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THE SHEKINAH CONCEPT IN THE BIBLICAL ERA

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Old Testament Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

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CHAPTER I

The concept of the Shekinah was one of the favorite devices of rabbinical theologians to describe their God's nearness and concern for His people. While that specific concept is not Biblical, very much of what it is trying to express is Biblically grounded. Much that the Shekinah meant to the rabbinist is not foreign to the Old Testament either, although the same concepts are couched in different terminologies. Hence, it will be our duty in the early pages of this thesis to attempt to determine just how Biblical this feature of early Judaism is.

This attempt will not only involve a careful study of the verb, שָׁכַן , and its cognates in the Old Testament. We must also take some note of the host of Old Testament concepts, which might have served as source-materials of inspiration for the rabbins, and which were later subsumed under a single heading. Other rabbinical concepts, similar to the Shekinah, will have to be dealt with in order to learn the exact sense in which that term was understood.

Yet no one would deny that much of what was included under the "Shekinah" heading was not Biblical. Many scholars would either set these changes into a general context of "the development of religion" or would find their cause in the encroachments which Greek thought was supposed to be making upon the Jewish world of that time. In these intro-

ductory pages, it will also be necessary to study some of the possible causes for the development of this important rabbinic theologoumenon.

We naturally approach this whole problem ultimately from a New Testament viewpoint. The problem of the relationship between the two Testaments is knotty enough as is, but the whole picture becomes infinitely more complex when we remember that the New Testament was not only influenced by our canonical Old Testament, but was also subject to the many subtle changes which four hundred years could make in the minds of populace and theologians alike. Many parallels can be drawn between the rabbinic attempts at bringing God near through the Shekinah and the Christian emphasis on the incarnation, which claimed to be the ultimate in uniting man and God. In the later pages of this thesis we shall see how the Shekinah-concept may have influenced not only the vocabulary of the New Testament, but also the bases of Christian theology.

Finally, we shall study briefly the possible influence of this concept on both Jewish and Christian liturgies. We might expect that influence to be considerable, for liturgies can often express better the intangibles of religion than a systematic theology.

However, before we begin our study of the Shekinah itself, we should, in these introductory pages, attempt to determine its relationship to the religious and philosophical

atmosphere of the times. Our interest here is not at all philosophical, but because the Shekinah treads upon ground which is common to both religious and philosophical thought, it will be necessary to discuss the problem in philosophical terms, for the religious does not include such abstractions in its vocabulary.

In brief, the problem, common to the Old Testament, as to all other religions and to all except atheistic philosophies, is that of God's transcendence vs. His immanence. If God is the Creator, the Absolute, the Prime Mover, what contact, if any, can He have with the created, sensible universe? If the pantheistic solution of identifying creator and creation is rejected, some degree of divine transcendence must be predicated. If He is transcendent, how will He reveal Himself to mankind? Through intermediaries, or by self-revelation; and, if the latter, by theophany or incarnation?

Every religion and every philosophy alike must face up to this problem. Religions rarely express their solutions in systematic forms of philosophy, but solutions they do give nevertheless. This is particularly true of both the Old Testament and of the rabbins; presentation is unsystematic and the terminology is ambiguous in both instances. The question is: do both of these systems solve the problem of immanence vs. transcendence in the same way, or have extraneous factors influenced the rabbinical consideration of the problem?

Adherents of the Wellhausen school of thought view the Shekinah-concept as the end of a long series of internal developments in the religion of the Hebrews. This type of approach, including the many varying forms it assumes, usually discounts revelation and finds the origin of all religion, including that of the Hebrews, in the various forms of totemism, animism, etc., which were rampant in the ancient world.¹ This near-panteistic form of primitive religion had few qualms about a transcendent god, because there were gods or demi-gods all about them.

In some instances this crude superstition gave way to more refined forms of polytheism, but in all the ancient pantheons, the gods and goddesses were always near and might assume any number of forms in their dealings with men. For reasons which are never explained, the Jews alone, in decided contrast to all their neighbors, developed under the leadership of both priests and prophets from gross polytheism through henotheism to a unique monotheism. These various stages of development are all said to be discernible in different parts of the Old Testament. Early writers, who viewed God more immanently, described Him in very anthropomorphic terms.

It was a school of post-exilic priestly writers, who

¹For a brief overview of this hypothesis and its "evidence", see Paul Heinisch, Theology of the Old Testament (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1950), pp. 47-8.

first reacted severely against these early crudities and began to describe God in more transcendent terms and left only a ritual approach open to Him. The movements toward absolute monotheism and toward relative transcendence had reached their climax at about the time of the Persian domination.

During the next period, however, when Greek influence was predominant, a complete reaction against the personal, anthropomorphic description of Jahwe in their Scriptures set in. The Greek aversion to matter was accepted, and God was gradually banished from the universe. However, the Jews still firmly believed in divine governance of the world, and so they found it necessary to postulate various sorts of hypostases or mediators between God and the world--among them the Shekinah.

Before we discuss the rabbinic view of God's relations to the universe, however,² it is necessary for us to understand how the Bible itself approaches this problem. Whatever evidence there might be for or against a completely naturalistic and rationalistic explanation for the development of religion, it cannot be denied that the Old Testament does make considerable use of anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms. So vivid do these become on occasion that it is

²See infra.

³For a rather fair sampling of these, see Heinisch, Op. cit., pp. 56-7.

even stated that God whistles,⁴ claps his hands,⁵ draws a sword from his scabbard,⁶ and treads a wine press.⁷

Such figures are much more common in the earlier books of the Old Testament, but later authors by no means shun them. In particular is this true when we are dealing with poetry. (It is interesting to note, too, that anthropomorphisms are almost always applied to Jahwe, the covenant-God, and not to Elohim, not even in the so-called "Elohistic" psalms.)⁸

This points to what seems to us to be the most likely explanation for almost all Biblical anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms: that they are simply vivid figures of speech, used deliberately and purposefully by writers of both prose and poetry to help give urgency and poignancy to what they wrote. How figurative these expressions are meant to be is evident in the frequent comparison of God with animals.⁹

⁴Is. 7, 13.

⁵Ex. 21, 22.

⁶Ex. 21, 3.

⁷Is. 63, 2-3.

⁸Gustave Cohler, Theology of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.) p. 99. In this connection, note also Gen. 7, 16.

⁹Reinisch, Op. cit., p. 67.

Today, as well as in Moses' day, it is practically impossible to describe God or His actions without resorting to some sort of anthropomorphism. This is true of even the most concise theology, because it too must operate with human terms and within human categories. The New Testament does not hesitate to use similar figures, nor have preachers ever since. "Anthropomorphism does not aim at humanizing God, but---to bring God close to man as a warm, living person and thus to preserve and strengthen religious life."¹⁰

Luther, in his usual penetrating fashion, understood how inevitable anthropomorphisms are and applies his familiar Iarva Dei concept on them:

Qui extra ista involucra Deum attingere volunt, isti sine scalis nituntur ad coelum ascendere.---Necessesse enim est, ut Deus cum se nobis revelat, id faciat per velamen et involucrum quoddam, et dicat: ecce sub hoc involucro me certo apprehendes.¹¹

In a sense, the anthropopathisms are still more necessary, for they express in the only language which human beings can understand real attitudes of God toward the world. "The anthropopathies serve to keep wakeful and strong the consciousness of the living, holy God, the idea of whom man so willingly volatilizes into abstractions."¹²

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Martin Luther, Commentary on Genesis; quoted in Oehler, Op. cit., p. 112, note 3.

¹² Oehler, Op. cit., p. 115.

The Old Testament speaks of God in both immanent and transcendent terms. On the other hand, the Jews of the Old Testament were always--unless we unhesitatingly accept the source hypothesis in its crassest forms--impressed by various divine attributes which we generally relate to God's transcendence, viz., His aseity, omnipresence, omnipotence, immensity, omniscience, holiness, etc. As it was axiomatic with the Jew that God was the creator of the universe, so it followed inevitably that his creator must transcend his creation. The Old Testament frequently contrasts the eternal God with the finite creature. We need cite only Ps. 113, 5-6; Ps. 90; Is. 55, 8-9; Ps. 139; or the book of Jonah. He knows all of men's thoughts. He is absolutely holy and demands as much of men.¹³ So much stress had been placed on this side of God's nature that it was a common belief that no one could behold God and still live.¹⁴ Jahwe is "a magnified human king enwrapped in isolation".¹⁵

On the other hand, however, the Old Testament is by no means incognizant of God's immanence. Christian thinkers have often accused the Jews of only a Pharisaic formalism,

¹³For a fuller discussion of these Old Testament attributes of God, see Heinisch, *Op. cit.*, pp. 74-96.

¹⁴Compare only Is. 6, 5. This popular attitude is evident in almost every theophany--in both Testaments.

¹⁵J. Abelson, The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1912), pp. 46-8.

with no comprehension of the divine immanence.¹⁶ This is a complete misrepresentation, as all the subsequent pages of this thesis will show. Rather the entire Old Testament is concerned with God's relations with mankind. Through His presence in the sanctuary (which approaches our particular interest, the Shekinah) He was very near, if not immanent, to His people. Much of Old Testament theology centers in the covenant which Jahwe made with His chosen race. God's love for His people is frequently portrayed in nuptial terms. God reveals Himself particularly in His providential care for Israel. Besides the transcendent attributes mentioned above, He also possesses the attributes of love and mercy (אֱהָבָה, רַחֲמִים, etc.).¹⁷ He is as a father to Israel, and His Spirit inspires man's wisdom, holiness, and sense of justice.¹⁸

It is just this inspired genius of the ancient Hebrews to make immanence and transcendence coalesce into one another and become component, indispensable parts of the same whole, that distinguishes their God (and the Christians') from all others, and which makes one highly skeptical of the too-simple solution which many Biblical critics propose. The Hebrew approach to the problem simply does not follow

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 12-8.

¹⁷ Heinisch, Op. cit., pp. 96-105.

¹⁸ Abelson, Op. cit., pp. 48-53.

the same line of development as does Greek philosophy. One author has stated this fact succinctly:

How could the Absolute be a person? For our philosophy it could only be by shedding all limitations and so ceasing to be an individual. But the Hebrew took the great leap of the mystic and held both the absoluteness and the personality of Jehovah. It is instructive in this connection to observe how Philo, bent on turning Jehovah into a philosophical Absolute, an abstract pure being, had to get rid, by allegorical interpretations, of all the characteristics of the Jehovah of the Old Testament. Neither David nor Amos nor any Hebrew would ever have recognized the vapid abstraction with which Philo comes out as the Jehovah they had known.¹⁹

Did rabbinic theology now follow the Old Testament in dealing with the problem, or was it deflected by the considerations of Greek philosophy? There is a clear tendency (although only a tendency!) in the Targums and the Septuagint to shun or paraphrase anthropomorphisms and theophanies; and other expressions, such as "Shekinah", are even substituted for the divine name (the Tetragrammaton). It is true that Maimonides, many centuries later, did set up the incorporeality of God as a dogma and placed anyone who denied this doctrine upon the level of an idolater,²⁰ but it is an extremely tenuous argument which attempts to make rabbins of Christ's time subject to the same foreign influences as a

¹⁹ Duncan Macdonald, The Hebrew Philosophical Genius (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936), pp. 9-10.

²⁰ Louis Ginzberg, "Anthropomorphism and Anthropopathism", Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1907), I, 624.

medieval philosopher. Thus Moore writes:

...It is, however, an egregious error to think that the Targums attempt to dispose of all the anthropomorphisms of Scripture...they reproduce faithfully the whole range of human emotions attributed to him ...If the reader will then compare Philo's treatment of such narratives with the Targums and the Midrash, he will discover how innocent the Palestinian masters were of an "abstract" or "transcendent"...or any other sort of a philosophical-idea of God.²¹

Other influences besides those from Alexandria exerted pressure on Judaism, probably chief of which were the varied circumstances of living in Palestine itself since the Exile, to which the theology of the times naturally would have to address itself.

Besides the Shekinah the rabbis employed a host of other concepts to safeguard the majesty and deity of God. These we shall treat in more detail in the fourth and fifth chapters of this thesis, but it would seem advisable to sketch here some of their most common paraphrases and circumlocutions of the Old Testament. Actual theophanies are completely shunned. The angel of the Lord and the Holy Spirit are given increasing functions. Various concepts of the Old Testament are personified, and are either made to represent God on earth or are used as paraphrases for His own name: the glory (קְדוּשָׁה or כְּבוֹד), the name (שֵׁם), the word (דְּבַר

²¹George Foot Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, the Age of the Tannaim (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1946), I, 120.

or נְלִינָה), wisdom (סֵפֶד), light (נֹר), etc. It is no longer God who acts or speaks, but one of these substitutes for Him. God's own personality no longer dwells in the temple, but his Name, or the Shekinah, or the Angel. The Qal stem in the original text ("I shall dwell in your midst") is replaced by the Hiphil ("I shall cause my --- to dwell"). Likewise by changing one vowel-point, the original נִלְוָה ("to behold the face of God") becomes נִלְוָה ("to appear"). The Septuagint often goes even further than the Targums in eliminating anthropomorphisms. The "image of God" becomes $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha \text{ Κυρίου}$, and the "mouth of God" becomes $\phi\omega\nu\eta \text{ Κυρίου}$. All human emotions are excluded from the Deity. Repentance, wrath, and pity are paraphrased in a way that predicates nothing human of God.²²

Scholars express many varying opinions on the causes for this trend. Wunsche, for example, believes that the Shekinah phraseology was intended merely to stress Jahwe's immanence in the world in contrast to the prevailing religious opinions of all other nations. He writes:

Es ist ein Schulausdruck, der in der Mitte zwischen dem spekulativen Denken und konkreten Vorstellungen ueber Gottes Wesen steht. Waehrend die juedisch-alexandrinischen Religionsphilosophen Gott als ueber- und ausserweltlich fassten, der nur mittelbar durch geschaffene, selbstaendige Wesen oder Hypostasen seine Wesenheit in der Welt zu bethaetigen vermoege, hielten die juedischen Volkalehrer in Palaestina und Babylon nach Vorgang der Biblischen

²²Ginzberg, *Op. cit.*, pp. 622-3.

Schriftsteller des Alten Testaments an der innerweltlichen Wirksamkeit fest. Gott ist gegenwaertig in der Welt, er ruht und wohnt bei seinem Volke, leitet seine Geschicke und greift unmittelbar in dieselben mit seiner maechtigen Hand ein... Somit haben wir in אלהים einen Decknamen oder eine Nebenbenennung Gottes, die fuer Gott selbst steht, ihn aber nach einer bestimmten Wesensseite, naemlich nach seiner realen Gegenwart in der Welt, dem menschlichen Bewusstsein nahebringt.²³

Maybaum believes that these changes were necessary to ward off misconceptions that might arise in the popular Jewish mind itself--without any foreign influences--as the Aramaic tongue replaced Hebrew. He writes:

Das Schriftthum der Hebraeer, so weit es uns in der Bibel vorliegt, ist von Bildern ueberfuellt, was freilich auch durch die abstrakte und ideelle Materie, die in der Bibel zumeist behandelt wird, veranlasst wurde. Trotzdem bleibt es ein merkwuerdiges Zeugnis von der uoppigen Phantasie dieses Volkes, dass der Gesetzgeber oft da, wo er es eindringlich ausspricht, dass kein Bild Gott darzustellen vermag, mit einer bewundernswerthen Naivetaet von der Hand, dem Fusse und den Ohren Gottes redet. Es steht jedoch fest, dass, so lange die hebraische Sprache gesprochen wurde, den waahren Bekennern der mosaischen Lehre diese Tropen immer nur als solche erschienen sind. Als aber zur Zeit des zweiten Tempels die aramaeische Sprache immer mehr uober Hand nahm und zur Umgangssprache wurde, und sich endlich das Beduerfniss nach einer Uebersetzung des Pentateuchs immer mehr geltend machte, da war es natuerlich eine Frage von der hoechsten Bedeutung, ob es rathsamer sei in einer zwar wortgetrouen Uebersetzung die Bilder, Gleichnisse und Wendungen der Schrift, da wo sie sich auf Gott beziehen, unversondert wiederzugeben, oder mit Beibehaltung des Sinnes dieselben zu umschreiben. Die Befuerchtung lag naemlich nahe, dass das Volk, welchem mit dem Verlust der hebraischen Sprache auch das Verstaend-

²³D. Aug. Wuensche, "Schechina", Realencyklopaedie fuer protestantische Theologie und Kirche (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1906), XVII, 538.

niss fuer die Ausdrucksweise derselben geschwunden war, das Abbild mit dem Urbild vorzuwechseln, und diese Tropen als Eigenschaften und wesentliche Merkmale Gottes auffassen wuerde--ein Missverstaendniss, dass bei der crassen Unbildung des gemeinen Landvolks gewiss sehr nahe lag.²⁴

Abelson again believes that the Shokinah speculations represent a theological reaction against the Old Testament's stress on the transcendence of God:

I must here point out the difference between the religion which the Rabbinic Jew derived from his Book (the Old Testament), and that which he learned from his own soul's experiences. In the former he was preponderatingly taught truth of the Divine Transcendence. But his individual and national experiences brought him round to the truth of the Divine Immanence... Instead of the monarch wrapped in impenetrable isolation, he became the Shechinah. No longer the great Unapproachable, the great Unknowable, He became the Father, with a Father's love for His children. And His worship sprang not from a feeling of external obligation, but from the impulse of the Holy Spirit, that emanation of Himself which He had deposited in the finite heart. Yet, although the Shechinah was brought down to earth, its permanent residence was in the heavens. The monotheistic idea was never for a moment imperilled.²⁵

Marshall quite faithfully echoes the most widely-held view today: "The two most remarkable features of Judaistic theology were its development of the doctrine of Divine 'aloofness', and the way in which it then sought to bridge the

²⁴Siegmund Maybaum, Die Anthropomorphien und Anthropopathien bei Onkolos und den spaetern Targumim mit besonderer Beruecksichtigung der Ausdruecke Memra, Yekara und Schechinta (Breslau: Schletter'sche Buchhandlung, 1870), pp. 1-2.

