy Spirit, are each at times found "speaking," "crying," "lamenting," or "answering."[73]

Abelson's book is an invaluable introduction to the Rabbinic concept of the immanence of God in general, and the Holy Spirit in particular. Its durability is an expression of its usefulness and insight. However, after nearly one hundred years, it is time for an updated and less apologetic study of the subject. A more detached and objective view is required. Moreover, methodology in the study of Rabbinic Literature

[72] Abelson, *Immanence*, 238-277.

has changed over the past century. It is no longer considered enough to gather a compendium on a certain term in order to produce a broad "Rabbinic" view of the subject. Today each concept is apt to receive more careful attention to its diachronic and synchronic development.

Other books and articles provide additional light on the subject of Rabbinic attitudes toward the Holy Spirit. Herbert Parzen's 1929 article, "The Ruah Ha-Kodesh in Tannaitic Literature," was written in the methodological style of the era, with loose attributions of opinions to "the Rabbis" as a body, and complete confidence in the reliability of rabbinic attributions.[74] Parzen generally focuses on Tannaitic literature, but also mixes in opinions from medieval commentators Rashi (1040-1105) and David Kimhi (c. 1160-1235), as well as the Targumim. Parzen begins considering the conditions by which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* can be experienced (by saintly people, usually in the land of Israel, during the "Biblical centuries"[75]), and only then proceeds to a definition of the term. What is interesting about this article is not the dated nature of the methodology, but the consistency of his definitions with Abelson (whom he doesn't cite) as well as with later authors who identify the two main meanings of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*:

> The term, in Tannaitic Literature, may be said to fall into two chief categories. Each category contains a distinctive singular connotation. In one the Ruah Ha-Kodesh represents God. God is the active agent. He is the centre of attention. In the other, the Ruah Hakodoesh denotes inspiration. And man has the centre state. Man is the focus of attention. Man holds the important position, in the sense that the Ruah Ha-Kodesh is for him.[76]

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[73] Analysis of such examples will be found Chapters 3 and 6.
[74] Herbert Parzen. "The Ruah Ha-Kodesh in Tannaitic Literature," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 20 (1929-30): 51-76.
[75] Herbert Parzen, "The Ruah Ha-Kodesh," 56
[76] Herbert Parzen, "The Ruah Ha-Kodesh," ibid.

Moreover, the first definition of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, in which it "represents God," is associated with "the Spirit of Scripture,"[77] and "the dramatization of Biblical verses." Furthermore, it is "a Representative of God—the Greek Logos."[78] Parzen describes *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "as the representative of God. It is the agent of God. It is a synonym for God."[79] He points out that there were many other metonyms for God that were used both to "avoid anthropomorphism" and the overuse of the sacred Tetragrammaton. Such common rabbinic names for God as ha-Makom ("the place," the Omnipresent, or "Existence" as he puts it) or "the Holy One, blessed be He," are also included in this category. The connection that some Tannaim drew between the word *yestsivah* (standing, "presenting oneself") and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (e.g. in Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, Tractate Shirata 10) represents an important aspect of the term, in which it describes a theophany experienced by the prophet. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* can also represent God's guidance, as in Sifrei Numbers 132, where the Land of Israel is divided among the tribes, "by means of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, and at the direction of the Omnipresent (*al pi ha-Makom*)." As for the second meaning of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, as divine inspiration acting upon mortals, there are also nuances to be found. It can signify prophecy (in particular the prediction of future events), wisdom, and poetic ability (as when the Children of Israel sing the Song at the Sea or David composes the Psalms).[80] Those touched by *Ruah*

[77] A term which he attributes to Solomon Schechter, but with no bibliographical reference.
[78] Parzen, "The Ruah Ha-Kodesh," 57
[79] Parzen, "The Ruah Ha-Kodesh," 60.
[80] Parzen, "The Ruah Ha-Kodesh," 70-72.

ha-Kodesh experience spiritual purity and exaltation.[81] Parzen gathers selected texts with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in a somewhat homiletic fashion to present his picture of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, with little critical reading or attention to diachronic development. Still, it is interesting that his overall classifications and findings—that the term can either be a metonym for God or refer to prophetic inspiration—are well in concert with other studies of the subject throughout the past century. His identification of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with Wisdom and the Logos is also important to my study of the Hellenistic roots of its use as a metonym.

Ruah Hakodosh in Some Early Jewish Literature is an unpublished doctoral dissertation by Edward Beavin[82] Beavin surveys uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the Apocrypha, Tannaitic Literature, and the Dead Sea Scrolls (those available in 1961). He concludes that these early Jewish literatures all share some common general meanings of term. He, too, finds that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* can be a straight "metonym" for God, or more specifically can signify a cleansing and purifying spirit, or a source of some special knowledge, or wisdom in general.[83] It can also provide prophetic inspiration or moral strength. Of interest is Beavin's caution to Christian scholars not to try to read Trinitarian theology back into Apocryphal or even Pauline writings by focusing on the whether or not they contain the definite article with "holy spirit."[84] He demonstrates that this is of little grammatical importance in context, and in all such cases the term meant a divinely

[81] Parzen, "The Ruah Ha-Kodesh," 73-74.
[82] Edward Lee Beavin, *Ruah Hakodesh in Some Early Jewish Literature* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Doctoral Dissertation, 1961). Beavin later became an Old Testament scholar and specialist in Dead Sea Scrolls at Kentucky Wesleyan College, and was a visiting lecturer at Harvard.
[83] Edward Beavin, *Ruah Ha-Kodesh*, 70-71; 104-106.

given spirit in human beings, and not a hypostatization (in the Christian Trinitarian meaning of the term). Beavin's section on the Tannaitic literature focuses mainly on the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, with a few additional references (including references to Talmudic stories quoted from an anthology.) Although he identifies and briefly describes most references to the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the Mehkilta and some other Tannaitic texts, he does not do an in-depth analysis of the term or evidence much familiarity with the original Hebrew sources. Nonetheless, this short thesis achieves its goal of showing that early Jewish literature made extensive use of the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in ways that are distinct from later Christian Trinitarian theology.

Ephraim Urbach's classic, *The Sages*, notes a few references to well-known passages on the subject of the Holy Spirit, which he views as synonymous with prophecy.[85] Urbach refers to a Tannaitic dictum that "Whoever accepts one commandment in faith is worthy that the Holy Spirit should rest upon him." (Mekhilta Vayehi 6). Urbach notes that some Rabbinic texts saw the Greek period as the end of formal prophecy, after which one must turn to the Sages, rather than the prophets, for guidance. Finally, he refers to a saying of Hillel (noted sage who lived in Babylonia and Palestine during the first half of the first century), in Tosefta Pesachim 4:13, that the ordinary people could be counted on as a halakhic source because, "the holy spirit rests on them. If they are not prophets, they are sons of prophets."[86] Urbach finds this significant, and introduces the insight that:

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[84] Edward Beavin, *Ruah Ha-Kodesh*, 23.
[85] Ephraim Urbach, *The Sages* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979)
[86] Urbach, *The Sages*, 399, 567, 577.

> the holy spirit had departed from individuals, but it rested on the community as a whole…the holy spirit as a permanent factor ceased to exist in the days of the Second Temple, but certain situations of exaltation and joy deriving from the performance of a Divine precept bring about its reappearance; more than this, however, the generation does not merit.[87]

Urbach also states that, "There is no difference whatsoever between 'Shekhina' and 'Heavenly Voice'; they are both alternative expressions for 'the holy spirit' that speaks out of the language of Scripture."[88] In fact, although the terms are related and sometimes interchanged, the *Shekhinah* and the *Bat Kol* rarely speak in Scripture, and it is a rather large generalization to say that they are "both alternative expressions" for the Holy Spirit.

Alan Unterman, Howard Kreisel, and Rivka Horowitz's article on "Holy Spirit" in the Encyclopedia Judaica (EJ), gives a solid general background to the subject. [89] Unterman notes that the Holy Spirit has different uses in Rabbinic thought. It can signify the function of prophetic inspiration, the conference of temporary prophetic ability to exceptional individuals, a function of religious ecstasy or joy, and finally—somewhat problematically—as a hypostatization or synonym for God or the Shekhinah. Those are the same basic functions, but in reversed order from the way that Parzen and Beavin classify them.

> This hypostatization is essentially the product of free play of imagery, and does not have the connotations of *Ru'ah ha-Kodesh* as an entity separate from God.

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[87] Urbach, *The Sages*, 577.

[88] Urbach, *The Sages*, 66. The Midrash quoted is Lev. Rabbah 6:1.

[89] Alan Unterman, Alan, Howard Kreisel and Rivka G. Horwitz, "Ru'ah Ha-Kodesh," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik (eds), Vol 17, 2nd Edition. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007: 506-509. This article also appeared in the 1st Edition, except for the Kreisel section on Maimonidies.

> Neither are there any overtones of *Ru'ah ha-Kodesh* somehow forming part of the Godhead, as it is found in the Christian concept of the Holy Ghost, which was a translation of *Ru'ah ha-Kodesh*. The problems centering around this use of the term *Ru'ah ha-Kodesh* are the product of its different uses shading into one another. Sometimes it is used merely as a synonym for God, and at others it refers to the power of prophecy through divine inspiration. In order to maintain a perspective on the matter, the monotheistic background and the image character of rabbinic thinking must always be kept in mind.[90]

These statements raise the central issue of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic literature. It is both the "power of prophecy" and a synonym for God. The article attributes this vivid personification of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to the fertile Rabbinic imagination and rightly affirms that this imagery does not contradict Jewish monotheism, but does not take the next step to analyze the unique function and purpose of this particular hypostatization for God.

In the continuation of the EJ article, Rikva Horowitz offers an overview of the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Jewish Philosophy, including Philo (Alexandrean Jewish philosopher and exegete, c. 20 BC to c. 50 CE). She confirms that Philo saw the Divine Spirit as inspiration to prophecy, and that he also saw it as the divine soul that comes from God, and identified the Spirit with Wisdom, which he elsewhere identifies with the Logos: "Philo's Divine Spirit corresponds to the rabbinic Shekhinah."[91] This is pertinent background for my current study, which also examines the connections of Spirit and Wisdom.

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[90] Unterman, "Ru'ah Ha-Kodesh," EJ. The term referred to in this paragraph, "Holy Ghost," based on the King James edition of the Bible, was formerly a common English translation of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in its Trinitarian Christian usage.

[91] Horowitz, "Ru'ah Ha-Kodesh," EJ.

In a more contemporary work, Stuart A. Cohen highlights the political aspect of Rabbinic descriptions of Holy Spirit.[92] According to Cohen, in order to establish their hegemony in the Jewish community and to avoid antinomian tendencies, the Rabbis downplayed the role of prophecy, including the role of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, even in biblical times and certainly in their own day. Cohen quotes numerous Rabbinic sources about the end of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and prophecy, without passing judgment on whether this cessation of divine inspiration was meant to "underscore Israel's unworthiness to receive prophetic pronouncements or was…to be understood as a sign that improvements in the national character had made prophets redundant."[93] The Rabbis wanted to establish that normative decisions would now be made on the basis of study and debate rather than prophetic inspiration. "The chronology of most of the sources which articulate rabbinic views on the cessation of prophecy has led to the suggestion that they were impressed into polemic service against third-and-fourth-century Christianity," with its claims of new prophetic revelations.[94] Moreover, the rabbis were also concerned with the preservation of religious norms, as well as the establishment of their own authority in Jewish society. Rabbinic texts accomplished this political aim in various ways: by denying the continued existence of prophecy, by minimizing its uniqueness in the Biblical setting, and by recasting the prophets in their own rabbinic image. Although not specifically focusing on *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, this book has much valuable material for understanding the social and

[92] Stuart A. Cohen , *The Three Crowns-Structures of Communal Politics in Early Rabbinic Jewry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Chapter 3.
[93] S. Cohen, *Three Crowns*, 67.
[94] S. Cohen, *Three Crowns*, 68.

political context of its use. Such aspects of the topic are often overlooked when the focus is on theology.

Other recent literature addresses the subject of Spirit in theology and interfaith dialogue. Michael E. Lodahl's *Shekhinah/Spirit* is a Christian "process pneumotology," or a theological exploration of the Holy Spirit "by way of the language and concepts of process philosophers and theologians." [95] Lodahl focuses on understandings of "God as Spirit" in the context of Christian Jewish dialogue, which he prefers to call "conversation."[96] In Part I of the book he explores the Jewish historical and textual roots of his subject.[97] Part II turns to the problem of evil as it relates to pneumatology in a post-Holocaust world, and Part III addresses the problem of eschatology. Throughout, Lodahl draws upon Jewish theological concepts of God's presence and absence, in ways that lead him to question traditional Trinitarian doctrine and to note the role of Christian theological triumphalism in laying the groundwork for anti-Semitism."[98] Lodahl stresses that whether the term used in ancient Jewish texts for God's immanence was *ruah*, pneuma, or *Shekhinah*, it signifies a way "*of referring to God's presence and activity, rather than to a being or beings hypostatically distinct from God*" (his italics).[99] By "hypostatization," however, he refers to Christian Trinitarian doctrine of separate persons within the Godhead, and not to literary imagery or personification as employed by the Rabbis.

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[95] Michael E. Lodahl, *Shekhinah/Spirit: Divine Presence in Jewish and Christian Religion* (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 1.
[96] Lodahl, *Shekhinah/Spirit*, 4-7.
[97] Lodahl, *Shekhinah/Spirit*, 41-57.
[98] Lodahl, *Shekhinah/Spirit*, 67-73, 107-110.

Lodahl's Chapter 2, on "Ruach, Pneuma, Shekhinah: The Divine Presence" (41-78) is of particular interest to my study because of his assessment of the role of Spirit and Divine Presence in biblical and Rabbinic tradition. Intriguingly, he writes, "It is true that the term "Holy Spirit" for the rabbis generally connoted the voice of God in the scriptures, and 'Shekhinah' tended more to suggest God's comforting and sustaining presence particularly in the context of Jewish suffering." The Rabbinic understanding of the Holy Spirit as "the divine voice in scripture" is central to my own thesis and has not been mentioned much in scholarly literature. However, Lodahl does not develop this statement further or embark on an in-depth study of primary Jewish sources. He gets most of his information on the Rabbinic literature from scholars like Abelson and Urbach, and shares Abelson's conclusions that Rabbinic uses of the term "Holy Spirit" may have been scaled back over time because of its role in Christian doctrine.[100] His book is a meaningful contribution to the field of interfaith theological dialogue, but does not present a detailed study of the functions of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic literature.

Elliot B. Gertel's article, "The 'holy ghost' and Judaism"[101] takes a dimmer view of interfaith dialogue and adopts a somewhat polemical tone to oppose it. Since Gertel identifies "Holy Spirit" almost exclusively with Christian Trinitarian doctrine, he minimizes its active role in Rabbinic sources. Although the two ideas have common roots, they are not identical. One can appreciate the role of "Spirit" and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic Literature without identifying it with Trinitarian Christian theology. But even

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[99] Lodahl, *Shekhinah/Spirit*, 57.
[100] Lodahl, *Shekhinah/Spirit*, 56.

more significantly, Gertel jumps to theological conclusions after a cursory survey of sources from a wide variety of periods and texts.

A key to Gertel's treatment of the subject is found in his sweeping statement that, "The Bible does not want us to be 'spiritual.' It wants us to do the will of God, to respond to God's teachings, to do God's commandments, and to be worthy partners of God in Covenant."[102] Gertel upholds a traditional Jewish idea of the primacy of religious observance when he contends that Spirit is "a vehicle of guidance that God uses reluctantly" in the Bible, and it is referenced with decreasing frequency in the accounts of the later prophets.[103] It is "at best an unpredictable emergency measure to remind Israel that the best way to draw close to God is to follow the teachings of the Torah"[104] These statements do not account for the many positive reference to "spirit" in the Tanakh and other ancient Jewish literature or its prominent role as *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in early Rabbinic works such as the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael.[105]

For Gertel, the Rabbinic concept of the "Holy Spirit," is a term for the *Shekhinah* or Divine Presence, distinguished from the Biblical *Ruah*, and he notes that "the Divine Presence graces the community through the study of Torah and the observance of mitzvot." According to Gertel, it was through Hellenism that the Christian notion of the Holy Spirit was developed, in contrast to the Rabbinic Jewish concept. But this may be a

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[101] Elliot, B. Gertel, "The 'holy ghost' and Judaism" (Conservative Judaism, 49, 2, New York, 1997): 34-55. Even the lower case in the title carries a message.
[102] Gertel, "The holy ghost," 37.
[103] Gertel, "The holy ghost," 36-38.
[104] Gertel, "The holy ghost," 45.
[105] Or indeed the many medieval Jewish authorities who sought to experience the Holy Spirit: see Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Prophetic Inspiration After the Prophets-Maimonides and Other Medieval Authorities* (Hobokon, NJ, Ktav, 1996).

false dichotomy. By the New Testament period, Hellenistic culture had influenced Palestine to the point that "Hellenism" and "Judaism" were hardly two separate entities; and indeed, "from about the middle of the third century BC all Judaism must really be designated 'Helenistic Judaism' in the strict sense."[106]

Gertel writes that the New Testament describes the Holy Spirit as Christ's spirit, abrogating the need for Jewish laws and boundaries between Jews and Gentiles. He references a number of books of Christian theology of the Holy Spirit that have a triumphalist or even an anti-Jewish tone. He concludes that the differences in the two faiths' views of the subject are "deep" and "unbridgeable."[107]

Gertel footnotes Solomon Schechter's example of parallels between New Testament and Rabbinic motifs related to Holy Spirit (such as the dove), but makes no more of it than to note that a Christian scholar rejected it. He cites the passage from the Tanna de-be Eliyahu, 207, [108] that "Jew or Gentile [male or female, slave or free] God's spirit rests upon a person in accordance with his or her deeds," but fails to consider its intriguing virtual parallel in Galatians 3:28 (and its intriguing difference), that in the Rabbinic text the Spirit's presence is based on deeds, while in the New Testament it is found through Christ. Such a comparison would highlight a shared tradition about the

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[106] Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism, Vol, 1* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), introduction and 107-110. See also Burton L. Visotzky, "Midrash, Christian Exegesis, and Hellenistic Hermeneutic," Current Trends in the Study of Midrash, Carol Bakhos (ed.), (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006), pp. 118-119, who states that contemporary scholars, "routinely assume rabbinic Judaism to have been thoroughly Hellenized."

[107] Gertel, "The holy ghost," 49. This viewpoint is in striking contrast to the previous book, *Shekhinah/Spirit*, in which a Christian theologian learns from Jewish theology in ways that make him question Christian Trinitarian doctrine.

[108] Tanna debe Eliyahu is a homiletic work of uncertain dating and provenance, probably post-Talmudic. Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction*, 340-341.

democracy of the spirit, while noting the difference in how the two religions describe its acquisition. Gertel does not do much analysis of the development of Holy Spirit in Rabbinic writings in the context of this article, and he gets most of his references on the subject from Abelson's book. In summary, this article contained much valuable information, but its polemical tone—against interfaith dialogue on the subject and including several barbed references to contemporary Jewish interest in "spirituality"—left it lacking as a fully objective scholarly work.

A new monograph on the subject of "Spirit" in ancient Jewish thought is *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism* by John R. Levison. Levison examines the concept of "Spirit" in the writings of three important first-century Hellenistic Jewish thinkers: Philo Judaeus of Alexandrea, "Pseudo-Philo" (the anonymous author of the *Liber Antiquarium Biblicarum*, a Hellenistic Jewish retelling of Scripture from the first century CE), and Flavius Josephus (37 CE-100 CE, a Jewish general who surrendered to the Romans and later became an important historian and apologist).[109] He shows that these and other ancient Jewish writers had a variety of influences in writing about the spirit. Careful analysis of their work shows that they reflect ideas about the spirit that are also found in Jewish works such as the Hebrew Bible, Apocrypha, and Dead Sea Scrolls, as well as the thought of Greco-Roman authors, particularly Cicero and Plutarch. Each of the three authors studied by Levison wrote about "an astounding variety of effects of the spirit's presence," (Levison, 238) and these are further examined in my section on "Hellenistic Jewish Literature." Although Levison is concerned with first century authors and only

[109] John R. Levison, *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism* (Boston: Brill, 2002).

touches briefly on the topic of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic literature, his book provided invaluable background material for my study.

Three additional selections focus specifically on the role of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in particular texts. One focused article is W.D. Davies' "Reflections on the Spirit in the Mekilta: A Suggestion," in *The Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Society*.[110] In this article, he asserts that the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael is one of the most important Rabbinic sources for understanding the New Testament. He notes the pervasive importance of "the Spirit" in this text, and suggests (although only "very tentatively") that much of the description of the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the Mekhilta might have been a conscious, if unsystematic, polemical response to early Christian theology. There are two examples of particular interest to Davies. First, the Mekhilta is very concerned with the idea that prophetic revelation through the Holy Spirit usually takes place within the land of Israel. Therefore, the sages must go to some pains to explain how Moses and even the entire people of Israel are able to be inspired by it outside the land (Tractate *Pisha* 1). Second, according to Davies, the Holy Spirit is presented in a "warlike" and militant way in Shirata 7, as it exalts in the overthrow of the Egyptian army. Davies believes that each of these key themes on *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Mekhilta—the importance of the land of Israel and the role of the Holy Spirit in national triumph—might be polemically responding to early Christian ideas of the spirit as "geographically ubiquitous and nationally

[110] W.D.Davies, "Reflections on the Spirit in the Mekilta: A Suggestion," *The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*, Vol, 5 (1973): 95-105. The article provides preliminary reflections to his book, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1974.

indifferent."[111] According to Davies, the Mehkilta depicted a Holy Spirit that was associated with the land of Israel and with the Jewish people and its fate, unlike its more universalistic overtones in nascent Christianity. There is, of course, much more to the role of the Holy Spirit in the Mekhilta, and in particular the "warlike" depictions in Shirata might be seen as somewhat ironic and even humorously mocking in tone. Still, these insights from a noted scholar of early Christianity can offer suggestions of the polemical dimensions of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic texts.

In his book *The Exegetical Imagination on Jewish Thought and Theology*, Michael Fishbane has a chapter on "Midrashic Theologies of Messianic Suffering," in which he identifies what he calls a *Ruah ha-Kodesh* type of homily in Pesikta Rabbati. The dating of this Palestine sermonic collection is inconclusive, but it probably dates to around the seventh century of the Common Era.[112] Fishbane draws the readers attention to several homilies in Pesikta Rabbati 34-37,[113] for the period of comfort after Tish'a be-Av (the fast commemorating the desctruction of the Holy Temple in Jerualem), which open with commentaries on eschatological verses from the prophets.[114] At the beginning of each Piska, a verse from the Zachariah or Isaiah is offered, followed by the declaration that it "is to be considered in the light" of what a certain Biblical figure "was inspired to say by the holy spirit" (*zo hi she-ne'emra be-Ruah ha-Kodesh al yedei*).The Biblical

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[111] Davies, "Reflections," 104.
[112] William Braude, trans., *Pesikta Rabbati—Discources for Feasts, Fasts, and Special Sabbaths* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 26. According to Stemberger, *Introduction*, 301-302, this can only be seen as an approximation, because there are many difficulties in dating the text. The core of the text may date to the third or fourth century, but its redaction may have taken place several centuries later.
[113] William Braude, trans., *Pesikta Rabbati,* 663-690.

figures referenced are Isaiah (Isa.61:9), Solomon (Song of Songs 8:9), David (Psalms 36:10), and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 31:13), and the verses cited as inspired by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* are each said to offer messianic hope to the people of Israel. Here, works from each of these major literary prophets are attributed to the influence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh.* In contrast to Maimonides low ranking of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the hierarchy of prophecy (see Chapter 3), these studies provide evidence that in some circles *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was associated with the major prophets as well as with Kings David and Solomon. Fishbane notes that bringing in the references to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* adds "a prophetic and semi-apocalyptic dimension to the various sermons" and contrasts with other Rabbinic assertions about the end of prophecy.[115] The references to the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* might be a rhetorical or hermeneutical move: if due to Rabbinic conventions the homilist can no longer claim to be divinely inspired, he can at least hint that his interpretation is based on inspired words.

However, Fishbane was not the first to investigate the "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* type" of homily. It was also examined by Marc Bregman in his article, "Circular Proems and Proems that begin with the Formula 'Thus it is said by the Holy Spirit,'"[116] where his focus was on the forms of the proem or *petihta*. Bregman brings extensive research to demonstrate that there are many exceptions to the commonly accepted description that a homiletic proem always ends with the first verse of the pericope (*gufa*) which follows,

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[114] "Midrashic Theologies of Messianic Suffering," Michael Fishbane, in his *The Exegetical Imagination on Jewish Thought and Theology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998): 73-85.
[115] Fishbane, *The Exegetical Imagination*., 77, 85.
[116] Marc Bregman, "Circular Proems and Proems Beginning: 'Thus it is said by the Holy Spirit." [Hebrew] *Studies in Aggadah, Targum and Jewish Liturgy in Memory of Joseph Heinemann*, Fleisher and Petruchowsky, eds. (Jerusalem: Magnes: 1981: 34-51).

and a high percentage of such exceptions occur in proems which begins with the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* formula noted above.[117] He calls proems which end with the verse they begin with, "circular" proems. Whereas Fishbane investigates the rhetorical uses of the "said with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*" form, Bregman is concerned with the dating of the various types of proems and contends that the "circular" forms were actually a later development that is more common in the Tanhuma-Yalamdenu genre of text.[118] The "said with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*" form is an unusual one and a fuller investigation of its provenance is a desideratum. Both Fishbane and Bregmans investigate the uses of one particular function of the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* which highlights its function of prophetic inspiration and touches on its connection to speech. But the possibly late dating of these Midrashic selections may place them outside the range of my current study.

Burton Visotzky's *Golden Bells and Pomegranates: Studies in Midrash Leviticus Rabbah*, includes the chapter, "Angels and Insects: Theology, Angelology, Prophecy, Eschatology," which pays special attention to the functions of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Leviticus Rabbah.[119] He places the references to God in that document on a "continuum" from the most transcendent to the most immanent. According to Visotksy, calling God

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[117] Cf. Harry Fox, "The Circular Proem: Composition, Terminology and Antecedents, Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research, Vol. 29 (1982): 1-31.

[118] Marc Bregman, "Circular Proems," 48-49. He notes that Zunz (1784-1886), had already identified the "said by the Holy Spirit" form as symptomatic of the later Aggadic forms, followed by Hanoch Albeck (1890-1972), who found that some of the material in these Midrashim originated in the Bavli. Fox considers the circular (or "envelope") proem a Tannaitic form which was "rediscovered" by later editors, but he does not question the late dating of the "said with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*" form. ("The Circular Proem," p. 28). The dating of Tanhuma-Yelamdenu, a Midrash on the Pentateuch, is open to debate. While commonly dated as late as the 9th century, its core may date from around 400 (Stemberger, *Introduction*, 305-306).

[119] Burton Visotzky, *Golden Bells and Pomegranates: Studies in Midrash Leviticus Rabbah* (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 135-153.

"King" or "The Blessed Holy" (*ha-Kadosh barukh Hu*) emphasizes his transcendence.[120] On an "intermediate" level, God is referred to as *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, a term used with much more frequency than *Shekhinah* in Leviticus Rabbah.[121] *Shekhinah* and "Father" are the more intimate and immanent terms for God, suggesting a close relationship to human beings.[122] Beyond these are the retinues of the heavenly court, angels, demons, and local spirits.

According to Leviticus Rabbah, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speaks to human beings through scriptural verses (e.g. Leviticus Rabbah 3:5, 4:1 or 8:1). *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is also the force that acts upon Israelite prophets when they are filled with God's spirit and speak his word.[123] Thus it is "a primary means of delivering prophecy and thus verses of canonized Scripture."[124] *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, as the power of prophecy, represented a powerful and sometimes dangerous visionary force in the Bible; but it is a more benign phenomenan in the rabbinic present. Visotzky notes three places where *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is said to provide Rabbis of the Tannaitic period with a certain measure of clairvoyance which gives them a supernatural ability to understand the domestic problems of their students (Leviticus Rabbah 8:1, 9:9, 21:8). In two of these anecdotes, the issues uncovered by the rabbis in question suggest that they were merely "privy to community gossip,"rather than

[120] Although in some Rabbinic texts (e.g. Bavli Berakhot 3a and 6a), it is used to describe an anthropomorphic and fatherly image of God.
[121] Burton Visotzky, *Golden Bells and Pomegranates*, 176.
[122] Burton Visotzky, *Golden Bells and Pomegranates*, 137-138. In the Bavli, *Ha-kadosh barukh Hu* may be depicted in an immanent and anthropomorphic fashion (e.g. Berakhot 3a, 6a, 7a).
[123] Burton Visotzky, *Golden Bells and Pomegranates*, 136-137.
[124] Burton Visotzky, *Golden Bells and Pomegranates*, 142.

receiving supernatural inspiration.[125] Visotzky provides a focused look at the role of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in one major text, which still leaves room for a broader survey of how the term develops diachronically.

This survey of literature has lead to many sources on the development of the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* from the Biblical to the post-biblical and Rabbinic periods, but no in-depth analysis of if, or how, the term continued to develop and change in Rabbinic Literature itself. While several studies have noted the *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s dual function as both prophecy and personification, there has been no explanation of the relationship between these the two functions. Likewise, there has been little sustained and detailed attention to the *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s distinguishing characteristic: her speech, which is a quality lacking in Rabbinic portrayals of the *Shekhinah*. Repeatedly, scholars have equated *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with the *Shekhinah* and failed to analyze the differences in the two figures. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* personified speaks in Scripture in certain formulaic ways, as the divine voice in Scripture, and these formulae have not been analyzed in earlier studies. Having considered the works of various scholars over a century, one still sees a need for revisiting the subject using an updated methodology. The foregoing review demonstrates that while much data has been culled, there is nevertheless a need for a new, comprehensive and critical study on the topic of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic literature.

[125] Burton Visotzky, *Golden Bells and Pomegranates*, 143-144. These stories are analyzed more fully below, in Chapter 5.

Chapter 1: Methodology: How I Approach the Textual Evidence

LITERARY STUDIES OF MIDRASH AND AGGADAH

Although the literary value of Aggadah has been recognized since the *Wissenschaft,* Midrash and Aggadah were studied in the Academy primarily with such traditional tools as textual criticism, redaction criticism, history, and philology. These were, and continue to be, crucial in examining a vast classical literature in which there is still much to be learned about composition, redaction, and dating of texts.[126]

Some contemporary studies on Rabbinic literature in general, and the Aggadah in particular, are predicated on new literary and reader-centered approaches and understandings. They often take a literary, cultural, or anthropological approach to their topics. The influence of scholars of myth such as Mircea Eliade, or anthropologists like Levi Straus, has fostered an appreciation for myth's richness in emotional content, symbolism and deep spiritual and psychological meaning. Folklorists such as Dov Noy, Howard Schwartz, and Dan Ben-Amos have focused on the Aggadah's folkloric, legendary, and mythical components.[127] Literary studies of the Bible by critics like Robert Alter,[128] have awakened an interest in studying the Midrash and Aggadah as

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[126] Stemberberger, "Handling Rabbinic Texts: The Problem of Method," op.cit., 45-55.
[127] Joseph Heineman and Dov Noy, *Studies in Haggadah and Folklore* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972); Howard Schwartz, *Reimagining the Bible-The Storytelling of the Rabbis* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). See also Dan Ben-Amos, "Jewish Folklore Studies," *Modern Judaism, 11:1 Review of Developments in Modern Jewish Studies,* Part, 2 (February, 1991): 17-66.
[128] Robert Alter, *The World of Biblical Literature* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

literature.[129] The study of Midrash in the context of literary theory has proven fruitful. Contemporary studies examine Midrashic texts from the standpoint of literary theories such as semiotics, dialogics and rhetorical criticism.[130] Literary critics have looked to classic Midrash as an ancient antecedent of modern deconstructionist theories that see a text's meaning as something fluid and multivalent.[131]

Two examples of such contemporary literary study of Talmud are found in the works of Jeffrey Rubenstein and David Kraemer. In his book *Talmudic Stories*, Rubenstein approaches several well known Aggadot in the Bavli and examines them as literary works.[132] For each story, he examines its formal literary qualities, its redactional process by the Stammaim, its deliberate placement within a halakhic *sugya* (Talmudic legal discussion), and finally, its cultural import. He finds these Aggadot to be literary forms that respond to historic and cultural issues of importance to the Stammaim, even when told about much earlier authorities. These issues include shame and pride, reticence and action, or the value of Torah study versus the value of ordinary everyday life. He sees the Aggadah as a complement to Halakhah that provides a holistic appreciation of Rabbinic literature.

Such literary techniques, according to Kraemer, can be applied to the study of Halakha as well as Aggadah. David Kraemer, in *Reading the Rabbis*, applies a "literary"

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[129] For an extensive overview, see Geoffrey Hartman and Sanford Budick, eds., *Midrash and Literature*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).
[130] David Stern, *Midrash and Theory* (Evanston, Northwester University Pres, 1996), p. 5. He cites examples by Daniel Boyain, Jose Faur, Steven D. Fraade, James L. Kugel, and Michael Fishbane, as well as his own work.
[131] See David Stern, *Midrash and Theory*, 1-13, and Dan Ben-Amos, "Jewish Folklore Stuides," *Modern Judaism*, 11:1 (February 2001): 17-66.

methodology to reading halakhic *sugyot* (plural of *sugya*).[133] For Kraemer, the essence of a literary approach to Talmud is "to comprehend the meanings of the text at the level of its final composition," which he opposes to the common source-critical studies that tend to "atomize" the text.[134] The hand of the redactors should be viewed as that of an author or authors who "actively shapes his sources to create a composite whole."[135] Following Robert Alter's view of "Biblical Literature,"[136] Kraemer finds so-called textual "problems" the very occasion for a *literary* appreciation of the text.

In this study, I utilize some of the general literary methods of textual analysis, particularly those advanced by Jeffrey Rubenstein. I examine stories and traditions involving *Ruah ha-Kodesh* for their literary qualities, their diachronic development, and their cultural and theological significance.

Specific Literary Methodologies to Be Used in this Dissertation

My dissertation makes use of several developments and theories in the literary study of Rabbinic Texts. I utilize Form Criticism and Tradition Criticism, as well as theories and methods developed in the growing field of Oral-formulaic studies, which are

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[132] Jeffrey Rubenstein, *Talmudic Stories—Narrative Art, Composition and Culture*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).
[133] David Kraemer, *Reading the Rabbis-The Talmud as Literature*. (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
[134] Kraemer, *Reading the Rabbis*, 9.
[135] Kraemer, *Reading the Rabbis*, 10. The degree to which editors shaped the Rabbinic texts is an area of scholarly debate. Neusner represents one theoretical pole, arguing that the documents were carefully and deliberately shaped by a final editorial hand. The other extreme can be found in the writings of Peter Schäfer, who defines these texts as "macroforms" which underwent continual reformulations in an almost random and organic process over the generations. Martin S. Jaffee,"Oral Tradition in the Writings of Rabbinic Oral Torah: On Theorizing Rabbinic Orality," *Oral Tradition*, 14/1 (1999): 3-32
[136] Robert Alter, *The World of Biblical Literature*.

more recently being applied to Rabbinic studies. Finally, I incorporate the modern literary theory of "Intertextuality" as it applies to the study of Midrash.

Form Criticism

Form and tradition criticism are two historically established methods that have been important to Biblical and Rabbinic studies.[137] Form Criticism has its origins in Biblical scholarship, and has become an important methodology in literary explorations of Rabbinic literature.[138] Some exemplars of this methodology in the field of Rabbinics include Jacob Neusner, Abraham Goldberg, Joseph Heineman, and Eliezer Diamond.[139] Form Criticism (also known as Genre Criticism) for Rabbinic texts is different than Form Criticism of Biblical and New Testament texts.[140] Form Criticism looks for the recurring patterns that appear in texts regardless of their content, and also "describes texts as textual realizations of certain forms [e.g. a Midrashic homily]. It does not describe what is said in a text."[141]

In Biblical studies, Form Criticism is often used as a tool for uncovering the original, orally transmitted units which an editor or redactor used to build a textual

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137 Stemberger, *Introduction,* 49.
138 See, "Is the Method of Form-criticism appropriately applied to Rabbinic Literature?" in Wayne S. Towner, *The Rabbinic "Enumeration of Scriptureal Examples"—A Study of a Rabbinic Pattern of Discourse with Special Reference to Mekhilta D'R.Ishmael* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), 27-48.
139 Jacob Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature,* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), pp. 30-51 is but one example of Neusner's emphasis on formal and rhetorical characteristics of Rabbinic literature. See also Abraham Goldberg, "Form-Analysis of Midrashic Literature as a Method of Description," *Journal for Jewish Studies* 36 (1985): 159-174; Joseph Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud, Forms and Patterns* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1977), Eliezer Diamond, "Wrestling The Angel of Death: Form and Meaning in Rabbinic Tales of Death and Dying," *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, XXVI, 1, 1995: 76-92.
140 Stemberger, *Introduction,* 49-55.
141 Avraham Goldberg, "Form-Analysis of Midrashic Literature," 160, 174.

narrative, but by the nature of Rabbinic literature such units are often easily evident. Rabbinic literature calls itself "Oral Torah" and is clearly composed of units of tradition framed in conventional forms. In Rabbinic literature, Form Criticism is most useful for textual interpretation, rather than identification of literary units.[142] One must be cautious in trying to reconstruct a Rabbinic *Sitz im Leben* for the origins of the formal units, both because of the ahistorical nature of most Rabbinic narratives and the problematic issue of rabbinic attributions. Yet with proper care, form criticism can lead to a better understanding of tradition history, because a tradition is gradually edited and its formal qualities developed from one version to the next.[143]

The first generic distinction in Rabbinic Literature is between Halakhah and Aggadah. This dissertation explores aggadic texts, even if they are embedded in a primarily "halahkic" work. For Aggadah, the first generic distinction to be made is between prose, which overwhelmingly dominates Rabbinic literature, and poetry, which is fairly rare. In aggadic prose literature, three major generic categories have been identified. The first major generic category is narrative forms. These include biographical tales, miracle stories, tall tales, animal fables, stories which include the appearance of the *Bat Kol* (Divine Voice), and others. A second category is "scientific" descriptions about geography, medicine, and so on. A third recognized generic category in the Aggadah is "speech" forms, which include various types of sayings, parables, proverbs, and prayers.[144]

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[142] Lindbeck, *Story and Theology* (forthcoming), Chapter 2.
[143] Wayne S. Towner, *Rabbinic Enumeration*, 34-35, 45-46.
[144] Stemberger, *Introduction*, 51-52.

In this dissertation, I identify a particular type of Midrashic narrative form in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh,* speaking as the divine voice in Scripture, is pictured in "Reciprocal Dialogue" with Israel. I then show how the same form is adapted in the Bavli to place "the Holy One, blessed be He," in the role formerly filled by *Ruah ha-Kodesh.*

Tradition History

In Rabbinic as in Biblical scholarship, the identification of forms and units of text leads to the larger study of Tradition History. The term "Tradition History" has two definitions. The first is the study of topics and themes throughout Rabbinic literature and culture. With that definition, this entire dissertation is really a type of "Tradition History" for the traditions involving *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic Literature.[145]

The second definition of the term "Tradition History" is the study of the history of parallel traditions in Rabbinic texts. There are many parallel "units of tradition" that find their way into more than one Rabbinic text, sometimes virtually unchanged and sometimes with significant varients. Similar parallel units are found in the Bible and other ancient literature. The diachronic development of such parallel traditions is a growing area for scholarly research. The oral nature of transmission is one way to account for variations in traditions as they were shared in different settings.[146] Conversely, the variations may embody the deliberate literary and rhetorical choices of

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[145] Stemberger, *Introduction*, 53.
[146] Shmuel Safrai, "Oral Torah," *The Literature of the Sages, Part One*. Shmuel Safrai (ed) (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 80-81.

editors and redactors.[147] It can be particularly fruitful to view a tradition as it emerges in a variety of Rabbinic texts, so that changes and developments can be seen.

According to Stemberger, "the synoptic reading of these parallel texts is a basic task of rabbinic research."[148] He affirms this while recognizing Jacob Neusner's well-known objection to so-called "synoptic studies"of rabbinic texts. By this Neusner meant to oppose an unhistorical approach which does not take into account the integrity of each text when building a case for an undifferentiated "Rabbinic view" of a given topic. While not all would agree with Neusner's radical emphasis on the independence of each Rabbinic text as a carefully "authored" and edited representation of a world view and rhetorical program, the rigor with which he has approached the critical study of Rabbinic texts has influenced a whole generation to avoid the sometimes naïve, unhistorical methodologies of the past.[149] Scholars of half a century ago might have simply collected all references about a subject from the Bible through the Middle Ages and drawn conclusions on the concept, without much attention to the diachronic and synchronic development of subjects and traditions.[150] Now it is generally accepted that iterary and theological explorations must be placed in the context of a historical framework.

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147 Stephen S. Fraade, "Literary Composition and Oral Performance in Early Midrashim,"*Oral Tradition*, 14/1, 34.

148 Stemberger, *Introduction*, 53.

149 A summary of Neusner's theory of texts and methodology is found in Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature*, pp. 1-21. A critique of the insights and limitations of his approach can be found in Martin S. Jaffee,"Oral Tradition in the Writings of Rabbinic Oral Torah: On Theorizing Rabbinic Orality," *Oral Tradition*, 14/1 (1999): 3-32.

150 Even master scholars were not immune to this propensity. "Despite its deliberately historical orientation, even E.E.Urbach's book *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefts* (Cambridge, MA 1987), in many respects an eminent standard work on rabbinic theology, does not escape the danger of an almost entirely unhistorical description." (Stemberger, *Introduction,* 46.)

As I examine textual traditions, I note the ongoing scholarly debate over the historical reliability of Rabbinic attributions, which was explored in some detail in my Master's thesis.[155] Even those scholars whom I tend to follow in this matter, such as David Weiss Halivni, David Kraemer, and S. Stern (i.e. those who have "demonstrated the overall reliability of the Talmudic attributional system") still acknowledge that "those attributed statements are oral-literary constructs," carefully crafted for the purpose of memorization and transmission," rather than examples of "historically exact quotation."[156] Wayne Towner notes, "Traditions which are passed on in the name of R. Akiba or R. Judah enjoy authority in the last analysis because the consensus of the community has granted them it, and not simply because a name is attached to them."[157] And yet, the named named sage often remains an important factor upon which that very consensus is based. Based on these considerations, I am more likely to reference the redacted text than the named authority, but I also think it is important to note which authorities are linked to different uses of a term. The reliability of Rabbininic attributions is undermined by the fact that many sayings, or variations of the same tradition, are often assigned to different authorities in different texts, which is abundantly evident in many of the more popular traditions about *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. At the same time, certain roles and

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155 Danan, *Between Earth and Heaven: Elijah the Prophet in Rabbinic Literature*, University of Texas, 2000, 24-26.

156 For an analysis of these different approaches, see Jay Rovner, "Pseudepigraphic Invention and Diachronic Stratification in the Stammaitic Component of the Bavli: The Case of Sukka 28," Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol LXVIII, Cincinnati, 1997: 11-62. The quotation here is from Rovner, fn. 15. To place this issue in the broader context of redactionary theories for the Talmud, see Martin Jaffee, "Rabbinic Authorship as a Collective Enterprise," *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*, Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Martin Jaffee (eds.), (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 17-37.

157 Towner, *Rabbinic Enumerations*, 35.

characteristics are often associated with a particular sage, which can be considered a folk or oral tradition built around his personality and character.[158] I note at least one instance of an Amoraic sage, Rabba, who is repeatedly cast as sceptic in regard to the appearances of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

In this dissertation I examine four different aggadic traditions about *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in depth, as they appear in parallel versions in several texts, and seek to draw some conclusions about their diachronic and synchronic change and development. I will also take note of other traditions in the course of different types of textual analysis.

Oral-Formulaic Studies

Form and Tradition History are considered established methodologies in Rabbinic scholarship. Oral-formulaic studies compromise an important newer influence on the methodology employed in this dissertation. Inquiry into the role of orality in the historic composition of Rabbinic Literature is as old as the Geonim (Babylonian scholars of the post-Talmudic period),[159] but the academic study of Rabbinic literature as an orally-derived literature is relatively new.[160] So I begin here by giving a brief overview of the

[158] Kris Lindbeck, *Elijah and the Rabbis: Story and Theology:* (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming), Chapter 1.
[159] See for example Gaon Sherira ben Hanina, *Igeret Ha-Rav Sherira Ga'on* (Showing two recensions, manuscript and Geniza variants, Hebrew), Benjamin Menasseh Lewin (ed.) (Jerusalem: Makor, 1972). The Igeret is a 10th Century Geonic responsum to a query about the origins of the Mishnah, Talmud and other Rabbinic works. "French" and "Spanish" versions of the manuscript disagree on some key points.
[160] *Oral Tradition*, 14/1 (1999) was devoted exclusively to the study of Rabbinic Literature as an Oral-Traditional literature. An outline of Oral-Formulaic and Folklore studies as they apply to the study of Rabbinic Aggadah can be found in Kris Lindbeck, *Elijah and the Rabbis: Story and Theology* (forthcoming), Chapter 2.

oral-literary quality of Rabbinic literature, and then proceed to more methodological questions.

