

# HEKHALOT RABBATI

## היכלות רבתי

### THE GREATER TREATISE CONCERNING THE PALACES OF HEAVEN

*translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by*  
Morton Smith

*corrected by*  
Gershom Scholem

*transcribed and edited with notes by*  
Don Karr

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Shaye J. D. Cohen

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editor and executor. Reviewers may quote brief passages.

## Preface to the July 1995 edition

The following sections of *Hekhalot Rabbati* (hereafter HR) have been edited from an English draft prepared by Morton Smith (1915-1991). The draft shows corrections and marginal notes made by Gershom Scholem (1897-1982). Smith made the translation in the early 'forties from an unpublished edition (in the original Hebrew and Aramaic) prepared by Scholem and Chaim Wirszubski (1915-1977). In a note\* accompanying the photocopy of HR, Smith stated that the translation was based on a "somewhat inferior manuscript" (MS New York 8128) and that "a new translation based on two better manuscripts is now being made." That was 1981.

In 1978, David Blumenthal published *Understanding Jewish Mysticism: A Source Reader*, vol. 1 (Ktav Publishing House, New York), which contained a translation of roughly the second half of HR prepared by Lauren Grodner. The translation was based on the edition of S. A. Wertheimer in his *Batei Midrashot*, with some adaptations according to spot English translations in

- (1) Smith's "Observations on *Hekhalot Rabbati*" in *Biblical and Other Studies* edited by Alexander Altmann (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963);
- (2) Scholem's *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1960; 2nd, improved edition: 1965);
- (3) Scholem's *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1941; reprinted frequently).

In 1982, Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan presented again roughly the second half of HR in English in *Meditation and Kabbalah* (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, Inc.), adding chapters I and II as a preface. Kaplan also based his work on Wertheimer, correcting it according to other versions.

It is now July 1995, and the *first* half of HR has yet to be published in English, so I have been grateful to the late Professor Smith for having provided me with a copy of his draft, whatever its shortcomings.

The following is a presentable edition of the first half of HR\*\*, prepared to fill the gap until the whole of HR appears in translation. (Elliot R. Wolfson stated in a footnote in his recent book that he was preparing an annotated translation for Paulist Press. I called Paulist to inquire as to the likely publication date, but they had never heard of the project. [See Wolfson, *Through a Speculum That Shines*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994: page 92, note 83].)

The as-yet unpublished (in English, at any rate) "first half," presented here, is Smith's Chapters I to XII. Smith's Chapter XIII is where Grodner's translation begins, though she calls it "Chapter 15." Kaplan's translation cuts in a chapter or so later. Through this typescript, numbers in square brackets indicate paragraph (segment, or *microform*) numbers from *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, edited by Peter Schäfer, Margarete Schlüter, and Hans Georg von Mutius (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1981). In recent scholarly books and articles, it has become conventional to refer to *Synopse* numbers when citing or quoting *hekhalot* material.\*\*\*

—Don Karr

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\* March 17, 1981.

\*\* The transcription below has been completed. See "Preface to the December 2008 edition."

\*\*\* My apologies: The *Synopse* correlations are somewhat inconsistent in CHAPTERS XIV-XXX.

Preface to the January 2009 edition

Smith's chapters XIV-XXX have been added to the transcription, making this a complete edition of Smith's translation.

Inconsistencies in Smith's spelling have been retained, *e.g.*, within a few lines we find "spendour" and "splendor" (as in CHAPTER XXIV); elsewhere, "Shekinah" and "Shekhinah."

To place *Synopse* § numbers, I have compared segments of Smith's translation with passages translated in

- Boustani, Ra'anan. *From Martyr to Mystic: Rabbinic Martyrology and the Making of Merkavah Mysticism*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.
- Halperin, David J. *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988.
- Kuyt, Annalies. *The 'Descent' to the Chariot. Towards a Description of the Terminology, Place, Function and Nature of the YERIDAH in Hekhalot Literature*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995.

It is of interest to follow the hapless course of Smith's translation of HR in the letters recently published as *Morton Smith and Gershom Scholem, Correspondence 1945-1982*, edited with an introduction by Guy G. Stroumsa (Leiden – Boston: Brill: 2008). The HR translation is mentioned more than two dozen times over the full range of years covered; indeed, the first mention is in 1945, the last in 1982.

My sincere thanks to Professor Shaye J. D. Cohen of Harvard University, literary executor to Morton Smith, for granting me permission to reproduce Smith's translation of HR.

I sincerely hope that readers will inform me of errors.

—Don Karr

# THE GREATER TREATISE CONCERNING THE PALACES OF HEAVEN

*translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic by Morton Smith  
with corrections by Gershom Scholem  
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(...) = Smith's additions  
[...] (words) = Smith's additions  
[...] (numbers) = *Synopse* § numbers  
{...} (letters/words) = my additions (DK)  
{...} (ellipses) = a gap – a place where material appears in other MSS

## CHAPTER I:

[81] Said Rabbi Ishmael: What are those songs which he recites who would behold the vision of the Merkabha, who would descend in peace and would ascend in peace?

[82] Greatest of all [his achievements] it is that [the angels] have a care for him, to gather him in and bring him unto the chambers of the palace of the seventh heaven, to cause him to stand on the right hand of the throne of the glory of God; for there be times when he standeth over against Tazsh the Lord God of Israel, to see all that which is done before the throne of His glory and to know all that which is destined to come to pass in the world:

Who shall be cast down, who exalted;  
Who shall be weakened, who made strong;  
Who shall be crushed with poverty, who made rich;  
Who shall die, who shall live;  
From whom shall inheritance be taken,  
To whom shall inheritance be given;  
Who shall be granted the Law for his portion  
And who be given Wisdom.

[83] Greatest of all\* it is that he beholdeth all the works of the children of men, yea even those which they work in their secret chambers, whether these be seemly works or works corrupt:

A man stole – he knoweth and recognizeth it;  
A man committed adultery – he knoweth and recognizeth it;  
A man committed murder – he knoweth and recognizeth it;  
A man was suspect to have lain with a woman in her uncleanness –  
he knoweth and recognizeth it (the truth of the matter);  
A man spread slander – he knoweth and recognizeth it.

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\* “Greatest of all” is Scholem’s correction from §83 onward. Smith had “Still greater,” which may indeed make better sense. Kaplan opens each of these lines, “When one is on a (still) higher level...”

[84] Greatest of all it is that he recognizeth all those who know sorcery.

Greatest of all it is that any man who lift up his hand against him and smite him is clothed with scalls and covered with leprosy and crowned with a pox.

Greatest of all it is that any man who slander him is subject to all manner of injuries: morbid growths and discolourations and wounds which give rise to running ulcers.

[85]     Greatest of all it is that he is set apart from all the children of men and is exalted in all his doings and is honored by those above and those below. And if any man find cause of offense in him, upon that man do offenses, great and evil and harsh, fall from heaven. And if any man stretch forth his hand against him in reproach, against that man doth the heavenly court of justice stretch forth its hand to consume him from the world.

      Greatest of all it is that all men are set before him as silver before the refiner, to know which is alloyed silver, which is pure silver. And, moreover, he beholdeth in families:

      How many in a family be children of forbidden unions,  
      How many in a family be children of their mother's impurity,  
      How many in a family be wounded in the stones,  
      How many in a family be cut off of their privy members,  
      How many in a family be children of slaves,  
      How many in a family be children of the uncircumcised,  
      How many in a family be unfit for the priesthood.

## CHAPTER II:

[86]     Greatest of all it is that any man who harden his face against him to gainsay him is darkened from the light of the balls of his eyes.

      Greatest of all it is that if any man treat him despitefully he leaves neither root nor branch nor yet inheritor.

      Greatest of all it is that any man who spread evil report against him is consumed, his judgment is determined and no mercy is had upon him.

{...}

[92]     Greatest of all it is that in the heavenly court of justice, three times each day (from the day when permission was given to Israel, to the honest and to the upright, to the humble and to the humiliated, to the understanding and to the chosen and to the separated, that they might descend to the Merkabha and ascend thence) three times each day they blow the trumpets thrice and excommunicate with the lesser excommunication and again excommunicate with the greater excommunication, saying: "Let him be excommunicated to Tazsh the Lord God of Israel, to him and to the throne of His glory and to the crown upon His head, to the heavenly court of justice and to the earthly court of justice and to all the host of heaven and to all its servants, he who standeth before one beholding the Merkabha and who abandoneth him."

[93]     Said Rabbi Ishmael: Thus ran the teaching as to the vision of the Merkabha: He who beholdeth the Merkabha hath no right to stand up [out of courtesy to a superior], except before three authorities only: before a king and before a high priest and before a sanhedrin (and that, when a patriarch is with the sanhedrin, thus if a patriarch is not with a sanhedrin, then even before a sanhedrin he shall not stand up). And should he stand up he would be guilty of death because he had stood up before it, and he would lessen his days and cut short his years.

[94]     Said Rabbi Ishmael: What be the words of the songs which a man doth recite when he descendeth to the Merkabha? Let him begin and recite the principal songs [OR, the first songs]:

      The beginning of praise and the commencement of song  
      The beginning of jubilation and the commencement of exultation  
      Do the princes sing who serve each day  
      The Lord God of Israel and the throne of His glory;  
      They bear up the wheel of the throne of His glory, [singing]:  
      "Sing, sing for joy, supernal dwelling!

“Shout, shout for joy, precious vessel!  
 “Made marvelously and a marvel.  
 “Surely thou shalt gladden the King who sitteth upon thee,  
 “[With a joy] as the joy of the bridegroom in his bridechamber.  
 [Thus said I] when I came to take refuge under the shadow of Thy wings  
 In the joy of my heart which rejoiced in thee.  
 (For thy converse [my heart] is with the converse of the King  
 And with thy Maker thou dost hold discourse.)  
 (As it is said, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.”)

- [95]      “From the praise and song of each day,  
              “From the jubilation and exaltation of each hour,  
              “And from the utterance which preceedeth out of the mouths of  
                              the holy ones  
              “And from the melody which wellet up out of the mouths of  
                              the servants  
              “Mountains of fire and hills of flame  
              “Are piled up and hidden and poured out each day.”  
              (As it is said, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.”)

### CHAPTER III:

- [96]      “Why should’st thou be affrighted, faithful servant?  
              “Why should’st thou be terrified, servitor beloved?”  
              “I say to thy face, Zoharariel, Lord God of Israel,  
              “If I be not affrighted, who is he that shall be affrighted?  
              “If I be not terrified, who is he that shall be terrified?  
              “For I am summoned before the Omnipotent six hours in each day,  
              “And a thousand times I am dragged upon my knees  
              “Until I touch the throne of glory.”

And then the voice would answer say{ing}:  
 (As it is said [Ez. 1:25]: “And there was a voice above the firmament  
 that was over their heads; when they stood they let down their wings.”)  
 “As for those who practice upon you those practices –  
 “Reproach shall not be cast upon their words,  
 “Nor shall any contradict their discourse,  
 “Nor any contradict their words.”  
 His kingly servants behold the King majestic  
 Enthroned in the chambers of the palace of silence,  
 Dread and fear, holiness and purity.  
 (As it is said, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.”)

- [97]      King of miracles, King of powers,  
              King of wonders, King transcendent.  
              Thy throne doth fly and standeth still.  
              Years very many, generations without end have passed  
              Since thou didst drive the peg for the weaving of the web  
              On which the perfection of the world and the excellence thereof do stand

And even yet hath Thy throne not rested its foot upon the firm ground  
of the seventh heaven,  
But as a bird doth fly it fly and standeth still.

- [98] The loftiest of the lofty, they whose brows be bound with diadems,  
\*And all angels, the chief hypostases which Thou hast created,  
Stand harnessed beneath the throne of glory  
And do hold it up continually with strength, might and power.  
And they also have not rested their feet upon the firm ground of the  
seventh heaven,  
But as a bird do they fly yet stand still.

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\* A marginal note in Smith's hand at this place reads: "Translated at first "all the angels of the chief hypostases" & Prof. Scholem corrected to this {as shown above}, which seems to suppose מואכִי instead of מואכִי. What is the final Hebrew text?"

- [99] And three times in each day  
Doth the throne of Thy glory prostrate itself before Thee and say to Thee,  
"Zoharariel, Lord God of Israel,  
"Pray seat Thyself upon me, O splendid King,  
"For Thy burden is delightful to me  
"And weigheth not heavy upon me."  
(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.")

- [100] Wonderful loftiness and strange lordship  
Is the loftiness of exultation and the lordship of splendor  
With which the angel of the presence doth conduct himself  
Three times each day  
In the heavenly court of justice  
As he goeth and cometh upon the seventh heaven  
Which is upon the heads of the cherubim and upon the heads of the ophanim  
And upon the heads of the holy beasts.

- [101] And the cherubim and the ophanim and the holy beasts  
Are harnessed and stand beneath the throne of glory.  
And when they behold anyone in the height  
As he goeth and cometh upon the seventh heaven  
(Which is upon the heads of the cherubim and upon the heads of the ophanim  
And upon the heads of the holy beasts)  
They are terrified and affrighted and faint and fall backward,  
For no creature is able to attain unto that place  
By a distance of one hundred and eighty five thousand myriad parasangs  
Because of the streaming fires which flow and issue forth  
From the mouths of the cherubim and from the mouths of the ophanim and  
from the mouths of the holy beasts  
Who open their mouths to say "Holy"  
When Israel saith before Him "Holy"  
(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.")

[102]       A measure of holiness, a measure of dominion,  
A measure of fearfulness, a measure of consternation,  
A measure of trembling, a measure of shaking,  
A measure of terror, a measure of panic  
Is the measure of the garment of Zoharariel Lord God of Israel  
Who cometh crowned to the throne of His glory.

103]       And it is every part engraved from within and from without with  
              the words *The Lord, The Lord*.  
And the eye of no creature is able to behold it,  
Not the eyes of flesh and blood, and not the eyes of His servants.  
And as for him who doth behold it, or glimpseth or seeth it,  
Hallucinations lay hold upon the balls of his eyes  
And the balls of his eyes emit and send forth torches of fire  
And these enkindle him and these burn him.  
(For the fire which cometh out from the man who beholdeth,  
This enkindle him and burneth him.)  
Why? Because of the measure of the garment  
Of Zoharariel, Lord God of Israel,  
Who cometh crowned to the throne of His glory.  
And pleasant and sweet is His beauty  
As the appearance of the beauty of the glory of the majesty  
Of the eyes of the likeness of the holy beasts  
(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.")