²⁵Abelson, Op. cit., pp. 286-7.

chasm which it had created between God and man."²⁶ (Because of this view, Marshall discusses the Shekinah almost exclusively from the standpoint of its supposed mediatorial functions.)

Finally, another authority, Ginzberg, attributes the rise of all such terms as the Shekinah to nothing more than an increasing reluctance on the part of post-exilic Judaism to speak anthropomorphically about God. He explicitly disclaims any foreign origin for this trend; it is "a refinement of religious ideas which had its origin upon Jewish soil".²⁷

Hence, it should be clear that the case for a Greek origin of the Shekinah thought is not so pellucid as some would make it out to be. It will not be discreditable on our part, then, if we continue to treat the Shekinah as an essentially Jewish concept. This thesis will present the viewpoint that, while the Shekinah is not a Biblical figure of speech, it is a continuation of the same fundamental approach to the immanence-transcendence question that the Old Testament makes: the transcendent God willingly making Himself immanent with and available to His people.

²⁶J. T. Marshall, "Shekinah", Dictionary of the Bible, edited by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), IV, 437.

²⁷Ginzberg, Op. cit., pp. 622-3.

CHAPTER II

Although the word שְׁכִינָה is itself not used in the Old Testament, the stem from which it is derived, שׁוּב , is used quite commonly and often in a sense which is not far removed from that which the rabbins later applied to the Shekinah. In this chapter we propose to investigate the Old Testament's usage of שׁוּב and its cognates, and in general to determine how much of what later was included under the term, Shekinah, can be justified on the basis of such a word study itself.

In almost all Semitic tongues the stem "škn" means to dwell or to inhabit.¹ The Hebrew verb appears in the Qal stem pointed both שׁוּב and שׁוּב , although the former is more common. Ancient Hebrew (using the old Phoenician alphabet) already employed the same stem (𐤑 𐤕 𐤍). The Aramaic word is exactly the same as the Hebrew, only with the characteristic Aramaic pointing (שׁוּב). (The Aramaic verb is used twice in the Old Testament, the Pael stem in Dan. 4, 18, and the Pael stem in Ezra 6, 12.) The Arabic verb, سَكَنَ , and the Syriac, ܫܘܒ , also employ these three consonants to express similar meanings. Already the appearance of this root in all major Semitic languages in

¹Jesenius' Hebrew and Chaldean Lexicon, translated by Tregelles (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), pp. 822-3.

substantially the same sense might indicate some other reason than the usual arbitrariness in the development of a language for this favoritism.

A concordance study of the word, דָּוַן , and related words in the Old Testament is very revealing. (The details of the summaries presented here can be found in the tables presented in connection with this chapter.) Of the 550 times the Authorized Version uses the English word "dwell" to translate a Hebrew word, דָּוַן was the original expression in only ninety-one instances. (The word commonly translated with "dwell" is יָשַׁב , so 431 times.) Similarly, where the Authorized Version renders "dwelling" or "dwelling place", דְּוָן was the original in only thirteen cases, and again יָשַׁב or some other derivative of יָשַׁב was the most common.² Hence, it is clear that a translation is not likely to shed much light on our problem.

In reality, the verb, דָּוַן , is used a total of 127 times in the Old Testament, some thirty-six times of which the Authorized Version translates otherwise than "dwell" (see Table III). The Qal is frequently translated "abide", "inhabit", "remain", etc., and naturally the Hiphil is more frequently translated with "place" or "set" than with the more clumsy "cause to dwell". Likewise, דְּוָן is used a total of 134 times in the original text and is translated

²Robert Young, Analytical Concordance to the Bible (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1920), pp. 277-9.

"tabernacle" in all but seventeen instances, usually according to the requirements of the context. The cognate nouns, דָּוַן and דָּוַן , are used twenty times and once respectively.^{3 4}

Closer investigation reveals that דָּוַן is often used in a general, non-technical, or non-theological sense. Wherever God or some cultic object is not its subject, it frequently connotes the same idea as the English "dwell" or the German "wohnen". A study of the use of the word shows that this is the case in the vast majority of the instances where the Qal stem of the verb is employed (seventy out of 109).^{5 6} Thus, this verb is often used to describe the allotments of land in Canaan, originally given to the twelve tribes. With various wild animals as its subjects, the prophets frequently use it to describe the future desolation of some land. Often, it is also employed in a somewhat tropical, but still related, sense of Israel's dependence upon Jahwe. Also closely related is its use with inanimate objects as its subject in the sense of "being found" (compare

³Solomon Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae atque Chaldaicae (Lipsiae: Veit et Comp., 1896), I and II, passim.

⁴The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament (London: Longman, Green, Brown, and Longmans, 1843), III, 1260-1.

⁵Ibid.

⁶See Table V.

the Greek $\delta\upsilon\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\omega$). In most instances, however, those inanimate objects are conceptual (wisdom, judgement, light) or religious or cultic objects (soul, tabernacle, cloud, congregation), although this might be largely coincidental. In twenty-nine instances where $\text{ך}\psi$ is used in the Qal stem, or slightly over one-third of the cases, it is used in a sense which might be termed specialized or "theological". This special use we shall investigate in greater detail later in this chapter.

A study of the use of the cognates of $\text{ך}\psi$ is only indirectly helpful in determining the exact use of the verb. One proper name, שְׁכַנְיָהוּ , or, once, שְׁכַנְיָהוּ , transliterated "Shechaniah" in the Authorized Version, is derived from the stem, $\text{ך}\psi$. This name is used eight times in the Old Testament, but evidently of only six individuals, all of whom seem to have lived in post-exilic times. (One is tempted to theorize that this stem's popularity in personal names after the Exile parallels the origins of the rabbinical Shekinah concept!) The name probably signifies intimacy with Jahwe, as though dwelling in or with Him.⁷ (In one instance this idea of familiarity is also suggested in the use of the verb-stem, $\text{ך}\psi$, (see Prov. 8, 12: "I, wisdom, dwell in prudence"), almost as if $\text{ך}\psi$ here were being

⁷Gesenius, Op. cit., p. 823.

confused with the possibly related stem, קָנָה .⁸

The abstract, segholate noun, קָנָה , appears only once in the Old Testament (Deut. 12, 5). Here the word is used as a parallel to the $\text{יָשָׁב־הָאֱלֹהִים שָׁמָּה}$ phrase, which, as we shall see later, was so closely connected with the rabbinic conception of the Shekinah. In the Authorized Version the verse reads as follows: "But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation (יָשָׁב־הָאֱלֹהִים) shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come". The rabbis might well have used this verse with justification as a proof-text for their doctrine of the Shekinah.

More common by far is the derivative, קָנָה , used twenty times in the Old Testament and translated "neighbor" in the Authorized Version in all except two instances. However, this word is never used in a theological context, and hence sheds little light on our problem.

The chief derivative of קָנָה is קָנָה , and its use is the most instructive for us. This is the Old Testament's chief word for "tabernacle", and so the Authorized Version translates it in all but seventeen cases.⁹ Other terms for "tabernacle" include מִדְּבָר (booth) (usually in connection with the phrase, חַג־הַמִּשְׁכָּן --feast of tabernacles) and מִשְׁכָּן

⁸Ibid., s. v. קָנָה (3), p. 823, and קָנָה , p. 567.

⁹Englishman's Concordance, Op. cit., I, 770-1.

(tent), which, while it is used more often than קֹדֶשׁ ,¹⁰ is generally considered the more generic term. Scholars usually interpret אֹהֶל as referring to the outer, tent-like structure, which houses the קֹדֶשׁ , the place where God dwells or condescends to reveal His glory¹¹ (compare the New Testament's ἐπέω and δόξα). Even though the theological connotations of אֹהֶל and קֹדֶשׁ are, no doubt, to be distinguished,¹² in actual Old Testament usage the distinction between the two often is not observed. Thus, the trappings and furniture of both are spoken of. It is always אֹהֶל which is used in the familiar phrase, "tabernacle (אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד) of the congregation", never קֹדֶשׁ . It is very interesting to note that the cloud is spoken of as resting upon both: with אֹהֶל in Ex. 33, 10; Num. 9, 17; and Num. 12, 10; with קֹדֶשׁ in Ex. 40, 36, 38; Num. 9, 15, 18, 19, 20, 22; and Num. 10, 11. Twice (Ex. 40, 34 and 35), the glory (כְּבוֹד) of the Lord is spoken of as filling the קֹדֶשׁ ; nothing comparable is said of the אֹהֶל . This last fact, plus their occurrence in the same verse on two occasions (Ex. 36, 14 and Ex. 40, 19) is the only real evidence for any early distinction between the two terms. All of these facts seem to indicate quite

¹⁰Young, *Op. cit.*, pp. 952-3.

¹¹Cf. William Cooke, *The Shekinah* (London: J. B. Cooke, 1857), p. 12 (footnote). Cf. also Ex. 36, 14 and Ex. 40, 19.

¹²It is interesting to note that in the New Testament, קֹדֶשׁ and אֹהֶל are again combined in the single term, σκηνη . Was this due to the rabbinic emphasis on the Shekinah?

clearly that in earlier days the stem, שׁוּׁ , was not revered so highly as by the rabbins, who made it into one of their most characteristic theological concepts.

Before we investigate the theological use of the verb, שׁוּׁ , itself and attempt to determine what "the Shekinah concept of the Old Testament" was, we should first look briefly at the chief Old Testament synonyms for שׁוּׁ . Eight other verbs beside שׁוּׁ are occasionally translated by "dwell" in the Authorized Version.¹³ By far the most common of these is יָׁשׁוּׁב . This common stem is used almost 1100 times, making it a very proper object of detailed study in its own right. Its basic meaning, of course, is "sit". Some 420 times the Authorized Version renders it with "dwell" and elsewhere with "abide", "remain", "tarry", etc. Its Qal participle, יֹׁשֵׁב , is the regular Old Testament word for the "inhabitant" of a land. Only occasionally does the stem connote short duration.¹⁴ When God is its subject, it is used most frequently in semi-anthropomorphic fashion to describe God's residence in the heavens (see Table VI). (In one case, Dan. 7, 9, this is also true of the Aramaic equivalent, יָׁשֵׁב , but here with the apocalyptic term, "Ancient of Days", as its subject.) Interestingly enough, in the seven instances in the Old Testament where the phrase, "God,

¹³Young, Op. cit., pp. 163-4.

¹⁴Englishman's Concordance, II, s. v., יָׁשׁוּׁב , pp. 566-75.

who dwellest between the cherubim", occurs (יָשַׁב בֵּינֵי כְרֻבִים), it is always יָשַׁב and never שָׁכַן which is used--and this in a context which was very close to what later Judaism associated with the Shekinah! Finally, we may also note four other instances (I K. 8, 27; II Chr. 6, 18; Ps. 9, 11; and Ps. 22, 3) where God's condescension and dwelling on earth is spoken of (which is the essence of the Shekinah concept), this general term, יָשַׁב, is used instead of the שָׁכַן we might expect.

Except by contrast, the other synonyms of שָׁכַן in the Old Testament are of little help to us. The stem, הָלַךְ, is often used in an almost synonymous sense with שָׁכַן. Its basic meaning is "to turn aside from the way" or "sojourn a short time",¹⁵ and the Authorized Version generally translates it with "sojourn". It never has God as a subject. The verb, הָלַךְ, is used only once in the Hebrew Old Testament (Ps. 84, 10). It is more common in the Aramaic (used seven times in Daniel). We know it best by its cognate, הָלַךְ (generation). Its basic idea seems to be "to go around", "to go in a circle",¹⁶ The verb, הִלַּךְ, is used almost 150 times, and its basic idea is "to incline", "to set oneself down", and so usually "to encamp", or "to pitch" a

¹⁵Gesenius, Op. cit., pp. 163-4.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 193.

tent,¹⁷ Thus it is used regularly of the stages of the Israelites' journey through the wilderness, and once of setting up the tabernacle (Num. 1, 51). In the well-known Ps. 34, 7 it is used figuratively of the "Angel of the Lord", but in Num. 9, 18 it is used almost antithetically to ךָּשׁוּב , and hence it is clear that the term has no theological significance. The other words translated "dwell" need not detain us long. Both יָשָׁב and יָשַׁב are translated with "dwell" in the Authorized Version only once; יָשַׁב is used only once with conjugal implications; and the Aramaic שָׁבַח , with "light" as its subject, is once rendered "dwell" in Dan. 2, 22. None of this aids us in our study of the stem, ךָּשׁוּב .

Detailed study of the verb, ךָּשׁוּב , shows that it is the only verb meaning "dwell" in the Old Testament, which really has any specialized, theological sense, and which is so used with some degree of consistence. (The use of the word,

יָשָׁב , as we saw before, shows that in Biblical times this usage had not yet become as fixed as in later days. Yet

יָשָׁב is not used with nearly the frequency of ךָּשׁוּב in a theological sense; and it cannot be denied that יָשָׁב has a vivid, almost poetic and anthropomorphic quality, which

ךָּשׁוּב does not.) Out of a total of 109 cases where ךָּשׁוּב is used in the Qal, God is its subject twenty-four times, and "glory" or "cloud", both manifestations of God, control it

¹⁷Ibid., p. 291.

in five other instances. (See Table V.) With few exceptions the verb is then used in a context which emphasizes God's intimate and almost personal relation to His people. (None of the verses explicitly make this connection, but the close relationship between this and the covenant concept is obvious.) Often it is followed by בְּתוֹכְךָ ("in the midst of thee") or similar expressions of familiarity. To dwell with His people was synonymous with dwelling in Jerusalem (Ps. 135, 21), on Mt. Zion (Is. 8, 18), or upon a "high and holy hill" (Is. 57, 15).¹⁸ In Is. 33, 5a it is stated that Jahwe dwells on high, but this is paralleled in the second half of the verse with "He hath filled Zion with judgement and righteousness". In I Kings 8, 12 and II Chr. 6, 1 it is used of God's presence in the sanctuary ($\text{לִשְׁכַּן בְּתוֹכָם}$ -- "dwell in thick darkness").¹⁹ (לִשְׁכַּן also later assumed speculative connotations connected with the Shekinah; compare $\gamma\upsilon\phi\omicron\varsigma$ in Heb. 12, 8.)

In certain instances we may draw definite parallels between the way in which the Old Testament uses לִשְׁכַּן and rabbinic thought on the Shekinah. In Joel 3, 17 and 3, 21,

לִשְׁכַּן is used in a very eschatological context; as we shall see, there were definite eschatological connotations in both

¹⁸Since לִשְׁכַּן has such definite theological connotations here, it is difficult to understand how many critics can cite these verses to prove that the Jews were henotheistic at this time!

¹⁹Cf. supra what was said of the consistent use of לִשְׁכַּן with בְּתוֹכְךָ .