As mentioned in the opening section of this introduction, Rabbinic Literature's traditional name is "Oral Torah," *Torah she-be'al peh*, a term which can alternately refer to the texts' composition, oral-performative settings, or doctrinal significance. Rabbinic Literature is distinguished by its valorization of oral transmission and performance. Rabbinic texts are "suffused with the dialogical language of orality."[161] They are replete with verbs and descriptions that highlight acts of speech, listening, and debate. Traditions are conveyed as the quoted sayings of sages, passed down by word of mouth from master to disciple. While many ancient cultures used both oral and written approaches to teach and transmit text, only Rabbinic culture attached a special theological significance to orality and claimed a divine revelation of oral teachings along with the written one of Scripture.[162] Of course, there are many different Rabbinic texts, composed over several centuries in both Palestine and Babylonia, which may have been formulated in different stages of orality and writing, though they are collectively called, "Oral Torah." Even those sources which speak of an alleged "ban" on writing Oral Torah that was applied to *halakhic* texts mention that *aggadic* works circulated in writing at a fairly early period. Bavli Sanhedrin 57b and Bavli Temurah 14b refer to an early "Book of Aggadah."[163] The

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[161] Stephen S. Fraade, "Literary Composition and Oral Performance in Early Midrashim," 45.

[162] Elizabeth Shanks Alexander, "The Orality of Rabbinic Writing," *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*, Fonrobert, Charlotte Elisheva and Martin S. Jaffee (eds.), (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 38-57.

[163] On the Temurah passage, Steven Fraade notes: "It is now understood that there was no unanimous or uniform early Rabbinic ban on the writing of Oral Torah, but rather on performatively enacting the Oral Torah from a text, as the Written Torah from memory." Steven D. Fraade, "Literary Composition and Oral

hermeneutic nature of Rabbinic literature must also be borne in mind. The Oral Torah continually quoted and commented on the written scripture, so that written and oral texts were continually interacting.[164]

Nonetheless, Rabbinic texts are now received in written form, as they have been for over a millennium. The debate about when they were put into writing continues. There is evidence of early commission to writing in the Damascus Document, among the Qumran scrolls, which already includes written versions of oral laws for the Sabbath.[165] Shmuel Safrai asserts that even though the doctrine of Oral Torah was only fully articulated in Amoraic literature, there are many Tannaitic traditions, as well as the testimony of Josephus and early Christian writers, to show that the Pharisees and their Rabbinic inheritors preserved unwritten laws and a belief in the primacy of oral transmission. According to Safrai, oral transmission came first, followed only later by "reduction to writing."[166] The writing was "only the final step concluding an extended process of creation and redaction."[167] In the case of the Mishnah, J.N. Epstein considers the written texts to be authoritative (even though their recitation was oral), while Saul Lieberman contends that the oral versions were authoritative, and the written ones

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Performance in Early Midrashim,"*Oral Tradition*, 14/1 (1999), 35. For more explication on orality and writing in Rabbinic texts, see Stemberger, *Introduction*, 31-44.

[164] Ben-Amos, Dan,"Jewish Folklore Studies," 22-23.

[165] See Garcia Martinez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, eds. *The Dead Sea Scrolls—Study Edition* [Hebrew/English] (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), Vol. 1, 615, and Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (fourth edition), (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 109-110.

[166] Shmuel Safrai, "Oral Torah," *The Literature of the Sages, Part One*. Shmuel Safrai (ed) (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987):35-120.

[167] Shmuel Safrai, "Oral Torah," 72.

originally served as mere reference notes.[168] Yaakov Elman uses textual, historical, linguistic, and oral-formulaic evidence to support his argument that the Babylonian Talmud was composed and redacted in an overwhelmingly oral environment. He contends that Palestinian society, influenced by Greco-Roman culture, was more open to using written texts, while the Bavli was an oral composition for a largely oral culture.[169]

Some contemporary scholars of Rabbinics have turned to the relatively new field of Oral Formulaic studies to highlight a different aspect of the term "Oral Torah": the *oral-performative* nature of their study and transmission. The issue of the orality of Rabbinic texts is not merely a matter of their composition, but also encompasses their role in Rabbinic culture, as "the social enactment of the words on the page."[170]

Martin Jaffee's *Torah in the Mouth*[171] is a study of the Rabbinic use of the term *Torah she-be'al peh* ("Torah in the mouth" or Oral Torah). Jaffee sets out to examine this subject in both its historical development and its theological meaning as a foundational doctrine of Rabbinic Judaism. After showing the earliest witnesses of the term in Tannaitic literature, he notes that by the time of the Yerushalmi, there is a conscious effort to depict Rabbinic literature as purely oral in composition, and to downplay the use

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[168] Summarized in Elizabeth Shanks Alexander, "The Orality of Rabbinic Writing," 48-55. See Saul Lieberman. *Hellenism in Jewish* Palestine (Second Revised Edition) (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962); Epstein, J. N, *Introduction to the Text of the Mishnah (*Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2000).

[169] Yaakov Elman, "Orality and the Redaction of the Babylonian Talmud," *Oral Tradition*, 14/1 (1999): 3-32.

[170] Elizabeth Shanks Alexander, "The Orality of Rabbinic Writing," 55. Oral-formulaic methods can be used to evaluate textual composition as well as as performance. Yaakov Elman (op cit) does use Oral Formulaic theory to demonstrate the role of oral composition in the Bavli, while Martin Jaffee uses them to evaluate the extent of orality in the composition of Tannaitic texts. Martin S. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth--Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism, 200 BCE-400 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 100-125.

[171] Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth.*

of writing. His conclusions thus contradict those of Ya'akov Elman. While presenting the scholarly debate on whether "Oral Torah" was actually written or Oral—a debate that goes all the way back to the aforementioned two rescensions of *Iggeret ha-Rav Sherira Gaon*—Jaffee takes a middle position or perhaps a new position that there is an "interpenetration of the written and the oral." Jaffee examines a number of Tannaitic texts, and seeks to demonstrate that they consist of both oral and written materials. He does this through a close examination of several selections from the Yerushalmi, showing which parts of the text evidence typical oral-formulaic characteristics, and which parts are best understood to be written editorial additions. [172] Finally, Jaffee turns to the role of "Torah in the Mouth" in Rabbinic culture. He looks at both Rabbinic texts and external evidence from Greco-Roman culture to show that face-to-face discipleship, centered on the oral recitation of sacred texts in the presence of a master, was seen as essential to the education of the day and the formation of character.[173] Jaffee concludes that "Torah in the Mouth" is not simply a matter of the way in which Rabbinic literature was composed, but more importantly indicates its oral-performance in the context of the master-disciple relationship. Not only Jaffee's conclusions, but his methodology as well, has been highly instructive to me in pursuing my dissertation research, since he also explored a Rabbinic term as it develops over many generations of text. His interdisciplinary approach—combining historical, literary, oral-formulaic and cultural studies—has been exemplary for my own study.

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[172] Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, 100-125.
[173] Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*, 148-149, citing the evidence of Yerushalmi Shekalim 2:7 (47a).

Similarly, Steven Fraade points out that the oral quality of Midrash lies not only in elements of its composition, but even more so in its transmission and performance. [174] Orality was classically considered to be an absolute category; texts were either written or they were oral (or possibly they developed orally and were later written down, as Safrai contends). There is a new recognition that literary composition has a "dynamic interface" with oral performance.[175] Orality is not just a stage of composition that lies "behind" the written text, but also can be a public performance that lies "in front" of it. Rabbinic Literature has an "orality grounded in textuality that remains orally fluid.[176] Rabbinic texts could be compared to "scripts [that] remain to be played, however improvisationally, by future casts of sages and their disciples, who will in turn recast those learned scripts of Oral Torah for subsequent cycles of oral textual performance."[177]

In addition to formal oral recitation as part of the process of Rabbinic discipleship and training (as referenced by Jaffee and Fraade), there were, and are, many other venues for oral performance in Rabbinic culture. Traditional venues for such oral performance of sacred texts include the public chanting, translation and explication of Torah (from the time of Ezra and continuing to its present synagogue adaptations), the preaching of sermons and homilies, informal storytelling and folklore.[178] Even today, a page of the Talmud is not really "Talmud" while it remains on the printed page, but only after it is

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[174] Steven D. Fraade, "Literary Composition and Oral Performance in Early Midrashim,"*Oral Tradition*, 14/1 (1999): 33-51.
[175] Cf. John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 78-79, who writes of the end of "the old model of the Great Divide between orality and literacy."
[176] Steven D. Fraade, "Literary Composition and Oral Performance," 30.
[177] Steven D. Fraade, "Literary Composition and Oral Performance," 46.
[178] Dan Ben-Amos, "Jewish Folk Literature," *Oral Tradition*, 14/1 (1999), 166-170.

brought to life in the interactions of learners and teachers in community. The meaning of a Rabbinic text, particularly Talmud, resides not in its inert form on the printed page, or in the mind of a single silent reader, but mostly in the face-to-face communal interaction of learners. Talmudic studies in yeshivot (orthodox academies for higher Rabbinic study) involve loud and vigorous chanting of the text and arguing its meaning with a study partner. To summarize, Rabbinic literature is a dynamic interaction of the written and the oral, the literary and the performative. As such, one can fruitfully apply the theories and methods of Oral-Formulaic studies to its research, and it is to that topic that I now turn.

Oral-formulaic studies were born of the pioneering work of Albert B. Lord and John Miles Foley. Lord, building on the work of his mentor, Milman Parry, researched the oral composition techniques of traditional bards performing epic poetry in mid-20th century Balkans. He demonstrated that their performances were far from mere recitations or memorizations, but rather involved creative and spontaneous compositions produced in the performative moment within a set framework of oral formulae that include scenes, phrases, and meters into which the poet fit his original improvisations. Lord then applied his findings to the study of the Homeric poems as oral epic compositions.[179]

Lord's student, John Foley, turned his attention to the dynamic interaction of orality and literacy and to the study of "oral traditional works that survive in textual form." Foley writes that the exact composition process of such texts may never be fully recovered, but the implications of oral tradition in the "oral-derived" text should be

[179] Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964).

recognized and interpreted.[180] He turns his attention to the "traditional" aspect of "oral-traditional" works by melding the study of oral-formulaic structures with the newer field of Ethnography of Speaking or Ethnopoetics, to note that figures of speech in oral performative pieces are far more than clichés (as literary formalism might have it) or even more than simply oral formulae (as earlier orality studies might identify them), but rather signify a full and rich set of extra-textual cultural ideas each time they are evoked in oral performance:

> The traditional phrase of scene or story-pattern has an indexical meaning vis-à-vis the immanent tradition; each integer reaches beyond the confines of the individual performance or oral-derived text to a set of traditional ideas much larger and richer than any single performance or text. To varying degrees that are best understood as representing a spectrum of signification, phraseology and narrative patterns, long studied as compositional units in the narrowest sense, encode metonymic realities in a highly connotative pars pro toto idiom.[181]

All of this has implications for the study of Rabbinic texts, which are clearly a type of "oral derived" literature. I utilize Oral-formulaic theories in two ways in this dissertation. First, I note the patterns and formulae which characterize the use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic aggadot and midrashim. Repetitive formulae are characteristics of the orally-derived nature of these texts:

> Oral transmission is indicated by such …as mnemonic aids…syntactical patterns, standard phrases and a certain linguistic rhythm as well as generally stereotypical iterary forms. It is also worth noting…the formation of a series, numerical sayings, etc., as well as the correlation of smaller units by means of shared keywords, thematic connections or even common stylistic properties.[182]

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[180] John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance,* 78-79.
[181] John Miles Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance,* 6
[182] Stemberger, *Introduction,* 38-39.

On a meta-level, I investigate the extended meaning of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in its oral-traditional context. Oral-traditional literatures each have their own distinctive histories of composition, intended audiences, and "performance arenas" (Foley's term). Rabbinic aggadot were frequently conveyed orally in the context of public lectures or sermons, often held in the synagogue, and attended by rabbinically knowledgable audiences as well as by the common folk.[183] Of course, Rabbinic literature cannot be simplistically equated with oral epics or the products of other pre-literate cultures, either in composition or performance.[184] Still, the idea of a traditional context for the oral-derived text seems especially well suited to Rabbinic culture. Just as "rosy-fingered dawn" or "grey-eyed Athena" signaled a whole context of traditional associations for the listeners of a Homeric epic; so too "a *Bat Kol* went forth and exclaimed," or "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out from heaven" would produce a set of associations, cultural context, and narrative expectations for the listener of a Rabbinic homily. This set of expectations from stock figures and phrases heightens the dramatic effect when the conventions are occasionally upended, as in the famous passage in Chapter 4 of Bavli Baba Metsia, in which the Sages reject the pronouncement of the *Bat Kol* and assert their own independence in determining the law, which is "not in heaven" (Bavli Baba Metsia 59b). It is this rich treasury of traditional oral literary associations that I hope to uncover.

[183] Lindbeck, *Story and Theology* (forthcoming), Chapter 2.
[184] Martin Jaffee "Oral Tradition in the Writings of Rabbinic Oral Torah," 17; and Stemberger, Introduction, 38.

Intertextuality

The final theoretical base that I employ in my dissertation comes from the world of contemporary literary studies. As noted earlier, in the 1980's Midrash became a focus for literary theorists, who saw in it an early example of a non-logo-centric hermeneutic:

> The typical midrashic predilection for multiple interpretations rather than for a single truth behind the text; its irresistible desire to tease out the nuances of Scripture rather than use interpretation to close them off; and, most of all, the way midrashic discourse mixes text and commentary, violating the boundaries between them and intentionally blurring their differences, flourishing precisely in the grayish no-man's-land between exegesis and literature—all these features that once had seemed (since the time of Maimonides at least) to be the most problematic and irrational aspects of midrash now became its most intriguing, fascinating qualities.[185]

Such new appreciation for Midrash called for new theoretical expression. Daniel Boyarin takes I. Heinemann's classic *Darkhei ha-Aggadah*[186] as the starting point for his own *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*.[187] He asserts that each generation must create a new version of *Darkhei ha-Aggadah* (or similar books) for its own times. Boyarin suggests that his own "fourth way" of approaching the Aggadah will be the concept of "Intertextuality." This is a contemporary literary theory, based on the works of literary critics such as Mikhail Bakhtin, which asserts that each and every text (including novels with a single author) is not a purely original creation, but is actually composed of

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[185] David Stern, Midrash and Theory, 3-4.

[186] Described in my Introduction, in the "Historic Study of Midrash and Aggadah."

[187] Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990. For critiques of Boyarin, see reviews by Richard S. Sarason,, The Journal of Religion, Vol. 74, No. 3, (Jul., 1994): 426-427, David Blumenthal, CCAR Journal(Summer/Fall, 1995): 81-83. For further exposition and critique of Boyarin's theory of Midrash, see, Bruce N. Fisk, *Do You Not Remember? Scripture, Story and Exegesis in the Rewritten Bible of Pseudo-Philo* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield

many voices ("heteroglossia"), is dependent on previous texts, and is also culturally conditioned and constrained.[188] Intertextuality applies to *all* texts, but all the more to Rabbinic texts, which are openly composite, quoting, and collective compilations. Boyarin proposes a working definition of Midrash as a "radical intertextual reading of the canon, in which potentially every part refers to and is interpretable by every other part."[189] The Rabbis read the Biblical text creatively, not to recreate a mythic and romantic past (*qua* I. Heinemann); but, within the constraints of their own cultural and ideological framework, to reinterpret and find fresh meanings in Scripture.

Boyarin uses intertextual theory to gain a better understanding of how Midrash functions. He analyzes the use of biblical quotations in Midrash, compares midrashic hermeneutics to modern source-critical methods of Bible study, explains the working of the *mashal* (parable) as a midrashic method, and compares the midrashic method to allegory, among other topics. Boyarin draws on Saussure's linguistic theories by defining midrashic use of biblical quotations as either paradigmatic (providing a series of related ideas with which to interpret a text) or syntagmatic (constructing a *mashal* or other narrative parable related to the biblical text). But both types of citation ultimately comprise a hermeneutical method in which verses are juxtaposed in order to draw out their fullest meaning, not through allegory or symbolism, but through the intertextual dialogue.[190] In this dissertation, I apply this method to draw attention to the intertextual

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Academic Press, 2001), 89-108. Boyarin provides a nuanced exposition of the hermenteutical and literary methods of Midrash, but their historical and ideological contexts should be considered as well.

[188] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination—Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, Michael Holquist (ed.), Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (trans.). Austin/London: University of Texas Press, 1981

[189] Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality*, 16.

[190] Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality*, 26-38.

features of many *Ruah ha-Kodesh* texts. I show how Rabbinic authors used biblical quotations creatively, sometimes relating them to them to later historic events, and the particular effects of describing these quotations as speeches of *Ruah ha-Kodesh.* The intertextual use of quotations articulated by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* even produced a new aggadic form, which I term "Reciprocal Dialogue."

An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Literary Study of Aggadah and Midrash

To summarize my method of research, I take an interdisciplinary approach to the literary study of Midrash and Aggadah. I consider the historical development, literary settings, and cultural background of the term I am studying, and I do so through a close and careful reading of texts, grounded in an awareness of Rabbinic styles, forms, exegesis, and rhetoric. My methodologic models include the literary and cultural studies of Martin Jaffee, Jeffrey Rubenstein, and Daniel Boyarin, although my particular emphasis here is on a theological, rather than a cultural, concept.

Like other scholars of Rabbinic literature described in this chapter, I strive to read closely and carefully, and to appreciate the literary qualities of the redacted text. In doing so, I am guided by Boyarin's awareness of "intertextuality" as it applies to Rabbinic Midrash. Noting the oral-performative origins of many Rabbinic aggadot, I focus attention on such features as the repetition of words and narrative forms or genres. In the present study, I utilize the methods of oral formulaic studies to describe some of the conventions and formulae association with the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, and note the formulaic uses of various words and phrases with which it is regularly linked. This will

lead me to consideration of the role *Ruah ha-Kodesh* plays in the context of oral-literary tradition. Tradition history is an important part of my research, as I examine parallel Rabbinic traditions about *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in their synchronic and diachronic development. As I look at historical development of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* within Rabbinic texts, and I also examine its function and the function of related terms (such as Wisdom/*Hokhmah*) in earlier Jewish texts and in surrounding cultures.

Finally, theology is an integral part of the interdisciplinary approach, but it should be addressed only after an analysis of the literary and cultural background is complete. The term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* clearly had theological importance to the Rabbis, but proceeding directly to broad and comprehensive theological conclusions about its meaning (as in Gertel's study cited in our Literature Review) is risky, unless one first researches the historical development, literary settings, and hermeneutical aspects of its uses. In the words of Michael Fishbane, "Many students of Jewish thought tend to move quickly past the exegetical phenomena to the ideational content that may be deduced,"[191] or as David Stern writes, "few steps are more difficult to take—or more prone to error—than the move from exegesis to theology."[192] The Rabbis did not put forth a systematic theological program or offer definitions of theological terms. Only through thorough and careful analysis of the relevant texts in their literary, cultural and historical contexts, can one propose judgements of how theological terms are used.

In *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, Daniel Boyarin deliberately set out to update a portion of Isaak Heinemann's classic *Darkhe ha-Aggadah* (*The Methods of*

[191] Fishbane, *The Exegetical Imagination*, preface.

Aggadah), in order to "propose a reading of midrash which is in keeping with the intellectual, critical, and theoretical movement of our times," while keeping his focus on one document, the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael.[193] Likewise, this study sets to take up where Abelson's *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature* left off nearly a century ago, and to look even more carefully and comprehensively at the development and uses of one term which he explored in that book.

My methodology draws on a long tradition of the study of Rabbinic Midrash and Talmudic Aggadah. I analyze the meaning of an important term in Rabbinic theology and thought only after a careful examination of its historical development, traditional context, hermeneutical and literary functions as expressed in primary texts. It is to that task that I now proceed in the analysis of Rabbinic texts about *Ruah ha-Kodesh.*

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[192] Stern, *Midrash and Theory*, 73.
[193] Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality*, 18.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Chapter 2: Pre-Rabbinic Literary References to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*

Rabbinic literature is highly distinctive in style, but it did not develop in a vacuum. Studies of Rabbinic Literature increasingly acknowledge that scholars must place their understanding of Rabbinic thought upon the background of its biblical heritage as well as within the broader philosophical and religious milieu of its time. This chapter will offer a short survey of the numerous roles of *Ruah* or spirit in the Mediterranean cultures preceding and concurrent with Rabbinic Judaism. Just as Rabbinic literature had more than one use for the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, so, too, other ancient Jewish, sectarian, Hellenistic, and early Christian authors made many and varied uses of the term, relating it to prophecy, to God's creation, to conviction of wrongdoers, and to individual purity and cleansing.[194] There were multiple literary and philosophical influences on Jewish thinkers at the beginning of the Common Era.[195] At the same time, in moving beyond the obvious influences of the Hebrew Bible, it is important to balance the need to seek potential influences and interactions, with an awareness of the perils of assuming connections or continuity. Caution must be taken in citing intriguing connections between literary references from different periods when in fact one may just

[194] John R. Levison, *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 237-254.
[195] John R. Levison, *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism*, 235-236.

be looking at "parallel developments from the same presuppositions."[196] It may be best to consider that the various sectarians, Hellenistic Jewish writers, New Testament authors, and Rabbinic sages are all part of a common milieu of post biblical Judaism(s); and indeed, there is a certain amount of overlap between these groups in the early part of the common era.[197] All draw on the biblical heritage and share a certain shared universe of discourse, while each group has its own distinctive ideologies. Certainly the pervasive biblical concept of *Ruah* as the animating spirit of prophecy and inspiration had a great impact on all of these different groups, although each one developed it in a different way. With those caveats in mind, one can fruitfully compare and contrast Rabbinic views of spirit with those of the Hebrew Bible, Dead Sea Scrolls, Hellenistic Jewish Literature, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, and the New Testament and Church Fathers.

RUAH IN THE BIBLE

The Tanakh is the ancient Jewish text that most openly and directly influenced Rabbinic thought. *Ruah* is an important term in the Tanakh from the first page of Genesis, where *Ruah Elohim*, the spirit or wind of God "hovers over the face of the water." (Genesis 1:2).[198] The word may variously signify wind, breath, or spirit (human

[196] Stemberger, *Introduction,* 48-49.
[197] Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81 (1962): 1-13. For more on the topic of commonalities among Ancient Jewish sects, see Wayne McCready and Adele Reinhartz (eds.), *Common Judaism: Explorations in Second-Temple Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008).
[198] The Tanakh contains material from several major documents redacted in different stages, so the fact that a term appears in the book of Genesis does not mean that this was the earliest chronological usage in the Bible. For an overview of the subject, see Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1997). For convenience in this study, I will reference the order of the Masoretic text. For an analysis of how the term *Ruah* develops over the diachronic strata of one Biblical book, see

or divine).[199] *Ruah* is dynamic, and is described in conjunction with many verbs, such as "hovering" (Gen. 1:2), "filling" (Exodus 31:3), "pouring out" (Numbers 11:25, Joel 3:1-2), "enveloping" (Judges 6:33-34), "ringing" or "pounding" (Judges 13:25), "bearing" (King I 18:12), "guiding" (Isaiah 63:14), and even "tormenting" (Samuel I 16:14-15).[200] *Ruah* as wind, breath, or spirit, is used some 250 times in the Tanakh in conjunction with divine activity.[201] These references to *Ruah* as the Spirit of Elohim or the Spirit of YHWH, are found in many books and are particularly prominent in Judges and the books of Samuel.[202] Some use of the term *ruah* is found in all books of the Bible except for Leviticus in the Pentateuch; Obadiah, Nahum, Zephaniah in the Minor Prophets; and Ruth, Lamentations, and Esther in the Writings.

In the book of Isaiah, the term can mean breath or wind, but is commonly used with emotional and abstract "spiritual" connotations, particularly in Deutero-Isaiah.[203] *Ruah* assumes an explicit role in prophecy in the exilic period.[204] For the other major prophets, the word *ruah* in Jeremiah most often refers to wind, while in Ezekiel it refers

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Wonsuk Ma, *Until the Spirit Comes-The Spirit of God in the Book of Isaiah* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

[199] Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1996 edition, 924, also James Hamilton Jr., "God With Men in the Torah," Westminster Theological Journal, 65, 2, Philadelphia, 2003, 113-133.

[200] Karel vanderToom, et.al, *Dictionary*, pp. 792-804. I am grateful to Rabbi Ruth Gan Kagan for pointing out a number of examples.

[201] Karel vanderToorn, Bob Becking, Peter W. Vonderhorst, eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden, New York, Koln: E.J.Brill, 1995), 792.

[202] [202] Karel vanderToorn, et. al, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons* 792.

[203] In the first part of Isaiah, through chapter 39, examples include Isaiah 11:2, 32:15. Emotional or psychological states are expressed with the term *Ruah* in Isaiah 19:14 and 28:6. In Deutero (and Trito) Isaiah there are many examples, including Isaiah 42:1, 44:3, 59:21, and 63:10 (which adds the word "holy"). Deutero-Isaiah begins with Chapter 40, and Trito-Isaiah (according to many scholars) begins with Chapter 54 or 56, according to Marc Tzvi Bretler, in *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 782-783.

to such diverse concepts as strength and courage, a miraculous, life-giving wind from God, or the spiritual power to prophesy.[205]

The context modifies the meaning of the term *ruah*, offering a range of uses, many with positive and a few with negative connotations. In some cases the use of *ruah* is multivalent, and can signify wind, breath, and spirit in a single passage, as in Ezekiel 37:1-14. In this dramatic vision, Ezekiel is carried by *Ruah YHWH* to a valley full of dry bones. The word *ruah* by itself could signal a physical transportion by wind, but as the phrase *Ruah YHWH* it signifies that the prophet entered a spiritual state in which he was able to experience visions. He is told to prophesy over the dry bones and to the *ruah* as wind (along with its other connotation of life force), so that God will bring his *ruah* (breath of life) to resurrect the bones and turn them back into living, breathing people. [206]

Wind

Throughout the Tanakh, *ruah* as physical wind is seen as one of God's tools in controlling human destiny. Wind is an invisible yet powerful force beyond human control. *Ruah* as a wind sent by God figures in many of the stories of the Pentateuch, such as the story of Noah's Ark (Genesis 8:1), the Ten Plagues (Exodus 10:13-19), or the parting of the Reed (or Red) Sea (Exodus 14:21). God controls the power of the wind (Jeremiah 10:13, Psalms 147:13), yet winds can be so awe-inspiring that they are construed as divine forces in and of themselves. Elijah witnesses a dramatic wind, but

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[204] Metzger and Coogan, *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 287-288.
[205] Moshe Greenberg, *The Anchor Bible: Ezekiel 1-20* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1983) 62.
[206] Moshe Greenberg, *The Anchor Bible: Ezekiel 21-37*, (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1997), 741-744.

"the Lord was not in the wind." (Kings I 19:11) Wind plays a role in Ezekiel's theophany and vision of the chariot: "And I looked, and, behold, a stormy wind came from the north, a great cloud, and a fire flaring up, and a brightness was around it, out of its midst, as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire…" (Ezekiel 1:4). But later in the same chapter, *ruah* has a meaning of "spirit" or "will": "they [*the figures in the chariot*] went everyone straight forward; where the spirit [*Ruah*] would go, they went; and they turned not when they went (Ezekiel 1:12)." [207]

Breath

"Breath" is the least common use of the term *ruah* in the Tanakh, but there are still dozens of references to it, often in association with divinity. Breath is like the wind on a much smaller scale, and most importantly it is seen as the force of life itself. God's *ruah* or breath is different from human breath because it has the power to bestow or destroy life. This divine breath is transferred to man, giving him life: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7, Job 33:4). Thus is becomes the intimate "point of contact" between God and human beings.[208] As previously mentioned, a *ruah* (both wind and divine breath) sent by God can restore the breath of life to the dead (Ezekiel 37:9-10). In the highly mythic and anthropomorphic imagery of passages such as Second

[207] Here, *ruah* means "spirit" or "will" rather than wind, as evident from uses later in the chapter about the "spirit of the creatures" in the divine throne. Moshe Greenberg, *The Anchor Bible: Ezekiel 21-37*, (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1997), 45-46.
[208] Lodahl, *Shekhinah/Spirit*, 44.

Samuel 22 or Psalm 18, "the foundation of the world were laid bare by the mighty roaring of the Lord and the blast of the breath (*ruah*) of His nostrils."

Spirit and Inspiration

In a more abstract sense, *ruah* becomes a word to describe emotional states or special abilities which emanate from God. In this case, "spirit" is the usual choice of English translation. A change of *ruah* may signal a spiritual renewal of divine origin, as in Ezekiel 36:26-27: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit (*ruah*) will I put inside you; and I will take away the heart of stone from your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit inside you, and cause you to follow my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them."

Charismatic leadership or talent is described by the word *ruah* in several books of the Hebrew Bible.[209] *Ruah Elohim* is said to fill Bezalel in his artistic creation of the Tabernacle (Exodus 31:3). In the book of Judges, the presence of the Spirit of YHWH can transform a person into a leader (Judges 3:10, 6:39) or give him super human strength (14:19). In I Samuel, the movement of *Ruah YHWH* is used to describe the transfer of divine favor from Saul to David, as Saul's spirit from God is replaced with an "evil spirit" that also comes from God (I Samuel 16:14, 23). A "double portion" of *Ruah* is transferred from Elijah to his disciple Elisha along with a mantle of leadership (Kings II 2:9). This passage is a rare instance of someone requesting *ruah*; more frequently it visits individuals without invitation.

[209] VanderToorn et.al, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons*, 792.

The spirit of God (*Ruah Elohim*) rests on individuals and grants them the wisdom and knowledge they need to lead (II Chronicles 15:1 and 24:20). A special spirit from God is the essential quality of the messianic leader described by the prophet Isaiah: "the spirit of the Lord (*Ruah YHWH*) shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isaiah 11:2). (Note the connection of wisdom and spirit, which are often combined in Hellenistic as well as Rabbinic thought.) It is also available to all the children of Israel: "For I will pour water upon the thirsty land, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon your seed, and my blessing upon your offspring." (Isaiah 44:3). The divine spirit is indeed the most important quality that a leader needs to succeed: "This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit—said the Lord of Hosts." (Zechariah 4:6).

Ecstatic prophecy is another spiritual experience described with the term *ruah*. The spirit that was upon Moses is transferred and shared with the seventy elders; it rests upon them, causing them to enter an ecstatic state and to prophesy (Numbers 11:25-26). In Samuel, ecstatic bands of prophets are described as being overcome by the spirit of God and prophesying (I Samuel 10), and the spirit of YHWH can speak from within a person (II Samuel 23:1-2).

Visionary prophesy is included in the term *ruah*. In Trito-Isaiah,

> And this shall be my covenant with them, said the Lord: My spirit which is upon you, and the words which I have placed in your mouth, shall not be absent from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your children, nor from the mouth of your children's children—said the Lord—from now on, for all time. (Isaiah 59:21)

In this verse, the spirit/*ruah* is directly linked to the prophetic words. The spirit is *upon* the prophet, and causes him to speak. In the book of Joel, the prophetic spirit has the potential to rest upon the entire people: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." (Joel 3:1). This connection of *Ruah* and prophecy was well entrenched by the post-exilic period. Nehemiah speaks of God warning the people "by your spirit through the prophets" (Nehemiah 9:30).

Ruah in the Bible may have a negative connotation as well as a positive one. Spirit may also signify a person's negative or perverse mood or attitude as well, as in a "spirit of jealousy" (Number 5:14) or a hardened spirit (Deuteronomy 2:30), or the aforementioned "tormenting" of Saul by an evil spirit from God (Samuel I 16:14-15). Michael Fishbane, who contends that the mythic content of Biblical works are often overlooked, states that many of these references to "spirit" in an emotional context may have referred to heavenly beings, "spirits" from God who are sent to earth "as delegated agents of the divine will." The most obvious example is in I Kings 22:21-23, in which God sends a "lying spirit" to the mouth of prophets, in order to lead the wicked king Ahab into disaster.[210] Another example would be Job 4:15-16, in which Eliphaz says, "Then a spirit (*ruah*) passed before my face and the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern its form; a shape was before my eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice…" The spirit here is a ghostly image with a divine message.

Holy Spirit

The phrase "holy spirit" is found in only three verses in the *Tanakh*: Psalms 51:13 and Isaiah 63:10 and 11, and in all three cases it is as a grammatical construct, involving a possessive pronoun, which in Hebrew becomes a suffix on the word, that is *ruah kodshekha* (your holy spirit or the spirit of your holiness) or *ruah kodsho* (his holy spirit or the spirit of his holiness). In Psalms 51:12-14, the psalmist is very concerned with having the correct spirit, and prays, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a constant spirit inside me. Do not cast me away from your presence; and do not take *your holy spirit* from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation; and uphold me with a willing spirit." In tritero-Isaiah, the prophet describes the people of Israel, "But they rebelled, and grieved *his holy spirit*; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." He then poses a question: "Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses, and his people, saying, 'Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he who put *his holy spirit* in him?'" (Isaiah 63:10-11). Although these three examples are precursors to the Rabbinic term, the precise expression "*Ruah ha-Kodesh*," as used in Rabbinic texts, is not found in the Tanakh.

In summary, *Ruah* in the Tanakh is already a multivalent term, signifying wind, breath, or spirit. It is often portrayed as a divine force, coming from God to fill people with life, with special abilities, or with prophetic powers. An early connection of *Ruah* with versions of the qualifier *kodesh* is found here as well. Thus, the many inter-related

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[210] Michael Fishbane, *The Exegetical Imagination on Jewish Thought and Theology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 72.

meanings of term *Ruah* in the Tanakh provide an essential foundation for its uses by the Rabbis.

SPIRIT IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The Dead Sea Scrolls present some of the earliest Jewish literature of the post-Biblical period. First discovered in 1947 in caves near the Qumran ruin in the Judaean desert, the Scrolls include a wide variety of Biblical, apocryphal, and sectarian texts dating from the mid-second century B.C.E. to the first century C.E. The languages of the scrolls are Hebrew (predominantly), Aramaic, and some Greek. Here one already finds an expansion of the meanings of the term *Ruah* in its connotation of "spirit." Spirit and spirits—including both angels and demons—are a frequent concern of the Qumran scrolls, which also introduces the formulation "*Ruah Kodesh*" (without the definite article and sometimes with possessives "his" or "your") to refer to the holy spirit of God or even of human beings. In the non-Biblical, Hebrew scrolls of Qumran, the terms *ruah* and *kodesh* are juxtaposed more frequently than in the Bible.[211] The absence of the definite article difference probably has little theological significance,[212] but it shows an articulation that is distinct from that in Rabbinic sources.

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[211] Arthur Everett Sekki, *The Meaning of Ruah at Qumran* (Atlanta: Scholars Press 1989). About 18 instances of *Ruah kodesh* (no definite article) and variations are noted in his index. As I noted above, in the Tanakh, the term *Ruah* is often used in *semikhut* (construct form) with the divine names YHWH and *Elohim*, but only three times with a form of *kodesh* (as noted, in Psalm 51:11; Isaiah 53:10-11)].

[212] Edward Lee Beavin, *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, 23.

The term *Ruah Kodesh* finds varied uses in the scrolls, from cleansing, to enlightenment, to the guidance of the righteous. God's *Ruah Kodesh* is said to cleanse man of sin in the *Community Rule* (IQS 3:7, 4:21). This text declares that the correct path for humanity is the study of Torah and the Law of Moses, "that they may do according to all that has been revealed from age to age, and as the Prophets have revealed by His Holy Spirit." (IQS 8:16), leading to a community founded on the "spirit of holiness according to everlasting truth" (IQS 9:3).[213]

The term is also used in connection to granting wisdom and enlightenment to the believer. The *Thanksgiving Hymns* praise God for "shedding his *Ruah Kodesh*" upon the believer (IQH 7:6/7), which has delighted him and opened his heart (IQH 9:32). The "psalmist" has hearkened faithfully to God's holy spirit (*Ruah Kodshekha*) (IQH 12:12). These Hymns also speak of multiple spirits and link the concept of spirit with the concept of divine Wisdom. The "Words of the Heavenly Lights" (4Q504, 4, 5), which contains fragments of prayers from Qumran, and thanks God for "shedding his holy spirit" *Ruah Kodsho* on the faithful and teaching them through it.

A related use of the term relates to the guidance of the faithful. The *Damascus Document* describes how God "made known his holy spirit" to those he loved "by the hand of his anointed ones, and he proclaimed the truth to them" (CD 2:12). The same text refers to those outside the sect who routinely "defile their holy spirit" (CD 5:11), which

[213] Translations from Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English-Revised and Extended Fourth Edition* (London: Penguin Books, 1995). The capitalizations are his, as there is no upper case in Hebrew. The issue of capitalization has been addressed in the introduction to this paper.

shows that the term was applied to the human spirit as well.[214] John Levison points out the parallels of wording between this passage and Leviticus 11:43 and 20:25, in which the people are commanded not to defile their *nefesh* (life or soul), and concludes that in this text, "holy spirit" meant the life force itself.[215] The Liturgical Prayer (IQ34 6/7) also speaks of God's covenant with the faithful, founded on "the words of your holy spirit" (*divrei Ruah Kodshekha*).

These varied uses of Spirit in the Dead Sea Scrolls may be said to form a kind of bridge between Tanakh and New Testament outlooks. Some scholars see the use of the term here as more closely connected to the former, and others to the latter. Arthur Sekki contends that the use of God's Holy Spirit in the Qumran literature is closely tied to Old Testament concepts, and particularly parallels the Qumran usages to Isaiah 44:3, Joel 3:1-2, and Ezekiel 36:27, 37:6 and 14, all of which speak of God putting his spirit or breath of life into the people. He notes that "The evidence…points to Qumran as an eschatologically oriented community which saw itself as the heir of God's eschatological Spirit and regarded this Spirit as the basis and source of its spirituality."[216]

Compare this to David Flusser, who notes that "spirit" has many applications in the Dead Sea Scrolls which more closely resemble its uses in the New Testament, and that these uses heavily influenced the New Testament. Pneumatological ideas in the

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[214] This recalls the saying of Rabbi Eliezer in Sifrei Deuteronomy (Piska 173): "Whoever cleaves to impurity, a spirit of impurity rests upon him. And whoever cleaves to the Shekhinah; it is logical (*din hu*) that the *Ruah Ha-Kodesh* will rest upon him"

[215] John R. Levison, *The Spirit in First-Century Judaism* (Boston: Brill, 2002), 73-76.

[216] Sekki, *Meaning of Ruah at Qumran*, 221-223. An interesting tangent he notes is that the term *Ruah* has a feminine gender when it refers to the human soul or personality, and normally takes a masculine gender when referring to angels and demons. The term is used almost exlusively in the feminine in Rabbinic literature, but assumes a masculine gender in Christian writings.

Scrolls which influenced the New Testament include "specific spirits" representing "individual divine gifts to the Elect," and the nation that the "granting of wisdom is a function of the Holy Spirit…The Holy Spirit is the only mediator of true knowledge, which is inaccessible to carnal man."[217] The well-known dualism of the flesh and the spirit found in the New Testament may also partly derive from the Dead Sea scrolls, as well. Still, no Qumran writings show the same negativity of some Greek and particularly Gnostic ideas toward the physical world and the body.[218] For example, in both the *Thanksgiving Scroll* and the New Testmanent, "the flesh" is not a burden, as in extreme Greek dualism, or the realm of evil, as in Gnosticism, but rather, "the flesh is unredeemed human nature, steeped in sin, the spirit is the Holy Spirit which brings redemption…the Holy Spirit makes carnal man into spiritual man…."[219] Although in discussing *Ruah* in the Scrolls, Sekki emphasizes connections to the Tanakh while Flusser highlights the precursors of developments in the New Testament; both of them demonstrate the continuity of the Scrolls' pneumatology with its biblical roots.

Another important emphasis in the Dead Sea Scrolls is in the contrast of positive and negative implications of the term *ruah*. As we saw occasionally in the Tanakh, the word "spirit" can occasionally have a negative connotation. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is sometimes associated with the role of devil spirits and demons. The well known notion of "two spirits," good/light and evil/darkness, is found in the "Community Rule" (IQS),

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[217]Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, 56,67. This use of Wisdom is found in the DST, now classified as 1QH (The Thanksgiving Hymns). It is interesting to note that Rabbinic texts do not portray a dichotomy of "flesh" and "spirit"; they speak of body and soul as different, but not as polarities.
[218] Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, 60, 62
[219] Flusser, *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity*, 65.

Sections 2-4. Some Qumranic texts, such as the David Compositions (11QPsApa) and Genesis Apocryphon (IQapGen) highlight a sectarian concern with evil spirits and demons that may lead to sin, suffering, and danger. Prayer, recitation of psalms, and incantations in the name of YHWH were seen as effective means of ridding oneself of such spirits.[220] According to Hermann Lichtenbarger, it is important to understand the role of the divine spirit in the Scrolls on the background of this concern with the influence of spirits and demons in all aspects of life. A certain dualism is present in the Dead Sea Scrolls, but it must still be placed "within the parameters of Jewish monotheism;" namely, that the powers of evil will eventually be conquered by God at the eschaton.[221]

Lawrence Schiffman[222] explains the dualism of the Scrolls differently. The notion of "bad" spirits was already found in the Bible (e.g. I Samuel 18:10), but is not highly developed in Rabbinic thought. Schiffman notes the importance of demonic spirits and elaborates on the role of the two cosmic angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls by comparing these notions to the Rabbinic concept of the two *yetsarim* (impulses for good and evil) competing in the human psyche. Sectarian notions took the warring powers from inside

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220 Hermann Lichtenbarger, "Spirits and Demons in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins- Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn*, Stanton, Graham, Longenecker & Barton (eds.), (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004)., 12-15.

221 Hermann Lichtenbarger, "Spirits and Demons in the Dead Sea Scrolls," ibid. For a historical perspective on the subject of dualism in pagan religion, its central role in Zorastrianism, as contrasted with the lack of dualism in Israelite religion, see Yehezkel Kaufman, *The Religion of Israel—From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, Moshe Greenberg (trans. and ed.), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 55-58, 63-67.

222 Schiffman, Lawrence, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (New York: Doubleday, 1995.) 114, 115

the human personality and made them into supernatural powers struggling for supremacy in the cosmos (although some sectarian texts see the struggle as primarily internal).[223]

Taken together, these various sources demonstrate the importance of Spirit or *Ruah* in the Qumranic texts. Its uses in these Dead Sea texts bridge some of the gap between those in the Old and New Testaments. The very words "*Ruah Kodesh"* are used in combination much more than in the Tanakh, but still without the definite article used by the Rabbis. The term *ruah* has a broad range of uses in the Scrolls, from the spirit of God to the spirit of man, or to angels and demons. When combined with a form of*kodesh*, the term can be used to speak of God's power to cleanse, enlighten, or inspire the righteous elect. Some amount of dualism is noted in reference to the spirit, but not to the degree found in Gnostic or certain Greek or Christian writings. What is of particular interest to my study of Rabbinic associations is the role of the *Ruah Kodesh* in teaching and granting wisdom to humanity, as noted in the selections from the *Thanksgiving Hymns.*

HELLENISTIC JEWISH LITERATURE

"Hellenistic Judaism"is a term the meaning of which is debated. Mary Isaacs defines it as "the Greek-speaking Judaism of the Diaspora" during the period of Greek and Roman domination.[224] She notes that the influence of Hellenism was also felt in Judea itself. The rendition of *ruah* as *pneuma*, meaning "breath," was introduced to

[223] Schiffman, pp. 114-115, 365.
[224] Marie Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit-A Study of Pneuma in Hellenistic Judaism and its Bearing on the New Testament* (London: Heythrop Monographs, 1976) provides a study on the topic of Spirit or Pneuma in

biblical translations by Hellenistic Jewish translators of the Septuagint, and later used in the New Testament. Following the Hebrew word *ruah* in the Tanakh, they use *pneuma* to signify wind, air, breath, the spirit of man or God, or it may be used as a term for supernatural beings or spirits—all dependent on context. In the Septuagint, *pneuma* is also used, although less frequently, as a translation for *ruah* when it means the human spirit or psyche. In pagan Greek use from the sixth century B.C.E., it had usually been confined to "wind," or "breath," (including in medical documents), and not customarily associated with the psyche, divinity or the spirit. By using the term *pneuma* as the translation for *ruah*, including the sense of "spirit," the Septuagint "introduced Jewish theological ideas into pagan Greek concepts of *pneuma.*"[225] According to Isaacs, it is also significant that Philo and other Jewish authors used *pneuma* to describe the spirit of God, and the "image of God in man" (ibid), but never to describe "the demonic," in contrast to the Dead Sea Scrolls. This emphasis on the Spirit as something divine was influential in the emerging New Testament uses of the term.