#### CHAPTER IV:

[104]       Who is like unto our King among all the lofty ones of them  
              who lay hold upon kingship?  
Who is like our Maker? Who is like unto the Lord our God?  
Who is like unto Him among those who knot the knots of diadems?  
For with six voices do the supernal servants,  
The bearers of the throne of His glory,  
The cherubim and the ophanim and the holy beasts, sing before Him,  
For each voice is exalted beyond its fellows and differeth from  
              that which was before it.  
The first voice: Everyone who heareth it at once crieth out and  
              prostrateth himself.  
The second voice: Everyone who hearkeneth unto it at once falleth into  
              confusion and thereafter returneth not.  
The third voice: Everyone who heareth it at once is seized by con-  
              vulsions and at once dieth.  
The fourth voice: Everyone who hearkeneth unto it at once hath the  
              skull of his head and his body broken and  
              most of the ends of his ribs are torn out.  
The fifth voice: Everyone who heareth it at once poureth himself out  
              as a vessel and is utterly dissolved into blood.

The sixth voice: Everyone who hearkeneth unto it at once is seized at heart by a fierce fire, and his heart is tumultuous and overturneth his inmost bowels, and his bile is dissolved within him as to be as water.  
(As it is said, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.”)

[105] Who is like unto our King? Who is like unto our Maker? Who is like unto the Lord our God?  
The sun and the moon emit and send forth the crown on His head.  
The Pleiades and Orion and the star of morning,  
Constellations and stars and planets  
Flow and issue forth from the garment of Him  
Who sitteth crowned upon the throne of His glory.  
And He gave forth a great light from between His eyes.  
For King of miracles, King of powers,  
King of wonders, King transcendent is He.  
(As it is said, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.”)

[106] Said Rabbi Ishmael: All these songs did Rabbi Akiba hear when he descended to the Merkabha, and he laid hold upon them and learned them before the throne of God’s glory, for there His servants sang them before God.

#### CHAPTER V:

[107] Said Rabbi Ishmael: That day was the fifth day of the week when there came abysmal tidings from the great city of Rome saying: “Four men from among the mighty of Israel have been seized – Rabbi Simon ben Gamaliel and Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha and Rabbi Elazar ben Dama and Rabbi Judah ben Baba; and eight thousand students from Jerusalem shall be their ransom.”

[108] And when Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah saw this decree, he caused me at once to descend to the Merkabha and I questioned Surya the Prince of the Presence. And he said to me: “Ten men did the heavenly court of justice write down, and gave them unto Sammael the wicked, the genius of Rome, saying: ‘Go out and destroy from the mighty of Israel every good member, thigh and shoulder, to fulfill the decree’ [Ex. 21.16]: “And he that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.” And the sons of Jacob stole Joseph their brother and sold him, what shall be done concerning them? At once was the authority given to Sammael to destroy ten of the mighty in their stead, in order to fulfill the decree. And a vengeance to be avenged upon him is laid up against him until the time shall come when [Is. 24.21] ‘The Lord shall punish the host of the high ones on high,’ for he shall be cut down and cast upon the earth, ne and all the princes of the kingdoms in the height, as the goats and sheep of the day of atonement.”

[109] Said Rabbi Ishmael: All these warnings and all these conditions were made known to and laid upon Sammael the wicked, and he saith, ‘I have taken all upon me provided only that ten of the mighty shall be destroyed, to wit: Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph, and Rabbi Judah ben Baba, and Rabbi Jeshbab the scribe, and Rabbi Hananya ben Teradyon, Rabbi Hozpit the interpreter, Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua, Rabbi Hanina ben Hakinai, Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha, Rabban Simon ben Gamaliel, Rabbi Eliezer ben Dama.’

[110] Said Rabbi Ishmael: What then did Zoharariel the Lord God of Israel? Because of the wrath with which He was filled against Sammael as having ~~taken~~ upon him all those conditions, [His patience] did not then suffice Him that He should say to the scribe: “Write decrees of punishment and great plagues, strong and harsh and

fearful and terrible, heavy and disgraceful against the wicked city, Rome.” Nay, but at once He Himself took paper and wrote upon the paper. And thus He wrote against the day of vengeance which is destined and laid up for the wicked city, Rome. “One cloud shall come up and stand above Rome six months and pour down a running sore upon man and upon beast and upon the silver and upon the gold and upon all the fruit and upon all kinds of metals. And thereafter shall another cloud come up and drive away its fellow and stand in its place six months and pour down a scall of leprosy and scab and pox and all manner of scalls whatsoever upon the wicked city Rome, until the time shall come when a man shall say to his fellow, ‘Behold, the wicked city Rome, she and all that which is in her, are thine for one farthing,’ and he shall say to him, ‘I want her not.’”

[111] Said Rabbi Ishmael: When I came and bore witness to this [which I had received] from before the throne of glory, all [my] fellows rejoiced and they made that day before Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah a day of feasting and rejoicing; and yet more - the Patriarch himself did say in his joy, “Bring in before us all manner of musical instruments, and we shall drink wine to their accompaniment, inasmuch as Zoharariel the Lord God of Israel shall surely wreak vengeance and do wonders and wonders of wonders upon the wicked city Rome, and we shall exult with joy of harp and flute.”

[112] Said Rabbi Ishmael: What then did the heavenly court of justice? They at once gave command to the angels of torment, and these descending, wrought upon Lupinus Caesar utter destruction; and there was not left in all his palace a fugitive nor a remnant, and Rufa the wife of his youth and all his mistresses and all his maid-servants and all his concubines were cast dead on the earth before him, and all his sons and all his daughters and all the delights of his eyes were rent asunder and thrown [dead] before him.

[113] Said Rabbi Ishmael: What was done to that wicked man himself? He was abased and made contemptible by reason of his dead, that they lay ever before him. And whensoever and man stretched forth his hand to take one of the dead of Lupinus Caesar, that he should lay it upon the bier and take it forth to bury it, then would the abyss swallow up that body, and, when the burier withdrew his hand, would the abyss again vomit it forth. Thus did his dead lie ever before him; and yet more – they were noisome and stank throughout all his royal palace and he was ashamed before the royal princes who came in and went out before his face.

## CHAPTER VI:

[117] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Surya, the Prince of the Presence, spoke to me [saying]: “Friend, why did all this disgrace, all this revilement, and all this shame befall that wicked man? Because of Rabbi Hanaya ben Teradyon. For when the day came which he had set for his execution, [some of his servants] said to him, ‘Lord Caesar, repeal [the sentence which] thou [hast passed] upon that sage, that he be not killed.’ [But] he replied, ‘Let him die. For though I and all these of my family, yea, even though all Rome be destroyed with him – yet in this matter I will not change my mind.’”

[118] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Surya, the Prince of the Presence, spoke to me [saying]: “Friend, I shall tell thee why the strength of that wicked man was great: Because he came from the line of Esau the wicked, and therefore he confirmed and strengthened and hardened his heart.”

[119] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Surya, the Prince of the Presence, spoke to me [saying]: “Friend I say unto thee, thou shalt not be grieved at this death in which thou departest to thine eternal dwelling, for already hath Zoharariel the Lord God of Israel filled His mouth with laughter at that wicked man and said: ‘By the glory of the loftiness of the fearful palace in which I dwell, and by the throne of My glory which is My concern and which I leave not from [the time of] its creation and unto eternity: In Gehenna, at the hand of Rabbi Hananya ben Teradyon, I will cause that wicked man to taste the taste of flame of fire and fiery coals of cherubim and ophanim and the holy beasts.’”

[120] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Surya, the Prince of the Presence, spoke to me [saying]: “Friend, I shall tell thee what did then the pure effulgence of the splendor of the effulgence of ’Uzhaya the Lord God of Israel. At that time He commanded me and I descended and banished and drove out Lupinus Caesar from his palace in which he was sleeping during the night and took him to a pig sty and a dog pound and put him asleep [there], and I brought in Rabbi Hananya and put him asleep in the palace of Lupinus Caesar. Next day came the executioners who had been commanded concerning Rabbi Hananya to this effect: ‘He is sitting and doing wonders in the school and is teaching law to the mighty of Israel. Off with his head!’ Lupinus Caesar appeared to them as Rabbi Hananya ben Teradyon and they cut off his head. And Rabbi Hananya ben Teradyon bound on the diadem of his royalty and reigned over the wicked city Rome in the likeness of Lupinus Caesar, six months, and killed in it six thousand bishops, a thousand bishops a month. [121] And something in the form of Rabbi Hananya ben Teradyon was then put before the men of the wicked city Rome and they laid hold upon it and cast it into the fire. And who was he whom they cast into the fire? Lupinus Caesar. For after he was killed, he was made alive again in the heavenly court of justice. And they laid hold upon him and cast him into the fire, and he was in anguish in the midst of the fierce fire. And after this manner did they with all ten sages of Israel, for the proclamation goeth forth from the seventh heaven proclaiming and saying in the heavenly court of justice: ‘As for the design which the wicked city Rome designed against the mighty of Israel to destroy them, Zoharariel the Lord God of Israel has agreed, but even the meditation of the heart which Rome meditatemeth against his children is weighty to them as if they carried it out.’”

[The First Apocalypse]

[122] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Seganzegael, the Prince of the Presence, said to me, “My friend, sit in my bosom and I shall tell thee what is to come upon Israel.” I sat in his bosom and he gazed upon me and did weep, and his tears ran down continually from his eyes and fell upon my face. I said to him, “Why does your Excellency weep?” He said to me, “My friend, come, and I shall take thee in and teach thee what is laid up for Israel, the holy people.” He grasped me by my hand and took me in to the inmost chambers and to the most secret rooms and to the treasuries. He took tablets and opened them and showed me letters written with griefs each different from the other. I said to him, “For whom are these?” He said to me, “For Israel.” I said to him, “And can Israel bear them?” He said to me, “Come tomorrow and I shall teach thee of griefs yet different from these.” On the morrow he took me in to the inmost chambers and showed me griefs more bitter than the first: [There] those [who shall perish] by the sword [were destined already] for the sword; those [who shall perish] by hunger, for hunger; those who shall be led captive, for captivity. I said to him, “And did then, your Excellency, Israel alone sin?” He said to me, “Griefs more bitter than these are laid on them anew each day. And when, assembling in synagogues and schools, they say, ‘Amen. Let the great name be blessed,’ we do not permit these [griefs] to go forth from the inmost chambers.”

[123] When I went down from before him I heard a voice speaking in the Aramaic language, and thus it said:  
“The holy shrine shall be a ruin;  
and the temple, a fire burning;  
“And the dwelling of the king, desolation;  
and she in whom the king rejoiced shall mourn as a widow;  
“And the virgins and the youths shall be spoiled;  
and the servants of the king, be killed;  
“And the pure altar, polluted;  
and the table which was set before the Lord, taken as spoil by the enemy;  
“And Jerusalem shall be desolation;  
and the land of Israel trembling.”

[124] When I heard the voice of this vision I was terrified and struck silent and fell backwards. But then came the angel Hadariel and gave me breath and spirit and stood me upon my feet. He said to me, "My friend, what came over thee?" I said to him, "Your Excellency, is there no restoration for Israel?" He said to me, "Come, and I shall bring thee in to treasuries of consolations and to treasuries of salvations and shall show thee." He brought me in to treasuries of salvations and to treasuries of consolations and I beheld the companies of ministering angels, that they were sitting and weaving garments of salvations and making crowns of life and fixing in them precious stones and pearls and compounding all manner of spices and perfumed wines for the righteous. And I beheld one crown which differed from all the [other] crowns, and the sun and the moon and the twelve signs of the zodiac were fixed in it. I said to him, "Your Excellency, for whom are these crowns?" He said to me, "For Israel." "And that different crown, for whom is that destined?" He said to me, "For David, the king of Israel." I said to him, "Your Excellency, show me the glory of David." He said to me, "My friend, wait for three hours until David cometh hither and thou shalt behold his greatness." [125] He took me and seated me in his bosom. He said to me, "What dost thou see?" I said to him, "I see seven lightnings which strike as one." He said to me, "My son, close thine eyes that thou not be shaken by those that shall go forth to meet David." At once, all ophanim and seraphim and the holy beasts and treasuries of snow and treasuries of hail and clouds of glory and planets and stars and ministering angels and fiery spirits of the fourth heaven cried out in tumult, saying: "For the chief musician, a psalm of David. The heavens are telling the glory of God." And I heard a sound of a great uproar which came from Gozen, saying: "The Lord shall reign forever and ever." And behold David, the King of Israel, came first, and I beheld all the kings of the house of David following after him, and each had his crown on his head and the crown of David was more brilliant and differed from all the other crowns and its splendor went forth from one end of the world to the other. [126] When David went up to the great school which is in the firmament, there was set for him a throne of fire which was forty parasangs in height and double in length and double in breadth. And when David came and sat down upon his throne which was prepared for him opposite the throne of his Creator (and all the kings of the house of David sit before him, and all the kings of the house of Israel stand behind him) at once David arose and uttered songs and praises [such as] ear hath not heard from [the creation of] the world. And when David began and said, "The Lord shall rule forever; thy God, Zion, to all generations, Hallelujah!" Metatron and all his servants began and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, all the earth is full of His glory," and the beasts praise God saying, "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His [dwelling] place," and the firmaments say, "The Lord shall reign forever," and all the earth saith, "The Lord has been King, the Lord is King, the Lord shall be King, forever and ever," and all the kings of the house of David say, "The Lord shall be King over all the earth, in that day shall the Lord be one and His name One."

{...}

[The Second Apocalypse]

[130] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Thus did 'Akhtariel Yah the Lord God of Hosts converse with me, saying: "My friend Ishmael, know that I have not given to any of the nations of the world [permission] to enslave Israel, except for one day in this world, [and that] because Israel forsook Me and bowed down to other gods and set up a graven image in my house (and [therefore] did I drive My Shekinah forth from [that place] where I had sworn to cause My name to dwell forever). And they did anger Me and did provoke Me, they, their kings and their princes, their priests and their prophets. And for seven hundred years did they remain separate from Me. And I swore in Mine anger that I would subdue them beneath the [kingdom of] iron and the [kingdom of] clay. And their princes shall they kill and their kings shall they slaughter, their youths shall they cast out and their children shall they dash to pieces, and they shall make the yoke of their old men heavy and shall decree upon them harsh decrees until they shall pine away in their iniquity and in the iniquity of their fathers. Either let them return to Me, or the end shall be fulfilled, for thus have I sent unto them by the hand of My servants the prophets, that I will visit upon them the days of the Baalim when they did burn incense to them. And even as they did provoke Me to anger seven hundred years, so I will surely anger them and make them jealous with a foolish nation and a

nation for which I set apart no kingdom, in that day when I cast lots for all the peoples. Because, even because....”

[131] Said Rabbi Ishmael: When I heard “Because, even because” my hands grew feeble and I fell prostrate upon my face and I was terrified and there was no force in me, neither to speak nor to answer. At once did Metatron the Prince of the Presence answer and said to me, “My friend, rise and stand and strengthen thy loins and understand and be intelligent in [the matter of] the words which He will speak to thee.” And I heard a voice going forth from between the two cherubim and saying: “My friend, Ishmael, fear not, for I will not exact from them payment measure for measure, for I know that they have not in them the strength to endure; but I act for My Name’s sake and I set division between the nations and great enmity between Edom and Ishmael, that they make war one with another and so destroy not utterly my people Israel.”