Judaism's and Christianity's conception of the Shekinah. In Num. 5, 3 and 35, 34 God's dwelling in the land is stated as a reason to maintain ceremonial cleanness; we shall see later that the rabbis taught similarly that sin caused the removal of the Shekinah from the land. In Eze. 43, 7 and 9, שׁוֹכֵן is used immediately after the imaginative account of the Shekinah's return to the prophet's new temple. This is undoubtedly the Old Testament's closest approach to the later Shekinah-terminology. Finally, we must note that, in Ps. 68, 18, שׁוֹכֵן is used in a context which St. Paul (Eph. 4, 8) and all Christendom after him have interpreted as Messianic.

The Piel of שׁוֹכֵן in every case but four is used with שׂוֹכֵן ("to place his name there"), one of the expressions used as a synonym of God Himself.²⁰ In Ps. 78, 60 the Piel of שׁוֹכֵן is also used of the tabernacle (שׂוֹכֵן , but paralleled with שׁוֹכֵן).

In the face of this evidence, it is obvious that something approaching the rabbinic doctrine of the Shekinah is definitely present in the Old Testament.²¹ As we have already noted, the שׁוֹכֵן stem has not yet taken on the more specialized sense with which later Judaism endowed it, but

²⁰See the discussion of שׂוֹכֵן in Chap. IV infra.

²¹We might also note that this "Theological" use of שׁוֹכֵן is scattered over the entire Old Testament, thus confuting the "animism to transcendence" scheme of the evolutionary hypothesis.

it is clearly the favorite word in the Old Testament for expressing Jahwe's presence with His people. Frequently, an author will use שׁוּב in both theological and secular senses in adjacent verses, but its consistent use whenever God's concourse with His people is the subject makes it certain that this stem meant more to the pious Jew, who was acquainted with his Old Testament, than any other similar word or synonym could possibly have. Hence, it was quite natural that the rabbins should later choose this stem to characterize an old concept, which they now desired to single out for greater emphasis because of altered circumstances among their people.

As we already pointed out in Chapter I, the idea of God's presence with His people and care and concern for them is practically axiomatic in the thought of the Old Testament.²² Much of this emphasis in the Old Testament has no connection with the root, שׁוּב , under which heading the rabbins grouped all such ideas. Chief among these is the idea of the כְּבוֹד or "glory" of God; in many instances we might simply say that the later term, "Shekinah", was a paraphrase or translation of the Hebrew, כְּבוֹד , except for the fact that שְׁכִינָה is the real Aramaic equivalent of כְּבוֹד ; which term is often used in distinction to the Shekinah. This whole problem we shall consider in Chapter V. There

²²See Chap. I.

were, in addition to דבר , other Old Testament concepts, from which the rabbinic idea of the Shekinah seems to have been derived; these we shall consider in Chapter IV.

The Old Testament had already clearly distinguished between God's omnipresence and His special presence in the tabernacle (later termed the "Shekinah").²³ This latter was the center of the whole Jewish ritual. How to find God present among His people after the destruction of the first temple was one of the chief problems facing the Jews in the Exile and thereafter. How they met that problem we find partially indicated already in the later books of the Old Testament, beginning with Ezekiel; and this is then continued in the vast rabbinic literature. It was under such historical circumstances, then, that Jewish minds first turned to a consideration of what was later to develop into the important concept of the Shekinah. Before we investigate further the possible Old Testament roots for that rabbinic doctrine, we should first, in the next chapter, study the doctrine itself.

²³Gustave Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, nd.), p. 137.

TABLE I

Verbs translated "dwell" in the Authorized Version

1.	יָשַׁב	-	421	times
2.	שָׁכַן	-	86	times
3.	הָיָה	-	12	times
4.	דָּוַן	-	6	times
5.	חָנָה	-	1	time
6.	זָבַז	-	1	time
7.	יָתַב	-	1	time (Aramaic)
8.	יָלַן	-	1	time
9.	עָנַד	-	1	time
10.	שָׁלַח	-	1	time (Aramaic)

Translated "cause to dwell" or "make to dwell" (Hiphil)

1.	יָשַׁב	-	10	times
2.	שָׁכַן	-	5	times
3.	שָׁכַן	-	1	time (Aramaic)

TABLE II

Nouns translated "dwelling" or "dwelling-place" in the Authorized Version

1.	בֵּית	-	14	times
2.	בֵּית	-	13	times
3.	בֵּית	-	10	times (usually participle)
4.	בֵּית	-	7	times
5.	בֵּית	-	4	times
6.	בֵּית	-	3	times
7.	בֵּית	-	2	times
8.	בֵּית	-	2	times
9.	בֵּית	-	2	times
10.	בֵּית	-	1	time
11.	בֵּית	-	1	time (Aramaic)
12.	בֵּית	-	1	time

TABLE III

Places where the Authorized Version renders
 777 otherwise than "dwell"
 (Parentheses give subject of verb)

Qal

1. "Abide"	- Ex.	24, 16 (glory)
		40, 35
	Num.	9, 17 (cloud)
		9, 18 (cloud)
		24, 2
	Jud.	5, 17
	Prov.	7, 11
2. "Continue"	- Ps.	102, 28
3. "Inhabit"	- Job	26, 5
	Ps.	104, 12
	Prov.	10, 30
	Is.	57, 15 (God)
	Jer.	17, 6
		46, 26
4. "Remain"	- Lev.	16, 16 (congregation)
	Num.	9, 22 (tabernacle)
	Job	37, 6
	Eze.	31, 13
5. "Rest"	- Num.	10, 12 (cloud)
	Ps.	16, 9

Piel and Hiphil

1. "Cause to dwell"	- Deut.	12, 11 (name)
	Ps.	78, 55
	Jer.	7, 3
		7, 7
2. "Make to dwell"	- Num.	14, 30
3. "Place"	- Gen.	3, 24
	Deut.	14, 23 (name)
		16, 2 (name)
		16, 6 (name)
		16, 11 (name)
		26, 2 (name)
	Ps.	78, 60 (tent)
4. "Set"	- Josh.	18, 1 (tabernacle)
	Heb.	1, 9 (name)
	Jer.	7, 12 (name)
5. "Cause to remain"	- Eze.	32, 4
6. "Lay"	- Ps.	7, 5 (honor)

TABLE IV

Places where the Authorized Version renders תבואה
otherwise than "tabernacle"

1. "Dwelling place"	- I Chr.	6,	32	
	Job	39,	6	
	Ps.	26,	8	("dwelleth")
	Ps.	87,	2	
	Is.	32,	18	
	Jer.	9,	19	
		30,	13	
		51,	30	
	Eze.	25,	17	
	Hab.	1,	6	
2. "Habitation"	- II Chr.	29,	6	
	Ps.	78,	28	
	Ps.	132,	5	
	Is.	22,	16	
		51,	2	
	Ez.	7,	15	(Arabic)
3. "Tent"	Gant.	1,	8	

TABLE V

Analysis of use of 7JU (in Gal)

I. With Jahwe as subject or implied

Exr.	24, 16 (glory)	Ps.	68, 16
	25, 8		68, 18
	25, 45		135, 21
	29, 46	Is.	8, 18
	40, 35 (cloud)		33, 5
Num.	5, 3		57, 15
	9, 17 (cloud)	Exo.	43, 7
	9, 16 (cloud)		43, 9
	10, 12 (cloud)	Joel	3, 17
	35, 34		3, 21
Deut.	33, 12 (?)	Zec.	2, 10
I Kings	6, 13		2, 11
	8, 12		6, 3
II Chr.	6, 1		

II. In sense of "inhabit", "dwell"

Gon.	9, 27	Ps.	104, 12
	14, 13		120, 5
	16, 12		139, 9
	25, 18	Pr.	1, 33
	26, 2		2, 21
	35, 22		7, 11
	49, 13		10, 30
Num.	23, 9	Is.	13, 20
	24, 2		13, 21
Deut.	33, 16		18, 3
	33, 28		26, 19
Judg.	5, 17		33, 16
	8, 11		34, 11
II Sam.	7, 10		34, 17
I Chr.	17, 9	Jer.	65, 9
	23, 25		17, 6
Job	4, 19		23, 6
	15, 28		25, 24
	16, 15		33, 16
	26, 5		46, 26
	29, 25		48, 28
	30, 6		49, 16
	37, 8		49, 31
	39, 28		50, 39
Ps.	15, 1	Exo.	51, 13
	16, 9		17, 23
	37, 29		31, 13
	55, 6	Obad.	3, 3
	65, 4	Micah	4, 10
	69, 36		7, 14
	74, 2	Neh.	3, 18
	102, 28	Zec.	8, 8

TABLE V (continued)

III. In sense of "being found"
(Inanimate objects as subjects)

Lev.	16,	16	(congregation)
Num.	9,	22	(tabernacle)
Josh.	22,	19	
Job	3,	5	(cloud)
	38,	19	(light)
Ps.	85,	9	(glory -?)
	94,	17	(soul -?)
	120,	6	(soul -?)
Pr.	8,	12	(wisdom)
Is.	32,	16	(judgment)

TABLE VI

Places where לשׁוׁן occurs, where we might expect לשׁוׁן

I. Of God's dwelling in heaven

I Kings	8, 30	Ps.	68, 16
	8, 43		91, 1
	8, 49		101, 16
	22, 19		102, 12
I Chr.	13, 14		123, 1
II Chr.	6, 18		132, 14
	18, 18	Is.	6, 1
Ps.	2, 4		32, 16
	9, 4		37, 28
	9, 7		40, 22
	10, 8	Jer.	22, 2
	26, 5	Lam.	5, 19
	29, 10	Dan.	7, 9 (יחב)
	55, 19	Joel	3, 2

II. Of God's dwelling "between the cherubim"

I Sam.	4, 4
II Sam.	6, 2
	7, 2
II King	19, 15
Ps.	99, 1
Is.	37, 16

III. Of God's dwelling on earth

I Kings	8, 27
II Chr.	6, 18
Ps.	9, 11
	22, 3

CHAPTER III

The expression "Shekinah" itself properly belongs to later Jewish theology, and usually appears in its Aramaic form, שְׁכִינָה (construct: שְׁכִינָהּ ; determinative: שְׁכִינָהּ). There is, however, enough genuine Hebrew scattered throughout the rabbinic literature that the Hebrew form of the word, שְׁכִינָה , does appear at times.

Every theological system is tempted to overwork the proof-text method in supporting its own particular viewpoint, and rabbinism was no exception. To support its doctrine of the Shekinah, it exploited to the fullest extent everything in the Old Testament that might lend credence to that theory. Many phases of the Shekinah-doctrine were Biblical, but this method easily tended to conceal the many extra-Biblical fancies and notions, which soon sprang up around it. (It was Christianity, later, which first really separated the wheat from the chaff here.)¹

We saw in the last chapter what meagre support could be found in the Old Testament for an explicit Shekinah-doctrine; but we also noted that, not only the theological usage of שְׁכִינָה , but the very conceptual presuppositions of the Old Testament (as God's immanence, the redemption of His people, etc.) all favored it. Yet, when in post-exilic Judaism the

¹See infra.

Shekinah had become a prominent theologoumenon, the rabbins professed to see the operation of the Shekinah throughout the Old Testament. Much of this interpretation required simply the substitution of "Shekinah" for some Biblical word or concept, while some of it was exegetically rather suspect. Partially as a link with the preceding chapter, we wish to present here, in the first part of this chapter, "the activity of the Shekinah in the Old Testament", as rabbinism conceived it. However, Christianity too accepted most of this phase of the Jewish Shekinah doctrine, and hence many of these viewpoints in the interpretation of the Old Testament are common to both religious traditions.

(It is probably worth noting here that the Koran too has somewhat of a doctrine of the Shekinah, in this case probably derived and adapted from the Christian (Syriac) tradition. The Koran reads (Surah 48, 4 and 26): "Who sends down His Shekinah into the hearts of believers, that they grow continually in the faith".² Oehler remarks here: "But the Koran so wholly lacks the New Testament knowledge of the indwelling of God in believers' hearts through the Spirit, that this idea is reduced to an empty phrase".³ Nevertheless, it is an excellent testimonial to the power and appeal of this concept; for this means that the Shekinah has

²Quoted in Gustave Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, nd.), p. 138, note 1.

³Ibid.

been incorporated into the theologies of all three religious traditions affecting the Western world.)

Before the Fall, a Shekinah or any other special manifestation of God was believed to have been unnecessary. "Creation itself was a mirror in which they saw everywhere reflected the existence and perfections of the deity;...existence itself was not more real than their consciousness of the presence and approval of their Creator."⁴ The pregnant expression, "presence (שׁוֹכֵן) of the Lord", first appears in the Old Testament immediately after the story of the Fall.⁵ Commentators have often theorized that from now on God no longer appeared to Adam and Eve in His true state and full glory.

Secondly, the Shekinah is often identified with the "flaming sword" (הַיָּדְבָרִים הַשֹּׁפְרֵי אֵשׁ), which guarded the entrance to Eden, because (1) fire is a frequent symbol of God's presence; (2) the sword is mentioned here in connection with the cherubim, who somehow also represented God on earth; (3) there are marked similarities here with Ezekiel's inaugural vision; and (4) the use here (for the first time in the Old Testament) of the root שׁוֹכֵן (Hiphil stem) to describe an action of God on earth.⁶

⁴William Cooke, The Shekinah (London: J. B. Cooke, 1857), p. 20.

⁵See under שׁוֹכֵן in Chap. IV infra.

⁶Cooke, op. cit., pp. 27-39.

A little later (Gen. 4, 16) we read that "Cain went out from the presence (וַיֵּצֵא) of the Lord". Unless this represents some crudely henotheistic viewpoint, it is difficult to conjecture what else it should mean except that Cain left some visible manifestation of God.⁷

Stephen in the New Testament (Acts 7, 2) evidently associates some visible Shekinah with the calling of Abraham (ὁ θεὸς τῆς δόξης), although the Old Testament is silent on this detail. Something bearing many affinities to the Shekinah is also found in the "smoking furnace and burning lamp" (שֵׁן וְטֶבֶל) of Abraham's vision (Gen. 15). It is to be noted that this vision also closely unites the imagery and import of the הִרְאָה with that of the Shekinah.⁸

Disregarding here numerous theophanies,⁹ the Shekinah next appears at Sinai, and thereafter always remains with the Israelites. The display at Mt. Sinai itself (Ex. 19; Deut. 4, 11 and 33, 2) is probably to be connected with the Shekinah, who "appeared" now to emphasize Jahwe's distinction from all idols, His special concern for His people, and their need for the ritual now being instituted.¹⁰ Hereafter,

⁷Ibid., pp. 39-41.

⁸See Chap. VI.

⁹See Chap. IV.

¹⁰Cook, op. cit., pp. 58-9.

the Shekinah is present among the Jews in two different ways: (1) between the cherubin, and (2) in the cloud of pillar of fire. The latter form (cf. Ex. 40, 36-38; Num. 9, 15-16 and 10, 35-36) lasted only while the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness, while the former lasted at least until the destruction of the first temple. (Its fate thereafter was a matter of considerable dispute among the Jews, as we shall see presently.) The Shekinah's presence between the cherubin in the sanctuary became the center and rallying point of the whole ritual and cultus of the Jews (which adds force to the utter confusion of the Jews when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed this "place of the presence"). (Compare Ex. 25, I Sam. 4, and Jer. 7.) The propitiatory sacrifices were validated only by this symbol of God's presence there. Because of this divine validation the ark in the sanctuary was known as the "Ark of the covenant" (אֲרֹן הַבְּרִית) and the "ark of the law" (אֲרֹן הַתּוֹרָה).¹¹ The cloud-Shekinah makes a dramatic entry into the completed tabernacle (Ex. 40, 33-35) and similarly at the dedication of Solomon's temple (I K. 6, 10-11; II Chr. 13, 14). (This paradoxical rule of God in the heavens while dwelling between the cherubin became a source of wonder to Jewry, similar to the incarnation for Christendom. This awe before the divine condescension is

¹¹Ibid., pp. 64-6.

reflected in much of Israel's poetry (cf. Ps. 80, 1 and 99, 1).

Undoubtedly the symbolism of what was later termed the Shokinah is reflected in the inaugural visions of both Isaiah and Ezekiel. Both visions, and particularly Ezekiel's, came under external circumstances which might engender considerable doubt as to the reality of God's presence among His people. The removal of the Shokinah (Ezekiel calls it the $\text{ך} \text{ל} \text{ל}$)¹² because of sin in Chapter 11 and its return to a forgiven people in Chapter 43 provides a unifying factor for the entire prophecy of Ezekiel.