Aristobulus was an Alexandrian Hellenistic Jewish philosopher who lived in Ptolemaic Egypt (mid-second century B.C.E.) and wrote biblical commentaries that used Greek allegorical and philosophical methods.[226] Although his work exists only in fragmentary form, some of his important ideas have been preserved. Aristobulus was

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Hellenistic Jewish sources, such as Philo and the *Wisdom of Solomon*. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, uses the term to refer to Greek-speaking (or bilingual) Jews in Judea.

[225] Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit*, 143.

[226] Carl R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors, Volume III, Aristobulus.Texts and Translations.* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995, 74-75.

influenced by Ben Sira's concept of Wisdom[227] and compared it to the Stoic idea of the Logos, "the law of the world or the world-soul," the "spiritual principle of order and knowledge in the cosmos." The biblical seven days of creation were really a mystical "sevenfold Logos" that brought truth and order to the universe.[228] Wisdom, knowledge and spirit are paralled in Aristobulus' account of creation:

> From this day the first wisdom and knowledge illuminate us. For the light of truth—a true light, casting no shadow, indivisibly apportioned to all—is the Spirit of the Lord for those who are sanctified through faith, occupying the position of a lamp for the purpose of obtaining knowledge of things are they really are.[229]

This typical Hellenistic-Jewish identification of Wisdom, Logos and divine spirit will be reflected in the later Rabbinic personification of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

The most important Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, Philo Judaeus of Alexandria (c. 20 B.C.E. to 50 C.E.), was not directly referenced by the Rabbis, and his writings and thought were more actively preserved in Christian circles. Converserly, Philo's familiarity with early Tannaitic teachings is questionable.[230] Philo described God in philosophical terms, as a pure immaterial intellect. Because of Philo's desire to harmonize Jewish Scriptures with the Greek Platonic and Stoic philosophers, Logos/Wisdom was an important notion in Philo's thought. It was for him a kind of

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[227] Ben Sira or Ecclesiasticus, from the early second century B.C.E., is also considered a Hellenistic work, but since it is included in the Apocrypha it will be examined in the next section.
[228] Martin Hengel, 1974. *Judaism and Hellenism (Vol. 1).* Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 168.
[229] Aristobulus, Fragment 5b, [229] Carl R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors, Volume III*, 179.
[230] Gideon Bohak, "Philo," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*, Werblowsky, R.J. Zwi, and Geoffrey Wigoder (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997): 529-530. For possible but limited Palestinian influences on Philo, see Samuel Sandmel, Philo of Alexandria (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 127-134, and Bernard Bamberger, "Philo and the Aggadah," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Vol. 48 (1977): 153-185.

emanation from God's own being, a hypostatization which gave the world its form, functioned as natural law, and became manifest in virtuous lives.[231] Philo's depiction of the Logos/Wisdom as a kind of blueprint for the Divine architect (*De Opificio Mundi*, chapter 4) is so strikingly similar to the opening passages of Genesis Rabbah (in which Torah is God's blueprint for the world) that some scholars have advanced the idea that Rabbi Hoshaya took the image from his contemporary Origen, an early church father who often praised Philo.[232] Wisdom or Sophia is closely associated or even identified with the Logos in Philo (Legum Allegoriae 1:65).[233] Although the two terms overlap in Philo's thought, Logos is understood as the male principle and Wisdom as the female.[234]

Philo also emphasizes the many and varied ways in which Spirit acts on human beings. In his exegetical and philosophical writings, Philo describes the Holy Spirit as inspiring ecstatic artistic experiences, using prophets as its passive "channels" to convey divine messages, facilitating mental ascent by philosophers, enabling the exegete (including Philo himself) to write inspired work, and shaping biblical characters into model rulers in the Hellenistic mode (beautiful, virtuous, and skilled in rhetoric). At times the Spirit overtakes individuals in a kind of "possession," while at other times they are

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[231] Levison, *The Spirit in First Century Judaism*, p. 238. Cf. James C. Vanderkam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2001), 138-142.
[232] David Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria (*Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1985), 25, points out earlier identifications made by Jacob Freudenthal, Wilhelm Bacher, and the nineteenth century Jewish historican Heinrich Graetz. Referenced in Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines-The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 128. Of course, this assumes that Rabbi Hoshaya is the authentic author of the passage attributed to him. The reliability of Rabbinic attributions is a matter of some scholarly debate, as I have pointed out.
[233] See Marie Isaacs, *The Concept of Spirit*, 135, and Peter Schäfer, *The Mirror of His Beauty* (Princeton/ Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 39-57.
[234] Peter Schäfer, *The Mirror of His Beauty*, 44-45.

able to function lucidly while under its influence.[235] This multivalent use of the term is also found in Rabbinic writings, albeit with somewhat different forms and emphases.

Other Jewish authors of the Greco-Roman milieu exhibited a similarly wide variety of uses of the term "spirit" and "holy spirit." "Pseudo Philo" (author of the first century *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, LAB[236]) shows biblical influences when describing the way in which "the spirit of the Lord" grants military prowess to biblical figures such as Gideon and Kenaz (LAB 27). He writes in great detail of the process by which biblical leaders, including Kenaz again and Joshua, were overtaken by the holy spirit, which "leapt upon" them, causing emotional upheaval and an altered mental state that led to prophecy (LAB 28). He thus combines typical biblical uses of the spirit of God as enabling prophecy and leadership with the more extravagant descriptions of "possession by the spirit" that were found in Greco-Roman writers, specifically Cicero and Plutarch.[237] Such ideas were not unknown to Rabbinic authors, who spoke of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "leaping" upon Phinehas the High Priest (Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 9:7) and of people speaking unintended words of prophecy when a "spark" of that Spirit forced them to do so (Genesis Rabbah 85:9). But Hellenistic Jewish writers such as the author of LAB offered much fuller and richer descriptions of overpowering episodes of "possession" by

[235] Levison, *The Spirit*, 239.
[236] This book was probably composed in Hebrew and was translated to Latin, possibly with an intermediate Greek translation. It appears to have been written in Palestine in the second half of the first century and shows a great deal of familiarity with biblical texts, along with a knowledge of Greek and Roman literature (Levision, 266-269).
[237] Levison, *The Spirit*, 221-222.

the Spirit, which included dreaming, agitation, personal transformation, mental changes, and subsequent amnesia about the event.[238]

Josephus, too, makes many different uses of the term. He equates it with an angel of God when recounting the story of Balaam (Antiquities 4.108), but in other texts he adopts a more universal tone and models himself on Stoic philosophy when he describes *pneuma* as the "spirit which provides cosmic unity."[239]

Hellenistic Jewish writers provided an important backdrop to understanding the Holy Spirit in Rabbinic literature. They expanded and interpreted the use of hypostatizations such as Wisdom and Logos. They skillfully combined biblical, extra-biblical and non-Jewish influences to craft new and varied uses of the Spirit which presage its multivalent function in Rabbinic literature. But one can also see here paths not taken by Rabbinic writers, such as in the highly detailed descriptions of "possession" by the Spirit offered by some Hellenistic authors.

THE APOCRYPHA AND PSEUDEPIGRAPHA

The Apocrypha ("hidden books") or Deuterocanonical Books to the Old Testament, were composed between 300 B.C.E. and 200 C.E. These works were revered in some early, especially Hellenistic, Jewish circles and included in the Septuagint (and the Vulgate) but not introduced into the Hebrew canon.[240] The Pseudepigrapha ("falsely ascribed" writings), are defined by James Charlesworth as writings from that same period

[238] As described in several passages in *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, Levision, *The Spirit*, 239.
[239] Levison, *The Spirit*, 240.
[240] Ecclesiasticus, included in the Apocyrpha, was examined in the previous section.

that are: (almost all) Jewish or Christian, "often attributed to ideal figures in Israel's past…customarily claim to contain God's word or message, [and] frequently build upon ideas and narratives present in the Old Testament."[241] Some works are included in both categories; and it is for that reason that I examine them together based on chronology rather than type. In general, those called Apocrypha were included in the Septuagint, while the Pseudepigrapha were not.[242] Together, the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha constitute an ancient Jewish literature written by Jews and for Jews, but rejected in Rabbinic circles.[243]

Many of the uses of Spirit and Holy Spirit in these extracanonical books are similar to those in Biblical writings, but there are a few innovations which may be significant. According to James Charlesworth, many apocryphal references to the Holy Spirit appear to be from early Christian circles or later Christian editors and include frankly Christological and Trinitarian references.[244] Yet for the purposes of this dissertation, the uses will be examined to determine whether they were adopted or rejected in Rabbinic literature.

I Enoch, parts of which may date to the third century B.C.E., is a very influential and popular Apocryphal work (attested, among other places, in the Dead Sea Scrolls). It calls God the "Lord of Spirits" in connection with visions of a Messianic figure, and

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[241] James Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.) (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983, Vol. I) xxi. Eccliasticus or the Wisdom of Ben Sirah is also considered an apocryphal work, but I have described it in the previous section on Hellenistic Jewish literature.
[242] Avigdor Shinan, *The World of the Aggadah* (Tel Aviv: MOD Books, 1990), 23-24.
[243] Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1 declares a ban on those who reads "external" books, which may refer to the uncanonical works.
[244] Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* ,Vol. 2, "Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers," 686-688, Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah, Vol. 2, Introduction, 154.

also—similar to the Scrolls—makes references to the dual nature of body and soul or spirit.[245] W.D. Davies finds this selection important to early Christianity, as it joined the idea of Holy Spirit to Messianic aspirations.[246]

Some Pseudepigraphal texts echo the uses of Spirit in biblical sources. For example, in *Jubilees*,[247] a second century BCE pseudepigraphic midrash and apocalypse related to the books of Genesis and Exodus (texts of which were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls), biblical patriarchs and matriarchs are able to bless their children when gifted with a "spirit of truth" or a prophet spirit (25:14, 31:12). This function would be echoed in Rabbinic Aggadic Midrash.[248] The *Testament of Abraham*, a first century Egyptian Jewish pseudepigraphal work about the last days of Abraham the patriach, became popular in Medieval Christian circles. In chapter 4, God promises to send forth his holy spirit upon Isaac, so that he sees his father's death in a dream.[249] The *Psalms of Solomon*, probably a first century Jewish work, include references to a Messianic king being "created…strong in the holy spirit" by God, a formulation which recalls the book of Isaiah.[250]

One text with a direct influence on Rabbinic ideas is the *Wisdom of Ben Sira* (Ecclesiasticus), a Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom text originally composed in Hebrew, some time between 190 and 175 BCE. It is included in the Roman Catholic and Eastern

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[245] See I Enoch 47, Sparks, 248-249.
[246] W.D. Davies, Paul in Rabbinic Judaism (London, 1948), 205, quoting E.F. Scott, *The Spirit in the New Testament* ,(London, 1923).
[247] Charlesworth, Vol. 2, 35-142.
[248] These are cited by Levison, p. 246. Cf. such Rabbinic texts as Gen. Rabbah 98:3.
[249] Sparks, H.F.D., ed., *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 402.
[250] Psalms of Solomon 17, Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, p. 680.

Orthodox biblical canon, and Hebrew manuscripts were found in the Cairo Geniza. Although not part of the Jewish canon, the book was considered authoritative and quoted several times in the Talmud.[251] Ben Sira was pivotal in identifying Wisdom or *Hokhma* with the Torah. In Ecclesiasticus Chapter 24, Ben Sira describes Wisdom as the universal law permeating the world, but links it exclusively to the Torah of Israel: "Wisdom shall praise herself, and shall glory in the midst of her people...all these things are the book of the covenant of the most high God, even the law which Moses commanded for an heritage unto the congregations of Jacob" (Ecclesiasticus 24:1,23).

Another book which links Wisdom and Spirit is the *Wisdom of Solomon*, an Apocryphal work (c. 100 BCE) that was written by an Alexandrian Jew. This Greek document introduces "Platonic, Stoic, and other forms of Hellenistic thought" to Jewish readers. Following the biblical Proverbs, it portrays a personified female Wisdom as God's agent in creating the world. Wisdom fills creation: "For Wisdom is mobile beyond all motion, and she penetrates and pervades all things by reason of her purity" (Wisdom of Solomon, 7:22). This usage recalls the Stoic concept of the Logos.[252] In chapter 9 of this influential work, the author advances dualistic ideas, praises Wisdom, and parallels her to God's holy spirit:

> Now with you is Wisdom, who knows your works and was present when you made the world…Send her forth from your holy heavens and from your glorious throne dispatch her that she may be with me and work with me, that I may know

[251] Bavli Hagigah 13a, Ketubot 110b, Baba Batra 146a, Nidah 16b. Although at times Ben Sira is quoted as "saying" (omer) something, like a Rabbinic sage, more often he is referenced with a variation of "katuv" or "kativ," similar to quotation formulas that refer to Scripture.
[252] Russell Pregeant, *Engaging the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 29.

> what is your pleasure…For what man knows God's counsel, or who can conceive what our Lord intends?...For the corruptible body burdens the soul…
>
> Who ever knew your counsel, except you had given Wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high? And thus were the paths of those on earth made straight, and men learned what was your pleasure, and were saved by Wisdom.
> (*Wisdom of Solomon* 9:9-17)

More than any other ancient Jewish text, *Wisdom of Solomon*, "moves Wisdom closest to God" and introduces Spirit (pneuma) as their connection.[253] The connections between Wisdom, Logos, and God's holy spirit in *Wisdom of Solomon* are helpful in understanding the historical and theological background to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, which I will explore more fully in Chapter 6. The history of Wisdom as an intermediary, as well as its connection to female numina is pertinent to my study of the hypostatic features of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. From the time of these Apocryphal Wisdom books and throughout Rabbinic literature, Wisdom and Torah are inextricably linked, and this is very important to the development of the Rabbinic *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as the divine voice, the voice of wisdom speaking in the Torah/scriptures.

The *Fourth Book of Ezra*, a pseudepigraphal work written around 100 C.E. (with some later Christian additions at the beginning and end of the book), is an expanded form of the Apocryphal book of 2 Esdras. It is particularly significant for the understanding of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. It is based on the Biblical figure of Ezra, religious leader of the Jews at

[253] Peter Schäfer, *The Mirror of His Beauty*, 34-35.

the period of rebuilding the Temple, but with the addition of seven apocalyptic visions.[254] In the last original chapter (prior to the Christian concluding chapters), Ezra prays for divine inspiration in the form of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, to be sent to him so that he can restore the Scriptures for the returning people and take his place as the second Moses (*Fourth Ezra,* 14:22).[255] Rabbinic tradition, too, holds that Ezra had "the power of canonization …the power of restoration," and that he was a kind of second Moses who renewed Scripture after the corrupting influence of the Exile.[256] This description of Ezra composing Scripture through divine inspiration will be reflected in the popular Talmudic concept that sacred texts were composed with the *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.[257]

The Pseudepigraphal *Odes of Solomon,* thought to be a late first century, early Christian or Judeo-Christian hymnbook of uncertain provenance, contains both common and exceptional uses of the term "Holy Spirit."[258] Ode 6:7, states, "Our spirits praise his Holy Spirit," and Ode 14:8, puts forth a fairly typical Jewish sentiment: "And open to me the harp of your Holy Spirit, so that with every note I may praise you, O Lord." The Holy Spirit is here related to song and psalm; it enables the singer to praise the Lord. Ode 11:2 offers the unusual metaphor of being "circumcised by [God's] Holy Spirit," so that the singer's "inner being" is uncovered to God's love.[259] Ode 19:2-4 offers dramatic and highly unusual (seemingly Christian) imagery related to the Holy Spirit (and God the

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[254] James Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol, I, 516-559.
[255] Charlesworth, Vol. 1, 554.
[256] Bavli Sanhedrin 21b-22a. See David Weiss Halivny, *Peshat and Derash—Plain and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 132-154.
[257] See Bavli Megillah 7a.
[258] James Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (2 vols.) (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983, Vol. 2, 725-779. The Odes have been transmitted in Greek, but the original language may have been Aramaic or even Qumranic Hebrew.

Father, as well!) as nursing parents. It states, "The Son is the cup, and the Father is he who was milked, and the Holy Spirit is she who milked him…the Holy Spirit opened her bosom, and mixed the milk of the two breasts of the Father [sic]."[260] Such imagery was "a shock" to early 20th century scholars who studied the Odes.[261]

The Apochypha and Pseudepigrapha were mostly Jewish literature, written by Jews for Jews. For reasons not completely evident to us, the legitimacy of most of these texts was rejected by the Rabbis. Some are of Christian origin and reflect Christian theology. But as seen in this brief overview, some uses of the Holy Spirit found in these works found affirmation and continuation in Rabbinic literature, including such ideas as having visions, blessing someone, or composing sacred writ through *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The role of Spirit and Holy Spirit (Greek: *pneuma hagion*, Latin: *spiritus sanctus*) in particular, is extremely important in the New Testament, even before the idea of the Trinity became doctrine in the fourth century Nicene Creed.[262] Many references in the Synoptic Gospels provide a window not only into emerging Christian thought, but also into first and early second century *Jewish* attitudes and beliefs. The New Testament describes the Holy Spirit as both a power and a personification, a dual function which is found in Rabbinic texts as well, although expressed in different ways.

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[259] No more unusual, perhaps, than the biblical phrase, to "circumcise your heart" (Deut. 10:16).
[260] Charlesworth, 752.
[261] Charlesworth, Vol. 2, 727.
[262] James H. Charlesworth, "Christians and Jews in the First Six Centuries," *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism—A Parallel History of Their Origins and Early Development,* Hershel Shanks, ed. (Washington,

> In the [New Testament] imagery used in connection with the spirit, two groups of related images can be distinguished. In the one the spirit is described in a personal way, either as subject or object; in the other the spirit is described as a power, force or influence, either material or immaterial. The language used is partly derived from the biblical idiom and partly from contemporary Hellenistic material.[263]

The activities of the Holy Spirit are abundant in the New Testament. In Matthew 1:18, 20, Mary is reported to have conceived a child by the Holy Spirit. While there is no evident parallel to this concept in classical Rabbinic texts, other New Testament sources have interesting Rabbinic echoes. In Matthew 3:15-17 (paralleled in the other synoptic gospels), Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan, when "the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, dove and alighting on him, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Subsequently, the Spirit leads Jesus to the wilderness, where he will be tempted. This image of the dove would later be incorporated into Trinitarian depictions of the Holy Spirit, and is also evidenced in Rabbinic literature.[264] Later, Jesus is said to cast out demons by means of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:28), and he warns his followers against the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (ibid. 12:31-32). Jesus also utilizes a typical Rabbinic usage of the term "Holy Spirit" by speaking of King David writing the Psalms through its inspiration (Mark 13:35).

D.C.: Biblical Archeology Society, 1992), 320-321. See also J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Chrisitan Creeds*, (New York: David McKay Company, 1972).

[263] Karel vanderToorn, Bob Becking, Peter W. Vonderhorst, eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden, New York, Koln: E.J.Brill, 1995), 796.

[264] See Mekhilta Beshallah 3 and Bavli Shabbat 130a (the people of Israel are compared to a dove. In the latter text, the dove's protecting wings are compared to the commandments), Bavli Berakhot 3a (the *Bat*

Another early Christian theme concerning the Holy Spirit is its role as the "paraclete" (*paracletos* or advocate, in the masculine gender) of the people. The Holy Spirit is depicted (in the New Testament and in Church interpretations) as comforter, defender, intercessor and advocate. This is based on many references in John, including John 14:15-16, and in Romans 8:36-37 and 8:33, and it, too, finds parallels in Rabbinic texts in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* acts as an advocate for the people of Israel or for biblical figures "in court."[265] The word "paraclete" was Hebraicized to "praklit" in the Mishnah and Talmud, but it is not specifically used to describe *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Rather, it is the performance of the commandments, repentance, and good deeds which are said to be an individual's "praklit."[266]

Acts 2:2-4 describes the dramatic scene on Pentecost (Shavuoth), when "suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they [the disciples] were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." In early Christianity, the "pneumatic" Pentecostal experience was the path to a "New Covenant Hermeneutic," that "relativized, or even denigrated…the Mosaic covenant as a result of a conviction of its completeness in the new age inaugurated by Jesus and the gift of the

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Kol, divine voice, speaks like a dove), Bavli Hagigah, 15a (Ben Zoma has a mystical vision of the *Ruah* of God hovering over the waters "as a dove hovers over her young").

[265] Leviticus Rabbah 6:1, where *Ruah ha-Kodesh* acts as Israel's "advocate" (sanigoria) to God, and 85:12, Bavli Makkot 23b, in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is said to appear in court.

[266] Mishnah Avot 4:11 and Bavli Shabbat 32a.

Spirit"[267] The events in Acts 2:2-4 bear more resemblance to events in the Hebrew Bible (e.g. Numbers 11:25) than to any Rabbinic narrative, but some parallels are found here as well[268], and will be explored further in this study. I Corintheans 12 speaks of the gifts, or charisms, given by the Spirit, including various spiritual abilities. This finds parallels in some Rabbinic texts which mention special abilities and powers granted by *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.[269] However, these generally refer to Biblical events and are rarely noted in the Rabbinic present.

Shared underlying Jewish beliefs about *Ruah Ha-Kodesh* influenced the New Testament and Rabbinic ideas alike. W.D. Davies' *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*[270] devotes a chapter to "Old and New Obedience: the Lord and the Spirit." He notes that Rabbinic authorities spoke of the reward of faith as well as works.[271] He points out that some Rabbis contend that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* had ceased, yet they look forward to its renewal in the future eschatology. Paul, as "a Pharisee who believed that the Messiah had

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[267] Scot McNight, "Covenant and Spirit: The Origins of the New Covenant Hermeneutic," in Stanton, Graham, Bruce Longenecker & Stephan Barton (eds.), *The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins-Essays in Honor of James D. G. Dunn (*Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004).

[268] See Song of Songs Rabbah 1:10:2, in which tongues of flame dance around a sage studying Torah. Divinely inspired speech is commonly mentioned in Rabbinic texts, but not the specific notion of "speaking in tongues."

[269] Leviticus Rabbah 8:2, Bavli Baba Batra 122a, Genesis Rabbah 98:3 and others will be examined in Chapter 3.

[270] William David Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism -Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1948). Davies seeks to adumbrate the early Rabbinic influences on Paul, in contrast to "Hellenistic" or "Greek" influence, while acknowledging that the two overlap. Like many scholars of an earlier period, his citation of Rabbinic evidence ranges far and wide, to the Tannaitic literature as well as the much later Bavli (although he avoids reliance on the Yalkut literature due to medieval provenance, Davies, 219), and he dates some sayings to the quoted sages and not the redacted text. But he still analyses their application with a critical eye. Davies sometimes relies heavily on Abelson and his questionable assertions on such points as the "materiality" of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (Davies, 184-185; see my critiques of this view in Chapter 6). Nonetheless, Davies' cogent analysis of the issues remains relevant.

[271] Davies notes Mekhilta Vayasa 3 (Lauterbach Vol. p. 103) and later texts; one can add Mekhilta Beshallah, 7 (Lauterbach, Vol. 1, 252, 253).

come" would doubtless expect the fulfillment of contemporary Rabbinic expectations that "the Messianic Age or the Age to Come [will be] the age of the Spirit."[272] In addition, Paul was influenced by Jewish concepts of the "communal" nature of the spirit, as found in biblical passages which speak of God's spirit being poured forth on the entire people (e.g. Isaiah 44:3, Joel 3:1), and by some Rabbinic documents such as the Mekhilta,[273] which held that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rests upon prophets only so that they may help Israel, allowing the entire people can experience it as a collective.

The Holy Spirit plays a pivotal role in the New Testament long prior to its part in Trinitarian doctrine. There are a number of intriguing parallels and potential points of interaction between New Testament references to the Holy Spirit and Rabbinic ones; however, there are also significant and meaningful differences.There is shared imagery, such as the dove or tongues of fire, and shared metaphor, such as the role of the Spirit as "advocate." But the same images in Rabbinic literature are used to heighten the importance of following the commandments. Both literatures describe *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as both a subject and a force or power, and both hold that it inspires the composition of sacred texts. But the New Testament places emphasis on the Messianic dimensions of the Spirit, as an agent in proclaiming the sonship of Jesus, forging a new covenant, and granting gifts to the faithful. In Rabbinic sources, the "gifts" granted by *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, whether special powers or prophetic abilities, are largely confined to the biblical past and

[272] Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*., 216. Some of Davies' evidence is questionable, e.g. citing Numbers Rabbah 15:25, based on the prophet Joel's predictions about the spiritual age to come. That work may be dated as late as the ninth century (Stemberger, 311). Cf. the implicit idea in Tosefta Sotah 13:3, that when the age is worthy, the Holy Spirit will again rest upon individuals.

the eschatological future, rather than the Rabbinic present—except in potential or in a diminished capacity. The New Testament gives us a window to ways in which some First Century Jews understood the workings of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, while providing us with valuable contrasts of ways not chosen by the Rabbis.

[273] Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, Tractate Pisha, 1 (Lauterbach, Vol. 1 p. 14), and 13 (Lauterbach, Vol. 1, 13).

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Chapter 3: Conventional and Formulaic Uses of the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic Literature

Scholars have noted two main uses of the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in classic Rabbinic literature.[274] First, it is used to signify a prophetic spirit or "divine inspiration" given by God that enables a person to prophesy, or sometimes endows him or her with other leadership abilities. This use is firmly rooted in Biblical precedent. In Rabbinic use, this spirit visits not only (or even especially) the classical literary prophets, but many biblical characters, including females. On rare occasions it is used in references to sages in the Rabbinic present.[275]

Second, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is personified. This usage is a new development not found in the Bible. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is used in the sense of a metonym (in this context, something associated with God that stands in for God) or hypostatization (from the Greek, "a personification of certain attributes proper to God, occupying an intermediate position between personalities and abstract beings").[276] This should not be confused with "hypostasis" as understood in Christian theology, where it refers to the three "persons" of the Trinity.[277] Due to the theological loadedness of "hypostastatization," I prefer the term "divine metonym." Like other terms (*Shekhinah, Kavod, Bat Kol*) that express "divine

[274] Noted in EJ, "Ruah ha-Kodesh," Alan Unterman, and other references in the Literature Review.
[275] Unterman, EJ.
[276] Helmar Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom: Studies in the Hypostatization of Divine Qualities and Functions in the Ancient Near East* (Lund: H. Ohlsson., 1947), 8.
[277] See J.N.D. Kelly, *Christian Creeds*, 241.

immanence," it may be used as a substitute for God's name or as an expression of divine involvement with humanity.[278] In some rabbinic texts, I will note that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is interchanged with other such personifications. Both the use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to mean prophecy, and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as divine metonym are attested, beginning in Tannaitic literature and continuing through both Talmudic literature and Aggadic Midrash of the Amoraic period. What changes is the specific use, emphasis, formulae or nuances of the uses, which I will note and examine in detail.

The central function of this personification of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is its role as the divine voice in the Torah. The main (and heretofore largely ignored) difference between personified *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and the *Shekhinah* is that the former *speaks*. As prophecy, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is the divine spirit animating select human beings, enabling them to articulate the word of God. As a divine metonym, the association with speech continues. We find *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speaking with certain formulaic words, such as "shouting" (*tsovahat*), replying (*meshivah*), spreading news (*mevaseret*), or saying (*omeret*). The content of these speeches is almost always a scriptural quotation, occasionally with added comments, and often representing "God's perspective" on matters, as it were.

In texts subsequent to the Halakhic Midrash, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is portrayed as an active and present voice, in contrast to the *Bat Kol* that speaks formulaically in the past tense. As I elaborate in Chapter 6, this difference highlights the distinctive role of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as the "still speaking" voice of Scripture. Particularly in Genesis Rabbah,

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[278] See Joseph Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature*, 224, Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, p. 155, and Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 97-98.

Ruah ha-Kodesh serves as a kind of "omniscent biblical narrator" or "voice of the Torah," often introducing a fine note of irony or even humor.

Sometimes a variety of uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* are presented in the same passage. For example, Genesis Rabbah 75:8 includes a mix of uses. The same passage notes that Solomon wrote Proverbs with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (divine inspiration), and alluded to Jacob and Esau. In the same passage, we are told that Holy One, blessed be He, blesses Jacob together with Isaac, while *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (personified) blesses him with Rebecca. Meanwhile Isaac sees with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (prophecy) that his descendents will one day be exiled.

One need not be overly concerned at some inconsistencies in the way that the authors of Rabbinic texts viewed *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, since it is a given that rabbinic theology is unsystematic and not wholly consistent.[279] The literature offers an increasing insistence that prophecy (*Ruah ha-Kodesh* included) has *ended*, even as we see a growth in the uses of that same term, *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, now personified as the living, present voice of God speaking in Scripture, through Midrash. Finally, I will also examine the role of gender, specifically the connection of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to Wisdom, the *Shekhinah*, and other expressions of "divine feminine" immanence.

As explained in my Methodology section, set patterns and formulaic phrases are one of the recognized characteristics of oral-derived traditional literatures. Such formulae served two functions: they were aids to memorization for the performer of a story, and

279 According to William David Davies, "Pharisaic Judaism was not concerned with theological consistency…But Heschel has rightly warned against treating the Rabbis as untheological even if they were

they created traditional associations in the mind of the listener. After introducing each type of usage for *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (power of prophecy and personification), I proceed to identify the various typical formulae associated again and again with each usage. For *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as the power of prophecy, the expressions, "resting," and "sparking" are used repeatedly. For personified *Ruah ha-Kodesh,* speech is the operative action and there are only a few expressions for such speech.

RUAH HA-KODESH AS THE POWER OF PROPHECY

The first function of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic texts, and the one most directly related to the term's biblical roots, is its connection to prophecy. In the Hebrew biblical tradition, the prophet has a dual role: to convey the word of God to people, and to act as an intercessor between the people and God. The familiar Rabbinic dictum, "Since Haggai, Zachariah, and Malakhi, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* ceased (*paska*) from Israel,"[280] essentially equates *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with prophecy. But inspiration (that is, being filled with *ruah*) is only one component of the prophetic experience—its trigger, so to speak—for the classical Biblical prophet "must also experience a revelation of the divine word."[281] In the Rabbinic portrayal of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* the two are inseparable: spirit and word are inextricably interwoven.

Avot de-Rabbi Nathan also links prophecy and *Ruah ha-Kodesh*:

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unsystematic." Davies, "Reflections on the Spirit in the Mekilta: A Suggestion," *The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*, Vol. 5, 1973, 95.

[280] Tosefta Sotah 13:4 et al.

[281] "Prophets and Prophecy," Shalom Paul and S. David Sperling, Encyclopedia Judaica, Second Edition, Volume 16, 567. (Electronic Edition).

> By ten names were the prophets called, to wit: ambassador, trusted, servant, messenger, visionary, watchman, seer, dreamer, prophet, man of God.
>
> By ten names was *Ruah ha-Kodesh* called, to wit: parable, metaphor, riddle, speech, saying, glory, command, burden, prophecy, vision.[282]

Although the "specific connotation" of the Holy Spirit "as divine inspiration is wholly postbiblical,"[283] the Rabbis found ample Biblical precendent for their use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to represent the power of prophecy. In Numbers 11, God takes "the spirit that was upon" Moses, and shares it with the seventy elders, who immediately begin to prophesy. In II Kings 2, Elisha requests a double portion of Elijah's spirit, in order to inherit his mantle of prophecy. God's spirit comes upon Bilaam (Numbers 24), and later Saul (I Samuel 10), and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2) and they prophesy. Moreover, the association of Spirit with prophecy was the most "pervasive" (but not exclusive) use of the term in all ancient Jewish literature.[285] The Rabbis continued to connect *ruah* and prophecy, but they nearly always used the full term *Ruah ha-Kodesh.* They perceived *Ruah ha-Kodesh* acting upon many Biblical characters, not only the classical prophets.

There are numerous references to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as the power of prophecy in both Tannaitic and Amoraic texts. One way that the Bible describes prophecy is that God "put his words" in the mouth of a prophet (Numbers 23:12, Jeremiah 1:9). Sifrei Deuteronomy Piska 176 links *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and prophecy in explaining, "I will put

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[282] *The Father According to Rabbi Nathan*, Judah Goldin, trans., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 142. Each of the "ten names" constitutes a Biblical reference. Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, 226-227, surmise that the "core" of Avot de-Rabbi Natan may date as early as the third century, while the extant version was probably completed between the seventh and ninth century.
[283] Unterman, "Ruah ha-Kodesh," EJ.
[285] Levison, *The Spirit in First Century Judaism*, 244-248.

My words in his mouth and he will speak to them all that I command him" (Deuteronomy 18:18): "From here they knew how *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was put in the mouths of the prophets."

Leviticus Rabbah mentions the prophet Elisha (10:2) and Elihu, one of Job's comforters (14:2) as making use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh.*[286] It also refers to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in relation to the literary prophets: "Rabbi Aha said, "Even *Ruah ha-Kodesh* resting (*shorah*) on the prophets does so by weight, one prophet speaking one book of prophecy and another speaking two books." (Leviticus Rabbah 15:2)

Ruah ha-Kodesh as prophecy is not limited to males. Bavli Megillah 14a-14b describes seven women prophets in the Bible. It specifically mentions *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in connection with Sarah: "Yiscah is Sarah; and why was she called Yiscah? Because she discerned [*saketah*] by means of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, as it is said, 'In all that Sarai says to you, hearken to her voice' (Genesis 21:12)." (Bavli Megillah 14a).[287] The view of Sarah as a prophetess is echoed in Genesis Rabbah 45:2, in which: "Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai [when she told him to father a child with her handmaid, Hagar, Genesis 16:2]. R. Jose said, "To the voice of the *Ruah ha-Kodesh,* even as you read [in the Scriptural verse], 'Now therefore hearken unto the voice of the words of the Lord.' (I Samuel 15:1)." The voice of Sarai here is the voice of the *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, which is "the

[286] Burton Visotzky find an allusion here to the canonical debate over the authority and historical legimitacy of the book of Job. Visotzky, *Golden Bells and Pomegranates*, 143.
[287] The passage also mentions that Queen Esther was "clothed in *Ruah ha-Kodesh*" (referring to her garbing herself in "royal apparel" (*malkhut*), Esther 5:1).

voice of the words of the Lord." The Midrash implies that Sarai is speaking in God's voice and speaking in a prophetic mode, conveying the "words of the Lord."[288]

The "Ranking" of Ruah ha-Kodesh as Prophecy

Maimonides described eleven degrees of prophecy (with a twelfth and highest rung attributed only to Moses), and confined *Ruah ha-Kodesh* only to the lowest two degrees, which he believed included the composition of the hagiographia by Kings David and Solomon.[289] Was *Ruah ha-Kodesh* already considered a "lower" form of inspiration in Talmudic literature as well? While Rabbinic texts extend the influence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to individuals not usually considered prophets, they certainly do not confine it only to "lower forms" of prophecy.

Amoraic texts provide different perspectives on the relative ranking of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with other sources of divine revelation. Genesis Rabbah 45:5 comments on the passage in which Hagar is told that she will bear a son. "Rabbi Hanina said, 'if Elisha the Prophet said thus by [means of] *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, it would suffice you, but she merited to have the angel speak with her." In II Kings 4:16, Elisha tells the Shunamite woman that she will bear a son. The implication is that if Hagar had had a similar experience to the Shunamite woman, and had been told by a prophet through *Ruah ha-Kodesh* that she was going to have a son, that would have been "good enough." By contrasting that possibility

[288] This interpretation also "removes the suspicion that Abram obeyed a woman's orders." Neusner, *Genesis Rabbah*, vol. II, 147.
[289] Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines, Vol. II, Chapter 45, 396-405.

with Hagar's actual merit to receive her good news directly from an angel of God, Genesis Rabbah might be implying that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is a secondary, mediated level of revelation, lower than an angelic revelation.[290]

Many other passages suggest the opposite. I have noted the passages in Talmud and Midrash Rabbah about Sarah's prophecy, and how her voice became "the voice of the Lord," when she spoke with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. I also noted Leviticus Rabbah 15:2, in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is linked with the literary prophets. The oft-repeated Rabbinic saying, "Since Haggai, Zachariah, and Malakhi, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* departed from Israel"[291] links *Ruah ha-Kodesh* directly with the literary prophets. Pesikta Rabbati, 34-37 connects *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with the two of the major literary prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Several Rabbinic texts connect *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with Moses himself. Sifra (Vayikra 1:9) mentions that Moses hears directly from the Holy One, blessed be he, and speaks with *Ruah ha-Kodesh.* According to Pesikta de-Rab Kahana 1:8, at one point Moses fears that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has departed from him.

At the same time, the presence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* does not necessarily make an individual into a *navi* or biblical prophet. [292] I note its brief visits to lesser biblical figures later in the chapter, as well as its association with priestly figures and judges, and even with some of the Tannaim. One must bear in mind that the Rabbis who authored the Talmudic and Midrashic literature did not compile a systematic theology on the lines of

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290 As per Maimonides, who lists angelic visions in dreams as the sixth degree of prophecy.
291 Tosefta Sotah 13, Yerushalmi Sotah 9:13 (24b), Yerushalmi Horayot 3:5 (48c), Bavli Sotah 48b, Bavli Yoma 9b, Song of Songs Rabbah 8:13
292 Frederick E. Greenspahn, "Why Prophecy Ceased," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 108, No. 1 (Spring 1989), 44-45.

Maimonides. They clearly refer to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in connection with prophecy, but in a general way, rather than drawing up a formal hierarchy of prophetic modalities.

COMMON USES OF THE TERM *RUAH HA-KODESH* IN ASSOCIATION WITH PROPHECY

Ruah ha-Kodesh "Resting"

The most common formula for *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in connection with prophecy is the term *shorah*, resting. The description of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as a spirit of prophecy that "rests" (*shorah*, or occasionally *nahah*[293]) on individuals, or even on the entire people, is found in several Tannaitic texts and persists into Amoraic texts. The root *sh-r-h* can connote taking lodging, resting, dwelling, or in other uses soaking, steeping, or dissolving.[294] In classic Rabbinic texts, as we shall see, this does not necessarily convey a sense that one who experiences *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "resting" upon him or her experiences a mystical union with the divine, with the intendent dissolution of the ego, or in the Hellenistic sense of an oracular possession, but it could infer that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* permeates the one upon whom it rests.

The verb "rested" (*nahah*) is used in reference to *Ruah* in the Bible, but variants of *shorah* are not. It is, however, found in one intriguing reference in Targum Onkelos to Genesis 45:27: "And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said to them; and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, *the spirit of Jacob their father revived*" (*va-tehi ruah Ya'akov avihem).* Targum Onkelos translates this last phrase with an Aggadic gloss as: *ushrat ruah kudsha al Ya'akov avuhun*, "and the Holy Spirit

[293] The latter found in the Bible (Numbers 11:26, Isaiah 11:2).

rested upon Jacob their father," using the Aramaic form of the same Hebrew verb for "rested."[295] As the Aramiac Targum Onkelos is customarily dated to the early third century CE[296], this could be one of the earliest references to this expression; however, the Targumim underwent extensive reworking through the centuries, and often are closely tied in to ideas in Midrashic literature.[297]

I now proceed to a chronological overview of Rabbinic texts containing the expression of *Ruah ha-Kodesh shorah* (Holy Spirit resting), beginning with selections from the Tannaitic Literature.

"Resting" in the Mekhilta

There are numerous references to the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "resting" in the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael. The link between *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and prophecy, using the term *shorah*, is made explicit in the following Mekhilta passage (Pisha 1), in which Barukh ben Neriah, the scribe of Jeremiah, is found "complaining to God."[298]

> I have been treated differently from the other disciples of the prophets. Joshua ministered to Moses, and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested [*shartah*] upon him. Elisha ministered to Elijah, and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested [*shartah*] upon him. But I! Why have I been differently treated from the other prophets? "I am weary with my groaning and I find no rest [*menuhah*]." [Jeremiah 45.3] "Rest" here is but a designation for "the spirit of prophecy"[299] as it is said: "and the spirit [*ruah*]

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294 Jastrow, Dictionary, 1628-1629. Another meaning of the root is "loosen" or "untie."
295 Interestingly, Rashi comments, "The *Shekhinah* rested upon him." In Chapter 4 I will explore the interchange of *Shekhinah* and *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.
296 S. David Sperber, *Targum* (EJ).
297 Alexander Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature and Thought—An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 29.
298 Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, Tractate Pisha, 1, Lauterbach, Vol. 1, 14
299 Hebrew, *nevuah*, or simply "prophecy." Lauterbach translates, "spirit of prophecy."

> rested [*tanah*] upon them . . . and they prophesied in the camp" (Num. 11.26). And again it says: "The spirit of Elijah does rest [*nahah*] on Elisha." (II Kings 2.15). Again is says, "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest [*nahah*] upon him" (Isaiah 11.2)."

The answer that Barukh ben Neriah receives is that prophets, including Moses, only merit having the spirit rest upon them, so that they may prophesy for the sake of Israel. Since Israel is going into exile, he will have no one to receive his prophecy. This passage clearly links the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with the Spirit mentioned in the Bible in conjunction with the prophets and parallels the Rabbinic *shorah* to the Biblical *nahah*. The Mekhilta identifies Moses' spirit that rested upon the seventy elders in the camp in Numbers 11, and the "spirit of Elijah" given to Elisha in II Kings 2, with the *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, and defines it as a spirit that makes one into a prophet or grants individuals the ability to prophesy.

According to the Mekhilta, it is not only prophets such as Elijah and Jeremiah who have *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "resting" upon them and enabling them to prophesy. It expands the idea to include a collective experience of prophecy. The Mekhilta describes the entire people of Israel, as a body, receiving *Ruah ha-Kodesh* at various times, most notably when they sing the Song of the Sea.[300] But they are also granted *Ruah ha-Kodesh* at the time when they "despoil" the Egyptians, who give them gifts before they depart from Egypt (Exodus 12:36). The Torah states that the Lord gave the Israelites "favor" (*hen*), in the eyes of the Egyptians, which The Mekhilta takes as an indication that they

[300] Several Biblical passages allude to a messianic promise that God's spirit will someday be poured out upon the entire people: Isaiah 44:3, Ezekiel 39:29, Joel 3:1-2. This passage suggests that it already has at the first redemption of the people, from Egypt. Perhaps this is part of their "gifts" upon leaving Egypt.

all received a functional *Ruah ha-Kodesh*: "The word "favour" (*hen*) here only means, '*Ruah ha-Kodesh* ,' as in the passage: 'And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the *spirit* of grace" (*hen*), etc. (Zachariah 12.10). [301]

What the children of Israel do with this spirit of prophecy is also notable. They don't become literary prophets like Jeremiah, or even obtain ecstatic experiences of the divine, like the seventy elders. Rather, they appear to be granted a kind of clairvoyance which enables them to see that which is not visible to the eye: "R. Eliezer the son of Jacob says: *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested upon the Israelites. And every one of them could say to the Egyptians: 'Lend me your article which you have put away in such and such a place.' The Egyptians would then bring it forth and give it to him."[302] This notion that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* grants ordinary individuals extraordinary powers of "seeing" things hidden from the naked eye, at a distance, or in the future will be found in later documents and become particularly noted in some Amoraic texts.

Finally, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rests upon the entire people of Israel as they sing the Song at the Sea. This description of the episode at the sea, in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* inspires the entire nation, developed into an ongoing textual tradition that will be reviewed separately in Chapter 3.

[301] Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, Tractate Pisha 13, Lauterbach, Vol. 1, 105. It is a favored move of The Mekhilta to point out that a certain word, "only means" (*ein ela)* whatever the proof texts sets out to prove. Another example is in Pisha 1, where "great things" (*gedolot*) only means "prophecy" (*nevu'ah*).
[302] Lauterbach, Vol. 1, 105.

"Resting" in Sifrei Deuteronomy

Sifrei Deuteronomy also makes use of the expression that the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "rests" on individuals. Sifrei, Parashat Devarim, Piska 22, says that it was *Ruah ha-Kodesh* which enabled Rahav to foresee how the pursuit of the spies would proceed, and to warn them, "Make for the hills, so that the pursuers may not come upon you. Stay there in hiding three days, until the pursuers return; then go on your way." (Joshua 2:15). The text asks, "How could she know that the pursuers would return after three days?" and concludes that this is "to teach that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested (*sharta*) on her." This is one of many Rabbinic passages in which ordinary biblical characters are able to "prophesy" momentarily when the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* visits them in some fashion. It is notable that many, if not most of the characters so endowed are females, and sometimes, as in this case, gentiles. They "prophesy" only in the limited sense of declaring things that will come to pass in the future; but not by functioning as spokesmen or women for God or exhorting the people. But their limited moments of prophecy serve God's plan in the unfolding narrative.

Other Common Uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as Prophecy

"Sparks" of Prophecy in Aggadic Midrash

In Midrash Rabbah, minor biblical characters are sometimes said to have *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "kindled" (*nitsnetsa*) in them, like a "spark" or prophecy that flickers

momentarily.[303] In Genesis Rabbah 85:9, Tamar's request of Judah's "signet, cord, and staff" are signs of such a "spark," for these are taken (through proof texts) to be symbols of his future royal line:

> *And he said, what pledge shall I give you? And she said, your signet and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand* (Genesis 28:18). R. Hunia said: *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was enkindled within her. *Your signet* alludes to royalty, as in the verse, Though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon My right hand, etc. (Jeremiah 22:24); *And your cord* (*petilekha)* alludes to the Sanhedrin, as in the verse, And that they put with the fringe of each corner a thread *(petil)* of blue, etc. (Numbers 15:38) *and your staff* alludes to the royal Messiah, as in the verse, The staff of thy strength the Lord will send out of Zion (Psalms 110:2).