[132] Said Rabbi Ishmael: I sat and did reckon the reckoning which was first given me, and I reckoned to Babylon seventy years, and to Media fifty and two years, and to Greece an hundred and eighty years, and for Edom I had not yet made reckoning till I arose in the same prayer and in the same affliction in which I had first fallen aforetime. Straightway I heard a voice from heaven going forth and saying, “My friend, Ishmael, know thou that if Israel repent, forthwith shall they be re- deemed, for thus did I stipulate with Isaiah [30.15]: ‘In repenting and rest shall ye be saved.’”

[133] Said Rabbi Ishmael: I retorted word against word, and said, “If they do not repent, shall they never be redeemed?” He said to me, “Either they shall pine away in their iniquity or the end shall be completed.”

[134] Said Rabbi Ishmael: I retorted word against word, and said, “And may not the end of this wicked kingdom be revealed?” I heard a voice going forth and saying, “My friend Ishmael, at the end of the fulfillment of seven hundred years, from the time of the building of {the} house [which was built by the authority] of the kings of Persia, all things shall come to an end and they shall finally cease from off all the face of the earth and that shall be the cleansing of iniquities. Even as they did forsake Me seven hundred years and did serve the Baalim, so I, even I, will forsake them and will cast them off into the hand of the cruel, seven hundred years. And there shall be for them no saviour, no priest, neither teacher, and no prophet and no king and no leader and no prince until they turn and return to Me in prayer and in supplications for mercy. And yet, if they seek My Face, I shall be found of them, and I shall bring them back to their land.”

[135] Said Rabbi Ishmael: I retorted word against word and said, “And if they do not repent shall they never be redeemed?” He said to me “I will set over them a king whose decrees shall be harsh as Haman’s, and against their will, by compulsion, they shall return to Me. And this shall be [Daniel 8.23] ‘a king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences.’ [7.25] ‘And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and he shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time.’”

[136] Said Rabbi Ishmael: I reckoned the reckoning: For Babylon seventy years and for Media fifty and two and for Greece and hundred and eighty and for Edom accordingly I found the years to the destruction of the second temple to complete seven hundred years. And I sought in books which Daniel had closed up and sealed, and I found written in them: “Seven hundred years were determined and decreed upon Thy people and upon Thy holy city and at their fulfillment shall the transgressors cease and the sinners shall come to an end and the iniquity of a small people shall be atoned and He that is righteous forever shall bring the Messiah who has remained hidden and sealed [from the sight] of all the prophets and he shall anoint the Holy of Holies.”

[137] Said Rabbi Ishmael: And even as Daniel explained I found written [Daniel 9.24] “Seventy weeks are decreed upon Thy people and upon Thy holy city to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up vision and prophecy and

to anoint the Holy of Holies.” And these seventy weeks be a sign for seven hundred years, and when these do come to their end they shall end at even{ing}, and straightway shall come the light, for it is said [Zachariah 14.7] “And it shall come to pass that at evening time there shall be light.”

[138] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Why was this [vision of the] end revealed to me? Inasmuch as I had set my heart to study wisdom and to reckon seasons and times, minutes and ends, and a period of periods and a season of seasons. And I turned my face to the supernal Holy One in prayer and in supplications and in fasting and in sackcloth and in mourning, and I did often pray saying: “O Lord God of Hosts, God of Israel, how long are we to be loathsome and broken, made a mock and a derision among the peoples. All those who see us will mock us and say, ‘These are they, the people of the Lord. Why did He smite them and why did He cast them out from before His face?’ And they say, ‘Because of the greatness of their iniquity and the strength of their sin did He abominate them and loathed them and put them away from before His face and He shall bring them back no more.’” And because of this prayer did ‘Akhtariel Yah, the Lord God of Israel converse with me.

#### [The Third Apocalypse]

[140] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Metatron, the great Prince of the Presence, spoke to me [saying]: “My friend, come and I shall reveal the Messianic end which even they of old time were not worthy that it should be revealed to them, but thy glory is weighed equal to [that of] Aaron the Priest. As for that generation in which the son of David shall come, in it are all the peoples like unto a woman in travail, eating and drinking but with no thought. And there shall be wailing among the holy, and cries of terror among the images of the mighty ones, and trembling shall arise in the cities and quaking in the provinces. And the vine shall yield its fruits, yet shall wine cost dear, and the olives shall be smitten and oil shall be dear. And none that laboreth, he and his household, all the day long suffereth to support himself and to support his household, because of the great cost of living. And when the nations of the world do see that this be so, they give authority for assistance in all things, as it is said [Psalms 97.7] ‘Ashamed be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols.’ And when thou seest all these signs, know that this is the Messianic end.

[142] Thereafter come four from the four winds of the world and these be they: the children of Maskidia from one quarter, the children of Shabhur from one quarter, the children of Mash and Marghish from one quarter, the children of Piston from one quarter and they make war with one another and kill one another, and there fall of them, that day, more than two hundred thousand slain. At that time do they say to one another, ‘Why should we make war? Come and we shall compromise and whoever winneth shall be supreme king and we shall all serve him.’

[143] Then shall the Messiah come forth from prison with [naught save] his staff and his sack, and he warneth them, ‘I am patient with you.’ Then do they say one to another, ‘With what shall he conquer us. His countenance is not that of men and his form is not that of men. His wealth is not that of men. His strength is not that of men. We are rich, strong, warlike, the children of kings. And this fellow – with what shall he conquer us?’ They say to him, ‘If we conquer you what do you give us?’ The Messiah saith unto them, ‘If you conquer me, behold I and all the children of Israel are your slaves.’ When they hear this, from the greatness of the love with which they love to enslave Israel doth each one say unto him ‘Say what thou wilt.’ The Messiah saith unto them, ‘The thing which I propose is small and is not great: He who bring to life all these slain shall be king over us.’ Straightway are their words stopped up and they have no mouth to speak. [144] Then doth the Messiah stand and wrap himself in prayer and gird himself as an hero before Him who spoke and the world was. He saith before Him, ‘Master of worlds, remember on my behalf the suffering and grief and darkness and obscurity in which I was cast, mine eyes which beheld no light and mine ears which heard great reviling and the scurvy of my skin upon my bones and the breaking of my heart in my vitals and the weakening of my strength with pain and grief. It is revealed and known before Thee that in this matter I have not acted for my own glory,

nor yet for the glory of my father's house have I acted, but for Thy glory have I acted, for Thy sake and for Thy temple {and} for Thy children who dwell in sorrow among the peoples of the world.' Then do those two hundred thousand stand upon their feet and say, 'We are of Israel, we are of Israel' as it is said [Zech. 2.15], 'And many nations shall join themselves unto the Lord.' Then doth the Messiah say unto them, 'Go ye and assemble all your brethren from all the nations.' And they go and assemble all Israel and bring them and cause them to stand before the Messiah as it is said [Isaiah 66.20], 'And they shall bring all your brethren out of all the nations as an offering unto the Lord.'"

[145] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Zegangael, the Prince of the Presence, said to me, "All the peoples of the world are destined to come to the Messiah and say to him, 'We have heard concerning thee that thou hast power to kill and to make alive. We pray thee, speak with the Holy One, blessed be He, that He receive from us a gift.' He saith unto them, 'And what gift do you bring to me?' They say unto him, 'We have destroyed the house of dwelling, from it we shall enter.'\* And we say unto them, 'Those men are wicked. He needeth not your building, for of it is written [Ps 147.2] "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem" etc.' They say unto him, 'We, if that be so, shall gather in it precious stones and pearls the like of which is not in all the world.' He saith unto them, 'Ye wicked, all precious stones and pearls are His, for it is said [Haggai 2.8], "The silver is Mine and the gold is Mine" etc.' Then doth the Holy Spirit answer them and saith unto them, 'Fools and evil-doers, what do ye bring in place of the great men and the lords whom ye have killed?' Straightway they go forth from before him in disappointment."

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\* In a marginal note, Scholem suggests that the reading of this quote be 'We shall enter from the temple which is destroyed'; that is, as their gift, the nations offer to rebuild the temple. This passage is similar to the offer—and rejection—of the Samaritans in Ezra 4.

[146] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Splendor of Height said to me, "Come and I shall show thee their appearance. Between firmament and firmament is hung water; between water and water, fire; between fire and fire, water; between water and water, fire and hail and water. Fire burneth more fiercely and there is a wall of fire on either side of the throne and seraphim standing before Him and saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts' and beasts uttering praise, 'Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His [dwelling] place.' And the firmament saith, 'The Lord shall reign forever.' And the earth saith, 'The Lord reigneth, He is apparelled with majesty.' And the seas and the rivers utter praise and say, 'To Him who divided the Red Sea into parts' etc."

[147] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Splendor of Height said to me, "I make a request of thee: Say unto Israel, 'Love the repentant.' For repentance reacheth and goeth to the throne of glory, three hundred and ninety firmaments (removed). The repentant are greater than the ministering angels. [148] For at the time when Israel went into exile, Metatron and Yikhael and Gabhriel said 'What shall we do?' Forthwith they laid their hands upon their heads and wept with a loud voice and said, 'Who will go up to the height of heights and weep before Him who spoke and the world was, that He shall return from the fierceness of His anger and shall have mercy upon His children. [149] Metatron said to them, 'I shall go up when they go up.' All those who glowed with fire shrank trembling from before him. When he had ascended [through] eighty firmaments the heavens and the heavens of the heavens shook and the holy ones above said with one voice, 'How comes it that the odor of one born of woman ascendeth on high' until the Holy One, blessed be He, said unto them, 'He is one of the servants of justice and of My seraphs. Permit him that he come and weep over [the fate of] My children who have gone into exile among wolves and among lions, and over their temple and their Law, that the son of the son of Nimrod the wicked has burned them, and over sages and students who were killed in the holy temple. Heaven forbid that My hands were relaxed and that I was not able to deliver them because they themselves relaxed from the study of the Law, and there were not among them penitents who might beseech mercy upon them. For if only there had been among them penitents who might have besought mercy upon them I had not made them over death.' Behold, thou hast learned that the repentant are greater than the ministering angels."

[150] Said Rabbi Ishmael: These heavens [of which I speak] are 390 [in number] for such [is the numerical value of the word] Shamaim [viz: *heavens*] in gematria. And lest thou shouldst say that these [heavens] alone exist [I state in advance that the fact is not so] but this far it is permitted to speak, from here on thou hast no right to speak. For there is no number to the membranes, and there is no end and reckoning, and there is no sum to firmaments of fire. And the conflagration cometh. But search not deeply into this matter, that thou be not banished from the world, but put an end [to the questionings] in thy heart.

[151] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Once I was burning whole burnt offering upon the altar and I beheld 'Akhtariel Yah the Lord of Hosts sitting on a throne high and lifted up. He said to me, "Ishmael, my son, bless Me." I said before Him, "Master of the Worlds, may it be Thy will, O Lord my God, that Thy mercy conquer Thine anger, and may Thy mercy prevail over Thine [other] attributes, and deal with Thy children according to Thine attribute of mercy, and walk, for their sakes, within the line of justice." And He nodded toward me.

#### CHAPTER VII:

[152] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Surya, the Prince of the Presence, spoke to me, saying, "Friend, I shall tell thee the praise of the King and of His throne." Therefore it is said:

Thou hast uplifted the throne of Thy glory upon the cherubim of heaven,  
And the ophanim of greatness do bear it,  
And creatures of frost, creatures of mist, creatures of flame,  
Crowned with loftiness and with splendor.  
And the eyes of Shaddai are lifted up upon them,  
And they were extended beneath it  
As rams beneath the plough.  
And it was erected upon their heads  
With strength, might and power.

(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.")

[153] Be exalted, be raised on high, be lifted up, O splendid King!  
Upon the throne raised high and lifted up, fearful and terrific.  
Thou dwellest in the chambers of the temple of loftiness.  
The servants of Thy throne are terrified and make tremble  
The heavens which are the footstool of Thy feet, each day,  
With voice of exultation and tumult of psalmody and roar of songs.

(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.")

[154] Messengers of the Power [of God] and awakeners of the Shekhinah  
(Tumultuous of voice, who magnify song  
To the voice of the servants and the voice of the mighty)  
Sing, with sweet mouth and with holy melody,  
Him who dwelleth in the lava stream of flaming coals.

[155] They bear up the wheel of the throne of His glory, [singing]:  
"Sing, sing for joy, supernal dwelling!  
"Shout, shout for joy, precious vessel!  
"Made marvelously and a marvel.  
"Surely thou shalt gladden the King who sitteth upon thee,  
"[With a joy] as the joy of the bridegroom in his bridechamber.  
"Let him rejoice, and let all the seed of Jacob be glad."  
[Thus said I] when I came to take refuge under the shadow of Thy wings  
In the joy of my heart which rejoiced in thee.

(For thy converse [my heart] is with the converse of the King  
And with thy Maker thou dost hold discourse.)  
(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.")

- [156] O wreathed with splendor, crowned with crowns,  
Supernal singers in the song of jubilation  
Extol ye the Lord of flame,  
For in the innermost Shekhinah, in the innermost chamber  
Of the chamber of His chambers do ye dwell.  
He hath distinguished your name from the name of His servants,  
He hath separated you from the servants of the Merkabha.  
He who nameth the name of one from among you –  
Fire flames, flame encircles,  
Blaze encompasseth, coals of splendor brought forth.  
(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.")

- [157] O beloved of the Fearful, chosen of the Most High,  
Ye who lift up [your] faces, whose converse is majestic,  
Agreeable and pleasant in the eyes of Shaddai,  
Who speak and are heard in the presence of the splendid King,  
Servants of his majesty, crying: "King majestic  
"Enthroned in the chambers of the palace of silence  
"Dread and fear, holiness and purity."  
(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.")

#### CHAPTER VIII:

- [158] O ye who cancel decrees, who annul vows,  
Who avert wrath, who quiet jealousy,  
Who cause love to be remembered, who set forth friendship  
Before the loftiness of the majesty of the fearful palace,  
What aileth ye that ye be fearful  
And there be times when ye rejoice?  
What aileth ye that ye do sing for exultation,  
And there be times when ye are terrified?  
They said:  
"When the ophanim of the power of God darken the Merkabha  
"We rejoice with great joy."  
(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.")
- [159] A lovely face, a majestic face,  
A face of beauty, a face of flame,  
Is the face of . . . . . the Lord God of Israel  
When He sitteth upon the throne of His glory  
And His dignity is established in the dwelling of His majesty.  
His beauty is more lovely than the beauty of the powers,  
His majesty surpasseth the majesty of the bridegrooms  
And brides in their bride-chambers.  
He that beholdeth Him is at once torn in pieces,  
And he that glimpseth His beauty at once poureth himself out as a vessel.

[160] They who serve Him to-day  
Serve Him not to-morrow,  
And they who serve Him to-morrow  
Serve Him never again.  
For their strength grew feeble and their faces darkened,  
Their hearts wandered and their eyes were obscured  
After [the vision of] His majesty, the splendor of the beauty of their King.  
(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy.")