Finally, the imagery of the Shokinah is also present in the apocalyptic vision of the "Ancient of Days" in Dan. 7, 9-14. Jewish tradition, as far as can be determined here, has largely left this vision unadministered, but Christianity, naturally referring the "Son of Man" to Jesus, has interpreted the Ancient of Days as a form of the Shokinah, "designed as a Prologue to the incarnation, when the Shokinah should be the habitation of J" in the human nature."¹³

We have already noted the quandary in which Jewdom always found itself concerning the Shokinah after the destruction of the first temple. The predominant concern of the Jewish people then became the question whether it was still

¹²See Chap. IV.

¹³Roses Lowman, Three Tracts (London, 1756), p. 166.

possible for Jahweh to be present among His people. No doubt, this concern over the presence of God laid the foundations of the entire doctrine of the Shekinah. The last chapters of Ezekiel already seem to point toward a solution of the problem which was to become typical of some of later Judaism and especially of Christianity: a partial spiritualization of the concept. Haggai in particular of the canonical prophets seems to use the term in a more spiritual sense, or at least not referring to anything so tangible as seems to be implied, for example, in I Sam. 4 or Eze. 1. Thus he writes of the second temple: "I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts" (2, 7); and again: "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former" (2, 9).

At any rate, the Shekinah never visibly descended on the second temple, and rabbinism never pretended that it was present there--at least not in the former sense.¹⁴ The rabbins always spoke of the Shekinah as one of the five things, which had been in the first temple, but was missing from the second. Thus we read:

Quinque res fuerunt in templo primo, quae non fuerunt in templo secundo: (1) arca sacra cum operculo propitiatorio et Cherubin, (2) ignis coelestis, (3) Schechina divina, (4) Spiritus sanctus, (5) Uris et Thummim.¹⁵

¹⁴Cooke, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

¹⁵A. Gfroerer, *Geschichte des Urchristentums* (Stuttgart: E. Schweizerbart's Verlagshandlung, 1836), I, 306.

In general, three different views were expressed by Jewish writers as to the Shekinah's fate after the captivity: (1) It now left the universe entirely; (2) It remained near the ruins of the western wall of the temple, hovering about the once-sacred spot; or (3) It disseminated itself over the whole world.¹⁶ Yet one thing is sure: Judaism never forgot its Shekinah; on the contrary, it now became a longed-for treasure of far greater proportions than before.

Doch obgleich die Schechina mit dem Ende des ersten Staatslebens transcendent geworden ist, hoert ihr immanentes Wirken in der Welt nicht auf, ihre Augen blicken praefend auf die Menschen, vor allem auf die Gerechten.¹⁷

However, as was already evident from our discussion of the immanence-transcendence problem in the first chapter of this thesis, scholars are by no means all agreed that the doctrine of the Shekinah developed in the simple fashion we have described above. Opinions differ widely concerning the roots of this teaching, which began with the first of the Tannaim and continued its development on Jewish soil alone some ten centuries into the Christian era.¹⁸ Gfoerer says bluntly: "Das Wohnen der Schechina in frommen Seelen ist

¹⁶J. Abelson, The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature (London: Macmillan and Co., 1912), pp. 120-1.

¹⁷D. Wuenche, "Schechina", Realencyklopaedie fuer protestantische Theologie und Kirche (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1906), XVII, 540.

¹⁸Abelson, op. cit., p. 360.

eine juedische Faerbung der alexandrinischen Lehre: δ λόγος οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν".¹⁹ Wuensche derives it from the Babylonian influences of the Exile:

Es darf als sicher gelten, dass die Vorstellung von dem Sichniederlassen und Ruhon der Schechina im Stiftszelte und spaeter im Tempel auf die alt-babylonische Vorstellung von der Gottheit zurueckgeht, die im Allerheiligsten--des Tempels auf einem Postamente thronte, wodurch angedeutet werden sollte, dass sie sich den Ort zu ihrem Wohnsitz erwählt habe und hier verehrt sein wolle...".²⁰

Bachr believes that the Shekinah is simply a rabbinic perversion of the Old Testament:

Eine solche Gegenwart scheint auch uoberhaupt dem Mosaismus zuwider, der wohl Theophanien kennt, aber keine bestaendige, ununterbrochen fortdauernde. Eine Wolke mit Feuer, die unaufhoerlich auf der Caporeth ruhte, wuerde den Charakter eines Bildes Gottes gehabt und so dem obersten Grundsatz des Mosaismus...widersprochen haben.²¹

The Jewish Encyclopedia itself bases the Shekinah-concept on five types of Old Testament passages: (1) where God is said to dwell in the tabernacle or among the people of Israel; (2) where God's name is said to descend; (3) where God is said to dwell in Jerusalem; (4) where God is said to dwell on Mt. Zion; and (5) where God is said to dwell in the temple. It seems to view--as we do--the later conceptions of the Shekinah as a natural outgrowth of these statements

¹⁹Gfoerer, op. cit., p. 307.

²⁰Wuensche, op. cit., p. 539.

²¹Karl Bachr, Symbolik des Mosaischen Cultus (Heidelberg: J. C. B. Mohr, 1837), I, 397.

in the Old Testament.²²

A Christian writer, Abelson, distinguishes four stages in the total development of the Shekinah: (1) the primitive spiritualization of fire, cloud, light, etc., (2) a separation of the material phenomena from the spiritual idea, simply signifying the Godhead; (3) an increasing personification, almost to the point where the Shekinah is regarded as an entity separate from the Godhead; and (4) an increasing universalization of the concept.²³

Scholars are just as divided among themselves as to just what the typical Jewish view of the Shekinah was. These views we must now investigate in some detail. In general, we may distinguish three major views of the nature of the Shekinah: (1) "Shekinah" and similar rabbinic expressions were simply a later paraphrase of the supposedly unutterable Tetragrammaton; (2) the Shekinah represents a constant self-manifestation or theophany (in spite of its absence from the sanctuary), or (3) the Shekinah is a separate, created entity, a hypostasis or mediator between God and man.

Gfoerer, who is the chief protagonist of the view that the Shekinah is an offspring of the Alexandrian Logos concept, sees in the Shekinah (as well as in the later Memra

²²Ludwig Blau, "Shekinah", The Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1907), XI, 258.

²³Abelson, op. cit., pp. 78-9 and 367-75.

and Yekara)²⁴ an independent emanation of God and mediator between Him and lower forms, after the fashion of Neoplatonic philosophy. He writes with typical dogmatism: "Nur so viel ist klar: die Schechina galt in Jesu Christi Tagen fuer ein von der Gottheit verschiedenes, aus derselben hervor gestroemtes Wesen; ob auch fuer eine Persoenlichkeit, ist nicht gewiss."²⁵ Most other scholars, however, disagree with Gfoerer, and this should be noted! In complete contrast to that view Moore writes:

The agencies which God employs to manifest his presence or convey his revelation, or execute his will, whether personal or impersonal, may in this function be called intermediaries, as Moses is called an intermediary in the giving of the Law; but not "mediators" in the sense which we commonly attach to the word.²⁶

Marshall believes that in the Targums, at least, the Shekinah never has an independent personality, but is merely God's "manifestation form".

The Shekinah is used in the Targums as the equivalent for the Divine Being, not for His glory...it does not indicate the radiance or brilliance, but the central cause of the radiance. This centre was conceived to be Divine.²⁷

In general he simply differentiates the Shokinah of the

²⁴See Chap. V.

²⁵Gfoerer, op. cit., p. 306.

²⁶George Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, the Age of the Tannaim (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), I, 436.

²⁷J. W. Marshall, "Shekinah", A Dictionary of the Bible, edited by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), IV, 488.

rabbins from the קלל of the Old Testament. As proof for his argument, he points to the fact that the Targums never render קלל by נללל except in Zec. 2, 9.²⁸ Yet he does admit that later in the Midrash and Talmud the Shekinah does become more independent and assume the functions of a Logos or spirit.²⁹ (No doubt, the Neoplatonic philosophy did exert increasing influence on Jewish thought in subsequent generations. Maimonides' views are both materialistic and Neoplatonic,³⁰ but it is very tenuous to judge tannaitic views by what medieval commentators believed.)

Lowman defines the Shekinah simply as a revelation to the world "in a sensible manner, by a visible appearance, and an audible voice."³¹ He quotes with approval a Latin writer:

Shechinah, late sumpta, usurpatur ad designandum quodlibet effectum notabile Praesentiae divinae: Minus late, praesentiam divinam, sub aliqua specie, aut signo visibili, denotat. Denique strictissime, Praesentiam majestaticam, ut aiunt, in materia aliqua lucida, ignea, aut candolscenti exhibitam.³²

Maybaum is in substantial agreement with this view and views the Shekinah as merely an expression of God's various relations to the world: (1) His dwelling in the midst of Israel;

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., p. 489.

³⁰cf. infra.

³¹Lowman, op. cit., p. 186.

(2) His omnipresence; and (3) His personal presence.³³

We can learn something of the Targumists' view of the Shekinah by noting when they employed that term in their paraphrases of the Old Testament. Marshall lists five theological emphases which the Targumists wished to make by their use of that term: (1) God's dwelling in the land of Israel (substituted for some Biblical expression in Gen. 9, 27; Ex. 25, 8; 29, 45; I K. 6, 13; 8, 12; Is. 60, 2; Zec. 8, 3); (2) The omnipresent God cannot be localized, but the Shekinah can (Gen. 28, 16; I Sam. 4, 4; II Sam. 6, 2; I K. 8, 12, 13; 11, 21; Ps. 74, 2; Hab. 2, 20); (3) Not God, but only the Shekinah is visible (Ex. 3, 6; Lev. 9, 4; Is. 6, 5; Eze. 1, 1); (4) The heavens are too small to contain God (Deut. 3, 24; 4, 39; Is. 32, 15; 38, 14; 33, 5); and (5) God cannot properly be said to remove Himself from His people (Is. 1, 15; 8, 17; 57, 17; 59, 2; Jer. 33, 5; Hos. 5, 6).³⁴ Whenever אֱלֹהִים is used in the Old Testament for God's omnipresence, Onkelos substitutes "Shekinah" (Ex. 20, 21; Deut. 12, 5; 11, 21; etc.) The same is true whenever יְהוָה describes God's personal presence (Num. 6, 25; Deut. 31, 17, 18).³⁵

We shall refer again to the uncertain meaning of rabbinic

³³Siegmund Maybaum, Die Anthropomorphien und Anthropopathien bei Onkelos und den spätern Targumim mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Ausdrücke Memra, Yeikara und Schochinta (Breslau: Schletter'sche Buchhandlung, 1870), p. 5.

³⁴Marshall, op. cit., p. 488.

³⁵Muensche, op. cit., p. 539.

terms like "Shekinah",³⁶ but a few examples here will illustrate well how fluid an application these terms could have. For example, in Gen. 3, 8, where the original has $\text{וַיִּבְרָח אָדָם מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּתְּרָה$, Onkelos has $\text{וַיִּבְרָח אָדָם מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּתְּרָה}$. Again, in Gen. 16, 33, where the Old Testament simply has $\text{וַיִּבְרָח אָדָם מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּתְּרָה}$, Onkelos says $\text{וַיִּבְרָח אָדָם מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּתְּרָה}$ ("the Glory of the Lord was elevated").³⁷ "Shekinah" is frequently used with קָדוֹשׁ (Aramaic for the Hebrew קָדוֹשׁ) (Ex. 33, 3; Job 34, 29; Ps. 22, 25; 27, 9; 89, 47; Is. 30, 20). The use of the Hebrew word קָדוֹשׁ in the original often seems to suggest the use of "Shekinah" in the Aramaic versions (Gen. 9, 27; Ex. 25, 8; 29, 4, 45; Num. 5, 3, 11, 20; 14, 4; 16, 3; 35, 4; Deut. 1, 42; 32, 10; Ps. 16, 8; 44, 10; 74, 2; Hag. 1, 8).³⁸

The Shekinah is often viewed very materialistically in rabbinic literature. It has a face, for only those who have led a moral life will see "the face of the Shekinah" (if this is to be taken literally).³⁹ At times it is almost identified with the angels: "Wherever an angel is seen, there the Shekinah is seen", and for each Mitzvah (precept) the Jew keeps, he receives an angel or a higher degree of

³⁶See Chap. IV.

³⁷Lowman, op. cit., pp. 76-97.

³⁸Wuonsche, op. cit., p. 539.

³⁹Abelson, op. cit., pp. 98-103.

God's immanence.⁴⁰ ⁴¹ Again, because of its form in the wilderness, it is often viewed in later days as a cloud, and the rabbis speak of the "clouds of glory" which "surround Israel above and below".⁴² A comment on Judg. 13, 25 states that "the Shekinah was beating before Samson like a ball".⁴³ Because of its frequent association with a manifestation of the נור , the Shekinah is most frequently materialized as light. The Shekinah is said to represent universal light, sometimes only as far as Israel is concerned, sometimes in a literal sense.⁴⁴

Views on the function of the Shekinah are fully as varied as those on its nature. Lowman lists four chief functions: (1) to show that God personally directs the material world by his providential care, and not through spirits and demons as in all pagan cults; (2) to show that all worship must be directed to Jahwe alone, to fear His wrath and seek atonement with Him (cf. Ps. 46, 4-5; 80, 1; 99, 1-2); (3) to provide a link between patriarchal and Mosaic religions, for Moses only added the laws to a cultus already present; (4) to point to Christ, its antitype; and (5) to provide sacred

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 128-9.

⁴¹cf. the discussion of Metatron in Chap. V.

⁴²Abelson, op. cit., pp. 92-3.

⁴³Ibid., p. 96.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 82.

authority to all Jewish laws and to the oracles of the high priest.⁴⁵ Cooke lists eleven functions: (1) to prove the existence of a supreme being, for idols have no such sign of existence; (2) to prove God's conscious, personal existence, against animism and pantheism; (3) to ward off materialism (Deut. 4, 15-16); (4) to declare His supremacy and sovereignty over the universe; (5) to indicate that Jahwe is the only proper object of worship; (6) to sanction the doctrine of the atonement, which Christianity should develop; (7) to testify to the unity of His existence; (8) to indicate His acceptance of sacrifices and offerings (cf. Gideon, Elijah, David at Araunah, etc.); (9) to guide the Israelites; (10) to show divine displeasure at sin; and (11) as a testimony to surrounding nations.⁴⁶

Sometimes the Shekinah is spoken of as everywhere, sometimes it is said to be only in the congregation.⁴⁷ Sometimes it seems to be present only in Jerusalem; at other times throughout the world. Often in this connection, a definite distinction is made between God and the Shekinah: God is present everywhere, but the Shekinah reveals itself only in Palestine.⁴⁸ The Shekinah was a constant protector,

⁴⁵Lowman, op. cit., pp. 191-219.

⁴⁶Cooke, op. cit., pp. 67-87.

⁴⁷Gfoerer, op. cit., pp. 302-3.

⁴⁸Abelson, op. cit., pp. 117-125.

counsellor, and friend.

The Jew believed that the Shekinah floated about, as it were, in his environment; in other words, he believed that his God was conjunct with all those of his race and faith who did His will, and thus found refuge in Him; there was a Divine life circulating through them and expressing itself through them.⁴⁹

The relationship of the Shekinah to sin is antipodal. Pride is tantamount to denying God's immanence in the universe. The rabbis taught that because of sin the Shekinah withdrew to heaven in seven successive steps, because of the sins of Adam, Cain, Enoch, the generation of the flood, the builders of the Tower of Babel, the Sodomites, and the Egyptians in the days of Abraham. Seven righteous men then brought it back to earth: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Kehath, Amram, and Moses.⁵⁰ Later, however, an individual's sin did not cause the Shekinah to withdraw from the entire nation, as long as repentance followed, for the ability to repent was itself a sure sign of the divine presence.⁵¹

A whole library of anecdotes and folk-lore grew up in Judaism around the Shekinah. We repeat only a few of these popular beliefs here to illustrate some of the Jewish notions of the functions and purposes of the Shekinah. The Shekinah

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 278.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 135-8.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 138-42.

is so close to man that it even feels a man's pain.⁵² "Whenever two men sit together and are occupied with words of Torah, the Shekinah is with them" (the Talmud later raised this number to ten).⁵³ Because of the guidance the Shekinah gives men, it is often equated with the "Voice of God".⁵⁴ Because it is imbedded in man and the world, it is often viewed as the universal marriage-maker.⁵⁵ Perhaps after Ruth 2, 12, a proselyte was often spoken of as coming under the wings of the Shekinah, but the same expression was also applied to its guidance during life and to the approach of death.⁵⁶ Sacred joy, especially at religious festivals, was encouraged, because the Shekinah did not rest upon a sad heart, but only on a joyful one.⁵⁷ Moralistically, serving a saint is recognized as equivalent to serving the Shekinah.⁵⁸ It was sparks which shot out of the mouth of the Shekinah which caused Moses' face to shine and Aaron's rod to sprout.⁵⁹ The Shekinah is still supposed to be visible

⁵²Ibid., p. 104.