Tamar simply asks for concrete objects, but *Ruah ha-Kodesh* impacts her choice of objects and simultaneously moves her to allude to momentous thing beyond her ken.

For a rather piquant example, Genesis Rabbah 85:19 notes that when Jacob says "a wild beast has devoured him" about Joseph, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is "kindled within him," for with a bit of divine inspiration he unwillingly refers to Potipher's wife! ("Beast" is a feminine noun in Hebrew.)

When Joseph's brothers meet him in the court of Egypt and fail to recognize him, they answer, "We are brothers," the irony of the phrase (for they are really *all* brothers, including the Viceroy of Egypt before them) is taken as a sign that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was kindled in them, for their mouths said more than they knew (Genesis Rabbah 91:7, commenting on Genesis 42:11). An element of irony is included here, because their words acknowledge more than they themselves recognize. These last two examples are

[303] See Marcus Jastrow, *Sefer Milim*, 929.

different from the "resting" on Rahav cited in Sifre. She may not recognize prophecy but still realizes that she is making an accurate prediction. Here the "sparks" of prophecy are unconscious in every respect!

A more unusual use is in Leviticus Rabbah 32:4, which states that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was "kindled" in Moses himself early in his career. But perhaps that is the exception that proves the rule. In most every other case, one finds characters who are not known as prophets, yet with the "spark" of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speak prophetically on one occasion. The midrashist often finds an allusion, irony, or heightened dimension of meaning in their words and describes it as *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "kindled" or "sparking" in them momentarily. Possibly with Moses, the "kindling" was seen as only the beginning of his long prophetic career, as opposed to other Biblical characters who had just a momentary spark of insight.

Ruah ha-Kodesh *as Visionary Power in Amoraic Texts*

The use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as a visionary power is expanded in Amoraic texts, including the Palestinian Midrashim Genesis Rabbah and Leviticus Rabbah, as well as the Babylonian Talmud. Most of the Amoraic uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to describe the power of seeing the future are found in Genesis Rabbah and Leviticus Rabbah. In Genesis Rabbah 37:7, one finds the notion that the biblical ancestors could name their children for future events in those children's lives because "they availed themselves of (*mishtamshim be-*) the Holy Spirit" but according to this Midrash, in the present people do not have use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, and thus have to name children for ancestors! In

Genesis Rabbah 93:12, Rabbi Eleazar declares that Joseph cried when he "foresaw (*ra'ah*) through *Ruah ha-Kodesh* that two Holy Temples would be built in Benjamin's portion, and both would be destroyed."

In Genesis Rabbah 13:12, the reader is told that one of the names for lightning in the clouds is, "*haziz*," (Job 28:25), "so called because it achieves [awe-inspiring] sights in the sky and causes *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to rest upon men, as you read, The vision (*hazon*) of Isaiah (Isaiah 1:1)". This Midrashic etymology links the sense of vision, of seeing the awe-inspiring thunder clouds from God, with the ability to achieve prophetic vision, and specifically refers to Isaiah, one of the literary prophets.

Leviticus Rabbah also has several references to the use of the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as "seeing." There is not just one formulaic verb used for the process, but a variety of terms. In Leviticus Rabbah 1:3, we find that one of Moses' names was "Father of Soco," because he was the father of the prophets who see (*sokhim*) by means of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*." In Leviticus Rabbah 32:4, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* begins to stir or spark (an atypical use of the term *nitsnetsa*) in Moses himself, when he sees an Egyptian taskmaster beating a Hebrew slave (Exodus 2:12). The first effect of that stirring is to give Moses the power of seeing beyond the visible. He looked "this way and that" before striking the task master. According to this Midrash, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* enabled Moses to see the invisible: that the taskmaster had already lain with the slave's wife before seeking to kill him.[304] Finally, Leviticus Rabbah 9:9 finds Rabbi Meir seeing (*tsafa*) what has happened in a domestic dispute by means of the *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. (This is also one of the rare instances in which a rabbinic contemporary makes use of the *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.)

[304] As the Soncino Talmud commentary notes: "with divine vision."

At least one example of such vision through *Ruah ha-Kodesh* can be found in the Bablyonian Talmud as well. In Bavli Berakhot 10a, it is reported that King Hezekiah told Isaiah, that the reasons he did not try to have children is that he "saw for myself [*haz'ai li*] by *Ruah ha-Kodesh*" that they would not be virtuous. Isaiah chides him for looking into the "secrets" of the Holy One in an incorrect way. This passage also introduces a rare notion that not all uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* are to be approved.[305]

Other Powers Granted by Ruah ha-Kodesh in Amoraic Texts

A few Amoraic texts expand the powers granted by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* beyond the ability to foresee and speak prophetic words, and extend it to providing strength and endowing individuals with physical evidence of the indwelling of God. These hearken back to the Biblical book of Judges, in which the spirit of God rests on various charismatic tribal leaders such as Gideon (Judges 6:34), Jephtah (11:29), and Samson (13:25). These Amoraic texts likewise specify that it was the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* that animated certain individuals.

One example is the case of Samson. Judges 14:25 states, "The spirit of the Lord first moved [Samson] in the encampment of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol." Yerushalmi Sotah, 1:8 (17b), paralleled in Leviticus Rabbah 8:2, understands this verse to mean that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is the source of Samson's superhuman strength. According to the Yerushalmi text, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* either enables Samson to cover huge distances in a single step or make his hair stand on end and clang so loudly that it is heard from one

[305] Cf. I Kings 22:22, which speaks of a "lying spirit," *ruah sheker*, which Micaiah the prophet sees in a vision of the heavenly court, coming before YHWH and offering to be placed in the mouth of the prophets

place to the other! Leviticus Rabbah version offers the additional possibility that Samson had the power to clang two mountains like stones, and the sound would be heard "from Zorah to Eshtaol." These are certainly unusual understandings of the power of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. They clearly interpret the Biblical "spirit" as *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but see it in the unusual role of giving an individual superhuman strength. (Of course, Samson the "superman" is an atypical Biblical hero.)

Leviticus Rabbah offers more examples of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* providing biblical leaders with special powers. In Leviticus Rabbah 1:1 and 21:12, it is stated that Phinehas the High Priest's face "glowed like torches" and he displayed an angelic expression when *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested (*shorah*) upon him. Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 9:7 (27b) also associated Phinehas with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, claiming that it "jumped" (*kaftsah*) upon him and declared his election when he acted as a zealot. Here it is associated with his status rather than any special powers or qualities.

Another High Priest is depicted as gaining special powers under the influence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. In Bavli Baba Batra 122a, Eleazar the Kohen Gadol was able to divide the Land of Israel among the tribes, because he was directed (animated, guided) by the Holy Spirit (*haya mekhuvan be-Ruah ha-Kodesh*):

> Eleazar was wearing the Urim and Tumim, while Joshua and all Israel stood before him. An urn [containing the names] of the [twelve] tribes, and an urn containing descriptions] of the boundaries were placed before him. Animated by the Holy Spirit [*mekhuvan be-Ruah ha-Kodesh*], he gave directions, exclaiming: 'Zebulun' is coming up and the boundary lines of Acco are coming up with it. [Thereupon], he shook well the urn of the tribes and Zebulun came up in his hand.

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and lead the King of Israel to his defeat.

> [Likewise] he shook well the urn of the boundaries and the boundary lines of Acco came up in his hand. Animated again by *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, he gave directions, exclaiming: 'Naphtali' is coming up and the boundary lines of Gennesar are coming up with it. [Thereupon] he shook well the urn of the tribes and Naphtali came up in his hand.

A final example of powers with physical impact that are granted by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is found in Genesis Rabbah 98:3, on the verse, "Assemble yourselves and hear, you sons of Jacob" (Genesis 49:2).

> Why "assemble yourselves"? "Rabbi Berekiah said, sometimes in the name of R. Hiyya, and sometimes in the names of the Rabbis of Babylon: This teaches that they were scattered, and an angel descended and assembled them. Rabbi Tanhuma said: This teaches that they were scattered, and he [Jacob] assembled them by means of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

It is not clear what process the Rabbis understood that Jacob used to "assemble them by means of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*." Perhaps they thought that he used *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to see where they were and send for them. The comparison between an angel and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is also intriguing. It suggests that the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was intentially distinguished from angels (a contrast noted above in Genesis Rabbah 45:5), perhaps so that it would not be identified as an intermediary power.

Ruah ha-Kodesh ***Departing from Individuals***

The inspiring presence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* may "flicker" in individuals for a moment or remain much longer, but in any case inspiration is not generally seen as a permanent state. Several Aggadic Midrashim of the Amoraic period describe situations in

which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* came and went from individuals. "Its presense is. . .a sign of divine favor, and its departure reflects lowered status."[306]

Genesis Rabbah includes several references to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "departing" from individuals. In Genesis Rabbah 65:4, Joshua ben Levi says that Esau is responsible for *Ruah ha-Kodesh* departure from Isaac, because of the bitterness of spirit produced by his heathen wives. Genesis Rabbah 91:6 says that following Joseph's disappearance, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* departed (*nistalkah*) from Jacob, so that his (spiritual) powers of "seeing and hearing" were incomplete. Leviticus Rabbah 37:4 reports that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* departed from Phinehas the High Priest when he neglected to go to Jepthah and release him from his rash vow to sacrifice the first thing that came through the door after his victory (which turned out to be his daughter). According to Pesikta de-Rab Kahana 1:8 even Moses fears that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has departed from him, and come to rest upon the princes who bring their gifts to the Sanctuary. [307] Repeatedly, we see that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* temporarily rests, flickers, or empowers individuals, but then may leave them. It is a logical step to the idea that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* can depart from the entire people, which is explored in Chapter 5.

The Concept that Sacred Texts are "Composed with Ruah ha-Kodesh*"*

One of the most well-known Rabbinic concepts about *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is that certain texts were "composed with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*" and are thus sacred, inspired and ostensibly worthy of inclusion in the Biblical canon. The full process of how the Tanakh was canonized is complicated and open to debate. Scholarly consensus has rejected an

[306] Frederick E. Greenspahn, "Why Prophecy Ceased," 46.
[307] Braude and Kapstein, Pesikta de-Rab Kahana, 18.

earlier popular hypothesis that the Rabbinic sages completely formulated the biblical canon at their council in *Yavneh* (Jamnia) around the year 90 C.E. The Rabbinic sages of that period may have simply debated the status of a few books.[308] One of the main differences between ancient Greek and Rabbinic ideas of authorship is that Greek sources recognized individual human authors, while Jewish tradition found sanctity in those books which claimed to have been written by prophetic figures with divine inspiration.[309] According to Sid Leiman, "canonical" (his term for "authorative") and "inspired," were not identical categories to the Tannaim. To be included in Scripture, a book had to belong in both categories, authoritative and inspired. A book could be considered authoritative, but if lacking the inspiration of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* would not be included in the Tanakh. For example, Ben Sirah and 2 Maccabees were considered authoritative books that might be privately taught and quoted by the sages, but they were not held to be divinely inspired by *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.[311]

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[308] See Sid Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Midrashic Influence* (Hamdon, Conn., Archon Books, 1976); Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 164-180; Jack P. Lewis, "Jamnia Revisited," *The Canon Debate*, M. McDonald, and James a Sanders (eds.), (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002): 146-162; and Jack N. Lightstone, "The Rabbis' Bible: The Canon of the Hebrew Bible and the Early Rabbinic Guild," *The Canon Debate*: 163-184.

[309] Jed Wyrick, *The Ascension of Authorship: Attribution and Canon Formation in Jewish, Hellenistic, and Christian Traditions*, (Cambridge, Mass./London: Harvard University Press, 2004), p.2; Elias Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge, Mass.:Harvard University Press, 1988), 201-203.

[311] Sid Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence* (Hamdon, Conn: Archon Books, 1976), 127. See also Jed Wyrick, *The Ascension of Authorship*, 188-190. Ezra, as a "second Moses," may have been seen as the end point for sacred books; that is, even authoritative books after his time are no longer included in Holy Scripture, Jack Lightstone, "The Rabbis' Bible," *The Canon Debate*, 182-184. Below I will note an example of a scroll that was considered "inspired" but not "canonical" by the Yerushalmi.

Mishnah Yadayim 3:5 and Mishnah Eduyot 5:3 (considered one of the earliest tractates)[312] record Tannaitic arguments about the status of certain biblical texts. Here one first encounters the distinctive term "*metamei yadayim*," or making the hands ritually impure, to identify a text as sacred. Sacred books require special "handling" because they are divinely composed and contain the word of God. There are some books in the canon, particularly in the Writings, whose content made their sanctity questionable, such as Ecclesiastes (*Kohelet*) and Song of Songs. Ecclesiastes seems to display a lack of belief in the meaning of life, and of divine reward and punishment. It also seems self-contradictory, as is the book of Proverbs (Bavli Shabbat 30b). Song of Songs deals with erotic love between the sexes. The passage in Eduyot states that the house of Hillel, but not the house of Shammai, held that Kohelet "defiled the hands," while the Yadayim passage also includes the Song of Songs, championed by Rabbi Akiba, who proclaimed it "the Holy of Holies." While these Mishnaic traditions do not cite inspiration by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as the justification for a book being considered sacred or canonical, Tosefta Yadayim 2:6 directly links the two: "Rabbi Simeon ben Menasia says: The Song of Songs defiles the hands because it was composed [lit. "said"] with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Ecclesiastes does not defile the hands because it is only the wisdom of Solomon."[313]

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312 R.J.Zwi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Yerushalmi.

312 R.J.Zwi Werblowsky and Press, 1997), 215-216.

313 Marc Hirshman concurs that traditions about the supposed reluctance to accept Ecclesiastes into the Canon are probably Amoraic or later, with this being the only mildly negative comment about it that can reliably be dated to the Tannaitic period. "Kohelet's Reception, Interpretation in Early Rabbinic Literature," *Studies in Ancient Midrash*, James Kugel, ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 2001): 87-99.

The idea of sacred texts being composed with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* continues in the Talmuds. Whether the book of Esther is divinely inspired and thus "defiles the hands" is the subject of a long discussion in Bavli Megillah 7a. The book of Esther deals with secular subjects including sex and violence, and it fails to mention the name of God, so some justification is sought for its sacred status. Part of this argument is brought in as a Beraita, considered to be an older tradition from the Tannaitic period (and the first part of it is taken from Tosefta Yadayim 2:6):

> Rab Judah said in the name of Samuel: "[The scroll] of Esther does not make the hands unclean."[314] Are we to infer from this that Samuel was of opinion that Esther was not composed under the inspiration of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*? How can this be, seeing that Samuel has said that Esther was composed under the inspiration of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*? It was composed to be recited [by heart], but not to be written.
>
> The following objection was raised: R. Meir says that [the scroll of] Kohelet [Ecclesiastes] does not render the hands unclean, and that about the Song of Songs there is a difference of opinion. R. Jose says that the Song of Songs renders the hands unclean, and about Kohelet there is a difference of opinion. R. Simeon says that Kohelet is one of those matters in regard to which Beth Shammai were more lenient and Beth Hillel more stringent, but Ruth and the Song of Songs and Esther [certainly] make the hands unclean! — Samuel concurred with R. Joshua.
>
> It has been taught [in a Beraita]: R. Simeon b. Menasia said: "Kohelet does not render the hands unclean because it contains only the wisdom of Solomon . . ."
>
> It has been taught [in a Beraita]: R. Eleazar said, "Esther was composed [literally, "said" *ne'emra*] under the inspiration of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, as it says, 'And Haman said in his heart.' (Esther 6:6)" R. Akiba says: "Esther was composed under the inspiration of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, as it says, 'And Esther obtained favor in the eyes of all that looked upon her.' (Esther 2:15)" R. Meir says: "Esther was composed under the inspiration of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, as it says, 'And the thing became known to Mordecai.' (Esther 2:22)" R. Jose b. Durmaskith said: "Esther was

[314] i.e. it is not a holy book and not to be included in the biblical canon.

> composed under the inspiration of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, as it says, 'But on the spoil they laid not their hands.'(Esther 9:15)"[315]
>
> Said Samuel, "Had I been there, I would have given a proof superior to all, namely, that it says, 'They confirmed and took upon them,' (Esther 9:27), [which means] they confirmed above what they took upon themselves below." Raba said: "All the proofs can be confuted except that of Samuel, which cannot be confuted. [Thus,] against that of R. Eleazar it may be objected that it is reasonable to suppose that Haman would think so, because there was no one who was so high in the esteem of the king as he was, and that when he spoke at length, he was only expressing the thought concerning himself. Against the proof of R. Akiba it may be objected that perhaps the fact is as stated by R. Eleazar, who said that these words show that to every man she appeared to belong to his own nation. Against R. Meir it may be objected that perhaps the fact is as stated by R. Hiyya b. Abba who said that Bigthan and Teresh were two men from Tarsis. Against the proof of R. Jose b. Durmaskith it may be objected that perhaps they sent messengers." Against the proof of Samuel certainly no decisive objection can be brought.
>
> Said Rabina,"This bears out the popular saying, 'Better is one grain of sharp pepper than a basket full of pumpkins.'" R. Joseph said: "It can be proved from here: 'And these days of Purim shall not fail from among the Jews' (Esther 9:28)." R. Nahman b. Isaac said, "From here: 'Nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.'(ibid.)" [316]

This passage recreates a debate among the Tannaitic Sages as to the holiness of several books in the Writings, and then focuses on the book of Esther with the introduction of the Beraita. (The opinion attributed here to Rabbi Jose is the reverse of his statement in Mishnah Yadayim 3:5, where he says that Ecclesiastes does not render the hands unclean, but there is a dispute about the Song of Songs.) The Sages hold that Esther was "composed under the inspiration of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*." This is not understood as a poetic abstraction, but very specifically to mean that the author of the book spoke in

[315] All of these are verses from the book of Esther which presumably could only be known through powers of vision or knowledge granted by the *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.
[316] Bavli Megillah 7a

a prophetic voice, foreseeing the future or knowing hidden facts that could only be divined through *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

Various proofs are offered in the Beraita in Bavli Megillah 7a to show that the author of the scroll of Esther had to have been imbued with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in order to know these hidden facts, but most of these proofs are rejected by the Raba (third generation Bablyonian Amora). Finally, the satisfactory proof (offered by Samuel, an outstanding first generation Babylonian Amora) is accepted: that the holiday of Purim was "confirmed" in Heaven and on earth. Rabbi Joseph (third generation Babylonian Amora) and Rabbi Nahman bar Isaac (fourth generation Babylonian Amora) add the additional prooftexts that the Jewish people and their descendents still observe the days of Purim, as the scroll predicted. The scroll is thus prophetic and represents the divine word because it successfully predicts the formation of a new Jewish holy day, which was surely approved in heaven. The fact that the holiday is still observed by the people and that the Sages are still studying the book of Esther is the ultimate proof of its holiness.

Elsewhere in the Bavli, the book of Psalms, also part of the Ketuvim, is attributed to the function of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* inspiring King David. In Bavli Berachot 4b one finds:

> R. Johanan says: "Why is there no letter *nun* in Ashre [Psalm 145]? Because the fall of 'Israel's enemies' begins with it.[317] For it is written: 'Fallen is the virgin of Israel, she shall no more rise.' (Amos 5:2). (In the West [Palestine] this verse is thus interpreted: She is fallen, but she shall no more fall. Rise, O virgin of Israel." R. Nahman bar Isaac says: "Even so, David refers to it by inspiration (*u-smakhan be-Ruah ha-Kodesh*) and promises them an uplifting. For it is written [in the following verse]: 'The Lord upholds all that fall.'"

[317] The Hebrew word for fallen, *nafla*, begins with the letter *nun.* "Israel's enemies" is a Rabbinic euphemism for Israel itself, when speaking of Israel's punishment. *Soncino Talmud* comments.: "David knew by inspiration that Amos was going to prophesy the downfall of Israel, and he refers to that verse and prophesies their being raised up again, though their downfall is not mentioned by David."

This follows the Soncino translation; however, let me offer the following alternative: "David lifted them up (*u-smakhan*) by means of [citing] *Ruah ha-Kodesh* [in the next verse of the Psalm]. For it is written: The Lord upholds (*somekh Adonai*) all that fall."[318] Read this way, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* functions more as a hypostatization, because it is paralleled to the verse about the Lord. Or the passage could have a double entendre; David sees by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* that the Lord/*Ruah ha-Kodesh* will lift up the fallen virgin of Israel. The two ways in which the passage can be read emphasize both ways in which the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is employed in Rabbinic literature. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* can mean David's prophetic power in composing the Psalms, even as it functions as a metonym for God. Indeed, prophetic power ultimately comes from God.

Yerushalmi Megillah 1:1 (70a) covers some of the same issues in a different way. It is determined that the scroll of Esther is similar to a Torah scroll. Just like a Torah scroll, it must be written according to tradition, with the lines etched in the parchment, and just the the Torah it can be interpreted and explicated (*nitna lehidaresh*). The sages go on to consider the status of another scroll:

> R. Jeremiah in the name of R. Samuel bar R. Isaac: "The scroll that Samuel gave over to David is available for/subject to exegesis (*nitnah lehidaresh*)." What is the scriptural basis for the view? "All this that the Lord had made me understand by His hand on me, I give you in writing—the plan of all the works (I Chronicles 28:19, David speaking to Solomon about the design of the Temple)." "All this in writing," refers to the tradition (*masoret*); "from the Lord," refers to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*; "which He made me understand" proves that it is available for exegesis (*she-nitna lehidaresh*).

[318] There are slight variants in different Talmudic manuscripts. Oxford Opp. Add. Folio 23 has *samkha* "he lifted her up."

> R. Jeremiah asked, "And why do we not interpret, 'And the plan of all that he had by the spirit' (*be-ruah*, I Chronicles 28:12) [to also allude to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*?] Because, said R. Mana, "What is the meaning of *be-ruah* [in this other verse]? [Here] it means 'in the breath of his mouth' (*be-ruah piv*)."

This passage from the Yerushalmi suggests that other, non-canonical books (such as the "scroll" imagined by the rabbis here being given from Samuel to David, then to Solomon) could be inspired by *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. It also suggests that books composed with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* have fundamentally different characteristics than other works. They must be carefully copied and interpreted. Books that are prophetic and inspired by God necessitate divinely ordained methods of Midrashic exegesis. The Rabbinic reading of I Chronicles 28:19 encapsulates three characteristics of holy books: They are spoken with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, transmitted through faithful copying (*masoret*, tradition), and are then subject to divinely sanctioned Rabbinic interpretation in the form of Midrash (as illustrated by the phrase "*nitnah lehidaresh*"). Correct interpretation will reveal that books on seemingly secular topics (prevalent in the Writings) contain divine teachings.

It is interesting that while the rabbis chose to interpret I Chronicles 28:19 as referring to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, the actual word *ruah* in I Chronicles 28:12 is taken to mean simple human breath (the breath of his mouth, *ruah piv*). This shows that the word "*ruah*" alone is not enough to establish the presence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but that the Rabbis seek other indications that something is divinely inspired, such as the reference to the Lord in verse 19. In addition, this interpretation reinforces the notion that when *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speaks, it is not one's own opinion being spoken, but the divine breath speaking through one's mouth, as it were (as in the aforementioned passage in Genesis

Rabbah 45:2, in which the words of Sarah are the words *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, that is of the Lord).

The composition of biblical books through divine inspiration is is also mentioned in Amoraic Midrash. In Genesis Rabbah 85:2, R. Huna states in the name of R. Aha that a sequence of events is out of order in the book of Daniel, "so that it might not be said that the narrative is mere fiction, and that all might know that is was composed with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. The Rabbis said: In order to unite the whole book [of Daniel] as one written [lit. "said"] with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*."[319] This may relate to the idea encountered in Yerushalmi Megillah 1:1 (70a) that sacred texts are "available for" or "subject to" exegesis. Only through proper exegesis can the book of Daniel be correctly understood.

Song of Songs Rabbah 1:7 states that Solomon composed his books as *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested (*shartah*) upon him, although it does not explicitly connect this fact to their fitness for inclusion in the biblical canon:

> So the heart of Solomon was full of wisdom but no one knew what was in it but when *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested (*shartah*) on him and he composed [lit. "said:] three books, all knew his wisdom . . .because he discoursed on the Torah in public, he earned the privilege that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested on him and he composed three books, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and The Song of Songs.

It is also interesting to note that all these texts introduce the idea that books could be composed with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, and yet the term used is "said" (forms of *amar*) The idea of oral composition and the words "in the mouth" are paramount in Rabbinic thought, although for the Bible they are to be transmitted in writing. As I noted previously in the passage from Yerushalmi Megillah 1:1, sacred texts are orally

composed with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, and then written down. As Jed Wyrick has demonstated, Rabbinic texts typically refer to composition of biblical books as "saying" (using a form of the verb *amar*), and this "saying" is seen as separate from the subsequent process of transcription or textualization (using a form of the verb for writing, *katav*).[321] Moreover, when *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is personified, she is portrayed as speaking, sometimes engaged in acts of midrashic interpretation (more on this below). Speech, undertstanding and interpretation are integral to the function of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

Since the concept of "texts composed with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*" is fairly well known, it is puzzling that there are not more discussions of the subject in relation to other biblical books. It is almost always brought up in reference to the Ketuvim or Writings section of the tri-partite Tanakh. Among the Prophets, only the book of Ezekiel, although divinely inspired, was in danger of being "hidden away" since some of it contradicts instructions in the Torah (Bavli Shabbat 13b). This may be simply because the status of the Ketuvim was under dispute while the Torah and prophets had already been accepted as authoritative.[322] Or it may be because of the aforementioned problematic subject matter of some of its books. However, this repeated association of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with the Writings on this particular issue—while books in the Nevi'im are unquestionably designated "prophetic"—may have led to the lower "ranking" of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in

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319 Jastrow, 1022.

321 Jed Wyrick, *The Ascension of Authorship,21-79.* He notes the discussion of "authorship" of biblical books in Bavli Baba Batra 14a-15b as part of the evidence, noting that "writing" here appears to mean "textualization."

322 Marc Zvi Brettler, "Kethuvim," *The Jewish Study Bible*, Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (eds.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 1275-1279. An indication of their late provenance and questionable credentials is found the the variety of orders of these texts in early manuscripts and "canonicial lists" (1275).

some medieval Jewish thought.[323] This is somewhat ironic, for most of the texts noted here seem to say equate "said with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*" with being said in a state of prophecy.

In summary, the influence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is offered as an explanation of the sanctity of certain books in the Ketuvim (Writings) portion of the Tanakh. At first this seems to simply be a term indicating that are canonical, but the complexity of the canonical process resists a simple correlation, while the passage in Yerushalmi Megillah 1:1 implies that there can be books composed with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* which did not enter into the canon. Several selections suggest that books that are "composed with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*" are prophetic works, spoken by human agents through the "breath" of God. They are sacred texts that must be handled with care and transmitted according to tradition, while their authoritative meaning is sometimes hidden in secular subject matter and requires Rabbinic exegesis for full understanding. Books composed with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* essentially have divine authorship, even though they are transmitted by human beings. Here again the idea is reinforced that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is the divine voice in scripture.

"Said With Ruah ha-Kodesh" (zo hi she-ne'emra be-Ruah ha-Kodesh)

An extension of texts being composed or said with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is a particular Midrashic formula: "that which was said with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*" (*zo hi she-ne'emra be-*

[323] E.g. Maimonides' *The Guide of the Perplexed*, Chapter 45, or Radak's (c.1160-1235) interpretation of the reference to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the passage in I Chronicles 28 as a sign of the "lower" nature of King David's prophecy. See David Rothstein's comments in *The Jewish Study Bible*, 1762. See my section above on "The 'Ranking' of Ruah ha-Kodesh."

Ruah ha-Kodesh al yedei-) to quote some biblical figure, whether prophet or monarch.[324] Such quotation forms can be found in Genesis Rabbah 75:8 (referring to Solomon), 91:5 (to David) and 97 (to Job) and are particularly prevalent in in Pesikta Rabbati. In Piska 6:2:

> Thus all the work...was finished. R. Tanhuma Barabbi began his discourse as follows: These words are to be considered in the light of what *Ruah ha-Kodesh* said through Solomon (*zo hi she-amra Ruah ha-Kodesh al yedei Shlomo*): "See a man skilled in his work?—He shall attend upon kings; He shall not attend upon obscure men." (Proverbs 22:29)

Several other examples of this formula are also found in Pesikta Rabbati. See Pesikta Rabbati 20:2: "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* spoke through Solomon, king of Israel, saying, 'His cheeks are like beds of spices, banks of perfume. His lips are like lilies; they drip flowing myrrh. (Song of Songs 5:13); or Pesikta Rabbati 30:1: 'Comfort ye, comfort ye my people' (Isaiah 40:1). These words are to be considered in the light of what is said by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (*ze hu she-ne'emar be-Ruah ha-Kodesh*), 'Shall mortal man act more justly than God?' (Said by one of Job's comforters, Job 4:17)" This latter reference is an unusual example of the formula, as it does not attribute inspiration by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to an identified intermediary figure.[325] Thus it is closer to the formulae that I will describe for personified *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speech, but in the passive voice.

More typical examples are in all the proems of Messianic comfort in Pesikta Rabbati 34-37, in which the opening prophetic verse of each proem is followed by the

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[324] This form was introduced in my Literature Review section above. Works cited are Michael Fishbane's *The Exegetical Imagination on Jewish Thought and Theology*, 73-85, and Marc Bregman's "Circular Proems and Proems Beginning: 'Thus it is said by the Holy Spirit." [Hebrew] *Studies in Aggadah*: 34-51. In addition to the Pesikta Rabbati examples discussed here, Bregman has identified some manuscript fragments of other Midrashim with this form, which have yet to be published (41-42, fn.)

words,"This is to be considered in the light of what Isaiah was inspired by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to say," (Pesikta Rabbati 34:1), "This is to be considered in the light of what Solomon was inspired by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to say [in a verse from Song of Songs]," (Pesikta Rabbati 35:1), "This is to be considered in the light of what David king of Israel was inspired by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to say [in a verse from Psalms]," and (Pesikta Rabbati 36:1), "This is to be considered in the light of what Jeremiah was inspired by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to say" (Pesikta Rabbati 37:1). A homily then follows, which closes in "circular" fashion with the verse attributed to inspiration by *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.[326] Except for the exceptional example in Pesikta Rabbati 20:1, the formulae do not personify *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but they do indicate that both the prophets and the writings were viewed as works written with divine inspiration. Thus this formula, like the term "composed with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*," repeatedly emphasizes the same divine authority behind texts in the writings as well as the prophets, and uses the same wording of texts being "said."[327]

Summary of Common Usages for *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as Prophecy

The use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as the power of prophecy assumes several different common forms, most of them reflecting an adaptation of biblical uses of *Ruah.* Various citations show the connection of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to prophets and prophecy in a number

[325] Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati,* 571, translates as "what Scripture says elsewhere," yet he indexes the page as a reference to "Holy Spirit."
[326] Bregman notes that the majority of the proems which mention inspiration by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* have the "circular" form, "Circular Proems," 43.

of Rabbinic texts. But it is seen to affect other biblical figures, too, not only those known as prophets. The most common use of the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is "resting" (*shorah*) upon an individual or even the entire people of Israel, enabling them to prophesy in the sense of seeing at a distance, foreseeing the future, or singing inspired words. Other usages of the term have *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "kindled" (*nitsnetsa*) briefly in a biblical character who is not usually a prophet, and enabling her or him to say something prophetic, even unwittingly. In Amoraic texts, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* increasingly refers to an ability to have visions or foresee the future or something unknown or at distance. In some texts, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* grants other superhuman powers to its recipient. Finally, certain canonical texts were seen to have been "said" through *Ruah ha-Kodesh* acting upon later biblical figures like King Solomon. Those texts are accepted as holy writ and part of sacred scripture.

[327] Cf. Harry Fox, "The Circular Proem," 30-31. Not only the attribution to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but the interpretation of various parts of scripture through verses from other sections gives credence to the Writings as integral to Scripture.

PERSONIFIED RUAH HA-KODESH: FORMS OF SPEECH

In its second function, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is personified. At times it stands in for God and gives the "divine perspective" in a Biblical drama, while elsewhere it seems to be another name for the Torah. The salient feature of this second type of use is *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s portrayal as a *speaking* entity. For overwhelmingly (and differing from the Shekhinah), *Ruah ha-Kodesh* communicates.[328]

Ruah ha-Kodesh is variously depicted as "responding" (various forms of the verb *heshivah*), "saying" or "stating" (*omeret*), "proclaiming," (*mevaseret*), and "crying out" (*tsovahat*). The frequency of the terms varies in the different texts and different textual types. In Halakhic Midrash, most of the references are versions of "responding," while in Lamentations Rabbah, "crying out" predominates.[329] The Aggadic Midrash offers several examples of "stating" or "saying." The Yerushalmi contains examples of "stating" and "proclaiming," while the Bavli has both "responding" and "proclaiming." By careful reading of each type of speech, I have striven to uncover both conventions of use and patterns of meaning.

When *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speaks, it speaks in Scripture.[330] Sometimes the words that are highlighted as *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s "lines" are simply part of the dialogue under

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[328] It should be noted that the setting for virtually all of these examples is in Midrashic expositions of the scriptures. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is not described as communicating with these formulae in the Rabbinic present.
[329] Which makes sense, given the subject matter on destruction of Jerusalem and the exile.
[330] Burton Visotzky calls it the "primary means for delivering prophecy and thus verses of canonized Scripture" in Leviticus Rabbah. Visotzky, *Golden Bells and Pomegranates*, 142. Peter Schäfer terms *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, not God, but "the mode through which God reveals himself," *Die Vorstellung vom hieligen Geist in der rabbinischen Literatur* (Doctoral Thesis) (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1972), 62, cited in Schäfer, *The Mirror of His Beauty*, 263, fn.

exposition. By attributing a certain word or phrase in a narrative to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, a dimension of irony or an omniscent viewpoint may be highlighted. At other times, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is introduced into the Midrashic presentation of a text, quoting another verse from elsewhere in Scripture that highlights the drama or sharpens the meaning of the primary passage, in what might be termed an intertextual fashion. All formulae of speech are available to use with these two options. On rare occasions some words of explanation are added to the quotation. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* usually uses words from the Prophets and Writings, but occasionally from the Torah itself, and rarely uses original words that are not in the Bible. Therefore, one might think that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is simply being used a substitute word for Scripture or Torah. However, the sometimes dramatic depictions and the active verbs used for describing *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s communication give it a dimension of personification that distinguish it from other, more passive ways in which the Sages generally choose to quote Scripture, e.g. with expressions such as "as it is stated" (*she-ne'emar*) or "as it is written" (*ka-katuv*).

Ruah ha-Kodesh is not the only personification of Scripture in Rabbinic sources. Azzan Yadin points out that Halakhic Midrashim from the school of Rabbi Ishmael "personify" Scripture to some degree with the terms *ha-torah* and *ha-katuv*, which he takes care to distinguish from one another.[331] *Ha-torah* is sometimes used with the verbs "said," (*amra*) or "spoke" (*dibra*), although these are not paired with scriptural quotations but indicate generally accepted (from the Rabbinic viewpoint) teachings of Scripture. *Ha-*

katuv, by contrast, is cited the present tense and is often used with terms related to pedagogy (such as "comes to teach") and is used to express the Bible's self-interpretive role. These formulae are different from those paired with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but they, too, produce a type of "personification" of Scripture.[332] So *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is not unique as a way to quote Scripture in a personified way. What makes it distinctive is that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* provides elements like pathos, irony and drama to the process of citation.

One of the more challenging aspects of interpreting these texts is to conceptualize exactly who is speaking when we are told that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "says" (or cries, or responds). Did the Rabbis imagine a supernatural auditory phenomena taking place? Did they conceive of the speaker as God, a prophet or other character, or scripture itself? Various Midrashic texts suggest different possibilities about "who is speaking." At times, it appears to be "the voice of God" addressing a biblical character, at times it is a dramatic way of quoting scripture, and it times it is the voice of a divinely-inspired individual. Taken together, I would characterize *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as "the divine voice in scripture."

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[331] Azzan Yadin, *Scripture As Logos—Rabbi Ishmael and the Origins of Midrash* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). He does not include the Shirata as part of the Rabbi Ishmael textual tradition in Mekhilta (preface, xii).

[332] A. Yadin, *Scripture as Logos*, 174-175.

Various formulae and usages of *Ruah Ha-Kodesh* speaking

Responds (*Heshivah*) In Tannaitic Texts

The earliest uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speaking are found in Halakhic Midrashim with variations on the word, *heshivah* (responded). In the Mekhilta Shirata 7 there is a remarkable use of *heshivah* that contains rather broad humor. Pharoah boasts that he will pursue, overtake and massacre the Israelites (Exodus 15:9). *Ruah ha-Kodesh* responds (*heshivah*) with further verses from the Song of the Sea that indicate that God will triumph against Pharaoh. Then *Ruah ha-Kodesh* mocks Pharoah (with another verb, *mela'eget alav*) and says, "You blew with your wind," using the same verse (Exodus 15:10) that was used in seriousness to speak of God's triumph against the Egyptian army, but here to mean something like "you're full of hot air, Pharoah," with the addition of another proof text to emphasize the insult as well as the parallel of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and the Lord: "Behold, they belch out with their mouth...But You, Lord, laugh at them, you mock (*til'ag*) all the nations." (Psalms 59:8-9).[333] While W.D. Davies found these passages to be militant and to reflect a kind of "holy war,"[334] they could also be seen to put an ironic and humorous gloss on a biblical poem which celebrates a violent victory.[335]

[333] Lauterbach, *Mekilta*, Vol. 2, 57-58.
[334] Davies, "Reflections," 103-104.
[335] Judah Goldin writes that the biblical "Song of the Sea" itself is "strongly polemical and mocking in flavor and purpose," literary qualities not lost on the Tannaitic composers of Mekilta's *Shirata*. Judah Goldin, *The Song at the Sea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 57-58.

Additional references to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* responding (with some form of *heshivah*) occur in other Halakhic Midrashim.[336] In Sifra, Shemini 37, Moses is distressed lest he made improper use of the anointing oil when anointing Aaron to be High Priest, so *Ruah ha-Kodesh* responds to him with the verse from Psalms 133: "Behold how good it is and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that runs down upon the beard, Aaron's beard, that runs down to the hem of his garments."[337] The selection of a verse from Psalms to ameliorate Moses's dilemma highlights the unity of Scripture. David Stern points out that this is typical of Midrash, which uses "intertextual" interpretation to show the "omnisignificance" as well as the "essential unity" of Scripture. The text from Sifra is a perfect example of what he describes as the "typical midrashic habit of viewing the Bible atemporally, of explaining scripture through scripture, and of connecting the most disparate and seemingly unrelated verses in order to create new and overarching nexuses of meaning."[338] Often, as here, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is the agent of this intertextual juxtaposition.

A most unusual example is found in Sifrei Deuteronomy Nitsavim Piska 2, where *Ruah ha-Kodesh* responds (*meshivo*[339]), "Give a translator (*meturgeman*) to Joshua, and he will ask and interpret and teach instructions during your lifetime, so that when you pass on, Israel will not say, during the life of your Rav you didn't speak, and now you

[336] See Sifra Behukotai 6:3, Sifrei Deuteronomy Va'Ethanan Piska 6, and Sifrei Deuteronomy Nitsavim-Vayelech Piska 2.
[337] The same example is repeated in Leviticus Rabbah 3:6, where it uses both terms, "responds" and "says."
[338] David Stern, *Midrash and Theory*, 29.

speak." It is quite rare if not unique for *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to make an original speech. Such original speeches are usually assigned to the "Holy One, Blessed be He," so here *Ruah ha-Kodesh* seems like a substitution for the Holy One.

The term "*heshivato*" (she responded to him) is used with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Tosefta Sotah 6:4. This text provides an aggadic perspective on Moses' complaints to God about the insatiable Israelites and their cravings for meat. The Tosefta renders the Biblical line, "And the Lord answered Moses, 'Is there a limit to the Lord's power? You shall soon see whether what I have said happens to you or not," (Numbers 11:23) as "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* responded to him, 'Now you will see whether what I have said happens to you or not!'" Again, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is used here as a metonym for God. There may even be a connection drawn here to the next episode in Numbers 11:26, in which the *Ruah* of YHWH comes upon Eldad and Medad, enabling them to prophesy.

*Ruah ha-Kodesh "Says" or "States" (***Omeret***) in Amoraic Midrash*

Most texts in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* states or says (*omeret*) contain some degree of irony. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* functions as the omniscent narrator, as it were, pointing out dimensions of the story unknown to the characters involved. Several of these are found in Genesis Rabbah. Our first selection is from Genesis Rabbah 63:14, and concerns Jacob, Esau and the birthright:

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339 Almost all verbs used with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* are in the feminine gender, but occasionally a masculine verb or mixed genders are found. I discuss the issue of gender in some detail in Chapter 6.

> And Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils (Genesis 24:34). As a lentil is wheel-shaped, so is the world like a wheel. As a lentil has no mouth, so a mourner has no mouth, for a mourner does not speak. As a lentil symbolizes mourning, yet also joy, so here too there was mourning—because of Abraham's death, and joy—because Jacob received the birthright.
>
> "And he ate and drank." He [Esau] brought in with him a band of ruffians who said: 'We will eat his dishes and mock at him.' And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* states, "They prepare the table" (Isaiah 21:5)—i.e. they set the festive board; "They light the lamps . . . [They say] Rise up, you princes"—this means Michael and Gabriel; [and they say] "Anoint the shield"—make a record that the birthright belongs to Jacob.
>
> Bar Kappara taught: And just as they were laughing/mocking, the Holy One, blessed be He, "agreed," laughed [right back] at them and established the birthright for Jacob. As it is written," Thus says the Lord: Israel is My son, My firstborn" (Exodus 4:22).[340]

This passage includes a strong sense of irony. Esau's "band of ruffians" (a midrashic invention not found in the text) decides to make fun of Jacob while they eat the pottage with Esau. However, the joke is on them. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speaks and describes their rude behavior with a verse from Isaiah that may refer to the Babylonians' "night revelry suddenly brought to an abrupt end by a peremptory call to arms."[341] The image of the enemies of Israel cavorting but really doomed, is brought in to heighten the irony of this Midrash about Esau's behavior in rejecting his birthright. Note also in the last paragraph (my paragraph divisions), that the Holy One, blessed be He, is paralleled to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the previous paragraphs, in His role of mocking Esau and his band.

In other cases, it seems that "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* says" is simply a way to say, "the narrative voice of the Torah says." In Genesis Rabbah 80:8, Rabbi Nahman ponders if the

[340] I have slightly revised the translation of the final paragraph from the Soncino version, for greater clarity.

sons of Jacob really dealt deceitfully with Shekhem. He explains their behavior by saying, "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* says, 'Because he had defiled Dinah their sister.'[342] And they said to them, 'We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised; for that would be a reproach to us'" (Genesis 34:13-14). *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is like a narrator, providing some necessary information, beyond a mere description of events in sequence, not understood by all the players in the drama. It is like an omniscient narrator, and in that sense fits in well with its definition as "the divine voice in Scripture." Jacob's sons are tricking Hamor and Shekhem; their words are, if not ironic, certainly not what they seem to the listeners to be, and the narrator, idenitifed by Rabbi Nahman with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* both reminds the readers why they are being deceitful and justifies their deceit. The *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speech here is a kind of aside, an explanation of behavior not understood by all the players in the drama. Jacob's sons are tricking Hamor and Shekhem, their words are certainly not what they seem to the listeners to be, and the rabbis see this explanatory interpolation in the verse as the voice of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* noting that irony or double message.

Genesis Rabbah 84:12 provides a somewhat hypostatic use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*: "His [Joseph's] brothers envied him, but his *father* kept the saying in mind (*shamar et ha-davar*). (Gen. 37:11)…R. Hiyya interpreted: And his brothers envied him, but *Ruah ha-Kodesh* bade him [*omeret lo*, lit. "says to him"]: 'keep the saying in mind' (*shemor et*

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341 Freedman and Simon, Soncino Midrash Rabbah CD-Rom (Chicago: Davka, 2001), fn. to cited passage.

342 Full scriptural reference: "Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor—speaking with guile because he had defiled their sister Dinah—and said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to a man who is uncircumcised, for that is a disgrace among us." (Genesis 34:13-14, JPS translation).

ha-devarim)—the matter will be fulfilled."[343] Since *Ruah ha-Kodesh* almost never says words that are not Scriptural quotations, it probably makes sense to read this as the voice of Rabbi Hiyya explaining his *derash*. Or it could be that Rabbi Hiyya described *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as itself adding the extra phrase in order to fortell the future, to give the implications of the verse. It would then function as here again as the divine narrative voice of the Torah, providing a foreshadowing of future events. The passage is gently ironic in the sense that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* provides a viewpoint unknown to Joseph's brothers.