Servitors beloved, servitors lovely,  
Servitors who hasten, servitors swift,  
Are they who stand upon the stone of the throne of the glory  
And who are stationed upon the wheel of the Merkabha.  
As the stone of the throne of the glory returneth upon them,  
As the wheel of the Merkabha snatches them  
They who stand to the right return and stand to the left  
And they who stand to the left return and stand to the right,  
And they who stand before return and stand behind  
And they who stand behind return and stand before.  
He who beholdeth the other saith, "This is he,"  
For the feature of the face of the one  
Is like the feature of the face of the other,  
And the feature of the face of the other  
Is like the feature of the face of the one.  
Happy the King of whom those be the servants!  
And happy the servants of whom this be the King!  
Happy the eye which feedeth itself . . . . .  
And which gazeth upon this wonderful light,  
A vision wonderful and exceeding strange!  
(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy.")

[161] Rivers of joy, rivers of rejoicing,  
Rivers of jubilation, rivers of content,  
Rivers of love, rivers of friendship,  
Pour themselves, issuing forth from before the throne of glory,  
Strengthen themselves and pass through the gates of the seventh heaven.  
From the sound of the playing of the harps of His beasts,  
From the sound of the exultation of the drums of His ophanim,  
And from the sound of music of the cymbals of His cherubim  
A sound strengtheneth itself and goeth forth in a great tumult  
When Israel saith before Him,  
"Holy, Holy, Holy."

#### CHAPTER IX:

[162] In the sound of the seas, in the tumult of rivers  
In the waves of Tarshish which the south wind troubleth,  
In the sound of the song of the throne of glory  
Which maketh music and praiseth the splendid King –

A multitude of sounds and great tumult! –  
Many did utter their voices  
Before the throne of glory, to aid it and to strengthen it,  
When it maketh music and applaudeth the Mighty One of Jacob.  
(As it is said, “Holy, holy, holy.”)

- [163] “Blessed be ye to the heavens and to the earth, ye who descend to the Merkabha,  
“If ye will say and will declare to My children what I do,  
“In morning prayer and in noonday and in evening prayer  
“And in each day and in each hour  
“When Israel saith before me ‘Holy.’  
“Teach them, and say unto them,  
“Lift up your eyes to the firmament over against your house of prayer  
“At the time when you say before Me “Holy.”  
“For I have no pleasure in all My world which I have created  
“Like in that time when your eyes are lifted up to Mine  
“And Mine eyes are lifted up to yours,  
“At the time you say before Me, ‘Holy.’  
“For the breath which goeth forth from your mouths at that time  
“Moveth and riseth up before Me as a pleasant savor.  
[164] “And bear witness to them, witness of what ye have seen,  
“What I do to the feature of the face of Jacob your father  
“Which is graven for Me upon the throne of My glory,  
“For at the time when you say before Me, ‘Holy,’  
“I bow down upon it and clasp it  
“And embrace it and kiss it  
“And My hands rest upon its arms three times  
“As against the three times that you say before Me, ‘Holy.’”  
(As it is said, “Holy, holy, holy.”)

- [165] Who will not attribute majesty to the King majestic,  
Who will not give praise to the King who is praised,  
Who will not hallow the King who is hallowed?  
For each day do powers and many wonders  
Come to pass before Him, each surpassing and more strange than the other.  
For from the breath of the eyelids of His chief servants,  
Which moveth and goeth out from their mouths  
When they make mention of that splendid name,  
The name which entereth by the ears and goeth out by the mouth  
And which is forgotten from the heart that is not fitted for it.  
(As it is said, “Holy, holy, holy.”)

- [166] For in that place where it be mentioned  
It lighteneth and dawneth and gildeth and silvereth  
And moveth topaz and onyx and sapphire,  
Carbuncle and emerald and pure marble,  
For wonderful and strange and great secret is it,  
The name by which heaven and earth were created  
And by which all the categories of creation  
Were swallowed up and bound together and suspended and sealed.  
(As it is said, “Holy, holy, holy.”)

## CHAPTER X:

- [167] Be proud, be proud ye lofty!  
Lift yourselves up, lift yourselves up ye splendid!  
Strengthen, strengthen yourselves, ye strong!  
Exalt, exalt yourselves, ye haughty!  
For to the King of the world and to all His servants,  
To them alone,  
[Belong] loftiness and strength, haughtiness and splendor.  
For it is fitting that the servants of His sublimity should exalt themselves,  
And it is proper that they who bear up His throne should make themselves strong.

{Shi'ur Qomah material begins}

- [167] For from the throne of His glory and upwards His height is one hundred and eighty thousands of myriads of parasangs, and from the throne of His glory and downwards there be one hundred and eighty thousands of myriads of parasangs. His stature is two hundred and thirty and six thousands of myriads of parasangs. From the ball of the right eye to the ball of the left eye there be thirty myriads of parasangs. The width of His right eye is three myriads of parasangs and three thousand of parasangs, and so for His left eye. And from His right arm to His left arm His width is seventy and seven myriads of parasangs, and His arms are folded upon His shoulders. His right arm – The Mover is its name, and the name of His left arm is The Follower (?) The palms of His hands are four thousands of myriads of parasangs, each one. The right palm – its name is Just, and of the left the name is Holy. Therefore He was called “God the great, the strong, and the fearful.” Said Metatron, “Thus far have I beheld the height of Jedidiah, the Master of the world. Peace.” [These revelations enable us to understand the verses in the Song of Songs 5.9 ff.] “What is thy beloved move than another beloved, O thou fairest among women?” etc. “My love is white and ruddy,” etc., all the section down to “daughters of Jerusalem.”

{Shi'ur Qomah material ends}

- [168] For how many of the mighty are they  
Who bear up the throne of the glory of this mighty King,  
Standing laden, day and night,  
Evening and morning and noon, in trembling and in terror,  
In fright, in shivering, in shaking and in fear!  
And how great strength is there in ye, ye servants of our God,  
That ye recall to Him and cause Him to hear  
The reminder of His name, in the height of the world!  
There is no searching out and no telling the sound and the strength.  
(As it is said, “Holy, holy, holy.”)

- [169] The ban of Heaven be upon ye, ye who descend to the Merkabha,  
If ye remember not and declare not what ye have heard  
And if ye bear not witness of what ye have seen on the faces,  
The faces of loftiness, the faces of strength,  
The faces of sublimity, the faces of splendor,  
Which lift themselves up, and maintain themselves on high, which  
crowd upward and make themselves great,  
The faces exalt and strengthen themselves  
Three times each day, on high,  
And the children of men know them not and recognize them not.  
(As it is said, “Holy, holy, holy.”)

## CHAPTER XI:

[170] When the Angel of the Presence goeth in to arrange and to set in order the throne of His glory and to prepare a seat for the Mighty One of Jacob, a thousand diadems doth he bind upon the head of each one of the ophanim of majesty, and a thousand times doth he kneel and fall down and prostrate himself before each one of them. Two thousand diadems doth he bind upon the head of each one of the cherubim of glory, and two thousand times doth he kneel and fall down and prostrate himself before each one of them. Three thousand diadems doth he bind upon the head of each one of the Holy Beasts, and three thousand times doth he kneel and fall down and prostrate himself before each one of them. Six thousand diadems doth he bind to [him who is called] Shining Light, to him and to eight thousand thousands of thousands of myriad myriads of myriads of diadems, and six thousand times doth he kneel and fall down and prostrate himself before each one of them. Twelve thousand diadems doth he bind upon [the angel of] lightning, upon him and upon sixteen thousand thousands and myriad myriads of myriads of diadems, twelve thousand times doth he kneel and fall down and prostrate himself before each one of them.

[172] I make a request of ye . . . . .<sup>\*</sup>  
Hypostates, who bear the throne of His glory  
With whole heart and with longing soul:  
Increase jubilation and exultation and song and the making of music  
Before the glorious throne of Totrosiai Nebhobh Medhath Za'an.  
(And there be those who say Tesar Nadhibh Merath Za'an the Lord God of Israel.)  
And let His heart rejoice at the time of the prayer of his children,  
And He will permit Himself to be sought and to be found of them  
that descend to the Merkabha  
At the time when they stand before the throne of His glory.

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<sup>\*</sup> Smith's indication of a lacuna here appears unnecessary. Kuyt has, "I ask of you, MDWT' of the bearers of the throne of glory" (—*The 'Descent' to the Chariot*, page 176).

[173] Each day, when the dawn beginneth to appear,  
The King majestic sitteth and blesseth the beasts"  
"To ye, Beasts, do I speak,  
"Ye, Creatures, do I cause to hear.  
"O Beasts, who bear the throne of My glory  
"With whole heart and with longing soul,  
"May that hour be blest in which I created ye,  
"May that planet be exalted under which I formed ye,  
"May the light of that day  
"In which ye occurred to the thoughts of My heart, shine.  
"For ye are a precious vessel which I have prepared and have completed.  
"Be silent before Me, all creatures which I have made,  
"That I may listen and give ear to the voice of the prayer of My children."

{...}

{A marginal note at this place reads: '(Something omitted / יתי = יתכרך ? So probably best left out / thrice below)'}  
{...}

[178] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Happy are Israel! How much dearer are they in the sight of the Holy One, blessed be He, than are the ministering angels! For when the ministering angels wish to sing a song of heaven above, they first gather about the throne of glory, like mountains of fire and hills of flame, and the Holy One, blessed be He, saith unto them, "Be silent before Me each angel and each beast and each ophan and each seraph whom

I have created until I shall first have heard and have given ear unto the voice of the song of the praise of Israel My children.” For it is said [Job 38.7], “When the morning stars sang together,” these be Israel; “And all the sons of God shouted for joy,” these be the household of the angels. When is there glory in heaven, as it is written [Psalms 57.11], “Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens”? At the time when “thy glory [is over] all the earth,” etc. Thousands of myriads of ministering angels stand to the right of the throne, and over against them to the left of the throne, and between the surrounding rivers stand the princes, the great ones, they who stand in command of each troop and each host to the right of the throne and to the left of the throne, and who teach [them] to sing songs and to make music for the glory of the King of Kings of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

[179] When it cometh the time of the angels to sing songs and to make music before the Holy One, blessed be He, the Lord, [then doth] the angel Shamiel, the great, honored and fearful prince stand above the windows of the lowest firmament to hear and to attend to the sound of the songs and the music and the praises which ascend from the earth, from the synagogues and from the schools, that he may cause them to be heard before the seventh heaven. [180] And why doth he stand above the windows of the firmament? Because the ministering angels have not permission to sing a song [in heaven] above until Israel first open their mouths in song [on earth] below, as it is said, “Praise ye the Lord our God.” And all the ministering angels and all angels of each heaven, when they hear the voice of songs and praises which Israel saith [on earth] below, do commence [in heaven] above with “Holy, holy, holy.” [180] And why is the name of that prince called Shamiel? Because at each dawn he standeth and causeth the voice of songs and praises which ascend from earth, from synagogues and schools, to be heard before each firmament unto the seventh heaven and the holy beasts and ophanim and seraphim and cherubim of majesty. When they heareth [the voice of Israel] and causeth it to be heard in each firmament, straightway there descend troops upon troops, ranks upon ranks, companies upon companies, camps upon camps, divisions upon divisions of ministering angels from every firmament to the midst of rivers of fire and rivers of flame and rivers of burning and immerse themselves therein seven times and examine themselves in fire three hundred and sixty and five times.

[181] And have, then, the ministering angels flux and [are they liable to] impurity, that they need immersion? But these are those ministering angels who are set over the service of the world and who descend each day to make peace in the world. And when the time of song cometh they mount up to the firmament. And because of the odor of the children of men born of women, because they do have flux are [are liable to] impurity, [these angels] immerse themselves in fire and cleanse and make brilliant and separate and examine and strengthen and magnify and better themselves in fire until they make themselves holy and hallowed, clean and cleansed, and they return and are once more the angels of the seventh heaven.

[182] And thereafter do they call one to another and speak one to another and they ascend from the rivers of fire each with the permission of the other and they strengthen themselves and make themselves like unto light and unto lightning of the splendors of splendor. And thereafter they go up on a ladder of fire, each with the permission of the other, with laud, with praise, with psalm, with rejoicing, with exultation, until they come unto the soldiers of the seventh heaven, unto lightnings of brilliance, unto cherubim and ophanim, unto holy beasts, unto the wheels of the Merkabha, unto the majesties of the countenance, unto the winged beings, unto the throne which is high and lifted up. [183] Forthwith do they stand in fear and in trembling and in shaking and in holiness and in truth and in humility and cover their faces with their wings that they behold not the likeness of God who sitteth upon the Merkabha, and there stand troops upon troops of a thousand thousands of thousands and ranks upon ranks of a myriad myriads of myriads and camps upon camps uncountable and hosts upon hosts without number, like unto mountains upon mountains of fire, and like unto hills upon hills of flame, before the throne of glory. And then doth the Holy One, blessed be He, seat Himself upon the throne of glory, and His glory filleth the world, as it is said, “All the earth is full of His glory.”

[184] And moreover the holy beasts do strengthen and hallow and purify themselves more than these, and each beast has bound upon its head a thousand thousands of thousands of crowns of luminaries of diverse sort, and they are clothed in clothing of fire and wrapped in a covering of flame and cover their faces with lightning. And the Holy One, blessed be He, uncovereth His face.

[185] And wherefore do the holy beasts and the ophanim of magnificence and the cherubim of majesty hallow and purify and clothe and wrap and adorn themselves yet more? Because the Merkabha is upon their faces and the throne of glory upon their heads and the Shekhina over them and rivers of fire pass between them, accordingly do they strengthen themselves and make themselves splendid and purify themselves in fire seventy times and do all of them stand in cleanliness and holiness and sing songs and music, praise and rejoicing and applause, with one voice, with one utterance, with one mind and with one melody.

[186] And not only [do they purify themselves] but [nevertheless] there fall from them – that is, from the ministering angels – a thousand thousands and myriad myriads, fall to the river of fire and are burned. Wherefore? Because there may not be among them any who preceedeth or delayeth, who singeth more softly or loudly the song and the sanctus [which are sung] before the King of Kings of Kings. Accordingly any who preceedeth the rest or who delayeth [and singeth] after them in the song is at once burned.

[187] But among the holy beasts there is none that preceedeth or delayeth because their height is one and their breadth is one and their clothing is one and their strength is one and the crowns on their heads are one and their splendor is one. And the creatures are arranged at the four feet of the throne, one over against the other: One wheel over against another, one ophan over against another, one beast over against another, one cherub over against another and one melody over against another. And they open their mouths in song, in thanksgiving, in fear, in fright, in terror, in trembling, in shaking, in shivering, in cleanliness and in holiness and in a still, small voice, as it is said, “and after the tumult (*sic*) a still, small voice.”