⁵³Marshall, op. cit., p. 469.

⁵⁴Abelson, op. cit., p. 83.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 113.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 89-92.

⁵⁷Moore, op. cit., II, 46.

⁵⁸Abelson, op. cit., p. 129.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 84.

to the devout between the shoulders and finger of priests when they pronounce benediction on Israel.⁶⁰

Many eschatological notions were bound up with the Jewish view of the Shekinah. The saints will forever enjoy the light of the Shekinah in heaven.⁶¹ The absence of the Shekinah from the second temple was always deplored, and hence the Messianic hopes of the Jews included that of a renewed presence of the Shekinah and a more intimate fellowship with God.⁶² The Shekinah was also active in Sheol. All those now "bound in Gehinnom will ascend out of hell with the Shekinah at their head".⁶³ When the Shekinah comes to institute the Messianic age, its feet will rest upon the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14, 4).⁶⁴

At the hands of the later rabbis and the medieval commentators the Shekinah became increasingly grotesque, and ever further removed from the Biblical prototype. Here, finally without dispute, the Greek influence overshadowed that of the Old Testament. At the head of this later view was the towering figure of Maimonides, who decidedly viewed the Shekinah as a mediator, "geschaffene, feuerartige Lich-

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 93.

⁶¹ Blau, op. cit., p. 260.

⁶² Marshall, op. cit., p. 489.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Groerer, op. cit., p. 302.

wesen oder Engel"⁶⁵ or "a mystical halo of glory which is external to the deity".⁶⁶ Maimonides' metaphysics made him interpret God's unity so rigorously that the ascription of attributes to God was to him merely a subtler form of anthropomorphism; hence, the Shekinah had to be something created, so as to be excluded from any participation in the divine essence.⁶⁷ Maimonides is quite explicit: "Per gloriam Domini significatur nonnunquam splendor aliquis creatus, quem Deus, quasi prodigii, vel miraculi loco, ad magnificentiam suam ostendendam alicubi habitare fecit."⁶⁸ Thus he equates the Shekinah with an angel: "Non enim invenies Deum ullum opus fecisse, nisi per manus alicuius angeli".⁶⁹ Immortality will consist in enjoying the "Ziv" (shining) of the Shekinah, in blessed union with the Shekinah for which the righteous have qualified themselves in ascending stages of spiritual saintliness.⁷⁰ Similarly, but more fancifully, Abarbanel, another medieval commentator, defines the Shekinah as the primeval light of Gen. 1 (before the sun was created) which God "sealed up in his treasures, after the luminaries

⁶⁵Wuensché, op. cit., p. 542.

⁶⁶Abelson, op. cit., p. 169 (note).

⁶⁷Moore, op. cit., I, 437-8.

⁶⁸Quoted in Lowman, op. cit., p. 79.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 61.

⁷⁰Abelson, op. cit., pp. 85-9.

were created, to serve him upon special occasions, when he would make himself appear extraordinarily present."⁷¹ Only one, Nachmanides, fiercely combatted this medieval perversion of the Biblical view, but his protests went unheeded.⁷²

Almost all the false Messiahs in Jewish history claimed to be the incarnate Shekinah.⁷³ Those we cannot mention here, but perhaps one humorous incident will serve as a fitting conclusion to the tortuous and confusing history of the Jewish doctrine of the Shekinah. One, Heheniah Ghiya Chayon (1650-1726), an "arch-imposter, who in hypocrisy, audacity, and unscrupulousness had but few equals in the eighteenth century, so rich in impostors"⁷⁴ openly taught a Trinity as a doctrine of the Jewish religion. This, of course, was not the Christian Trinity, but there were indeed three persons in this new Godhead: (1) the holy, primeval One, or Soul of all Souls; (2) the Holy King, an incarnation of the Deity; and (3) a female person, the Shekinah! Strangely enough, the book containing this weird doctrine was even recommended by the rabbinate of Venice "either because they had not seen it before it was printed, or because by reason of Kabbalistic stupidity they did not perceive its drift".⁷⁵

⁷¹Quoted in Lowman, op. cit., p. 79.

⁷²Wuenschel, op. cit., p. 542.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Heinrich Graetz, History of the Jews (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1941), p. 215.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 217.

CHAPTER IV

Besides the Shekinah there are also a number of other Scriptural expressions which closely parallel the sense which was later given to "Shekinah" and with which that concept is often confused. At best, the rabbins were never systematic. They are always given more to a sort of poetry than to philosophy. Hence, they had no misgivings about employing many of those Biblical expressions alongside their own terminology, without indicating what relationship, if any, there was between the two. Furthermore, we must remember that the Talmud was written over a period of several hundred years at a time when Judaism was exposed to many contrasting influences.

Lowman well summarizes the common viewpoint of scholars:

In the language of the Chaldee paraphrases, the Shechinah of Jehovah, the *Meirra* [sic] de Jehova, and the Voice of Jehovah, or of the Angel of the Presence, or divine majesty are all but different ways of expressing one and the same thing."¹

Abelson is more trenchant:

Graetz was right when he spoke of the Talmud as a "Daedalian maze in which one can scarcely find his way even with the thread of Ariadne". The rabbins described it as an ocean on which only the experienced swimmer might dare to venture. The difficulties of rabbinic literature are the inconsistencies of many of the doctrines to be found there. ...It embodies such a huge medley of opinions which it simply states as they were uttered, and

¹Moses Lowman, Three Tracts (London, 1756), p. 124.

leaves unreconciled, scattered, not strung upon any particular thread...There is a congeries of opinions, but no one canonical opinion which is finally authoritative and demands acceptance.²

We must make a brief study of some of the chief Old Testament terms which the Targums, Midrashes, and Talmud either leave untranslated when the context might lead us to expect "Shekinah", or else place in close syntactical relationship with that expression. (Naturally, in a field so vast as Judaism, there are many aspects that are related to the Shekinah, which we cannot touch upon here. Even some Old Testament expressions with which the rabbis paraphrased the divine name or characterized His relations with men must be omitted here, notably אל גבורה (might), אל רחמים (mercy), and עליון (heaven).

"God...at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers"³ Among the most diverse of these "manners" are the numerous theophanies of the Old Testament. Their relationship to the Shekinah is not altogether clear. Should we view the Shekinah as one among many theophanies, or is it a later, more general term, which includes all types of theophanies? Both views have been expressed in previous pages of this thesis. It is to be noted, however, that already in the Old Testament the theophanies

²J. Abelson, The Immanence of God in Rabbinical Literature (London: Macmillan and Co., 1912), pp. 77-8.

³Heb. 1, 1.

become less frequent after the institution of the Mosaic ritual, with its permanent presence in the sanctuary, as if that had rendered special manifestations of God unnecessary. At times the Targumists paraphrased these theophanies; at others they translated them verbatim. This simply is one of the many areas which Judaism left unadministered, and we can do little more than leave it so too. Nevertheless, the Old Testament witness does seem to justify a tentative conclusion that the Shekinah represented a more permanent and more spiritual revelation of God after the theophanies disappear, but, at that, not a revelation of an essentially different type.⁴

Probably the most important parallel to the Shekinah in the Old Testament is the divine Glory (קְבוֹד). Both that term and its Aramaic equivalent (קְבוֹד)⁵ are frequently used in the Targums whenever the Old Testament speaks of men's vision of God or of God's self-manifestation to men. We have already noted that the Targums never translate the קְבוֹד in the Biblical text with "Shekinah", save in one instance.⁶ On the other hand, concepts which those two words

⁴Gustave Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n.d.), p. 124. (Oehler remarks here that revelation followed the same course in the New Testament: the Christophanies cease soon after Jesus' ascension to make room for the operation of the Holy Spirit.)

⁵See Chap. V.

⁶See supra.

express are almost identical, and the Old Testament itself often states the קַבֹּד as subject, where later Judaism saw the activity of the Shekinah (cf. only Ex. 33-4; I K. 8; and Eze. 1). In Ex. 33, 17 ff. קַבֹּד alternates with כְּבוֹד .⁷

The rabbis occasionally spoke of the "glory of the Shekinah" as though it were to be distinguished from the glory of God, but it is extremely doubtful that they visualized anything specific in that case. More likely, "glory" then, instead of a terminus technicus, is meant merely as an attribute of the Shekinah, with a meaning similar to שִׁפְרוֹ .⁸

More often, the קַבֹּד and the Shekinah are used practically as synonyms in Jewish literature. Under the caption, "Glory of God", the Jewish Encyclopedia simply says, "See Shekinah",⁹ which indicates how closely the authors of that authoritative Jewish work linked the two expressions. The Septuagint and the New Testament translate both terms alike with $\delta\omicron\phi\alpha$.¹⁰ Kittel states bluntly: "Dass die Schekina und der Kabod auf das engste zusammengehören, zeigte sich schon an den Umschreibungen von TgJ [Jonathan's Targum]. Wenn die Schekina zum Zion kommt, wird der Kabod sichtbar fuer ganz

⁷See infra.

⁸Coehler, op. cit., p. 110.

⁹Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1907), V, 679.

¹⁰Lowman, op. cit., p. 76.

Israel."¹¹ Again, while discussing the development of the קִבְּרֵי concept in the "P" school, Kittel gives the same definition to it as we might expect for "Shekinah":

Zum Verstaendnis muss bemerkt werden, dass die Priesterschrift weder in der Tradition steht, die sich Jahwe im Heiligtum wohnend dachte, noch die deuteronomische Anschauung teilt, der zufolge Jahwe im Himmel bleibt und dem erwählten Volk nur seinen Namen an den Kultort gab. Puer P ist Jahwes Bereich wohl der Himmel, aber je und dann fährt er allen Volke sichtbar nieder, um mit Moses zu sprechen, Gericht zu ueben uca. Die Stelle jener hoch heiligen Begegnung ist der זֶמַן הַקָּדוֹשׁ קִבְּרֵי , das ist "Zeit der Begegnung", genauer die Deckplatte der Lade.¹²

The common Old Testament phrase to express the function of the קִבְּרֵי is $\text{זֶמַן הַקָּדוֹשׁ קִבְּרֵי}$ (LXX: $\text{τότον σκηνώματος δόξης σου}$).¹³ The קִבְּרֵי is furthermore integral to the eschatological yearnings expressed in the Old Testament--a characteristic which the rabbis later appropriated to the Shekinah (cf. Ps. 72, 19; Is. 66, 18; 40, 5; 43, 7).¹⁴ Thus one Midrash states: In kommenden Aeon, wenn ich meine Shekina zum Zion gefuehrt habe, werde ich mich in meinem קִבְּרֵי enthuelen fuer ganz Israel, und sie werden schauen und werden leben in Ewigkeit.¹⁵

¹¹Rudolph Kittel, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935), II, 249.

¹²Ibid., p. 243.

¹³Lowman, op. cit., p. 80.

¹⁴Kittel, op. cit., p. 245.

¹⁵Quoted in ibid., p. 253.

Another important Old Testament concept with definite affinities to the Shekinah is the "Holy Spirit" (קדוש רוח יְהוָה). Already in Old Testament usage we face the problem of whether "spirit" is meant personally, or simply refers to an attribute or state, which God has given. We must remember that the old Hebrews did not distinguish between "spirit" and "breath".¹⁶ The Old Testament also speaks of a "spirit of jealousy" (Num. 5, 14), a "spirit of fornication" (Hos. 4, 12), etc.¹⁷ But very often the "spirit of God" or the "Holy Spirit" is definitely personified. This spirit is very active in the creation of the world according to Gen. 1. This spirit is bestowed (often רוח) upon the Jewish leaders and the prophets for their activities (cf. Num. 11, 17; Deut. 34, 9; Judg. 11, 29; I Sam. 10, 6, etc.)¹⁸ The Old Testament also gives definite eschatological meanings to the Spirit, for in the Messianic age a fuller measure of the Spirit can be expected (so particularly Isaiah 11).¹⁹

In rabbinic usage the Shekinah and the Holy Spirit are sometimes clearly distinguished. Thus, one Midrash mentions both the "Schechina divina" and the "Spiritus sanctus" as

¹⁶See Gesenius, Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, translated by Samuel Tregelles (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), pp. 760-1.

¹⁷Paul Heinisch, Theology of the Old Testament (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1950), p. 122.

¹⁸See ibid., pp. 120-1; and Oehler, op. cit., pp. 141-2.

¹⁹See Heinisch, op. cit., p. 119.

among the five things missing from the second temple.²⁰ At other times, the two expressions are practically indentedified. Thus, a Targum on Ex. 33, 16 reads:

Woran anders soll erkannt werden, dass ich Gnade gefunden habe vor dir, als wenn deine Schochina mit uns redet und Wunder unter uns geschehen, dass du den Geist der Prophezeiung von den Voelkern der Erde wegnimmst, und in dem heiligen Geiste mit mir und deinem Volke redest.²¹

In the Mishnah the story is told of a meeting of rabbis at Jamnia. Suddenly they heard a voice saying: "There is here a man who is worthy that the holy spirit should rest upon him, but his generation is not worthy". The Talmud reports exactly the same story, but substitutes "Shekinah" for "Holy Spirit".²²

In general it is true that "Holy Spirit" is used far less in later rabbinical literature than in the earlier, probably to avoid confusion with the Christian emphasis upon the "Holy Spirit".²³ It had been the specific function of the Holy Spirit, according to the rabbins, to inspire prophecy and the Scriptures,²⁴ but now the Shekinah assumes more

²⁰Quoted in A. Fr. Gfoerer, Geschichte des Urchristentums (Stuttgart: E. Schweizerbart's Verlagsanhandlung, 1838), I, 306.

²¹Ibid., p. 326.

²²Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1945), p. 184.

²³Abelson, op. cit., pp. 377-9 (Appendix I).

²⁴George Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era, the Age of the Tannaim (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), I, 437.

and more of this activity. How great the danger of confusion with the Christian interpretations of the Spirit is evident from the way in which Christianity coalesced so many varied concepts of Jewry into one, viz., the doctrine of the third person of the Trinity. Thus one Christian writer concludes:

The Spirit itself is the luminous pillar which leads his people into all truth; the Spirit is the Urin and Thummim, . . . The Holy Ghost is the true spiritual glory that fills the sanctuary with his presence--the Shekinah that dwells in the hearts of God's people, rendering their bodies temples of the Holy Ghost. And every other good set forth in ancient type and symbol is now comprised in the completion of the Christian dispensation by the gift that crowns all others--the gift of the Holy Spirit.²⁵

We face further problems when we try to establish the relations between the Shekinah and another important personage in the Old Testament, the "Angel of the Lord" (מַלְאָכִי אֲדֹנָי מַלְאָכִי). To say nothing of the whole Old Testament angelology, the interpretation of this expression is one of the knottiest aspects of Old Testament theology. To the best of this writer's knowledge, the "angel of the Lord" was never identified with the Shekinah. Yet so many of its functions in the Old Testament, as God's representative to men, parallel those of the Shekinah that one cannot ignore it in a discussion of the latter. Most likely the later Jewish doctrine of the Metatron²⁶ developed from the "Angel of the

²⁵William Cooke, The Shekinah (London: J. B. Cooke, 1857), pp. 185-6.

²⁶See Chap. V.

Lord". Kittel believes that originally it was merely one of the theophanies, but was later revised:

Urspruenglich war in diesen Sagen wohl unbefangen von ganz sinnfaelligen Gotteserscheinungen die Rede. Die Bearbeiter der Sagen haben aber diese urwuechsige Ueberlieferung im Interesse der streng-on Transzendenz Jahwes eingeschoben.²⁷

Heinisch has well summarized its lofty position in the Old Testament:

The expression mal'akh Jahweh or mal'akh Elohim is used interchangeably with the divine name Jahweh itself; there is no essential difference between promises made by Jahweh Himself and those made by the mal'akh Jahweh; the mal'akh had been Jacob's special protector; Jahweh's "name", i. e., His nature, is in Him; sacrifices are offered to Him; He has the power to forgive sins; the angels are subordinate to Him; Satan must acknowledge His power; He is the angel of the covenant, identical with God; those to whom He appears are convinced of having seen God.²⁸

The affinities here with the functions of the Shekinah are obvious.