Another example of gentle irony is found in Genesis Rabbah 92:9: Joseph says to his brothers (after saying that he will retain one of them in prison),

> "But as for you get up and go in peace to your father." But they answered: "Can he enjoy peace when he is forsaken of all!" Yet *Ruah ha-Kodesh* says, "Great peace have they that love your law, and there is no stumbling for them."(Psalms 119:165)

Although the sons think their father is forsaken, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* provides a broader perspective, by quoting a verse from the Writings.

Leviticus Rabbah[344] contains an additional example of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "saying," which also involves a kind of chorus of characters along with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. It uses the word *omeret* for the speeches all of the characters. Leviticus Rabbah 28:6 (end of parasha) pictures Mordechai beginning to sing Psalm 30 as he rides through the streets of Shushan on the King's horse. Again, the intertextuality of Midrash creates an organic

[343] I have slightly changed the Soncino translation, which added in the words, "his heavenly father," (not in the Hebrew), making the parallel of God and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* even more explicit.

whole, woven of verses from diverse scriptural books. Each character from the book of *Esther* in turn says part of the Psalm. Finally *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the role of Biblical narrator concludes the Psalm.

Proclaims Good News to Them*—Mevaseret** ***(Tannaitic and Amoraic)

An aggadic passage in Mishnah Sotah 9:6 and Tosefta Sotah 9:6, carried through to the Yerushalmi Sotah 9:6 (23b) and the Bavli Sotah 46a uses the expression, *mevasartan* which means proclaims, announces, or informs good news to them. (The word always has the connotation of giving good news in the Bible). The passage is about the *egla arufa* or the absolution ritual performed when a corpse was found outside the city limits (Deut. 21:1-9). The ritual involved breaking the neck of a young heifer at a wild river and having the elders of the city deny responsibility (indirect, according to the Mishnah) for the death. The Mishnah assigns each phrase of the Biblical ceremony to different participants in the ritual. It then concludes that the final Biblical words, "the blood is forgiven them," at the end of the passage were not integral to the priests' speech, but in fact were spoken by the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* who announces to them (*mevasartan*), when you act thus, the blood is forgiven you."

> Then the priests exclaim, "Forgive, YHWH, your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, and suffer not innocent blood to remain in the midst of your people Israel." There is no need for them to say, "and the blood shall be forgiven them,"

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[344] M. Margulies, critical edition of Leviticus Rabbah, 1960, based on the British Museum edtion Add. MS 27169 (Catalogue Number 340) as included in Bar Ilan Library. The reference to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is missing from many printed editions.

> but *Ruah ha-Kodesh* announces to them (*mevasartan*): When you act thus, the blood is forgiven you.[345]

The phrase is read as the voice of the narrator, the voice of the Torah, as it were. But it is also the voice of God (although not stated so explicitly), because only God could know or say that the people were forgiven. Why did the Sages find it necessary to assign that phrase to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as the voice of God speaking through the Torah? Perhaps this mishnah wants to emphasize that the ritual of the *egla arufa* was not intended as a kind of magic ritual with automatic results, but instead awaited acceptance by God. Although this Mishnaic narrative is carried over into the Tosefta, Yerushalmi, and the Bavli as part of the Mishnaic foundation of those texts, the part with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* does not undergo any type of transformation or elaboration over time. Apparently, this shows that it was valued and preserved, but did not capture the aggadic imagination as much as some other textual traditions which I will explore in the next chapter.

The concept of *Ruah Ha-Kodesh* as "Biblical Narrator" does not end in the classic Rabbinic period. Rashi (France, 1040-1105), commenting on Ezekiel 1:1, states that, "Therefore, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* interrupted [Ezekiel's] words in the following two verses [Ezekiel 1:2-3] to teach who the prophet was and to teach from what date he was counting." He is basically asserting that another party had to be involved in the composition of the book of Ezekiel, and that is *Ruah ha-Kodesh* itself, since the

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[345] Mishnah Sotah 9:6 (Bavli Sotah 46a). I have slightly modernized the translation of the Biblical quotations, but more importantly, removed the Soncino text's quotation marks around the message of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, which I see as an explanation of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s Scriptural words and not a quotation put in the mouth of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Also, Soncino translates, "the blood is forgiven you," but the Mishnah has *ha-dam mitkaper lahem*, "the blood is forgiven/atoned for *them*," which is actually a paraphrase from the

background information is stated in the third person. In regard to the verse from Deuteronomy 21:8 discussed above, Rashi writes, "Scripture proclaims to them (*mevasram*) that since they did thus, the sin is forgiven them." He has thus substituted "Scripture" for the Mishnah's use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, because he sees the two terms as overlapping.

Cries out—**Tsovahat**

Another typical formula for the speech of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is with the verb *tsovahat*, "cries out" (or "calls aloud," "calls out," depending on context). This form usually refers to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* crying out against injustice or evil. The sources of the *tsovahat* quotations usually seem appropriately somber or serious. They often derive from certain darker selections from the Prophets (Jeremiah or Isaiah) or from the Writings, particularly wisdom literature, dirges or petitions such as those found in Lamentations, Psalms, Proverbs, or Ecclesiastes. Although most of the examples of *tsovahat* are Amoraic, there is one important example in the Mekhilta Shirata 3 at the Song of the Sea.[347] This passage is one example of "Reciprocal Dialogue" between the people and God, through the hypostatization of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. As Israel proclaims words of praise to the Lord, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* calls out from heaven (*tsovahat min hashamayim*) with parallel verses of praise for Israel. The Mehkilta text is distinguished from the Amoraic examples to follow because it lacks their dark or lamenting quality. In

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biblical verse (Deut. 21:9) *ve-nikaper la-hem ha-dam*, and thus suggests that the entire final phrase is meant as an explanation of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s message to the people, rather than a direct quotation.

this case, it means "cried out" with more a positive connotation. Every nation praises and is helped by God, but the Mekhilta emphasizes the special and reciprocal relationship between God and Israel: "Israel says, "Hear of Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4). And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* calls aloud from heaven (*tsovahat min ha-shamayim*) and says, "And who is like you people Israel, a nation one in the earth ((I Chronicles 17:21)…." This text gives a powerful example of hypostatization of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* calling aloud from on high. This particular type of Midrash with reciprocal dialogue will be examined in further detail in the next section of this chapter.

Another and very different example of the use of *tsovahat* occurs in Genesis Rabbah 63:11:

> And Jacob cooked pottage (Gen. 25:29). "What is the purpose of this pottage?" he [Esau] asked him. "I made it because that old man [Abraham] has died," he replied. "Judgment has overtaken that righteous man!" exclaimed he [Esau]; "then there is neither reward nor resurrection."
>
> But *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out [*tsovahat*], "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him" (Jeremiah 12:10). "Weep not for the dead," applies to Abraham, "but weep bitterly for him that goes away," applies to Esau.

Here a mournful passage from Jeremiah is quoted by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with the word *tsovahat*. An intertext from a later book of the Bible is introduced to heighten the drama of Jacob and Esau's story. However, one can also say that the context is ironic, as with the earlier examples with the word says, *omeret*. Esau is mourning for Abraham; but in truth, it is he who should be wept over. This recalls the aforementioned passage in Genesis Rabbah 92:9, in which the sons of Jacob feel sorry for him and yet *Ruah ha-*

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[347] Lauterbach, Vol. 2, 23.

Kodesh says that he will be blessed with peace. In that passage, no curse is extended to the sons, as there is here for Esau, a character generally vilified in rabbinic sources.[348] At least here Esau is portrayed as mourning for Abraham.

Most uses of *tsovahat*, however, have a very different form. The formula is commonly brought in several times in a midrashic passage, punctuated by the repeated "cries" of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Leviticus Rabbah 4:1 is a particularly long and well developed passage that speaks of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* crying out and saying (*tsovahat ve-omeret*).[349] This is the *Petihta,* or opening section, of a long homily on Leviticus 4:2: "If anyone [any soul] shall sin through error, in any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done." As is typical of Leviticus Rabbah, the skilled homilist creatively links the opening verse of a Torah reading to another, seemingly unrelated biblical verse, in this case to Ecclesiastes 3:16: "And moreover I saw under the sun, in the place of justice, that wickedness was there; and in the place of righteousness, that wickedness was there."[350] The entire "literary homily" (to use Joseph Heinemann's term[351]), focuses on the nature of the soul and its propensity to sin despite its lofty origins. In each case, various sages take the verse from Ecclesiastes and interpret it as referring to a variety of scriptural contexts that speak of the propensity of human beings to fall into sin. I cite the *Petihta* in full to note its rich word play and rhythmic texture:

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[348] Esau became a symbol of Rome in Rabbinic writings, and of Christian regimes oppressive to Jews in medieval Jewish commentary. Shalom Pual, "Esau," The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion, R.J. Zwi Werblowsky and Geoffrey Wigoder (eds.) (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 232.
[349] There is a parallel tradition in Ecclesiastes Rabbah 3:19.
[350] JPS translation: "Alongside justice there is wickedness, alongside righteousness there is wickedness."
[351] J. Heinemann, "The Art of Composition in Midrash Leviticus Rabbah" (Hebrew), *Ha-Sifrut* 2 (1971): 808-834, as cited in David Stern, *Midrash and Theory*.

R. Eliezer and R. Joshua [gave expositions]. R. Eliezer said: "The place where the Great Sanhedrin had sat and decided the lawsuits of Israel, There was the wickedness, there, 'All the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the middle gate' (Jeremiah 39:3), i.e. in the [very] place where they used to decide the law." (The proverb says: "Where the master hangs up his armor, there the shepherd hangs up his pitcher.")

And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out (*tsovahat*), saying, "In the place of righteousness, there was wickedness committed. In the place of which it is written, 'Righteousness lodged in her, But now murderers' (Isaiah1:21), there they perpetrate murders; there they slew Zechariah and Uriah."

R. Joshua said: "In the place of justice there was the condemnation: In the place where the divine Attribute of Justice (*Midat ha-din*) displayed itself in the episode of the Golden Calf, of which it is said, 'Go to and fro, from gate to gate' (Exodus 32:27), There was punishment executed,[353] there the Lord smote the people, because they had made the calf."

And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out, saying, "In the place of righteousness, there was the wickedness,' the place where I attributed to them righteousness, and called them god-like: I said: 'You are god-like beings, and all of you children of the Most High' (Psalms 132:6), There was wickedness: there they acted wickedly by making the Golden Calf, and prostrating themselves to it."

Another interpretation (*devar aher*): "In the place of justice," etc., speaks of the generation of the flood. In the place of justice, in the place where the divine Attribute of Justice acted against the generation of the flood: "There was punishment executed," there He blotted out every living substance (Genesis 7:23), as we have learned in the Mishnah: "The generation of the flood have no share in the World to Come, and they will not appear for judgment" (Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:3).

And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out, saying: "In the place of righteousness, there was wickedness; in the place where I treated them as righteous, as it is written, 'Their houses are safe, without fear,' etc. (Job 21:9), There was wickedness, [as it is written], Yet they said unto God: 'Depart from us,'" etc. (ibid. 14).

Another interpretation: "In the place of justice," etc., speaks of the Sodomites. The place where the Divine Attribute of Justice acted against the Sodomites, [as it is said], "Then the Lord caused to rain upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire" (Genesis 19: 24), There was the condemnation, as we have

353 Reading the key word in the verse as *harshe'a*, found them guilty/executed punishment, instead of *haresha*, the evildoing (Sonsino note).

> learned in the Mishnah: "The men of Sodom have no share in The World to Come, but they will appear for judgment."
>
> And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out, saying: "In the place of righteousness, there was wickedness: in the place where I treated them as righteous, of whose land I have written, 'As for the earth, out of it comes bread, and underneath it is turned up as if by fire; the stones thereof are the place of sapphires, and it has dust of gold' (Job 28,:5); (They say that when one went to a gardener [in Sodom] and said to him: 'Give me an *issar*'s-worth of vegetables,' and having obtained them shook them, one found gold in the earth clinging to them, thus bearing out that which is said of it, 'It has dust of gold.') There was the wickedness" [committed], there they said: 'Let us deliberately cause the law of hospitality to be forgotten from among us!' [as it is said of Sodom], 'She did not strengthen the hand of the poor and needy' (Ezekiel 16: 49)."
>
> R. Judah b. Simon explained the verse as referring to Shittim. "In the place of justice," in the place where the Attribute of Justice acted-namely in Shittim, as it is said, "Take the chiefs of the people, and hang them up" (Numbers 25: 4), There was punishment executed—there, "Those that died by the plague were twenty and four thousand" (ibid. 9).
>
> And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out, saying: "In the place of righteousness, there was the wickedness. In the place where I turned the curse of Balaam into a blessing, as it is written, 'The Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing' (Deuteronomy 23:6), There was the wickedness [as it is said], 'And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit harlotry with the daughters of Midian' (Numbers 25:1)."

In each example, the term *tsovahat* refers to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* crying out with sorrow or anger at wickedness and injustice, as the divine voice of scripture. She wails like a mourning chorus at the mention of each place in which people went astray and returned wickedness for righteousness. Moreover *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (uncharacteristically) speaks some words outside of a scriptural quotation: "And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out, saying (*tsovahat ve-omeret*), 'In the place of righteousness, there was the wickedness,' the place where I attributed to them righteousness, and called them god-like, even as it is said, I said: 'You are godlike beings, and all of you children of the Most High' (Psalms

132:6*).*" *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is the voice of Scripture but adds the first person divine perspective as interpretation.

The effect of this midrash is that of a choral reading with poetic refrain, in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* echoes the words of the Sages. They continually quote the first half of Ecclesiastes 3:16, while *Ruah ha-Kodesh* quotes the second, parallel half in response. This forms a "chain of circles" in which the proem continually comments on and returns to the same verse.[354] In each part of the homily, Sages speak, presenting another example and another (*davar aher*), saying that such and such a place was the place described in Ecclesiastes. They may add Tannaitic teachings or even familiar proverbs. Then *Ruah ha-Kodesh* expounds on what they are saying and answers them with another scriptural selection to bolster their example. The Sages give a concrete example from biblical narrative in which people did a sin or evil, and were punished, while *Ruah ha-Kodesh* begins with citing a divine reward, benefit, or blessing, and ends with an example of human sin. Furthermore, the Sages deliver their examples more or less dispassionately, "interpreting" and "explaining," while *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out emotionally, adding pathos to an otherwise intellectual interchange. The word *tsovahat* conveys a sense of urgency and emotion.

There are five examples overall in this *petihta*, and they come from all parts of the Tanakh. The first of the Sages' examples comes from the Prophets, and the last four from the Torah. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* responds to them with verses from the Prophets, Writings, and finally the Torah. In all the parts *Ruah ha-Kodesh* goes beyond quoting diverse

[354] A Midrashic form described by Harry Fox, "The Circular Proem," 7.

scriptures and proclaims God's perspective on the episode, in the first person. In the second through fourth examples, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* says the refrain: "the place that I called them/treated them as righteous," (*makom she-tsidaqtim*) and then speaks in words of scripture. In the second, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* follows that phrase with the term, "I called," (*karati*) and a quotation from Psalms, and in the third and fourth sections, "and I wrote about them," (*ve-khatavti aleihem*) and quotations from Job. The fifth speech by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* refers to "the place where I turned the curse of Balamm into a blessing," and this is followed by a proof text from Deuteronoomy. This choral reading, as it were, becomes a round in which Scripture provides a verse, the Sages expound on it with verses from Scripture, and then *Ruah ha-Kodesh* joins in again, enlarging the the examples with a divine perspective ("I called, I wrote, I blessed"). The result is a kind of rhythmic dialogue between Sages and *Ruah ha-Kodesh.* The listener to this homily waits to hear what *Ruah ha-Kodesh* will say next. It is an overtly dialogic and intertextual exchange. In each case, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is speaking for God and speaking with Scripture, the divine voice in scripture, and the answering Rabbis are also speaking with Scripture. As it were, this is a way for the Rabbinic authors to bring God in as a partner in the Midrashic dialogue.

The examples of the formula *tzovahat* or *tzovahat ve-omeret* are among the most powerful uses of the personified figure of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as divine voice in the Torah. Whether repeating a refrain during a reciprocal dialogue (detailed in the next section), responding with the same timeless phrase of scripture to apply its paradigm to to a new

historical reality, or bringing in a variety of quotations to answer those of the sages, this formula for *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s speech always contributes a powerful sense of pathos and immediacy. Midrash operates as a hermenautic literature based on scriptural quotation, and such quotation not only creates new interpretive meanings, but often casts the original quoted verse in a new light.[355] Attributing some of the quotations to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* adds an additional dimension to the discourse. The midrashist could have simply said, "as it is written," or some other more impersonal stock phrase for quoting scriptures. He is creating a dialogue by introducing another voice, the voice of *Ruah Ha-Kodesh.* The choice of "*Ruah ha-Kodesh tsovahat*," particularly as it is usually repeated several times in a literary unit, adds a strong emotional dimension to a text by introducing the active divine voice in scripture into the narrative or homily at hand.

In a literary sense, these examples represent a particular type of interpretive move. Dan Ben-Amos outlines three major midrashic techniques by which the Oral Torah responds to the written: the "interpretive" (explaining lacunae in the biblical text), the "expansive" (weaving imaginative aggadot around a biblical core story), and the "associative," which weaves together "remote biblical verses to one another, forming models and drawing analogies between individuals, places, times, and actions."[356] The examples that I have shown of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "crying out" and bringing in a number of verses from different parts of the bible, might be included in his category of the associative.

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[355] Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and Midrash*, 22-38.
[356] Dan Ben-Amos, "Jewish Folk Literature," *Oral Tradition*, 14/1 (1999), 153-155.

Another way to understand this midrashic technique is through the lens of "intertextuality," already noted in some of the simpler examples above. Although all texts theoretically involve some elements of "intertextuality," since they all contain a plethora of voices in interaction, the interaction of different voices and texts is a particularly open process in the Midrash. The exchange of quoted text from many divergent places in the Tanakh (and beyond it) reveals new shades of meaning and understanding for each verse:

> The verses of the Bible function for the rabbis much as do words in ordinary speech. They are a repertoire of semiotic elements that can be recombined into new discourse, just as words are recombined constantly into new discourse. Just as in a lexicon words are placed into juxtaposition revealing semantic similarities and differences, so in the midrashic text, semantic similiarities and differences between texts are revealed via new juxtapositions. Just as the words of any language can be placed into new syntagmatic paradigms, so can the verses of the Bible.[357]

In the Midrashic examples under discussion, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is described as the intertextual agent, introducing various biblical quotations in order to juxtapose them with others from the sages, thus revealing new meanings in familiar words. The use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in this context adds a special dimension to the intertextual process, by turning it into a virtual dialogue between the sages and the divine voice in the Torah. Lamentations Rabbah (1:45-1:50) stretches the intertextual nature of Midrash even further, as it recounts several post-biblical heroic tales of martyrdom during the Roman occupation of Judea. Each tragic account concludes with the phrase, in chorus-like fashion, "and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out" (*ve-Ruah ha-Kodesh tsovahat ve-omeret*)[358]:

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[357] Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality*, 28.
[358] The Soncino translation reads, "Then the Holy Spirit cried out."

"for these things I weep," quoting the biblical book of Lamentations 1:16. Here are the pertinent selections:

> "For these things I weep:" Vespasian filled three ships with eminent men of Jerusalem to place them in Roman brothels. They stood up and said, "Is it not enough that we have provoked Him to anger in His Sanctuary, that we shall do so also outside the Holy Land [by consenting to immoral practices]!"… and they threw themselves into the sea.
>
> And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out, "For these things I weep."
>
> Hadrian the accursed set up three garrisons…He said, "Whoever attempts to escape from one of them will be captured in another and vice versa." He also sent out heralds to announce, "Wherever there is a Jew, let him come forth, because the king wishes to give him an assurance [of safety]." The heralds proclaimed this to them and so captured the Jews….He surrounded [those still in hiding] with his legions and slaughtered them, so that their blood streamed [to the coast and stained the sea] as far as Cyprus.
>
> And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out, "For these things I weep."
>
> [There follows a story of cannibalism, which is missing the summation by *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.[359]]
>
> …Trajan surrounded [the Jewish men] with his legions and slaughtered them. He said to the women, "Yield yourselves to my troops, or I will do to you what I did to the men." They replied to him, "Do to the inferiors what you did to the superiors." He forthwith surrounded them with his legions and slaughtered them, so that their blood mingled with that of the men, and streamed [to the coast and stained the sea] as far as Cyprus. And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out, "For these things I weep."

This is followed by a similar episode in Lamentations Rabbah 1:46, in which two siblings, children of the High Priest, are enslaved by the Romans and give up their lives rather than be forced to marry one another. Again, the phrase follows, "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out, 'For these things I weep.'" In the continuation of the Midrash, in Lamentations

1:50, the story of the persecutions continues with Miriam bat Tanhum, allowing her seven sons to be martyred rather than worship Roman idols. "After a few days the woman became demented and fell from a roof and died, to fulfill what is said, 'She who has borne seven languishes' (Jeremiah 15:9). A *Bat Kol* issues forth and proclaims (*yotset ve'omeret*), 'A joyful mother of children' (Psalms 113:9); and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cried out (*tzovahat ve-omeret*), 'For these things I weep.'[360]

This Midrash, which also displays a "chain of circles" form that repeatedly returns to the same verse,[361] might be read with the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as a kind of *Bat Kol* (heavenly voice) making itself heard at the end of each scene of martyrdom. However, the use of the actual *Bat Kol* in the last example (with its usual formula, "went forth and said," but atypically in present participle) suggests another interpretation. The introduction of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as commentator decontextualizes the biblical Lamentations and suggests that its verses can also provide a commentary on other episodes of Jewish martyrdom. *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, the divine voice in the Torah, addresses not only the siege of Jerusalem by the Bablyonians in 586 and 587 B.C.E., but later events during the Hadrianic persecutions and the Roman conquest of Jerusalem. The text thus becomes a more timeless commentary on the eternal paradigms of exile and conquest in Jewish history. It is also interesting that the *Bat Kol* utters a positive, spiritual message, that Miriam bat Tanhum, now presumably reunited in heaven with her seven

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[359] Since the text continued to be freely edited and amended into the middle ages (Stemberger, *Introduction*, 286), one might speculate that this section differed because it was a later addition.
[360] I have changed the translation to note that the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out in present tense, and the Bat Kol (uncharacteristically) does so as well. (More on tenses in Chaper 5.) This is similar to the story of "Hannah" (named in later texts) and her seven sons and Antiochus Epiphanes, in 2 Maccabees.
[361] Harry Fox, "The Circular Proem," 7.

sons, is a "joyful mother of children," while the anthropathetic *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out with force and mourns her tragic martyrdom.[362]

Reciprocal Dialogue between *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and Israel: A Midrashic Form

The previous examples show one way in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is depicted as a dialogue partner with human beings. I now turn to a specific form of this dialogue, which emphasizes the reciprocal nature of the covenantal relationship. A wide range of Rabbinic texts contain examples in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* clearly stands in for God or the divine voice in Torah, when speaking in a way that demonstrates the reciprocal nature of God's relationship with Israel. In each case, a Biblical personage or a group speaks in scriptural verses and is answered by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in another verse, sometimes from the same passage and sometimes from an entirely different part of the Bible, weaving together a vibrant example of Midrashic intertextuality. This "Reciprocal Dialogue" pattern contains so many typical elements that it can be considered a midrashic form.

Mehkilta Shirata 3 (Lauterbach, Vol. 2, p. 23) was quoted in a previous section of this chapter to illustrate the use of the term cries out (*tsovahat*). I will now examine it as an example of reciprocal praise dialogue between God and Israel, which is the beginning of a tradition of such exchanges. In this selection, each time the people praise God, "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* calls aloud from heaven" (*tsovahat min ha-shamayim*) and offers a parallel verse praising Israel. The Song at the Sea is transformed in the Midrashic imagination

[362] Welcoming martyrs into the World to Come is a typical function of the Bat Kol, Kris Lindbeck, *Elijah and the Rabbis* (forthcoming). This example is unusual because the Bat Kol quotes scripture, thus

from a one-way encomium to a mutual give-and-take between God and the Children of Israel. Although using a different verb, the imagery here recalls the evocation of divine inspiration in Isaiah 40:6, with its heavenly voices responding to one another, "a voice rings out: 'Proclaim!' Another asks, 'What shall I proclaim?'" But in this case the voices are those of Israel and the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in strophe and antistrophe. It evokes a Hallel or responsive song in the synagogue, suggesting the perhaps that liturgical milieu provided the genesis of the image.

> Israel says, "Hear of Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4) And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries aloud from heaven (*tsovahat min ha-shamayim)* and says, "And who is like your people Israel, a nation one in the earth?" ((I Chronicles 17:21)
>
> Israel says, "Who is like unto You, O Lord, among the mighty?" (Exodus 15:11) And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* calls aloud from heaven and says, "Happy are you, O Israel; who is like unto you?" (Deuteronomy 33:29)
>
> Israel says: "As the Lord our God is whenever we call upon Him." (Deuteronomy 4:7). And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries aloud from heaven and says, "And what great nation is there, that has statutes and ordinances so righteous," etc. (Deuteronomy 4:8).
>
> Israel says, "For You are the glory of their strength." (Ps. 89:18). And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* calls aloud from heaven and says, "Israel in whom I will be glorified." (Isaiah 49:3).[363]

This Midrash paints a remarkable and audacious picture in which not only does Israel praise God in the well known Song at the Sea, but God sings praises back to Israel as well, using verses from Torah, Prophets and Writings. The anthropomorphism is tempered by inserting the intermediary personification of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* between God

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heightening her juxtaposition with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

[363] Lauterbach, Vol 2, 23-24.

and Israel. The quotation of verses from later in the bible shows the timeless intertextual nature of Midrash. Each and every part of the bible has the potential to be taken out of context in order to comment on and draw new meanings from the other. I Chronicles 17:21 is from a prayer to God by David, and now it becomes part of the praises of God to Israel! Taking the verses back (or forward) to their original location in the Bible, one also finds Deuteronomy 33:29 sums up the the last blessing of Moses to the people. Here it is used as one of the divine praises of Israel. Deuteronomy 4, adjoining verses 7 and 8, both from Moses's address to the people beyond the Jordan, are here put into the mouths of both Israel and of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, speaking for God. The psalmist and prophet speak to one another as Israel and God in the last exchange. (Of course, the prophet was already speaking "for God," and so the interplay of dialogue is rendered even more complex.)

A variation of the same reciprocal praise tradition is found in the Mekhilta of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai, Tractate Shirata 6. In this version, instead of "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries aloud from heaven" (*tsovahat min ha-shamayim*), the phrase repeated throughout the passage is, "the Holy Spirit brings good tidings to them,[364] saying," (*Ruah ha-Kodesh mevaseret al yadan ve-omeret*), and additional praise passages are included:

> For behold, the nations of the world sing the pleasure and praise of He who spoke, and the world came into being. But mine are pleasing before Him. As it says in Scripture, "The favorite of the songs of Israel," etc. (II Samuel 23.1). He made me special (*asa'ani imra*) and I also made him special. He made me special: "And the Lord has affirmed" (this day that you are…His treasured people, Deuteronomy 26:18). And I also made him special: "You have affirmed this day" (that the Lord is your God, Deuteronomy 26:17).
>
> Israel says, "Who is like You, O Lord, among the mighty" (Exodus 15:11). And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* brings good tidings to them, saying, "Oh happy Israel!" (Who is

[364] Sonsino. Perhaps a better translation would be, "in parallel," or "in response."

> like you, etc., Deuteronomy 33:29). Israel says, "Who…is like the Lord our God when we call upon Him" (Deuteronomy 4:7). And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* brings good tidings to them, saying, "Or what great nation" (has laws and rules as perfect as all this Teaching that I set before you this day, etc., Deuteronomy 4:8).
>
> Israel says, "Hear, Of Israel! The Lord is our God, (the Lord alone)." (Deut. 6:4). And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* brings good tidings to them, saying, "And who is like Your people, Israel," etc. (I Chronicles 17:21). Israel says, "Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved," etc. (Song of Songs 2:3). And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* brings good tidings to them, saying, "Like a lily among (thorns)," etc. (Song of Songs 2:2). Israel says, "This is my God (and I will glorify him)," etc. (Exodus 15:2). And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* brings good tidings to them, saying, "The people I formed for Myself," etc. (Isaiah 43:21). Israel says, "For you are their strength in which they glory" (Isaiah 89:18). And *Ruah ha-Kodesh* brings good tidings to them, saying, "Israel in whom I glory" (Isaiah 49:3). [365]

Here the mutual words of praise are even more expansive and include verses from Song of Songs, the bible's love poetry, traditionally seen as an allegory of God's love for Israel. Here they become words of—not just a praise song—but a love song at the Sea, a mutual love song between Israel and God. There may be a polemical overtone here as well. "Bearing good tidings" (*mevaseret*) recalls the annunciatory role of the Holy Spirit (speaking through Elizabeth) in Luke 1:41-42, as well as the angels who come bearing the good news of the birth of Jesus with the phrase, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased" (Luke 2:14). But here the glad tidings announce and affirm the chosenness of Israel.

Another Tannaitic varient of this tradition of mutual praise between God and Israel is in Sifre Deuteronomy Piska 355. It is similar to both of the examples above, and contains most of the same exchanges from Mekhilta of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai, but now *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "responds/says" (omeret).

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[365] W. David Nelson, 129 (textual source is Add. to 1180 Ms. New York)

> ‘There is none like God, O Jeshurun!” (Deuteronomy 33:26). Israel says, “There is none like God,” and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* says (*omeret*), “except Jeshurun!” Israel says, “Who is like you, O Lord, among the mighty? (Exodus 15:11) and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* says, “Happy are you, O Israel, who is like you?” (Deuteronomy 33:29). Israel says, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deut. 6:4), and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* says, “And who is like your people Israel, a nation one in the earth” (I Chronicles 17:21). Israel says, “As an apple tree among the trees of the wood,” (so is my Beloved, Song of Songs 2:3), and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* says, “As a lily among thorns,” (so is my love, Song of Songs 2:2). Israel says, “This is my God, and I will praise Him” (Exodus 15:2), and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* responds, “The people which I formed for myself” (shall recount My praise, Isaiah 43:21). Israel says, “For you are the glory of their strength” (Psalms 89:18), and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* says, “Israel, in whom I will be glorified” (Isaiah 49:3).[366]

According to Fishbane, this Sifre text “subverts” the Deuteronomistic praise to God: “There is none like God, O Jeshurun” (*El* Jeshurun) by rereading the same phrase as, “except (*el[a]*) Jeshurun,” or more daringly, *el* Jeshurun (“Jeshurun is [like] God). I would favor the first rereading, but either way the form of reciprocal dialogue as used here creates a sense of equal praise, of give and take between the covenantal partners. As Fishbane writes:

> In either case, the utter incomparability of God as enunciated in Scripture is effaced by the Midrash, and a theological correlation of God and Israel is celebrated. Remarkably, the new voice who authority subverts Moses’ theological claim is none other than the Holy Spirit itself.[367]

Another text in this tradition of reciprocal praise between God and Israel is found in Bavli Berakhot 6a, which speaks of God’s “tefillin” containing verses praising Israel, just as Israelite tefillin contains verses praising God. The Berakhot passage has several

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[366] Sifre Deuteronomy Piska 355, as translated by Michael Fisbane, who provides an indepth analysis of the entire Piska as “The Measure and Glory of God in Ancient Midrash,” in his *Exegetical Imagination on Jewish Thought and Theology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 56-72. I have changed his “responds” to “says” to match the Hebrew *’omeret* more exactly.

parallels and some identical texts to both Mekhilta examples, but it now substitutes "The Holy One, blessed be he" (*ha-Kadosh barukh Hu*) in place of *Ruah ha-Kodesh.*

> R. Nahman b. Isaac said to R. Hiyya b. Abin: "What is written in the tefillin of the Lord of the Universe?" He replied to him: "And who is like Your people Israel, a nation one in the earth?" (I Chronicles 17:21) Does, then, the Holy One, blessed be He, sing the praises of Israel? Yes, for it is written: "You have affirmed the Lord this day . . . and the Lord has affirmed you this day." (Deut. 26:17-18) The Holy One, blessed be be, said (*amar*) to Israel: "You have made me a unique entity in the world, and I shall make you a unique entity in the world. You have made me a unique entity in the world, as it is said: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.' (Deuteronomy 6:4) And I shall make you a unique entity in the world, as it is said: 'And who is like Your people Israel, a nation one in the earth.'" (I Chronicles 17:21)

Although these various manifestations of one textual tradition of reciprocal praise between Israel and God have much in common, there are also significant differences between them. First, the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael uses the dramatic expression: "calls aloud from heaven" (*tsovahat min ha-shamayim*). The depiction of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is more abstract and less personified in the other two Tannaitic examples. Mekhilta of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai has, "the Holy Spirit brings good tidings [in response] to them, saying," (*Ruah ha-Kodesh mevaseret al yadan ve-omeret*), while Sifre Deuteronomy simply uses "says," (*omeret*). As noted, the Bavli substitutes another expression of divinity for *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. It is now in the masculine, "The Holy One, blessed be He" (*Hakadosh barukh Hu*), but it seems to be an adaptation of the same tradition.

In addition, the literary and hermeneutical contexts vary from text to text. The two different Mekhilta texts contain a straightforward account of mutual "exclusivity" and praise. Mekhilta of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai seems to have polemical overtones. The

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[367] Fishbane, *Exegetical Imagination*, 50.

Sifre, as noted above, may be more daring in its rereading of the texts to emphasize the mutual nature of the covenantal partnership. By contrast, the tradition in Bavli is placed in a dialectic exchange and asks the rhetorical question, "Does, then, the Holy One, blessed be he, sing the praises of Israel?" Note as well, the shift from present to past tense in the Holy One's speech in this Amoraic version. It creates a sense of remove from the speech, as something that happened in the Biblical past. Perhaps this was more comfortable to the redactors of the Bavli, which often makes substitutes other figures in traditions which earlier featured *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

A different use of reciprocity between *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and human beings is found in the Bavli, Pesachim 117a. It is presented in the form of a Beraita, suggesting an earlier tradition. God speaks through *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in a reciprocal Hallel exchange with various Biblical characters. Unlike some other Bavli passages, this maintains the figure of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rather than substituting another personification for God (a reason might be that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speaks here, and the *Shekhinah* is silent):

> Our Rabbis taught: "Who uttered this Hallel? [which we say at the Passover Seder]" R. Eleazar said: "Moses and Israel uttered it when they stood by the [Red] Sea. They exclaimed, 'Not unto us, not unto us,' (but to your name bring glory, Psalms 115:1)." Responds *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, [who] said, "For mine own sake, for mine own sake, will I do it." (Isaiah 48:11). R. Judah said: "Joshua and Israel uttered it when the kings of Canaan attacked them. They exclaimed, 'Not unto us" (etc.) and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* responds, saying. . ."[368]
>
> R. Eleazar the Modiite said: "Deborah and Barak uttered it when Sisera attacked them. They exclaimed, 'Not unto us [etc.].' and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* responds, 'For Mine own sake, for Mine own sake, will I do it.'"

[368] I have amended the translation to reflect the choice and tense of verbs used with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. (More on this in Chapter 5)

> R. Eleazar b. ‘Azariah said: “Hezekiah and his companions uttered it when Sennacherib attacked them. They exclaimed, ‘Not unto us’ (etc.) and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* responds, saying etc.” R. Akiba said: “Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah uttered it when the wicked Nebuchadnezzar rose against them. They exclaimed, ‘Not unto us, etc.,’ *Ruah ha-Kodesh* responds, saying, etc”. R. Jose the Galilean said: Mordecai and Esther uttered it when the wicked Haman rose against them. They supplicated, ‘Not unto us, etc.’, and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* responds, saying, etc.” But the Sages maintain: “The prophets among them enacted that the Israelites should recite at every epoch and at every trouble — may it not come to them! — and when they are redeemed, they recite it [in thankfulness] for their delivery.”

In this example, *Ruah Ha-Kodesh* speaks with the formula *meshivah ve-omeret* , “responds, saying” (except in the first instance, where it combines tenses by saying, “*meshivah Ruah Ha-Kodesh ve-amra”*).[369] This formula is a combination of two that I have noted before, the Tannaitic use of *heshivah* with the Amoraic use of *omeret*. Although a Beraita is traditionally considered a Tannaitic text included in a later document, the one quoted here uses *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with present participle verb, which is more consistent with later texts. This makes the voice of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* a timeless one that speaks from the mouth of Isaiah the prophet to address events that happened long before and after his lifetime. Both the human characters and the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* respond to one another with Scripture, in a process of Midrashic dialogue. Yet this example of the “Reciprocal Dialogue” form is distinguished in several ways. It weaves a story by giving examples of Israel’s redemption in various biblical stories, offered in chronological order. It is not simply a call and response of praise, but a call for help and salvation from biblical leaders who ask God to assist them, not for their sake but for His

[369] This mix of tenses is found in early manuscripts as well, and in Vatican 134 is found twice (before the verb *omeret* is then abbreviated). This minor exception may be of little importance to the meaning of the passage: “Fuzziness of tense is notorious in biblical Hebrew, but it is also attested, albeit to a lesser extent,

(using a quotation from Psalms). *Ruah ha-Kodesh* clearly speaks for God, as the divine voice of Torah, using a quotation from God in Isaiah, in which God promises to assist them "for my own sake." The "intertextual" request from the Psalms and response from Isaiah are applied to biblical scenes from different historical periods in order to emphasize the timelessness of God's help; and indeed: "the Israelites should recite [this Hallel] at every epoch and at every trouble."

Another example of reciprocity is found in Genesis Rabbah 75:8, in which every blessing that Isaac gives to Jacob is echoed by a blessing from the Holy One, blessed be he/*ha-Kadosh barukh Hu*. But the one that his mother Rebecca offers him is echoed or responded by *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. This passage presents an interesting consideration of the role of gender in the choice of metonyms used here for God, since *ha-Kadosh barukh Hu* is used for Isaac's counterpart, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* for Rebecca's. (Admittedly, this construction is unique, but it is intriguing). When Rebecca blesses Isaac in words from the Psalms, the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* echoes her and speaks for God: "His mother Rebecca too blessed him in like fashion, as it says, 'O thou that dwellest in the covert of the most high,' etc. (Psalms 91:1)1, 'For He will give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways' (Psalms 91:11), while the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* [also] blessed him[370]: 'He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him' (Psalms 91:15)." Psalm 91 becomes a kind of duet of blessing between Rebecca and *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

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in early rabbinic Hebrew," Sacha Stern, *Time and Process in Ancient Judaism* (Portland, Oregon: Oxford/The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2003), 44.

[370] The Soncino translates, "the Divine Spirit answered her" but the Hebrew is "*berakhto Ruah ha-Kodesh*," and no form of the verb *heshiv* is used.

Summary of the Uses of Personified *Ruah ha-Kodesh*

Ruah ha-Kodesh speaks with different formulae in Midrashic literature. Categorizing these formulaic terms and expressions and finding the common characteristics of each is the first step in seeking out their nuances of meaning. For *Ruah ha-Kodesh* doesn't just talk. She makes ironic statements, cries out, responds, and proclaims. Hers is the voice of divinity in the Torah, showing a larger perspective, protesting injustice, comforting those in distress. She speaks to people, speaks through people, speaks and is spoken to by other aspects of the Divine.

Ruah Ha-Kodesh almost always speaks with Scripture (from any of the three sections of the Hebrew Bible: Torah, Prophets, or Writings). *Ruah ha-Kodesh* also adds occasional words that are not in Scripture, but these words interpret the Scripture. When extra words are added to clarify the meaning that the Sages wish to highlight, they are usually from the perspective of God and include the first person pronoun.

` As J. Abelson has already noted:

> Holy Spirit is another name for Holy Writ and *vice-versa*; and where we get the phrase 'Holy Spirit says,' the meaning is equivalent to 'Holy Writ says.' But what is so very interesting is the ways in which the Holy Spirit is personified in all such passages," crying and weeping, rejoicing and comforting, etc., so that, "The explanation is this: Holy Scripture is the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is God. Hence all this pleading, crying exhorting, blaming, punishing, comforting, etc., on the part of the Holy Spirit is a graphic attempt on the part of the Rabbins [sic] to show the abiding presence of God by the side of man.[371]

Personified *Ruah ha-Kodesh* might thus be termed "the divine voice in scripture" (while in her role of prophetic inspiration, she is the divine voice speaking through men

[371] Abelson, *Immanence of God*, 225.

and women.) As a participant in Midrashic dialogue, she either speaks directly the words of God quoted in the Torah, or says words of the text that offer the divine perspective, the bigger picture. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is clearly much more than a convenient device to use when the Sages want to quote scripture. Other quotation terms are more usual, such as "as it is said" (*she-ne'emar*) or "as it is written" (*ka-katuv*). In the longest Midrashic selection examined here, Leviticus Rabbah 4:1, Sages speak, echoed in turn by *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, who enhances and elevates their teachings with her replies, which speak for God. She interjects the element of divine pathos into the intellectual explanations of the sages. The Sages' speech is an attempt to understand and interpret Scripture, the very language of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. With their teaching of words of Torah, the words of Sages and the words of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, which are all the words of God, become an interactive dialogue with the divine. If Midrash is "a kind of conversation the Rabbis invented in order to enable God to speak to them from between the lines of Scripture,"[372] then this conversation becomes all the more animated and explicit when introducing the figure of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* into the conversation.

[372] David Stern, *Midrash and Theory*, 31.

Chapter 4: Case Studies of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* Traditions

As explained in the Introduction, the study of Tradition History, examining similar units of tradition in different texts is a valuable method of contemporary research into Rabbinic literature. One can learn more about a concept by examining its diachronic and synchronic development within the confines of a textual tradition. In this chapter, I will examine four well-developed textual traditions about *Ruah ha-Kodesh*: the Song at the Sea, Miriam's prophecy, the Saint's Progress, and the tradition that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* appears in court.

THE SONG AT THE SEA

In the previous chapter, I noted that "resting" (*shorah*) is the primary verb used to describe *Ruah ha-Kodesh* acting as the spirit of prophecy. According to the Mekhilta, *Ruah* rests upon the entire people of Israel most significantly at the crossing of the Red Sea. There, it enables them remarkable powers of expression, as they sing the "Song of the Sea" (*Shirat ha-yam*). On the verse, "Stand by (*hityatsvu*) and witness the deliverance which the Lord will work for you today…" (Exodus 14:3), the Mekhilta comments:

> The Israelites asked him "When?" Moses said to them: "Today *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rests upon you." For the expression "standing" (*yetsivah*) everywhere suggests the presence of *Ruah*, as in the passages: "I saw the Lord standing beside the altar" (Amos 9.1). "And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times: 'Samuel, Samuel'" (I Samuel 3.10). And it also says: "Call Joshua and stand in the tent of meeting that I may give him a charge" (Deuteronomy 31.14).[373]

[373] Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, Tractate Beshallah 3, Lauterbach, Vol. 1, 210. cf *Mehkilta de Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai*, W. David Nelson, 52.

This passage combines the use of the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to signify a spirit of prophecy or inspiration which is about to descend upon the people at the Sea. Each of the proof texts describes a prophetic encounter with God. There is also a measure of hypostatization in the choice of proof texts that parallel *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with God: "'Standing' everywhere suggests the presence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*," and the proof text is "The Lord (YHWH) came, and stood."

The effect of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "resting" upon the children of Israel is that they are able to sing the Song of the Sea.

> As a reward for the faith with which Israel believed in God, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested upon them and they uttered the song; as it is said: "And they believed in the Lord…Then sang Moses and the children of Israel" (Exodus 14.3;15.1). R. Nehemiah says: "Whence can you prove that whosoever accepts even one single commandment with true faith is deserving of having *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rest upon him? We find this to have been the case with our fathers. For as a reward for the faith with which they believed, they were considered worthy of having *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rest upon them, so that they could utter the song, as it is said: 'And they believed in the Lord…Then sang Moses and the children of Israel.'"[374]

The Mekhilta describes the receipt of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as a reward for faith in God and for performing God's command with true faith. At times, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is "earned" in such a way, while at others it appears spontaneously. The Pauline doctrine that Christians partake of the Holy Spirit through faith seems at first blush far removed from Rabbinic thought, which frequently emphasized the arduous ethical practice leading to its attainment.[375] Yet here in the Mehkilta of Rabbi Ishmael, one finds the idea that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* can be gained through faith alone. Of course, this text describes Biblical

[374] Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, Tractate Beshallah, 7, Lauterbach, Vol. 1, 252, 253.

events and might not have been viewed as a guide to achieving *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the Rabbinic present. Perhaps faith was enough for biblical times, but greater efforts would be required of later generations.