[188] And they lift up the Merkabha with a sound of songs, with praise and with laud. Then do the holy hallow, the pure applaud, the messengers exalt, the wheels rejoice, the cherubim praise, the beasts bless, the seraphim give utterance, the troops magnify, the angels make music and they are divided into three groups of a thousand thousands and myriad of myriads. One group saith, “Holy, holy, holy,” and kneeleth and falleth prostrate; and the second group saith, “Holy, holy, holy,” and kneeleth and falleth prostrate; and the third group saith, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, all the earth is full of His glory,” and it kneeleth and falleth prostrate. And the beasts from under the throne of glory answer after them and say, “Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His dwelling place.”

[189] Each day, when [the time of] the afternoon prayer arriveth,  
The King majestic sitteth and praiseth the beasts,  
But before He have finished speaking  
The holy beasts come forth from beneath the throne of glory,  
Their mouths full of exultation, their wings full of jubilation,  
Clapping their hands, their feet dancing,  
And they encircle and surround their King,  
One on His right and one on His left  
And one before Him and one behind Him.  
And they embrace and kiss Him and uncover their faces,  
(They uncover, and the King of glory covereth His face)  
And the seventh heaven is broken like a sieve  
Because of the effulgence of the splendor of the beauty of the dignity  
Of the loveliness of the mercy of the desire of the brilliance  
Of the glory of the praise of the appearance of their faces.  
(As it is said, “Holy, holy, holy.”)

## CHAPTER XII:

[190] They who cancel decrees, who annul vows,  
Who avert wrath, who quiet jealousy,  
Who cause love to be remembered – the love of Abraham – before their King,  
When they behold Him, that He is angry against His children,  
What do they do?  
They beat upon their crowns and ungird their loins  
And strike their heads and fall upon their faces  
And say:  
“Release, release, O Maker of Creation!  
“Pardon, pardon, O mighty One of Jacob!  
“Atone, atone, O Holy One of Israel!  
“For loftiest of Kings art thou.  
“King fearful, King terrific,  
“King beloved, King honored,  
“Why shouldst Thou be hostile against the seed of Abraham?  
“Why shouldst Thou be jealous against the seed of Isaac?  
“Why shouldst Thou be contentious against the seed of Jacob?  
“For Thou hast called them the purchase of heaven and earth.”  
  
And horns come out from beneath the throne of His glory  
In many multitudes, and blow long and loud, and bless [saying]:  
“Blessed be ye who are advocates for My children,  
“Praised be ye who laud the Patriarchs”

And all the host on high rendered them glory and greatness, 'drw 'th t'n 'wry tzt the Lord God of Israel, which they were called.

[196] Behold it saith [I Chr. 29.2 ff.]: “Thine, Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth [is Thine]; Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of Thee, and Thou rulest over all, and in Thine hand is power and might, and in Thine hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all. Now, therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name.” And it saith, “How many are Thy works, O Lord, all of them hast Thou made with wisdom. The earth is full of Thy creatures.” Therefore be clothed with majesty, be exalted and be lifted up, O splendid King, be blessed and be praised and be hallowed, Totrosi'ai Lord God of Israel. (For He is called Totrosi'ai, Totrosyah, Totrosy'a, Totrosih, Totrosiel, Totrosig, Totrosikh, Totrosiph, Totrosiz, Totrosish, Totrosibh, Totrosin, Totrosis, Totrosi', Totrosik, Totrosith, Zurtag, Zoharariel, 'Ashrawwili'ai. And the right procedure in dealing with this paragraph with these great [magical] names is to read Totrosi'ai to Totrosith according to this order, Yod, He, Aleph, Heth, Lamed, Gimel, Kaph, Pe, Zade, etc. [These being the final letters of the names.]

## CHAPTER XIII:

[198] Said Rabbi Ishmael: When Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah saw that the wicked city Rome had taken counsel against the mighty ones of Israel to destroy them, he straightway revealed the secret of the world, that which is seen of him who is worthy to gaze upon the King and His throne, in His glory and His beauty, and [upon] the holy beasts, upon the cherubim of the Power [of God], and upon the ophanim of the Shekinah, upon lightning terrific, upon chain-lightning terrible, when the lava-stream which encompasseth His throne, upon its bridges and upon conflagrations which increase in strength and rise up between one bridge and another, and

upon dust of smoke and upon wind of splendour which raised all the dust of coals which was covering and hiding with the darkness of coals all the chambers of the palace of the seventh heaven. And Surya, Prince of the Presence, the servant of Totrakhiel the Lord, is great.

[199] To what can this scheme for those who descend to the Merkabha be likened? It is like unto a man who hath a ladder in his house, [and] who was going up and down on it and there is no creature that preventeth him. Whoever is clean and guiltless of idolatry and of sexual sins and of murder and of slander and vain oaths and of blasphemy and presumption and of groundless enmity and who keepeth every positive and negative commandment.

[200] Said Rabbi Ishmael: My master Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah said to me: Scion of nobles, fortunate is he (who is thus clean) and fortunate is his soul, for everyone who is clean and guiltless of these eight matters (which Totrakiel the Lord and His servant Surya the Prince of the Presence loathe) may go down and gaze

On the wonderful loftiness and strange lordship  
Loftiness of exaltation and lordship of splendor,  
Which come to pass before the throne of His glory  
Three times each day, on high  
From the day when the world was created and until now, for praise,  
With which Totrakiel the Lord doth conduct himself on high.

#### CHAPTER XIV

[201] Said Rabbi Ishmael: When my ears heard this warning my strength grew feeble. I said to Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah my master, "If so there is no end to the matter. For you will find no man whose soul is yet in his body who is clean and guiltless of these eight matters." He said to me, "Scion of nobles, and if not – ? Arise and bring before me all the great ones of the company and all the mighty ones of the academy, and I shall declare before them the hidden, the concealed secrets, wonders of the ascent, and the weaving of the web upon which the perfection of the world and the excellence thereof doth stand, and the beauty of heaven and earth (wherein all the ends of the earth and the world and the ends of the firmaments of the height are bound, sewed and joined, hung and standing) and the path of the ladder to the height, of which one end is on earth and one end on the right foot of the throne of glory."

[202] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Straightway I arose and assembled all the Sanhedrin, great and small, to the third entrance which was in the house of the Lord. And he was sitting upon a chair of pure marble which Elisha my father gave me, for it was of the goods of her that bore me which she did bring to him in her dowry. [203] And there came Rabban Simon ben Gamliel and Rabbi Eliezer the Great and Rabbi Elazar ben Dama and Elazar ben Shammua and Jonathan ben Dahabhai and Haninah ben Hakkanai and Jonathan ben Uziel and Rabbi Akiba and Rabbi Judah ben Babba. We came and sat down before him. And all the multitude of companies were standing upon their feet, for they saw spiderwebs of fire and torches of light which made a separation between them and between us. And Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah sitteth and setteth in order before them all the teachings concerning the Merkabha, [the] descent and [the] ascent, how he descendeth who descendeth, and how he ascendeth who ascendeth.

[204] And whenever a man wished to descend to the Merkabha he would call to Surya the Prince of the Presence and conjure him one hundred and twelve times by Totrosi'ai the Lord (who is called Totrosi'ai Zurtak Totrakhiel Tophgar 'Ashrawwili'ai Zebhodi'el Zoharari'el Tandiel, and Shekhadhozi'ai Dehibhiron, and 'Andiriron the Lord God of Israel. And let him beware that he do not exceed an hundred and twelve times and do not diminish from them. And if he exceed or diminish his blood is upon his own head. Bit his mouth must utter [the words of conjuration] and the fingers of his hands must count one hundred and twelve and forthwith he may go down and rule in the [world of the] Merkabha.)

## CHAPTER XV

[206] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Thus did Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah say to me: Totrosi'ai the Lord God of Israel of Hosts sitteth within seven palaces, one within another. And at the entrance to each palace are eight door-keepers, four to the right of the lintel and four to the left of the lintel. These be the names of the door-keepers of the first palace: Lahabhiel, and Kashrael, Gahoriel, Zekhuthiel, Tophhiel, and Lahariel, Mathkiel, and Shuwael. And there be those who say, And Shubhael. These be the names of the door-keepers of the second palace: Tagriel, and Mathpiel, Sarhiel, and 'Azpiel, Shaharariel, and Starel, Rig'iel, and Sahabiel. And these be the names of the door-keepers of the third palace: Shebhuriel, and Rezuziel, and Shalmiel, Sabhlael, and Zahazhael, Hadarel, and Puriel, and Paltriel. These be the names of the door-keepers of the fourth palace: Pahdiel, Gebhurthiel, Pozaziel, and Shekhinael, Shathkael, and 'Arbhiel, and Kapiel, and 'Anaphiel. These be the names of the door-keepers of the fifth palace: Tehilael, and 'Azziel, Gatoel, Gathoel, and Sa'aphriel, Naraphiel, and Gariel, Hadiel. And these be the names of the door-keepers of the sixth palace: Domiel, and Kazpiel, Gahaghiel, and 'Arasbarasbiel, 'Anromiel, and Parziel, and Magogael, and Tophrael.

And at the door of the seventh palace stand angry all the heroes, warlike, strong, harsh, fearful, terrific, taller than mountains and sharper than peaks, Their bows are strung and stand before them; their swords are sharpened and in their hands. And lightnings flow and issue forth from the balls of their eyes, and spider-webs of fire from their nostrils and torches of fiery coals from their mouths. And they are equipped with helmets and with coats of mail, and javelins and spears are hung upon their thews.

## CHAPTER XVI

Their horses be heroes of darkness, horses of the shadow of death, horses of thick darkness, horses of fire, horses of blood, horses of hail, horses of iron, horses of fog. The horses upon which they ride stand beside mangers of fire full of coals of juniper and eat fiery coals from their mangers, [taking] a measure of forty bushel of coals in one mouthful. And the measure of the [content of the] mouth of such horse is [the content of] three mangers such as the mangers of Caesaraea, and the measure of each manger is the measure of the gate of Caesaraea. And there be rivers of fire beside their mangers, and each of their horses drinks as the measure of the fullness of the watercourse which is in the valley of Kidron, which bringeth and containeth all the rainwater of all Jerusalem. And in that place was a cloud above their heads, showering blood above their heads and [above the heads] of their horses. And this is the sign and the measure of the horses of the entrance of the seventh palace and a horse of the entrance of each palace.

[216] And all those who descend to the Merkabha ascend and are not harmed, but they behold all this trouble and descend safely and come to stand and bear witness and tell the fearful and terrific vision. (Whereas, in the palaces of kings who are flesh and blood, matters are otherwise. [Neither are such visions seen, nor do visitors get safely out.]) And they bless and praise and applaud and glorify and exalt and magnify and attribute honor and beauty and greatness to Totrosi'ai the Lord God of Israel who rejoiced in those who descend to the Merkabha and who sat and looked for each one of Israel, to know when he would descend and behold

The wonderful loftiness and strange lordship,  
Loftiness of exaltation and lordship of splendor,  
Which come to pass before the throne of His glory Three times each day, on high,  
From the time when the world was created  
And until now, for praise.

[217] King just, King faithful, King beloved, King lovely, King supporting King lowly, King humble, King righteous, King pious, King holy, King pure, King blessed, King lofty, King mighty, King gracious, King merciful, King of Kings of Kings and Lord of the Crowns.

[218]           Totrosi'ai the Lord God of Israel desireth and awaiteth –  
                   In such measure as He awaiteth for the redemption and for the  
   season of salvation  
                   Which is laid up for Israel for a day of vengeance  
                   After the destruction of the last temple –  
                   When shall he descendeth to the Merkabha descend?  
                   When shall he see the loftiness of the height?  
                   When shall he see the end which bringeth salvation?  
                   When shall he hear the end which is wrought by wonders?  
                   When shall he see that which eye hath not seen?  
                   When shall he ascend and tell to the seed of Abraham who loved Him?

## CHAPTER XVII

[219]   Said Rabbi Ishmael: When thou comest and standest at the entrance of the first palace take two seals in thy hands, one that of Totrosi'ai the Lord and one that of Surya the Prince of the Presence. Show that of Totrosi'ai the Lord to those standing to the left. Straightway Dahabhiel the Prince who is head of the entrance of the first palace and is appointed over the first palace and standeth to the right of the lintel, and Tophahiel the Prince who standeth to the left of the lintel with him, – straightway they seize thee, one from thy right and one from thy left until they bring thee and hand thee over to Taghriel and Mathpiel and make thy peace with them and warn them concerning thee. Now Taghriel is the prince who is head of the entrance of the second palace and standeth to the right of the lintel, and Mathpiel is the prince who standeth to the left of the lintel with him. [220] And show them two seals, one of 'Adhriwaron the Lord and one of 'Uzhiy'a the Prince of the Presence. Show that of 'Adhriwaron the Lord to those standing to the right, and show that of 'Uzhiy'a the Prince of the Presence too those standing to the left. Straightway they seize thee, one from thy right and one from thy left, until they bring thee and hand the over to Shebhoriel and Reziziel and make thy peace with them and warn them concerning thee. Now Shebhoriel is the prince who is head of the entrance of the third palace and standeth to the right of the lintel, and Reziziel is the prince who standeth to the left of the lintel with him. Show them two seals, one of Zurtak the Lord to those standing to the right, and show that of Dehabhyoron the Prince of the Presence to those standing to the left. Straightway they seize thee, one from thy right and one from thy left, and these bring thee – two princes before and two princes behinds the – and hand thee over to Pahdiel and Gebhortiel and make thy peace with them and warn them concerning thee. Now Pahdiel is the prince who is head of the entrance of the fourth palace and standeth to the right of the lintel, and Gebhortiel is the prince who standeth to the right of the lintel with him. And show them two seals, one of Zebhoriel the Lord and one of Margiwiel the Prince of the Presence. Show that of Zebhoriel the Lord to those standing to the right, and show that of Margiwiel the Prince of the Presence to those standing to the left. Straightway they seize thee, one from thy right and one from thy left, until they bring thee and hand thee over to Tehilael and 'Azriel and make thy peace with them and warn them concerning thee. Now Tehilael is the prince who is head of the entrance of the fifth palace and standeth to the right of the lintel, and 'Azriel is the prince who standeth to the left of the lintel with him. And show them two seals, one of Totrakhiel the Lord and one of Zehaphtariai the Prince of the Presence. Show that of Totrakhiel to those standing to the right, and show that of Zehaphtariai to those standing to the left. Straightway they seize thee and bring thee – three princes before thee and three princes behind thee and two princes at thy sides, [224] because the door-keepers of the sixth palace would destroy all those who “do and do not” descend to the Merkabha because they act without permission. And [the superior powers] did give the door-keepers orders and beat them and burn them and set others in their place. And also the others who replace them behave in the same fashion, for they do not fear, nor do they consider, saying: “Why should we be burned and what pleasure is it to us that we should destroy [all] those that do and do not descend to the Merkabha because they act without permission?” And this is still the behaviour of the door-keepers of the sixth palace.

## CHAPTER XVIII:

[225] Said Rabbi Ishmael: All the companions said to me: “Scion of nobles, thou who rulest by the light of the Law as doth Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah, see him and bring him back that he sit with us, leaving the vision which he glimpseth in the vision of the Merkabha, and that he tell us who is he who doth and doth not descend to the Merkabha – he whom the door-keepers of the sixth palace would attack, for they would not touch at all those who [really] descend to the Merkabha. What is the difference between those [who would not be attacked] and those [who would]?”