The Christian church has never been able to agree whether the "angel of the Lord" was merely a finite spirit, subject to God; a non-hypostatical self-presentation of Jahwe; or identical with the Logos, the second person of the Trinity (so from Justin Martyr down).²⁹ (If the latter view is accepted, we might say that the "Angel of the Lord" and the

²⁷Kittel, op. cit., I, 76.

²⁸Heinisch, op. cit., p. 108.

²⁹See the excellent historical survey of this problem in Oehler, op. cit., pp. 131-4.

the "Shekinah" are among the roots of the second and third persons of the Christian Trinity, respectively; and we might compare their alternation in the Old Testament with the interchangeability of the indwelling of Christ and of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament.

In the fifth place, the Biblical use of $\text{U}\ddot{\text{U}}$ also in many instances parallels Jewish conceptions of the Shekinah. In Ex. 23, 21 the "name of Jahve" and the "Angel of Jahve" are equated.³⁰ The expression, $\text{U}\ddot{\text{U}}$, is paralleled with $\text{U}\ddot{\text{U}}$ in Is. 59, 19 and Ps. 102, 16.³¹ There is no doubt that the phrase is frequently used in the Old Testament to designate God's power. Most modern scholars see a development from this early literary device; first as a substitute for "Jahve" itself (Ps. 7, 18; 9, 11; 18, 50; 68, 5; 74, 18; 86, 12; 92, 2; Is. 25, 1; 26, 8; 56, 6) ("Es wird nicht mehr zwischen Jahve im Himmel und seinem Schem am Kultort unterschieden: in Schem offenbart sich Jahve selbst; er ist die dem Menschen zugewandte Seite Jahves");³² and then to a full hypostasization (Ps. 54, 1 "Save me, O God, by Thy name"; 89, 25; 118, 10-12; 124, 8; etc.).

Damit hat sich die letzte Wandlung des Schem-Begriffes vollzogen; sie steht im Zusammenhang mit der allgemein in der nachexilischen Zeit zu beobachtenden Neigung, die Transzendenz Gottes zu

³⁰Heinisch, op. cit., p. 127.

³¹See Kittel, op. cit., IV, 256.

³²Ibid., p. 257.

steigern und sein immanentes Wirken immer staerker auf Mittelwesen zu uebertragen.³³

This latter view is also supported by the frequent use of the phrase, $\text{אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵלֵינוּ}$, instead of calling upon God Himself.³⁴ The rabbins often referred to Jahwe simply by the term, אֱלֹהֵינוּ .³⁵ Evidently this use of אֱלֹהֵינוּ paralleled rabbinic belief in the Shekinah as representative of God.

Much the same is true of the expression, דְּבַר אֱלֹהִים , "Word of God". How much more dynamic all these Hebrew terms are than their Greek equivalents is something which is first dawning on many scholars. This power of the "Word" is evident already in the creation story. Further, דְּבַר אֱלֹהִים is often personified already in the Old Testament, and this tendency is developed in the Jewish wisdom literature.³⁶ Philo especially was fond of those passages which he could use as support for his Logos-doctrine,³⁷ but, of course, he does not represent Jewish thought as a whole. (Just what affinities St. John's doctrine of the Logos bears to both the Old Testament דְּבַר אֱלֹהִים and Philo's view is very problematic, but his thought does probably parallel much of contemporary Jewish thought.)

³³ Ibid., pp. 257-8.

³⁴ Gesenius, op. cit., p. 833.

³⁵ Heinisch, op. cit., p. 127.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 124-5.

³⁷ Ibid.

Later rabbinism, of course, developed the Old Testament view of לִבְרַחֲמֵי , just as it did almost everything else. Marshall writes:

An utterance of God is something Divine; as potent as God Himself, and therefore "Word" lends itself to Jewish philosophy as a suitable expression for a Divine intermediary between God and the world. This helps us to understand how Judaism came to its conception of the Shekinah...When the Jew had banished God from his universe, the recorded manifestation of the Divine Presence in the ark and elsewhere seemed to him a tertium quid between God and nature: Divine, but separable in thought from God.³⁸

A personified לִבְרַחֲמֵי figures very strongly in rabbinic discussions.³⁹ However, since לִבְרַחֲמֵי does not appear in the Aramaic vocabulary, its equivalent, לִבְרַחֲמֵי , is generally employed, the importance of which we shall consider in greater detail in Chapter V.

Wisdom (חֵכְמָה), at least in earlier Jewry, also bears many parallels to the Shekinah. The wisdom literature compares the wisdom of God with the spirit of God.⁴⁰ No other divine attribute is personified as much in the Old Testament as "wisdom".⁴¹ Wisdom is represented as appearing publicly in Prov. 1, 20-23. In Ecclesiasticus 24, 10 ff. the dwelling

³⁸J. T. Marshall, "Shekinah", A Dictionary of the Bible, James Hastings, Editor (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), IV, 488.

³⁹Abelson, op. cit., pp. 146-9.

⁴⁰Heinisch, op. cit., p. 140.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 112.

of divine wisdom on Mt. Zion is stated as the principle of revelation instead of the Shokinah's presence in the sanctuary.⁴² Both the Shokinah and Wisdom are all-pervading; both protect mankind in trouble; both are likely to leave because of sin.⁴³ However, while it is very probable that the rabbis garnered some of their conceptions of the Shokinah from the sapiential writers' emphasis on Wisdom, the two expressions cannot be completely identified, because later Judaism, probably in reaction against the Christian identification of Christ with Wisdom, usually subordinated Wisdom to the Torah or some other object, which they now glorified and personified in its place.⁴⁴ Much of what the Old Testament ascribed to the H^1H or to God Himself, the sapiential writers to Wisdom, and the rabbins to the Shokinah, the New Testament, probably drawing on all three sources, applies to Christ. This sequence is as fascinating as it is confusing.

We must also remember the frequent and equally confusing expression, "face of God" in the Old Testament, which was so often the original where the Targums translate with "Shokinah". The chief passage to deal with here is Ex. 33. In verse 2 Jahve had declared that He would no longer lead

⁴²Oehler, op. cit., p. 545.

⁴³Abelson, op. cit., pp. 55-76.

⁴⁴Heinisch, op. cit., p. 113.

such a stubborn folk personally, but would send an angel to lead them to the Promised Land. Moses entreats God, who finally promises, "My presence shall go ($\text{פָּנָי יְיָ אִתְּךָ}$)". All the questions of whether this "presence" was visible or could be seen by men and its relationship with the כְּבוֹד would enter into a complete discussion of this problem. Evidently in verse 11 "the Lord spake unto Moses face to face" as in verse 14, $\text{וַיִּשְׁרַח$ is meant as something from God (like the later Shekinah?), while in verse 20 ("Thou canst not see my face") (cf. I John 4, 12) it evidently stands for God Himself. Is. 63, 9 may mean that this "presence" (or the Shekinah) later appeared in the form of an angel.⁴⁵ The former usage of וַיִּשְׁרַח might justify one in reading more into the common וַיִּשְׁרַח when applied to God than is usually done, when that expression is interpreted as merely Hebraistic manner of speech.⁴⁶

Finally, we must also note briefly that the Shekinah is often pictured as a personification of light, probably because of its close association with the כְּבוֹד and the פָּנָי . Often, of course, "light" remains purely descriptive, but very often in rabbinical thought it becomes a cosmic power in its own right.⁴⁷ A Midrash on Num. 6, 25 (the Aaronic

⁴⁵Oehler, op. cit., p. 130.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 127-8.

⁴⁷Abelson, op. cit., pp. 55-76.

blessing) reads: "May He give unto thee the light of the Shekinah".⁴⁸ The Talmud states, "The face of the Shekinah lights up the whole earth".⁴⁹ This tendency to identify the Shekinah with personified light became much more pronounced in medieval Judaism, as we have already seen in our discussion of Maimonides' views.⁵⁰

The brief comparison in this chapter of the Shekinah with various other Biblical concepts, from which it is both derived and with which it is related, has unearthed more questions than it has answered; but it has also indicated how exceedingly complex this entire problem is and how utterly impossible any real systematization of rabbinism is. In the next chapter we must investigate a few other non-Biblical expressions which the rabbinical writers used in a way similar with or parallel to the Shekinah.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 57.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰See Chap. III.

CHAPTER V

In addition to the various Biblical terms which the rabbis frequently used in the discussions of the Shekinah or from which some phases of that doctrine were derived, there are also a few characteristic Aramaic expressions which occur in the Targums and Midrashes. These are often used in conjunction with the Shekinah, or they illustrate what was meant by that expression. The two most important of these, which we shall consider first, are $\text{N}\overset{\text{׀}}{\text{׀}}\overset{\text{׀}}{\text{׀}}\overset{\text{׀}}{\text{׀}}$ and $\text{N}\overset{\text{׀}}{\text{׀}}\overset{\text{׀}}{\text{׀}}$. These expressions are in many respects simply the Aramaic equivalents for שׁוֹכֵן and יְשׁוּב respectively, neither of which appeared in the Aramaic vocabulary. In some respects they simply absorb the meanings of their Hebrew relatives, or that which the rabbinic commentators had given them,¹ but elsewhere they represent new approaches to the whole problem of God's relation to the phenomenal world.

The term, *Memra*, appears exclusively in the Targums. By the time of the Midrashes and Talmud it has disappeared entirely, and the Shekinah alone assumes the functions which both seem previously to have shared.² Yet its history, though brief, is more important to us in this study than an

¹Ludwig Blau, "Shekinah", Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1907), XI, 258.

²J. T. Marshall, "Shekinah", Dictionary of the Bible, James Hasting, Editor (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), IV, 489.

extended development of some concept in subsequent ages could be. Compared to its brief history, opinions are almost as varied on the Memra as on the Shekinah itself. Macdonald has well summarized the wide range of meanings in which the expression is used:

It is connected with the frequent "word" of Jehovah in the Old Testament. The Targums rendered this with Memra, its literal translation in Aramaic; then this term was personified and its use extended as a means of separating Jehovah from anthropomorphic expressions which were felt to be against His dignity or spirituality. Thus it is the Memra of Jehovah against whom man offends and it is His Memra that "repents"; the voice of the Memra is heard and the Memra is put for the "hand" of Jehovah. The Memra thus became a manifestation of God and His personified agency. But it will be noticed that this personification, both literally and in idea, connects with the authoritative Word of Jehovah.³

Macdonald suggests that Philo's doctrine of the Logos was influenced by the Memra of the Targums,⁴ while Gfoerer, naturally, is of the opposite opinion:

In der That ist die Memra eine hebraeische Faerbung der alexandrinischen Logos...Bei den alexandrinischen Juden finden wir um Jesu Christi Zeit die Logoslehre schon ganz ausgebildet; wir wissen ferner dass die aegyptisch-juedische Weisheit laengst nach Palaestina verbreitet war, ist es also zu verwundern, wenn wir in hebraeischen Buechern aus jener Zeit, namentlich in solchen, die sonst viele Spuren der Geheimlehre enthalten, wie die Targumia, auf aehnliche Lehren stossen.⁵

³Duncan Macdonald, The Hebrew Philosophical Genius (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936), p. 44.

⁴Ibid., p. 40.

⁵A. Gfoerer, Geschichte des Urchristenthums (Stuttgart: E. Schweizerbart's Verlagshandlung, 1838), I, 311.

Yet, as in the case of the Shekinah, we cannot simply assert that the Memra-device was employed to avoid anthropomorphisms, if for no other reason than that the Targums themselves contain many anthropomorphisms. Maybaum prefers the opinion that Onkelos wished nothing more by using "Memra" than to render the Hebrew מְרָא intelligible to his age:

Alle Schwierigkeiten sind jetzt gelöst, ohne eine Hypostase des Wortes angenommen zu haben, durch welche Onkelos sich also von der alexandrinischen Logoslehre abhaengig erweisen wuerde...Denn ist es einmal gewiss, dass uns im Onkelos eine Uebersetzung fuer das Volk vorliegt, so duerfen wir in derselben die Loesung philosophischer Probleme nicht suchen.⁶

However, even Gfoerer admits that the various Targumists use the expression, "Memra" in different senses. Onkelos, thus, uses it in the most hypostatic fashion, he says; Jonathan more often identifies it with the Holy Spirit (which he often translates with קדוש , while in the Jerusalem Targum it is "ein Engel, eins mit der Shechina, der sich offenbarende Gott des alten Testaments").^{7 8} Gfoerer also admits that Onkelos does not make a very careful distinction between the Memra and the Shekinah:

⁶Siegmund Maybaum, Die Anthropomorphien und Anthropopathien bei Onkelos und den spaetern Targumim mit besonderer Beruecksichtigung der Ausdruecke Memra, Yekara und Shechina (Breslau: Schletter'sche Buchhandlung, 1870), p. 48.

⁷Gfoerer, op. cit., p. 316.

⁸For a detailed classification of the term's use in the Targums, see Alfred Edersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1943), II, 660-4.

Entweder war Onkelos ein vollkommener Thor und drueckte sich auf die unvernuenftigste Weise aus, oder verstand er unter Memra etwas Aehnliches, wie unter der Schechina, eine Ausstroemung aus dem Wesen des Hoehsten.⁹

Heinisch, probably chiefly for dogmatic reasons, asserts simply that the Memra "was inserted into the text or substituted for certain words, or used to circumscribe anthropomorphisms without wholly obliterating them";¹⁰ but the case does not appear to be as simple as he makes it out to be.

The Memra's parallels with the Shekinah are many. A Targum on Lev. 26, 12 equates the two: "I will place the glory of my Shekinah among you, and my Memra shall be with you."¹¹ Like the Shekinah it is often spoken of as the leader of the Israelites through the wilderness.¹² A Targum on Is. 49, 5 also gives the Memra an eschatological twist: "Die Memra Gottes wird die Huelfe des Messias seyn."¹³ With reference to Is. 6, 9-10, St. John (12, 40) applies to Jesus exactly what the Targums apply to the Memra.¹⁴

On many occasions the Memra seems to indicate merely a

⁹Gfoerer, op. cit., p. 310.

¹⁰Paul Heinisch, Theology of the Old Testament (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1950), pp. 150-73.

¹¹Marshall, op. cit., p. 489.

¹²Gfoerer, op. cit., p. 316.

¹³Ibid., p. 313.

¹⁴Edersheim, op. cit., p. 661.

particular expression for the Shekinah. Again, the Shekinah at times seems to be secondary, for the Memra is said to shed the Shekinah on the people. After a long discussion, Abelson concludes that while "Shekinah" describes God from the aspect of glory and majesty, "Memra" is "the immanent, creative, controlling, guiding principle rather from the standpoint of force than of love."¹⁵ We might also note, finally, that, as was the case with Wisdom, the Talmud tends to subsume some of the Memra's functions under the "Torah".¹⁶

The expression, *N7P7*, is used chiefly by Onkelos and is not nearly as important as Memra. Very often it seems to be a simple translation of the Hebrew *7113*. In this sense, it is occasionally used interchangeably with "Shekinah" or is "eine Eigenschaft der Schechina, naemlich ihren Glanz, und wird dann selbst fuer sie gesetzt".¹⁷ Where it is not simply a translation of *7113*, its sense is usually determined by the context in the Targum. In those instances, it seems to indicate only a certain type of God's self-manifestation. Maybaum writes:

Aus den bisher angezogenen Stellen ist nach unserer Ansicht erwiesen, dass *N7P7* im Onkelos keine von Gott gesonderte, zwischen ihm und der Welt vermittelnde, geistige und doch bestimmte Form annehmende Wesenheit, sondern einfach die Bezeichnung

¹⁵J. Abelson, Mysticism and Rabbinical Literature (London, 1912), pp. 150-73.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 55-76.

¹⁷Gfoerer, op. cit., p. 301, note.

fuer einen bestimmten Ort der Offenbarung Gottes ist, die durch Ex. XXIV, 17 nacher beschrieben wird.¹⁸

Edersheim, on the other hand, explicitly disagrees with Maybaum:

The distinction between the unapproachable God and God as manifest and manifesting Himself...accounts for the designation of God by two classes of terms, of which in our view, the first expresses the idea of God as revealed, the other that of God as revealing Himself; or, to put it otherwise, which indicate, the one a state, the other an act on the part of God. The first of these classes of designations embraces two terms: Yekara, the excellent glory, and Shekinah, or Shekhinah, the abiding Presence. On the other hand, God, as in the act of revealing Himself, is described by the term Memra, the "Logos", "the Word". A distinction of ideas also obtains between the terms Yekara and Shekinah. The former indicates, as we think, the inward and upward, the latter the outward and downward, aspect of the revealed God.¹⁹

In the Targum on Is. 6, all these expressions are used together in various senses, including the not-uncommon expression of the Shekinah being on the throne of the Yekara.²⁰

Cehler believes that Yekara is generally used in a sense parallel to Memra, although the latter is somewhat wider in meaning.²¹

In passing, we should also note briefly one other minor rabbinic expression, which is similar in some ways to the

¹⁸Maybaum, op. cit., pp. 48-51.