What is less clear from the text is exactly what the children of Israel were enabled to do through *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Did it grant them the ability to sing ecstatically about God, in the manner of prophets? To be more explicit, did it make them into prophets? Or did it give them a more limited ability: simply to know the lyrics to the Song without rehearsal, as it were? A clue to this can be found in another passage in Mehkilta:

> R. Nehemiah says: "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested upon Israel and they uttered the song in the manner in which people recite the Shema." R. Akiba says: "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested upon Israel and they uttered the song in the manner in which people recite the Hallel." Rabbi Eliezer the son of Taddai clarifies: "Moses would first begin with the opening words. Israel would then repeat after him and finish the verse with him. Moses began, saying: 'I will sing unto the Lord for He is highly exalted.' And Israel repeated after him and finished with him: 'I will sing unto the Lord, for He is highly exalted. The horse and the rider hath He thrown into the sea.'"[376]

This passage suggests that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was not granting the Israelites a special gift to compose the song of praise on their own, but only the miraculous knowledge of what to say when joining in chorus after Moses. But further in the Mekhilta, there is a hint that the children of Israel composed the song themselves, through the influence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. For regarding the verse, "the foe said, I will pursue," (Exodus 15:9), the Mekhilta asks, "But how did the Israelites know what

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[375] I Corinthians 12, cf. Mishnah Sotah 9:15, Yerushalmi Shabbat 1:3 (3c), Bavli Avodah Zara 20b. Cf. W.D.Davies, "Reflections on the Spirit in the Mekilta,"in which he contends that the Mekhilta was trying to present a Rabbinic view of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in contradistinction to Christian ideas.

[376] Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, Tractate Shirata 1, Lauterbach, Vol. 2, 7-8.
This tradition is carried over with few changes into the Yerushalmi, Sotah 5:4 (20c)

Pharaoh had planned against them when he was still in Egypt? It was simply through *Ruah ha-Kodesh* that rested (*sharta*) upon them that they knew what Pharaoh had planned against them while he was still in Egypt" (and thus added that verse to the song).[377]

Another Tannaitic text, Tosefta Sotah contains the same tradition about the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* resting upon the people at the sea, and further speculates on its effects:

> Rabbi Akiba interpreted: "At the time that Israel went up from the Sea, they requested to sing a Song. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested upon them and they sang a Song. How did they sing the Song? Like a grown person who leads the Hallel in the synagogue, and [the congregation] responds after him..." Rabbi Eliezer the son of Rabbi Yose the Galilean says, "Like a minor who recites the Hallel in school and they say every single word after him..." Rabbi Nehemiah says, "Like people who read the Shema in the synagogue, as it is said [in Scripture], 'Then sang Moses,' and so forth. The Torah doesn't have to specify [the word], 'saying,' so why does it do so? This teaches that Moses would open with a word of praise, and Israel would answer after him and finish with him."[378]

Each rabbi presents a different idea about how *Ruah ha-Kodesh* acts upon the children of Israel and enables them to sing. There is one addition from the version in the Mehkilta de-Rabbi Ishmael: Rabbi Eliezer the son of Rabbi Yose the Galilean suggests that the people repeated each word of the Song (presumably after Moses sang it first). Rabbi Yose the Galilean continues that when Israel emerged from the split Sea, and saw their enemies lying dead on the shore, "they wanted to say a Song, and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested upon them and they said the Song." He adds that when they beheld the *Shekhinah*, even nursing infants and fetuses in the womb were able to sing. The *Shekhinah* and the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* are both present in this text, and yet remain distinct. Both inspire song, the *Shekhinah* by its presence, and the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* by "resting" on the people.

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[377] Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, Tractate Shirata 7, Lauterbach, Vol. 2, 55.
[378] T.Sotah 6.1

Finally, the textual tradition of the Song at the Sea is carried over with few changes into the Yerushalmi, Sotah 5:4 (20c)**,** with the addition that, "even the smallest in Israel would sing the song like Moses. As it is written (Isaiah 63:10), "Then they remembered the ancient days [and] Him, who pulled His people out of [of the water]. 'Where is He who brought them up from the Sea? It is not written here, 'his shepherd,' but rather, his 'shepherds.'[379] This teaches that He made them all into 'shepherds.'" In this later, Amoraic adaptation of the Tannaitic tradition, the experience of having *Ruah ha-Kodesh* resting on the people does more than give them an ability to know the words; it momentarily raises them to the level of Moses, as it were, making them all "shepherds" of Israel. Notably, the continuation of the proof verse from Isaiah is one of the few in the Tanakh that uses the term *ruah kodsho*: "Where is he who put into their midst his holy spirit?" When the people as a whole experience *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, they become leaders, singers, and prophets, if only momentarily.

The Midrashic tradition of the Song at the Sea conveys the idea that the entire people of Israel could experience *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "resting" upon them and thus be inspired to sing an exalted work of poetic praise. What develops over time is the speculation about exactly what effect *Ruah ha-Kodesh* had upon them and how they were able to sing the Song. Tannaitic texts seem to limit the effects of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* upon the entire people; they are able to sing but not in a completely original way, and they are perhaps able to prophesy as a group, but only in a limited fashion. The example from the Yerushalmi, however, suggests that the entire people could be briefly raised to the status of prophets, even to the level of Moses, through the actions of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

[379] The verse continues: "…Along with the shepherds of his flock?" Some manuscripts and ancient versions have "shepherd" in the singular; the Masoretic text has "ro'ei" in plural. (JPS fn., p. 992).

MIRIAM'S PROPHECY

One of the most developed traditions about *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is a story involving Miriam, the sister of Moses. Miriam is called a "prophetess" in the Torah (Exodus 15:20), without any specific reference to the content of her prophecy. According to persistent Rabbinic traditions, as a young girl she prophesied the birth of her brother Moses. Genesis Rabbah 45:2 alludes to the story of Miram's prophecy, by pointing out that she was actually the Hebrew midwife, "Pu'ah," because she used to cry out (*po'ah ve-omeret*) through *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, "My mother will give birth to a son who will be the savior of Israel." Typically, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is linked to speech, but atypically, the speech, while brief, is not a biblical quotation but part of the Midrashic story.

An intertextual Midrashic tradition about Miriam's prophecy first appears in Mekhilta and is carried forward with a few variations into the Yerushalmi Sotah 1:9 (17b), the Bavli Sotah 11a, and to a slightly later Rabbinic text, Exodus Rabbah 1:22. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* figures prominently in most versions, except that in the Bavli, it is interchanged with the *Shekhinah*.

Here is the story as it continues in the Mekhiltah of Rabbi Ishmael:

> *And Miriam the Prophetess…took.* But where do we find that Miriam prophesied? It is merely this: Miriam had said to her father: "You are destined to beget a son who will arise and save Israel from the hands of the Egyptians." Immediately, "There went a man of the house of Levi and took to wife…and the woman bore a son…And when she could no longer hide him," etc. (Exodus 2.1-3) Then her father reproached her. He said to her: "Miriam! What of your prediction?" But she

still held on to[380] her prophecy, as it is said: "And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him" (ibid. v.4). For the expression "standing" (*yetsivah*) suggests[381] the presence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*,[382] as in the passage: "I saw the Lord standing beside the altar" (Amos 9.1). And it also says: "And the Lord came and stood" (I Samuel 3.10). And it also says: "Call Joshua and stand," etc. (Deuteronomy 31:14).

Afar Off. The expression: "afar off" (*me-rahok*) everywhere suggests the presence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, as in the passage: "From afar (*me-rahok*) the Lord appeared to me." (Jeremiah 31.2).

To Know. "Knowledge" (*de'ah*) everywhere suggests the presence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, as in the passage: "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord" (Isaiah11.0). And it also says: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Habakuk 2.14)

What Would be Done to Him. The expression "doing" (*asiyah*) suggests the presence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, as it is said: "For the Lord will do nothing, unless He reveals His counsel to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3.7). [383]

This midrashic vignette was so popular that it persisted in slightly different forms over at least six centuries of texts. Each word in Exodus 2:4: "And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him" (which speaks of young Miriam watching over baby Moses) is taken to refer to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. This verbal formula, "everywhere suggests" (*ein . . .ela*) is common in the Mekhilta. The passage identifies *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with Miriam's ability to prophesy, specifically to foresee and foretell the future. Early printed editions of the Mekhilta substituted the word "prophecy" for *Ruah ha-*

[380] *Mithazeket*, could also be translated, "encouraged by."
[381] "is nothing but" (*ein ...ela*), for all the phrases translated here as "suggests." This same Hebrew expression is translated by Lauterbach as both "suggests" and "everywhere suggests."
[382] Early printed editions substitute the word, "prophecy" (*nevu'ah*). Lauterbach, vol. 2, 81. But manuscripts of Mekhilta of Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai use *Ruah ha-Kodesh* even more emphatically. "In every instance, 'standing oneself' only means the Holy Spirit," (*ein kol yetsiva be-khol makom ela Ruah ha-Kodesh*), Nelson, 157.
[383] Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, Tractate Shirata 10, based on Lauterbach, Vol. 2, 81-82.

Kodesh.[384] One can only speculate whether that was an editorial change, made to avoid an association with Christian Trinitarian concepts. The proof texts are mostly from prophetic books of the Tanakah and relate to prophetic encounters with the Lord. They suggest that Miriam is standing there in a prophetic state. More intriguingly, since each text refers to "the Lord," the Midrash gives a hint that not only young Miriam is present at the river, but that the Lord is standing there with her. Thus there may be a shade of hypostatization already introduced in the text, as we noted above when some of the very same proof texts were used to describe the prophetic "stance" of the people of Israel at the Sea.

The version in the Bavli (Bavli Sotah 11a) makes a major change, substituting the *Shekhinah* for *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.[388] It also adds more proof texts so that each and every word in the verse is linked to a verse involving God or prophecy:

> And his sister stood afar off. R. Isaac said: The whole of this verse (Exodus 2:4) is spoken with reference to the *Shekhinah*: "and stood," as it is written: "And the Lord came and stood etc." (I Samuel 3:10) "His sister": as it is written: "Say unto wisdom, thou art my Sister." (Proverbs 7:4) "Afar off," as it is written: "The Lord appeared from afar unto me." (Jeremiah 31:3) "To know," as it is written: "For the Lord is a God of knowledge."(I Samuel 2:3) "What," as it is written: "What doth the Lord require of thee?" (Deuteronomy 10:12) "Done", as it is written: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing [without revealing his secrets to his servants the prophets.]" (Amos 3:7) "To him," as it is written: "And called it ["to him"] Lord is peace."(Judges 6:24).

The substitution of Shekhinah for *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is a common phenomenon in the Bavli. The change from *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to may serve to emphasize the presence of

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[384] Supra., note 381.

[388] This change of wording is found in the Vilna edition and also in the Munich, Oxford and Vatican Manuscripts, as collected in the Saul Lieberman Institute Talmudic text databank.

God yet de-emphasize the role of prophecy that emanates from God. Conversely, it could be seen as a merging of the two figures. Or it could be an indication of differences between Palestinian and Babylonian theology, since *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is referenced more freely in Palestinian Midrashim such as Genesis Rabbah and Leviticus Rabbah than in the Bavli. This phenomenon will be examined in more detail in Chapter 6.

Both the Yerushalmi and the Bavli's version include a proof text for the words "his sister": "Say to Wisdom, you are my sister." (Proverbs 7:4). The previous proof texts all refer to the Lord, but here the referent is Wisdom. Thus, Wisdom is paralleled to the Lord which is connected to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. As described in Chapter 8 of Proverbs, Wisdom, or *Hokhmah*, is a feminine character personified as God's first creation, and very important as a hypostatization in Hellenistic Jewish thought, which was seen as a precursor to the Rabbinic personification of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Wisdom was usually identified with the Torah in Rabbinic texts.[389] However, Peter Schäfer contends that:

> Proverbs 7:4 is a brilliant proof text because it relates Miriam, Moses's "sister," to the divine Wisdom, who is the "sister" of all human beings. Just as Wisdom in the biblical prooftext is clearly perceived as female, so also the only logical conclusion seems to be that, among the many manifestations of God, one takes on female form (and this conclusion suggests itself all the more if one considers the biblical and post-biblical Wisdom tradition). But this is precisely *not* what happens. In hiding Wisdom in a sequence of verses that all speak of the Lord God, the author of our Midrash makes it absolutlely clear that he does not even ponder the notion of a female aspect of God. Presumably, he could not find another biblical verse that mentions "sister" together with a designation for "God." Hence he takes the risk of equating "God" with "Wisdom"—without making the necessary next step and speculating about the nature of "Wisdom."

[389] Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 154-155, 169-175.

> Our Midrash contains a distant echo of the older Wisdom tradition, but it only reinforces the conclusion that the Rabbis have moved far away from it.[390]

It is not quite self-evident to me that the Midrashist is merely "hiding" Wisdom here in the proof-texts. The earlier versions of the tradition did not include this proof-text, which appears to be an Amoraic addition. Both the Yerushalmi, which parallels the verse to the workings of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, and the Bavli, which substitutes the *Shekhinah*, add the reference to Wisdom (which is then brought forward into the later Exodus Rabbah). True, the Midrash doesn't take the "next step" of carrying this daring idea further, but then again, the entire tradition is of the genre that Ben Amos terms "associative" rather than "expansive" in its function. It is a subtle reference, not a bold speculation. The very fact that it adds the figure of Wisdom to the series shows that the "distant echo" of the term as a feminine numina continues to reverberate in association with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

THE SAINT'S PROGRESS

The most well-known Rabbinic tradition on how to attain *Ruah ha-Kodesh* through merit is often known as the "Saint's Progress."[391] It is a *nehemta*, a passage of comfort, attributed to Pinhas (Phineas) ben Yair, a fifth generation Tanna known for his saintliness.[392] It was added to the end of Mishnah Sotah, and carried forward into the

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[390] Peter Schäfer, *The Mirror of His Beauty*, 93. In fn. 51 he notes the Soncino translation which describes Wisdom as "an emanation from God," which he says is not a solution that the author of the Midrash would have accepted.
[391] Soncino Talmud, CD-Rom edition, end of Sotah, note 38.
[392] *Who's Who in the Talmud*, Shulamis Frieman (Northvale, NJ: Aronson, 1995), 238-240.

Yerushalmi in tractates Shabbat 1:3 (3c) and Shekalim 3:3 (47c) as well as Bavli Avodah Zara 20b, and Song of Songs Rabbah 1:9:

> Rabbi Phineas ben Yair used to say: Heedfulness leads to cleanliness; cleanliness leads to purity; purity leads to abstinence; abstinence leads to holiness; holiness leads to humility; humility leads to fear of sin; fear of sin leads to saintliness; saintliness leads to (the possession) of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*; *Ruah ha-Kodesh* leads to the resurrection of the dead; and the resurrection of the dead comes through Elijah of blessed memory, Amen.[393]

There are slight variations on this tradition in different texts. The Yerushalmi Shekalim 3:3 is similar to the version included in Mishnah Sotah, but Yerushalmi Shabbat 1:3 changes the order and "demotes" *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to a rung lower than saintliness (*hassidut*), the highest quality that leads to the resurrection of the dead, which leads to the coming of Elijah. Yerushalmi Shekalim includes proof texts for each quality. Bavli Avodah Zarah 20b brings this tradition in a Beraita (similar in composition to the one in Yerushalmi Shabbat). The Bavli version adds "Torah" as a prerequisite for all, leaves out Elijah, and (although it doesn't "rank" saintliness "higher" than *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the list as in Yerushalmi Shabbat) declares in the end that, "saintliness (*hassidut*) is greater than any of these, for Scripture says, 'Then You did speak in vision to your saintly ones.'(Psalms 89:20)" But in the same passage, R. Joshua b. Levy counters: "Meekness (*anavah*) is the greatest of them all, for Scripture says, The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to bring good tidings unto the meek." (Isaiah 61:1)[394]

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[393] Mishnah Sotah, 9:15.

[394] Ephraim E. Urbach offers a full comparison of all versions of the saying in various texts and manuscripts: Urbach, *The Sages*, 948-949, note 20. He concludes that in the Yerushalmi Shabbat, "it is

How is it that "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* leads to the resurrection of the dead"? The connection could be derived from the book of Ezekiel, Chapter 37, in which the God tells the prophet to prophesy to the *ruah* (wind, breath or spirit), which will fill and revive the "dry bones" of the people.[395] Thus the prophet, inspired by *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, is able to bring about resurrection, which actualized by divine breath or *ruah*. But whatever the precise order or hierarchy of virtues proposed, the main focus of the tradition is on ethical development. In fact many centuries later, this *nehemta* was taken as the basis for one of Judaism's most well-known ethical treatises.[396]

It seems significant that in later versions of the tradition, the goal of attaining *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is made secondary to qualities such as saintliness and humility. Moreover, the Amoraic versions focus less on the the messianic implications of the passage and more on debating which of the ethical qualities mentioned is most important. In the versions that are found in later texts, ethics and character development overtake *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and its messianic potential. (Still, in the Bavli, the superior quality of meekness is supported by two proof texts that both speak of prophecy, which is implicitely connected with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*!) This textual tradition, in contrast to the

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possible that two ancient traditions, which were only parallels, were combined; the one read, 'Fear of sin leads to (the gift of) the holy spirit,' and the other stated, 'saintliness leads to the holy spirit.'"

[395] (For more on this biblical passage, see my section on "*Ruah* in the Bible," above.) This Tannaitic tradition, even as it speaks of the resurrection of the dead and Elijah, omits any reference to the Messiah. The reason may be historic. "The Judaism without Christianity portrayed in the Mishnah did not present a richly developed doctrine of the Messiah." *Judaism and Christianity in the Age of Constantine*, by Jacob Neusner (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1987), 5.

[396] The eighteenth century ethical work, *Messilat Yesharim* by Moshe Hayyim Luzatto: Moshe Hayyam Luzatto, *The Path of the Upright-Mesillat Yesharim*, Mordecai M. Kaplan, trans. (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1995).

"Rejoicing at the Water Drawing" selection discussed above[397] (and indeed in contrast to most Biblical accounts of the prophetic experience), suggests that obtaining *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is hard work and entails a long, slow progression toward saintliness. According to N. Glatzer,

> In the Talmudic literature, the resting of the holy spirit upon a man means no sudden experience of revelation, overwhelming him by its newness and immediateness…It becomes the result of the preparation achieved by study and good deeds, in contradistinction to Scriptural prophecy, where God's call to the prophet marked the beginning of a process.[398]

The "Saint's Progress" tradition hints that anyone, including a contemporary individual, who follows this path of ethical development, can merit to receive *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but it is not explicit about who can actually do so. Leaving that detail open democratizes the opportunity. The text does not say, for example, that the classical prophets or other Biblical figures followed this path to achieve prophecy. In the Mishnah, this *nehemta* comes at the end of tractate Sotah, where the Mishnah enumerates all the losses that Israel suffered when the Temple was destroyed. It offers hope that some of the spiritual gifts of the past have not been permanently lost, and indeed seems to suggest a way for people in the Rabbinic present to attain the goal of *Ruah Ha-Kodesh*. Yet paradoxically, this tradition (especially in its later manifestations) hints that this may not be the highest goal of the ethical individual.

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[397] Yerusashalmi Sukkah 5:1 (55a), Genesis Rabbah 70, and Pesikta Rabbati 1:2

[398] N.N. Glatzer, "A Study of the Talmudic Interpretation of Prophecy," *Review of Religion*, 10 (1946), 123-124, as quoted in S. Cohen, *Three Crowns*, 70.

RUAH HA-KODESH IN COURT

The idea that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is present in court is another Rabbinic tradition that develops over several texts. These "court scenes" not only show divine metonyms interacting, but also being interchanged in different verses of the same tradition (not only in different texts, but in different manuscripts of the same text of Genesis Rabbah). I will examine this tradition in two Palestinian texts and then in the Bavli. This tradition inserts *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (and other hypostatizations) into three biblical "court scenes" or better, "trial scenes": "in the court of Shem, in the court of Samuel, and in the court of Solomon." The Rabbis anachronistically describe the three trial or accusation scenes as taking place in "court" (*beit din*). In the first scene (Genesis 38), Judah has accused Tamar of harlotry, and she has tactfully demonstrated that he himself is the father of her unborn child. In the second scene (I Samuel 12), Samuel calls all the people to witness that he is righteous and did not exploit the people who are now calling for a king to be appointed in his place. Finally, in the third scene, Solomon decides which woman gets to keep a disputed infant (I Kings 3).

In Genesis Rabbah 85:12, the Holy One, blessed be He who "appeared in court" on three occasions in the Bible. In each biblical "appearance,"however, it is *Ruah ha-Kodesh* who does the speaking, at times on behalf of God and at times on behalf of an individual. Thus, the two terms are paralleled as metonyms for God.

> *And Judah acknowledged them*, etc. (Genesis 38:26). R. Jeremiah said in the name of R. Samuel b. R. Isaac: "The Holy One, blessed be he, revealed himself (*hofia*) in three places: in the courts of Shem, Samuel, and Solomon."

> In the court of Shem: "And Judah acknowledged them, and said, she is more righteous than I,"(*mimmeni*), which R. Jeremiah interpreted in the name of R. Samuel b. R. Isaac: "It was *Ruah ha-Kodesh* that said,[399] 'Through me (*mimmeni*) did these things occur.'"
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> At the Court of Samuel: "And he said unto them: 'The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day [that you have not found anything in my hand.'] And he said: 'He is witness.'"
>
> (I Samuel 12:5). Who said, "*He is witness*"?[400]R. Jeremiah in the name of R. Samuel b. R. Isaac said: "It was *Ruah ha-Kodesh* who said, '*He is witness*.'"
>
> At the court of Solomon: "Give her the living child, and do not slay it; she is the mother" (I Kings 3:27). Who said [these last words]? Said R. Jeremiah in the name of R. Samuel b. R. Isaac: "It was *Ruah ha-Kodesh* that said, 'She is the mother.'"[401]

The Holy One, blessed be he, appears in court, but it is *Ruah ha-Kodesh* who offers the speeches from Scripture. Also of note is that the first example, "in the court of Shem," shows *Ruah Ha-Kodesh* speaking a scriptural quotation *mimmeni* ("from me"[402]) and then adding two words *hayu ha-devarim* ("did this things occur"). *Ruah ha-Kodesh*

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[399] In the Theodor-Albeck text, the Hebrew word for "said" or "says" is abbreviated throughout this story, so I can't make a judgement which was intended.

[400] There is a textual anomaly here, as the biblical story reads, "and he said," where it should have read, "and they said," as all the gathered people acknowledge Samuel's righteousness.

[401] This translation is based on H. Freedman translation of Midrash Rabbah (Soncino), which translates from the text in the critical edition of Genesis Rabbah, edited by J. Theodor and Chanoch Albeck, which is primarily based on the Codex Add.. 27169 of the British Museum. The same version was used by Jacob Neusner in his *New American Translation* of Genesis Rabbah, 215. The Vilna edition of Genesis Rabbah contains a different version of the story, in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "appears," while the Holy One, blessed be he, speaks in the first court scene and the *Bat Kol* in the second two courts. Theodor/Albeck's critical text notes that numerous variations of the text appear in early manuscripts. The Vatican manuscript (Rome 30) version reads, "The Holy One, blessed be he, caused his spirit to manifest", *hofi'ah h'q'b'h ruho.* (The Soncino CD-Rom of Midrash Rabbah contains the Vilna edition for the Hebrew text, but Freedman and Simon translate according to the Theodor-Albeck version, so that the translation does not match the Hebrew.) I was unable to find this section in Sokoloff's *Geniza Fragments*.

[402] Freedman and Simon capitalize "through Me" to emphasize that God is doing the speaking, which makes sense from the context.

does not always stick verbatim to the Scriptural script. Her rare additional words are usually interpretations that identify *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with God's divine perspective. In the biblical story, Judah says, "she was more righteous than I (*mimeni*) (Genesis 38:26), but the Midrash creatively reads the verse as "from Me (*mimeni*);" that is, it all came about through God's direction. God wanted events to unfold in a certain way and they did, no matter what human beings had planned.

In the second court scene, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* confirms that the Lord was Samuel's witness in his "court." So unlike the first example, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speaks about God in the third person rather than the first. Finally, in the third example, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* provides the information, known only to God, about which is the real mother of the baby. In all three cases, the words which the Midrash describes as being said by *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, are said in Scripture by human characters. Judah says, "from me." According to most translations, the people say to Samuel, "He is witness." However, the verb used for "said" is in the singular, thus inviting the Midrashic play.[403] In the third scene, Solomon is the speaker in the plain sense. So how should one read the interpolation of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* into the text? One could imagine God manifesting in each scene and speaking the words attributed to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.[404] But it is more evocative to conceive of a person or people speaking, as the plain text would have it, with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speaking

[403] A related example is found in Gen. Rabbah 97 (as in Freedman, Soncino *Midrash Rabbah Vol. II,* according to Vatican Manuscript Codex 30), in which the Midrash discusses Genesis 48:2, "One told to Jacob" that Joseph was coming with his sons to receive his blessing. "Who told him?" asks the Midrash. "Some say it was Benjamin, while there are those who say it was *Ruah ha-Kodesh."* Like the passage in Samuel, the identification of the speaker is missing, leaving the Midrashist to fill in the blanks by saying that it was *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speaking.

[404] As we will see below, in Bavli Makkot 23b, in which the *Bat Kol* makes divine pronouncements in another version of this courtroom drama.

through them, giving them prophetic powers of discernment. The voice of people is merged with the divine voice, as with the earlier example of "the voice of Sarai," really being "the voice of the Lord."

On a formal basis, this tradition could be classified by the pattern of a "Rabbinic enumeration of scriptural examples."[405] Such enumerations stemmed from "list science" in the ancient Near East, and many were included in the Hebrew Bible. They are also frequently found in Rabbinic literature.[406] W. Sibley Towner divides these enumeration forms into six categories, each of which displays a growing degree of hermeneutical sophisticion, from simple analysis of a text to more complex lexical, syntactical, and legal analogies. The "Court Scenes" possess some characteristics of his second category, "hermeneutical analogy," a simple form in which the enumerated examples have a loose thematic connection.[407] Some of these also open with a verbal formula similar to our example, e.g., "In three places God warned the Israelites not to return to Egypt." (Mekhilta Beshallah 3:118). In the present case, the unifying theme is the court scene. However, in other ways these Court scenes exemplify a more sophisticated form of enumeration, which Towner calls the "technical exegetical analogy," a less common type of enumeration which provides technical information that is used to help solve textual problems.[408] Indeed, in each of the three cases given, the appearance of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is suggested to solve a potential interpretive problem of determining who provided the

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[405] Wayne S. Towner, *The Rabbinic "Enumeration of Scriptural Examples"—A Study of a Rabbinic Pattern of Discourse with Special Reference to Mekhilta D'R. Ishmael* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973).
[406] Wayne S. Towner, *Rabbinic Enumeration*, pp. 1-13. A similar study of such examples in the Hebrew Bible is found in W. M. W. Roth, *Numerical Sayings in the Old Testament: A Form Critical* Study (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965).
[407] Wayne S. Towner, *Rabbinic Enumeration*, 120.

information in question. Only in "Samuel's Court" is there a true difficulty in the text itself (a singular pronoun where there should be a plural), but the mysteries of paternity and maternity do provide puzzles in the first and third cases. In all three cases, the problem is "solved" by bringing in *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to "testify" in court as the divine voice in scripture. Taken together, I think that the "court" traditions represent a mixed form with elements of both hermeneutical analogy and technical exegetical analogy.

Another version of the "court" tradition appears in the slightly later Palestinian text Ecclesiastes Rabbah 10:17.[409] There are a few differences to be noted here. The tradition is brought in the name of a different sage, R. Samuel b. Nahmani (a well known second and third generation Amora in Palestine, who was considered a master of Aggadah), in place of R. Jeremiah (third and fourth generation Amora who moved from Babylonia to Palestine in his youth). It may be that the two rabbis named Samuel were confused (for R. Jeremiah transmits in the name of a different Rabbi Samuel). In this version, it is "the Attribute of Justice" (*Midat ha-Din*) which "cries out" (*tsovahat*, rather than "appears") in court on the three occasions, but the use *Ruah ha-Kodesh* continues as in the Genesis Rabbah version. The only major difference is that in the first court scene, she "cries out and says" rather than simply declaring.

A parallel and slightly fuller version of the Midrashic "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Court" traditions occurs in Bavli Makkot 23b:

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[408] Wayne S. Towner, *Rabbinic Enumeration*, 198-212.

[409] Ecclesiastes Rabbah has been dated from the 6th to 8th centuries in Palestine (although dating is uncertain) making it probably a later redacted text than Genesis Rabbah. (Strack and Stemberger, *Introduction*, 318).

> R. Eleazar said: "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* manifested itself (*hofi'ah*) in three places; at the court (*bet din*) of Shem, at the court of Samuel of Ramah, and at the court of Solomon."
>
> At the Tribunal of Shem, as it is written, "And Judah acknowledged them, and he said, She is right, it is from me [*mimeni*]." How did he know [for certain]? Maybe, just as he had come to [consort with] her, some other man had come to [consort with] her? [But] it was a *Bat Kol* that came forth and said, "She is right, from Me [*mimeni*] issued these secret things."
>
> "At the Tribunal of Samuel," — as it is written, "'Here I am; witness against me before the Lord and before His anointed, whose ox have I taken, or whose ass?. . . and they said, You have not defrauded us nor oppressed us, neither have you taken aught of any man's hand.' And he said to them, 'The Lord is witness against you and His anointed is witness this day that you have found nothing in my hand,' and He said, [He is] witness." "And He said"; should it not be "And they said"? [But] it was a *Bat Kol* that came forth and said, "I am witness in this matter."
>
> At the Tribunal of Solomon, — as it is said, "And the king answered and said, 'Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it; she is his mother': 'She is his mother'; whence knew he [for certain]? Maybe, she had been acting craftily? [But] it was a *Bat Kol* that came forth and said, "She is his mother."
>
> Said Raba: "How [can we be sure of this?] Maybe Judah had reckoned the days and months [since he slept with her] and found them to coincide, — for what we see we may presume; but we presume not, what we see not. Again, Samuel may have taken all Israel collectively, using the singular expression [verb], as it is written [elsewhere]: 'O Israel, you are saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation; You shall not be ashamed'? And Solomon likewise, because he saw one woman was compassionate and the other was not compassionate!"
>
> Only [of course], these [interpretations] are points of traditional lore (*ela gemara*).

This version of the tradition speaks of "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* manifesting," using the same Hebrew word used for the Holy One, blessed be He, appearing in court in the Genesis Rabbah version. *Hofi'ah* is a term used in Biblical Hebrew and in Talmudic Aramaic to signify an "appearance of the Deity" (Jastrow). It is found three times in the

Bible (Deuteronomy 33:2, Psalms 50:2[410] and 94:1), in each case connected to the manifestation of Elohim or YHWH. Here in the story about *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in court in each case the "manifestation" is that words in each scriptural story are attributed to a heavenly voice (*Bat Kol*) that speaks as a divine witness in the "courtroom drama" taking place in the narrative.[411] *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, through the instrument of a divine voice, speaks for God in each story, whether speaking in words of Scripture alone or with slight embellishment (as in the first example). At least one early manuscript (Jerusalem, Yad HaRav Herzog 1) has the variant reading, *hiskimah* (agreed, affirmed), rather than *hofi'ah*: "In three places *Ruah ha-Kodesh* agreed/affirmed in court." The choice of "agreed" instead of "manifested" has the effect of lessening *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s identification with divinity, even as it lessens the sense of God's direct involvement in the case. It paints a picture that is more verbal than theophanic. The same verb *hiskima* is found in another reference to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Yerushalmi Horayot 3:5 (48b) in which the sages are "happy that their opinion matched (to) the opinion of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*" (*she-hiskimah da'atan le-da'at Ruah ha-Kodesh*) in the matter of identifying sages worthy of receiving *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

Here in the Bavli's version of this tradition, the same Raba who doubted the proofs for the book of *Esther* being written with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Bavli Megillah 7a also expresses sceptism about the attribution of the three Biblical speeches "in court" to a

[410] In which God judges and "arraigns" Israel, a scene perhaps at the root of some of these Midrashic "Court" traditions.
[411] For more on the relationship and contrast of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and the *Bat Kol*, see Chapter 6.

heavenly voice.[412] He contends that perhaps it was just the use of logic that let the individuals in question know what to say in each case. The only "proof" of these heavenly appearances is an appeal to traditional lore.

It is interesting that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* maintains a place in this tradition when it is found in the Bavli, because the Shekhinah often takes its place in the Bavli. However, at the same time one notes that the *Bat Kol* fulfills the role that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* had filled in the Palestinian versions of the tradition, that of the main speaker, with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* the figure now manifesting without words. It seems like a direct substitution, because the *Bat Kol* even uses a formula of speech more characteristic of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. This may be part of the Babylonian trend to downplay the use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh.* At the same time, the "Holy One, blessed be He" might have been removed in the presumably later versions of the tradition in Ecclesiastes Rabbah and the Bavli, because it is masculine and tends to be seen as more of a straight synonym for God, and thus makes God appear too anthropomorphic. In each case, the hypostatizations present the divine viewpoint in the story. The variations in these three versions of the same tradition show that the different metonyms for God were somewhat fluid over time.

Abelson translates *hofi'ah* (appeared) as "shone forth" and interprets these texts to mean that, "Here, obviously, the Holy Spirit is materialized as a luminous body" although acknowledging that "the passage is capable of being interpreted in the higher intellectual

[412] In the Introduction to this dissertation, I noted the ongoing scholarly controversy about the reliability of attributions in Rabbinic literature. This example is a small illustration that there is at least there is some consistency to be found in the characterization of different sages and what *kind* of attitudes and approaches are assigned to them in the Talmud and Midrash.

sense of enlightenment, or in any religious or ethical sense implying Divine guidance."[413] This contention of a material appearance by *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was so startling that it really focused my attention on the question of what the Rabbis meant when they said that the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "appeared." Did the Rabbis indeed picture a mysterious apparition of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in some quasi-physical form? The texts can also be understood to mean that divine inspiration guided the words of the human players in the "court" scenes. I think that it is more true to the presentation in the Bavli passage to say that they imagined each scene as involving an auditory experience with the words of a heavenly voice intervening as a "witness," providing a divine perspective on events that people might not be able to ascertain for themselves.

Contrasting the Bavli version of the tradition to the version in Midrash Rabbah, it seems clear that the Bavli version, although offered as a Baraita, at least in its current form appears to be a later development of the story. It embroiders the framework of the existing tradition by inserting explanations of why the true verdict or understanding is elusive in each of the three cases, and then tops it off by adding Raba's objections at the end. In both versions in the Midrash Rabbah, whether the Holy One or the quality of Justice (*Midat ha-Din*) appears in court, it is the voice of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* that offers the divine speech, which may well be interpreted as God speaking through human beings or granting them special powers of discernment. By contrast, the pasage in the Bavli stretches the imagination by introducing the Bat Kol as a kind of *deus ex machina* to solve the mystery in the "court scenes." Yet is also seems somewhat playful, as the sages

[413] Abelson, 216.

acknowledge that Raba may be right. Perhaps no heavenly voice was needed for the story to make sense, but “it is a tradition.” (*ela gemara*).

Chapter 5: The Transition of Ruah ha-Kodesh from Power of Prophecy to Personification

I have noted that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has two major uses. As the power of prophecy it is the divine voice speaking through men and women. As a personification or hypostatization it presents the divine voice of the Torah interacting not only with biblical figures, but with the sages themselves in midrashic dialogue. The emphasis on these two uses subtly shifts from the first role to the second over time. It is not that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as prophecy is absent from Amoraic texts. It is natural for the first function to continue and even flourish in the biblical retellings of the Aggadic Midrash. But even as there is an increasing insistence over time that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has left Israel (once in the Tosefta and several times in the Talmuds and Amoraic Midrash), *Ruah ha-Kodesh* becomes a more present figure in Midrash in her personified form, speaking with and interacting with the Sages.

One of the best known Rabbinic claims about *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is that it was a thing of the past, and perhaps the messianic future, but not of the present.[415] I will examine some conflicting texts to try and ascertain if certain Rabbis had any notion that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was available to their own contemporaries in the Rabbinic present. The idea that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* departs from *individuals* is distinctive of the Aggadic Midrash,

[415] For a detailed argument about whether prophecy ceased after the First Temple period, including Rabbinic views of the matter, see Benjamin D. Sommer, "Did Prophecy Cease? Evaluating a Reevaluation," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115, No. 1 (1996): 31-47. Cf. Frederick E. Greenspahn, "Why Prophecy Ceased," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 108, No. 1 (Spring 1989): 37-49, on the views of different early Jewish groups about the continuing vitality of prophecy in the Second Temple period and beyond.

while the idea that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has departed from all of Israel is first encountered in the Tosefta and continues in both Talmudic and Midrashic texts. Conversely, the idea that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* might still be actualized to a limited degree in contemporary society is found in the same texts.

WHY DID *RUAH HA-KODESH* AS PROPHECY CEASE?

A number of reasons—historical, theological and political--have been proffered for the cessation of prophecy as a phenomenon in the ancient Jewish world. It is generally agreed that biblical prophecy, as a historical phenomena, declined during the Babylonian exile and ceased in the Second Temple period.[416] There were several reasons for this transition. First, the monarchy had ended, and with it, the connection between prophet and royal court (with which some but not all prophets were associated), as well as the religious belief that the monarchy allowed for a direct metaphysical connection between heaven and earth. Another historical factor was the destruction of the First Temple, which was believed to be "the central nexus between heaven and earth."[417]

Shaye J.D. Cohen documents the gradual shift away from classical prophecy, which he says began in the Persian period. He points out that the prophet Haggai still wrote in the classical prophetic style, claiming to represent the direct word of God, but

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[416] Benjamin D. Sommer, "Did Prophecy Cease? Evaluating a Reevaluation," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Volume 115, Issue 1 (Spring, 1996), 31. Cf. Shalom Paul and S. David Sperling, "Prophets and Prophecy," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Second Edition, Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik (eds.), Volume 16: 66-586.

[417] Sommer, 45, 46.

Zechariah was said to have spoken and interpreted through an angel. According to Cohen,

> [the period around the middle of the second century B.C.E.] witnessed the shift in the focus of apocalypse from cosmology to theodicy and eschatology…and the canonization of the prophetic books. The same period also provides the first explicit testimony (in I Maccabees 4:46, 14:41) that many Jews believed that prophecy had ceased…prophecy became apocalypse, and prophets became apocalyptic seers. Other heirs of the prophetic tradition were 'holy men,' miracle workers, 'charismatic' healers, foretellers of the future, and mystics.[418]

It is not the phenomena of prophecy as a religious institution *per se,* but rather Rabbinic assessment of its vitality, which is my focus in this work. This chapter presents several Rabbinic texts which speak of the end of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as prophecy. Even when *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was seen as a force in the Rabbinic present, its functions were domesticated and far removed from classical prophecy.

To what can we attribute this minimization of what was seen as such a powerful spiritual force? Theological and political considerations were important to the Rabbis' insistence that prophecy had ended. Stuart Cohen explains that prophecy was long known for its antinomian tendencies:

> Considering themselves to be the only authentic interpreters of God's word, the early rabbis were bound to regard as suspect any person who claimed spontaneous access to God independent of the rabbinic structure which they were attempting to establish...The pronouncement that 'From the day the [first] Temple was destroyed, prophecy was taken from the prophets and given to the sages [Bavli Baba Batra 12a] accurately summarized the political philosophy which underlay the conception."[419]

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[418] Shaye J.D. Cohen, *From Maccabees to Mishnah* (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1987), 199-200.
[419] Cohen, *The Three Crowns,* 69-70.

In Cohen's view, it was natural that the Rabbis wanted to place powerful uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as prophecy firmly in the past, or relegated to a Messianic future, while claiming that their generations were not "worthy" of its possession.

Frederick Greenspahn concurs: "The Rabbis sensed that their time was different from the biblical period. Their need to cite scripture itself attests to a feeling that the age of revelation had passed."[420] He notes texts such as Seder Olam Rabbah, 30:5, which states that prior to the time of Alexander the Great "prophets prophesied with the Holy Spirit; hereafter, 'incline your ears and obey the sages' words.' (Proverbs 22:17)," Mishnah Avot 1:1 which lists the prophets as just one stage in the chain of tradition, and Bavli Bata Batra 12b, with the statement that "since the destruction of the Temple prophecy has been given to fools and to children." In other words, prophets might still exist, but authority had now been given to the Sages.[421] Like Stuart Cohen, he sees the Rabbinic diminution of prophecy primarily in sociological terms:

> As one of several groups vying for religious leadership, the rabbis would have had little sympathy for their competition. As a class of exegetes who determined God's will through interpretation, they were unlikely to view more pneumatic figures charitably. . .In sociological terms, institutions and the kinds of routinized leadership they require are rarely tolerant of charisma, even though their own legitimacy is derived from such figures. By accepting prophetic leadership as one state in Jewish history, the rabbis relegate it to the past. Canonizing prophecy protected them from its contemporary practitioners.[422]

In summary, there were historical circumstances that led to the end of prophecy as a religious phenomena in ancient Judaism. There were also socio-political motivations for

[420] Greenspahn, "Why Prophecy Ceased," 43.
[421] Greenspahn, "Why Prophecy Ceased," 47.

Rabbinic attitudes on the subject. Given that historical and sociological background, I now examine various Rabbinic traditions about the departure of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* from Israel.

THE RABBINIC TRADITION THAT *RUAH HA-KODESH* HAS CEASED

Tosefta Sotah 12:5 states that "until Elijah [the prophet] was 'hidden away,' there was abundant *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Israel," but after his ascension, its presence departed (*nistalka).* According to Yerushalmi Ta'anit 2:1 (65a), Bavli Yoma 21b and Bavli Baba Batra 12a, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* existed in full force only during the First Temple period:

> R. Samuel b. Inia said: "What is the meaning of the scriptural verse: 'And I will take pleasure in it and I will be glorified (*ve-ekabed*)'? (Haggai 1:8). The traditional reading is *ve-ekabedah*, then why is the [letter] '*he*' omitted [in the text]? To indicate that in five things the first Sanctuary differed from the second: in the ark, the ark-cover, the Cherubim, the fire, the *Shekhinah*, *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, and the *urim ve-tumim* [the Oracle Plate]." — Some say, "They were present, but they were not as helpful [as before]."[423]

Alternately, there is a tradition in Rabbinic texts that *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, as the prophetic spirit, ended with the latter prophets: "Since Haggai, Zachariah, and Malakhi, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* ceased (paska) from Israel." God continues to communicate in more indirect ways, through the "*Bat Kol*" (lit. "daughter of a voice," "echo" or "heavenly voice") with the implication being that the *Bat Kol* is a method of communication of

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[422] Greenspahn, "Why Prophecy Ceased," 48. Prophecy also "posed a severe threat to the existing social order" and threatened Roman support for Rabbinic authority.

[423] Bavli Yoma 21b. The letter "he" is equal to five in gematria, or Hebrew numerology. Seven items are listed, but the first three are considered together as one item, according to Rashi (France, 1040-1105), who also comments that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was not "among the prophets from the second year of Darius' (reign)." The Soncino Edition translates, *amri*, "some say" as *amari* "I will tell you," but my translation follows Steinsatlz.

lower stature than that of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.[424] This tradition is first found in Tannaitic literature, in Tosefta Sotah 13:4, and is preserved in Amoraic texts: in Yersushalmi Sotah 9:13 (24b) and in Yerushalmi Horayot 3:5 (48c) and Bavli Sotah 48b and Bavli Sandhedrin 11a (where the Shekhinah is substituted), Bavli Yoma 9b and Song of Songs Rabbah 8:13. In most versions, the early Tannaitic Sages are gathered in an upper chamber, and a *Bat Kol* announces that one or two of them are worthy to receive *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but that the generation is unworthy of it.

> When the last prophets died: Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* departed (*paska*) from Israel; nevertheless they would hear the pronouncements of the *Bat Kol*.
>
> On one occasion[425] Sages were sitting in the upper chamber of Ben Gurya's house in Jericho; a *Bat Kol* came forth which said to them, "There is in your midst one man who is deserving of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but his generation is unworthy of it." They all looked at Hillel the elder; and when he died, they lamented over him, "Alas, the humble man! Alas, the saintly man! Disciple of Ezra!"
>
> On another occasion they were sitting in an upper chamber in Yavneh; a *Bat Kol* came forth and said to them: "There is in your midst one man who is deserving of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but his generation is unworthy of it." They all looked at Hillel the elder, and when he died, they lamented over him, "Alas, the humble man! Alas, the pious man! Disciple of Ezra!"
>
> Another time they were sitting in Yavneh and they heard the *Bat Kol* saying, "There is here a man who is deserving of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but his generation is unworthy of it'. They all looked at Samuel the Small, and when he died, they lamented over him, 'Alas, the humble man! Alas, the pious man! Disciple of Hillel the Elder!" (Tosefta Sotah 13:4)

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[424] Rashi (on Job 4:16) described the Bat Kol as an echo, like "the sound heard at distance when a man hits a hard surface with a hammer." Although it usually referred to a distant, heavenly voice, the Bat Kol occasionally referred to some overheard comment that was thought to have significance and contain a message from God. (Cited in Heschel, *Prophetic Inspiration After the Prophets*, 2-3 fn).

[425] Hebrew: *Ma'aseh*, introducing a story, event, or case.