[226] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Thereupon I took a piece of woollen cloth and gave it to Rabbi Akiba, and Rabbi Akiba gave it to a servant of ours, saying, “Go and lay this cloth beside a woman who immersed herself and yet did not become pure, and let her immerse [herself a second time]. For if that woman will come and will declare the measure of her menstrual flow before the company, it is known that one forbids [her to her husband] and the majority permit. Say to that woman, ‘Touch this cloth with the end of the middle finger of thy hand, and press not the end of thy finger upon it, but [only] as a man [presseth] who taketh a hair, which hath fallen therein, from out his eye-ball, pushing it very gently.’” [227] They went and did so, and placed the cloth before Rabbi Ishmael. He [picked it up by] thrusting into it a bough of myrrh full of oil of spikenard which was laid up in clean balsam and they placed it upon the knees of Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah and therewith caused him to be dismissed from before the throne of glory where he had been sitting and beholding

Wonderful loftiness and strange lordship  
Loftiness of exaltation and lordship of splendor,  
Which come to pass before the throne of His glory  
Three times each day, on high,  
From the time when the world was created  
And until now, for praise.

[228] And we besought of him [to know] who is he who “doth and doth not” descend to the Merkabha. He said unto us, “These be the men whom those who [really] descend to the Merkabha do take and cause to stand above them or to sit before them and do say unto them, ‘Behold and see and give ear and write down all that which we say and all that which you hear from before the throne of glory.’ And if those men be not fit for this task, then would the door-keepers of the sixth palace attack them. And take care that ye choose for yourselves fit men and these from the tested companions.”

[229] When thou comest and standest at the entrance of the sixth palace, display three seals of the door-keepers of the sixth palace. Display two seals to Kazpiel the Prince, whose sword is drawn in his hand, and there issue forth from it lightnings, and he shaketh it against everyone who is not fit to behold the King and his throne, and there is no creature who may stay his hand. And his sword crieth and saith: “Pain!” And he standeth by the lintel of the [entrance on the] right. And one seal show Dumiel. And is Dumiel indeed his name And is not ’byrghydrhym (*i.e.* Air Earth Water Fire) his name? And why was his name called Dumiel? Said Rabbi Ishmael: Thus said Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah: “Each day doth a voice go forth from the seventh heaven and proclaimeth and saith in the heavenly court of justice (saying as follows): ‘t ‘ws wbrmnzh / wpwr g ‘st the Lord God of Israel called him Dumiel accordiong to His Own Name, [saying]: ‘Just as I see and hold my peace so doth Dumiel [viz: The silence of God].’” His authority [extendeth over] the right lintel, but Kazpiel the Prince driveth him away, yet he cherisheth against him neither enmity nor hatred nor jealousy nor contention, but each [doteth] for His honor.

## CHAPTER XIX:

[232] Zoharriel and Pa'ali Pa'ali: Show something of these two seals to Kazpiel, and show Beronyah to Dumiel the Prince, a just and humble prince. And at once would Kazpiel the Prince string his bow and draw his sword and bring thee a whirlwind and seat thee in a chariot of brilliance and trumpet before thee as eight thousands of myriads of horns and three thousands of myriads of rams' horns and four thousands of myriads of bugles. And Dumiel the Prince seizeth a gift and walketh before thee. And what gift? Said Rabbi Ishmael: Thus said Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah my master: "This gift which Dumiel The Prince would seize [and carry] before the chariot of that man who doth deserve by reason of his righteousness to descend to the Merkabha is not a gift of silver and not a gift of gold, but it is that they grant him the privilege that he should not be questioned, not in the first palace and not in the second palace and not in the third palace and not in the fourth palace and not the in the fifth palace and not in the sixth palace and not in the seventh palace, but he showeth them his seal and they leave him [in peace] and he entereth."

[233] And in the entrance of the sixth palace Dumiel the Prince guardeth the sill of the right [side] of the entrance of the sixth palace, sitting on a chair [wrought] of a pure gem which [hath] in it the splendour of the luminaries of the firmament such as [they were at] the creation of the world. (Fortunate Day. Best of luck. Show the sign. Peace. The Lord God of Israel) And Dumiel the Prince receiveth him kindly and seateth him upon a chair wrought of a pure gem, and himself sitteth beside him at his right.

## CHAPTER XX:

[234] And Dumiel would say to him: "I bear witness and warn thee concerning two things: That none of those who descend to the Merkabha succeed to descend except only he who hath these two qualifications: He who hath read the Bible and studieth mishna, midrash, halakhoth and agadoth, and the explanation of halakhoth as to what is forbidden and permitted; and he who hath fulfilled all that which is written in the law and keepeth all warnings of statutes and of judgments and of laws which were declared to Moses on Sinai." [235] If he said to Dumiel the Prince, "I have one of these two qualifications," Dumiel the Prince would at once get in connection with Gabhriel the Secretary and write his the paper with red paint and would hang the paper upon the chariot of that same man, saying: "Thus and so is the knowledge of such a one in the Torah, thus and so are his actions, and he desireth to enter in before the throne of His glory." [237] And when the door-keepers of the seventh palace would see that Dumiel and Kazpiel and Gabhriel, were before the chariot of that man who deservingly descendeth to the Merkabha, they [would] cover their faces, which had been angry, and they [would] at once unstring the strung bows, and return the drawn swords to their sheaths. And nevertheless it is necessary to show them a great seal and a fearful crown: God of heaven, Master of earth the Lord God of Israel. And they would enter in before the throne of His glory and bring out before that man all sorts of [instruments for] music and song, and they would come making music before him until they bring him up and seat him beside the cherubim, beside the ophanim, beside the holy beasts. And he beholdeth wonders and powers, loftiness and greatness, holiness and purity, fear, humility and justice. Then said Rabbi Ishmael: "All the companions made a parable of this scheme [for those who descend to the Merkhaba: It is like] unto a man who hath a ladder in his house, [and] who was going up and down on it, and there is no creature that preventeth him." Blessed be thou, O Lord, who art wise in secrets and master of hidden things. Amen. Amen.

## CHAPTER XXI:

[238] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Rabban Simon ben Gamliel was angry with me. He said to me, "Almost had Zahaphtariai rebuked us and shucked {us} as husks of corn. Why didst thou, by criminal carelessness, sin against us? Dost thou, perhaps, think that Jonathan be Uzziel is a man of small account in Israel? If he simply

descended and came and stood at the entrance of the seventh palace without and seal, what would happen to him? He could not blink an eye before the door-keepers of the seventh palace had utterly exterminated him. [And yet you have said nothing about the necessary seals nor the names of the angels to whom they must be shown.] [239] Said Rabbi Ishmael: I went and was angry with Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah my master, saying, "The patriarch is angry with me, why do I live?" He said to me, "Scion of nobles, if [you ask for an answer] on this point [then tell me,] what is my distinction among you? I put in your mouths the prophets, the writings, mishna and midrash, halakhoth and agadoth, and the explanation of halakhoth as to what is forbidden and permitted. Were it not for the mysteries of the law [in which] I have initiated some of you, would ye have come and appeared before me at all? I know why thou hast come. Thou hast only come because of the door-keepers of the seventh palace. [240] Go and say to the Patriarch: 'As for all the door-keepers of the [first] six palaces, it is permitted to mention the names of each one of them and to touch them; but as for the door-keepers of the seventh palace, by the sound of their names is a man terrified and is not able to touch them, inasmuch as the name of them is called according to the name of the King of the world. Consequently I have not stated them. But now – since you say to me, "State them." – come ye and stand upon your feet and, each one of you, when His name goeth forth from my mouth, kneel and fall upon your faced.'" Forthwith came all the great ones of the company and all the mighty ones of the academy and stood upon their feet before Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah and he speaketh and they fall upon their faces and the scribes write.

## CHAPTER XXII:

[242] These be the names of the door-keepers of the seventh palace: Zahaphtari'ai the Lord, a prince honored and beloved; 'Abhirahi'ai the Lord, a prince honored and beloved and fearful; 'Atrighael the Lord, a prince honored and beloved and fearful and terrifying; Barnael the Lord, a prince honored and beloved and fearful and terrifying and dear; Noraphneel the Lord, a prince honored and beloved and fearful and terrifying and dear and splendid; Na'aroriel the Lord, a prince honored and beloved and fearful and terrifying and dear and splendid and strong; Sastitiel the Lord, a prince honored and beloved and fearful and terrifying and dear and splendid and strong and mighty; 'Anaphiel the Lord, a prince honored and beloved and fearful and terrifying and dear and splendid and strong and mighty and powerful and just and gallant, a prince whose name is mentioned on high before the throne of His glory three times each day from the day when the world was created and until now, for praise. Why? Because the ring of the seal of heaven and earth is given over to his hand. [243] And whenever they see him all those on high kneel and fall down and prostrate themselves before him, a thing which is not done in the height [before any other prince]. If you say, "They do not fall down before the Prince of the Presence" [This is true] for those who stand before the throne of His glory, who do not prostrate themselves before the Prince of the Presence, but before 'Anaphiel the Prince [even] so with the permission and according to the will of 'ntrws rbyhg. Some say pwmyl smh brz', the Lord God of Israel.

[244] These be the names of the door-keepers of the seventh palace of the descent, for those whose names I have just stated were of the ascent. Noraphiel the Lord, a prince honored and beloved and fearful, who was called 'Abhirzahi'ai the Lord; Dalkokiel the Lord, a prince honored and beloved and fearful, who was called Lebhakhiel the Lord; Yekariel the Lord, a prince honored and beloved and fearful, who was called 'Atrighiel the Lord; Yeshishiel the Lord, a prince honored and beloved and fearful, who was called Ben'an'ael the Lord; Teraphiel the Lord, who was called Shakdihiel the Lord; Na'aroriel the Lord, a prince honored and beloved, who was called Zohaliel the Lord, 'Anaphiel the Lord, a prince honored and beloved and fearful and terrifying and dear and splendid and strong and mighty and powerful and just and gallant, who was called Tophriel the Lord. [245] And why was his name called 'Anaphiel? Because of the ramification 'anaph of the crowns [which were] placed upon his head, for he overcast and covered all of the chambers of the seventh heaven as did the Maker of Creation. Just as, concerning the Maker of Creation it is written [Hab. 3.3]: "His glory covered the heavens," so also [does the glory] 'Anaphiel the Prince as a servant who is called by his master's name. And why is he more lovely and beloved than all the [other] door-keepers of the palaces? Because he openeth the doors of the entrance of the seventh palace and closeth them before the throne of glory which is set high and standeth

opposite the entrance of the seventh palace. And the holy beasts are opposite the entrance of the seventh palace, and the cherubim and the ophanim are opposite the entrance of the seventh palace, and there be 256 faces in each of the holy beasts opposite the entrance of the seventh palace. [246] Still greater it is that there be 512 eyes in [each of] the four beasts opposite the entrance of the seventh palace. Their faces are of the likeness of the face of a man, faces of 16 faces each are there in each beast opposite the entrance of the seventh palace.

#### CHAPTER XXIII:

[247] And whenever a man desired to descend to the Merkabha, 'Anaphiel would open for him the doors of the entrance of the seventh palace and that man would go in and stand on the door-sill of the entrance of the seventh palace and the holy beasts would lift up upon him 512 eyes and each one of the eyes of the holy beasts in pierced as a sieve of withes, and the appearance of their eyes [is described in Nahum 2.4]: "they run like lightnings." And these are in addition to the eyes of the cherubim of the Power [of God] and the ophanim of the Shekinah, which are like torches of fire and conflagrations of coals of juniper. [248] And that man would sway and tremble and start backward and be frightened and be terrified, faint and fall backward. And 'Anaphiel the Prince would support him, he and sixty and three door-keepers of the entrances of the seven palaces. And all of them would help him and say to him:

"Fear not, son of a seed beloved,

"Enter and see the King in His beauty,

"And thou shalt not be destroyed and thou shalt not be burned.

[249] "A just King is He, a faithful King is He, a submissive King is He, a humble King is He, a righteous King is He, a pious King is He, a holy King is He, a pure King is He, a blessed King is He, a lofty King is He, a mighty King is He, a pure King is He, a merciful King is He, a lowly King is He – blessed be He." [250] And they attribute to Him power. Forthwith a horn soundeth from above the firmament and cherubim and ophanim turn away their faces and he goeth in and standeth before the throne of His glory.

#### CHAPTER XXIV:

[251] When he standeth before the throne of glory he beginneth and reciteth a song which the throne of glory singeth each day: "Laud, song, and music, blessing, praise and celebration and applause and thanks and thanksgivings, victory and melody, speech and jubilation, rejoicing and joy and gladness, exultations, accord, humility, brilliance, propriety, truth, righteousness and justice, treasure, ornament and might, delight and ecstasy and elevation, calm and rest and consolation, contentment and quiet and peace, tranquility, security and prosperity, love, loveliness, grace and mercy and pulchritude, renown, acclaim and pity, splendor, glory, innocence, effulgence, appearance, adornment, brilliance, fire, ramification, sublimity, wonders and salvation, perfume, salt, light, loftiness, help, violence, potency, height, preciousness, mightiness, lordship, fortitude, elevation, exaltation and brightness, kingliness, power and force, holiness, purity and cleanliness, pride, greatness and kingship, magnificence and majesty, honour, and beauty to Zoharariel the Lord God of Israel."

Splendid King, He robed with splendour,

Made majestic with embroideries of song,

Crowned with magnificence and majesty,

A crown of loftiness and a diadem of fearfulness.

For His name is agreeable to Him, and His title is sweet to Him,

And His throne is splendid to Him and His palace is magnificent

And his glory is delightful to him, and His majesty is becoming to Him,

And His strength is pleasant to Him and His servants sing pleasantly to Him,

And Israel tell to Him the kingliness of His wonders.

King of Kings, God of Gods, and Lord of Lords  
 He surrounded with chains of crowns, encompassed  
     with the ramifications of the rulers of brilliance,  
 He who covereth the heavens with the ramification of His magnificence,  
     and who, in His majesty, appeared from the heights,  
 From His beauty the deeps were enkindled,  
     and from His stature did the clouds shower rain.  
 His stature sendeth out the lofty,  
     and His crown blazeth out the might  
     and His garment floweth with the precious.  
 And all trees shall rejoice in His word,  
     and herbs shall exult in His rejoicing,  
 And His words shall liquefy as perfumes,  
     flowing and sent forth in flames of fire,  
 Giving joy to those who search these,  
     and quiet to those who fulfill them.

[254] King beloved and lovely and clean,  
 Exalted beyond all the haughty,  
 Haughty, clothed in majesty beyond the majestic,  
 Majestic, lifted up beyond the mighty,  
 Mighty, upraised beyond the powerful.  
 Splendor of kings, praise of nobles,  
 Treasure of the holy, humility of the lowly,  
 Pleasant in the mouth of all those that call upon Him, Sweet to  
     them that hope in His name,  
 Righteous in all His ways, upright in all His doings  
 Just in counsel and in knowledge, clear in understanding and  
     in practice,  
 Judge of every soul, witness of every transaction, judge of every word,  
 Mighty in wisdom and in every secret, lofty in purity and in holiness.