¹⁹Edersheim, op. cit., p. 660.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Abelson, op. cit., pp. 380-2.

Shekinah, the "Metatron" (the derivation of the term is disputed, but most likely from *μετάθροπος*). This expression is of only minor significance here, because it belongs chiefly to later, medieval Jewish theology. Probably taking their cue from the Old Testament doctrine of the angel of the Lord, medieval Jewish theologians conceived of the Metatron as an emanation from the Godhead, who is the revealer of God and the mediator between God and the creature (like the Shekinah, Memra, etc.).²² Thus, as the beginning of all creatures and the ruler of the whole world, he was at times identified with the Shekinah. For example, one Talmudist writes: "Metatron est ipsissima Schechina, et Schechina Metatron Jehovah vocatur, quia corona est decem Sopherim."²³ If nothing else, the doctrine of the Metatron does at least provide a further illustration of what all may have lurked in Jewish minds as they spoke of the Shekinah.

²²Gustave Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, nd.), p. 134, note 3.

²³Quoted in Gfoerer, op. cit., p. 321.

CHAPTER VI

Probably the strongest testimony to the importance which the average Jew attached to the Shekinah is to be found in the New Testament. As we shall see in this chapter, there are many facets of the New Testament witness which are simply impossible to explain thoroughly without taking account of what transpired--both historically and theologically--since the last of the canonical prophets. In only the last few decades scholars have come to realize that both the Old Testament and rabbinic thought forms are much more vital to a penetrating understanding of the New Testament than the Greek language and thought. This shift in emphasis has already proved fruitful, but it often seems that all too often many students still treat the inter-testamental period as simply a theological vacuum. To say nothing of the Exile itself, the impact of three successive foreign masters, the Persians, the Greeks, and finally the Romans were bound to force the Jews to do some rethinking of their original positions, theology not excluded. Furthermore, the death of the old Hebrew tongue not long after the Exile had rendered the Old Testament itself unintelligible to the masses, who were now dependent upon the Aramaic translations and paraphrases (subject to all the perils that beset any translation) as well as the opinions expressed in the commentaries of the Tannaim. The New Testament itself reflects accurately what great influence the various theological schools and their

rabbinical teachers had on the populace.

The New Testament was written by men who were, on the whole, non-conversant with the trends of Greek and Persian culture (thanks to the traditional Jewish isolation), but all of whom had a good knowledge, not only of the Old Testament, but of rabbinic teaching as well. The language of the New Testament is "Koine"; there is no reason to believe that its theology was not "Koine" as well. That is to say, no scientific effort was made in its composition to adapt it to specifically Old Testament forms of revelation, but it was written (and preached) in the forms which were common and intelligible to its audience. Thus Hengstenberg writes on certain New Testament passages:

One cannot but feel that they do not enunciate the doctrine in question for the first time, but point to something already in existence and ultimately to the Old Testament, which alone could possibly afford a pledge of certainty...Baehr has correctly remarked that "the idea of a revealer of the deity was to them one of the primary truths of religion, which they expressed in language current at the time."¹

No one would deny that the Old Testament supplied the New with its dynamic and most of its basic approaches (as was true of early Judaism too), but it is just as reasonable to believe that it was contemporary Judaism which provided the matrix, the pattern of thought, in which the New Testament

¹E. W. Hengstenberg, Christology of the Old Testament (Edinburg: T. and T. Clark, 1872), IV, 315-6.

revelation was set. We must remember that most of the bizarre notions, so often associated with Judaism, stem from a later date than the first century or arose from Jewish reactions against the Christian use of the Old Testament.

We have already noted that the Shekinah, Kabod, Memra, Wisdom, etc., all were intimately tied up with the Messianic expectations of the Jews. The early Christians shared in all these expectations, and hence it was natural that, when they believed their Messiah had come, they should apply not only the "Messianic" portions of the Old Testament, but also all that Jewdom of that time included in that belief, to Jesus of Nazareth. We shall note here that the Jews' concept of the Shekinah influenced both the vocabulary and theology of the New Testament.

One of the most direct New Testament parallels with the rabbinic doctrine of the Shekinah is the $\sigma\kappa\eta\nu\eta$. This is the chief rendering of both the Septuagint and the New Testament for the Old Testament's שְׁכִינָה , קָבוֹד , and מַעְרָב .² At times in the New Testament, however, the sound of the Greek word was so close to its Aramaic equivalent that $\sigma\kappa\eta\nu\eta$ or $\sigma\kappa\eta\nu\acute{\omicron}\omega$ seems almost to be a simple transliteration of שְׁכִינָה .³ The cognates, $\sigma\kappa\eta\nu\eta$ and $\sigma\kappa\eta\nu\acute{\omicron}\omega$, are used some twenty-five

²Joseph Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: American Book Co., 1889), p. 577.

³J. T. Marshall, "Shekinah", A Dictionary of the Bible, edited by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), IV, 489.

times in the New Testament.⁴ Occasionally these words simply retain their original meaning of "tabernacle" or "dwell". In other instances they are used in a context which definitely links them with the Shekinah. (Many of these we shall consider later.) In at least three instances, however, all from the pen of St. John, transliteration of ΝΙΨΩ seems to be the most likely explanation. This certainly is true in the prologue of St. John's Gospel (1, 14): $\delta \lambda \acute{o} \gamma \omicron \varsigma \sigma \acute{\alpha} \rho \xi \acute{\iota} \chi \acute{\epsilon} \nu \epsilon \tau \omicron \kappa \alpha \iota \acute{\epsilon} \sigma \kappa \eta \nu \omega \sigma \epsilon \iota \acute{\epsilon} \nu \eta \mu \acute{\iota} \nu$. Practically all scholars are agreed that this verse must be an explicit reference to the Shekinah. An artificial word like "shekanized" would most nearly convey its original sense to theological ears. In Rev. 7, 15 we read, $\delta \kappa \alpha \theta \eta \mu \epsilon \nu \omicron \varsigma \acute{\epsilon} \pi \iota \tau \omicron \upsilon \theta \rho \acute{o} \nu \omicron \upsilon \sigma \kappa \alpha \nu \acute{\omega} \sigma \epsilon \iota \acute{\epsilon} \pi \acute{\iota} \acute{\alpha} \upsilon \tau \omicron \upsilon \varsigma$. While the $\acute{\alpha} \upsilon \tau \omicron \upsilon \varsigma$ here refers to the saints in heaven, $\sigma \kappa \eta \nu \acute{\omega} \sigma \epsilon \iota$ certainly implies far more than the English, "dwell", can ever convey. In Rev. 21, 3, in a similar eschatological context, the reference to the Shekinah becomes even more obvious: $\acute{\iota} \delta \omicron \upsilon \eta \sigma \kappa \eta \nu \eta \tau \omicron \upsilon \theta \epsilon \omicron \upsilon \mu \epsilon \tau \acute{\alpha} \tau \omega \nu \acute{\alpha} \nu \theta \rho \acute{\omega} \pi \omega \nu, \kappa \alpha \iota \sigma \kappa \eta \nu \acute{\omega} \sigma \epsilon \iota \mu \epsilon \tau \acute{\prime} \acute{\alpha} \upsilon \tau \omega \nu, \kappa \alpha \iota \acute{\alpha} \upsilon \tau \omicron \upsilon \lambda \alpha \sigma \acute{\iota} \acute{\alpha} \upsilon \tau \omicron \upsilon \acute{\epsilon} \sigma \omicron \nu \tau \alpha \iota, \kappa \alpha \iota \acute{\alpha} \upsilon \tau \omicron \varsigma \acute{\omicron} \theta \epsilon \acute{\omicron} \varsigma \mu \acute{\epsilon} \tau \acute{\prime} \acute{\alpha} \upsilon \tau \omega \nu \acute{\epsilon} \sigma \tau \alpha \iota$.

The Shekinah concept is also very evident in the New Testament word, $\delta \acute{\omicron} \beta \acute{\alpha}$, which is practically a translation of that word as well as of the Old Testament דָּבַר . This is

⁴Alfred Schmoller, Handkonkordanz zum griechischen Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1949), p. 456.

one of the outstanding examples where a word in the New Testament vocabulary is really more Hebrew or Aramaic than Greek (in the classical sense). Thus Kittel writes:

Den beherrschenden Bestand des nt.lichen Wortes aber bildet jene vollends jeglicher griechischen Analogie entbehrende, bei Philo nur ein einziges Mal anklingende, Bedeutung des goettlichen und himmlischen Lichtglaenzes der die Erhabenheit und Majestaet, ja das Wesen Gottes und seiner Welt ueberhaupt darstellt. Woher stammt dieser voellig neue Wortinhalt? Die Antwort kann nicht ohne Blick auf das at.liche Wort קבוצ gegeben werden.⁵

Classical Greek used $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ in the sense of "opinion", "judgment"; but with the single exception of IV Macc. 5, 17, this usage has completely disappeared in the Septuagint, Apocrypha, and the New Testament.⁶ Practically all the New Testament writers use $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ at times in a sense equivalent to the

קבוצ of the Old Testament or the שכינה of the Targums and Midrashes.⁷ Eidersheim specifically disagrees with Thayer (Grimm) and insists that $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ must be derived from נאפ" (or כבד), not שכינה,⁸ but in the light of the confused and overlapping meanings of all these terms, it would seem that he is being rather arbitrary here.

Parallel to developments in rabbinical circles, a

⁵Rudolph Kittel, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935), II, 240.

⁶Thayer, op. cit., p. 155.

⁷Ibid., p. 156.

⁸Alfred Eidersheim, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1943), II, 660.

personification is very evident in the Apocrypha. We note here only a few instances: (1) Enoch 14, 20: "And the Great Glory sat thereon, and his raiment shone more brightly than the sun"; (2) Tobit 3, 16: "The prayer of both was heard before the glory of the Great One"; and (3) Sirach 17, 13: "Their eyes saw the majesty of the glory".⁹

The first clear appearance of the Shekinah in the New Testament occurs at Jesus' birth. At least, this has been a frequent explanation of the angelophany to the shepherds. Luke 2, 9 refers to both an angel of the Lord¹⁰ and to the δόξα Κυρίου, which περιέλαμψεν αὐτούς. This is the beginning of the New Testament's shift of emphasis from the θεός τῆς δόξης to the Κύριος τῆς δόξης.¹¹ "Die Sichtbarwerdung der δόξα bei der Geburt des Christus Lk 2, 9 weist, ganz wie die Engelserscheinungen, auf seine Herkunft aus der Gotteswelt."¹² Luke fails to indicate whether the manifestation of the δόξα included the angelophany, or whether the two are to be distinguished. At any rate, the parallelism of this incident with the appearances of the Shekinah in the Old Testament (notably in the wilderness and to Ezekiel) are obvious. It is interesting to note also that the Talmud

⁹ Marshall, op. cit., p. 489.

¹⁰ See Chap. IV.

¹¹ Kittel, op. cit., pp. 251-2.

¹² Ibid.

relates a similar incident, involving the Shekinah, at the birth of Moses.¹³

(Many early Christians believed that the "star in the East", which led the wise men, was the ancient fire of the Shekinah, which was now, with the birth of Christ, returning to earth after being absent since the destruction of Solomon's temple.¹⁴ While this ancient interpretation is somewhat fanciful, it is of interest because of the evidence it offers for the influence of the Shekinah upon Christians.)

The Shekinah is also very evident in the accounts of the Transfiguration (Mt. 17, 1-6; Mk. 9, 2-8; Luke 9, 28-36). Moses and Elijah appear ἐν δόξῃ, but when the disciples awake they see τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν, but not that of the two heavenly visitors. Evidently, two different types of "glories" are in the synoptists' minds here. A cloud, like that of the Shekinah in the wilderness, appears and overshadows them, and a voice speaks from the cloud, just as Jahwe had spoken out of the כבוד atop Mt. Sinai (Ex. 16, 17). Also very suspect in this connection is Peter's suggestion to make three tabernacles (σκηνάς, of course), although his real intention is obscure.

(Although the word δόξα is not used, we may note also

¹³Hermann Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1922), II, 116.

¹⁴William Cooke, The Shekinah (London: J. B. Cooke, 1857), p. 109.

that many scholars see an appearance of the Shekinah in the story of the Annunciation (Luke 1, 26-38). The important passage (v. 35a) reads: πνεῦμα ἄγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ, καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοί. The Septuagint had used the word, ἐπισκιάζειν, already for $\gamma\omega\psi$ in Ex. 40, 35 (where the cloud is said to rest on the tabernacle). The same word is used by all the synoptists of the cloud at the Transfiguration. So here, Mary becomes a tabernacle in which God dwells. "The Shekinah entered her, when she conceived him who possesses the full glory of the Shekinah."¹⁵ Furthermore, the subjects here are the Holy Spirit and the δύναμις ($\sigma\eta\gamma\eta\gamma\eta$), which, as we saw,¹⁶ were personified already in the Old Testament and especially after the Exile, when they became parallels to the Shekinah.)

We may also note briefly a number of other instances in the writings of the synoptists where δόξα may mean "Shekinah", although very often it is difficult to distinguish the use of the word as a terminus technicus from its more mundane meaning of simply "splendor", "brilliance": (1) the doxology of the Lord's Prayer (whether genuine or not), ὅτι σοῦ ἐστὶν . . . ἡ δόξα; (2) the Hunc Dimittis (Luke 2, 32), where it is also paralleled with φῶς ($\gamma\eta\eta$), φῶς εἰς

¹⁵L. S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1946), p. 320.

¹⁶See Chap. IV.

ἀποκάλυψιν ἐθνῶν καὶ δόξαν λαοῦ σου ; (3) to the disciples enroute to Emmaus, Jesus speaks of His own death (Luke 24, 26) as an εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ ; (4) Stephen (Acts 7, 2) speaks of ὁ θεὸς τῆς δόξης appearing to Abraham; (5) At his death Stephen sees (Acts 7, 55) δόξαν θεοῦ and Jesus at the right hand of God (it is to be noted that the two are distinguished here); (6) St. Paul relates that at his conversion he was not able to see ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης of the light; and (7) when Christ speaks of His second coming, usually ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ or καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ (Matt. 16, 27; Mark 8, 33; Luke 9, 26; Matt. 19, 28; 25, 31; Mark 10, 37).

It is St. John above all others in the New Testament who clearly uses δόξα in a sense almost identical with the דְּבָרָא in the Old Testament or the נְבִינָא in contemporary rabbinism.¹⁷ It is also St. John who most intimately connects the Messiah with the Shekinah, as we have already noted on John 1, 14 in connection with σκηνή. It is further to be noted that immediately after the ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν in that verse, there follows ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ. John here makes Christ the substitute for and living antitype of the Old Testament tabernacle and its דְּבָרָא .¹⁸ In a number of instances, where Christ contrasts the δόξα of men with

¹⁷Kittel, op. cit., p. 251.

¹⁸Cooke, op. cit., p. 98.

that of God (5, 41; 7, 18; 8, 50; 12, 43) the word surely means more than the "honor" of the Authorized Version. In 12, 41, quoting Isaiah's account of his inaugural vision, Jesus notes that the prophet had seen *τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ*. Without thinking in terms of the Shekinah, it is also difficult to grasp the full import of Jesus' sacerdotal prayer. In 17, 5 he prays: *δόξατόν με σύ, πάτερ, ... τῇ δόξῃ ᾧ εἶχον πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι παρὰ σου*.