This passage is included in a description of the many losses that Israel faced after the destruction of the two Temples. These stories speak of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but they are dark and pessimistic in tone. In latter two cases, the Sages are meeting in Yavneh, the town where they met to preserve the holy books after the destruction of the Second Temple. In each case, they hear a heavenly pronouncement that one of them is worthy of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but the generation is not worthy. Everyone knows who is being pointed out. But there is no actualization of the possibility of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Instead, the very next phrase about Hillel the Elder (outstanding first century Tanna[426]) or Samuel the Small (second generation Tanna in Palestine, who died after the destruction of the Temple) takes us straight to his death and the community's mourning for him. The continuation of this passage in the Tosefta includes references to mourning and martyrdom under the Romans. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and prophecy are clearly relegated to the past and "worthier" generations. Admittedly, this is somewhat paradoxical, since the Biblical prophets were sent to admonish *sinful* generations. The generation of Jeremiah seems no more righteous than that of Hillel, so why was the "worthiness" test applied to Hillel's generation? It seems more of a rationalization for the cessation of prophecy.

In the version in Yerushalmi Horayot 3:5 (48c), there is a slight variation. As the sages sit in an attic in Yavneh: "A *Bat Kol* came out and said to then, 'There are among you two who are worthy of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, and Samuel the Small is one of them.' They looked at Eliezer ben Hyrkanos, and they were happy that their opinion matched the

[426]Described here as a "disciple of Ezra," who we noted was known in pseudepigraphal literature as one inspired by *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

opinion of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*." Here *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is used to signify both the spirit of prophecy that Eliezer ben Hyrkanos is worthy of receiving and in the next breath is given personification (the sages want their opinion to match hers).

Compare this Rabbinic text to the passage in the New Testament, Matthew 3:15-17, in which the Spirit of God descends in the form of a dove and calls out in a heavenly voice that proclaims that Jesus is God's beloved son. The dove image is also associated in some Rabbinic texts with the divinity and in particular with both the *Bat Kol* and *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. In Bavli Berakhot 3a, Rabbi Jose says, that he "heard a divine voice [*Bat Kol*], cooing like a dove, and saying: Woe to the children, on account of whose sins I destroyed my house and burnt my temple and exiled them among the nations of the world!" Second, the *Bat Kol* or heavenly voice has many connections to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic writings, and is sometimes exchanged with it, although our texts imply that it is a hypostatization of lesser rank. In Bavli Hagigah 15a, we find, "And the spirit [*Ruah*] of God hovered over the face of the waters (Gen.1:2) — like a dove which hovers over her young without touching [them]." In the previously quoted text in Tosefta Sotah 13, Hillel, who is contemporary and parallel in some ways to Jesus,[427] is depicted as being "chosen" by a heavenly voice. But the differences are significant. The Holy Spirit is referenced, but not actually present on the scene. The *Bat Kol*, or heavenly voice, points out the election of Hillel as *deserving* of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but his generation doesn't merit it. The listener or reader is then immediately pitched forward in time to Hillel's

death and the mourning for him. The story is placed in a section recalling the decline that followed the destruction of the Temple. The parallels and contrasts to the Matthew passage are striking, although one cannot be certain that they were deliberate. Although it is impossible to say for sure if the traditions about Hillel and the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* were a direct response to the Christian texts, they may well have been (among other things) a polemical response to ideas about the Holy Spirit in third-and fourth-century Christianity.[428]

The Potential to Reclaim *Ruah ha-Kodesh*

Despite Rabbinic pronouncements about the end of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, or stories relegating it to very limited uses, there are also suggestions in Rabbinic texts that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* might still be available to their contemporaries. Several of these suggest that one could "earn" *Ruah ha-Kodesh* through individual merit or effort. Such suggestions are found scattered throughout Rabbinic texts, with a particular tradition in the form of the "Saint's Progress" preserved in Talmudic traditions (examined in the previous chapter).[429] This did not necessarily mean that a return to Biblical prophecy was considered possible. It may be that a weaker or more diffuse experience of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was intended when referring to the Rabbinic present.[430]

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[427] See David Flusser, "I Am In the Midst of Them," in *Judaism and the Origins of Christianity* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988), and Jacob Neusner, *Judaism in the Beginnings of Christianity* (Phildelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 64.
[428] Stuart A. Cohen, *The Three Crowns-Structures of Communal Politics in Early Rabbinic Jewry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 68.
[429] End of Mishnah Sotah, Yerushalmi Shabbat 1:3 (3c), Yerushalmi Shekalim 3:3 (47c), Bavli Avodah Zara 20b, Song of Songs Rabbah 1:9.
[430] William David Davies, "Reflections on the Spirit in the Mekilta: A Suggestion" in *The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University* (New York, Vol 5, 1973), 95, 98.

The Rabbinic outlook contrasts with the New Testament idea that ecstatic prophecy is available to contemporary individuals by means of the Holy Spirit. One might compare Rabbinic recommendations about obtaining *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to Acts 2:2-4, with its depiction of the scene on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descends dramatically in tongues of fire and enables the disciples to prophesy. By contrast, Rabbinic literature is devoid of such dramatic and sudden appearances of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the Rabbinic present, and the "Saint's Progress" charts a lengthy and methodical course toward its attainment.[431] In a similar vein, Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 10:2 (28b) establishes learning and becoming a sages as the prerequisite for becoming a prophet and receiving *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (more on this text in Chapter 6).

Ruah ha-Kodesh and Individual Merit or Effort

Despite the tradition of declarations that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has ceased, there are a number of Rabbinic suggestions about the possibility of obtaining it through individual merit, some of which I have already noted. These texts hold out the intriguing possibility that one can somehow still earn the experience of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Mekhilta Beshallah 7 states, "Whoever accepts one single mitzvah with true faith is worthy that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* will rest upon him." While this commented on the Israelites at the sea, it appears to extrapolate the possibility of such merit to anyone who observes a single mitzvah with

[431] Interestingly, there are Rabbinic texts that associate the appearance of fire with the teaching and giving of Torah. For example, in Song of Songs Rabbah 1:10:2, Ben Azzai is teaching Torah when a fire dances around him. He claims that it is not because he is teaching a mystical subject, but just because the words of Torah, Prophets and Writings are so delighted to be woven together midrashically that they recreate the fire that appeared on Sinai with the revelation of the Ten Commandments.

perfect faith. (Of course, worthiness alone may not be enough, as seen in the previously cited passages on Hillel being worthy of *Ruah ha-Kodesh.*) In Sifrei Deuteronomy, Piska 173, Rabbi Eliezer comments on a verse that describes the the sinful Canaanites:

> Woe unto us (*haval alenu*): Just as whoever cleaves to impurity, a spirit of impurity rests upon him, so, too, whoever cleaves to the *Shekhinah*; it is logical (*din hu*) that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* will rest upon him. And who caused [the Shechinah to depart]: "But your iniquities have been a barrier between you and your God." (Isaiah 59:2)[432]

Rabbi Eliezer thus holds out the possibility of earning *Ruah ha-Kodesh* but simultaneously suggests that it is not currently attainable due to Israel's sins.

Leviticus Rabbah 35:7 warns against learning Torah without practicing its teachings, and then continues:

> Rabbi Aha said: "He who learns with the intention of practicing will be privileged to receive *Ruah ha-Kodesh*." What is his reason? Because it says, "That you may observe faithfully all that is written [in the Torah]; only then shall you prosper in all your undertakings and only then will have have wisdom (*taskil*, Joshua 1:8)," and *taskil* cannot but allude to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*; as may be inferred from the text, *Maskil* of Ethan the Ezrahite (Psalms 89:1). [433]

Finally, in Song of Songs Rabbah 1:8, one finds Rabbi Yudan's teaching: "whoever teaches the Torah publicly merits that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* should rest on him. For so did Solomon; he taught, and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested on him, and he composed three books, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and The Song of Songs." (as noted in the discussion of texts composed under the influence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.)

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[432] W.D.Davies, comments, "a sinful nation is not longer a suitable environment for the Holy Spirit."Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 206. In addition Ephraim Urbach notes that some manuscripts read, "Shekhinah," for Holy Spirit. Urbach, *The Sages*, 43.

[433] If Joshua follows the Torah, he will be "maskil" (wise) like the composer of Psalm 89, who was imbued with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in his poetic expression.

Although the examples given in these Midrashim are of biblical figures, the wording of these texts leaves open the possibility that the authors proposed that contemporary figures might be worthy of receiving the *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Nevertheless, as already noted, that does not mean that they would actually receive it, due to the perceived lack of merit of later generations. Or even if they did receive it, like the Tannaitic Rabbis described below, its uses might be severely limited.

One Rabbinic tradition describes obtaining *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in an active way. In Yerushalmi Sukkah 5:1 (55a), Genesis Rabbah 70, and Pesikta Rabbati 1:2, Israelite pilgrims are described as "drawing forth *Ruah ha-Kodesh*" in Jerusalem during the *Simkhat Beit ha-Sho'evah* ("Festival of the Rejoicing at the Place of the Water-Drawing," to cleanse the temple altar at Sukkot). In the Yerushalmi version, Rabbi Joshua ben Levi explains, "It's called the *Simkhat Beit ha-Sho'evah* because that's where they drew out the *Ruah Ha-Kodesh*, as it is written, "draw forth water in joy from the wellsprings of redemption."

In Genesis Rabbah 70, there is a long discussion of the verses:

> And he looked, and saw a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for from that well they watered the flocks; and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. And there were all the flocks gathered; and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place. (Genesis 29:2-3)

Many different and varied interpretations of these seemingly straightforward verses and each of their components are offered in the name of different authorities. Among them is one discussing *Ruah ha-Kodesh*:

> "And behold a well in the field," symbolizes Zion; "and lo, three flocks of sheep"—the three Festivals; "For out of that well they watered the flocks"—from there they imbibed [lit. drew out, *sha'avu*] *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. "And the stone was great" —this alludes to the rejoicing of the place of the water drawing. R. Hoshaya said: "Why was it called the rejoicing of the place of drawing [water]? Because from there they imbibed *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. 'And there were all the flocks gathered'—they all came, 'From the entrance of Hamath unto the Brook of Egypt' (I Kings 8:66). 'And they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep'; from there they imbibed *Ruah ha-Kodesh*; 'And put the stone back upon the well's mouth in its place': it was left lying for the next Festival. (Genesis Rabbah 70:8)

This passage draws a picture in which all of Israel, making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, could partake of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Moreover, that they played an active role in obtaining the spirit through their efforts to "draw it forth." This inspiration was seen as the source of joy in the festival. The version of this tradition in Yerushalmi Sukkah 5:1, adds the opinion of Rabbi Jonah that the Biblical prophet Jonah ben Amitai was among the pilgrims who attended *Simkhat Beit ha-Sho'evah* during the festival, and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested upon him there, "to teach you that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* only rests upon one with a happy heart."[434] (An atypical instance in which a Rabbinic texts suggests the actual process of how a Biblical prophet obtained *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.) The passage presents a distinctive vision of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as readily available and connected with celebration and joy.

Ephraim Urbach points out that the *Simkhat Beit ha-Sho'evah* was a Second Temple ritual. Therefore, this text contradicts the sentiment noted in other Rabbinic texts that the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was not present during the second Temple Period. Urbach's

[434] Cf. Bavli Pesahim 117a: "This teaches you that the Shechinah rests [upon man] neither in indolence nor in gloom nor in frivolity nor in levity, nor in vain pursuits, but only in rejoicing connected with a religious act."

solution is that "certain situations of exaltation and joy deriving from the performance of a Divine precept bring about its reappearance; more than this, however the generation does not merit."[435] Some Rabbinic sages may have believed that only a weaker and more "diluted" form of the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was still available after the close of prophecy. It is also possible that this repeated tradition about *Simkhat Beit ha-Sho'evah* represents an alternative viewpoint that holds that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was still operable during the Second Temple.

In summary, there are a number of Rabbinic traditions across a wide range of texts, about the cessation or departure of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Several Midrashic selections offer specific guidelines for how to achieve *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, while failing to make it clear if the information is merely symbolic, or actually considered practical. Still other texts, such as the Tannaitic and Amoraic tradition about the selection of Hillel, assert that "the generation is not worthy" of its receipt. There is only one narrative (involving Hillel in the Tosefta, see below) in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is cited in connection with determining a halakhah, but that role is downplayed in later versions of the same text and is found to have halakhic relevance only in regard to custom and not law. Taken together, it seems that the majority of Rabbinic texts make a point of relegating the active involvement of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to past generations, probably for the sociological and political reasons that they did not want to open a door to an antinomian outlook.

And yet the sages are reluctant to completely rule out the possibility of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in post-biblical times. The Amoraic tradition about *Simkhat Beit ha-Sho'evah*

[435] Ephraim Urbach, *The Sages*, 577.

suggests that even in the Second Temple period, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* might have been freely available as a component of religious celebration. I now turn to several Amoraic texts, in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is said to be available for use by some of the outstanding sages of the Tannaitic period.

Examples of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s limited role in the Rabbinic present

Although I have cited several texts about *Ruah ha-Kodesh's* departure with the end of prophecy, there are also a handful of Rabbinic references to the existence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in their own contemporary society, in the Rabbinic present.[436] The only Tannaitic text that refers to the contemporary use of the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is found in Tosefta Pesahim 4:11. There, the people inquire of Hillel the Elder whether it is permitted to bring the Paschal offering on the Sabbath. He answers in the affirmative, citing one good justification after another, including hermeneutical proofs (both linguistic, *gezera shavah*, and a fortiori, *kal va-homer*), and an appeal to received tradition (*kabalah*). But he only prevails when he points out that the ordinary people confidently make the sacrifice: "Leave it to them; *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rests upon them; if they are not prophets, they are the children of prophets." Sure enough, the people have cleverly attached the sacrificial knives to the wool or the horns of their sheep and goats, in order to be able to to carry them on Shabbat and perform the Paschal offering. Hillel is immediately

[436] And not only in the Talmudic period, but in the Middle Ages many prominent rabbis sought to receive prophetic inspiration. Abraham Joshua Heschel, Abraham Joshua, *Prophetic Inspiration After the Prophets-Maimonides and Other Medieval Authorities*, trans. from German and Hebrew by David Silverman, (Hobokon, New Jersey: Ktav, 1996), 1-23.

appointed the *Nasi*. The same story is carried forward into the Yerushalmi Pesahim 6:1 (33a) and the Bavli Pesahim 66a, where the order of events is slightly different. There Hillel himself has forgotten precisely what to do if someone forgets the sacrificial knife on the Sabbath, and is reminded of the *halakhah* by watching the behavior of the people, who are the "children of prophets." More significantly, the two Talmuds relate the story, and have Hillel call the children of Israel, "children of prophets," but completely remove the provocative phrase that "the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rests upon them."[437]

This intriguing passage appears to be the one story in Talmudic literature in which a *halakhah* is decided on the basis of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. In addition, the ordinary people are said to possess it and to be able to determine the *halakhah* for themselves. Furthermore, this passage contradicts the idea (in Tosefta Sotah, Chapter 13:4, et al.) that Hillel's generation was not worthy of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. For all these reasons, this text should draw our attention. But as Benjamin D. Sommer points out, the people don't behave at all like Biblical prophets. In point of fact, Hillel has actually stated that they are not prophets. Their actions "are not visionary or inspired; rather, the people find a clever legal loophole that allows them to offer a Passover sacrifice on the Sabbath. In other words, the people of whom Hillel speaks act like rabbinic sages rather than like prophets."[438] The fact that the people acclaim Hillel the Nasi after his pronouncement about their use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* might hint that they were flattered with his assessment of them. But the passage has no revolutionary content; it does not open the door to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as a new means to determine halakhah. Moreover, the later, Amoriac versions

[437] Noted by Rabbi Louis Reiser, personal communication, August, 2003.

of this tradition completely remove the phrase about *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "resting" on the common people. The fact that this reference is found only in one, earlier version of the tradition, may show a reluctance to allow any influence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with its antinomian potential into the halakhic realm. Therefore, this single use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as a determinant of halakhah must remain an anomaly in classic rabbinic literature.[439]

The rest of the references to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the Rabbinic present are Amoraic, but describe sages of the Tannaitic period. As noted in my Master's Thesis, stories of miraculous deeds and wonders are generally "projected back onto earlier Rabbinic figures who were viewed as legendary, saintly ancestors."[440] In Bavli Erubin 64b, Rabban Gamliel divined (*kiven*) through *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, but just in order to know the name of a heathen who he is meeting for the first time! In other texts, sages use *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to see what is going on in people's domestic lives and to promote *shelom bayit* (domestic harmony). In Yerushalmi Sotah 1:4 (16d) and in Levitcus Rabbah 9:9, Rabbi Meir sees (*tsafa*) by means of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* that a woman's husband has forbidden her to return home before spitting in the Rabbi's eye, because her attendance at his lectures has made her late in arriving home. Rabbi Meir concocts a ruse that he needs a woman to spit in his eye as a cure, thus bringing about her reconciliation with her spouse. In Leviticus Rabbah 21:8, Rabbi Akiba sees by means of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* that

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[438] Benjamin Sommer, "Did Prophecy Cease? Evaluating a Reevaluation," (JBL, 115/1, 1996, 31-47), 45.
[439] This textual tradition was given some halakhic significance in the realm of *minhag* or custom. It is considered the origin of the common halakhic dictum regarding *minhagim*: "go out and see what the people are doing" (*puk hazi mai ama daver*). Rabbi Baruch Gigi, "The Obligation to Observe Minhagim," *Yeshivat Har Etzion Weekly on-line Shiur in Halakhic Topics*, http://www.vbm-torah.org/archive/halak63/11minhag.rtf (December 22, 2001).

Rabbi Hanina ben Hakinai's daughter is ready to be married, so he should end his lengthy stay with Rabbi Akiba and return home to marry her off. In each of these texts from the Amoraic period, noted sages of the Tannaitic period are described as being able to use *Ruah ha-Kodesh* for purposes that promote peace and harmony in the domestic or communal sphere, but that are hardly comparable to the powers of Biblical prophets. Burton Visotzky goes so far as to attribute the domestic uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Leviticus Rabbah to rabbis being "privy to community gossip."[441] I prefer to say that these uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* might have been attributed to their intuition or their pastoral sensitivity to their disciples' domestic needs. Their intuition and interpersonal skills may be so well-honed that it seemed almost supernatural to their disciples.

In the Pesahim tradition, as well as the references to sages possessing *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, one can see that the idea that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was available in the Rabbinic present was not completely discounted. However, its uses and applications seemed quite limited. These few references to the use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the Rabbinic present might seem to downgrade or trivialize its functions. On the other hand, they could signify a shift in focus in later Rabbinic culture, in which the locus of spirituality is no longer to be found on a grand national scale, but is now focused on the particulars of everyday life. The Pesahim passage might suggest that a measure of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was thought to inspire the actions of the people in their customs, and the examples about the sages might suggest that the Rabbis found profound meaning in the "ordinary" and significance in the

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[440] J. Danan, *Between Earth and Heaven*, 141.
[441] Visotzky, *Golden Bells and Pomegranates*, 143.

smallest domestic deed. There are parallels here to what I found in my Master's Thesis research on Aggadic representations of the figure of Elijah the Prophet. By the time of the Bavli, the Messianic associations of Elijah's role began to recede, while the "folk" stories of his small and personal deeds multiplied. These seemed to reflect a shift in Jewish concerns, from grand apocalyptic expectations to an emphasis on ethical behavior in the domestic and interpersonal sphere.[442]

***Ruah ha-Kodesh* is Not Gone, but Changed**

Shortly after some Rabbis declare that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has departed from Israel, another change occurs. In Amoraic texts in particular, the tense of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s speech shifts from past to present. This is a process already begun in a few Tannaitic texts, such as the term *mevasartan* in the Mishnah Sotah 9:6, the term *tsovahat* in the two versions of the Mekhilta Shirata and *omeret* in their parallel version in Sifre (reviewed under "Reciprocal Dialogue"). However, variations of *heshivah* in past tense prevail in Tannaitic texts. That is to say, at roughly the same juncture when the Talmudic sages (of Tosefta and the two Talmuds) begin to insist that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* had departed from Israel with the last of the prophets, the Aggadic Midrash increasingly depicts her speaking in present tense.

By contrast, other divine metonyms in Rabbinic literature tend to speak in the past tense, if they speak at all. I have noted that the Holy One, blessed be He, and the Bat Kol almost always speak in the past tense, while the *Shekhinah* remains largely silent. Lest this seem like a picayune distinction, note Azzan Yadin's *Scripture as Logos*, in which he

[442] Julie Hilton Danan, *Between Earth and Heaven*, 155-156.

points out that in the Rabbi Ishmael traditions, the "Torah" speaks in the past tense, but "ha-Katuv" (Scripture) speaks in the present tense, and these are clues to the differing hermeneutical functions of the two words.[443]

Tempting as it is to base conclusions on the basis of grammatical shift alone, caution must be exercised. While in Modern Hebrew *Ruah ha-Kodesh tsovahat ve-omeret* can be translated "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* cries out and says," in early Rabbinic Hebrew it might reflect a past tense situation that occurs in parallel to another situation: "*Ruah ha-Kodesh* was crying out saying," or "[meanwhile] *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is crying out and saying."[444] Vagueness of tenses is common in both Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew, so a sense of past or present often depends more on context than on form.[445] Therefore it is equally if not more important to note that *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s present tense *role* blossoms dramatically in texts such as the "crying out" examples in Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 4:1 and Lamentations Rabbah 1:45-1:50. In these texts, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has hardly "departed." She is portrayed in a dynamic role of ongoing communication, as the divine voice of Torah interacting with the sages in midrashic dialogue.

The present and active nature of personified *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is most striking when viewed in contrast to the *Bat Kol* which was supposed to "replace" her. Classically,

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443 Azzan Yadin, *Scripture as Logos*, 31.

444 As in the biblical "*ve-ruah Elohim merahefet al pnei hamayim*" in which *merahefet* means "hovers," but is understood as "and the spirit of God 'was hovering' over the face of the waters." Esther Raizen, personal communication, October 12, 2008. Note also that "In early Rabbinic Hebrew, the perfect is generally used for the past, but the active participle is used *both* for the present and the future." Sacha Stern, *Time and Process in Ancient Judaism*, 44-45.

445 Avraham Zilkha, personal communication, February 3, 2009. We might call this a "narrative present." For a biblical example, see Genesis 18:1, in which Avraham "is sitting" *ve-hu yoshev* by the door of his tent," which clearly refers to a past tense situation. So *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, while using the very same word

the *Bat Kol* is presented as giving each utterance once in the past and it was done ("a *Bat Kol* came forth and said" *yatstah Bat Kol ve-amra*). Each pronouncement is articulated as a discrete and completed event. By contrast, there is a timeless, ongoing quality to the utterances of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, who not only speaks in the active participle but is increasingly depicted in active exchanges with the sages. She is not stuck in the past, and sometimes she crosses the boundaries of time by quoting one biblical book in intertextual fashion to comment on another book, or even to comment on post-biblical events, as is the case in Lamentations Rabbah. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has indeed not gone, but has changed and evolved from the voice of prophecy alone, to the interactive voice of Scripture participating in the ongoing dialectic of Midrash.

omeret, may be "saying" something in one text as a biblical narrator of past actions, in another as if a current participant in a discussion in the Beit Hamidrash.

Chapter 6: Divine Metonyms

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF "HYPOSTATIZATION"

Ruah Ha-Kodesh is but one of a number of personifications or metonyms (hypostatizations) of divinity found in Rabbinic writings. In Rabbinic literature, divinity is referred to in various new ways that were not found explicitely in the Bible. In addition to *Ruah Ha-Kodesh*, there are the *Shekhinah* (Divine Presence), the *Bat Kol*, and the *Memra* (in the Targumic literature).

While many depictions of God in the Tanakh show a deity interacting and speaking with human beings, Rabbinic writings take the matter further and introduce the The Holy One, blessed be He (*Hakadosh barukh Hu*). This title is more than just a substitute name for YHWH; rather in some texts it is a strikingly anthropomorphized, often fatherly characterization of God.[446] Since this is one personification which is in masculine gender, it has almost been seen as depicting the "essence" of God in later Jewish tradition. However, as a literary personification of fatherly qualities that humanize God's transcendent divinity, it too could be understood as a metonym.[447]

Even the Torah itself is sometimes personified as "a figurative trope for God... simultaneously identical and not identical," as exemplified in the opening section of

[446] At least in the Bavli, noted in my Master's thesis, *Between Earth and Heaven*, 150. By contrast, Burton Visotsky points out that in Leviticus Rabbah, the name represents God's transcendence; *Golden Bells*, 138.
[447] In the Amoraic period, this name gradually replaced "ha-Makom" (lit. "The Place") an earlier Rabbinic epithet for God which emphasized his nearness and immanence. Urbach attributes this to a desire to avoid Gnostic identifications of "ha-Makom" with "the world." Ephraim Urbach, *The Sages*, 75-76.

Genesis Rabbah.[448] Each of these figures might be termed a divine metonym. They may offer the function of speaking of the ineffable deity in a more personal and intimate way, without impinging on God's holiness or transcendence. They show a Rabbinic tendency toward the anthropomorphism and "anthropathetism" (attributing human-like emotions) of God. "The rabbinic God not only acts but feels, reacts, and remembers with much pathos. In short, this God also has a personality and his personality is tied to the fate of Israel."[449] At times these divine metonyms all seem to be different ways of referencing God, but at other times, they seem to evolve into separate characters of their own, characters that interact and address one another in Midrashic accounts.[450]

During the Babylonian exile, the use of God's name YHWH was increasingly limited, probably to emphasize His distinctive holiness and to avoid implications that the Hebrew Deity was on the same level as the many pagan gods encountered by the exiled Judeans. From the time of Darius I in the the Persian period (late 6th century B.C.E.), the name YHWH disappears from correspondence between the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem and the Persian court. From then on the "proper" name of God was increasingly limited in use, and eventually confined to the Temple service and the pronunciation of oaths (and after the destruction of the temple, its pronunciation became completely taboo, Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1). Instead, various substitutes were introduced in the Persian and Hellenistic periods, such as "Lord," "Most High," or "God of

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[448] David Stern, *Midrash and Theory*, 31.
[449] Michael Fishbane, *The Exegetical Imagination*, 97.
[450] E.g. Leviticus Rabbah 6:1, Pesikta Rabbati 3:4. I elaborate on the interactions of hypostatizations futher in this chapter.

Heaven."[451] This introduction of substitute names for God seems the first step in "hypostatization." God is not being called by a name, but by an adjective or descriptive phrase. Meanwhile, as God was perceived as more distant and transcendent, "middle-beings" were depicted to fill in the perceived gap between heaven and earth. These "divine mediators" may include, but were not limited to, metonyms for God. In post-biblical Jewish tradition, as found in the apocrypha, and the Dead Sea Scrolls, they came to include angels, spirits, the Memra (divine word or Logos, mentioned often the Targumim), and even personifications of evil.[452] The Targumim, Aramaic translations of the Bible, are especially "well-known for their various cirumlocuations for the name of God," which in addition to the Memra also include the Glory of God and the Presence (Shekhinah) of God."[453]

Wisdom as a Mediating Figure

Among the mediating figures, *Hokhmah* or Wisdom is of particular interest here because of its eventual connection to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Wisdom is already found vividly personified in the Tanakh, in the book of Proverbs (Chapter 8, et.al.) and Job 28, both from the early Hellenistic period, where she is presented as God's first creation and constant companion. Although it has been popular to attribute this to Greek influence, this personification of *Hokhmah* already appears in Jewish and other Semitic settings in

[451] Elias Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age*, 262-264.
[452] Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 153-175
[453] Peter Schäfer, *The Mirror of His Beauty*, 100.

the pre-Hellenistic period.[454] I noted the connection of Wisdom, Logos and divine spirit in the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon, Chapter 9. Other influences on the development of this hypostatization may have included the depiction of Wisdom in the book of Ahikar from Elephantine, the model of Maat/Isis, an Egyptian goddess of truth and justice, or Anatyahu, a goddess known as the *parhedros* (continual companion) of YHWH by the Jews of Elaphantine.[455]

In Pharisaic and Rabbinic Judaism, wisdom became identified exclusively with the Torah.[456] This identification was promulgated by the *Wisdom of Ben Sira* (Chapter 24) in the second century B.C.E., became a commonplace in Pharisaic and later in Rabbinic thought, and is fully developed in such works as Genesis Rabbah, in the opening pericope:

> The Torah declares: "I was the working tool of the Holy One, blessed be He." In human practice, when a mortal king builds a palace, he builds it not with his own skill but with the skill of an architect. The architect moreover does not build it out of his head, but employs plans and diagrams to know how to arrange the chambers and the doors." Thus God consulted the Torah and created the world, while the Torah declares, "In [or with] the beginning (*be-reishit)* God created," *Reishit* referring to the Torah, as in the verse, "The Lord made me as the beginning of His way" [Proverbs 7:22-originally a reference to *Hokhmah*.][457]

The identification of Torah with Wisdom gave the Torah three new associations: its preexistence to the world (Sifre on Deut. 11:10, based on Proverbs 8:22), its

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[454] Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism,* p. 154. He adds that Sophia as fully personified divine wisdom was actually a "relatively later" Greek invention under Gnostic influence.

[455] On the former, see Schäfer, *The Mirror of His Beauty*, 26-27; on the latter see Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism,* p. 154, citing G. Holscher. The subject of YHWH having a consort is beyond the scope of this study.

[456] Exemplified in Jewish liturgy as the Torah is placed in the ark and the congregation chants, "She is a tree of life to those that hold fast to her." These words originally referred to *Hokhma* in Proverbs 3:18. For more on how the Rabbis identified Wisdom with Torah, see Schäfer, *The Mirror of His Beauty*, 78-83.

connection to creation (Pirke Avot 3:23), and the idea that the "world is claimed to be created for the sake of the Torah" (Genesis Rabbah 12:2).[458] By identifying universal Wisdom with the Torah, Rabbinic Judaism "gave cosmic significance to morality and gave also to cosmic speculation a sobriety which otherwise it might have lacked."[459]

It is not far from here to recognizing the personification of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as a new, if more subtle, manifestation of the feminine numina Wisdom in the form of Torah. As I have noted, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* almost always speaks in words of Scripture and is seen as the divine voice in the Torah, and thus can be seen as another representation of Torah, which had become the particularly Rabbinic symbol for Wisdom. In the Methodology section of my dissertation, I described Foley's concept of oral-traditional literature, in which repeated verbal formulae connote complex traditional concepts to the culturally-attuned listener (or the informed reader, as the oral-derived works were written down and transformed into a kind of "libretti").[462] The very mention of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s actions of inspiration and speech could awaken in the Rabbinic listener a body of traditional associations that included prophecy, Wisdom, and the Torah. In addition, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* still carried all its rich biblical connotations of inspiration, election, and animation.

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[457] Genesis Rabbah 1:1.
[458] W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism-Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 170-171.
[459] Davies, *Paul*, 171.
[462] Foley, *The Singer of Tales in Performance*, 60-98.

Essence or Imagery

It is not difficult to see the many-layered meaning of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the realm of metaphor and imagery, but the theological weight of the various metonyms for God remains a subject of scholarly debate. Joseph Abelson calls metonyms like *Shekhinah* and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* expressions of "Divine Immanence," viewing them as examples of a mystical Rabbinic theology of God's nearness to humanity that set the foundation for later Kabbalistic ideas. [463] Were all these hypostatizations and intermediary figures seen as actual divine beings, or just as figures of speech? Are they *essence* or *imagery*? Some scholars take a minimalist approach, contending that these are simply names interposed to protect the sanctity of the Divine Name. Other embrace a maximalist approach which holds that the images were understood more literally.

Minimalist Approaches to Understanding Divine Metonyms

Since Maimonides' rejection of a literal approach to anthropomorphism, numerous Jewish scholars have explained the employment of such intermediary terms simply "as a means of avoiding anthropomorphisms in speaking of God, and thus defending a notion of his incorporeality." [464] For example, Ephraim Urbach sought to demonstrate that in Rabbinic literature the term "Shekhinah" is no more than a consistent expression of God's nearness or presence, lacking in hypostasis (in the broader sense of a quasi-independent being like the Christian Holy Spirit), or in mythical or materialistic

[463] Joseph Abelson, *The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature*.
[464] Daniel Boyarin, *Borderlines* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 117, quoting Robert Hayward.

qualities (such as light).[465] Urbach specifically sites Abelson and disagrees with his description of these various personifications as indicators of early Rabbinic mysticism. For Urbach, the personifications or anthropomorphic descriptions of God in Rabbinic Literature are a theological tool used by the Rabbis to bridge the gap between their concept of a transcendent God and God's interactions with humanity. They are always "an expression and reflection of God, but not God Himself, not separate personalitites."[466] Likewise, George Foot Moore denies the hypostasis of either Memra (Logos) or *Shekhinah* which he attributes to a "misdirected search for Christian dogmas in Jewish guises."[467]

Maximalist Approaches to Understanding Divine Metonyms

By contrast, several contemporary scholars emphasize the importance of hypostatic personification in certain early Jewish texts. Michael Fishbane claims that since the time of the Geonim and Maimonides, Jewish scholars have failed to appreciate the rich mythic content of both Biblical and Midrashic texts. Rabbinic myths tend to focus on the pathos of God and "His" (or "Her" we might say in relation to *Shekhinah* or *Ruah ha-Kodesh*) participation in the suffering of the people.[468] Azzan Yadin explores personifications of Scripture in the Midrashim of the Rabbi Ishmael "school," and finds

[465]E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 37-65.
[466] E. Urbach, *The Sages*, 39.
[467] G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927, 1970).
[468] Michael Fishbane, *The Exegetical Imagination on Jewish Thought and Theology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), Introduction and 134, *a*nd *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

potential connections to the literature of Qumran, Wisdom literature and some early Church figures. He argues that, "Rabbi Ishmael's conception of the personified Scripture may be linked to Ben Sira's identification of Torah and Wisdom," and makes a positive comparison between the Torah as a mediator and Clement and Justin Martyr's "role of Nomos as a medium of revelation."[469]

Daniel Boyarin goes even further in his explorations of the *Memra*, "Word" of God or Logos, which is also identified as Sophia or Wisdom (and thus potentially related to personified *Ruah ha-Kodesh,* although Boyarin does not specify that).[470] Boyarin departs from the scholarly consensus that the various hypostases served as mere tropes to distance the anthropomorphic actions from the transcendent God, and holds instead that they should correctly be taken at face value, to represent an early binitarian form of Judaism in non-Rabbinic circles.[471] He claims that many Jews, together with early Christians, believed in a "second divine entity, God's Word (Logos) or God's Wisdom, who mediates between the fully transcendent God and the material world." According to Boyarin, the recognition of an intermediary power, the Logos or Memra, amply attested in the Palestinian Targumim (but absent from Talmudic traditions), was considered by many non-Rabbinic Jews a valid Jewish doctrine before there were clear boundaries between Judaism and Christianity as religions, or even a clear definition of "religion" as a separate category. By the fourth century, such dualism was seen as a heresy (binitarianism, called the "worship of two powers" in Rabbinic writings) in Judaism and a

[469] Azzan Yadin, *Scripture as Logos-Rabbi Ishmael and the Origins of Midrash* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 174-175.
[470] Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 112-127.

defining doctrine of Christianity, and helped to define the "border lines" between the two young religious traditions.[472] Boyarin finds evidence that some leading Tannaitic Rabbis were attracted to the idea of Logos Theology, but that other Rabbis strongly rejected it as a binatarian heresy, and that the latter became the dominant Rabbinic view by the time of the Babylonian Talmud.[473]

J. Abelson had already addressed the Targumic prominence of the Memra in *The Immanence of God*, and like Boyarin had concluded that the Fourth Gospel was "thoroughly saturated with the Jewish Apocalyptic as well as the Palestinian Rabbinic teachings in the first century A.D." Furthermore he notes that the great medieval commentator Nahmanides insisted on the mystical importance of the Memra as much more than a substitute term for God, but obscured its significance as a secret doctrine known only to the cognoscenti.[474] As previously noted, Hellenistic Jewish writings often drew parallels between Sophia and Logos.[475]Although I do not find evidence that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was viewed as an intermediary power in Rabbinic literature, it clearly echoes elements of Wisdom/Sophia, the active feminine numina identified with the Torah in early Jewish thought.

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[471] Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines*, ibid.

[472] Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 112-127. But see critique by Stuart Miller, who objects that Boyarin "recreates the rabbis in the image of the church fathers," as "theologians who expend most of their efforts struggling with complex issues such as 'two powers in heaven," or as he calls the larger issue, 'Logos theology.'" Miller argues that practice, rather than complex theology, engaged the rabbis. Stuart S. Miller, "Roman Imperialism, Jewish Self-Definition, and Rabbinic Society: Blayche's *Iudaea-Palaestina*, Schwartz's *Imperialism and Jewish Society*, and Boyarin's *Border Lines* Reconsidered," *AJS Review* 31:2 (2007), 351-362. Quotations from page 360.

[473] Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 128-147. He finds hints of binatarian theology among Tannaim such as Rabbi Akiba in such texts as .g. Bavli Hagiga 14a and 15a.

[474] Abelson, *Immanence of God*, Chapter 8. He is not cited by Boyarin.

A Third Possibility: Divine Metonyms as Literary Devices

By focusing exclusively on the Rabbis' theological aims, though, scholars have perhaps missed the *literary* qualities of the metonyms for God. Michael Lodahl (following Abelson) writes, "Shekhinah was a literary device, not unlike other appellatives for, or attributes of, God which could be literarily personified but were not to be ontologically hypostatisized."[476] While acknowledging the attraction of theological speculations based on Midrash and Aggadah, David Stern prefers to focus on the "literary characterization" of God in Rabbinic texts.[477] In referring to the *Shekhinah* (and one could just as well extend this to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*), Stern contends that "the Shekhinah is…an inherently anthropomorphic figure."[478] Stern suggests that the question we might ask is how the Rabbis characterize God, what type of "personalities" they construct for him in various texts. The humanistic, anthropomorphic model was "the only model the Rabbis found complex enough to portray God's character-to communicate the full complexity of His nature..."[479]

Since the Rabbis never articulated a systematic theology, we may never know if they took their personifications of God literally. Like the ancient Greeks, they probably combined a sense of credulity with some level of understanding that their poetic

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[475] Examples are found in the Wisdom of Solomon and the biblical allegories of Philo. See Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 170-171, Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 94-101, Peter Schäfer, *The Mirror of His Beauty*, 39-57.
[476] Michael Lodahl, *Shekhinah/Spirit*, 52.
[477] Stern, *Midrash and Theory-Ancient Jewish Exegesis and Contemporary Literary Studies* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1996), ch. 4, 73-93.
[478] Stern, *Midrash and Theory*, p. 81. This is very remniscent of Abelson's declaration, that "the immanent God of Philo is a philosophical principle. The immanent God in Judaism is a person." Abelson, 72.
[479] Stern, ibid., 79.

descriptions of God were essentially literary in nature. Midrash Aggadah created a mythical sense of time and space (perhaps encompassing biblical time through the destruction of the Temple), in which such anthropomorphic depictions of God were acceptable.[480] Here we may be informed by another Bakhtinian concept, the "chronotope," or "time-space" matrix, which includes the idea that concepts of time and space vary in different literary genres. For example, depictions of time and space have different values in an ancient Greek adventure novel than in a chivalric romance.[481] Midrash Aggadah creates a literary realm outside of ordinary space-time, a realm in which the Bible is "eternally contemporary," where the sages in the *beit ha-midrash* (study house) engage in dialogue with the *Bat Kol* or *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

In the words of Peter Schäfer, "The Rabbis like to play with metaphors, and sometimes it is difficult to decide how far they wish to go—in the degree of radicality of their metaphors as well as the degree to which these metaphors blur the line between image and reality."[482] While a full evaluation of the myriad theories on hypostases is beyond the scope of this work, it is clear that personifications of God and of God's divine qualities are an integral part of early Judaism and the surrounding religious and philosophical traditions with which it interfaced. Clearly, too, Rabbinic Judaism did not make *Ruah ha-Kodesh* a part of the Godhead, as it became in the Christian Trinity. In Christianity, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* or Holy Spirit becomes part of God's essence. In Judaism, there is always a separation between the metonyms or qualities of God which never really

480 Stern, ibid., 93-95.
481 Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 84-151.
482 Peter Schäfer, *The Mirror of His Beauty*, 83.

"become" God, so to speak.[483] Given the overall Rabbinic emphasis on strict monotheism, I am convinced that the Rabbis maintained *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as *imagery* for the divine, rather than an *essence* of divinity. But that doesn't mean that there is nothing to be learned from the imagery itself. After all, there were many other possible ways to cite Scripture than to put it in the mouth of a feminine, personified force that is also the source of prophetic inspiration. Through the particular choice and use of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as the divine voice in the Torah, the Rabbis emphasized the Torah's inspirational, ironic, dramatic, or emotional content.

The study of Aggadah is an intersection of literature, hermeneutics and theology. The literary techniques of the Rabbis have the potential to offer us insight into their unarticulated theology. From a literary point of view, one can ask, "What is the function of each divine personality in our texts?" and this question may lead to theological understanding. I would suggest that the fatherly, caring, humanistic "Holy One, blessed be He," of the Rabbis[484] answers the question "Does God care about us?" The Shekhinah, who is described repeatedly as going to exile and suffering with the people of Israel, might address the concern, "Is God still present with us?" *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (and in other ways, the Bat Kol) might be filling the need to know if God is still speaking to us, inspiring, or guiding us. Its personified use in Rabbinic texts implies that indeed, He is.

[483] Helmar Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom*, 192. Schäfter, *The Mirror of His Beauty*, 263, fn. 17.
[484] This "fatherly" image is found more in the Bavli, supra fn. 445.

"Materiality"

Assertations of the "materiality" of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* are prominent in some secondary sources.[485] What actually impressed me the the most about the "personification" of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is the *lack* of imagery with which it is associated (cf. the figure of Wisdom in Proverbs). *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is personified, but overwhelmingly through the faculty of speech. She (more on her gender below) comes to life, but as the divine voice of Torah.

I have already noted that the "appearances" in court (Bavli Makkot 23a et.al.) are focused on textual quotations attributed to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, so one need not imagine a literal appearance. The notion that because people "saw by" *Ruah ha-Kodesh* it was a kind of light seems unfounded.[486] Likewise the many selections we have reviewed where *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was kindled (*nitsnetsa*) in an individual need not mean a literal spark. Abelson suggests for Leviticus Rabbah 1:1, that when *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rested upon Phinehas…his face glowed (lit. burned, *bo'arot*) like torches" suggests that a literal light shown from him. But in the context of the passage it seems simply that Rabbi Simon is trying to creatively justify the use of the word "mal'akh" (messenger) which can also mean "angel," by saying that Phinehas had an angelic appearance.

In Leviticus Rabbah 8:2, the comments on Samson's hair's clanging together like a bell have the quality of a tall tale. Whether the Rabbinic authorities took these tales literally (which seems very unlikely), it does not imply that they supposed that the *Ruah*

[485] Abelson, 212-223, cited extensively in W.D.Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, 184-185, although Davies doesn't find all the references "convincing."

ha-Kodesh itself made a sound. When Ben Zoma says (Bavli Hagigah 15a) that the "Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the water *like* a dove hovers over her young," that is the language of metaphor or *mashal*, not a claim that it literally takes the form of a dove (in contrast to Matthew 3:15). The texts on "drawing forth" (*misham sha'avu*) *Ruah ha-Kodesh* from the Temple at *Simhat Beit ha-Sho'eva* are using a play on words to indicate that the Temple provided the source of inspiration for the people, not saying that the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* was a physical substance to be pulled out of a well. Finally, Leviticus Rabbah 15:2, the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* rests on each prophet *be-mishkal*, "by weight," (better: by measure), need not insinuate that we can put it on a scale and weigh it. In all cases, the imagery associated with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* makes more sense in a metaphorical way than insisting that it refers to a concrete "materiality."

Nonetheless, such images as light, sparks, water, or doves can have import and meaning as literary motifs or metaphors for the nature of Spirit. What should be noted in the examples above is not a literal materialism in Rabbinic thought, but rather the imagery that they chose to use in association with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. It enlightens, it helps a person "see" the bigger picture, it can be the "spark" or a moment or make a person glow with enthusiasm. It is life-giving and plentiful as water, but some effort must be made to draw it forth, and so on. Many of these are similar to metaphors used for the Torah, thus strengthening the Wisdom-Torah-*Ruah ha-Kodesh* connection. This is not to say that no one in the Rabbinic or Medieval period took Aggadot literally (we have

[486] See Abelson's comment on Bavli Megillah 14a, Leviticus Rabbah 9:9, etc. Abelson, 215-216.

Maimonides testimony that many did), but overall the uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* do not point in the direction of literalism or materialism.

The Role of Gender

The Hebrew Bible depicts YHWH as a "male" God[487] and I have noted the fatherly qualities and masculine gender of the Rabbinic descriptions of the "Holy One, blessed be he." In subsequent traditional Jewish usage, such as the liturgy, God is addressed in the masculine gender.

Ruah is one of the rare Hebrew words that can have both masculine and feminine gender, but in Rabbinic use it is overwhelmingly in the feminine gender.[489] Interestingly, this is recognized in Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:40:

> "Behold, this I have found," says Kohelet (Ecclesiastes 7:27). [The verb "says" (*amra*) is feminine] whereas in another passage it is masculine! R. Jeremiah said: "It alludes to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, which is sometimes used as masculine and sometimes as feminine."