[255] King true and only, King who liveth forever,  
 King who killeth and maketh alive, King who sayeth and doeth,  
 King who formeth every disease, and createth every cure,  
 King who maketh every blessing, and establish every good,  
 King who feedeth all his works, and supporteth all his creatures,  
 King who is high and to each of the lowly, and who is strong to each  
     of good courage.

## CHAPTER XXV:

King high and lifted up, sublime and wonderful,  
 Beloved and old, upright and faithful,  
 Precious and honored, strong and stout-hearted,  
 Righteous and true, holy and pure,  
 Pious, great and mighty,

Strong, powerful, precious, fearful and terrific,  
 High-placed upon perfections of loftiness,  
 Established upon the adornments of splendour  
 In the chambers of the palace of loftiness.  
 Who seest profundities, beholdest mysteries, observest dark matters,  
 And who, in every place is .....  
 And there is no changing His purpose, nor retorting to His word,  
                   nor delaying His will  
 And there is no place to flee from Him, and no secret place to  
                   hide from before Him.

[256] Reign forever, King merciful and gracious,  
 Pardoner and forgiver, who rolleth away and taketh away [sin],  
 Let Thy majesty be declared in every song, Thy splendor in every chant.  
 Be high above the palaces of loftiness, be lifted up above the  
                   adornments of splendor,  
 Be exalted above all Thy doings, be praised above all created things,  
 Be honored above the throne of Thy glory, be precious above the  
                   vessel of Thy loveliness,  
 Be blessed with all blessings, be praised with all praises,  
 Be lauded with all laud, be applauded with all songs,  
 Be magnified forever, be holy world without end, Totrosi'ai the Lord.

[257] King of all worlds, Lord of all actions,  
 Wise in all secrets, ruler in all generations,  
 One God who art from eternity,  
 Unique King who art forever and ever. Selah.

[258] And I beheld something like unto the appearance of lightning which was fixed and stationary and was divided, among those who descend to the Merkabha, between those who were fit to descend to the Merkabha and those who were not fit to descend to the Merkabha. If a man were fit to descend to the Merkabha, when they say to him "Enter" and he doth not enter, they repeat themselves and say to him "Enter," and he at once entereth. They would then praise him, saying, "Surely this is one of those who descend to the Merkabha." But if a man be not fit to descend to the Merkabha, when they say to him "Enter" and he entereth, they at once place upon him a thousand pieces of iron, [259] because the door-keepers of the sixth palace place upon him a thousand thousands of waves of water, and there is not in that place even a single drop. And if he said, "What is the nature of this water?" they at once run after him, stoning him, and saying to him, "Wretch, art thou not of the seed of them that kissed the [golden] calf, and art unfit to see the King and His throne in his beauty." And if he be such, a voice goeth forth from the seventh heaven saying, "well have ye said [that] he is from the seed of them that kissed the [golden] calf and is not fit to see the King and His throne." He does not move from the spot before they place on him a Thousand thousands of pieces of iron.

[260] Who is like unto Thee Totrosi'ai Lord God of Israel, who doest mightily,  
 To Thee Totrosi'ai Lord God of Israel, shall the throne of Thy glory  
                   sing praise,  
 To Thee shall be attributed loftiness and greatness, strength and beauty,  
 Thou shalt be called strong, Thou, mighty; for Thee shall they make new [song]  
                   for Thee exult.  
 With Thee shall converse be held, Thou shalt be blessed, Thou praised,  
                   Thou exalted.

To Thee shall splendor be attributed, Thou shalt be lifted up, Thou  
magnified, Thou called majestic.  
Thou shalt be praised, Thou applauded, Thou sanctified,  
For Thee, Totrosi'ai Lord God of Israel, shall Thy servants weave diadems  
And shall sing unto Thee a new song  
And shall declare The King forever and ever.  
All things are Thy kingdom, and over all things is Thy kingdom,  
And Thou shalt be called One, world without end,  
Totrosi'ai, Lord God of Israel.  
Blessed be Thou O Lord, King of all secrets and Lord of all hidden things.

{...}

#### CHAPTER XXVI:

- [269] Thou workest wonders, dost bring to pass new things,  
Renewest Thy creatures each day,  
Servants [created] from fire to lift up praise of Thy mystery,  
O Sacred One. Who shinest in the midst of myriads of fire,  
Who loathest hatred and jealousy,  
Who despiseth enmity and contention,  
Who settest anger afar, who turnest away wrath,  
Who multiplieth all grace and goodness,  
The cherubim of Thy glory are fire.  
[O Thou] who art exalted upon cherubim of fire, Prince over princes,  
Seraphim, seraphim of flame do stand about Thy throne,  
Hither and other sound forth: "Make way for Him who rideth the heavens."
- [270] Blessing, praise and laud, song, thanks and thanksgivings,  
Splendor and whispering, applause, humility and mercy  
To the lofty, to the powerful, to the brave,  
To the elect, to the chosen, to the choosing,  
To the mighty, to the haughty, to the high.  
In their mouths music, on their tongues exultation,  
They slumber not, neither night nor day,  
But music and laud are as blazing light.
- [271] Thou art the great Lord  
The mighty and fearful, the righteous and pious,  
The holy and the faithful, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth.  
It is Thou who art Lord, O God of Gods and Lord of Lords,  
It is Thou who art Great, Thee do all the great magnify,  
It is Thou who art Mighty, Thee do all the mighty declare strong,  
It is Thou who art Fearful, Thee do all the singers celebrate,  
It is Thou who art Righteous, Thee do all the righteous justify,  
It is Thou who art Pious, Thee do all the pious expect,  
It is Thou who art Holy, Thee do all the holy hallow,  
It is Thou who art Faithful, Thee do all the faithful believe.

[272] It is Thou who hast revealed thy secret to Moses  
And who hast not concealed from him any of Thy mighty works.  
When the words goeth not forth from Thy mouth  
All the lofty mountains trembled  
And stood before Thee great consternation;  
When the word goeth forth from Thy mouth  
They were all of them burned with flames of fire.  
It is Thou who examinest the inward parts and choosest the faithful  
Thou dwellest in the flame of rivers of fire and conflagrations.  
It is Thou who art mighty, more lofty than all the lofty and lifted up above all,  
Who dost cast down the haughty and exaltest the humble.

[273] The most lofty of creation is man,  
The likeness of a man hast Thou fixed in Thy throne:  
They have the face of a man, and the hands of a man are under  
their wings,  
They run as a man, they toil as a man,  
They kneel down and prostrate themselves in song as a man doth,  
And the fear of Thee, O King, is upon them.  
The most lofty of cattle is the ox.  
The likeness of an ox hast Thou fixed in Thy throne:  
They run as an ox, they toil as an ox,  
They stand in the places as an ox,  
And the fear of Thee, O Holy One, is upon them.  
The most lofty of wild beasts is the lion.  
The likeness of a lion hast Thou fixed in Thy throne:  
They roar as a lion, they are feared as a lion,  
The thew of their strength is as that of a lion,  
And the fear of Thee, O terrible One, is upon them.  
The most lofty of birds is the eagle.  
The likeness of an eagle hast Thou fixed in Thy throne:  
They move as an eagle, they are swift as an eagle,  
They fly as an eagle, they soar as an eagle,  
And the fear of Thee, O Pure One, is upon them.  
And all of them do triply declare Thy sanctitude with the triple sanctus.  
(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy.")

[274] Be honoured, be made majestic, be raised, be lifted up,  
Be made splendid, be blessed, be praised, be magnified,  
Be hallowed, be exalted, be lauded, be applauded,  
For such is the duty of all creatures:  
To honour Thee, to own Thy majesty, to raise Thee, to lift Thee up,  
To show forth Thy splendour, to bless Thee, to praise Thee, to magnify Thee,  
The hallow Thee, to exalt Thee, to laud Thee, to applaud Thee,  
The great and holy King, who rulest  
Over the highest and over the lowest,  
Over the first and over the last,  
Which, from the midst of trembling and quaking,  
Do triply declare Thy sanctitude with triple sanctus.  
(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy.")

[275]	<p> Assembly and applause are His who liveth forever,  Beauty and bliss are His who liveth forever,  Compassion and caresses {?} are His who liveth forever,  Doctrine and deed are His who liveth forever,  Eternity and end are His who liveth forever,  Fervour and faith are His who liveth forever,  Glory and grace are His who liveth forever,  Humility and holiness are His who liveth forever,  Innocence and insight are His who liveth forever,  Justice and jubilation are His who liveth forever,  Kingdom and knowledge are His who liveth forever,  Loveliness and laud are His who liveth forever,  Majesty and mercy are His who liveth forever,  Nobility and name are His who liveth forever,  Obedience and observance are His who liveth forever,  Purity and power are His who liveth forever,  Righteousness and reason are His who liveth forever,  Strength and salvation are His who liveth forever,  Trust and truth are His who liveth forever,  Understanding and utterance are His who liveth forever,  Victory and vengeance are His who liveth forever,  Wonder and wisdom are His who liveth forever,  Excellence and exultation are His who liveth forever,  Years and youth are His who liveth forever,  Zest and zeal are His who liveth forever. </p>	<p> [honour faith  understanding blessing  greatness might  knowledge utterance  magnificence majesty  assembly trustworthiness  brilliance effulgence  grace mercy  purity goodness  preciousness salvation  crown glory  doctrine encouragement  kingdom power  beauty victory  secret intelligence  strength humility  jubilation righteousness  applause holiness  splendour wonder  song praise  laud loveliness]* </p>
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\* This list of words is similar to those used in Scholem's translation of the same hymn in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, pages 58-9; these likely represent a truer translation of the terms used in the text. In the left column, Smith imitates the text's alphabetical device instead of directly translating.

[276]      Who is able to state one from a thousand thousands of thousands  
And a myriad myriads of myriads of Thy mighty deeds, O King of Kings of Kings,  
Before whom the beasts are stationed and stand [speaking] with a still  
                small voice –  
They are fire, their palate is fire, their movement is fire, their speech  
                is fire,  
Yet are they afraid because of fire,  
Lest they be burned in flames of fire,  
It is Thou whom they encompass, it is Thou whom they surround,  
With Thee are they hidden, in Thy bosom do they give utterance,  
In secret and intelligence, girded with strength, clothed with magnificence.  
The eye may not travel to where Thou dwellest,  
King great and holy, ruler  
Over the highest and over the lowest,  
Over the first and over the last.  
There is none among the highest, nor among the lowest,  
Nor among the first, nor among the last,  
Who can know Thy works  
And search out all Thy wonders.

[277] Just as none is able to imagine ab, bc, cd, de, ef, fg, gh, hi, ij. Metatron whose name is called according to eight names, his name is Margawiel, his name is Gayothiel, his name is Ziathiel, his name is 'Izihel, his name is Yahawiel, his name is Mayoel, his name is Segansagiel, his name is Segansayriyah. And from the love with which they love him on high, they call him in the camps of the holy ones, Metatron, Servant of the Lord, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. Blessed be thou O Lord, wise in secrets and Lord of hidden things, Amen, Amen, Selah.

## CHAPTER XXVII:

{*Sar Torah* material: CHAPTERS XXVII TO XXX}

[278] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Three years did Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah behold me in affliction and in great sorrow and in great danger: That portion of the Bible which I would read one day, would I forget the next, and that mishna which I would study one day, the next day would I forget. What did I do? When I saw that the Law did not remain in me, I laid hold upon myself and denied myself food and drink and washing and anointment, and deprived myself of conjugal intercourse, and I neither exulted nor rejoiced, nor did any music nor song go forth from my mouth. [279] Thereupon did Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakkanah, my master, take me from my father's house and bring me into the chamber of the Temple in which the Sanhedrin met and cause me to swear by a great seal and by a great oath which appertaineth to Zebhoriel the Lord God of Israel who is Metatron the Lord God of Israel, God of the heavens and God of the earth, God of Gods, God of the sea and God of the land. And he revealed the secret of the Law, which was in his possession. And at once my heart was {as} enlightened as the gates of the East and mine eyes beheld the depths and the ways of the Law and thenceforth I forgot nothing. All things which mine ears heard from the mouth of my master and from the mouth of scripture and from the ways of the Law which I had truly practiced, thenceforth I forgot none of them.

[280] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Had I done nothing in the Law, yet would this method which I have fixed in Israel be more than sufficient for me, as against all the Law, [since I have revealed it] in order that men may increase their knowledge of the Law without weariness.

[281] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Rabbi Akiba did indeed say in the name of Rabbi Eliezer the Great: From the day when the Law was given to Israel until the last temple was built, the Law was given, its majesty was not given, and its preciousness, its glory and its greatness and its beauty, its terror, its reverence and its fear, its richness and its loftiness and its exaltation, its trembling and its splendour, its strength, its rule and its might were not given, until the last temple was built and the Shekinah did not dwell in it. [282] Thereupon Israel began to pour forth complaint before their Father who is in heaven, saying: "Thou hast laid many troublesome tasks upon us. Which shall we hold to and which shall we abandon? Thou hast thrown upon us great labour and great burden; Thou hast said to us, 'Build Me a house, and although ye build, yet study the Law.'" This is the plea of His children. [283] And this is the answer of their Father who is in heaven. Ye had a long rest between captivities, and I longed [saying], 'When shall I hear the sound of the words of My Law from your mouths?' Ye have not done well, and I have not done well. Ye have not done well in that ye have differed from Me, and I was angry against you and arose and brought utter destruction on My city and My house and My children. And I did not do well in that I arose against you and sealed a decree of judgment against you. Indeed, shall that which endureth forever and ever, world without end, contend with that which hath no endurance but for a year, or two, or ten, or thirty, and if at most for an hundred years, and then passeth away? But in that ye have rebuked Me, ye did well. Already have I accepted your rebuke.