John's Aramaic conception of the *δόξα* is very evident also in his Apocalypse. In 15, 8 we read that the temple was filled with smoke *ἐκ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ* (the parallelism with the entry of the Shekinah into the tabernacle and Solomon's temple is patent). In 18, 1 an angel comes, and the earth is lightened *ἐκ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ*. In Chap. 21, which promises (v. 3), as we already noted, that the tabernacle of God will be with men, we also read (v. 11) that the new Jerusalem has *τὴν δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ*; further (v. 23) the city needs no luminaries, for *ἡ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐρωτίσει αὐτήν* (it should be noted that this clause is paralleled with, "And the Lamb is the light thereof"). This is true of the New Jerusalem, just as it was of the Holy of Holies, which needed no outside light.¹⁹

St. Paul, a good disciple of rabbinic theology, is no exception to this usage of the New Testament. The Shekinah

¹⁹Ibid., p. 239.

may have been in his mind in Rom. 3, 23, where he asserts that all sinners have come short (better: "lacked") the "glory" (ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης) of God. An overview of Pauline use of δόξα in its technical use follows. Rom. 5, 2: "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God". Rom. 6, 4: Christ was raised "by (διὰ) the glory of the Father"; probably, "St. Paul was thinking of the Shekinah piercing with its radiance the gloom of Sheol, and cooperating with God, to release the Divine captive from the power of Satan and the gates of Sheol",²⁰ Rom. 8, 18: Present sufferings cannot be compared πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι. Among the special privileges of the Jews (Rom. 9, 4) St. Paul lists ἡ δόξα;²¹ in fairness we must quote Strack-Billerbeck's comment here: "Doch ist uns ein Beispiel fuer diesen absoluten Gebrauch von תְּכָוָה u. נִיפֹר' ohne Beifuegung einer Gottesbezeichnung in der rabbinischen Literatur nicht bekannt geworden".²² I Cor. 2, 8: the Jews crucified τὸν κύριον τῆς δόξης. I Cor. 15, 43: the dead body ἐγείρεται ἐν δόξῃ. II Cor. 3, 7-18 is a key passage in determining St. Paul's view of the δόξα, and we cannot do it justice here; the δόξα which filled Moses' face is τὴν καταργουμένην (has been nullified) because of τῆς ὑπερβαλλούσης δόξης, culminating in

²⁰ Marshall, op. cit., p. 489.

²¹ See Chap. III.

²² Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., III, 262.

an eschatological crux interpretum: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord". In II Cor. 4, 6, calling the Gospel "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" may be more than metaphorical. Eph. 1, 17 again speaks of ὁ πατήρ τῆς δόξης. Phil. 3, 21: Our bodies will be changed συνμορφῶν τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ. Col. 1, 11 speaks of τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ. I Thess. 2, 12: God has called us into his kingdom and glory. II Thess. 1, 9: At the Parousia Christ will punish the evil ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ. (Besides this list above, other passages might be quoted where the connection with the Kabod or the Shekinah is more controversial. In general, wherever the Authorized Version translates with the adjective "glorious", we suspect that the original τῆς δόξης is more than a mere exegetical genitive.)

Other New Testament writers often use δόξα in the same sense. James 2, 1 uses a τῆς δόξης to modify Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Since the context speaks of a συναγωγή of Christians, where the Shekinah would be present, many translate this: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Shekinah".²³ In I Pet. 4, 14 πνέυμα is modified by both τῆς δόξης and τοῦ θεοῦ, and it will rest (ἀναπαύσεται) upon Christians. Many commentators, including

²³ Marshall, op. cit., p. 489.

Bengel, regard δόξης here as an appellation of Christ.²⁴ In an account of the Transfiguration (II Pet. 1, 17) the voice is said to have come ἀπὸ μεγαλαρεπῶς δόξης. Jude 2, 4 speaks eschatologically of Christians' presence κατενωπίοι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ. In Heb. 1, 3 Christ is described as the ἀπαύγασμα (reflected brightness) τῆς δόξης, a phrase which occurs frequently in rabbinical writings.²⁵ In Heb. 9, 5 the Cherubim (overshadowing the mercy seat) are modified by δόξης.

In addition to specific instances like these where either δόξα or σκηνή reminds one of the Shekinah, there are numerous other instances where New Testament thought evidently was influenced by Jewish notions on that subject or some of the parallels we considered in previous chapters. The Shekinah was the closest Jewish approach to the incarnation; and since the incarnation was so central to Christendom, it need not surprise us that so much of its early thought on that subject parallels Hebrew thought-patterns. To Christians, Christ became the Shekinah incarnate. An abstract concept (Shekinah) was personified once and for all. In every instance where Christ appears after His ascension (and Christians would add: as before His incarnation) He reveals

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Strack-Billerbeck, op. cit., III, 672.

Himself in Shekinah-form (cf. Stephen, St. Paul, St. John).²⁶

New Testament writers are always contrasting the now-abrogated old dispensation with the new covenant, where the glory is now enshrined in an incarnate Messiah. For Christendom the rending of the veil of the sanctuary at Christ's death became the symbol $\kappa\alpha\tau' \epsilon\phi\omicron\lambda\eta\iota$ of this change. The imperfect forms of the old dispensation had been fulfilled in their antitype; the way to God Himself was open through Christ (cf. Rom. 5, 2). In Christ the Deus absconditus had become the Deus revelatus. The divine character had been fully disclosed in Christ, as though through Him human eyes had gazed upon the Shekinah within the Holy of Holies.²⁷ The Shekinah in Christ becomes evident in all His miracles, displays of wisdom, etc.²⁸

Just as the Shekinah once descended upon Israel, so at Pentecost the Holy Spirit descends to perpetuate, as it were, Christ's dwelling in believers.²⁹ As at first in Eden and as always when the $\gamma\lambda\omega\sigma$ appears, fire is the symbol of God's presence. The entire "mystical" aspect of Pauline theology, including the *κοινωνία* with Christ, the church as the $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$ (I Cor. 12), the second Adam (Rom. 5), the

²⁶ Cooke, op. cit., p. 110.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 123-37.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 108.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 153-9.

weighty ἐν Χριστῷ concept, etc., probably has affinities with the Jews' conceptions of God's nearness through the Shekinah. St. Paul very frequently speaks of the Christian's body as the temple of God or of the Holy Ghost (cf. I Cor. 3, 16-17; 6, 19; II Cor. 6, 16), as though it were the anti-type of the temple, and the indwelling of the Spirit were just as real as the Shekinah's presence in Solomon's temple.³⁰ Even the Jewish Encyclopedia admits that "the idea that God dwells in man and that man is His temple...is merely a more realistic conception of the resting of the Shekinah on man".³¹ While it is certain that the Holy Spirit in the New Testament performs many of the functions of the rabbinic Shekinah, its place in that scheme is highly problematic. In fact the ease with which the New Testament itself almost identifies the second and third persons of the Trinity at times is puzzling enough. Early Christian liturgies prefer to invoke the Logos directly and speak of the spirit in a very impersonal fashion. Not until about the fourth century does the older and vaguer "Spirit Shekinah" terminology bow to the more precise Trinitarian vocabulary of that day, but undoubtedly some of the theological content of the earlier ideas was unwittingly lost in that transfer.³²

³⁰Ibid., pp. 179-80.

³¹Ludwig Blau, "Shekinah", Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1907), XI, 259.

³²Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1947), pp. 184, 299, and 472.

Finally, the eschatological connotations of the Shemirah to Jewry are also faithfully reflected in the Christian perception of $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ and other concepts. We noted above that Christ frequently used that term in speaking of the Parousia. Thus $\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ and $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ are paralleled in Matthew's (20, 21) and Mark's (10, 37) relation of the same story. Commenting on II Cor. 3, 18, Kittel writes:

Die Brücke zwischen Gegenwart und Eschatologie steckt in $\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\ \delta\acute{o}\xi\eta\varsigma\ \epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha\upsilon$. Das Jetzt ist zwar $\epsilon\upsilon\ \delta\acute{o}\xi\eta$, traegt aber zugleich in dem $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ den Blick auf eine noch kommende Vollendung... In dieser... Praepositionalverbindung liegt jene ganze Gleichzeitigkeit des Habens und Nochnichthabens, die allenthalben den Grundzug der nt.lichen Froemigkeit bildet.³³

The eschatological flavor of $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ in the New Testament is such that it implies, not only participation in Christ's resurrection, but also present participation in His life, even though the present is but the $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\rho\chi\acute{\eta}$ and $\acute{\alpha}\rho\rho\alpha\theta\acute{\omega}\nu$ of the Spirit. Hence Kittel even makes bold to say: "Man koennte auch sagen: ist die $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ des Glaebigen wirklich Vollendung und Ziel des goettlichen $\kappa\alpha\lambda\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu$, so liegt es in der Natur der Sache, dass sie demselben Ursprung entstammt wie jenes".³⁴

Even as the glory of the incarnate Christ was a surety for the sanctification of the Christian on earth (cf. John 17, 22), so His glorification in heaven is a type and pledge of

³³Kittel, op. cit., pp. 254-5.

³⁴Ibid., p. 254.

"what we shall be" (John 3, 2).³⁵ Finally, when Christ returns ἐν δόξῃ as Judge of the world, the Shekinah will manifest itself in its "richest glory and sublimest display".³⁶ Thus Thornton writes beautifully:

The rising of our Lord from the Easter sepulchre was an act of God which anticipated the end of this world. Out of the closed tomb of the old order there has broken forth a new world--the world of the Last Day which is the eternal day of the Shekinah's Glory.³⁷

From this brief (and necessarily sketchy) discussion, it should at least be evident how many parallels can be drawn between the concept of the Shekinah and the New Testament witness. The essential unity of the two testaments is very obvious here. It is more than mere fancifulness when Christian scholars have noted a reference to the Shekinah at the beginning, middle, and end of their Scriptures: $\gamma\omega\omega$ in Gen. 3, 24; $\sigma\kappa\eta\gamma\omega\omega$ in John 1, 14; and $\sigma\kappa\eta\gamma\omega\omega$ in Rev. 21, 3.³⁸ We must now note briefly in the next chapter the impact which the Shekinah-concept has made upon the liturgies of both Jewdom and Christendom.

³⁵Cooke, op. cit., p. 134.

³⁶Ibid., p. 332.

³⁷Thornton, op. cit., p. 448.

³⁸Cooke, op. cit., pp. 13-4.

CHAPTER VII

The exact origins of every liturgy known to modern man are probably shrouded in antiquity. As every competent scholar would readily admit, many conclusions in the entire field of liturgics are really only reasonable conjectures. Yet it is to be expected that any ritual will reflect faithfully the basic theological tenets of the religion it serves. If the Shekinah occupied as prominent a position in the religious thought of Judaism and of Christianity as we have claimed on the preceding pages, we should also expect it to exert no little influence on the liturgies of both religions. Such is undeniably the case for both, but in each instance the actual evidence is naturally exceedingly sparse.

Although the Shekinah is no longer present in the visible form of the first temple, pious Jews today still believe that the Shekinah is present spiritually in their houses of worship.¹ Hence, for one thing, the Jew is not to appear in his synagogue with his head uncovered, because the Shekinah is above his head.² Chiefly, however, this belief is evident in the presence of the נר תמיד (the "Perpetual Lamp") in all orthodox houses of worship, where it is generally placed somewhere above the ark. We have already

¹See Chap. III.

²J. Abelson, Mysticism and Rabbinical Literature (London, 1912), p. 112.

noted the association of the Shekinah or Kabod with "light".³ Undoubtedly, this custom is descended directly from a similar ceremony in the tabernacle (Ex. 27, 20; Lev. 24, 2), where the perpetual lights symbolized Jahwe's unceasing presence in the sanctuary and among His people.⁴ Much Jewish piety centers about this institution, for the Talmud states: "God says, 'If you conscientiously keep My light burning in your soul, I shall keep your light; if you kindle My lights in the Sanctuary, I shall kindle the great light for you in the future!'"⁵ The rabbins themselves list four things which the Lamp symbolizes: (1) God's presence; (2) the spiritual light which went out of the sanctuary; (3) the Torah, which Israel is to keep alive in the world; and (4) happiness and prosperity, even life itself.⁶ As an indication of the importance of this symbol of the Shekinah to Jewry, Jewish Boy Scouts have a symbol of the ל' שֶׁנֶר ל' on their badges.⁷

Early Christian liturgies probably differed very little from those of their Jewish brethren. Time has not succeeded

³See Chap. IV.

⁴D. Aug. Wuensche, "Schechina", Realencyklopaedia fuer protestantische Theologie und Kirche (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1906), XVII, 539-40.

⁵Kaufmann Kohler, "Light", Jewish Encyclopedia (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1907), VIII, 84.

⁶Julius H. Greenstone, "Perpetual Lamp", Ibid., VII, 600.

⁷So this writer is given to understand.

in erasing all these similarities--at least not in the liturgical churches of Christendom. The reading of the lections and the psalmody are no doubt two such remnants of the Jewish ritual, but there is no reason to doubt that the "Lux Aeterna", which burns in all the liturgical churches in both East and West, is unmistakably another. The symbolism of Rev. 21 vividly supports such an interpretation: the New Jerusalem, in whose advantages even the Church Militant participates, needs no other light than that of the Shekinah-Lamb, whose illumination of His church is symbolized by the Lamp's unflinching flame in the sanctuary.

The sacrificed, yet victorious, life of Christ is the lamp which glows with the glory of the Shekinah. For Christ's sacrificed Body is the meeting place of God and man, where the redeemed share with the eyewitnesses the privilege of beholding "the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth".⁸

At the very center of the Christian ritual was the celebration of the Eucharist, when Christ became so real to all His members in so palpable a form, that, by contrast, the Shekinah of the Old Testament was really only an insignificant "shadow". Early Greek liturgies practically ignore the role of the Holy Spirit in the epiklesis of the Eucharistic Prayer. However, the ancient Syriac liturgy of SS. Addai and Mari (the traditional "apostles" of Edessa), which was

⁸L. S. Thornton, The Common Life in the Body of Christ (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1946), p. 342.

naturally much more subject to Semitic influences, where more of the old "Shekinah=Holy Spirit" terminology was still in vogue, states its Eucharistic prayer thus:

May there come, O my Lord, Thy Holy Spirit and rest upon this oblation...and bless and hallow it that it be to us...for the pardon of offences... and for the great hope of resurrection from the dead and for new life in the kingdom of heaven...⁹

It evidently was not until later, when the Holy Spirit's place was more rigidly set in the Trinitarian mode of expression, that its earlier associations with the Shekinah were forgotten.

We regret that more material was not available on this very interesting topic, but it should give some indication of the power of this ancient concept, which has been preserved to this present day in the usages of the Christian church.

As we reach the end of this study, it is not to be doubted that more questions have been raised than answered in the reader's mind. Many of the questions we did essay to answer were done so only in a very superficial manner--particularly the study of the $\delta\acute{o}\mu\alpha$ in the New Testament. Because of the complexity of the subject and the limitations of a thesis of this sort, however, we hope that these

⁹Quoted in Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1945), p. 183.

failures will be excused.

On the other hand, we believe that some important truths have received needed reemphasis here. The Shekinah is another instance of the indispensability of the Old Testament for the Christian church. The Christian revelation in Jesus Christ did not appear in a vacuum, but had been promised and prefigured ever since the primordial sin in Eden. Every religion is ultimately concerned with the relations of God and men. The inevitable solution of the religio naturalis to this problem was an anthropocentric one: the way of appeasement, the way of placation of an offended Deity. In startling contrast to that monotonous sameness of all paganism stood the theocentric answer at the heart of the Old Testament revelation, in which the offended Deity Himself leaves His throne and "shekanizes" among men. It was essentially that treasure which the Hebrew was to cherish and preserve until, "in the fulness of time", God Himself should at once climax and abrogate all His previous condescensions in the permanent Shekinah, the God-man, Jesus Christ.

That the Shekinah in Judaism not only became a new term for the Old Testament's view of revelation, but that various accretions and different emphases clung to this concept in the course of time, and that it was this Aramaic twist to the Old Testament doctrine which was probably in the minds of the authors of the New Testament, need not disturb us either.

None of these alterations destroyed the essential emphasis of the Shekinah-doctrine on the theocentricity of all revelation; and, furthermore, Christianity, as a religion of incarnation rather than of theophany, is inevitably a historical religion. It was inevitable that early Christians should think and express themselves (in the writings which have become normative for us) in the religious patterns of their own Jewish training. That first century date line on the New Testament does not antiquate its timeless relevance or invalidate the unimpeachable authority of the "kerygma" it contains. Rather, it becomes the duty of Christian scholars to acquaint themselves, as much as possible, with the historical mold into which those writings fit, so that the modern church may know better what the original writers intended and be spared the arbitrary legalism into which any ahistorical hermeneutic inevitably falls.

God still deigns to dwell with men, no longer by cloud and pillar of fire or by spectacular theophanies, but through His Christ and His Spirit. The Shekinah, the Kabod of the New Testament church is "the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth", in Whom and for Whom she lives, and upon Whom she fastens her gaze, now indeed "through a glass darkly", but soon face to face--one with Him who became one with her.

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