Despite this assertion, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is used almost exclusively with feminine verbs in Rabbinic texts, and so I have followed suit by using feminine pronouns for "her." By contrast, the Christian Holy Spirit came to have masculine associations. *Pneuma* in Greek

[487] Richard Elliott Friedman, *Who Wrote the* Bible, p. 35. Raphael Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, Third Enlarged Edition, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990), 28-30.

[489] Although modern Hebrew dictionaries list the word as both masculine and feminine (e.g. *Bantam-Megiddo Hebrew-English Dictionary*, 1975), it is rarely used in masculine form in the Bible, Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 1996 edition, 924, and always feminine in Rabbinic Hebrew, Marcus Jastrow, *Sefer Milim*, Judaica Treasury, 1971, 2004, 1498.

is neuter, but is used with masculine pronouns in the New Testament and Christian Trinitarian theology.[490]

Grammatical gender, however, is not the same as imagery or personification. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* does not attain the same feminine personification attributed to Wisdom in Proverbs or to the *Shekhinah* in later Medieval Kabbalah. However, I have noted its connection to the "*Wisdom/Hokhmah*" traditions and will shortly explore its frequent interchange with the Shekhinah in Babylonian texts. There is at least an overtone of femininity for *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

Indeed, many divine metonyms or terms for the "immanence" of God in Rabbinic literature are in the feminine: *Shekhinah, Ruah ha-Kodesh, Bat Kol.* Raphael Patai contends that this is no coincidence, for the Goddess worship of ancient Israel was the historical foundation for later Rabbinic and Kabbalistic ideas about the Shekhinah as the feminine, immanent Divine Presence, so that "contrary to the generally held view, the religion of the Hebrew and the Jews was never without at least a hint of the feminine in its God-concept …[although] At times…the female element in the deity was effectively pushed into the background."[492] In addition to the *Shekhinah,* he notes many other important "feminine numina," (*Bat Kol*, Torah, Zion, etc.) with the most prominent

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[490] According to Susan Ashbrook Harvey, Holy Spirit was most often understood to be feminine in early Syriac literature (prior to 400 CE). "It was referred to as "She," because the Syriac noun for spirit, *ruha* – related to the Hebrew *ruah* – is grammatically feminine….In Syriac literature, the grammatical gender of the noun *ruha* led to a feminine identification of the Holy Spirit, enhanced by various images used to describe Her activity that were clearly feminine." Influenced by evolving Church theology, around 400 CE the usages changed to masculine. S.A. Harvey, "Feminine Imagery for the Divine: The Holy Spirit, the Odes of Solomon, and Early Syriac Tradition," St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly 37 (1993), 111-139.
[492] Raphael Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess, Third Enlarged Edition* (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1990), 279.

among them *Ruah ha-Kodesh.*[494]Other scholars, however, see a discontinuity between the goddesses of old and the Kabbalistic Shekhinah as the "female aspect of God." Ephraim Urbach stresses that the Rabbinic Shekhinah utterly lacks the feminine imagery found in the Biblical Wisdom or the Kabbalah.[495] Peter Schäfer notes that while the term is in the feminine gender, it is conspicuously devoid of female personifications such as "daughter" or "sister," which in Rabbinic literature are far more likely to be attributed to the people of Israel or to Zion.[496] The term "*Shekhinah*" is continuous and always in feminine gender, but the associations of the concept continued to evolve and change over time. Although the path from biblical Wisdom to Kabbalistic Shekhinah remains a subject of debate, [497] I think that the feminine gender of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and the *Shekhinah* do hold some significance in Rabbinic literature. The fact that YHWH is referred to exclusively in the masculine gender has perpetuated a masculine identity which led to both Rabbinic images of a fatherly "Holy One" as well as the Christian "God the Father." Meanwhile, the words for God's Spirit and Presence are given exclusively feminine gender in Rabbinic writings.[498] Even thought the feminity of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and *Shekhinah* were not fully articulated here, the consistant feminine terminology held the place for later

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[494] Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 96-111, 277. Patai might agree with Urbach's conclusions about the lack of personification of the Shekhinah in the earlier strata of Rabbinic literature; however, he felt that the gender-specific and personified attributes of the Shekhinah became stronger in later Rabbinic texts. Examples include Pesikta Rabbati 139a

[495] Ephraim Urbach, *The Sages*, 64-65.

[496] Peter Schäfer, *The Mirror of His Beauty*, 83-86.

[497] Peter Schäfer, *The Mirror of His Beauty*, contends that the concept of the Shekhinah in the Bahiric Kabbalah was influenced by 12th Century Catholic Marianism, as opposed to Gershom Scholem, who stressed Gnostic influences [Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schoken, 1995)].

[498] The Rabbis, unlike Philo did not "assign masculinity to one, and femininity to the other, aspect of the godhead," [referring to Logos and Wisdom, respectively] but the different grammatical genders that they used "inevitably pointed in the direction of a sexual differentiation" which remained "latent" in Talmudic Judaism but emerged in the Kabbalah. Raphael Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess*, 111.

developments, and the increasing association of the two terms (more on this below) contributed to their personification and to their mutually reinforcing associations with Wisdom and divinity.

Divine Metonyms Interacting

Throughout my review of texts, I have noted passages in which more than one divine metonyms appear in the same story, including the "court scenes" described previously. Here I offer some additional and particularly well-developed examples of this phenomenon.

Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 10:2 (28b) discusses the "wicked" kings of Israel (including those who "have no portion in the world to come"), It describes King Ahaz as wanting to starve the people of Israel of the *Shekhinah* in their midst by closing the synagogues and schools. He plots:

> If there are no children [learning in school], there will be no [learned] adults, if there are no adults, there will be no sages, if there are no sages, there will be no prophets; if there are no prophets, there will be no *Ruah ha-Kodesh*; if there is no *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, there will be no synagogues and schoolhouses—as it were…in that case as it were, the Holy One, blessed be he, will not let his *Shekhinah* rest upon Israel.

This passage is interesting because it includes three different divine metonyms. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* here represents the power of prophecy. It is interesting that the prophets are the precondition for *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, and not the opposite. This aggadah gives the impression that one must be learned and trained to be a prophet before receiving *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* leads to synagogues (*batei knesiyot*) and school houses or houses of study (*batei midrashot*). These lead to the Holy One, blessed be He causing his

presence, the *Shekhinah*, to rest, upon Israel. The verb for "causing to rest" (*mashreh*) is related to shorah or "resting," which is often used with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in other passages. Here *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is presented as means of bringing the *Shekhinah.*

Leviticus Rabbah 6:1, comments on Levicitus 5:1, "If a person incurs guilt—when he has heard a public imprecation and—although able to testify as ne who has either seen of learned of the matter—he does not give information, so he is subject to punishment." This passage offers the striking image of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as the defense attorney for Israel, speaking to the people and "the Holy One, blessed be He," each in turn.

> [The same is indicated by the verse:] "Be not a witness against your neighbour without cause," etc. (Proverbs 24:28). "Be not a witness... without cause" refers to Israel, even as it is said, "You are My witnesses, says the Lord, and I am God" (Isaiah 43:12). "Against your friend" means the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said, "Your own friend, and your father's friend, forsake not" (Proverbs 27:10). . .
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> R. Aha said: "That [Scriptural passage] represents *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as [Israel's] defender (*sanigoria*), addressing an appeal first to one and then to another. It says to Israel, 'Be not a witness... without cause [would you mislead with your speech?' (Proverbs 24:28)], and afterwards it says to the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Say not: I will do to him as he has done to Me [I will pay the man what he deserves.'" (Proverbs 24:29)]. . .
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> Reuben knew some evidence in favour of Simeon.[499] Said Simeon to him: "Will you come and give this evidence for me?" He answered: "Yes." When he went before the Judge, Reuben withdrew. To the latter does *Ruah ha-Kodesh* say: "Deceive not with your lips"; after you beguiled him with your lips, and let him go to court, you withdrew. On the morrow there arises occasion for Simeon to give evidence on behalf of Reuben. Should Simeon do as Reuben had done to him? [To this *Ruah ha-Kodesh* replies]: "Say not: I will do to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his deed."

[499] Reuben and Simeon are names used to illustrated typical cases, like "John Doe."

In this particular "courtroom drama" passage, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is personified, but not strictly a metonym for God, because it is represented as separate from God, independently addressing the Holy One, blessed be He and Israel in turn, as if in court. Burton Visotzky clarifies that the original term was the Greek *fiscus sanegor*, a Roman official who mediated fiscal disputes between the emporer and the general treasury. He notes that the prophet, possessed of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, would classically mediate between the God and the people.[500] The Midrashic passage here represents *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as a mediator between God and the people, while quoting a verse from the Writings. The verses from Proverbs refer to relationships between human peers, and in fact the Midrash here calls the Holy One Israel's "friend." The continuation of the passage portrays *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, the divine voice in scripture, speaking the very same verses to two human participants as it did to the Holy One and Israel.

This recalls the New Testament concept of Holy Spirit as "paraclete" or advocate (John 14:15-16, Romans 8:36-37 and 8:33), although another Greek-derived word, "*sanegoria*" is used here. Elsewhere, in—perhaps polemical—contrast to the New Testament, Rabbinic texts also show a person's good deeds or repentance (*teshuvah*) advocating as "*praklit*" (paraclete) on his behalf; e.g. Mishnah Avot 4:11, Bavli Shabbat 32a, Bavli Baba Batra 10a. That choice of deeds and repentance as "advocates" places an emphasis on the saving power of deeds over faith.

Also in Leviticus Rabbah, 27:2, three examples of hypostatization interact: The Holy One, blessed be He, the *Bat Kol,* and *Ruah ha-Kodesh.* Their interaction is placed in

[500] Burton Visotzky, *Golden Bells,* 137 and fn: "The Greek phrase, *fiscus sanegor*, is abbreviated as *fi'*

a typical homiletic form, which begins with one verse and weaves its way back to a starting verse (which in this case is the last verse in this excerpt).:

> R. Tanhuma began his discourse with the text, "Who has a claim on me from before, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine." [*Mi hikdimani va-ashalem? Tahat kol ha-shamayim li hu.* (Job 41:3)].
>
> This applies to a bachelor who lives in a province and gives wages to scribes and teachers. Of him the Holy One, blessed be He, says: "It is for Me to pay him his recompense and reward and to give him a male child." R. Jeremiah son of R. Eleazar observed: "A *Bat Kol* will in the future cry aloud [burst forth, *lihiyot mefotsetset*] on the top of the mountains and say: 'Whoever has done with God let him come and receive his reward'[501] hence it is written, "Now it will be said to Jacob and to Israel: '(Look) What God has done!'" (Numbers 23:23)
>
> *Ruah ha-Kodesh* says[502]: "Who has a claim on me? And yet I shall repay him!" [meaning:] "Who offered praise to Me before I gave him breath? Who performed circumcision in My name before I gave him a male child? Who made a parapet for My sake before I gave him a roof? Who made a mezuzah for My sake before I gave him a house? Who made a sukkah for My sake before I gave him room? Who prepared a lulav for My sake before I gave him money? Who made fringes for My sake before I gave him a tallit? Who set apart *pe'ah* [unharvested corners for the poor] for My sake before I gave him a field? Who set apart *terumah* [offerings for the priests] for My sake before I gave him a threshing-floor? Who set aside *hallah* [the dough offering] for My sake before I gave him dough? Who set aside an offering for me before I gave him cattle?" Hence it is written, "When a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat is born, then...from the eighth day and forward it may be accepted for an offering. (Leviticus 22:27)"

Again, there are three divine figures speaking in this passage, although not speaking directly to one another as in other selections. Each offers a different response to Rabbi Tanhuma's opening verse from Job. The Holy One, blessed be He, speaks in

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sanegor, and garbled in the manuscript variants and parallels."

501 Based on Isaiah 40:9 (Soncino note). Burton Visotzky, *Golden Bells and Pomegranates*, 142: "Who has labored with God? All who labored with God, Come and receive reward," and points out that this is a Midrashic pun. The verse in Numbers ends, *mah pa'al El* (what God has labored), which the Midrash reads imaginatively as *mi pa'al im El*, "Who has labored with God?"

502 Reading the same proof text slightly differently. The Soncino translation offers, "Or is it the Holy Spirit that says?"

original words, giving a rather humanistic, personal interpretation to the text. The *Bat Kol* is charged with delivering a powerful heavenly message at some future, messianic time. (I explore the distinctive features of the various personifications in more detail in the next section.) *Ruah ha-Kodesh* now enters the conversation, not only quoting Scriptures, but expounding on them rather extensively and uncharacteristically. Or alternately[503] it is more likely that the homilist himself here interprets the meaning of the *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s scriptural speech. He speaks in the first person, speaking from God's viewpoint as it were. On the surface, this is merely further exposition of the verse. Yet the super abundance of examples, so passionately delivered, can be read as the homilest picking up where *Ruah ha-Kodesh* left off, and himself taking on the voice of the divine in the dialogic process. She inspires him to speak for God, much as she inspired the biblical prophets.

Another example of hypostatizations interacting can be found in Pesikta Rabbati 3:4. There is a long discussion of The Holy One, blessed be He, removing and restoring *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to Jacob. At first, it is clear that the first sense of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as the spirit of prophecy is meant. But then *Ruah ha-Kodesh* assumes the status of a hypostatization, in an interpretation attributed to Rabbi (Judah ha-Nasi): "The Holy One, blessed be he, said to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, '*baragil, baragil*,' even when you stand on your feet, go and instruct Jacob to give the birthright to Ephraim." The same passage offers a creative reading of the unusual construction, "*va-anokhi tirgalti le-Efraim*" (Hosea 11:3, translated in the JPS as, "I have pampered Ephraim"), as "I forced *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to

[503] And as the Soncino translation reads by inserting "meaning" in brackets.

'foot it' (*riggalti*) back to Jacob [from whom it had departed] so that he could bless Ephraim."[504] A parallel tradition, is found in Genesis Rabbah 97, with Rabbi Samuel bar Nahman as the tradent. [505]

Visotsky contends that the different names for God "reflect rabbinic concretizations of the concepts of God's immanence and transcendence."[506] Each of the hypostatizations has its own distinct features, and they are sometimes interchanged for one another, as I will explain in the next two sections of this chapter.

Distinctive Features of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Comparison to Other Feminine Figures

Ruah ha-Kodesh is sometimes interchanged with the term *Shekhinah*, especially in the Bavli (and more rarely with the "Holy One, blessed be He," and the *Bat Kol*[507]). We have already seen the the *Bat Kol* was described as a "replacement" when *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "departed." But the divine metonyms are not completely identical. Here I note the characteristics which distinguish *Ruah ha-Kodesh* from other feminine divine metonyms, particularly her method of speech.

[504] Braude, Pesikta Rabbati, 78-79, who finds the use of "foot it speedily" in early manuscripts.
[505] There are different versions of this section in different editions of Genesis Rabbah. According to Freedman (Soncino Midrash Rabbah), this chapter is found in the Vatican Manuscript Codex 30.
[506] Burton Visotzky, *Golden Bells,* 138.
[507] E.g. in the various "courtroom scenes" in the previous chapter.

Ruah ha-Kodesh and Bat Kol

The *Bat Kol* tends to make short declarations which only occasionally incorporate Scriptural quotations. Its most common roles are proclaiming the merits of individuals or declaring that someone has a place in the world to come.[510] These are usually introduced by the formula (almost never used for *Ruah ha-Kodesh*)[511], "a heavenly voice went forth and said" (*yatstah Bat Kol ve-amrah*).[512] The case in which the *Bat Kol* "cries out"(and not in a scriptural quotation) was already noted in Genesis Rabbah 85:12, in a story in which it is interchanged for *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. The *Bat Kol* usually seems distant, detached, and lacking the *inspirational* quality of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. It is the divine voice without the animating breath that is integral to *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. A characteristic contrast of the two terms was noted in the discussion of Lamentations Rabbah 1:50, after an account of a Miriam bat Tanhum, a woman who let her seven sons be killed as martyrs in Roman times. At her death, "A *Bat Kol* goes forth and proclaims, 'A joyful mother of children' (Psalms 13:9); and *Ruah Ha-Kodesh* cries out, 'For these things I weep." (The *Bat Kol* does speak in scripture in this instance, but for the limited purpose of declaring Miriam bat Tanhum's merit.)

The differences between *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and the *Bat Kol* then, are readily apparent:

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510 E.g. Bavli Shabbat 61b, Eruvin 13b, Mo'ed Katan 9a.
511 Except in later Midrashim such as Numbers Rabbah 17:2.
512 Kris Lindbeck, Doctoral Dissertation, *Story and Theology: Elijah's Appearences in the Babylonian Talmud*, Jewish Theological Seminary, 1999, 137-142.

> Ru'ah ha-Kodesh must…be distinguished from the bat kol, or heavenly voice. Both are, in some sense, a revelation of the divine, but their mode of action and relative importance differ. The bat kol is an artificial element, pictured literally as a heavenly voice, and not always accepted as halakhically determinative (see BM 59a, where the pronouncements of a bat kol are rejected). Ru'ah ha-Kodesh, on the other hand, works through man as divine inspiration, and is theologically incontrovertible." [513]

The *Bat Kol* is not described as "proclaiming good news," (*mevaseret*), a term unique to *Ruah ha-Kodesh.* In several instances, the *Bat Kol* speaks in formulae parallel to the *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (recalling the view of Urbach, above), but these are so rare as to be the exception that proves the rule. In all of these cases, we find Bat Kol "acting like *Ruah ha-Kodesh*" as it were, because of the preponderance of such references to the latter personification. For example, there are nearly a hundred references to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "crying out" (*tsovahat*) across Rabbinic literature (including the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, the Yerushalmi and all Aggadic Midrash), but just a handful of instances in which other personifications cry out (*tsovahat*) as well: the *Bat Kol, Midat ha-Din* (the divine quality of Judgment), *Tsedakah* (Justice*),* and even *Gehennah* (hell).[514] *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is the model, establishing the formula which the others follow.

The Bat Kol also "responds" on the model of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (forms of *heshivah*) on a very few occasions: in Bavli Pesahim 94a and Bavli Hagigah 13a (and repeated in the Yalkut Shim'oni on Isaiah) to Nebuchadnezzar:

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[513]Alan Unterman, "*Ruah ha-Kodesh,*" EJ. The last sentence could be true in theory, when speaking of the classical prophets, but is not really a salient aspect of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in Rabbinic Aggadah.

[514] In some cases quoting Scripture, but generally with original words: see Justice/*Tzedakah* in Gen. Rabbah 43:3 and Yalkut Shim'oni Parashat Lekh-Lekha, the *Bat Kol* in Gen. Rabbah 85:12 (as explored in the previous chapter), *Midat ha-Din* in Eccl. Rabbah 10:1, *Gehennah* in Tanhuma Parashat Metsora 1:1.

> It is taught: R. Johanan b. Zakkai said: What answer did the *Bat Kol* give to that wicked one, when he said: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High? A *Bat Kol* went forth and said to him: "O wicked man, son of a wicked man, grandson of Nimrod, the wicked, who stirred the whole world to rebellion against Me by his rule. How many are the years of man? Seventy, for it is said: The days of our years are threescore years and ten, or even by reason of strength fourscore years. But the distance from the earth to the firmament is a journey of five hundred years, and the thickness of the firmament is a journey of five hundred years, and likewise [the distance] between one firmament and the other. . ."

The *Bat Kol* continues with a lengthy and detailed description of the celestial realm and its inhabitants. This is a strikingly un-characteristic speech for the *Bat Kol*, as it is very long and mixes original speech with more than one Biblical quotation. It is located in a pericope about mystical teachings such as the "Word of the Chariot," after a warning not to occupy oneself with lofty secrets of the universe. The only other time that the *Bat Kol* is said to "respond" is in Esther Rabbah 9:2 after Haman prepares the gallows he intends for Mordechai:

> A *Bat Kol* responded to him: "For you is the tree fitting: the tree has been made ready for you from the six days of creation." The teachers of Babylon say: "How do we know about Haman from the Torah? Because it says, *Ha-min ha'ets*—have you...from the tree" (Genesis 3:11), which is interpreted as *Haman ha'etz* (Haman the tree).

Here the *Bat Kol* does not quote the Torah, although a proof text follows. I noted in the previous chapter that "responds" (variations of *heshivah*) are found in abundance for *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s communications in Tannaitic texts, so the verb's limited uses for the *Bat Kol* in later texts may be modeled on the former.

There are other rare occasions that the *Bat Kol* spoke (*amra*) with a scriptural quotation, e.g. Bavli Erubin 21b, Bavli Rosh Hashanah 21b and Bavli Yoma 22b. It

seems significant that these are all in the Bavli, in which the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is sometimes put aside for *Shekhinah,* or here for *Bat Kol*. This may possibly be a deliberate editorial move to downplay the role of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. However, the overwhelming majority of *Bat Kol* references are not Scriptural quotations. Furthermore, it is not too fine a distinction to note that the Bat Kol "spoke" (*amra*) while *Ruah ha-Kodesh* almost always "is speaking" (*omeret*.) This might suggest that the *Bat Kol*'s pronouncements are located in the past (or rarely the messianic future, as in Levitcus Rabbah 27:2), that is to say, they are conceived of taking place as discrete events in linear time, while words of the *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, the words of scripture, are "eternally contemporary." True, the past tense, *heshivah* (responded) was noted in certain examples of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speaking in Tannaitic literature. But there is also a move in the Amoraic literature to frame the statements of the *Ruah ha-Kodesh,* even though depicted in their Biblical settings, in the active participle, as if to say that the words of Scripture are ever present, if not operative in the contemporary Rabbinic world.

Ruah ha-Kodesh *and* the Shekhinah

Some scholars completely equate the *Shekhinah* and *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Patai writes that the *Shekhinah* and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* "were used synonymously in the Talmudic Period. When, therefore a Talmudic teacher speaks of the Holy Spirit, he may as well have used the term Shekhinah."[515] Similarly, Urbach held that there is "no difference whatsoever between 'Shekhina' and 'Heavenly Voice'; they are both

[515] Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess,* 105.

alternative expressions for 'the holy spirit' that speaks out of the language of Scripture."[516] I question these broad contentions.

The Shekhinah, which functions most like *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and is most interchanged with it, is largely a silent presence. At times, Rabbinic texts note that the Shekhinah "spoke" (repeatedly with Moses, or rarely with the rest of Israel)[517] but they do not *quote* the Shekhinah actively as speaking except in rare instances.[518] As for "speaking," there is one reference: in Mishnah Sanhedrin 6:5 (carried forward into the Bavli Sanhedrin 46a and Yerushalmi 6:23/48a, also in Bavli Hagigah 14b), Rabbi Meir asks, "When a person is distress, what words does the Presence of God (*Shekhinah*) say (*mah lashon omeret*)? As it were (*ki-ve-yakhol*): 'My head is in pain, my arm is in pain.'" The phrasing "what words does she say" and especially the phrase "as it were" (although removed in the Bavli and Yerushalmi) suggests that Rabbi Meir is simply saying the *Shekhinah* feels for the suffering individual, rather than suggesting actual speech on her part.

There is one case of the *Shekhinah* "lamenting" (*meyalelet*) in Bavli Sotah 5a (echoed in the later Yalkut Shimo'ni on Psalms), R. Eleazar is quoted as saying, "Over

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[516] Urbach, *The Sages*, 64. He then brings the passage from Lev. Rabbah 6:1 in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* acts as defense attorney for Israel as a rather puzzling proof text, since it doesn't mention the Shekhinah.
[517] Bavli Shabbat 87a. And this is a biblical reference, not referring to the figure of *Shekhinah* in the Rabbinic present, but using it as a substitute term for God or the Lord. An unusual example is in Bavli Bekhorot 8a: "All animals copulate with their faces against the back [of the female], except three, which copulate face to face, and these are a fish, man, and a serpent. And why are these three different? — When R. Dimi came [from Palestine] he said: In the West [Palestine] it was said: Because the Divine Presence (*Shekhinhah*) spoke with them [in the Bible]." This seems to be the substitution of *Shekhinah* for God, perhaps out of a sense of delicacy because of the subject matter.
[518] As mentioned in the Literature Review, Abelson (Appendix, 377-378) contends that both Ruah Ha-Kodesh and the Shekhinah are said to communicate by "saying, crying, lamenting, and answering." In fact, Ruah ha-quodesh is not used with "lamenting," (*meyalelet*) nor the *Shekhinah* with "crying" (*tsovahat*) or

every man in whom is haughtiness of spirit the *Shekhinah* laments (*meyalelet*); as it is said (*she-ne'emar*): But the haughty He knows from afar." (Psalms 138:6). The term *meyalelet* (cry or howl) is not used with *Ruah Ha-Kodesh*; furthermore, the biblical quotation here is not put in the *Shekhinah*'s mouth, but a standard midrashic form for quoting Scripture is used. Thus, the passage paints a picture of the *Shekhinah* crying and mourning, but not necessarily speaking words. An unusual case in which the Shekhinah speaks words of farewell to the Temple (not scriptural verses) is found in Lamentations Rabbah, Prologue 25, in which Rabbi Aha says, "When the Shechinah went forth from the Temple, [she] returned and embraced and kissed its walls and pillars, and was weeping and saying (*bokhah ve-omeret*), 'O be in peace, my Temple, O be in peace, my royal residence, O be in peace, my beloved house! O peace, from now onward let there be peace!'" This may well be the "exception that proves the rule" for verbal expressions by the Shekhinah, but it does not have the typical *Ruah ha-Kodesh* function of speaking in scripture.[519] These limited examples of the Shekhinah speaking are from the Bavli or Amoraic Midrash. As the Shekhinah begins to be substituted for *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (see below), she takes on some of the characteristics of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, including personification and even—although rarely—speech.

Unlike the Shekhinah or the *Bat Kol*, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* speaks overwhelmingly in scripture, with sometimes a word of explanation to guide the reader to how the scriptural quotation is to be interpreted. At the same time that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* may be

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answering (*meshivah*)," and the examples of the Shekhinah "saying" (*omeret*) something or lamenting (*meyalelet*) are explained here as falling short of full-fledged spoken communications, except in one case.

interchanged for Scripture or Torah, it retains its quality as a hypostatization for God, and never loses its connotations of "prophecy" and "divine inspiration." The definition, "the divine voice in scripture," captures all three of these elements.

The Interchange of Ruah ha-Kodesh *and the Shekhinah*

As described in the Literature Review, scholars have long noted the interchange of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with the *Shekhinah* in a number of texts. George Foot Moore writes:

> In Jewish literature also the "holy spirit" frequently occurs in connections in which 'the Presence' (shekhinah) is elsewhere employed, without any apparent difference in meaning; but the fact that within a certain range the terms are interchangeable is far from warranting the inference that shekhinah and ruh[sic] ha-Kodesh were identified in conception. In the Jewish thought of the [Tannaitic] time, the specific function of the holy spirit was the inspiration of prophecy or of Scripture, differing in this respect from the Old Testament as well as from Christian usage.[522]

I would agree that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and the *Shekhinah* are often *identified*, but not *identical*. I will now examine several examples of this interchange and consider if there are any further conclusions to be drawn about its significance.

It is in the Bavli that one finds a tendency to substitute the *Shekhinah* for previous uses of *Ruah Ha-Kodesh* or for formulae elsewhere used with *Ruah ha-Kodesh.* Nevertheless, the Bavli does not endow the *Shekhinah* with *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s scripture-quoting forumulae. The *Shekhinah* is now said to "rest" (shorah) on individuals, and

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[519] The Shekhinah does speak more in later, Medieval Midrashim, such as Midrash Mishle 47a.Quoted by Patai, *The Hebrew Goddess,* 106.

advice is given for how to merit this experience. "The *Shekhinah* rests only on a wise man, a strong man, a wealthy man, and a tall man" (Bavli Shabbat 92a), or "the *Shekhinah* rests [upon man] neither in indolence nor in gloom nor in frivolity nor in levity, nor in vain pursuits, but on in rejoicing connected with a religious act…" (Bavli Pesahim 117a). Sometimes the two terms are combined with this new use: "The *Shekhinah* and *Ruah ha-Kodesh* are not with you" (Bavli Berachot 31b), or "No priest would be asked to inquire of the Urim and Thumim unless he spoke with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and the *Shekhinah* rested on him" (Bavli Yoma 73b). Note that in the latter example, both figures must be present but *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is the speaking partner.

The *Shekhinah* is said to "depart" (*nistalkah*) from Jacob in Bavli Pesahim 56a, just as (and using the same term) *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is said to depart from him in the Aggadic Midrash. The entire "Miriam's Prophecy" is brought down in Bavli Sotah 11a, but the expression *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is changed to *Shekhinah*. It is now the *Shekhina*h and not *Ruah ha-Kodesh* who is beating before Samson like a bell (Bavli Sotah 9b), in a comment to Judges 13:25, which refers to *Ruah* YHWH stirring or "beating" within him (*lefa'amo*). (And as noted previously, the four occasions when *Bat Kol* quotes scripture in *Ruah ha-Kodesh* fashion are in the Bavli as well.)

Bavli Pesahim 117a is an excellent example of the interchange and combination of different figures. First, King David writes psalms when the *Shekhinah* "rests" (*shorah*) upon him, and "this teaches you that the *Shekhinah* rests [upon man] neither in indolence nor in gloom nor in frivoloity nor in levity, nor in vain pursuits, but on in rejoicing

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[522] George Foot Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era—The Age of the Tannaim*

connected with a religious act…" (reminiscent of Yerushalmi Sukkah 5:1 and the *Simkhat Beit ha-Sho'evah* traditions of receiving *Ruah ha-Kodesh* as the result of religious joy or the traditions that Solomon composed the writings under the influence of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*). This tradition is brought in the Bavli as a Beraitah, but the interchange of *Shekhinah* for *Ruah ha-Kodesh* suggests a later dating, concurrent with other substitutions of *Shekhinah* for *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. Later on the same page of Talmud (and also as a Beraitah) *Ruah Ha-Kodesh* returns and participates in the "reciprocal" Hallel (noted in Chapter 3) featuring various Biblical characters, who each ask God to save them using the biblical verse, "not unto us, not unto us, (Psalms 115:1)" while *Ruah Ha-Kodesh* responds with another verse, "for mine own sake, for mine own sake, will I do it" (Isaiah 48:11)

There seem to be too many examples of this sort to attribute the change to "copyist errors."[523] There appears to be a deliberate move in the text of the Bavli from *Ruah Ha-Kodesh* to *Shekhinah* in many (although not all) instances. Shekhinah adopts many of the characteristics of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*—except for her key marker of speech. She is present with people, rests upon them, even inspires them, but does not (usually) speak.

There may be polemical reasons underlying the substitution. Since we are familiar with many of the earlier versions of the same traditions and forms, we might speculate

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(Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927, 1955), 437.

[523] Alan Unterman,"Ru'ah Ha-Kodesh," (EJ) notes: "There are a number of texts in which the two terms Ru'ah ha-Kodesh and Shekhinah are found interchanged in different versions. . .This interchange may be due to the fact that though Ru'ah ha-Kodesh and Shekhinah are conceptually distinct, they are identical over a certain range and are both sometimes used as straight synonyms for God. G. F. Moore, however, considers the exchange of terms to be mainly the result of copyists' errors."

that the editorial switch from *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to *Shekhinah* signals a desire to de-emphasize the role of prophecy, while maintaining other aspects of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the guise of the Shekhinah and her silent presence. I have earlier noted that the Bavli is known for statements that minimize the role of prophecy, such as "From the day the [first] Temple was destroyed prophecy was taken from the prophets and given to the Sages…from the time the Temple was destroyed prophecy was taken from the prophets and given to fools and children" (Bavli Baba Batra 12a-b). Note also the famous story of "Aknai's Oven" (Bavli Baba Metsia 58b-60b), in which the divine intervention of the *Bat Kol* is openly rejected and Rabbi Eliezer's attempts to use miracles to establish halakhah end with his excommunication.[525] This suggests that the editors of the Bavli may have wished to downplay the role of *Ruah Ha-Kodesh*, the divine inspiration that leads to prophecy, and to insert the more static and silent presence represented by the *Shekhinah.* God would still be present, resting upon worthy individuals, but not inspiring (potentially antinomian) new revelations. In addition, if we are to accept Boyarin's hypothesis that the rejection of "Logos Theology" played an important part in the separation of Rabbinic Judaism from Christianity,[526] that adds an additional motivation for minimizing the role of a mediating Wisdom/Logos figure such as *Ruah Ha-Kodesh.*

The prevelance of the term *Ruah Ha-Kodesh* and the rate at which it is exchanged with other terms may also be related to its growing role in Christian doctrine. Although *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is frequently referenced throughout classical Rabbinic literature, there is

[525] See S. Cohen, *The Three Crowns*, pp. 69-70, and D. Boyarin, *Borderlines*, 170.
[526] Boyarin, *Borderlines*, 128-147.

a preponderance in the Mehkilta of Rabbi Ishmael and the later Aggadic Midrashim,[528] but a move to substitute the Shekhinah and other terms in the Bavli.[529] Abelson attributes this to a Rabbinic desire to avoid a term that came to be charged with Christian doctrinal significance.[530] Paradoxically, according to W.D. Davies, the lessening focus *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in later sources—for example, when one compares how similar Exodus passages are treated in the Mehkilta of Rabbi Ishmael versus the later Exodus Rabbah—could actually indicate a situation in which the Rabbis were less occupied with the subject because as time went by, "Judaism and Christianity were more removed from each other."[531]

I think that the choice of terms represents regional differences between Palestinian and Babylonian thought, since in Amoraic times *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is referenced more freely in Palestinian Amoraic Midrashim such as Genesis Rabbah and Leviticus Rabbah (where as noted, it is cited much more frequently than the Shekinhah[532]), but finds more substitutions in the Bavli. In the region and the era in which Christianity became official religion of the Roman Empire, the Palestinian sages may have felt more of a need to answer the polemics of Christianity through Midrash, by

528 William David Davies, "Reflections on the Spirit in the Mekilta," 95-105, and J. Abelson, *Immanence of God*, Appendix I, 377-379.
529 I also noted some printed editions of the Mehkilta at times interchange *Ruah ha-Kodesh* with Shekhina (e.g. Ba-hodesh 4:21: Lauterbach, p. 222, has *Shekhinah*, as does the Horowitz-Rabin edition, while Soncino, Judaic Classics CD-Rom, *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, and thus it was cited by Herbert Parzen in "The Ruah ha-Kodesh in Tannaitic Literature." Unfortunately he does not state what edition he used). In another case, the substitute term is "prophecy," *nevu'ah* (Shirata 10:65 as noted in Lauterbach, Vol. 2, p. 81 fn.).
530 Abelson, *Immanence*, 379.
531 W.D.Davies, "Reflections on the Spirit in the Mekilta," 104-105
532 Burton Visotzky, *Golden Bells and Pomegranates*, 176

giving different and distinctively Jewish meanings to the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.[533] The editors of the Bavli, by contrast, may have been more concerned with minimizing the role of prophecy and bolstering the hegemony of the Sages within their own community, as noted in Chapter 5.

There are thus probably sociological, theological, and historical roots to the shift from *Ruah ha-Kodesh* to the *Shekhinah* in some texts. Yet conversely, this phenonmenon could be seen as a merging of the two figures, which enhances the meaning of both terms with shades of the other. If there was an attempt to downplay the active role of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* by substituting the *Shekhina*h, I suspect that it backfired. These two feminine-gender personifications of divinity now become identified and interchangeable to a degree. As noted in Chapter 4 regarding the tradition of Miriam's Prophecy: both Talmudic versions, Yerushalmi Sotah 1:9 (17b) and Bavli Sotah 11a, parallel Moses' "sister" Miriam to divine Wisdom, even though the former refers to *Ruah ha-Kodesh* and the latter to the *Shekhinah*. If anything, this interchange seems to have led to enhanced and active personification of the Shekhinah in Amoraic and Medieval Midrashim, which may have helped to set the stage for later, more active uses of the term in Jewish mystical thought. Neither Wisdom nor the Shekhinah is fully personified as a distinctly female being in Rabbinic literature, and the full bloom of Shekhinah as feminine divinity awaited

[533] Neusner, *Judaism and Christianity in the Age of Constantine*, 7, 12. Peter Schäfer also sees regional differences, but follows Abraham Goldberg in speculating that Babylonian sages found a particular connection between the *Shekhinah*'s presence in the (first) Holy Temple and the activities of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* (Bavli Yoma 9b, 21b). Therefore, they were more likely to view identification of the two figures as self-evident. Peter Schäfer, *The Mirror of His Beauty*, 93-102.

the Kabbalah. [535] But the identification of the two terms in the Bavli may have been one step in personification and development of the *Shekhinah*, while the same time, the interchange lent more numinous power to the term *Ruah ha-Kodesh*.

[535] Where Gershom Scholem saw Gnostic influence in the Kabbalistic Shekhinah [Gershom Scholem, On *the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah* (New York: Schocken Books, 1991), pp. 140-196], Schäfer contends that twelfth century Christian Marianism was a primary influence on its development (Schäfer, 147-172).

Conclusions

I began this analysis of texts with the puzzle of why *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is both viewed as both prophecy and personified as the divine voice in Scripture. In evaluating a theological topic in the Aggadah, one should be careful to speak about the preservation of traditions (sometimes contradictory ones) rather than attempting to define a blanket "Rabbinic" belief. Yet there are certain trends that proceed throughout the trajectory of Rabbinic literature. *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s association with prophecy, as well as its personification and speaking, are found in early as well as later texts. However, some uses change and expand.

The term, "*shorah*" (rests) is found extensively in Halakhic Midrash, and also comes up in later texts, although I noted that in the Bavli it is increasingly transferred to the *Shekhinah*. The use of vision or seeing the future through *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is found in the Tannaitic literature, but expands greatly in two Amoraic texts. Such ability to see with *Ruah ha-Kodesh* on the part of contemporary Rabbis is found only in the Bavli and Leviticus Rabbah. (This is so even though the Bavli sometimes substitutes the *Shekhinah* for *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. The two treatments are not necessarily contradictory, for the role of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the Rabbinic present is relegated to domestic matters). The personification of *Ruah Ha-Kodesh* and its speech is found briefly in Tannaitic texts (particularly the Halakhic Midrash) but greatly expanded in Amoraic texts (particularly the Aggadic Midrash).

Certain traditions are carried along in Rabbinic texts from the Mishnah and Tosefta forward: the "Saint's Progress," the Aggadic retelling of the *eglah arufah* ritual (in which *Ruah ha-Kodesh* says the last words), the tradition that *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has ended after the latter prophets, or Hillel's declaration that the people are "if not prophets, then children of prophets." The Passage in Mekhilta about young Miriam's vigil is one of the most persistent traditions. Others are found in several different Amoraic texts, such as the traditions about the Rejoicing at the Water Drawing, *Ruah ha-Kodesh*'s appearances in court, or the discussions of texts being written with *Ruah Ha-Kodesh.* These traditions must have been preserved for lengthy periods in different versions because they represented popular ideas about *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, particularly in its association with famous figures like Miriam or Hillel, or because they offered ways to access *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, through the joy of a mitzvah or through the painstaking path of saintliness.

I described in some detail how the Bavli maintains some uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* but increasingly substitutes the Shekhinah in its place. Although *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is found in various Talmudic tractates, it is interesting that some of the most persistent traditions are found in Tractate Sotah. This may be because Tractate Sotah focuses on various unusual rituals conducted when the Temple stood, and this leads to Rabbinic reflection on the themes of what has been lost (including *Ruah ha-Kodesh*) with the Temple's destruction and if there is any chance to regain it. Other reasons await further study.

I noted different and sometimes contradictory traditions about the nature and availability of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the Rabbinic present. The contention that *Ruah ha-*

Kodesh in its role as prophetic inspiration has ceased or been suspended develops at around the same time that the usage of a "hypostaticized" *Ruah ha-Kodesh* grows and develops in the Aggadic Midrashim. This divine metonym is much more than a "free play of imagery," but it is hardly a materialistic conception or a demiurge to be worshipped. Rather, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* again takes the form of a *speaker*, as it once spoke through the prophets, but now personified as the divine voice in Scripture.

Ruah ha-Kodesh, in time past (and eschatological future) the voice of prophecy, slowly emerges as the divine voice of Torah. Moreover, if "Torah is a figurative trope for God" and Midrash is a "kind of conversation the Rabbis invented in order to enable God to speak to them from between the lines of scriptures,"[536] then the Aggadic figure of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* personified, participating in the Midrashic dialogue along with the Rabbis of the Oral Torah, seems to indicate that prophecy itself has now been transformed into Midrash as the ongoing means of divine communication. The *Bat Kol*—which is all that is said to remain of prophecy—gives distinct announcements in the past tense. And yet, through the active declarations of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, God is still understood to be speaking to mankind, in the eternal present of Aggadic time and space.[537] When *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is quoted, whether as an authority in Pesikta Rabbati 34-37, a passionate lamenter in Lamentations Rabbah 1:45-50, or as a participant in the Midrashic dialectic in Lev. Rabbah 4:1, the Midrashist in effect says that God is still speaking with us. The historical phenomena of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* may have been suspended until Messianic times, or been tamed to the small domestic sphere, but *Ruah*

[536] Stern, *Midrash and Theory*, 30.

ha-Kodesh personified as the divine voice of Torah never stops talking and interacting with human beings.

This personification of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has some gendered significance. Ancient numinous Wisdom was already identified with Torah in Hellenistic documents, and is now revived as the feminine voice of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*, albeit in a subtle way. Particularly in the Bavli and later texts, she is gradually identified and merged with the *Shekhinah*, the more silent and passive feminine divine presence. Her voice is alternately compassionate, demanding, clairvoyant, or humorous. Many uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* offering irony, moral lessons, or just the "bigger picture" in Scripture may reconnect it with the Wisdom tradition of Proverbs. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is not the fully developed feminine figure of the Kabbalistic Shekhinah, but she nonetheless presents the divine feminine in an active role, an echo of biblical Wisdom, communicating with the Sages and evoking their responses.

In the course of my inquiry, I encountered many questions for further study. I have ranged broadly, and many topics beckon for deeper analysis. I have touched on the possible influence of Christian doctrine on the uses of *Ruah ha-Kodesh*. The substitution of *Shekhinah* for *Ruah ha-Kodesh* in the Bavli (and their occasional exchange in various editions of other rabbinic texts) is certainly an area for further research. I have looked in a general way at the Wisdom/Logos/*Ruah ha-Kodesh* connection, but this, too, would welcome a more thorough investigation. A possible connection to the Targumic Memra has only been hinted at and could also be explored in more depth.

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[537] Stern, *Midrash and Theory*, 93.

Another topic for further study is the use of various forms and conventions of speech which were reviewed in general terms. For example, the formula of *tsovahat min ha-shamayim* (cries out from heaven) was found to carry over to other personifications, including the *Bat Kol* and *Tsedakah.* It would be very interesting to analyze the contexts, and the literary and rhetorical purposes for which such all such formulations are used. The "reciprocal" genre or form (*Ruah ha-Kodesh* or the Holy One, blessed be He, responding in a "duet" or "hallel" like style to human beings) is a powerful aggadic form that could well be explored and analyzed in greater detail. What are the origins and uses of this form throughout Rabbinic Literature? These and many more questions await further study.

One thing has become clear in the course of this study. According to some Rabbinic authors, *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has virtually ceased in the Biblical form of prophecy, and yet it has never really been silenced. It has just taken on new forms, in which it continues to communicate and interact with and through human beings. *Ruah ha-Kodesh* is the divine voice of the Torah which speaks to and through human beings. To use the imagery of the Aggadah itself, the well of *Ruah ha-Kodesh* has not run dry, but continues flowing abundantly for all who merit to draw from it in joy.

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Vita

Julie Hilton Danan was born in Passaic, New Jersey, on March 16, 1959, the eldest daughter of Dr. Charles Bernard Hilton and Betty Hilton, and moved to San Antonio, Texas, as a child. After graduating from Alamo Heights High School in 1997, she entered Plan II at the University of Texas at Austin. In 1978-79, she studied in the combined Jewish Studies Program at Bar-Ilan University, before transferring to Tel-Aviv University, where she completed her B.A. in English Literature, with honors, in 1982. Her book, *The Jewish Parents' Almanac*, was published by Jason Aronson in 1994. From 1990-2003, she served as spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Am, a Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation in San Antonio. She began her graduate studies in 1995, and in May, 2000, received a Master of Arts degree in Hebrew Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. In July of 2000, Rabbi Danan received rabbinic ordination after five years of study in the ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal Rabbinic Program. In the fall of 2005, she was admitted to candidacy in the Ph.D. program in Hebrew Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Part of her doctoral coursework was fulfilled at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, and at California State University, Chico. Since 2003, Rabbi Danan serves as rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel in Chico, California, where she is also a lecturer in Religious Studies and Modern Jewish Studies at California State University, Chico. She has been active in interfaith dialogue as well as in Ohalah, the Jewish Renewal Rabbinic Association. Rabbi Danan is married to Avraham (Albert) Danan, and they are the parents of five children.

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