[284] "For the sigh of Israel is sweet to Me, and the desire for the Law  
hath covered Me,  
"Your words have found grace in My ears, and I accept the sayings  
of your mouths.  
"Ye have labored in the house of My choice, and the Law shall not  
move from your mouths,

- [285] “For I am master of wonders, the transcendent Lord, I am He.  
 “Mighty works come to pass before Me, miracles and  
       marvels before My throne.  
 “Who hath come before Me and I have not fulfilled his [prayer]?  
       Who hath called upon Me and I have not straightway answered him?  
 “State before Me all your requests, and multiply upon Me the desire of  
       your hearts.
- [286] “My storehouses and My treasures, – nothing in them is lacking.  
 “State your requests and they shall be given you, and the desire of your  
       hearts shall be done forthwith,  
 “For there is no season like to this season, and no time like to  
       this time.  
 “There is no season like to this season, for My soul bowed down till  
       I beheld you,  
 “And there is no time like to this time, for the love of you cling  
       to My heart.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII:

- [287] “I know what ye request, and My heart perceiveth what ye desire.  
 “Ye request much [knowledge of] Law, and a multitude of Talmud and  
       many halakhic traditions,  
 “Ye hope to ask questions on points of law, and ye covet a multitude  
       of secrets.  
 “To multiply testimony in mountains upon mountains, to make wisdom  
       wonderful in hills upon hills,  
 “To increase knowledge of the Talmud in the streets, and subtleties  
       in the roads,  
 “To multiply laws as the sand of the sea, and rabbis as the dust of  
       the world,
- [288] “To seat academies in the gates of the tents, to expound therein  
       what is prohibited and what is permitted,  
 “Therein to declare the impure impure, and therein to declare the  
       pure pure,  
 “Therein to declare the fit fit, and therein to declare the unfit unfit,  
 “Therein to recognize the [sorts] of blood, and to teach the menstruants  
       what they should do,  
 “To bind diadems upon your heads, and crowns of royalty upon the heads  
       of your children,  
 “To force kings to prostrate themselves before you, to compel princes  
       to fall down in your presence,  
 “To send forth your name beneath all the heavens, and your memory in  
       the great ports,  
 “To illumine your faces as the brilliance of the day,  
       and the space between your eyes as a blazing star.  
 “And if ye be worthy [to employ] this seal,  
       and to make use of the fearful crown,  
 “Neither vulgar nor ignorant shall be found in you,  
       nor fool nor idiot shall be of your number,

- [289] “Ye rejoice, and My servants are grieved,  
 “That this secret goeth forth from My treasury.  
 “By virtue of it the voice of your academies [soundeth] as [the voice of]  
     fatted calves.  
 “Not with toil and not with weariness [do they learn],  
 “But with the name of this seal and with the mention of the fearful crown.  
 “He that marveleth at you, and he that grieveth grieveth because  
     of you;  
 “Many die in their sighing, and their souls go forth by reason of the  
     repute of your glory,  
 [290] “Wealth and riches increase upon you; the great of the world cleave unto you;  
 “That family from which ye marry a daughter is known on all sides to be noble,  
 “He that is blessed in you is truly blessed, he that rejoiceth in you  
     rejoiceth truly.  
 “Ye are called, ‘Those who turn many to righteousness’;  
     they call ye, ‘Those who prove men innocent.’  
 “The determinations of the months proceed from your [council],  
     and the intercalulation of years from the subtlety of your wisdom.  
 “By you hands are patriarchs anointed,  
     and presidents of the sanhedrin take office according to  
     your words;  
 [291] “Ye set up exilarchs, and the judges of cities are appointed by your authority.  
 “The order of society shall go forth from you,  
     and none shall differ therefrom.  
 “A great war was waged with Me and Me servants,  
 “As accuser appeared the greatest of the ministering angels.  
 “This is his plea:

#### CHAPTER XXIX:

- [292] “Let not this secret go forth from Thy storehouse,  
     and mystery of prudence from Thy treasures;  
 “Let not flesh and blood as our equals, suppose not the children of men our substitute.  
 “Let them grow weary in the study of the Law as much as they wish,  
 “And let those who come from their descendants, and after,  
 “Fulfill it with labor and great anguish.  
 “This is thy glory, this is thy beauty.  
 “In the midst of their rejoicing they bethink themselves and pray to Thee,  
 “They cry out before Thee whole-heartedly, they beseech Thee with desirous soul:  
 ““May that which we have read remain in our possession,  
     may that which we have studied remain in our possession,  
 ““May our inward parts grasp all that which our ears have heard,  
 ““May our hearts hold firmly the ways of the teaching which we have heard  
     from the mouth of the teacher.”  
 “And let them continue to honour one another.  
 “But if Thou revealest this secret to Thy children,  
 ““The small will be as the great and the fool as the wise.””

- [293] This is the reply which He replieth to His servants”  
 “Nay, My servitors, nay, My servants, trouble Me not in this matter.  
 “This secret shall go forth from My storehouse, and mystery of prudence  
 from My treasures.  
 “To a beloved people I reveal, to a faithful seed I teach;  
 “For them it is laid up from the fountainhead of the world, and from the  
 days of creation prepared for them.  
 “And I never thought to give it to any of the generations,  
 from the days of Moses and until now.  
 “For they shall go from evil to evil, and Me shall they not know,  
 “For their understanding was obscured by exile, and the words of the Law  
 were hard as brass and iron.  
 “It is proper for them to make use of it, to bring the Law as water in their  
 inward parts and as oil in their bones.  
 “For Israel was in affliction from the day when Mine anger waxed hot against them  
 “And I smote them, and because of them mountains trembled, and their  
 carcasses were as refuse in the midst of the street.
- [294] “With what shall I appease them? With what shall I comfort them?  
 “Or what good form of treasure is there on high  
 “That I should bring it forth and give it them and cause them to rejoice?  
 “For I have beheld and seen:  
 “I have gold, [but] there is gold in the world;  
 “I have silver, [but] there is silver in the world;  
 “I have precious stones and pearls, [but] there are precious stones and pearls  
 in the world.  
 “Wheat and barley, honey and oil, I have already placed in the world.  
 “But what is lacking the world? This secret and this mystery which is not  
 in the world.  
 “Therefore I shall give them this means of loftiness, that thereby My children  
 shall raise themselves up.”

## CHAPTER XXIX

[295] Said Rabbi Akiba: I heard a voice going forth from under the throne of glory, saying. And what was it saying? “I strengthened him, I took him, I commanded him (i.e. Enoch ben Jared whose name is Metatron), and I took him from among the children of men, and I made a throne for him over against my throne.” And what is the measure of that throne? Forty thousand myriads of parasangs of fire. And I gave over to him seventy angels, as against seventy peoples, and I gave into his hand all my servants in the world above and all my servants in the world below, and I explained to him all the categories of creation, and I set, as his name, ‘The Lesser Lord [which is the numerical equivalent of ‘My Lord; and he is lesser than *The* Lord]. (For his name, reckoning by the numerical equivalents of the letters, is 71.) And I gave him wisdom and understanding more than all the angels and made him greater than any of the ministering angels.

[296] Said Rabbi Akiba: Each day doth an angel stand at morning in the midst of the firmament and beginneth and saith, “The Lord is King!” And all the host on high answer after him until he reacheth [the word], “Bless ye,” and when he reacheth “Bless ye” a beast standeth in the midst of the firmament and the name [of this beast] is Israel, and engraven on its forehead [are the words] “My people is Mine.” And it saith, “Bless ye the Lord, the Blessed.” And all the princes on high answer after it, “Blessed be the Lord, the Blessed, forever and ever.” While this is yet unfinished, the ophanim break forth in tumult and tremble and shake the whole world

and say, “Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His [dwelling] place.” And that same beast standeth in the midst of the firmament until all the princes on high break forth in tumult, and seraphim and cherubim and troops and all the camps and each one in his place saith to the beast, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, is one Lord.”

[297] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Thus said Rabbi Akiba in the name of Rabbi Eliezer the Great: Our fathers did not undertake to put one stone upon another in the Temple until they compelled the King of the world and all his servants and He met with them and showed them the secret of the Law, how they should do it and how they should explain it and how they should practice it. At once the Holy Spirit appeared from the great entrance which is in the House of the Lord – since the Shekinah did not dwell in the Holy of Holies because of the decree. And when our fathers saw that the throne of glory made its way and stood between the cella and the altar – for although up to that time they had not built the building, [yet the throne moved] over the place of the rooks which they were shaping to found upon them the cella and the temple and the altar and all the structure generally – and when our fathers saw that the throne of glory was set on high between the altar and the cella, and the King of the World upon it, they at once fell upon their faces, [298] and concerning that moment it says [Haggai 2.9]: “The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former.” “For in the first temple I did not communicate with My children but by voice and in this temple ye have compelled Me and My throne and all My servants [to appear]. And would that it might endure! My children, why are ye fallen and lying upon your faces? Stand and seat yourselves before My throne in the order in which you sit in the academy and take hold upon a crown and receive a seal and hear the order of this secret of the Law, how ye shall do it, how explain it, and how practice it, how ascend the roads of your hearts, how your hearts may behold the Law.” At once did Zerubabel the son of Shealtiel answer and stood upon his feet as an interpreter and stated the names of the princes of the Law, each one according to his name, the name of a crown and the name of a seal.

#### CHAPTER XXX:

[299] Said Rabbi Ishmael: Thus said Rabbi Akiba in the name of Rabbi Eliezer the Great: “He who presenteth himself to serve in [connection with] this secret of the Law shall wash his garment and his undergarments and shall immerse himself in the most thorough manner lest semen should separate [any part of his skin from the water], and shall enter and sit for twelve days in a room or in an upper chamber. He shall neither go out nor come in nor eat nor drink but from evening to evening. And he shall eat, as his food, bread [baked by] his own hands [and he shall be wrapped] in a clean tallith. And he shall not taste any sort of vegetable. And water shall be his drink. [300] And he shall regularly read this midrash concerning the secret of the Law three times each day after [the regular daily] prayers which he shall pray from beginning to end. And thereafter he shall sit and shall repeat them – [the prayers and the Midrash] – twelve days the days of his fast, from morning until evening and shall not be silent. And whenever he finisheth it he shall stand upon his feet and conjure, as [one would conjure] by [the name of] their king, and shall call twelve times upon every prince, and thereafter he shall conjure him with the seal, [and so] for each one of them. [301] And these are their names which he shall say: The Prince Shekadhozi’ai the Lord, the Prince Nihappardiyuel the Lord, the Prince ’Abhirgehwhedhiryah\* the Lord (and there be those who say Gehwedhiryahu) the Prince Plitriyah the Lord, the

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\* In the margin, Scholem notes, “...I should prefer ’Abhirgehidyryah if the Heb. text permitted (& so in the following, transposing the י & the first ך).”

Prince Zehubh’adyah the Lord, the Prince ’Ogbohadyah the Lord, the Prince Totrosi’ai the Lord, the Prince ’Ashrawwili’ai the Lord, the Prince Zebhudiel the Lord, the Prince Margawwiel the Lord, the Prince Daharbyoron the Lord, the Prince ’Adiriron the Lord. [302] And he shall conjure them by the permission of his King for twelve [days] in the name of Yopphiel Splendor of Height, and in the name of Sarbiel who is one of the princes of the Merkabha, and in the name of Shadriel who is a beloved prince, and in the name of Hasdiel who is called to the Power [of God] six hours daily. And he shall repeat and shall conjure the same last four princes with a great seal and with a great oath in the name of ’Ezboghah, which is a great seal, and in the name

of Zurtak, a holy name and a fearful crown. [303] And when he finesheth twelve days let him go forth to any form of the Torah which he desire, whether Bible, whether Mishnah, whether the vision of the Merkabha. For he goeth forth in a clean spirit and from great sorrow and anguish, for it is a teaching known to us, an ordinance made by the first teachers, and a tradition of the men of old which they wrote down and left for coming generations, that the humble might practice it. And he who is worthy is answered thereby.

[304] Said Rabbi Akiba in the name of Rabbi Eliezer the Great: Happy is he who is aided by the desert of his fathers, and whom the righteousness of his ancestors stands [in good stead], that he may practice this crown and this seal, and they shall communicate with him, and he exalteth himself in the loftiness of the Law.

[305] Said Rabbi Ishmael: This was done by Rabbi Eliezer and he was answered and did not believe; and it was done by me and I did not believe until a brought a fool and he was made like unto me. And again it was done by shepherds and they were made like unto us. By the authority of the court they sent down Rabbi Akiba outside the Land [of Israel] and he waited until it was done by many who neither read nor studied and they became equal [to] others and were made learned students. And he came and verified [the matter] and agreed in the evidence which he bore in the court of the Patriarch, saying: "This was done also outside the Land [of Israel] and succeeded." And thus said Rabbi Eliezer the Great. And the Sages say, "Perhaps we possess it by virtue of the Land of Israel." And they did not believe until they sent Rabbi Akiba down to Babylon and it was done [there] and succeeded. And thereafter we rejoiced.

[306] Said Rabbi Ishmael: How shall a man begin before he pray this secret of the Law? When he arose (*si*) he shall say:

"Be made magnificent, be exalted, be lifted up, O splendid King,  
"Upon a throne high and lifted up, fearful and terrible.  
"Thou dwellest in the chambers of the palace of loftiness.  
"The servants of Thy throne are terrified, and set trembling  
"The heavens which are the footstool of Thy feet, each day,  
"With sound of exultation and with tumult of music and multitude of song."  
(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.")

And let him conjure and say:

"Who will not exalt Thee, O King fearful  
"And terrible above all Thy servants?  
"In shaking and in trembling do they serve Thee,  
"In terror and in quaking they are terrified before Thee.  
"With identical words, with one mouth they utter forth Thy fearful name.  
"Because of fright and fear [among those] who stand before Thee  
"There is none who goes ahead and none who lags [in the song].  
"And whoever delayeth the sound after his companion, in [the pronunciation  
of] Thy name  
"[Though but] as by the measure of a hair's breadth,  
"Is consumed, and flaming fire trampleth him down."  
(As it is said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts,  
all the earth is full of His glory.")

## APPENDIX

A chart prepared for the 1987 edition shows the alignment of chapters for three editions of *Hekhalot Rabbati* in English:

- Smith = Morton Smith: chapters I-XXX
- Grodner = Lauren Grodner: chapters 15-29, which appear in David Blumenthal's *Understanding Jewish Mysticism: A Source Reader* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1978) pages 59-89.
- Kaplan = Aryeh Kaplan: "a synthesis of the best readings found in various editions" of chapters 1, 2, and 16-26 in his *Meditation and Kabbalah* (York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1982) pages 41-54.

Within the column showing Smith's chapters is a band showing "text" (also "tx" and "t") or narrative sections and "hymns" (also "h") or songs.

Smith		Grodner	Kaplan
ch I	text		ch 1
ch II	hymns		ch 2
ch III			
ch IV	text		
ch V	hymns		
ch VI			
ch VII	text		
ch VIII	hymns		
ch IX			
ch X	text		
ch XI	hymns		
ch XII	text		
ch XIII	tx	ch 15	
ch XIV	h	ch 16	ch 16
ch XV	text	ch 17	ch 17
ch XVI	h	ch 18	ch 18 (2)
ch XVII		ch 19	ch 19
ch XVIII		ch 20	ch 20
ch XIX	t	ch 21	ch 21
ch XX	x	ch 22	
ch XXI	t	ch 23	ch 22
ch XXII		ch 24	ch 23
ch XXIII			ch 24
ch XXIV	h	ch 25	ch 25
ch XXV	t		(2)
ch XXVI	h	ch 26	ch 26
ch XXVII	text	ch 27	
ch XXVIII	hymns	ch 28 (1)	
ch XXIX	tx	ch 29	
ch XXX	h		

- (1) Grodner omits the first paragraph of Smith's CHAPTER XXVII.  
 (2) Kaplan omits material here, primarily hymns.